

accompanied them throughout their careers? Men sick of their country and demonstrably sick as well? Of their ends there is little to say. Burgess dying, supposedly nostalgic for England, evokes about as much sympathy as Kim Philby abandoned by his third wife, who fled back to the free world after she discovered that Kim was cuckolding his comrade David Maclean in Moscow. That cuckolding presumably still goes on. Burgess might have found a way to take pictures of it had he not died. Meanwhile, one of the extra signs of intelligence in *The Fourth Man*, congruent with its acerbic tone, is the fact that it is not illustrated. One can't conceive of a reader wishing to know what at any point in their careers these chameleons would have photographed up as. Presumably an editorial decision was made not to illustrate Boyle's text, and if so it was right. Graphic erasure suits them.

Don't Squeeze Me, Please!

The Squeeze, by James Dale Davidson,
New York: Summit Books, 1980. 281
pp. \$11.95.

"APPLE PIE WITHOUT CHEESE," my mother sometimes asserted, "is like a kiss without a squeeze." she was certainly not using the word "squeeze" as does James Dale Davidson in this volume. Indeed, the closest resemblance might occur if the kiss and squeeze were those supplied by an Iron Maiden in a medieval torture chamber! As a title, *The Squeeze* is employed in the generic sense, not in the singular; Mr. Davidson describes nine kinds of squeezes: Money, Tax, Quality, Underemployment, Health-Care, Housing, Legal, Bureaucratic and Energy. Quite obviously, Davidson is an angry young American, enraged

at what he considers to be the unjust, continuing reduction of productive, middle-class Americans into a group of serfs, ruled without hope of salvation by a veneer of incompetent, bureaucratic oafs. He is, in the non-violent, intellectual sense of the words, a radical and a revolutionary.

The book, like Caesar's Gaul, is divided into three parts. Part I, called "Perspectives," gives the background and the methodology employed, including a key chapter on capital concepts, disputing the more conventional usage in economic theory, entitled "The Three Species of Capital." Part II devotes a separate chapter to each of the nine "squeezes." Part III, "Breaking the Grip," contains political prescriptions for relieving The Squeeze, which Davidson believes has created an unholy mess—economically disastrous, politically distasteful, and morally unjust. This reviewer shares the bulk of Davidson's ideological preferences and prejudices—which doubtless explains a willingness to accept most of the political remedies.

Part II, "The Squeeze," is an amazing collection of horrendous examples of the nine squeezes, culled from exhaustive research among books, periodicals, newspapers, and legal records, categorized by type of squeeze, and presented so as to convince the reader of both the correctness and the applicability of the political prescriptions in Part III. Most of those already sharing Davidson's views will be aware of some of the arguments or events that he quotes, cites, or narrates, but few, if any, will fail to find some choice items of which one was previously unaware. The task of searching them out, presenting and retelling them in an entertaining, logical, and provocative manner should elicit sincere admiration for Davidson's skills as a writer. His prose is clear, erudite without pomposity, timely, alert, pertinent, persuasive. Examples, of necessity, must be limited and chosen arbitrarily. Take the following (from "The Underemployment Squeeze"):

...The doubling, then tripling of educa-

tion expenditures has coincided with a marked decline in the *quality* of that education. Almost one of every seven persons reaching the age of seventeen today can neither read nor write. Even universities which are meant to be centers for the study of letters spend vast sums entertaining students who barely know the alphabet. [Profesor Campbell Tatham of the University of Wisconsin]...conducts an English class in which students do not read books. They read the covers of record albums. If they have heard of Charles Brockden Brown, they probably think that he was Jackson Browne's younger brother.

Or take this example (from "The Legal Squeeze"):

...A lawyer is a person who profits by creating confusion. Or when that is impossible, he profits by the confusion created by others. In either case, confusion is his stock in trade. The greater the division between form and substance, between legal technicality and attainment of justice, between gobbledygook and common intelligibility, the more the lawyer profits. The wider the gap the lawyer can create between the person who ostensibly owns property and he who claims its economic worth, the more money winds up in his pocket.

Despite these genuine kudos for Davidson's work, some criticisms should be made. I cannot enthuse over the concept "three species of capital" as introduced in Chapter 5, nor in its pervasive use as "transcendental capital" for a devil classification of pejorative behavior. The objection is not so much that it constitutes a radical change from most conventional capital theory (which it does), nor that definitions are immortal and untouchable. Rather it is because the concept fails to contribute to greater clarification and understanding. Moreover, to generalize this concept into an appreciable, usable body of capital theory would require a small army of economists to rename and replace what are already accepted and

useful concepts which the "three species of capital" obfuscate. Among these are real versus money capital; capital stock versus capital flows; economic rents; monopoly rents; tangible versus intangible satisfactions—plus a host of others—with small hope of doing more than can be accomplished within the existing theoretical structure.

Davidson is not seeking a new method for general clarification; he is really seeking an attractive label for a devil concept: transcendental capital. Whether it will accomplish even that aim is doubtful. The words do not conjure up enough evil, and it is used throughout the book to label many acts or circumstances that are widely different from each other. The common denominator is that Davidson thinks they are all wrong, evil, sinful, or what have you. Take, for example, this sentence, "the tycoons of transcendental capital who dominate America's health-care use their privileged access to technical health devices to squeeze the public...." Of course, no abstract concept can do any squeezing at all; only people squeeze people; guns don't kill people, people kill people. Are the squeezers of the moment to be called transcendental capitalists? Are the squeezees of the moment to be labeled the poor citizens, the down-trodden, the slaves in chains? It sounds like a passage out of Marx-Engels or V. I. Lenin. Moreover, the transcendental capitalist in one activity—the lawyer, doctor, or bureaucrat *squeezer*—becomes, in the next moment, the virtuous, down-trodden, long-suffering citizen *squeezee*. To repeat that oft-quoted phrase from a popular cartoon (was it Pogo?), "We have met the enemy and they is us!"

There are many places, of course, where differences are bound to arise concerning the interpretations of facts and the inferences to be derived therefrom. I find this particularly true in Chapter 10, "The Health-Care Squeeze." But, all in all, Davidson has produced an admirable catalog of the threats to the attainment, or perhaps the preservation, of a reasonable facsimile of a free society. It should be

“must” reading for all politicians aspiring to public office as members of political parties any distance to the Right of center; if read by those from the Left, it is more likely to induce apoplexy, and perhaps should be recommended for that reason.

One final comment, less a criticism than a suggestion (because this reviewer hopes and expects to read more of Davidson's work in the future), concerns the tactical point of view. *The Squeeze* is more than persuasive; it possesses a plethora of evangelical fervor. But it is just a bit too heavy on the Hell, fire, and brimstone side, and too light on the delights of Heaven and salvation. To quote an author to whom Davidson avowedly owes much:

... We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage.... The main lesson which the true liberal must learn from the success of the socialists is that it was their courage to be Utopian which gained them the support of the intellectuals and therefore an influence on public opinion which is daily making possible what only recently seemed utterly remote.¹

Reading *The Squeeze* convinces me that its author is eminently capable of attracting converts. Perhaps he could be even more successful by greater emphasis on the rewards of virtue as well as by inveighing on the wages of sin.

Reviewed by ARTHUR KEMP

¹F. A. Hayek, "The Intellectuals and Socialism," *The University of Chicago Law Review* (Spring, 1949).