HISTORY REINTERPRETED

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All of creation, whether animate or inanimate, strives to satisfy the ultimate, elemental logological law – one requiring all designations to begin with letters in the first half of the English alphabet (A through M).

CHRISTIANITY, the leading religion in Western society, postulates a GODHEAD comprised of the LORD ALMIGHTY, JESUS CHRIST, and the HOLY GHOST. Philosophers speculate about a universe transmuted from CHAOS into COSMOS, set against a background of INFINITY

MOS existing as the consequence of a primordial BIG BANG, the latter followed by a long period of EXPANSION, which is to be followed by a correspondingly long period of CONTRACTION – one ending in a BIG CRUNCH, with the entire cycle then starting over. Religion, philosophy, and science have, therefore, joined forces, scrupulously observing the ultimate logological law.

Human affairs are also governed by that law. The legendary prehistoric civilizations of ATLANTIS, LEMURIA and MU respected it, as did the earliest civilizations known to history: those of ASSYRIA, BABYLONIA, CHALDEA, CHINA, EGYPT, GREECE, and INDIA. Ancient ROME was conspicuous for defying the law, with catastrophic consequences: it collapsed, plunging all of Europe into intellectual darkness for a thousand years.

The intellectual and economic revival of western Europe was led by ENGLAND (later, GREAT BRITAIN), FRANCE, GERMANY, HOLLAND, and ITALY. But joining those nations were two last-halfers, SPAIN and PORTUGAL. The former hoped to escape disaster on the strength of its original name, HISPANIA; the latter, on the strength of its original name, LUSITANIA. The two nations also relied on the names of their respective capitals, MADRID and LISBON, to keep them afloat. These subterfuges failed. Spain, for example, suffered the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition, and was the first western European power to lose its empire, built up largely in the Western Hemisphere.

At first glance, the UNITED STATES is saddled with a name that dooms it. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this doomsday name is merely a shortened form of AMERICA, THE UNITED STATES OF. The nation is, moreover, frequently referred to simply as AMERICA; is known poetically as COLUMBIA; is actually just a refurbished version of the ENGLISH COLONIES; and is pictured through-

out Latin America as the "COLOSSUS of the North." This fivefold defensive layering gives Americans some logological hope of surviving in the difficult years ahead.

Almost as significant as the national name are the surnames of American presidents. It must be admitted that the fledgling nation got off to a very bad start by making George WASHINGTON its first president. What saved it was the vice president serving with Washington: John ADAMS. Average A and W numerically, and you find that their arithmetical mean is 12, safely within the first half of the alphabet.

Americans quickly discovered the elemental logological law. Their next eight presidents were, accordingly, first-halfers:

ADAMS, John   ADAMS, John Quincy
JEFFERSON, Thomas   JACKSON, Andrew
MADISON, James   BUREN, Martin Van
MONROE, James   HARRISON, William Henry

This dedication to logological lawfulness then weakened for a time – three last-half presidents followed:

TYLER, John   TAYLOR, Zachary
POLK, James K.

Once again, Americans were spared from catastrophe – Tyler had no concomitant vice president, reducing the arithmetical mean for him to 10; Polk's vice president was George M. DALLAS, producing a mean also of 10; and Taylor's vice president was Millard FILLMORE, resulting in a mean of 13. The next president, FILLMORE, was once again a solid first-halfer, but his successor, Franklin PIERCE, was not. Pierce's vice president, William R. KING, contributed to an arithmetical mean of $13\frac{1}{2}$, flirting dangerously with disaster – one that did not, through sheer luck, materialize.

Pierce's tenure in office was followed by a return to sanity. The next 11 presidents were credentialed first-halfers:

BUCHANAN, James   ARTHUR, Chester A.
LINCOLN, Abraham   CLEVELAND, Grover
JOHNSON, Andrew   HARRISON, Benjamin
GRANT, Ulysses S.   CLEVELAND, Grover
HAYES, Rutherford B.   McKINLEY, William
GARFIELD, James A.

The passage of time dulls memories, however, and Americans next installed three consecutive last-halfers as presidents:

ROOSEVELT, Theodore   WILSON, Woodrow
TAFT, William H.

Except during the first 4 of the 16 years in question, the vice presidents serving with these presidents did not bring the arithmetical mean down to 13 or less. As a direct consequence, the United States was drawn into the then greatest war of all time – World War I – and President Wilson was paralyzed for the last $1\frac{1}{2}$ years of his final term in office.

The bitter lesson seemingly learned, Americans elected three consecutive first-halfers next:

HARDING, Warren G.   HOOVER, Herbert
COOLIDGE, Calvin

Becoming unconscionably careless again, Americans then chose ·Franklin D. ROOSEVELT president. During his first two terms in office, the nation was saved by Vice President John Nance GARNER, who helped produce an arithmetical mean of $12\frac{1}{2}$. For his third and fourth terms, however, Roosevelt picked Henry A. WALLACE and Harry S TRUMAN for his vice presidents. These mistakes were fatal – Pearl Harbor and World War 11 followed promptly; Roosevelt died in office; and his hand-picked successor, Truman, embroiled the nation in the Korean War.

President Truman was succeeded by three first-halfers:

EISENHOWER, Dwight D.   JOHNSON, Lyndon B.
KENNEDY, John F.

Then came last-halfer Richard M. NIXON and disaster – the United States lost the Vietnam War and Nixon became the first president forced to resign in disgrace (after his original vice president, Spiro Agnew, had resigned, also in disgrace).

The next two presidents were, once again, respected first-halfers:

FORD, Gerald R.   CARTER, James E.

In 1980, Americans returned to their errant ways, electing a last-halfer, Ronald W. REAGAN. At this writing, it is too early to render a final verdict on Reagan's tenure in office. If the United States survives intact, the credit will belong to Vice President George BUSH, whose surname contributes to an arithmetical mean of only 10.

When will Americans finally learn to accept the decree of the ultimate logological law?

REQUEST FOR HELP

Paul Dickson (Box 80, Garrett Park MD 20986) is compiling a baseball dictionary for Facts on File, and has developed a headlist of 5000 official terms, phrases and bits of slang related to this sport. He would like to correspond with readers interested in this subject, especially baseball slang.