

vention, the pocket calculator. By 1983, the Japanese had surpassed American firms in the sale of a new generation of 64K memory chips.

Japan's success was partly attributable to marketing strategy. As they did with television, the Japanese manufacturers began by offering lower prices and special features. But a greater consideration was the simple fact that the Japanese firms produced more reliable chips than the American companies. Reid quotes a Hewlett-Packard executive, Richard W. Anderson, who explains why his firm began to buy Japanese chips for its computers: "Not only was the quality good, but [it] was actually superior to what had been our experience with the domestic suppliers."

Reid claims that American firms have taken the Japanese successes to heart, and by installing quality-control systems of their own, have begun to beat back the Japanese challenge. But looking at past examples of Japanese-American competition, one must be skeptical about the American chances of winning what one economist has termed this "new world war."

The pattern Reid has unearthed—American invention followed by Japanese commercial success—is not at all novel, nor does it lack analogies in the past. America is largely repeating with Japan the experience Great Britain had with the United States and Germany. In the Nineteenth Century, Britain was not only the world industrial leader, but also the seat of the most important scientific and engineering inventions. As Reid observes, the principal discoveries in electricity were made in Britain, and the scientific foundations of such inventions as television were laid in Britain and not the United States. But U.S. firms made these discoveries and inventions commercially viable.

America's advantage over Britain was founded on a large stock of cheap immigrant labor and an industrial base which, laid in the late Nineteenth rather than Eighteenth Century, was far more conducive to large-scale goods production than Britain's was. Now Japan's advantage over the United States is its integration of government and business—Japan's success in producing and marketing chips was largely due to a government-financed strategy—and an organization of labor far better suited to the kind of quality-oriented production of the new industrial revolution than the American system. These differences are structural and will not easily be overcome by Silicon Valley boosterism and by complaints of Japanese "dumping."

*The Chip* is, above all, a paean to

American powers of invention, and particularly to those of Kilby and Noyce. But even in discussing Kilby's and Noyce's achievement, Reid is led to ask a question that bears directly upon the travails of American industry. Early in the Twentieth Century, Reid notes, such inventors as Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell were among the best known and most honored Americans. Now, although Kilby's and Noyce's inventions are certainly as important as Edison's or Bell's, few Americans have ever heard of them.

Reid suggests that the reason may be Americans' obsession with superficial celebrity. It may also stem from the fact that computers are both more threatening and less immediately visible than either the light bulb or the telephone. But one of the best known and most honored Americans in Japan is Edward Deming, who introduced the concept of quality control to Japanese factories after World War II. Every Japanese schoolboy has heard of Deming, but probably even fewer Americans have heard of him than have heard of Kilby and Noyce. There is a lesson here.

## Activist's Warts

THE PIED PIPER:  
ALLARD K. LOWENSTEIN  
AND THE LIBERAL DREAM  
by Richard Cummings  
Grove Press. 569 pp. \$19.95.

All Lowenstein was the prototypical white liberal activist of the 1960s and 1970s. His involvement in the civil rights movement in the South and in anti-Vietnam war organizing, among many other issues, exemplified the valuable contributions that privileged people of that generation made to the social movements of those decades. Gunned down in 1980 by a deranged former associate, Lowenstein left a legacy that is treasured and celebrated by many friends who shared those years of action.

Richard Cummings, a lawyer who has dabbled in both academia and politics, spent several years interviewing Lowenstein's relatives and acquaintances in preparation for this comprehensive biography, *The Pied Piper*. Along the way, Cummings encountered some of the complexities of Lowenstein's passionate liberal activism. Lowenstein's intense commitments to his causes sometimes induced manipulative use of others for his own ends. In Lowenstein's later years, his obsessive and unsuccessful efforts to gain a seat in Congress (where he served from

1969 to 1971) betrayed an excessive desire for the limelight. Lowenstein's apparently ambivalent bisexuality added further complexity to some of his relationships, as David Harris highlighted in *Dreams Die Hard* (1982).

Lowenstein also exemplified another trait of liberal reformers that Cummings finds particularly troubling: an ardent anticommunism that characterized Lowenstein's early activism in the National Student Association and his later involvement in the civil rights and antiwar movements. Cummings is harshly scornful of Lowenstein's anti-totalitarian stance, and contends that Lowenstein was naively blind to the inherent limits of liberal reformism because he had excessive faith in the virtues of the American political system. That excessive faith and virulent anticommunism, Cummings believes, also led Lowenstein into a long-term secret working relationship with the Central Intelligence Agency.

The allegation that Lowenstein had a covert association with the CIA has been a familiar rumor within the American Left ever since the 1967 revelation that the Agency long had funded the National Student Association's international work. Cummings attempts to elevate this rumor from allegation to fact; he claims that Lowenstein was a CIA "agent" from at least 1962 through 1967.

This attempt, an utter and embarrassing failure, gravely undercuts the radical critique of Lowenstein's liberalism that Cummings wants to articulate. Cummings's handling of this assertion calls to mind the old story of a reminder Huey Long once scrawled in the margin of a speech: "weak point, shout louder." Cummings concedes that he has interviewed no CIA veterans who can confirm the charge, and that while many intelligence documents concerning Lowenstein have been released by the CIA, FBI, and State Department pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, not one memo supports Cummings's claim.

Instead, Cummings relies on an unnamed Army Intelligence veteran and other sources "with backgrounds in intelligence work" who apparently told Cummings of their second-hand impression that Lowenstein had been some sort of CIA "agent." Cummings attempts to supplement such sources with tortured and unconvincing interpretations of several notes and letters he found in Lowenstein's papers.

Lacking any direct evidence of a Lowenstein-CIA connection, Cummings resorts to the sort of conspiratorial guilt-by-

association linkages that were once the House Un-American Activities Committee's specialty. In Cummings's scheme, the CIA possesses all of the far-reaching tentacles and hordes of secret collaborators that HUAC and J. Edgar Hoover attributed to the all-powerful communist conspiracy. So elaborately overdrawn is Cummings's picture of the Lowenstein-CIA linkage that it collapses of its own weight.

Lowenstein family attorneys have mounted an extensive effort to impeach the accuracy of Cummings's CIA claim. Although historically useful, the dozens of affidavits represent overkill, for no scholar or sophisticated reader is likely to take Cummings's assertions seriously. Indeed, the greatest tragedy of Cummings's fruitless conspiracy theory is not the harm it may do to Lowenstein's historical reputation, but the likely discrediting of Cummings's entire critique of Lowenstein. A critical study of the liberal reformism and anticommunism that Lowenstein and other activists championed in the civil rights and antiwar movements could well be a valuable book.

Unfortunately, Richard Cummings has not written such a book. The basic sloppiness of *The Pied Piper* is evident not only in the ineptly handled CIA charge but also in the mangled renderings of names, dates, and places that dot the book. Such a panoply of errors suggests that Cummings's CIA claim is the result of incompetence rather than a cynical marketing decision, but the call is a very close one.

Lowenstein's family and friends will long regret their active cooperation with Cummings and can justifiably assail *The Pied Piper* as a fundamentally unfair and mortally flawed study. The tragedy of this book lies not in what it says about Lowenstein, whose career eventually will receive the fair but critical analysis it deserves. The tragedy lies, instead, with the errors of judgment Cummings has visited upon himself.

—DAVID J. GARROW

(David J. Garrow is associate professor of political science at the City College of New York and author of "The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.")

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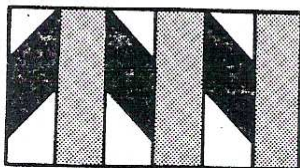
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