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and Eleanor Hochman



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PENGUIN REFERENCE BOOKS

THE PENGUIN DICTIONARY OF
CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN HISTORY

Stanley Hochman has edited more than a dozen reference works and translated an equal number of fiction and non-fiction books from French and Italian. Eleanor Hochman's translations include Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers*, George Sand's *Indiana*, and with her husband, Emile Zola's *Germinal*. They live in New York City.

For Daniel Bell Hochman
and Joel Lansburgh Hochman

“Only connect . . .”

Preface

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.
—George Santayana

A few entries in this new edition remain the same as in the two earlier ones, but many more are of issues or events that continue to engage our minds and imagination, have great relevance to our present lives, and are constantly being modified by new information.

Christopher Beam, who spent five years transcribing 3,700 hours of the **Nixon tapes** that had not yet been released by mid-1996, promises that they will be “a godsend for historians, not only of **Watergate** but domestic policies, the 1972 elections, the whole area of foreign policy and diplomacy.” Robert McNamara, who was Secretary of State until he resigned in 1968, wrote in his 1995 memoir that he knew at the time that the **Vietnam War** could not be won by “any reasonable means,” and since that war cast a military shadow on the **Gulf War, Operation Restore Hope** in Somalia, the **Haiti invasion**, and **Bosnia**—and had economic repercussions on such social visions as the **war on poverty** (now considered to have failed)—it is clear that the importance of these events did not end with their seeming conclusions.

Other entries—**affirmative action, AIDS, Roe v. Wade, silicon breast implants, the Exxon Valdez**, among them—are ongoing because they deal with constantly changing attitudes about who we are and what we believe in, and one of our hopes in writing this book is that the reader who begins with any one major entry will be able, by following the boldface cross-references, to see the interconnectedness of much that has happened and to get a clear sense of more than fifty years of our economic, political, and cultural post-World War II history, both serious (**Marshall Plan, NAFTA**) and frivolous (**streaking, Bobbitt**).

And of course there are new entries: the **Ames Espionage Scandal**, **Contract with America**, **downsizing**, **“family values,”** **gays in the military**, **Million Man March**, **North American Free Trade Agreement**, **Oklahoma City Bombing**, **O. J. Simpson trial**, **TWA Flight 800**, **twelve-step programs**, **Welfare Reform**, and **Whitewater**, to name only a few.

Anyone who leafs through this book can hardly fail to agree with columnist Molly Ivins, who wrote: “My fellow citizens, we live in a great nation. Its occasional resemblance to a lunatic asylum is purely coincidental. . . .” Or as comedian Richard Pryor noted about singer Michael Jackson, where else but in America could a poor black boy become a rich white boy?

Stanley Hochman
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New York City

List of Acronyms and Initials

- ABM:** Antibalistic Missile
- ADA:** Americans for Democratic Action; Americans with Disabilities Act
- AEC:** Atomic Energy Commission
- AFDC:** Aid to Families with Dependent Children
- AFL:** American Federation of Labor
- AID:** Agency for International Development
- AIDS:** Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
- AIM:** American Indian Movement
- AIP:** American Independent Party
- ANP:** American Nazi Party
- ATF:** Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms
- BIA:** Bureau of Indian Affairs
- BPP:** Black Panther Party
- CAP:** Community Action Program
- CDC:** Centers for Disease Control
- CENTO:** Central Treaty Organization
- CETA:** Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
- CIA:** Central Intelligence Agency
- CORE:** Congress of Racial Equality
- CREEP or CRP:** Committee to Re-elect the President
- DOE:** Department of Energy
- EEOC:** Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency
- ERA:** Equal Rights Amendment
- ERISA:** Employee Retirement Income Security Act
- FAA:** Federal Aviation Administration
- FAP:** Family Assistance Plan
- FDA:** Food and Drug Administration
- FOIA:** Freedom of Information Act
- FPCC:** Fair Play for Cuba Committee

- FTC:** Federal Trade Commission
- FW:** Fascinating Womanhood
- GAO:** General Accounting Office
- GATT:** General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- GSA:** General Services Administration
- HUAC:** House Committee on Un-American Activities; generally referred to as the House Un-American Activities Committee.
- HHS:** Department of Health and Human Services
- HUD:** Department of Housing and Urban Development
- IAEA:** International Atomic Energy Agency
- ICBM:** Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
- IGY:** International Geophysical Year
- IRA:** Individual Retirement Account
- JDL:** Jewish Defense League
- JTPA:** Job Training Partnership Act
- MAAG:** (U.S.) Military Assistance Advisory Group
- MDAA:** Mutual Defense Assistance Act
- MDS:** Movement for a Democratic Society
- MDTA:** Manpower Development and Training Act
- MFDP:** Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party
- MLF:** Multilateral Force
- NAFTA:** North American Free Trade Agreement
- NASA:** National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- NBEDC:** National Black Economic Development Conference
- NBPC:** National Black Political Convention
- NDEA:** National Defense Education Act
- NEA:** National Endowment for the Arts
- NFWA:** National Farm Workers Association
- NOW:** National Organization for Women
- NRA:** National Rifle Association
- NSA:** National Student Association
- NSF:** National Science Foundation
- OAS:** Organization of American States

- OEO:** Office of Economic Opportunity
- OMB:** Office of Management and Budget
- OR:** Operation Rescue
- PAC:** Political Action Committees
- PATCO:** Professional Air Traffic Controllers
- PC:** Politically Correct
- PFPP:** Peace and Freedom Party
- PLP:** Progressive Labor Party
- PPA:** Progressive Party of America
- PUSH:** People United to Serve Humanity
- RAM:** Revolutionary Action Movement
- RNA:** Republic of New Africa
- RSVP:** Retired Senior Volunteer Program
- SAC:** Strategic Air Command
- SALT:** Strategic Arms Limitations Talks
- SCLC:** Southern Christian Leadership Conference
- SDI:** Strategic Defense Initiative (Star Wars)
- SDS:** Students for a Democratic Society
- SEATO:** Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
- SEC:** Securities and Exchange Commission
- SNCC; Snick:** Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
- SST:** Supersonic Transport
- START:** Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
- TA:** Tailhook Association; Transactional Analysis
- TM:** Transcendental Meditation
- TSS:** Toxic Shock Syndrome
- UFO:** Unidentified Flying Object
- UMT:** Universal Military Training
- USIA:** United States Information Agency
- VISTA:** Volunteers in Service to America
- VOA:** Voice of America
- WSP:** Women Strike for Peace
- YAF:** Young Americans for Freedom
- YIPPIES:** Youth International Party
- ZPG:** Zero Population Growth

Contents

Preface	ix
List of Acronyms and Initials	xi
The Penguin Dictionary of Contemporary American History	1
Index of Names in the News	621

A

ABSCAM As the result of a controversial FBI investigation in which agents posed as representatives of Abdul Enterprises Ltd., a nonexistent import-export firm, beginning in May 1980, seven congressmen and several other elected officials were indicted on charges of accepting bribes in exchange for political favors. Though ten persons were eventually found guilty, two convictions were later set aside.

Among those charged were Sen. Harrison A. Williams, Jr. (D-N.J.), Rep. John M. Murphy (D-N.Y.), Rep. Frank Thompson, Jr. (D-N.J.), Rep. Michael J. Myers (D-Pa.), Rep. Raymond F. Lederer (D-Pa.), Rep. John W. Jenrette, Jr. (D-S.C.), and Rep. Richard Kelly (R-Fla.). The only Republican, Kelly, who had originally refused the bribe, claimed that he had taken \$25,000 as part of his own investigation into organized crime. Though he was nevertheless found guilty, his conviction was overturned on May 14, 1982. The name of Rep. John P. Murtha, Jr. (D-Pa.), a **Vietnam War** Marine Corps veteran, was mysteriously leaked to the press even though officials admitted that he never took or agreed to a bribe. Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.) was at least one other legislator who flatly refused a bribe.

Revelations about Abscam—initially considered a contraction of “Arab scam” but after complaints by Arab UN representatives and members of the American-Arab Relations Committee explained as a contraction of “Abdul scam”—began surfacing early in February 1980 in newspaper and TV reports of secret videotapes of public officials accepting bribes totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars in return for help in making investments, obtaining licenses and residence permits, etc. FBI operations began in February 1978, when in return for a reduced sentence an informer introduced agents to what he said were corrupt officials. Both the tactics and the premature leak of the subsequent investigation were criticized by civil libertarians.

ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKING

As the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* approached Port Said, Egypt, on Oct. 7, 1985, four members of a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) splinter group known as the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) seized control of the ship when they realized they had bungled their original plans to take over the vessel when it reached Ashdod, Israel. The hijacking was seen as a reprisal for the October 1 Israeli bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis, itself a response to the September killing of three Israelis in Cyprus. As President Ronald Reagan, whose administration was first to defend and then to condemn the Tunis bombing, put it in his 1990 autobiography, “The Middle East,

seldom quiescent, had heated up again."

The four PLF terrorists threatened to start killing their 400 hostages and blow up the ship unless 50 Palestinians held by Israel were released. Reagan was still considering the use of a Navy Seal team to assault the *Achille Lauro* when on October 9 the hijackers surrendered to PLO representatives sent by Yasir Arafat; all six were to be given safe conduct out of Egypt. Only then did Italian authorities announce that Leon Klinghoffer, a 69-year-old wheelchair-bound American, had been shot to death and "casually"—the word is Reagan's—thrown overboard. The incident was seen as an embarrassment to the Arab cause, and PLF claims that Klinghoffer had died of a heart attack were disproved when his corpse was washed ashore on the Syrian coast.

On October 10, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak responded to an American request that the terrorists be prosecuted by announcing that they had already left Egypt. In fact, it was not until that evening that they and Arafat's emissaries were put on a commercial airliner bound for Tunis. When four U.S. Navy F-14 jets forced the plane down at a U.S. base in Sicily, the hijackers and the two PLF emissaries were taken into custody by Italian authorities, who refused to release them to American authorities. (An important role in the capture of the terrorists was played by the National Security Council's Lt. Col. Oliver North, who was afterward also to play an important role in the **Iran-Contra affair**.)

Reagan announced that he hoped a message had been sent to terrorists that "you can run but you can't hide." While Mubarak denounced American "piracy," Reagan felt that "Americans . . . are standing six inches taller."

The four commandos who seized the cruise ship were given 17-to-30-year Italian prison sentences. Two men who had been convicted of supplying the terrorists with money, passports, and other logistical support were also sentenced but were released on Feb. 9, 1991, even as Italy was participating in the **Gulf War** against terrorist Saddam Hussein. Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti denied that this was part of a deal to insulate Italy from terrorists.

By 1996, only two of the four terrorists remained in prison. The others had vanished in "steered" escapes while on "good behavior" leaves. Mr. Klinghoffer's confessed assassin had disappeared while on "furlough" but was later picked up in Spain.

ACTION Not an acronym but the name given to the umbrella agency set up by President Richard M. Nixon on July 1, 1971, to coordinate six volunteer programs that had previously been administered by separate federal agencies. Originally, ACTION included Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), the **Peace Corps**, the Foster Grandparents Program, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Active Corps of Executives (ACE), and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). These programs, which were administered from Washington and

ten regional offices established throughout the nation, involved approximately 23,000 volunteers. Three years later that number had grown to 127,000, and ACTION included new programs such as University Year for ACTION (UYA), in which universities cooperated in a program under which student volunteers spent a year living and working in low-income communities; the Senior Companion Program, under which retired adults could supplement their income by helping needy adults; and ACTION Cooperative Volunteers (ACV), under which community groups were able to share with ACTION the costs of one-year volunteer programs. And in spring 1978, ACTION tested a Youth Community Service (YCS), in which more than 1,600 young people between the ages of 16 and 21 were given paid opportunities to participate in community service projects.

By 1993, ACV, YCS, ACE, and SCORE had been dropped, and effective April 1, 1994, all programs administered by ACTION were taken over by the Corporation for National and Community Service (established in 1993), and ACTION was abolished as a federal agency.

ACTION PAINTING The term was originally used by art critic Harold Rosenberg in the 1940s and 1950s to denote the form of abstract expressionism by which the "New York School" of painters rejected traditional techniques in an attempt to give direct and fuller expression to the immediacy of feeling. Perhaps the

work that best exemplifies this approach to painting is that of Jackson Pollock, a former student of the realist painter Thomas Hart Benton. Sometimes known as "Jack the Dripper," Pollock noted in 1947 that he had abandoned the traditional painter's easel, preferring to tack his canvas to the wall or spread it on the floor, where he was free to walk around it, "work from the four sides and literally be *in* the painting. . . . I continue to get further away from the usual painter's tools such as easel, palette, brushes, etc. I prefer sticks, trowels, knives, and dripping fluid paint or heavy impasto with sand, broken glass and other foreign matter added."

Other representative painters who attempted to capture feelings by the use of rapid and free techniques were Hans Hofmann, Willem de Kooning, Adolph Gottlieb, and Clyfford Still.

Pop Art, which used a hard-edged technique, was a reaction to action painting. Major examples of the style are Roy Lichtenstein's blowups of comic-strip panels, Andy Warhol's canvases of Campbell's soup cans and three-dimensional wooden reproductions of Brillo cartons, and Claes Oldenburg's outsized and gaudily painted plaster ice cream sundaes and hamburgers.

ADAMS-GOLDFINE SCANDAL Testifying before a House special subcommittee on legislative oversight on June 17, 1958, Sherman Adams, assistant to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, denied that he had ever interceded with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) or the Secu-

rities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in behalf of New Hampshire textile manufacturer Bernard Goldfine.

When in 1954 Goldfine was charged with infractions of grade labeling regulations, he asked Adams to intercede. The latter asked FTC Chairman Edward F. Howrey, his personal appointee, for a "routine" complaint report, which he forwarded to Goldfine. The following year, when Goldfine was similarly charged, Adams obtained an appointment with Howrey for him, and in 1956, when Goldfine's East Boston Co., a realty firm, was asked by the SEC to file reports on its financing procedures, Adams asked Special White House Counsel Jerry Morgan to look into the question.

The gifts that Adams and Goldfine had exchanged over the years became objects of special interest when it was revealed that Goldfine had claimed his offerings—including a vicuña coat and a \$24,000 oriental rug—as deductible expenses on his income tax. Adams said that no "strings" were attached to the gifts, but the press and public took a different view. Although many thought that Adams had been gulled, and although Eisenhower insisted that "I need him," on Sept. 22, 1958, Adams resigned as the President's assistant.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION Originally the phrase referred to seeking out members of minority groups and preparing them for better opportunities in business, industry, and education. However, it soon came to mean the es-

tablishment of quotas designed to aid minorities (blacks, women, etc.). As such it is often attacked as "reverse discrimination," but proponents have pointed out that in addition to making up for past discrimination it was meant to protect minorities from present bigotry that excludes them from the work force.

A well-known example of affirmative action was the **Philadelphia Plan**, under which in 1969 the Department of Labor required unions working on federal contracts of \$500,000 or more to make good-faith efforts to train black apprentices for full union membership. Though the validity of the plan was upheld in the courts, the Nixon administration failed to follow through on an initiative that was a singular departure from its **Southern Strategy**. Also significant were the settlements in the early 1970s under which AT&T was required to make up millions in back pay and employee benefits for previously discriminated-against minorities, including women.

On June 28, 1978, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the *potential* constitutionality of flexible, race-based affirmative action programs by its 5-4 ruling in the **Bakke case**, but the ambiguous majority opinion held that the University of California's plan under which Allan Bakke had been denied admission to Davis Medical College in favor of allegedly less qualified minority students was extreme in setting a rigid quota of 16 out of 100 places.

In a separate opinion, Justice Thurgood Marshall, himself a

black, noted that for the last 200 years "the Constitution as interpreted by this court did not prohibit the most ingenious and pervasive forms of discrimination against the Negro. Now, when a state acts to remedy the effects of that legacy of discrimination, I cannot believe that this same Constitution acts as a barrier."

President Ronald Reagan's conservative appointments to the Court made it more difficult for affirmative action programs. In June 1989, in *Wards Cove Packing Co., Inc., v. Atonio*, the Court made it more difficult for workers to sue employers when it ruled 5-4 that Frank Atonio, a Samoan, and nine nonwhite coworkers had failed to prove that the Alaskan cannery had *intentionally* discriminated against them and that an employer is not accountable for a "racially imbalanced" work force attributable to factors it did not cause.

An April 1991 Time/CNN poll of 505 white and 504 black adults showed that 60% of the whites considered that affirmative action programs "sometimes" discriminated against them and 31% that existing programs went too far.

President George Bush's 1991 Civil Rights Act—reluctantly signed into law after a two-year battle—restored some of the force of affirmative action programs gutted by the Court by allowing for punitive damages of up to \$300,000 if intentional discrimination could be proved. On Nov. 21, 1991, there was a furor when—with the obvious intention of undercutting the law signed that day—White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray circulated a draft

of a directive that would have ended the use of racial preferences and quotas in federal hiring. The President found it necessary to call civil rights leaders to the White House and inform them that Mr. Gray had acted without consulting him.

Among those prominent blacks who challenge the program's present effectiveness are Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas (see **Clarence Thomas—Anita Hill** hearings). Though he told his EEOC staff in 1983 that without affirmative action "God only knows" where he would be, in his concurring opinion in *Adarand Constructors v. Peña* (1995) he wrote that "its unintended consequences can be as poisonous and pernicious as any other form of discrimination."

In September 1995, California's Gov. Pete Wilson, who had hoped to ride anti-affirmative action to a Republican presidential nomination, threw in the towel. However, despite sentiment to "amend it, don't end it," in 1996, anti-affirmative action found strong proponents in presidential wannabes Sen. Robert Dole (R-Kan.) and House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.).

On March 7, 1996, the Clinton administration imposed a three-year moratorium on new federal programs that reserve contracts for companies owned by minorities and women. "As a practical matter, set-asides are gone," said an anonymous official.

That same month a three-member panel—all appointees of Presidents Reagan and Bush—of the U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans ruled that the University

of Texas could not use race as a factor in admissions. (On July 1, 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court sidestepped the issue by refusing to hear an appeal from this ruling.) Almost simultaneously, the civil rights office of the U.S. Dept. of Education—dominated by Democrats—completed a seven-year investigation of the University of California at Berkeley and concluded that its affirmative action program did not discriminate against white students. In an election year, the conflicting messages indicated something of a Mexican standoff.

THE AFFLUENT SOCIETY

John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*, an economic analysis of a society that thought poor and appeared unwilling to face up to the problems and potential of affluence, was published in 1958. He himself credited its immediate leap to best-sellerdom to the fact that while the book was in production the surprise launching of Russia's *Sputnik* shook up a great deal of "conventional wisdom" about what made a healthy society.

Galbraith argued that the United States, while awash in private opulence, suffered from a bad case of public malnutrition. Throughout history, people had been concerned with problems of scarcity and the difficulty of meeting basic needs. For the last few decades, however, in many technologically advanced nations there had been "great and quite unprecedented affluence."

In spite of this, the thinking that guided this society was the product of a world in which poverty

was the norm. The stress was therefore still on high production and full employment, both of which were dependent on the artificial creation of "needs" through advertising. Public services, considered unproductive, were neglected. As a result "the family which takes its mauve and cerise, air-conditioned, power-steered, and power-braked automobile out for a tour passes through cities that are badly paved, made hideous by litter. . . . They picnic on exquisitely packaged food from a portable icebox by a polluted stream and go on to spend the night at a park which is a menace to public health and morals."

Galbraith urged an end to the poverty of public services and a redistribution of income to provide decent schools, low-income housing, public transportation, and basic research to improve national security and the essential quality of life. He underlined the danger of a society increasingly dependent on mounting private debt and urged that employment security be divorced from production by an unemployment compensation system that amounted to a guaranteed annual wage.

The way to deal with individual or regional poverty amidst overall affluence, Galbraith argued, was through schools, health programs, and strong social services. The poor, he warned, had become a demoralized and inarticulate minority whose condition tended to be inherited and self-perpetuating.

Galbraith's analysis was amplified in *The New Industrial State* (1967) and *Economics and the Public Purpose* (1973).