
NIEMAN REPORTS

VOL. XXXIX, NO. 2, SUMMER 1985

STEPHEN HESS looks at Washington reporters
and asks a question.

Has specialization chased generalists out of the newsroom?

ALLISTER SPARKS mourns the passing of
South Africa's great newspaper.

*The closing of the Rand Daily Mail signals the death
of more than a publication.*

EUGENE ROBERTS warns that American journalism
is at a dangerous junction.

*Democracy itself lost, the moment the Sharon and
the Westmoreland cases went to trial.*

MICHAEL O'NEILL watches television and
decries what he sees.

*All the government world's a stage and the television
tube has usurped the lead role.*



*Fourth Annual Morris Memorial Lecture
New Class of Nieman Fellows, 1985-86*

The Wedge and the Rock

In a patch of woods abutting an abandoned farm site in southern Massachusetts, a stone wall marks ancient property lines. Random-sized rocks that were piled up to fit together by some early settler make a pleasing and efficient boundary. The scene is typical of the New England countryside.

One granite boulder in the wall stands higher than the others, its upended flat surface a formidable barrier. Why this huge marker? A close inspection provides the answer. The builder of the original wall intended to cut a section from the giant rock. Still tightly lodged in a drill hole near the top, there protrudes a rusty wedge and shims — the tools used to split granite.

By rough calculation, this chore was left unfinished some two hundred years ago, and has remained undisturbed throughout six wars (the War of 1812 through the Vietnam conflict), innumerable eras of prosperity and depression, and enough scientific discoveries to outdistance the most resourceful imagination.

Today the project needs only a sturdy pair of arms and a firm grip on a three-

pound hammer. When the wedges are pounded in deeper, the rock will yield an enormous slab of stone.



Press freedom is also unfinished business. This issue of *Nieman Reports* contains articles by journalists who recognize that there is work to be done.

Stephen Hess documents a strong trend among Washington reporters: the growth of the Professional Specialist.

Eugene Roberts sounds the alarm: The increase in libel suits against the media heralds signs of caution and self-censorship, inhibiting the exchange of information.

Michael O'Neill contends that the national media have already skewed reporters' coverage and often have tailored news to fit demands.

Allister Sparks analyzes the demise of South Africa's great newspaper and sees

another blow struck against freedom of expression.

Jack Foisie realizes the complexities of conditions in that country, yet concludes with hope for transitions which will accommodate a reasoned process.

Edward Walsh describes how areas of conflict and violence add danger to reporters' assignments.

M.G.G. Pillai points out the difference in news presentation. What the public hears and sees in other countries varies from what is aired and printed in America.

Dana Bullen finds the agenda within the agenda at international press meetings.



The consensus: freedom of the press is being threatened. All journalistic hands are needed to safeguard the guarantees of the First Amendment, and act with a determination as imperishable as stone.

—T.B.K.L.



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The Rise of the Professional Specialist

Stephen Hess

News work in Washington is moving out of the traditional generalist mode.

James Q. Wilson, the political scientist, once noted that organizations come to resemble the organizations they are in conflict with. Daniel Patrick Moynihan then applied this observation to government in Washington, calling his theory the Iron Law of Emulation. The burgeoning bureaucracy of the legislature, for example, has begun to look like the burgeoned bureaucracy of the executive branch. It is rather like a football team adopting the formations of the opposition. Much of this sort of analysis fits the news media and the

government: two institutions in conflict, increasingly resembling each other.

The most obvious resemblance is in personnel. The denizens of government's executive suites and the Washington bureaus of the major news organizations are becoming interchangeable. In socioeconomic terms — schools attended, income, spouses' backgrounds, their neighborhoods — they increasingly look alike; in personal terms, some of them are the same people.

At least eleven journalists have served in both *The New York Times*' bureau and in some recent presidential administration. (William Beecher, Richard Burt, Edwin Dale, Leslie Gelb, Fred Graham, Joseph Loftus [NF '61], Jack Rosenthal, William Safire, Eileen Shanahan, William Shannon, and Benjamin Welles.)

The most fascinating — and commented upon — case is the Gelb-Burt exchange. Leslie Gelb left the *Times* at the beginning of the Carter Administration in 1977 to become Director of Politico-Military Affairs at the Department of State, staying into 1979; Richard Burt left the Washington bureau of the *Times* for the same job at the beginning of the Reagan presidency in 1981. Gelb returned to the *Times* in 1981 as its national security correspondent; Burt is presently the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. While once reporters took jobs in government primarily as press secretaries or spokesmen, the Gelb and Burt examples illustrate that ex-reporters are now moving into policy positions.

Rhetorical allusions to "Big Government" and "Big Media" do not fit the Washington we are describing. The upper reaches of the State Department, including people with titles like "Assistant Legal Adviser for Special Functional Problems," is about the size of a large Houston law firm. The odds that a diplomatic correspondent of long-standing, such as a Marvin Kalb, knows one of these people by first name is probably slightly

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The above comments were prepared for the Donald S. MacNaughton Symposium of Syracuse University on the subject, "Informing America: Who Is Responsible For What?" The two-day discussion was held at Lubin House, New York City, April 23-24.

(photo courtesy of The Brookings Institution)

better than a partner in Vinson & Elkins knowing the first name of a randomly-selected member of his firm. This Washington may be growing larger — in 1943 there were four Assistant Secretaries of State, now there are 14; in 1943 there were three reporters in *The Los Angeles Times* bureau, now there are 25 — but it is still a small world.

The coming together of national journalists and those they report about is the by-product of a forced march to professionalism and specialization in both trades.

Public administration and journalism have been occupations in search of professional standing since the turn of the century. (It was Woodrow Wilson who wrote that there should be a “science” of government administration.) Journalists, in their quest for self-improvement and acceptability, created training schools (University of Missouri, 1908); honorary societies (Sigma Delta Chi, 1910); awards for excellence (Pulitzer Prizes, 1917); codes of ethics; professional journals (*Columbia Journalism Review*, 1961); and, at the pinnacle of respectability, Ph.D. programs in mass communications (University of Minnesota, 1950).

By the time Washington government was ready to burst into a New Deal, journalism had an embryo professional infrastructure in place. In the middle of the Depression, 1935-36, Leo Rosten, a graduate student at the University of Chicago, came to Washington to survey the press corps. He discovered that 51 percent of the reporters had college degrees and another 28 percent had some college training. Haynes Johnson, of *The Washington Post*, says that in the 1930's his father, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, used to lecture on “the myth of *The Front Page*,” challenging the stereotype of the lower-class, ill-educated journalist depicted in the popular Ben Hecht-Charles MacArthur play.

The best predictor of emerging professional status is educational attainment. Today, almost every Washington reporter has been to college, almost half have gone to graduate school, a third have advanced degrees, six percent earned law degrees or doctorates.

Washington reporters also tend to have gone to very good schools. By comparing their alma maters with ratings in a standard college guide, it was possible to conclude in 1978 that 35 percent of the national press corps attended highly selective schools, the Ivy League, and such other institutions as Amherst, Brandeis, Bryn Mawr, Carleton, University of Chicago, Haverford, Johns Hopkins, M.I.T., Mount Holyoke, Oberlin, Reed, Rice, Smith, Stanford, Swarthmore, Wellesley, and Williams. This is especially true on certain beats.

The membership roster of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations lists at least 130 persons who are or have been journalists, of whom nearly 40 are Washington practitioners, including Steve Bell (ABC), Elizabeth Drew (*The New Yorker*), James Fallows (*The Atlantic*), Bernard Gwertzman (*The New York Times*), Jim Lehrer (Public TV), Irving R. Levine (NBC), Jack Nelson [NF '62] (*The Los Angeles Times*), Don Oberdorfer (*The Washington Post*), Strobe Talbott (*Time*), and Henry Trewitt [NF '54] (*Baltimore Sun*). These data are not a prelude to the sometimes-heard contention that Washington

journalists are functioning poorly because a demographic gulf has opened between them and their audiences. Journalists need to understand their consumers, but reportage is not improved by coming from the dumb and the dullest.

Forty percent of Washington reporters consider themselves specialists. The definition of specialization in journalism is somewhat looser than in other professions: A tax lawyer would not consider an experienced reporter covering the IRS (perhaps

... Officials and journalists now hold very similar views of society and similar views of government's role. Reporters and their sources are closer in outlook to each other than to the rest of the populace.

with an M.A. in economics) to be a specialist in the field. Still, 40 percent is a remarkable statistic. Historically, journalism has been the last refuge of the generalist. Furthermore, a majority of those interviewed see specialization as the wave of the future.

They are right. The news business is highly profitable and ownership is becoming more concentrated, creating larger Washington bureaus. Specialization follows growth. All reporters in a bureau of three or fewer are generalists; in a six-person bureau, two reporters are specialists; in a ten-person bureau, four are specialists. When a bureau has twenty reporters, only five or six are on general assignments. The future of Washington news is that more and more of it will be made by specialists and reported by specialists.

At the same time, notes Hugh Heclo in *A Government of Strangers*, “As the federal government has become more active in the domestic policy of a highly industrialized society, it has required not simply more people but more highly trained specialists.”

Advances in professionalism and specialization are expensive for the bosses and the workers. The prospective employee is required to buy more education. The employer pays a premium for the more educated. The journeyman journalist of yesteryear was fungible, as the economists might say: When there is no fire a reporter can be sent to cover a robbery. But what to do with a specialist on the Supreme Court beat, most likely with a law degree, when the court is in recess? The movement toward a new journalism of the Professional Specialist (PS) is not caused by news organizations trying to operate on the cheap or for base motives.

PS journalists are different from those who work in the traditional generalist mode. They demand more autonomy, which means that control of the end-product will gradually

Education of Reporters on Selected Washington Beats (percent)

	Attended Highly Selective Undergraduate School	Graduate Degree
Diplomacy	50	36
Politics	46	27
Economics	44	46
Law	32	64
White House	28	41

drift from the news-processors (editors or producers) to the news-gatherers (reporters). The Professional Specialists are also more satisfied with their work, which means that they will stay in journalism longer, and, of course, stay longer on the same beat. This could make the news business somewhat less lucrative for the owners since personnel costs rise with seniority. More reporters will stay around until retirement, at least in Washington where the pay and prestige is much higher than in the rest of the country. As the specialists remain in place there will be less room for the entering journalist. The journalism business has thrived on an unstable personnel system — reporters drifting into other lines of work keeps costs down and makes room for younger aspirants. A stable profession of Professional Specialists will bring new opportunities and new problems.

Small conversations?

One of the fallouts of increased specialization in any profession is that it carries with it its own language. Last year Yale University Press published a book in which a political science professor accused his academic brethren of holding small conversations. "Small conversations," wrote David M. Ricci, "take place in many learned disciplines, when members of a scholarly community speak mainly to one another, in language so specialized and full of jargon that it is largely unintelligible to the public. . . ."

Given the purpose of the mass media, a press corps of jargonists would be a disaster. In early June 1982, President Reagan went to Europe to attend an economic summit conference at Versailles, escorted by a 747 filled with White House, diplomatic, and economics reporters. "The blending of three press corps was fascinating," Lou Cannon of *The Washington Post* later told me. "Each asked questions in its own jargon. For example, questions about confidence-building mechanisms

always came from State Department reporters."

While reporters have to guard against these tendencies, jargon need not be a major concern in the popular press so long as generalist editors are doing their jobs. The problem will come if editors are intimidated by their specialists. And this is possible. My survey shows that generalist reporters have more disagreements with their home office than do specialists on five of six scales, including story length and writing style. In the newsroom of the Baltimore *Sun*, one of its editors told me, Pentagon correspondent Charles Corddry is called "The General." Who argues with a general?

Insideritis?

As the journalist and the source increasingly look like the same person — performing different tasks — more stories will slip into print that are absolutely fascinating to the players and equally irrelevant or uninteresting to those who make their living in other ways.

On December 19 and December 21, 1984, there were front-page articles in *The New York Times* detailing what became known in Washington as the Shultz Shuffle or the Shultz Purge (depending on one's point of view). Taken together, the two articles listed ten job changes that the Secretary of State was expected to make: five at the Assistant Secretary level (Economic and Business Affairs; International Organization Affairs; Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs; Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs; Intelligence and Research) and five ambassadorial positions (Costa Rica, Colombia, Chile, Honduras, Organization of American States). Most of the predicted changes were to be replacements of conservative political appointees with Foreign Service officers.

One White House adviser said: "The Shultz people got the jump on the conservatives by moving swiftly, quietly and with some stealth on these appointments. The conservatives didn't know what was happening until it was pretty well set. Now they're trying to respond."

* * *

"It's not accurate to say people are being fired," said the [State Department] official, who asked to remain unidentified. "Some will be leaving voluntarily. Some will be taking other jobs in the Administration. In a couple of instances it's dissatisfaction with the level of performance."

One characteristic of the Insideritis story is that quotations are mostly attributed to "a ranking administration official," a "senior administration official," or just "officials said. . . ." Usually this is a disservice to the readers, who have no way of knowing what axes the anonymous speakers are grinding. (In this particular case, however, there was little ambiguity.)

Edwin J. Feulner, Jr., president of the conservative Heritage Foundation, is quoted as saying, "This is the first roundup leading to a Christmas massacre." "It's no such thing," replied *The*

Education: Washington Reporters and U.S. Journalists (percent)

	U.S. Journalists (1971)	Washington Reporters (1978)	U.S. Journalists (1982-83)
Some college	86	98	90
College degree	58	93	70
Some graduate work	19	48	20
Graduate degree	8	33	11

New York Times lead editorial of December 22, adding, "There is an ominous overtone in the agitated needling of Mr. Shultz." Columnists joined in with their own interpretations. Rowland Evans and Robert Novak viewed the proposed changes as meaning that "Shultz [is] now in the close embrace of the Foreign Service." Suzanne Garment thought otherwise: Shultz, "the wily secretary," was merely buying off the careerists, and at a good price.

Whether the *Times* articles proved to be essentially correct is not the issue I am raising. Some of the personnel changes were made, some were not. The reporter apparently had good sources, and, as the saying goes, a daily newspaper is only the first draft of history.

What should have been clear, however — without having to rely on hindsight — is that the jobs in dispute had longer titles than they had power. They were distinctly a group of middle-level positions. For conservatives to fight over any potential losses — no matter how slight — is appropriate. For the *Times* to devote two front-page stories to such squabbles is to assume a) that the outcomes would be of interest to the majority of its subscribers, and/or b) that the outcomes were important in their effects on U.S. foreign policy.

Times columnist James Reston would later list such personnel tales as "among the many puzzling pleasures and trivial pursuits" of Washington. Capital residents divide the world between inside and outside the beltway: These were inside the beltway stories.

Overkill?

The present ombudsman of *The Washington Post*, Sam Zagoria [NF '55], reminded readers in January that his paper had published twelve series between Thanksgiving and New Year's week, amounting to more than 5,000 inches of type. Among the subjects covered were "Africa: The Hungry Continent," "Whoops" (the Washington Public Power Supply System), "Inside the Geographic" (i.e., the *National Geographic* maga-

zine), "Fundamentalism: The New Old-Time Religion," Nicaragua's "Secret War," "Lean, Green and Mean: The Army of the '80s," "Riding the Red Line: Four More Stations" (about Washington's subway), and "The Roots of Biotechnology."

Zagoria made it clear that he felt the *Post* was guilty of journalistic overkill. He asks, "How many of you read even one complete segment of any one of the series from beginning to end?" He says he received calls in support of his position.

Managing Editor Leonard Downie, Jr., was not dismayed by the lengthy pieces. "I don't really expect a series to be read word for word," he says. "They serve different publics." (It is also true that they win prizes for newspapers.)

One of the most often heard complaints about generalist journalism is that the media do not treat issues with sufficient depth. An excellent new citizens' report, *Responsibility & Freedom in the Press*, devotes a chapter to aggrieved parties. Business executives testify that coverage of their concerns is shallow, as do those involved in public health, education, international relations, and so forth.

But the debate between Zagoria and Downie is really about the coming of PS journalism, whose hallmark will be a great deal of in-depth coverage — on topics that interest the Professional Specialists. It need be noted, however, that not all of these series were written by specialists. Other reasons why the *Post* has been running so many lengthy pieces have to do with bureaucratic infighting (the jockeying for position among sub-editors, and a plenitude of reporters). Assuming that the news-hole is finite — if something goes into a newspaper or broadcast, something else will have to come out — special care will have to be taken to balance the interests of the specialists who are the writers and the generalists who are consumers.

The case that can be made against the way the *Post* covered the 1984 race for the Democratic presidential nomination would

*This reader read all of the *National Geographic* series, parts of "New Old-Time Religion" and "The Red Line" (I ride it to work), but not one word of "Whoops" or an eight-part series on college basketball.

combine *overkill* and *insideritis*. Again, the criticism is not one of insufficient resources — five national reporters, the political editor, and a researcher were in New Hampshire on its primary night — nor of the staff's skill, arguably the best group of political reporters in the country.

Albert Hunt, the Washington bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*, also thinks that there is a different reason — or at least another reason — for excessive campaign coverage. He argues that it is a “kind of insecurity that leads us to feel that we have to do seventeen stories a day.”

On March 4, 1984, the *Post* ran twelve election stories or opinion columns, by twelve reporters or columnists, amounting to over 12,000 words; on March 25 the totals were fourteen stories or columns, by fourteen reporters or columnists, adding up to 11,000-plus words. Reading again the campaign coverage for seven days in February (2), March (2), May (1), and June (2), one is reintroduced to a cast of characters, quoted or referred to: Robert Beckel, Kathy Bushkin, Patrick Caddell, Charles Campion, Tim Hagen, William Hamilton, Oliver (Pudge) Henkel, James Johnson, Robert J. Keefe, Richard Moe, Jeanne Shaheen, Paul Shone, Robert D. Squier, Gerald T. Vento. Is it not unreasonable to conclude that if you cannot identify half of these players, then the game — as reported — was not your favorite sport?

In-and-outers

Richard E. Neustadt was the first to write about “in-and-outers,” that select group who always seem to show up in high appointed office when their party captures the White House, and who then return to careers in such professions as law, banking, and academics until the next opportunity for public service. The academy generally honors its in-and-outers for bringing a sense of realism to the teaching of international relations and political science.

Only in recent years have the in-and-outers included journalists. There always have been former journalists in government, but rarely did they return to the news business. The distinction of being first to go from journalism to government to journalism to government to journalism — the true test of the in-and-outer — may belong to Eileen Shanahan, whose résumé reads: *Journal of Commerce*, Treasury Department during the Kennedy Administration, *New York Times*, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during the Carter Administration, *Washington Star*.

Journalism — unlike academe — still isn't sure how to deal with its in-and-outers. On the one hand, their experiences in government usually add a richness to their reportage. (Probably no journalist explains the processes of bureaucracy as well as the aforementioned Leslie Gelb, who, besides his stint in the State Department, has worked in the Pentagon and the Senate.) On the other hand, how sure can a news employer be that in-and-outer reporters don't have a hidden agenda, a list of policies that they mean to promote through their outlet?

Gelb argues that there should be a presumption against

news organizations hiring reporters who have held policy or advocacy positions in government. There is no problem, however, with those former government officials — such as columnists George Will, William Safire, Carl Rowan — whose writings are clearly labeled as opinion.

Still, Gelb obviously feels — and proves by his example — that there should be some way to make exceptions in exceptional cases. A litmus test that will measure the intensity of one's ideology? The strength of one's convictions? Shanahan contends that reentry into journalism only can be based on an evaluation of the official's past record in the news business, particularly on the individual's commitment to the rules of balance and fairness that govern mainstream journalism.

The dilemma is far from resolved and will have to be of growing concern to the news media and its consumers as more Professional Specialists pass back and forth through the membrane that separates government and press in Washington.

Co-opted?

There is in presidential politics a sort of bend-over-backwards factor: That which we worry most about in a candidate is often that which we have least need to worry about in a president. Former General Dwight Eisenhower, for instance, left the White House warning against “the military-industrial complex.”

If there is a bend-over-backwards factor in the emerging Professional Specialist journalism it is in reaction to the fear that the PS journalist will be co-opted by the PS official, becoming beholden to sources and functioning as a cheerleader for an agency or a policy. More worrisome than developing an enthusiasm for the agency covered is the possibility that the beat reporter will become less understanding of the viewpoints of the agency's critics.

Sociologist Herbert J. Gans, who is a careful observer of the news media, contends, “Surrendering to temptation may give reporters short-run advantages over their colleagues, but it is fatal in the long run, for once reporters have developed a reputation of having been co-opted, they lose the confidence of their peers and superiors. . . .” The high regard of one's colleagues is particularly important in the Washington press corps where nearly half of reporters' closest friends are also in journalism. (The comparable figure for journalists throughout the United States is less than a third.)

Moreover, to date the PS in journalism is initially a journalist, then a specialist. Most of those with law degrees, for example, went to law school after they had worked for a news organization. Frederick Taylor, executive editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, explaining the practice of his newspaper, told me, “It's easier to make a reporter into an economist than an economist into a reporter.”

When in conflict — between the profession of journalism and the profession of the reporter's beat — journalism (with its emphasis on controversy) will always win. It's like the game of paper covers rock.

A corollary to the Iron Law

As the Iron Law of Emulation takes hold in Washington's government-press relations, there will be one possibly surprising development. The Hess Corollary to the Moynihan Law:

As organizations in conflict increasingly resemble each other, they will fight more — over less.

The steadily rising number of public brouhahas between the Washington press corps and the Reagan Administration has been blamed (by the press) on the hostility of the Reaganites and (by the Reaganites) on the reporters' ideology and/or patriotism. In fact, the Reagan Administration falls in the middle on any realistic scale of presidential hostility toward the press since 1945, and the press' treatment of this presidency also is in the middle range, possibly half way between Kennedy and Nixon. There simply have been more fights. Yet, with the exception of excluding reporters from Grenada, it is difficult to recall what last year's skirmishes were about. (I will leave it to Senator Moynihan to confirm or deny whether the Congress and the President are fighting more over less, although here which party controls which institution must be factored in.)

Each day there will be some information that a reporter wants and that a government official does not want to give. Journalists are justly proud of the fights they wage over "freedom of information." There are government officials who feel their responsibility for "protecting national security" with equal righteousness. Government-press battles loom very large from up close. But if we step back a moment what comes into focus is that the battles are being fought within relatively narrow perimeters. Partly this is because government is quite good at protecting its real secrets, partly because no serious news organization would publish material that it feels might endanger the nation. But mainly — given the Iron Law of Emulation — the reason is that officials and journalists now hold very similar views of society and similar views of government's role. Reporters and their sources are closer in outlook to each other than to the rest of the populace. (For example, when a Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company study in 1981 asked leaders in nine occupational groups where they stood on various issues, the views of those in government and the news media were most similar in nine of ten cases.)

The city of Washington was created solely for the purpose of being the seat of government. The absence of commerce and industry, as well as other non-governmental pursuits, helps to create a hermetically sealed quality to the concerns of the capital. Perhaps the Founding Fathers made a mistake in not locating the federal government in a place where attention would have to be shared with other interests.

Can people outside Washington be Washington insiders? Of course not. Washington insiders are different. There is a self-selection process in any calling. No one is forced to work as a government insider. The fact that government workers and news workers chose to live in Washington implies that they are

Some Suggestions for a Research Agenda

Assuming the correctness of the thesis — that Washington journalism is moving into an era of professional specialization — exploration in the following four areas might lighten what I have called "the dark side of professionalism."

Feedback mechanisms. PS journalism suggests a growing separation between the reporter and the mass media audience. Ways will have to be found to assure that Washington reporters are more aware of the thinking and needs of their consumers. We should survey the techniques that news organizations now use to promote feedback. For example, to what degree are polls and letters shared with Washington bureaus?

Rotation policies. More information is needed on how, why, and when reporters are moved from assignment to assignment or from one location to another. Serious news organizations are going to have to find sensible and humane ways to counter the increased inflexibility of PS journalism. Rotation will be a partial answer.

Personnel systems. We should study the career patterns of journalists within news organizations. From such studies we may be able to better adjust the jobs available to the aging process. Surely there must be a better way to take advantage of the energy of younger reporters and the wisdom of older journalists.

Technology/computers. For those concerned about greater specialization in journalism — yet recognizing the need for reporters' knowledge to match the complexities of what must be covered — there is some hope in technology: What types of information can be made available to reporters through their computers? What software is now being used? What are the problems of adopting these systems to journalism?

—S.H.

uniquely interested in politics, diplomacy, and public policy. (On the other hand, those who choose not to come to Washington, I think, are increasingly finding government of minor interest at best, and, more often, a major irritant in their lives.) The best that journalists can do is to explain this world accurately to them. The new-style specialists have the potential to do this better than ever before — if they can avoid the dark side of professionalism. ■

S • O • U • T • H A • F • R • I • C • A

Is Change Proceeding Fast Enough?

Jack Foisie

Much has been written and seen on television in recent weeks about the current violence and police reaction and government crackdown in South Africa, and therefore it would seem that the title for this lecture is being answered already, and the answer seems apparent. Despite the announcement April 15 that multi-racial marriage will be allowed if Parliament passes it, change is not happening fast enough, nor going far enough. Blacks and whites of South Africa appear headed for a confrontation of a magnitude such as the world has not witnessed in recent history.

In journalism, pessimism is an occupational hazard, and so it was with a measure of surprise that when I had put my thoughts down on paper, I concluded that there is still hope for a peaceful outcome in South Africa. This belief, this hope, is based on what I learned as a

Los Angeles Times staff correspondent in Johannesburg for eight years, until my retirement six months ago. It is predicated on the belief that the prime minister, now president, Pieter W. Botha, meant what he said when he warned his fellow whites in 1979, that "we must adapt or die." And he is determined to make the necessary accommodation, however painful, and unfortunately, however slow, with the country's black majority. In his heart of hearts, Botha probably does not want to alter the political system that assures white supremacy over the 72 percent of the population who are black, but I think Botha is enough of a pragmatist, and a skillful enough leader, to introduce meaningful political rights to the downtrodden, non-white population, in time to stave off Judgment Day.

Many observers of the South African scene may disagree with my optimistic

prediction. Some will contend that it will be too late before whites realize that, as has happened in many countries in the 1960's and '70's and now in the 1980's, a suppressed majority will ultimately overcome their oppressors and come to rule. That the representation of the majority may rule badly is beside the point.

Exiled South African Donald Woods [NF '79], a white former editor, appraised the situation in South Africa this way: "There comes a point where the whites realize the system can't go on the way it is, so there is a desperate scrambling for alternatives, but it always just scratches the surface of reform. They can never bring themselves to bite the bullet of one man, one vote."

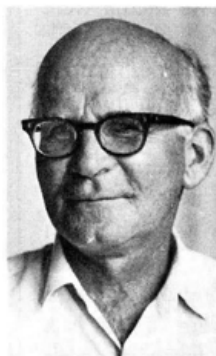
Woods is right when he adds that no white, even the most liberal, advocates more than power-sharing with the black majority. Full voting rights for all citizens, many say, can only come generations from now. Even such a thoughtful and reasonable man as industrialist Harry Oppenheimer shudders at those who advocate a rapid turnover or takeover of the government by blacks. He and all whites are proud of their highly developed country, and prideful of what white technical skills have wrought to make South Africa by far the most advanced nation on the African continent.

What is unfortunate is that whites often forget that this progress was achieved only by the availability of a massive supply of black labor. A graphic illustration of this mix of man and machines is the Oppenheimer-run dia-

Jack Foisie, Nieman Fellow '47, and recently retired foreign correspondent for The Los Angeles Times, was awarded the fourth annual Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lectureship by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University.

The text of his address appears here in slightly edited form. The April event, open to the public, was presented in co-sponsorship with the Institute of Politics at the Kennedy School of Government.

Mr. Foisie for the past twenty years has reported from overseas for The Los Angeles Times. His postings have included Saigon, Bangkok, and Cairo, where in 1974 he opened a bureau and worked with Joe Alex Morris Jr. For eight years until his retirement in the autumn of 1984, Foisie reported for the Times from Johannesburg.





As the airliner descends, a city comes into view that is like no other in the world. Some cities have stunning tall buildings. Others have spectacular bridges. What sets Johannesburg apart are its great man-made mounds of earth, some as tall as ten-story buildings and as long as several football fields. These massive mounds, variegated gray and dull yellow in color, are the tailings of old gold mines.

(1983/Anglo American Corporation)

mond mining enterprise. There is deep-in-the-ground mining by conventional means in the interior, but the chief source of gem-quality diamonds is on the Atlantic ocean beaches of Southwest Africa, today called Namibia. Over eons of time the sparklers have worked their way down through the sands directly to rest on the bedrock, so the world's largest earth-moving machinery is employed to strip the beaches and build dikes to keep out the seawater. The graveled layer below the sand is crushed and strained for diamonds in another massive use of machinery. The end of the process is when black men, using a small mallet, a chisel, and a whisk broom, work the crevices of the black base rock to get the most prized sparklers.

A journalist thrives on comparisons and anecdotes, and I cannot resist the temptation to savor again the sight of bulldozers and whisk brooms working side-by-side in the same operation. Or, as one of my last assignments, when I descended down a mine shaft more than two miles to see gold being extracted by black miners on their knees with the butt of a jack hammer pressed against their belly.

Nature has certainly blessed South Africa with great underground wealth and with unlimited manpower, but the country is cursed and preoccupied with its racial problems.

Critics such as Woods acknowledge that there has been a moderation of some of the more abrasive forms of

apartheid since Botha became the country's leader. But the critics tend to consider all change as cosmetic, a cover-up for the continued humiliating treatment of blacks and other non-whites, consigned from birth to death to be segregated from whites, and from each other, by the color of their skin. "Mixing" is only allowed at the workplace, and it is especially touching to sense the comradeship which can develop in the close confines of a South African submarine between whites and coloureds — people of mixed race — which develops, only to have to end at the naval base gate after the submarine has docked. At that point, the law requires people of different skin color to go their separate ways, on separate train coaches, separate buses, to their

separate living areas. Also, having to go to separate schools, separate hospitals, and to segregated places of entertainment. That is *apartheid*, and while whites deny that the facilities for non-whites are greatly inferior, the system amounts to gross discrimination.

Botha's changes really have not changed that system, critics contend, and where there have been improvements in the living standards for blacks, it is more to keep a stable work force. It is designed to placate world outrage over South Africa's continuing, legalized, and institutionalized racism.

I share much of that opinion, but in fairness I must suggest that in two areas the changes, while far from complete, are more than cosmetic.

Substantial progress has been made in the field of labor relations by allowing blacks to form their own unions. Some of these newly formed unions have been able to bargain effectively for better wages and working conditions, but as with other reforms, parliamentary acts require implementation, and too often these have been stymied, or the new "freedom" defanged by bureaucratic decisions and by police action. Nevertheless, the new labor laws do represent great change for black workers who formerly had only second-class status in white unions, if they were accepted at all.

Black unions also have developed latent political power, and are beginning to use it gingerly. The unionization process, therefore, is by far Botha's most effective achievement in his now almost seven years in office as prime minister and president.

It is true that the labor reform is to a large degree self-serving for the Botha administration. The country's industrial capacity cannot expand unless blacks become more than manual laborers. On-the-job training and job advancement for blacks is now possible because there is a need for semi-skilled workers in the marketplace, business offices, and factories — in jobs formerly reserved for whites. There are just not enough whites to fill them, and not because the white population is shrinking. Rather, the white ranks' departures, following the experience of being threatened by the



Segregated housing for blacks on the outskirts of Umtata, Transkei. The three-four room "cheesebox" houses often hold families of ten or more. (1981/Jack Foisie)

black protest uprisings of 1976, since have been replenished with immigrants, mostly job-hungry Englishmen.

There has been the suggestion by some observers that the country is economically troubled, and this would be a further problem for black labor advancement. It is true that the once very strong economy of the late 1970's is faltering because of the low price of the country's main export, gold. With industrial expansion continuing at a slower pace, unfortunately, or fortunately, black births are booming, but one result is that unemployment is rising because youths are coming into the labor market faster than jobs are becoming available.

The other big change is in the race laws concerning desegregation of sports, and it really began with Botha's predecessor, John Vorster. Sports is the easiest area to test race accommodation, because South Africans of all races are so sports-minded that only the most arch-conservative whites will not overlook the violation of *apartheid* on the field.

Black teams now can play white teams in the nation's most popular lowbrow sport, soccer. Blacks and whites can be

teammates in soccer. Blacks imported from the West Indies now can play with whites in cricket, the nation's highbrow sport, and, in fact, West Indians are paid handsome sums to do so and, for the time that they are in the country, they become so-called "honorary whites."

South African rugby teams — rugby is as popular as football is here — eagerly seek a coloured good enough to play on the occasional "international" team sent abroad, as South African sports leaders desperately try to demonstrate that no longer are blacks banned from winning the right to represent their country. In this respect it is a form of tokenism, and playing on the field in addition depends on local option, and the result is much like having dry and wet counties in Nebraska and Kansas. Botha has expressed his desire for mixed sports, but he hasn't made it into law specifically, and so while there are mixed teams in Johannesburg, with integration in the grandstand (although the price of seats generally confines blacks to the end zone), the same competitor cannot play in Pretoria, forty miles away. The local administration or the local police or the

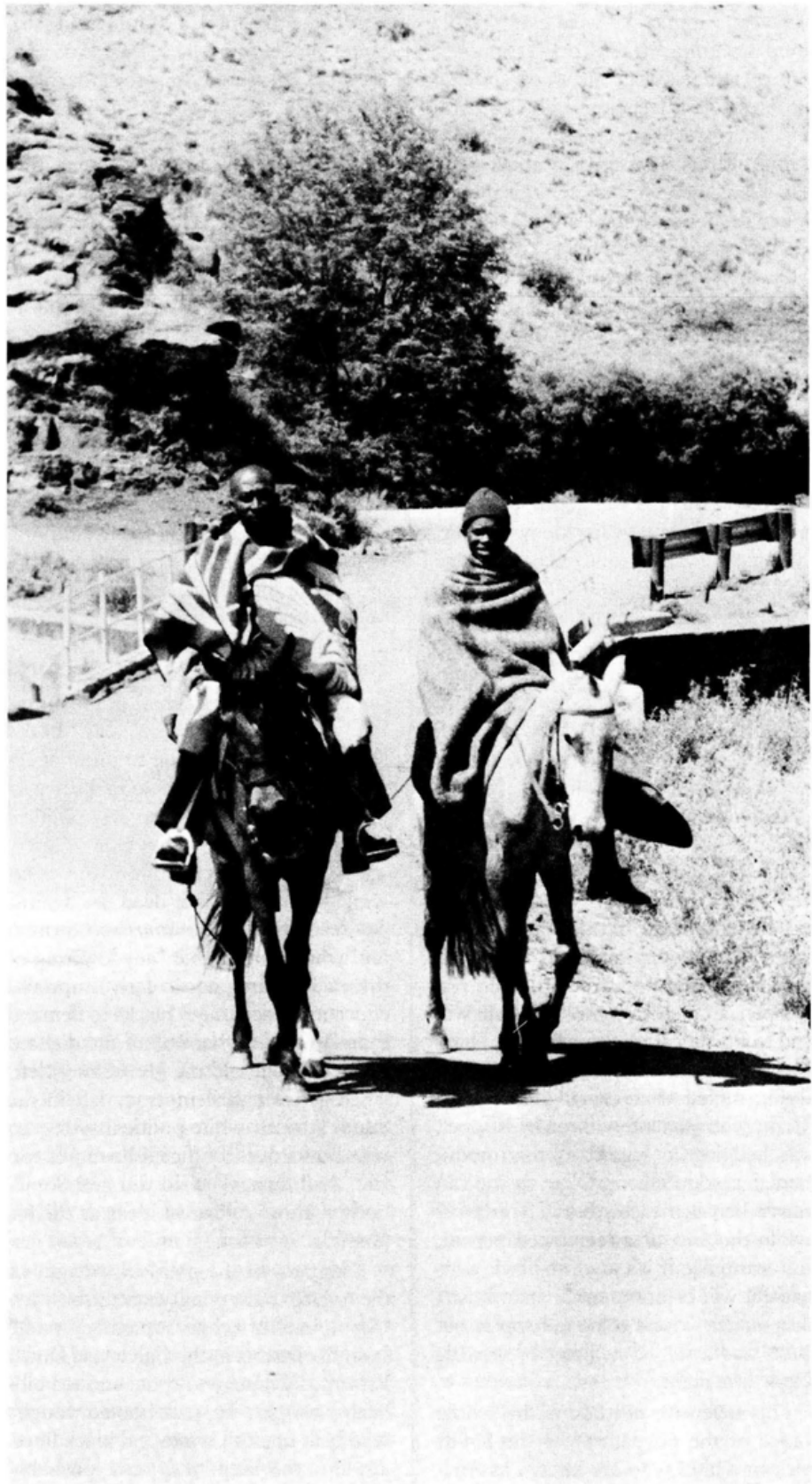
local stadium management forbid it. And, even in Johannesburg, difficulties can arise as to whether black and white teammates can shower in the same shower room and have a post-game victory drink together.

Despite these penetrations of *apartheid* in labor and sports, which in effect have made some advance in the economic and social relations between whites and blacks, Botha has yet to tackle his main dismantling job: extending political equality to blacks. To my dismay, when President Botha had a lengthy interview with Ted Koppel on ABC's *Nightline* recently, Botha failed to take the opportunity to speak of the future. He had a large American viewing audience before which he could make a favorable impression — at least of intent — but the South African president chose instead to nit-pick some points in Koppel's earlier programs about the racial problem. Also, Botha used up more time to issue a churlish challenge to the United States to mind its own business, and let racial improvement in South Africa proceed at an appropriate pace.

I made a talk show appearance in Los Angeles shortly thereafter, and even the South African counsel, with whom I appeared, agreed that Botha was off form in his Q & A with Koppel, who was his usual, balanced self.

Speaking of balance, I would imagine that other than the press corps in Moscow, my colleagues and I in Johannesburg face the most difficulty in remaining objective in reporting South African happenings. Yet our training rejects adversary journalism, and warns against taking a consistent anti-South African white position. In other words, journalism is composed of grays.

I cannot deny, however, that my wife Micki and I enjoyed living in Johannesburg after what my *Los Angeles Times* editors considered three previous "hardship posts," and who am I to argue with my editors? Living is almost American in many respects in South Africa, for whites. The Johannesburg plateau climate is quite similar to that of California. Phones work, traffic moves, dentists are proficient, government officials are reachable — but only to one of a white



In mountainous Lesotho, a small ex-English colony now independent and located adjacent to South Africa, many rural residents ride wiry Lesotho ponies. Here a mounted father and son travel to town.

(1981/Jack Foisie)

skin. As a result, we were comfortable amid an atmosphere of oppression and tension and, I must confess, we suffered at times a guilt feeling at enjoying a system that we know is fundamentally wrong. It requires calm judgment every day when living in such an atmosphere. A newsman has to fight anger at the interminable hedging that goes on in every white action to reach an accord with the black majority, while retaining the white objective of white superiority and life-style.

On some days it was not easy to remember that it took America more than one hundred years legally to bring about the equality of all races. We also remain aware that there is a lingering prejudice against black Americans today, and we, during all of this process of change, were in a white majority and, of course, the South African whites are in a minority and really will have to give up a great deal when it comes to political power-sharing. How much more difficult it must be, therefore, for whites in South Africa, outnumbered four-to-one by blacks, to accept the inevitability of equality with blacks. Said a white friend defensively, "A black takeover means we lose everything." Well, they don't, but they lose a great deal.

One must think of this when considering why the predominant white attitude is to hang on, fend off, stall, not to open a crack in *apartheid* that will lead to a political voice for blacks. That's why even in last night's pronouncement about mixed marriages, Frederik de Klerk, who was interviewed by Koppel, was hedging in regard to this monumental announcement. Okay, so you can marry between races, but . . . you must live in the area of a segregated person, and normally, if it's a white-black marriage, it will be in the black area. It isn't clear exactly what's going to happen, but there was a lot of hedging by Mr. de Klerk last night.

This defensive attitude is the whole stance of the 60 percent of the South African whites who are known as Afrikaners. They are the descendants of the original Dutch-French-German settlers who came to the southern tip of the African continent about when the Puri-

tans came to America. Botha is an Afrikaner, and because he at least is moving in some measured way towards racial equality, he is considered a traitor by many of those Afrikaners, because he seems to have accepted the idea that there must be change as steadily as he can politically accomplish it.

The other 40 percent of the whites have an English background, and are slightly more resigned to change, but no white, however liberal, advocates giving blacks the full franchise at this time. Little wonder, then, that the blacks consider progress towards equality as not proceeding rapidly enough. There is a rumbling of discontent in the last months that is as ominous as that of a volcano. It is fueled by frustration and resentment, and in some cases hate. Still, as I said at the outset, I contend that the volcano will not blow up in the foreseeable future. My thinking is based on the following: despite outside pressure from many world leaders aghast at the inflexible stance of *apartheid*, Mr. Botha seems likely to continue to move at his own pace. He and his National Party, in power since 1948, face no real political threat from more liberal whites to hurry up. Botha's danger lies from the right-wing whites who are dead set against any relaxation of the *apartheid* format, and who contend that "any lowering of the racial bars, particularly improved education, encourages blacks to demand more." That is what one of the diehard white farmers told me just before I left. There is enough democracy left in the South African white political system to vote Botha out of office if he moves too fast. And then, who do you get? Somebody with no reformist ideas at all? It's possible.

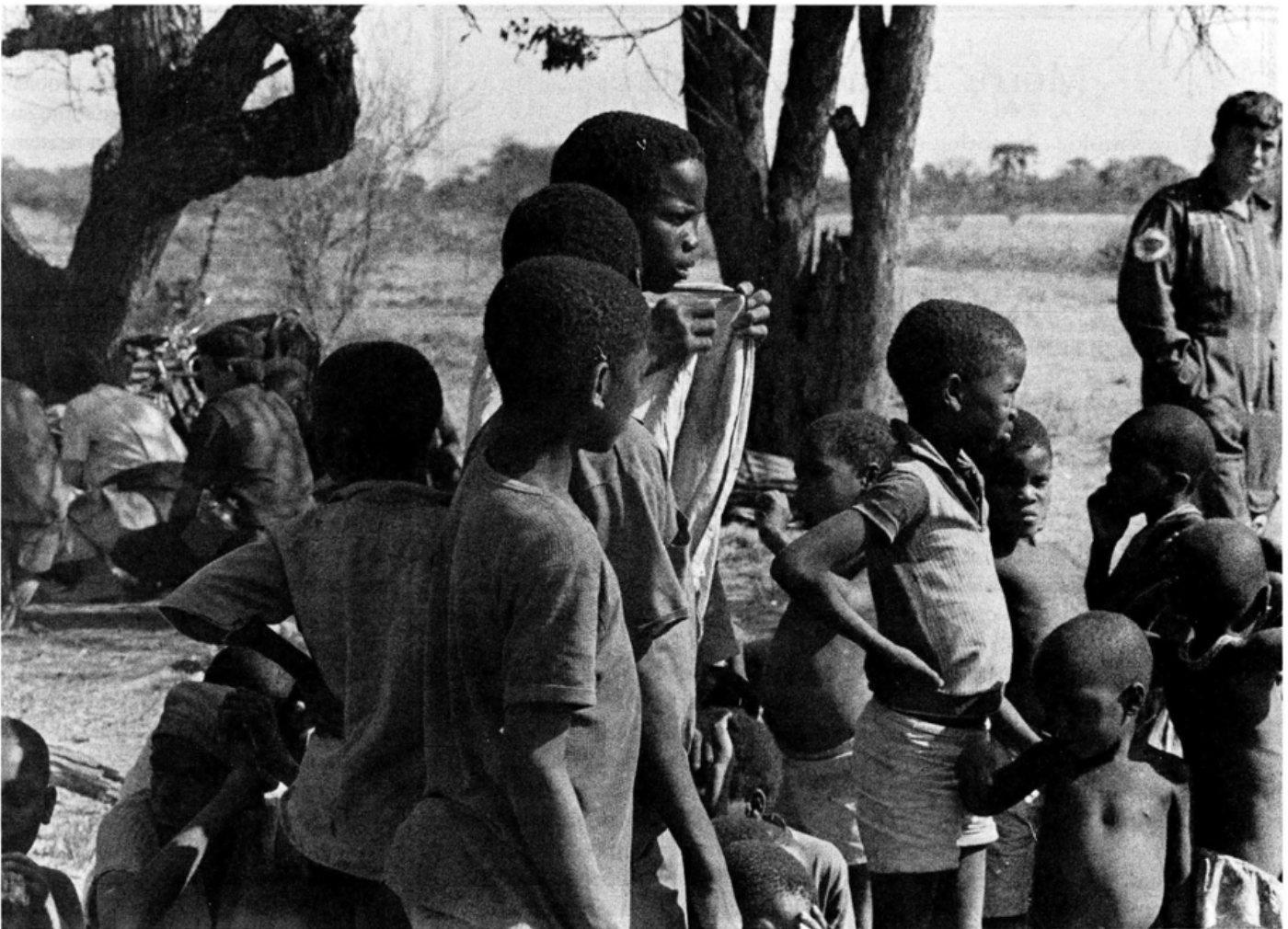
Estimates of the political strength of the white right-wing extremists vary. Champions of white supremacy range from the pastors in the Calvinistic Dutch Reformed Church, who cite selected biblical passages, to jack-booted toughs who beat up both white and black liberals. But the main resistance probably comes from rural whites, the Afrikaner farmers, who see blacks at their least developed state, and regard them as no more than a source of cheap labor.

There is an argument in vogue, expressed by Botha and others, that South African blacks really have little to complain about, that they are better off than blacks elsewhere in Africa. It is a favorite fallback of white defenders that this is demonstrated by the fact that inept black rule has occurred in many former white colonies, and it proves that blacks are incapable of bringing their newly independent countries into the modern world.

In my opinion, this premise of white defense is only valid when it is attributed to urban blacks, a sizeable minority of the black population in South Africa. They do live better than their brethren elsewhere on the continent. The majority of blacks in South Africa, forced to live in impoverished tribal homelands, are no better off than blacks in many of the independent states in Africa.

One thing is certain — black revolt will be no more than the whites can handle in the foreseeable future, because the discontent seethes only in urban areas. I am not a historian; I know there have been some revolutions based almost entirely on urban uprisings, but I would suggest that in South Africa, the united, coordinated effort of both urban and rural blacks is going to be required if they are going to protest on a country-wide basis. This must occur before the whites are going to consider political power-sharing seriously. But right now, rural blacks seem unaffected by the discontent that is so prevalent in the city, and this is, frankly, because rural blacks are just too busy staying alive.

Another reason for the whites' belief that there is still time to negotiate a "reasonable" solution with blacks is that, unfortunately, black leadership is still disorganized, with very little prospect of unified direction. The 1976 protests, which were underway when I first arrived, had some national cohesiveness. Perhaps it was accidental, perhaps it was organized, but there were nationwide demonstrations, and the police were seriously troubled in order to stop what was going on. But since that year of '76, any cohesive, country-wide basis to challenge the white government has been thwarted by a ruthless police force which, inci-



Refugees in the Namibian conflict. Ovangos live on both sides of the Angola-Namibia border. For nearby journalists, orphaned youngsters were asked to stand.

(1976/Jack Foisie)

dentally, is composed of black policemen as well as white, but under white domination, and the police are aided by hundreds of black informers motivated mostly by pressure, and sometimes by promises of special favors. So black resistance continues to be mainly hit-and-run, even among the most effective of the underground movements, the African National Congress.

The lack of unity among black leaders is due partly to tribal rivalry based on suspicions and hatreds often stemming from ancient disputes. The other factor keeping the black leaders apart is their apparent inability to put cause ahead of personal ambition as in the case of some leaders. Urban blacks, better educated and better off, usually consider their country cousins in the homelands to be

outmoded and backward, with their witch-doctoring and intra-tribal feuds.

This appraisal, however, does not apply to the one prominent rural leader, Gatsha Buthelezi, a well-educated man, the leader of six million Zulus. This means that his one tribe alone (there are ten major and minor tribes in South Africa), outnumbers all the South African whites. Buthelezi's trouble is his reluctance to form an alliance with any urban black leaders, and they in turn consider him to be a government lackey because he does not reject the possibility of power-sharing with whites. Buthelezi contends that there still is time for a negotiated outcome to the racial problem. For some unclear reason, here are two thoughtful men, and yet neither Botha nor Buthelezi is willing to initiate

talks with the other.

Among other prominent black activists leading black protest to bring about equality, the most prominent name in recent months is Bishop Desmond Tutu, this year's winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. He is certainly the most written about these days, but he lacks a political base and seems to be more listened to outside the country than in. Another churchman is emerging, Dr. Allan Boesak, and his particular appeal is that he is a coloured, and about the only mixed-race leader who still openly supports black demands.

One of the terrible by-products of *apartheid* is that it seems to be contagious. Although coloureds are second-class citizens under *apartheid*, despite a

Morris Memorial Lecture

A lectureship honoring the memory of Joe Alex Morris Jr. was established at the Nieman Foundation in 1981 by his family, Harvard classmates and friends, and fellow journalists. The award is given annually to an American overseas correspondent or media commentator on foreign affairs.

The first Morris Memorial Lectureship was awarded in 1982 to Flora Lewis, foreign affairs columnist for *The New York Times*. In 1983 Norman Kempster, Jerusalem

bureau chief for *The Los Angeles Times*, delivered the annual Morris Lecture. Eric Sevareid, senior broadcaster, author, and consultant to CBS News, was awarded the third annual Morris Lectureship in 1984.

The Morris award memorializes Joe Alex Morris Jr., a Harvard graduate in the Class of 1949 and long-time Middle East correspondent for *The Los Angeles Times*. He was killed during street fighting in Tehran while covering the Iranian revolution in January 1979.

recently granted minority voice in parliament, most coloureds consider themselves to be superior to blacks. So do Indians, or Asians as they are called, although they are subject to almost as much discriminatory treatment as blacks.

A year or so after I took up my posting in Johannesburg in 1976, my editors asked when did I see either a stable and racially peaceful South Africa, or a bloody white-black confrontation. After thinking about it, I said five to ten years, for either development. Asked the same question today, eight years later, I would again estimate five to ten years. Such is the stumbling pace of reform and protest in South Africa.

Now I'm getting to a subject that I've become aware is a very sensitive one on the Harvard campus. I have saved until the last some comment on the Reagan Administration policy of constructive engagement with South Africa and whether it has been a worthwhile effort. After two days on the Harvard campus, I realize I am touching a sensitive subject. Students desire to do something to add to the pressure on South Africa, and they should do so if they can. The object that they center on as a pressure tool is to encourage divestment. My belief is that disinvestment of American investment is not going to add much pressure, and it

will mean the loss of an estimated 350,000 jobs for blacks. Divestment will add some, but not considerable, pressure because American investment adds up to only one percent of the total in highly industrialized South Africa. Much more foreign investment comes from Europe. So the divestment process would have to be European and American combined to make a real serious effect on what is still a very strong economy, despite the faltering at the moment. So, as a symbol of protest, yes, but don't expect South African whites to collapse under such an effort.

Dr. Chester Crocker, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, is the architect of "constructive engagement," which contends that the reform in South Africa, and the settlement of the disputed South African-mandated rule of Namibia, was unlikely to be achieved by further alienation of Botha's government, as the Carter Administration had attempted to do — but in more dart-like fashion, such as asking for black foreign service officers to volunteer to take posts in South Africa. Some did, and they were given calculating positions, such as the visa officer in the Johannesburg consulate of the American embassy, so that a white seeking a visa for the United States would have to come in rather humble fashion to face the American black visa

officer. Yes, it was joyous to see, but it didn't really move much toward solving the overall and very grand problem. Therefore, President Carter's pressure merely stiffened South African resistance to outside interference.

On the other hand, constructive engagement, critics argue, is a policy that allows Botha more time on both reform and racial matters. As to a solution in Namibia, U.S. pressure is lacking in any form.

Other means of pressuring South Africa have been tried, but without much success. The United Nations' arms ban always has had loopholes and, in addition, has caused South Africa's mighty industrial muscle to develop a successful arms industry of its own, perhaps with nuclear capability, and with Israel's help.

The current offensive, I am well aware, is to divest, to pull out either subsidiary companies, or, like Harvard, to pull out stocks of companies with subsidiaries in South Africa. The former would hurt black workers of American companies who, under the Sullivan Code, have led the way in creating some equality in the workshop. The Code really embarrassed South African companies sometimes to do the same. Constructive engagement, as I said, has not hurt the South African economy, and the divestment of stocks of American companies by Harvard and others probably is not going to be too effective, either. I'm in thorough agreement with trying all forms of pressure, but one shouldn't expect too much from them.

There is a move in Congress right now to expand the economic sanctions. Good. There is a leading idea to have American banks abandon financial support to the South African government. Good. But keep looking for a way really to put the screws on them. Perhaps elect another president, of another party. Is that non-partisan? I guess not.

Meantime, the only effective boycott is one which prevents South African sports teams from entering the Olympic games or other formal international competition. In sports-loving South Africa, that hurts, even though it's a relatively minor segment of the overall discriminatory policies of the government. ■

The Closing of the Rand Daily Mail

Allister Sparks

In South Africa's extraordinarily divided society, the *Mail* was a unique institution.

The decision by the proprietors of the *Rand Daily Mail* to close the newspaper is a stunning victory for the South African government, which has schemed and plotted for a quarter of a century to silence its crusading voice.

Faced with losses said to have reached \$7 million last year (a book loss which critics question), the publishing company's board decided to close it at the end of April and to bring out a specialist financial daily in its place.

In the 1960's, the government tried to bleed the *Rand Daily Mail* to death by involving it in a series of costly court cases after it published an exposé of the maltreatment of black prisoners in South African jails. These stories culminated in the prosecution of Laurence Gandar, the editor who in 1959 launched the paper into its crusading era and who later was acclaimed by the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA).

In 1975, the government tried secretly to buy control of the publishing company, South African Associated Newspapers (SAAN), using an Afrikaner businessman, Louis Luyt, as a frontman. Luyt admitted afterward that the pur-

pose of the exercise was to change the *Mail*. When this failed, the government tried another clandestine trick, launching a rival newspaper called *The Citizen*, again using the obliging Luyt as its frontman.

After *Mail* reporters exposed this act of official subversion in their revelations of a massive scandal involving the Department of Information, which led to the resignation of President John Vorster and his heir apparent, Cornelius Mulder, in 1979, *The Citizen* was transferred at a knockdown price to a sympathetic Afrikaner publishing company which has kept it going with lucrative government printing contracts.

The bitter irony is that *The Citizen*, with its fraudulent history, now emerges as the winner of this newspaper struggle, even though it has only half the *Mail*'s circulation and is also published at a huge loss by a financially weaker company.

The key to this conundrum lies in the fact that the SAAN board, made up of conservative businessmen, was never happy with the *Mail*'s crusading role. Its management likewise blamed the paper's failing profitability on the unpopularity of its liberal stance, which they said cost it advertising support. Although blacks read the paper in increasing numbers, the board and management regarded this as a disadvantage to advertisers because of the lower earning level of blacks, and they sought to pressure successive editors into increasing the paper's appeal to conservative whites.

To see the paper die now at the hand

of its own proprietors, having survived so many attempts by the authorities to silence it, and to see the Information Department scandal which its own reporters exposed ultimately pay off in this spectacular fashion, is galling to those who have been associated with the *Mail*'s long struggle.

But the real importance of the *Mail*'s closure obviously lies beyond such personal sentiments. It is more important even than just the death of one of the world's great newspapers. It is an event that has far-reaching political implications for the country.

Without the *Mail*, the voice of white dissent — which has always been one of South Africa's hopeful features — will become muted. What is worse, the gulf between white and black will deepen. For a generation, the *Mail*, more than any other newspaper, strove to interpret the segregated race groups to one another. Now that bridge of understanding has been demolished.

Few outsiders can comprehend the extent of social division in South Africa. The influence of *apartheid* has gone far beyond the separation of black and white. Even within white society, the English and Afrikaner language groups tend to be isolated from each other to a surprising degree. Their children go to separate schools, where they even play in separate sports leagues, so that they seldom meet.

While addressing a group of 300 pupils at an English high school in Johannesburg some time ago, I asked how many knew an Afrikaner child of their

Allister Sparks, '63, was a political reporter with the *Rand Daily Mail* at the time of his Nieman Fellowship. He was editor from 1978 to 1982, when he left to become South Africa correspondent for *The Washington Post* and the *London Observer*.

own age whom they could even loosely describe as a friend. Five put up their hands. I then asked how many knew a black child outside the master/servant relationship. Three put up their hands.

This early estrangement continues into later life, as most young people go

exclusively to black affairs. They operate within their own group cell and tell blacks about the black community.

Likewise, the Afrikaans newspapers do not tell Afrikaners much about blacks or blacks much about Afrikaners. Several of the major English newspapers stretch

them social support, these dissenters will be more vulnerable to conformity pressure. President Pieter W. Botha was openly delighted to hear the news of the *Mail's* demise. He was "glad," he said, to see "a new South Africanism taking control over the country." By a new South Africanism, of course, he means a new spirit of conformity. "It will be of vital importance for the media to work for this new South African spirit," Botha added.

So the pressures will increase on the rest of the media too. With the *Rand Daily Mail* gone, it will be more difficult for any of them to step out of line.

The *Mail's* submergence, in any event, will have a ripple effect on the rest of the media. To begin with, it will reduce the profitability of the country's other morning newspapers which have operated in association with it. These include the *Cape Times*, which has been the most outspoken voice of white liberalism after the *Mail*.

The new financial daily, to be called *Business Day*, will be published nationally and so is bound to draw business advertising away from the regional dailies. With that depleting their revenues, their expenditures will increase as they have to shoulder a larger share of the group's news-gathering costs.

In their pooled news arrangement, the *Mail* covered more than half the country, particularly the mining and industrial heartland of the Witwatersrand where most of the news is generated. Now the regional papers have had to establish their own news bureau in Johannesburg. These increased burdens are likely to push marginally profitable papers like the *Cape Times* and Durban's *Natal Mercury* into the red.

Without the *Mail's* vigorous reportage to draw on, their news coverage will be depleted. The larger Argus company, known as "Aunty Argus" in the trade because of its staidness, will dominate the English-language newspaper market with its blander evening papers, some of which may start putting out morning editions in the manner of American single-newspaper towns.

The content of the news service put out by the industry-owned domestic

To see the paper die now at the hand of its own proprietors, having survived so many attempts by the authorities to silence it . . . is galling to those who have been associated with South Africa's long struggle.

to separate English and Afrikaner universities, listen to separate radio channels, watch separate television programs, and to a degree even live in separate suburbs, work in separate businesses, and belong to separate clubs, churches, and cultural institutions.

The blacks are not only separated from the whites but also from the mixed-race coloureds, the people of Asian descent, and to a lesser extent even from one another according to their tribal classification.

The whole country is a honeycomb of cellular group ghettos, full of ghetto attitudes of "us" and "them," and with little understanding of the other groups. Empathy is not a flourishing commodity in South Africa.

In this extraordinarily divided society, the *Rand Daily Mail* was a unique institution. It provided the single most important channel of communication between these groups, telling each something of the activities and attitudes of the others.

The requirements of target marketing have made most newspapers predominantly group oriented. The few black newspapers there are play an important role because they provide blacks with a platform. But they do not tell whites about the black community because whites do not buy them; nor do they tell blacks about the white community because their reporting is devoted almost

across a wider spectrum, but none equalled the *Rand Daily Mail* for its universality.

Readership surveys showed that the *Mail* had nearly a million (885,000) readers a day, rather more than half of them black. A quarter of the white readers were Afrikaners, mostly government supporters, and the rest English. It also had more coloured and Asian readers than any other paper.

Regrettably, the paper retained to the end a special edition aimed at the black areas. It was never able to overcome the problem of catering to local community interests which *apartheid* made racial as well as regional. However, under successive editors it always strove to carry as much inter-group news as possible in both editions.

Perhaps most important of all, the *Mail* was perceived as a white institution that was prepared to champion black causes. As with the constituency of white dissenters which it nurtured, this helped prevent the emergence of a virulent counter-racialism among blacks. It remains a source of amazement and gratification to me that after all they have endured for so long, even the most radical of blacks retain a commitment to the principle of "nonracialism." All will tell you it is because of the white dissenters who have stood by them down the years, often at great personal cost.

Without the public voice which gave

news agency, the South African Press Association (SAPA), which draws on the coverage of all member papers, will likewise undergo a change. It is true of news cycles everywhere that the heaviest flow is late in the day, so that SAAN's morning papers have provided the bulk of the agency's news, with the *Mail* by far the biggest single contributor. It has meant that the *Mail* and its partners have had a significant influence on the news content of the South African media.

Now the reverse will happen. With the *Mail* gone, the main input into SAPA's news service will be from the two remaining Johannesburg morning newspapers, the discredited *Citizen* and a pro-government Afrikaans paper called *Beeld*, as well as from the semi-official South African Broadcasting Corporation.

This will change the whole complexion of the news flow in South Africa. The effect is going to be particularly marked on the smaller regional papers which are heavily dependent on SAPA for their national news coverage.

SAPA will no doubt do its best to cover key events with its own staff, but its ability to do so is limited. Inevitably, an important opposition newspaper like the *Cape Times* is often going to have to depend on a *Citizen* or *Beeld* report of, for example, a key political trial in Transvaal province.

Worst of all, perhaps, is the damaging effect the closure of the *Mail* will have on the already depleted ranks of the journalistic profession. Caught between political harassment and economic squeeze, journalism in South Africa has for long been no bed of roses, but many fine practitioners have stuck to it out of a sense of idealism and commitment that boldness in the face of adversity evokes. The *Mail* was central to that spirit. With its closure the bubble has burst and many are quitting, either for other occupations or other countries. Fewer bright youngsters will join.

Indicative of this is the fact that although more than 130 *Mail* journalists face unemployment in an industry suffering the worst of the worst recession for half a century, SAAN has had difficulty staffing the smaller *Business Day*

because so few accepted job offers there. Many are planning to emigrate in what is close to being a mass exodus of South Africa's most talented collection of newspaper people. Their departure will dull South African journalism for years.

Why did it happen? Management

Many are planning to emigrate in what is close to being a mass exodus of South Africa's most talented collection of newspaper people.

blames what it backhandedly calls a "succession of brilliant editors" for running a paper which acquired a "split image" by having half its readers white and half black. They claim it was targeted to neither market and, falling between, failed to attract advertising.

The editors hotly dispute this, pointing out that the *Mail* operated profitably for sixteen years on basically the same editorial formula, then, after a new management changed its marketing strategy, the losses rose from \$62,000 to \$7 million over the following eight years.

The editors claim the paper was read by opinion leaders of all groups and could have succeeded if it had been properly marketed. Instead the new management tried to sell it to advertisers in a group package with other SAAN papers which had predominantly white reader profiles. The *Mail* did not match the other papers, with the result that the ad sales teams resented and neglected it while management curtailed its black circulation and pressed the editors to try to change the readership profile.

Two years ago the company commissioned a team from the *Financial Times*, London, to study the paper's problems. The *FT* team submitted a report strongly critical of the management, recommending top-level changes, a restructuring of the marketing division, and a new marketing strategy for the *Mail*. Nothing was done and the *Mail*'s losses doubled in the following year.

Through a strange set of circumstances, SAAN management operates with a unique degree of independence and was never called to account for failing to change its disastrous policies.

Between them, the Argus company and various limbs of Harry F. Oppen-

heimer's giant Anglo-American mining empire, together with Oppenheimer himself through a trust formed in 1975 to thwart Luyt's attempt to buy the company, control about 70 percent of SAAN stock. Yet between them they have only one representative on the eight-man board.

Oppenheimer, who is acutely sensitive to any suggestion that he might use his wealth to manipulate public opinion against the government, long ago insisted that Anglo-American recuse itself from exercising the power which it really holds. Argus withdrew from the board to prevent the appearance of a monopoly.

This means the SAAN board is made up of men who represent only minor stockholders. It is a husk. The real power lies outside, but is not exercised except through occasional winks and nods. It leaves management in a virtually unrestrained position.

In other circumstances, such a high degree of independence for a newspaper management could be a good thing, enhancing the freedom of its publications. In this case it has led to a publishing tragedy. ■

RAND
Daily  Mail

The Media, Public Figures, and the First Amendment

Eugene Roberts

A few weeks ago, a hair-raising story appeared deep inside *The New York Times*. It was the story of Raymond S. Henderson, the president of a local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — the NAACP. He had appeared before the Town Council of Braddock, a Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, suburb, to protest the dismissal of a black secretary. He charged that her ouster was “racially motivated” and demanded that the Town Council reinstate her.

It seemingly was just another chapter in American democracy — the head of a citizen’s group angrily denouncing government officials for their actions. The episode, or something similar, had been acted out thousands of times before in thousands of towns all over America. It is, in fact, what many of us think America is all about. But this time there was a difference, a major menacing difference.

A few days after his appearance before the Town Council, a process server banged on Raymond Henderson’s door and served him with a lawsuit. Five members of the Town Council were suing him for \$100,000. They charged that he had defamed and slandered them by describing their dismissal of the secretary as “racially motivated.”

Today, Mr. Henderson is wondering what sort of democracy it really is when government officials can use a lawsuit to intimidate their critics.

Eugene Roberts, Nieman Fellow '62, is executive editor of The Philadelphia Inquirer. The above text is the fourth annual Kenneth Murray Lecture on the First Amendment which he gave at the University of Michigan in March.



“The lawsuit really keeps you tied up,” he said. “The suit made a lot of people scared about being active. It took a lot of time for me to convince people that the national branch (of the NAACP) would come to our aid.” These members, according to Mr. Henderson, were afraid that, if they lost the lawsuit, they would be held personally liable and driven, perhaps, to financial hardship.

As for Mr. Henderson, he is “chilled,” to use a word frequently employed by the press to describe the debilitating effects of libel suits. “Whenever something controversial comes up,” Mr. Henderson says, “I go to my lawyer to check what I can say without getting myself into trouble. You have to be darn careful these days.”

Mr. Henderson, in fact, has made an interesting discovery — one that more and more private citizens are going to discover, to their alarm, all across the nation.

The same series of court decisions that has opened the American press to intimidating libel suits by public officials, simultaneously has opened average people to legal harassment by those who govern them.

All of us are going to learn in the months and years ahead, if we haven’t learned it already, that freedom of expression is not the peculiar province of the press or of any special interest group. Either we all have the right to criticize government and its officials with impunity and without running the risk of financial disaster, or none of us has it. And, alas, as long as the courts fail to realize — and then correct — the mayhem they have wrought with libel decisions, none of us has it.

We, in short, are in the midst of a genuine First Amendment crisis. Government officials who are totally immune from libel or slander suits for anything they write or say or do in office, are free to sue the people they are supposed to serve. Here is the situation in America today:

Members of the U.S. Congress are immune from libel or slander suits under Article 1, Section 6 of the U.S. Constitution.

Members of the federal judiciary are immune under the "doctrine of judicial immunity" — that is, case law.

Federal agencies are immune from libel or slander prosecution under an Act of Congress.

All states have constitutional, statutory, or judicially mandated immunity for judges.

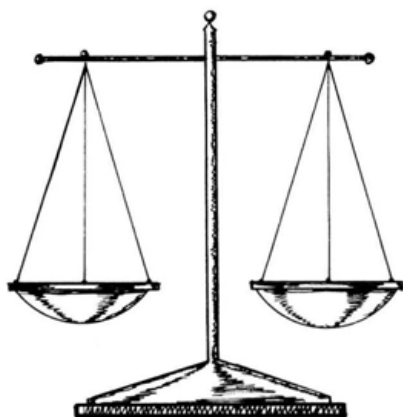
Most states also give legislators immunity and give public officials "executive privilege," thus shielding them from lawsuits for actions taken in performance of their official duties. Depending on the state, that can go right down to township supervisors and councilmen. In Pennsylvania, for example, district attorneys are protected from libel and slander suits, even when they hold a press conference.

In short, the framers of constitutions, the elected legislative assemblies, and the courts of this nation have spoken as one: There are officials whose functions are so important to society that their right to speak freely must be protected.

But if that is true, if these officials are so powerful, so influential, and so important to society that they merit immunity, then they, above all others, are deserving of — and, indeed, require — the most intense public scrutiny and criticism. By newspapers. By radio and television. And especially by citizens and citizen groups.

Instead, what we have today is a severe imbalance where we ought to have a balance. We have a situation where the town councilmen of Braddock, Pennsylvania, can say anything they wish at their meetings about Raymond Henderson, the NAACP leader, or any other citizen without fear of being sued. But Raymond Henderson can be and, in fact, is being sued for criticizing them.

It all boils down to this: We, as a society, have now delivered into the hands of government officials the nation over — indeed, the world over — a simple but effective weapon against freedom of expression. It is the capability of using protracted litigation to harass, intimidate, and punish the press and private citizens alike for views and reportage that officials do not like. The weapon has been there for some years now. The trend toward using it has been growing steadily.



The recent litigation by General William Westmoreland against CBS and Ariel Sharon, the former Defense Minister of Israel, against *Time* magazine simply spotlighted the trend. In the area of the country I know best, the Philadelphia area, fifteen public officials have sued or are now suing in twenty separate libel cases against newspapers, magazines, television stations, and, at least, one private citizen who served on a State Judicial Inquiry and Review Board and was critical of a State Supreme Court Justice. The officials include two former mayors, five judges, three former prosecutors, three state legislators, one Philadelphia councilman, and one member of Congress. And every single one of these officials is himself immune from being sued for libel or slander for anything he said or wrote or did while exercising his role as an official.

How did this alarming imbalance occur? How did we get to this dangerous junction in American democracy? It started, of course, twenty-one years ago this month with the *Times v. Sullivan* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

You know the story. In 1960, a group of civil rights activists published an ad in *The New York Times* outlining a "wave of terror" against Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other blacks fighting openly against segregation. The general tenor of the ad was correct, but the ad contained at least seven errors of fact. Although he was not mentioned by name, L. B. Sullivan, a city commissioner who supervised the police department in Montgomery, Alabama, sued, and an Alabama jury ruled against the *Times* and the authors of the ad and awarded Sullivan \$500,000.

The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the verdict. Writing for the majority, Justice Brennan said: "We consider this case against the background of a profound national commitment to the principal that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide open, and that it may well include vehement, caustic and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials."

And the court went on to say that "erroneous statement is inevitable in free debate, and that it must be protected if the freedoms of expression are to have the 'breathing space' that they need . . . to survive."

If the court had stopped there, we might be free of the problems posed by the Westmoreland and Sharon cases and the many other suits filed in recent years by public officials. But the court did not stop there. It went on to delineate what it obviously thought was broad latitude for public discussion of government and its officials. The court said, "The constitutional guarantees require, we think, a federal rule that prohibits a public official from recovering damages for a defamatory falsehood relating to his official conduct unless he proves that the statement was made with 'actual malice' — that is, with knowledge that it was false or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not."

Although the majority of the court clearly thought it was ratifying wide-open criticism of government, three justices —

Goldberg, Black, and Douglas — recognized that the court had undermined the very freedom it sought to protect by putting even the slightest qualification on it.

The three justices homed right in on the “actual malice” test and warned in the words of Justice Black that it provided at best “an evanescent protection” for the right to be critical of public affairs and public officials.

... Journalists often find themselves on trial as much for what they didn't say as for what they did say.

Justice Goldberg was just as alarmed about the “actual malice” loophole the court had created. He immediately recognized that the court had created an imbalance in freedom of expression in favor of public officials. He argued that if officials were going to have absolute immunity from libel and slander suits for anything they said or wrote about private citizens or the press, it was essential that private citizens and the press have absolute immunity when discussing public officials and public issues.

“If liability can attach to political criticism because it damages the reputation of a public official as a public official, then no citizen can safely utter anything but faint praise about the government or its officials,” Justice Goldberg said.

“The vigorous criticism by press and citizen of the conduct of government of the day by the officials of the day will soon yield to silence if officials in control of government agencies, instead of answering criticisms, can resort to friendly juries to forestall criticism of their official conduct.”

Well, here we are twenty-one years later, and it is clear that the worst fears of Justices Black, Douglas, and Goldberg have come true. If anything, they are proving to be conservative in their foreboding. Public officials, indeed, are using litigation and friendly juries to mute their critics, whether they be in the press or just ordinary outspoken American citizens.

The good intentions of the Supreme Court in the *Times v. Sullivan* case have been distorted by later court developments to the point that the very decision which was designed to protect the press and the public's right to robust criticism of public officials on public issues has become a weapon aimed at the heart of criticism. One of the developments was a footnote by Chief Justice Warren Burger in a 1979 court opinion. In it, he told trial judges that they were issuing too many summary judgments in libel cases — that is, tossing out the cases before they went to trial. The impact of this is that increasingly juries — rather than judges — are wrestling with such highly refined legal concepts as “actual malice” — which is, by court definition, totally different from the standard dictionary definition

of malice. In court terms, it means — in the words of Judge Pierre Leval of New York — “defamatory publication either in the belief that it is false or with reckless disregard of the truth.”

And to complicate the problem even further for juries, the Supreme Court ruled six years ago in the case of *Herbert v. Lando* that people who bring libel suits are entitled to inquire into journalists' states of mind. This gives them the right, unless there is a specific state statute to the contrary, to examine journalists' notes, rough drafts, internal memos, and — in the case of television — raw outtakes of unused film.

The result is that journalists often find themselves on trial as much for what they didn't say as for what they did say — all of this causing confusion among juries. More and more critics of officials are losing jury trials and the awards are climbing to staggering sums. True, the jury verdicts are reversed in an overwhelming majority of the cases, but the critics are put to heavy expense and trouble, to the point that it becomes easy to rationalize staying quiet instead of speaking out.

Meanwhile, lower courts, becoming accustomed to jury trials, malice tests, and discovery into states of mind in cases involving journalists, are extending the same doctrines to private citizens.

Unfortunately, there are no clearing houses that keep count of public official libel cases against the press or slander suits against private citizens, but there are powerful indications that the movement toward them has gathered such momentum that it threatens to become an avalanche.

Bruce W. Sanford, a First Amendment lawyer who is doing a book on the libel/slander problem, believes that as libel litigation against the press has grown there has been an explosion in the number of defamation suits filed against private citizens and public interest groups. “The number of these cases was probably a few hundred a year in the 1970's,” he said. “But now they are approaching 1,000 or even more than that.”

And Ira Glasser, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, told *The New York Times*: “I've been seeing these kinds of cases in recent years, whereas I never saw them before. Public officials and others are telling themselves, ‘Hey, this is a way we can put a price on dissent that our tormentors won't be able to meet.’”

A classic example of putting a price on dissent occurred on Long Island, New York. A Policeman's Benevolent Association there proclaimed it, henceforth, would file suit against every citizen filing a misconduct complaint that was found to be unsubstantiated by the police department's civilian review board which, by the way, dismisses 95 percent of citizen complaints. After the threat of mass libel and slander actions, the number of complaints — as you might imagine — dropped drastically.

These days, even such a basic democratic exercise as circulating a petition can get average citizens in trouble — real trouble. In Washington County, Virginia, Sally Sparks and Bob Steven-

son led a drive to recall two county supervisors who had voted for a utility tax without first holding a public hearing. They followed the law to the letter, drawing up petitions, circulating them in the community, gathering hundreds of signatures, then presenting the recall request to a judge.

Last August, the judge turned them down — but that hardly was the end. Supervisor Ken Matthews filed a \$250,000 libel suit against the leaders of the recall drive saying that their petition — a petition written by voters, signed by voters, and presented by voters to a court — had defamed his reputation. Once again, a leaf appears to have been taken from newspaper libel litigation. The supervisor contends that malice was involved because the husband of one of the leaders of the drive had been fired from his job by the Board of Supervisors.

It also can be dangerous for average citizens to exercise another American tradition — writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper

There have been suits against letter-to-the-editor writers in such widely scattered parts of the country as San Lorenzo Valley, California; Bristol, Tennessee; Keene, New Hampshire; and Philadelphia and Bethlehem in Pennsylvania.

In North Carolina, Robert McDonald, a staunch Republican who operates day-care centers, didn't write his newspaper. He wrote Ronald Reagan, then president-elect, with copies to Reagan Adviser Edwin Meese III, F.B.I. Director William H. Webster, and members of Congress.

He wrote, charging that a former judge who was being considered for U.S. Attorney did not have the character or competence for the position.

A citizen's right, you say, to involve himself vigorously in debate over who will hold public office? Well, thus far, it hasn't turned out that way. The former judge sued for \$1 million, contending that McDonald's two letters had defamed him and had cost him the U.S. Attorney's job.

Mr. McDonald contended that citizens must be free to "communicate candidly with federal officials concerning the qualifications of people for federal office — without fear that they will have to defend a costly libel action if they do so." Two separate federal courts have disagreed, and Mr. McDonald has had to fight all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has taken his case under consideration.

And we can expect suits by public officials against private citizens to grow and grow and grow in the wake of an ever increasing number of libel suits against newspapers and television stations. Each time a big-name public figure sues a major publication and generates widespread publicity, it almost inevitably lures other public officials to try libel and slander suits against their critics — often small newspapers or private citizens or public-interest groups that can ill afford to defend themselves.

In Massachusetts, former Governor Edward J. King and former gubernatorial candidate John Lakian are both suing *The Boston Globe*. Lakian filed a \$100-million suit challenging an article that portrayed him as misrepresenting his background. And former Governor King is seeking \$3.6 million claiming that he was defamed by political columns and editorial cartoons that held him to ridicule.

It can be dangerous for average citizens to exercise another American tradition — writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper.

When Jane Shoemaker, a fellow editor on *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, heard of the King suit, she was incredulous. "A political cartoonist holding politicians up to ridicule?" she mused. "That's not libel. That's a job description."

And so it goes. Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada has filed a \$25-million suit against the *Sacramento Bee*. One State Supreme Court Justice is suing my paper, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, for \$7.7 million and another Supreme Court Justice is seeking unspecified punitive and compensatory damages. William Janklow, the Governor of South Dakota, is suing Viking Press and Peter Mathiessen, the author, for \$25 million and *Newsweek* magazine for \$10 million.

These cases involving large newspapers and publishing firms are, of course, the merest tip of the iceberg. Almost everywhere you turn in America today you hear of an embattled smaller paper.

Take, for example, St. Mary's County, Maryland, where Larry Millison, a county commissioner, has been feuding with the local newspapers for years.

The weekly *St. Mary's Beacon* published a story about changes made in the flight patterns for the Patuxent River Naval Air Station. The paper notes that overflying aircraft would cut the value of property and that the pattern routed planes around land owned by Millison. The story neglected to point out that land also owned by the commissioner would be adversely affected. A second weekly, the *Enterprise*, picked up the piece.

Commissioner Millison filed an \$8-billion — yes, with a "b" — lawsuit, not just against the two papers but against specific editors and reporters. He claimed the omission was libelous and had caused him particular pain and suffering. He said it was responsible for a heart attack and that, as a result of the article-induced heart attack, he could not attend to his horse breeding business.

But there is more. He sued a reporter who had left the paper before the article ever appeared — but who had asked him some probing questions once at a news conference. He sued a former editor who had nothing to do with the story and had moved to another city.

In court documents, the papers have contended that Millison threatened hitting reporters with libel suits as far back as 1979 and 1980 should they write articles which he might deem unfavorable to him. According to court records, these threats were made at meetings of the commissioners, at press conferences, and on other occasions.

"Millison encouraged reporters to believe that he would file such suits by pointing out to them that other elected officials had benefited by the filing of such suits by receiving more favorable coverage after such suits were filed," said attorney Ted Sherbow in one of the scores of court documents.

The case was dismissed on grounds that the pieces were not defamatory. It never even reached the point of considering the issue of malice. But consider the effects. Legal fees, paid for under libel insurance, amounted to more than \$300,000. The reporter had moved on to another paper, and her career was rising — until the suit was filed and she was frozen in place pending resolution. The editor tried to buy a radio station but had to list the suit as a contingent liability — and was turned down.

No sooner had the case been dismissed — in the spring of 1984 — than Millison filed another lawsuit against the *Beacon* for another article, this one even milder. That case is now making its way through the legal system.

And in Mississippi, there is a case that tells you much about the fallibility of juries.

In 1979, there was a nasty fight going on in Harrison County, Mississippi, about roads. Some residents were charging that Supervisor Hud Snowden was showing favoritism in paving decisions and trading asphalt for votes.

On June 20, 1979, the *Daily Herald*, on Mississippi's Gulf Coast, reported the flap. It specifically reported that Snowden had widened and paved Hill Top Road, which provided access to a subdivision being developed by two other politicians, Circuit Court Clerk Webb Lee and State Representative Tommy Gollott.

The story contained an error. The county, in fact, did widen and pave a road, and it was a road to the development. But

it was called Russ Road, not Hill Top Road. The *Herald* printed a correction.

But on that error — the misnaming of the road — Clerk Lee and Representative Gollott sued the *Herald* for "malicious libel." Not only did they sue — but they won. A jury awarded them \$300,000.

The *Herald* appealed, and on May 25, 1983, the Mississippi Supreme Court ruled in its favor. The court noted that neither man had been accused of dishonesty, or even impropriety, and no reflection had been made on their morals or characters. The court went on:

"The most which can be made of (the article) was that these public officials were recipients of favored treatment by Mr. Snowden — namely, that he had widened and paved a road leading to their subdivision. This, of course, was true, except the road was incorrectly named."

Suits like the Maryland and Mississippi cases and the countless suits involving average Americans are being overshadowed by the big cases — *Westmoreland v. CBS* and *Sharon v. Time* magazine. These cases leave the impression that it is large and powerful news organizations that are the targets of public officials' libel suits.

And many media critics will tell you that libel suits are an essential counter-balance to "media giants" and that, in the end, libel suits promote democracy and diversity of opinion by using courtrooms as forums in which opponents can fight back at a press grown too powerful.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The largest and wealthiest press and television organizations — with ample funds, and insurance, and determination to fight back — will not be curbed easily by libel suits. Indeed, in the end, if current trends of litigation continue, they will be the only ones who can afford to speak out — they, and of course, public officials who are totally immune from libel and slander litigation. It is the alternative voices — the ones without ample treasuries or insurance or sophisticated legal help — that will be stilled: small newspapers, journals of opinion, private citizens, public interest groups, writers of letters to the editors. In short, individuals and small news organizations that do not have, or cannot afford, the protections of expensive legal help or of libel insurance — which, of course, is growing steadily more costly as libel and slander suits grow ever more numerous.

Make no mistake. Libel suits by public officials do not promote diversity, criticism, or dissent. To the contrary, they put a heavy price on it. They enforce the power of those who govern. They reduce the power of those who are governed.

The libel problem is real. It is frightening. It is menacing to a nation that has thrived and flourished on vigorous dissent and unfettered criticism of government and its officials.

We have turned a precious right — freedom of speech — over to lawyers who, with their qualifying, quibbling, and quarreling, are pricing it out of existence.

There was a very good reason our Founding Fathers went back to the Constitution only four years after it was written and added the First Amendment. They looked around them



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(see page 51)

Words at Work

William Allen White purchased The Emporia Gazette in 1895 and wrote for the Kansas newspaper until his death in 1944. He became known as the "Sage of Emporia" and was especially noted for his editorials. One of his earliest and most famous appeared during the McKinley-Bryan campaign. It was cited recently by Eugene Roberts in a speech he gave at the University of Kansas on the issue of the press and libel suits. Following is an excerpt:



It is more than a little troubling to contemplate that if William Allen White were alive today he might well be in court defending himself against a libel suit. Unlikely, you say? Then you haven't read White's editorials and do not understand his readiness to flail public officials at will anytime he felt it to be in the public good.

Just look for a moment at one of his most memorable editorials, the one which propelled him in front of the public's eye, where he was to remain, deservedly so, for the rest of his career. The editorial was one called "What's the matter with Kansas?"

Listen now to one of the key passages in the editorial. It went like this:

What's the matter with Kansas?

We all know: yet here we are at it again. We have an old mossback Jacksonian who snorts and howls because there is a bathtub in the state house; we are running that old jay for governor.

We have another shabby, wild-eyed, rattle-brained fanatic who has said openly in a dozen speeches that "The rights of the user are paramount to the rights of the owner; we are running him for chief justice, so that capital will come tumbling over itself to get into the state.

We have raked the old ash heap of failure in the state and found an old human hoopskirt who has failed as a businessman, who has failed as an editor, who has failed as a preacher, and we are going to run him for congressman-at-large. He will help the looks of the Kansas delegation at Washington.

Then we have discovered a kid without a law practice and have decided to run him for attorney general.

Then, for fear some hint that the state had become respectable might percolate through the civilized portions of the nation, we have decided to send three or four harpies out lecturing, telling the people that Kansas is raising hell and letting the corn go to weed.

That editorial today might be regarded by some as intemperate, but by many in Kansas — and across the nation — it was regarded as a breath of fresh air; a vibrant, bewitching articulation of what many a Kansan on many a bench in front of many a courthouse was thinking on many a day but never could express so eloquently or so devastatingly.

It helped touch off a wave of reform and good government in Kansas, and it certainly made a lot of people across the state stop and think.

at the rash of conflicting viewpoints flying about the political landscape of the purest democratic republic on the face of the earth since ancient Greece — and they decided they liked the babble of those many voices, those polemical broadsheets cranked out on hand presses. . . much more than they would like the chilling alternative, a silence enforced by a central government.

Now, 200 years later, the babble, if you will, threatens to grow quieter. . . and quieter.

What is eroding here, and eroding fast, is one of the most fundamental rights of a free people — fully as fundamental as the right to vote, or own property, or travel without restraint.

And if we lose that right, what kind of country will this

be? And what then will we lose next?

There, in the end, is only one solution — one way out. It is not a radical one. It is a tried and true solution that stood us well until the recent wave of court action. It is the First Amendment, which says quite simply, and absolutely, that speech is free. The time has come to return to basics. The time has come to return to the First Amendment. The time has come to recognize that you can't have free speech and qualify it. Justices Black, Goldberg, and Douglas saw that clearly twenty-one years ago.

It is time that the justices now on the U.S. Supreme Court — and, indeed, the judges on all the other courts across the nation — see it just as clearly. ■

Reporting from an Alien Landscape

Edward Walsh

The growing cycle of violence in southern Lebanon underscores the risks in news coverage.

When two Lebanese employees of CBS News were killed in southern Lebanon in March, it underscored dramatically the risks that are inherent in news coverage of a battle zone, especially for photographers and television camera crews who are compelled to get as close to the action as possible.

Toufiq Ghazawi, a cameraman, and Bashir Metni, a sound technician, were the first newsmen killed in southern Lebanon since the June 1982 Israeli invasion. The incident near the village of Kfar Melki was a tragedy, but what turned it into an international dispute between CBS and the government of Israel were the first wire service reports on how Ghazawi and Metni had died.

Eyewitness accounts from two French journalists who were in the same party said they were fired on by an Israeli Army tank. The journalists said the tank was 500 to 700 meters away, that the cameras and press stickers of the group were clearly visible, and that the Israeli

gunner appeared to have fired at them deliberately.

That the soldiers of a country allied with, and supported by, the United States would deliberately fire on a group of unarmed journalists, killing two employees of an American news organization with fire from an American-built M60 tank, was a criminal outrage. Within hours of the first wire service reports, Edward M. Joyce, the president of CBS News, issued an angry statement accusing the Israelis of an "entirely unprovoked" attack and demanding a special investigation.

Joyce's anger was understandable, but to those of us who have been to southern Lebanon there was something that didn't ring quite true in those first reports of the incident at Kfar Melki. As brutalized as the Israeli soldiers have been by their long, frustrating, and increasingly dangerous occupation of southern Lebanon, it seemed unlikely that their discipline had so completely broken down that they would start taking pot shots from relatively short range at a group of unarmed journalists. It seemed more likely that the deaths of Ghazawi and Metni were part of a larger tragedy, which is the story of what has happened to southern Lebanon and the Israeli soldiers who have occupied it during the last three years.

The summer of 1982 was the time of flowers and rice. That is what the Lebanese threw in the direction of the advancing Israeli columns that came

to southern Lebanon that June to drive away the guerrillas of the Palestine Liberation Organization, whose often brutal behavior had thoroughly alienated the local population.

Back then, southern Lebanon seemed in some ways like an extension of northern Israel. Hebrew signs had been put up along the roads, and the Israeli *shekel* was an acceptable currency to the Lebanese merchants. That summer, it was possible to cross the border at Rosh Haniqra and drive all the way to Beirut, to peer from the Israeli-controlled Christian east side of the city across the ugly swath of gutted apartment buildings known as the "green line" into predominately Moslem West Beirut.

From East Beirut, it was a simple drive to the hilltop headquarters of the Israeli Army spokesman's office in the suburb of Baabda, where each day photographers and camera crews gathered to record the bombardment of the Lebanese capital.

The most frightening aspect of the trip from the border to Beirut was the insane driving habits of the Lebanese, who made even the Israelis look like models of courtesy and decorum. Journalists in southern Lebanon had to be accompanied by an escort officer from the Army spokesman's office and he, by Army regulation, had to be armed. The escort officers often carried with them an Israeli-made Uzi submachine gun, a small, lightweight weapon of limited range. Later, the escort officers were more likely to arm themselves with an American-made M16, the frontline com-

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bat assault rifle in both the U.S. and Israeli arsenals.

The change came gradually, and although journalists knew it was happening it was impossible to pinpoint a precise turning point. Certainly a key episode occurred in the fall of 1983 when an Israeli convoy tried to barrel through a Shiite Moslem religious procession in the southern Lebanese city of Nabatiyeh, setting off a shooting spree in which there were several Lebanese casualties.

Whatever the reasons, the occupation and economic dislocation that accompanied it grew increasingly unpopular. Flowers and rice turned into booby-trapped cars and rocket-propelled grenades. The Israelis retaliated, stepping up the number of roadblocks and searches of villages. The cycle of violence grew.

For a journalist, it was always preferable to travel in southern Lebanon without one of the armed escort officers unless you were doing a story about the Israeli Army and needed an escort to gain access to units stationed there. With a few exceptions, the escort officers are bright, likeable, often highly educated Army reservists who try to be as helpful as possible. But if what the journalist was looking for was a local story, about the Lebanese and their view of the Israeli occupation, the presence of an escort officer invariably restricted his or her freedom of movement and the willingness of the Lebanese to talk.

After the summer of 1982, with the PLO gone from Beirut and southern Lebanon relatively calm, it was possible to travel unescorted across the border. The Israelis, then seeking to reach a political agreement with the Lebanese government, were proud of their "open border" at Rosh Haniqra. Many reporters based in Israel made the trip, often staying overnight in southern Lebanon, which the Army escort officers were forbidden to do. During those trips, the changing attitudes of the Lebanese toward their Israeli occupiers were recorded.

As the Lebanese resistance to the occupation stepped up in 1983, a new reason to travel without an escort officer was added to the greater freedom of movement that this allowed: It was safer.

Although the Israelis insist on calling the Lebanese Shiite guerrillas who attack them "terrorists" — the same term they apply to Palestinian terror squads who have slaughtered Israeli children and Olympic athletes at Munich in 1972 — the Lebanese Shiite attacks have been aimed exclusively at Israeli military targets. It thus became far preferable to travel the southern Lebanese countryside in a Lebanese taxicab rather than in an automobile with yellow Israeli license plates, seated next to an armed and uniformed Israeli soldier, with the antenna of an Israeli Army field radio sticking out the window.

In early 1984, the Israelis changed the rules of the game. Following a terrorist attack in the center of Jerusalem by three gunmen who entered the country at Rosh Haniqra, they announced there would be no more going back and forth across the border without an accompanying escort officer.

Yet over the next year, the Army spokesman's office, trying to be cooperative and maintain good relations with the Western press, granted numerous exceptions to this rule. Most often the reason was to allow reporters to visit the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) at Naqura a few miles north of the border, and to get a fill on the local situation from Timur Goksel, the UN press spokesman. What you did once you reached Lebanon — whether you decided to take a taxi to Sidon, Tyre, or some of the Shiite mountain villages that are centers of resistance to the Israelis — was none of the Army's concern.

Goksel, 41, the son of a Turkish Air Force officer, a burly, affable man who likes the company of journalists and is a devoted news junkie, is one of the unsung heroes of the coverage of southern Lebanon. He has been the UN spokesman at Naqura since 1979, and in that time has become known — in person or by reputation — to virtually every correspondent in the Middle East. Since UNIFIL and Goksel came to southern Lebanon, there probably never has been a reporter making a first trip to the area

who has not been told by colleagues first to "see Timur." He is not a popular figure with the Israelis.

With reports from the UN units in the area, his own network of local sources, and a relentless monitoring of the news, Goksel always knew where the action was.

"Go see Mustafa Saad, then you'll have the story," Goksel told a group of us in January shortly before the Israelis withdrew from the port city of Sidon. The three of us — myself, Curtis Wilkie of *The Boston Globe*, and Jonathan Broder of *The Chicago Tribune* — dutifully searched out Saad, the leader of the Sunni Moslem community in Sidon.

We had a fruitful 90-minute interview with Saad, but back in northern Israel that night the story took a dramatic turn. Goksel tracked us down at our favorite restaurant and telephoned.

"Just thought you'd like to know that a few hours after you talked to Mustafa Saad his apartment was bombed," he said. Saad was seriously injured, in danger of losing his sight, and his wife was wounded. Their 11-year-old daughter was killed in the blast.

Over the last year, Goksel also has sent a number of us to see Khalil Jeradi, a leader of the Shiite Moslem militia Amal in the mountains east of Tyre. That, however, is no longer possible. In March, Jeradi was one of twelve people killed by a bomb that was planted in a religious center in his home village of Maarakeh.

Early this year, Goksel's role in providing information on what was happening in southern Lebanon became even more important as the Israeli Army launched its "Operation Iron Fist" — a term that originated in the Israeli press — in a series of raids into Shiite villages thought to contain guerrillas and arms caches. There were numerous clashes, and, according to Army figures, more than seventy guerrillas were killed in the first few months of these operations.

Gathering information from UN soldiers who were present in the villages during the searches, Goksel was often able to supply reporters with important details that were left out of the official Israeli Army communiqués, which are



It was no longer like an extension of northern Israel, but an eerie, alien landscape where death could come at any moment, from any direction.

usually masterpieces of imprecision.

As the violence grew during early 1985, the area, and the story, of southern Lebanon became less controllable. The Israelis tried to prevent correspondents who are based in Beirut from reaching southern Lebanon, but when the Israelis pulled back from the Sidon area in mid-February and abandoned their fixed positions and crossing points, they lost much of their ability to do this. It was also impossible to tell where the Israelis would turn up next. Ghazawi and Metni, who had come to southern Lebanon by taxi from Beirut, were killed in an area outside the new Israeli zone into which an Israeli Army raiding party had gone in search of guerrillas and weapons.

With every trip back into the south, the fear and jumpiness of the young Israeli soldiers were more evident. You could not blame them. It was no longer like an extension of northern Israel, but an eerie, alien landscape where death could come at any moment, from any direction. Israel Television documented what had happened in the last three years, recording an officer telling his soldiers before they went on patrol, "You shoot at anything that moves."

The Army, of course, knew all about this and knew that southern Lebanon was a much more dangerous place than ever before for anyone traveling there. Three days before the CBS men were killed, a group of us went back to the south. But this time we did not stray out of the territory in which the UN force is stationed, and we traveled in one of the familiar, unmistakable all-white vehicles that belongs to the UN units. That had been our agreement with the Israeli Army officer who sent our names up to the border for clearance into Lebanon.

He knew very well what the game was in southern Lebanon, how we would skirt about in search of a Mustafa Saad or Khalil Jeradi, but this time he was adamant.

"I don't want any running around in Lebanese taxis," he told one of my colleagues. In the spring of 1985, the officer explained, Lebanese taxis were sometimes the targets of "inadvertent fire."

It is unfortunate that Joyce and the other executives of CBS News in New York did not know about the transformation of southern Lebanon. If they had, they might not have been so quick to take the first wire service reports quoting two French journalists who were unknown to them and jump to the conclusion that their men had been murdered. They had a perfect right to demand an investigation of the incident, and good reason to be suspicious of the original Israeli Army version that said that the tank fired on a group of armed guerrillas, among whom was the camera crew. But there was never sufficient evidence to back up the CBS charge of a deliberate, unprovoked attack.

The first Army account was wrong. There were armed guerrillas in the vicinity, but not at Kfar Melki. The tank, in fact, fired on a group of unarmed journalists. But the key question was always whether this was deliberate.

On that score, CBS was even more wrong. Its own independent investigation later determined that the tank was 2.6 kilometers (about one and a half miles) away from the target, not the 500 to 700 meters as alleged by the French reporters, just as the Israeli Army had claimed from the outset. From that distance, neither the camera equipment nor the press stickers of the journalists would be clearly visible.

During the dispute, the Israeli Army released two side-by-side photographs. One showed a man holding a television mini-camera on his shoulder. The other showed a man with a shoulder-held, rocket-propelled grenade launcher. The suggestion was that it is not easy to tell the difference from any distance, and that the tank crew fired because it thought it was in imminent danger of attack. The Army neglected to say that a rocket-propelled grenade launcher does not have the range or accuracy to hit a tank from 2.6 kilometers, and that any Israeli tank commander would know that.

The truth is probably that the tank crew didn't know what it was shooting at. They were on the lookout for armed guerrillas thought to be in the area, and when they spotted something suspicious — a group of men moving near the village — they radioed their battalion commander for permission to open fire. Permission was instantly granted. That is the way things are done these days in southern Lebanon. CBS officials were correct in later pointing out that there remain serious questions about the decisions made by the tank commander and his battalion superior, but that is a far cry from the original charge of deliberate attack.

The incident at Kfar Melki was yet another episode in the string of events that has so poisoned the atmosphere surrounding U.S. news coverage of the Middle East, and especially the Israeli adventure in Lebanon.

For many Israelis, the CBS accusation only deepened their sense of isolation and embattlement in the Middle East, the "us against them" syndrome in which the Western media is part of "them." In the process of accomplishing this, a major American news organization allowed itself to look not only foolish but also reckless in its treatment of the facts. Both in Israel and the United States, there is no shortage of critics who will be quick to point to Kfar Melki as a typical example of how all of the American news media covers the Middle East in general and Israel in particular.

So the casualties from Lebanon continue to mount. ■

Media Power and the Dangers of Mass Information

Michael J. O'Neill

The national media are no longer just observers and messengers,
but are now lead actors in government.

I owe my presence here tonight to the benevolence of a friend of many years — Elie Abel, a man whose intellectual gifts and many accomplishments would qualify him for any think tank. We were colleagues together in Washington some years ago — mainly covering foreign affairs at the State Department and White House — helping to run the government, as journalists always do, of course, but under more pleasant circumstances than exist today. It was a simpler, more comfortable age then, when reporters and government officials had a rather congenial relationship and television had not yet ruined our way of life.

The remarkable thing about memories like this is that they remain forever young while we grow older. Indeed, they seem to glow even more brightly as the flesh decays, so that they are, perhaps, the most tangible suggestion we have of immortality. Some people like George Kennan curl up inside their nostalgia and, with Miniver Cheevy, yearn for “the days of old when swords were bright,” and presidents listened to career diplomats.

But today's world cannot be remodeled with yesterday's memories; there are no U-turns on the road to the future. The democratic process, alas, can never be put back together again the way the authors of the Constitution intended. The roaming masses cannot be herded into their old voting blocs. And for

years to come, no doubt, we will be choosing electronic images to preside over the nation in peace and war.

Remember that poignant scene after the election last November, when Walter Mondale played the final notes on his campaign bugle? That was the formal surrender of the presidential election system to television. “Modern politics today requires a mastery of television,” he said. “I’ve never really warmed up to television and, in fairness to television, it’s never warmed up to me.”

Why he felt he should be fair to television, I don’t know, but he went on to say: “I don’t believe it’s possible anymore to run for president, without the capacity to build confidence and communications every night. It’s got to be done that way.”

This wasn’t just a loser’s excuse. It was a simple statement of fact. Thanks to television, we now have a system in which the qualities needed to win an election are unrelated to the capacity to govern, while the qualities needed to govern are irrelevant to election success. It is a process designed to produce professional campaigners and amateur presidents — current incumbents excepted, of course. It is, in the words of James MacGregor Burns, “the worst top-leadership recruitment system in the democratic societies of the world.”

This would be just dandy if all we needed were common leaders for common times, when great statesmen like Churchill can be a terrible nuisance with all their energy and activism. But the present is an uncommon time and there is a crisis requiring uncommon leadership — a crisis of governance, an increasing inability to act decisively and wisely in a time of global danger. And absolutely central to the entire problem is the baleful effect of mass communications — from national newspapers to computers, but most of all, television.

For different reasons, both our elected leaders and most political scientists have been slow to see the crucial connection between mass communications and their laments about dying parties, fragmented power, and failing governmental institutions. Even a Washington veteran like Lloyd Cutler admits it came as “a distinct surprise” when he got into the White House and saw “how much television news had intruded into both

Michael J. O'Neill, former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, in January gave the above annual Carlos McClatchy Memorial Lecture, sponsored by Stanford University's Department of Communication.

Mr. O'Neill was editor of the New York Daily News from 1975 to 1982; he has been a journalist for thirty years.



the timing and the substance of policy decisions that an American president is required to make."

"Television news," he said, "now has a much greater effect on national policy decisions — especially foreign-policy decisions — than print journalism has ever been able to achieve and more than most experienced observers realize. . . Mastering the art of television presentation is now critical to governance."

His underlying point — and the one I want to make — is that television is not just another page in media history, the son of radio, that requires some social notice but no significant institutional adjustment. It is an utterly unique phenomenon that is profoundly influencing everything we do — how we act, how we think, how we see the world, how we govern. It is altering and distorting our perceptions of reality and, together with computers, not only expanding knowledge but changing its very nature.

So it is more urgent than ever before to address two questions which a prescient T. S. Eliot posed more than fifty years ago:

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?"

"Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Where indeed? Because we are confronted with a dangerous paradox — the fact that the greatest outpouring of new knowledge in all of human history is undermining the very wisdom it is supposed to serve. Mass information — hurled at us by powerful media, twisted into new forms by television and computers — is democratizing knowledge the way higher education was democratized after World War II. But it is also diminishing our capacity for the rational analysis and deliberative judgment on which public wisdom depends and on which effective government depends.

How is our knowledge being changed? How are our perceptions and our thinking processes being affected? In a number of ways:

First, television alters the prisms through which we see the world. The most distant events are swept inside our personal horizon, broadening our "affections," to use Hamilton's phrase, beyond family cultures — from the Super Bowl here to great human disasters in India or Ethiopia.

We no longer have to manufacture our own images out of aging words and older pictures. Real-time experiences are delivered into our living rooms, in pulsating color, so that we can share vicariously in the daily triumphs and tragedies of the human race. The result is a new kind of knowledge that is existential and impressionistic, immediate and global, that artificially extends our human linkages and changes the mix of our personal responses. It is also an evanescent knowledge in which images flicker for only an instant on the mind's screen and then disappear while other images crowd in.

Second, the very process of thinking and deciding is altered. In written communication, the words stand passive and still on the page, never moving. The imagination must work to convert them into individual versions of reality and then the mind has to take over and reason its way toward conclusions and

action. The progression is from words to reason, to conviction, to action.

In the case of television, on the other hand, movement, sound, and color rush actual experiences directly to the senses, producing instant emotional reactions, as we saw after the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. There is no need for verbal translation or rational interpretation. The process moves from image to impression, to emotional impulse, and then to action. Sensation and emotional intensity dominate. The reflection and reasoning, which verbal communication demands, are by-passed.

This impressionism may be driving us back toward the ancient oral/visual tradition which Socrates extolled, but which writing and the printing press later killed. Just as blind people hear more acutely than the rest of us, I suspect the television generation can communicate more easily with images than with words. Reading and writing levels have fallen, and remedial courses are now standard fare in colleges, attracting a third of the freshman class at Yale, for example. A recent study, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, indicates that American schoolchildren have been slipping in terms of "higher-order" reasoning.

But it's not just children. The capacity for written discourse and verbal analysis is now in decline at all age levels. The oral-visual cult flourishes in the White House, of course. As Michael Deaver remarked last year, the president's staff would be "crazy" if it didn't recognize television's influence and "construct events and craft photos" to fit the network news programs. I once sent Lyndon Johnson a memo recommending that press experts be cranked into decision-making because of the vital role of public opinion in the ultimate success or failure of policy. I never dreamed that White House public relations would become a Fortune 500 industry.

The oral-visual cult also flourishes in the nation's board rooms. Spend any time at all in corporate planning sessions and you learn immediately that business executives don't like struggling through written analyses. They want their reports quick and easy, in the form of snappy oral presentations, slide shows, and flip charts. I'm convinced that archaeologists, digging through the ruins of our civilization a thousand years from now, will find only video cassettes and flip charts, and they will conclude that the 1980's did indeed mark the beginning of the end.

A third point about television's effect is that it necessarily distorts knowledge because it must be centered on visual events — action that can be photographed and issues which can be both dramatized and simplified. It cannot deal with subtle, complex, and abstract subjects that lie beyond the camera's beady eye. Like a playwright, television rearranges reality to serve the needs of drama. Whenever dramatic material is in short supply, it builds its own stages, writes its own scripts, creates its own events, and calls it news. National affairs come to resemble theater as much as reality.

"A parade of impressions," said James David Barber, "jogs gently along the edge of attention, barely disturbing the rational faculties, leaving behind a blur of affective responses" so that

"politics is cut adrift from its real-world moorings and floats out into the seas of fiction."

Fourth. Flashing television images mobilize popular feelings on a massive scale never seen before and with stunning speed. The historian Richard Wade believes Japan would have surrendered much sooner if our atom bomb test had been televised for the Japanese people. Scenes of Bull Connor's swinging clubs applied the public prod that finally launched Kennedy toward civil rights reforms. Television helped to end the Vietnam War and to reverse administration policy in Lebanon. It instantly popularized the invasion of Grenada, making a laughing stock, by the way, out of a lot of carping television pundits who completely misjudged the American mood. As Jody Powell chortled later, "It was sometimes difficult to tell which the American people enjoyed more, seeing the president kick hell out of the Cubans or the press."

When television is in its natural element, transmitting real events in real time, it can be superb. Very often, however, it has a disruptive effect, amassing emotions and generating demands for action that frequently run ahead of a government's ability to respond, as for example, in the so-called Revolution of Rising Expectations.

Fifth. Like television, but in a different way, computers are also changing the way knowledge is applied to public problems. One example is the pressure for concrete facts and quantification. Another is the bias in favor of machine-storable data as opposed to abstractions and subjective analysis. Just as Leonardo da Vinci once sought mathematical formulas for human proportion, so man is now hugging his computers in hopes he can quantify all of human life. Reflection and reasoning are neglected.

As one observer noted recently, the economists have been misfiring on all their predictions lately because they are so immersed in computer data and mathematical models that they cannot see what's happening in the real world — like meteorologists sitting in a windowless room and forecasting fair weather while it's storming outside.

A sixth and final note about television's effect on our thinking is that the sheer volume of information overwhelms the brain's capacity for absorption, selection, and interpretation. The rat-a-tat-tat of the news shows — headlines and weather, weather and headlines . . . fires, murders, and taxes . . . hijackings and nuclear talks. Everything is repeated endlessly, motion and image chopped into tiny pieces, like diced ham, but impossible to digest. Again, analysis and judgment are the victims. So embassies are bombed while warnings lie hidden in dusty intelligence files. And other more subtle issues, long-range problems like basic research budgets, lie unattended like bodies on an Ethiopian plain.

These changes in the nature and uses of knowledge have enormous consequences, not only for public wisdom, in the theoretical sense, but for the practical business of making our democracy work. To begin with, television and the mass media have altered the basic relationship between the people

and their government by giving voters instant access to the same information being received by their elected representatives. This produces instant mass emotions, instant mass opinions, and then mass pressures which force policy-makers to act without prior thought and against their private best judgment.

During Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, television sent American emotions into orbit with gruesome scenes from the

We no longer have to manufacture our own images out of aging words and older pictures. Television delivers real-time experiences into our living rooms.

refugee camp massacres. Almost at once, President Reagan responded by rushing the Marines back to Beirut, against the advice, it is reported, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among others, Lloyd Cutler argues that if it had not been for television, the "public horror would not have been as instantaneous or acute" and "the response could have been deliberately and perhaps more wisely chosen."

Highly emotionalized television experiences like this, together with other factors, have dramatically increased the public's involvement in the daily affairs of the country. This has had a whole series of consequences such as: the phenomenon of participatory democracy or, in Samuel P. Huntington's phrase, "democratic surge," the sudden emergence of single-issue politics, a massive increase in egalitarian pressures, and a related shift toward the kind of assertive individualism which worried Alexis de Tocqueville almost a century and a half ago. Tocqueville — in my view a greater journalist even than Dan Rather — felt that individualism might be held in check by the broadly based civil associations he saw during his celebrated tour. But these defenses tend to fall when modern technology permits more personal and individualized relations between citizens and their public leaders.

Taken together, these trends made a murderous attack on a cardinal principle of our representative democracy — the principle that the American people would rule only indirectly through elected intermediaries, chosen because they are better informed than ordinary citizens and therefore better able to make wise decisions. Our Founding Fathers no doubt were moved by the same inspiration which Walter Bagehot articulated years later when he said Britain owed its greatness to the stupidity of the English people. Great leaders, he explained, cannot lead if their followers are running around with their own information and ideas, thinking for themselves.

The same principle applies to American politicians who no longer follow anybody. Thanks again to television, they have established their own direct communications with their consti-

tuents and pay little or no attention to their parties. The testing process once imposed on candidates by party service and public performance has almost disappeared; media personality is all that counts. "Experience and intellect," as Ted Sorensen observes, "are no more crucial to the multimedia campaign than the candidate's hair, teeth, smile, and dog."

Last year, Sorensen, Dick Wade, and some other political experts were in a New York hotel briefing Gary Hart for a television debate. Suddenly, the candidate jumped up and left the room when he learned that French President Mitterand was in the same hotel. When his surprised aides asked why he had to see Mitterand, Hart replied, no reason. Just that there were television cameras outside his room and it was a photo opportunity. Which is another way of saying that television calls the shots in the presidential primaries and that the national conventions have become an antique which our elders should bequeath to the Smithsonian.

After an election, officials may owe money to David Garth and favors to a lobbyist, but no cement of mutual dependence binds them to their party colleagues. There has been a breakdown, therefore, in political loyalties — between the president, for example, and the Republicans in Congress so that a Bob Dole rushes out with his own federal budget even before Reagan has presented his, something that was unthinkable when I first went to Washington in the 1950's.

Congressional power is fragmented and discipline no more than a Sam Rayburn memory. The president, personification of the nation's ideals and therefore the chief focus of press attention, has grown relatively stronger. But media power has gained most of all.

The national media are now no longer just observers and messengers but lead actors in government, creating, shaping, and often distorting the informational base of decision-making, magnifying as well as reporting the conflicts of power, advocating, nagging, and harassing as well as explaining. They are the targets of manipulation by every party to every issue, the objects of guile and deception, the victims of conflicting pressures, witting and unwitting participants in the management of crisis and in the formation of policy, both the collaborators and adversaries of government.

The ability of the press to mold public opinion is now so great that issues and events are often shaped as much to serve the medium's needs as to promote the general welfare. Newsmakers modify their behavior, creating controversy on demand, turning away from debate and petition in favor of protest and demonstration. Manufactured issues and synthetic facts are created in profusion. They carom against reality, often displacing truth, in an endless contest for media impact and public favor.

Although the assassination of Indira Ghandi was a great story in the classic definition of news, acres of newsprint and television time are being filled with what Daniel Boorstin calls pseudo-events. During the election campaign, both President Reagan and Walter Mondale had whole squadrons of media

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experts doing nothing but creating "news" for television. Reagan's men even tried to bar reporters from airport crowds so that the President's impromptu comments could be censored and his hand-shaking filmed according to a daily script. Reporters were marched before cameras as props for televised debates. Photo opportunities were staged and controversies created on cue to provide the action pictures and artificial excitement demanded by the electronic media.

Journalists play the same game as the politicians. Janet Cooke lost her Pulitzer Prize because an article she wrote for *The Washington Post* turned out to be fiction. But newspaper editors and television producers are creating news all the time, sometimes out of the thinnest kind of material. I remember being desperate for a story once when I was a United Press editor in Washington. So with few facts, but plenty of help from congressmen who cater quotes for any occasion, we produced a national scare about coffee prices, broke the coffee market, and started a wonderful row between the United States and Brazil.

Creative activity like this is necessary because life simply doesn't supply enough sensations to meet the media's daily needs. When editors are stuck for a headline or producers need a lead for the evening news, they have to hustle up an exposé, a new controversy, or a so-called news exclusive. This is called enterprise and enterprise stories appear by the gross to provide zest, sparkle, and shock to brighten even the dullest day.

It once occurred to me in a dream that it might be good public policy to reduce the output of this kind of pseudo-news the way the government combats farm surpluses. Journalists would be paid subsidies for everything they did NOT produce — rewarded for eliminating all synthetic controversies and all rehashes of old stories. Reporting would be strictly limited to only those things that are genuinely new and occur naturally. The results would be spectacular. I'll bet that half the turmoil we always seem to be embroiled in would disappear, in a stroke. Television news shows could be cut to a couple of minutes every night. And who knows? Someone might even be able to get through *The Los Angeles Times* in less than a day.

Still remaining, however, would be something else: the clever manipulation of facts, to achieve a maximum effect on readers and viewers. Remember Jimmy Carter's famous "ethnic purity" remark? Well, one of our reporters on the New York *Daily News* originally got the quote during a presidential interview. Displaying unpardonable responsibility, he buried it in his story. But *Newsweek's* editors knew a good angle when they saw it, exhumed the phrase from the paper, and created a rousing good controversy that ragged the Carter campaign for weeks.

The soft-spoken Sam Donaldson has the touch, too. Carter, responding to a shouted airport question in 1978, said he would be "reluctant" to use U.S. troops to guarantee a Mideast peace as part of a Camp David agreement. Donaldson immediately translated "reluctant" into the words "confirmed in effect." This produced a splendid two- or three-day story, with Prime Minister Begin issuing a denial, Ted Koppel speculating that the whole business was a White House trial balloon, and pundits weighing in on all sides.

There are other more subtle ways in which the system works. Alexander Haig admits he was hurried on his way toward Reagan's Out Basket by his famous "I am in control" statement at the time of the assassination attempt. What really did him in, he believes, was not the original remark but the fact that the tape was edited very tightly and then played again and again, piling up criticism both inside and outside the White House. Even seasoned observers, like Leslie Gelb of *The New York Times*, have suggested that the gaffe might never have been noted if television had not rerun the tape repeatedly at a time of maximum public attention.

Another example was that moment during the first presidential debate last October when President Reagan briefly fumbled his thoughts. Polls showed that the initial reaction of voters was that Reagan held his own in the debate. But the networks singled out the fumble and for days reran the tape over and over again while all the commentators swarmed in to analyze the President's poor showing, the age factor, and other negative issues. *The Washington Post's* chief pollster, Barry Sussman, said that once again television displayed "its immense power to create, change, or manipulate public opinion." For as the media autopsies continued, polls showed voter attitudes clearly shifting away from Reagan and toward Mondale — though obviously not far enough.

The end result of all these developments is that news has become the captive of its own process, and distorted by it. There is a blurring of the line between the medium and the message, between substance and image, and now we see everywhere the fleeting shadows of Plato's cave. The unreal consorting with the real. Entertainment and celebrity mingling with hard news and tough reporters. Public discussion becoming a jumble of emotionally charged impressions that confound clear thought — a confusing gruel of the important and true, the irrelevant and synthetic.

All this alarms Cutler who says bluntly that "print and television journalists ought to expose the tacit conspiracy of silence about staging, whether practiced by revered network announcers or by politicians in and out of office."

"Staging, of course, has its place in the creative arts," he argues, "but in the arts its use is not concealed from the audience. The staging of television news, political press conferences, and public addresses is concealed from the audience. Not to mince words, it is a fraud."

Fraud or not, the video news culture is likely to continue, not only reshaping the democratic process to fit its special needs, as we have seen, but affecting all our decision-making processes. To a degree not dreamed of even a few years ago, the networks and national press now set the agendas in Washington, deciding what the focus of government should be, reporting and magnifying controversy, nagging for instant solutions, and creating public pressures that become almost irresistible. Policy struggles, formerly conducted mainly in the back corridors of power, are now played out on the open stage with political leaders and special interest groups wrestling with each other for the media advantage that has become so essential to legislative success.

The attention of officials is consequently riveted to the crises being featured on the nightly news shows. They spend incredible amounts of time and energy dealing with instant television facts, comments, and pseudo events, trying to shape public opinion themselves or attempting to counter the propaganda of rivals. John Ehrlichman estimated that Nixon spent "half his working time on the non-substantive aspects of the presidency, and probably 40 percent of that half dealing with the problems of communications." The testimony of more recent White House aides suggests the media are now an even more voracious consumer of presidential attention.

"The most harmful effect of television news," says Cutler, the insider who has been the most outspoken on the subject, "is its tendency to speed up the decision-making process on issues that television is featuring and to slow down and interrupt the process of deciding other important issues that get less television attention. Whatever urgent but less televised problem may be on the White House agenda on any given morning, it is often put aside to consider and respond to the latest television news bombshell in time for the next broadcast."

The result, most often, is immediate, frenetic action rather than careful thought or long-range planning. Policy-making is essentially reactive, specializing in fire control. It is not prospective, seeking out the causes of crises before they occur with the novel ambition of preventing at least some of the calamities which befall us. It is a system that invites the ambushes of history in which we are so frequently trapped.

A related phenomenon — very subtle but fascinating — is the false sense of confidence that instant electronic news gives to both political leaders and the general public. Because they see the world every night on the evening news, they feel they are up to the minute on everything that is going on. They are beguiled into believing they are wiser than they are. They unconsciously substitute their personal television impressions for other more studied views.

In foreign affairs, for instance, intellectual equipment and specialized knowledge are given less importance when elected officials and the voters quickly form their own opinions from television newscasts. The mystery of foreign affairs is dissipated. Advice is ignored and ambassadors are by-passed, as in the case of Iran. Personal diplomacy becomes the statesmen's sport and the role of the State Department is reduced.

In their recent book, *Our Own Worst Enemy*, three foreign affairs professionals — I. M. Destler, Leslie Gelb, and Anthony Lake — noted how America's postwar foreign policy was based

on three kinds of public opinion: A small leadership group with shared views, an educated elite and, finally, a mass public that "knew and cared little" about the subject. This pattern broke down with Vietnam and the activism of the 1960's and, since then, the swings in opinion have become both much wider and far more frequent.

What can be done about all this? Anyone who raises problems is supposed to have solutions. That is the American way. The saliva test of a Congressman is to present him with a crisis. If he immediately introduces a bill and announces the crisis is over, you know he is a Congressman. Yet the beginning of wisdom, I think, is to recognize that there are no solutions for unsolvable problems. The only thing to do with a country like Lebanon is to leave it on the stove, cooking in the juices of its own history. Similarly, I see no practical way to repair much that is now wrong with our democracy.

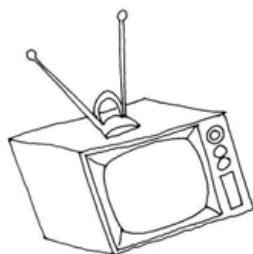
A great many distinguished Americans — academics like Huntington, Burns, Wade, and Daniel Bell and political practitioners like Cutler, Sorensen, and Cyrus Vance — are worrying about the social and political disarray. There are calls for constitutional amendments, yet another massive overhaul of party rules, congressional reforms, and an incredible variety of other proposals. But these are beyond the range of this brief discussion, so I will only touch on a few general issues and then offer some specific thoughts — not solutions — about the media.

First, the core of the entire problem is social and cultural, best typified, perhaps, by our intensely adversarial national character and by strong new egalitarian demands that, carried to extreme, frustrate both justice and government. We urgently need a more give-and-take society, one that is as interested in harmonizing views for the common good as it is in asserting individual, sectional, or class rights.

Secondly, in the case of government, we need to foster a revival of consensus politics through such actions as party reforms to strengthen political loyalties and to reduce the present excessive reliance on television and media marketers like David Garth. We should also restore elitist policy-making and develop a modified shadow cabinet system to eliminate amateur-night government and bring more historical memory, knowledge, experience, and continuity to bear on issues.

Walter Lippmann once argued that "the common interests very largely elude public opinion entirely and can be managed only by a specialized class." His trust in experts all but vanished later in his life, and many issues certainly cannot be left safely to them. But solid knowledge, seasoned by experience and combined with political skill, is still essential to public wisdom.

Thirdly, I would mention education which is, as I see it, the only long-range hope for fundamental change. Without going into detail, I would make just a couple of observations. One is that education is the only way to combat TV-dinner values and promote more interest in learning and reflection. It is the best tool for building a new spirit of public service that emphasizes giving and sharing for a common good, as opposed to the self-centered, rights-demanding philosophy



which now seems to guide so many people. Education also is needed urgently to change the egocentric point of view that now permeates the government, the media, and nearly all of society, including education itself. This is a grievous American flaw that denies us the multi-cultural sensitivity and understanding necessary to deal wisely with other nations.

Finally, there is mass communications, particularly television, which has been a central focus of this discussion. There is now a rising clamor for reform — CBS and *Time* magazine were put in the public dock and the entire profession is scrambling to combat what it calls a “Credibility Crisis.” Radical modification of journalistic behavior is unlikely, because of coercive technology and stubborn tradition — that “eternal yesterday” as Max Weber called it. But modest improvement is possible.

The media should begin by assuming new duties to match their expanded power. They are now too deeply enmeshed in government to continue standing on the curbstone of history, rejecting any connection with the failures they celebrate. They need to become more constructive citizens, as interested in what is right as in what is wrong, accepting their share of responsibility for what goes badly or well. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan has observed, government cannot possibly succeed if it is always portrayed as failing.

The media also need to modify outmoded definitions of news that emphasize action over thought, conflict over harmony, the exceptional over the normal, and negative over positive. It is possible to report success and progress without alienating readers or viewers.

Journalists should be less arrogant, more tolerant of frailty in men and institutions, more sensitive to individual rights and human feelings, more generous of spirit so that the media are a force for conciliation, not just a goad for social conflict and disarray.

They also need to be more resistant to the pseudo drama and photogenic contrivances that television demands but which distort reality, overly emotionalize news, and interfere with the rational formation of public opinion. They should avoid creating artificial news — manufacturing controversies and personality clashes — simply to fill the vacuums of sensation which the medium abhors.

They need to develop new attitudes and innovative techniques to serve the special informational demands of a violently unstable world. The profession's smug defense of its present reactive, adversarial, and action-oriented system should not blind journalists to its grave deficiencies.

Among other things, I would specifically recommend a new kind of journalism — “preventive journalism” as opposed to the popular investigative journalism — that would approach the world in a very different way from what the press does now. Instead of only describing the ruins that follow disaster, preventive journalism would search in advance for the hidden forces of change; it would try to identify the underlying causes of crises before, rather than after, they explode so that an alerted

society might have time to protect itself from the ambushes of history. It is not enough for the media to provide the videotapes of war; they should also patrol ahead to uncover the hissing fuses.

This would require a different mindset and new techniques. It would mean looking deeply into societal trends, on a sustained, long-term basis, so that the public can see and hear

The beginning of wisdom is to recognize that there are no solutions for unsolvable problems.

the grinding gears that precede the crises which the media eventually cover so fully. To their credit, *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times* are doing some of this kind of reporting. But television and most newspapers are still dominated by an action-reaction mentality. And that is a worry.

The present period is one of those rare moments in the human story when we see history's changing of the guards, a new age replacing the old, and in the present case, producing an extraordinary confluence of phenomena — the Technological Revolution and modernism, the breakup of the colonial world, rampant new nationalism, the waning energies of the Industrial Age, and the related eroding dominance of the West.

The forces now surging through the world are affecting different peoples in different ways. But the universal instrument of change is instant mass communication which is accelerating, magnifying, and altering everything that is taking place. In the United States, television in particular is creating a new mass society that is redistributing political power, promoting plebiscitary politics over representative government, and substituting media appeal and popular impulse for rational decision.

No one can tell the final meaning of the turbulence around us, whether the signs we see are the signals of ascent or decline. No one can tell whether we are, as a people, in the spring of our seasons or only enjoying an Indian summer before winter sets in, to recall Toynbee's reference to Rome's last days.

But there is danger that we are failing the ultimate test of civilization, because our culture and our institutions are adapting too slowly to the momentous changes now reshaping society. We may also be failing because television has badly corroded the deliberative process, consensus politics, and other conditions necessary for effective democratic government.

One thing is certain. Wisdom is our greatest need and wisdom is our greatest loss. Its recovery should be the transcendent priority of the American people. ■

Blossoms from the Iron Tree

M.G.G. Pillai

Journalists see and report on events from a contested viewpoint.

For eleven months, until January 1985, the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the influential weekly on Asian affairs that is published in Hong Kong, appeared on Malaysian newsstands up to five weeks late. The Malaysian government, which prevented its regular distribution — as it can under the law — denied any suggestion of censorship; but officials indicated in private conversation that the pressure on the *Review*, which is in the stable of the Dow Jones group that owns *The Wall Street Journal* and its European and Asian editions, would remain until its chief correspondent in Malaysia, a citizen, was removed. He is not there any more, and the magazine now appears on time in Malaysia.

What was surprising about the affair was the *Review's* silence, during the eleven months, as it tried to negotiate with the government. None of the four Western news agencies — Reuters, Associated Press, United Press International, and the Agence France Presse — and *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, all of whom have resident correspondents, thought it important to write about the *Review's* problems until after they were all over.

This perhaps unconscious feeling is not unusual among Western news organizations — i.e., that acquiescing to occasional official pressures would, in turn,

bring about an understanding, implied or otherwise, that would strengthen their links with the government. But sometimes it does make nonsense of their public stance of arguing for more freedom and access for journalists.

But if anyone else, particularly a Third World newspaper, had caved in to such pressures, then that government and that newspaper would have been damned by the Western media, under the code of ethics to which all newspapers and journalistic organizations claim to subscribe to, but apply only when it suits them. This one law for “us,” the repository of all that is good about journalism, and “them,” those poor journalists of the poorer countries of the world, unable to write “freely” because of political and other pressures, is typical of the arrogance with which the “Free World” journalists look at the rest of the world.

A few years ago when a U.S. Secretary of State was in Malaysia while on a “whistle stop” tour of Asia — the only way he and his cabinet colleagues travel — I went for dinner with some members of the accompanying press corps. The subject turned, as it invariably does at these gatherings, to press freedom and the problem of reporting in countries like Malaysia. I said that journalists worked better in any situation or country when their sources are good, and they had access to them. It was one of those weeks when I had seen the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Home Minister in the course of a morning. I asked my friends when was the last time they had talked to, not to mention inter-

viewed alone, the Secretary of State, or had been briefed by him.

I thought then, as I do now, that I had a better understanding of how the Malaysian government felt about foreign and other policy issues than my American friends did about United States policy. More often than not, they depended on anonymous officials who, in a big bureaucracy like the one at Foggy Bottom or at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue or at the Pentagon, were more likely to push their particular “line” than tell you what was happening. My friends disagreed, of course, that they would be, or could be, neutralized by layers of junior officials, but they accepted the problem.

More often than is admitted by the trade, reporting hinges on whether access to news sources is easy or difficult. Reporters who barge into a country when a *coup*, famine, or earthquake takes place can never have the access that sensitive reporters like Robert Trumbull of *The New York Times* or Robert Shaplen [NF '48] of *The New Yorker* have built up over the years. It is necessary to come into a country, or anyplace, when nothing is happening, and to spend more than a little time drinking endless cups of coffee in idle chat until the news sources are comfortable enough to part with a few secrets off the record or, more important, point you in the right direction.

But few foreign correspondents can, want to, or are allowed to put in that much time by their editors. Their daily lives are dictated by the cast-iron deadlines of their newspapers, which often

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can find space only for world-shaking events, like the murder and cremation of the Indian prime minister; the Iran-Iraq war; entertainment spectacles like the royal wedding in London; human interest stories; or the antics of a non-European, like Idi Amin or Jean-Bedel Bokassa, which subconsciously reinforce the view, particularly in the Western world, that those not imbued with the finest of European or Christian civilization are not right in the head.

Lack of access in a country where press freedom is limitless is less to be desired than in a country where the reverse is true. If you have to write regularly on U.S. foreign policy based on what minor functionaries, whose role is at best peripheral, are prepared to tell you, need one wonder why that policy is misunderstood, and not only overseas, as indeed Soviet foreign policy is? Is there really any difference in access to the two septuagenarians who lead the two superpowers, Mr. Reagan and Mr. Chernenko? Has the White House correspondent of *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* a special advantage in interviewing President Reagan that the Tass correspondent wanting to interview his President does not have? Conversely, the *Pravda* correspondent in Washington has as much, or as little, chance of interviewing Mr. Reagan as *The Los Angeles Times'* man in Moscow has of interviewing Mr. Chernenko. They would get their interviews only if it was decided they should, and that decision is not theirs to make.

Too often we rule our lives by glib definitions. The story rarely written is about development and the unglamorous drudgery that surrounds it, but without which a state cannot push itself forward. Some bureaucrats and journalists, most of whom came from the Third World some years ago, came up with "development journalism," to look at growth and its impact on these poor countries. An admirable idea, but the bureaucrats, and among them were some journalists, quickly put their imprimatur on a number of virtually iron-clad rules which made nonsense of the whole project.

One perceptive journalist, only half jokingly, said that "it was necessary to have a tractor in the first paragraph before that story could come under the definition of development journalism."

But development stories today are no different from political or diplomatic stories. What was said gets more prominence than what was done; a rehash of a report that often means nothing, rather than the building of a tubewell in Upper Volta, still gets more emphasis. It is easier, and much more fun, since one does not have to forego such simple pleasures as filet mignon and vintage champagne, to report on speeches that

The rarely written story is about development and the unglamorous drudgery that surrounds it, but without which a state cannot push itself forward.

leaders make but do not mean, than to trudge to some godforsaken village in a remote, poor country and listen to heart-rending stories of hunger, pestilence, and famine or to write about that village boy who has built a mudhouse that can withstand floods.

To complement development journalism is "investigative journalism," which the Watergate scandal made popular, and which flooded journalism schools and newspapers in the United States with aspiring "investigative journalists." We get taken in by these fads that quickly catch the imagination of the country and then bask in the glory that deification brings about, forgetting that the qualifying adjectives like "investigative" and "development" are tautological. But by adopting these catchy labels, and by trying to be trendy — whatever that word means — we in the trade lose touch with reality while insisting we have not.

When I read recently in an American journalism magazine how President Rea-

gan's media advisers placed rings around the White House press corps on the President's internal and overseas tours, I could not help noting that the situation was no different for Malaysian, British, Filipino, or other reporters who traveled with their local dignitaries. But it is considered proper to be in a "pool" in Washington, D.C., or Paris, France, but not in Dhaka, Bangladesh, or Jakarta, Indonesia, even if what these "pool" reporters write about is the same trivia that passes for news in the United States as elsewhere — what the leaders had for breakfast; what inanities they spoke; the seemingly erudite analysis of speeches from which have been removed any suggestion that something is brewing. At best, they are banal and wordy.

So what we get is a view that is as remote from the truth as it could be. With notable exceptions, newspapers emphasize entertainment rather than news. This is not peculiar to the United States: The owners encourage it since it keeps readers happy and the authorities off their backs. The coverage of the recent American elections, and of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's assassination and funeral in November, was treated as an unscheduled entertainment in the press and on television and radio around the world.

But this superficiality, unfortunately, prevails only too often in reporting of the "hot spots" of the world. News reports from Iran focus, often enough, on the illiberal nature of the Islamic structure of the state and the personal foibles of the clergy, but little about the support that the Ayatollah Khomeini, octogenarian and frail as he is, obviously has in the country. Cuba's Fidel Castro rules as he has for the past quarter of a century, even with Soviet help, only because he has the support of his people. This support, however indirect, can move mountains, as the Shah of Iran discovered to his cost, and can keep rulers in power long after the rest of the world has written them off.

But this is not confined to political and foreign reportage; it is in every sphere of reporting and is made difficult by the nature of the bureaucracy, the instincts of politicians, the growth of the public relations industry, the weakness

of the opposition, and the partiality of much of the information that is fed to the public, whether by governments or by interest groups.

Reporters and newspapers do not often accept the fact that they have a problem with these conflicting pressures and often pretend that all is well, when it is not. They have to change, but that change is not predicated to a Western, Soviet, or any other model. That the countries in the Third World want a change is as valid as the view that any government involvement in the flow of information could only bring about censorship, or worse. But the happy medium that satisfies both extremes remains elusive so long as news is covered on the basis of need, and not relevance. Much of the copy from Western news agencies is irrelevant, just as much of the copy from government controlled news agencies of the poorer countries is.

Unfortunately, the issue is seen in Cold War terms. The Soviet support for a new information order is enough for Washington to oppose it. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made it easier for the United States to assist, covertly, the Afghan resistance, although Washington blotted its copybook by its ham-handed invasion of that dot of an island called Grenada. Washington's schizophrenia over its relations with El Salvador and Nicaragua spills over to the reportage, which does not do the American press proud, if you measure it by the yardstick of what they claim to stand for. Art Buchwald's definition of a freedom fighter as an anti-government force supported by the United States, and a rebel as one backed by the Soviet Union, Libya, or one of the other countries that the "Free World" takes to be "uncivilized," contains more than a grain of truth. So it is Afghan "freedom fighters," but El Salvadorean "rebels."

The effectiveness of the press in a given situation ought to be judged by the prevailing circumstances, whether they be in the United States, Britain, or elsewhere, but it rarely is. The virtual civil war in Northern Ireland has lasted longer than most civil commotions, and has caused as much disruption to British civil life, in relative terms, as the fighting in

Chad, Lebanon, Afghanistan, or Kampuchea has in those countries. But it never has been reported with the same intensity as the tribal wars that have wracked Zimbabwe or the Sudan, almost as if there is a conspiracy to keep out of the public eye the bloody spectacle of two civilized, Western, Christian tribes misbehaving like those quarrelsome, uncivilized, heathen tribes of Africa or Asia.

For the journalist, the problems of orientation are not limited to Senegal; they are equally prevalent in the United States, Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, or Malaysia. The other day, my local television station showed a remarkable and sensitive National Geographic film about a cruise down the Volga in the Soviet Union. For a moment while I collected my senses, assailed by a daily diet of news that depicts the Soviet Union and its people as evil by nature with no redeeming qualities, what surprised me was that most of the Russians had the same feelings that I have; that they are human beings as we are; that they bleed when their fingers are pricked; that they have suffered as much, if not more, than the citizens of other countries in World War II.

But like millions of others, I am a victim of an axiom of human nature: If you turn your enemy — or presumed enemy — into an evil beast, it is easier to hate him. The United States and the Soviet Union have regarded each other as enemies for four decades. Their leaders have decided that they trust their own judgment and ability to press the nuclear button at the right time, that it is a more effective deterrent than negotiations would ever be. We are shaken with tears and with disbelief when we see a retired Soviet colonel and one of his former soldiers, both in their seventies, tearfully hugging and embracing each other at a chance encounter in a small town along the Volga, before a memorial for the thousands who died in a battle during the Second World War, from which the pair had returned home.

The politics of the press, by which I include all media and their reporting of the world, are as much fashioned by for-

eign policy considerations as they are with the mechanics of placing reporters in key places, and linking computer terminals in remote corners of the earth. That is at the heart of the *contretemps* over the new information order. The United States' withdrawal from UNESCO does not change the status quo; it only hardens existing positions, making it even more difficult to soften, or narrow, the differences. The politicization of UNESCO is only incidental to Washington's central complaint of bias; but it has become a victim of East-West differences over what the world of the future ought to look like. Both Washington and Moscow use UNESCO as a pawn, disregarding the consequences to those who benefit from its existence.

Unfortunately, we in the press do not stray too far from these positions, since we are conditioned to accept our government's point of view on many issues, whatever the truth is. We write reams about, and in support of, those countries that are reluctant to send food and other aid to Ethiopia for fear of bolstering the Marxist-Leninist regime there, forgetting to mention, or ignoring, that a starving three-year-old child could not be a Marxist-Leninist in any country. We mock at the geriatric leadership in Moscow, but we are surprised when Mr. Reagan sometimes shows his age. What is the difference between a Romania wanting to distance itself from the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, and a New Zealand wanting to be independent enough from Washington to deny entry to U.S. warships that carry nuclear warheads?

We know, or think we know, what would happen to a Russian reporter in the Soviet Union if he wrote regularly about the United States' point of view on international issues in Soviet newspapers and magazines. But could American or British or German reporters write regularly about the Soviet view of events in the major newspapers in their country? Would press freedom be stretched that far to allow someone to explain regularly, as part of his or her beat for an important newspaper, the other point of view, particularly that of a country which is regarded as an enemy? Report-

ers in the United States, in Western Europe, and other bastions of the "Free World" have had their telephones tapped, or worse, for lesser indiscretions.

We forget, or we refuse to accept, that countries, like individuals, are conditioned differently by their history, experience, and attitudes. It is as difficult to clone a country as it is to clone an individual. Asking a country, as the United States sometimes does, to give up its historical and cultural conditioning, to fit into a mold of what the "civilized" world would like it to do, is to bait that country into injured agony and retaliation. Long before the Soviet Union came into existence, men from the secret service of the Tsars were following suspicious foreigners and suspected revolutionaries, as the KGB does now to preserve the security of the state. American television crime series are not shown nor allowed to be shown on French television stations, because the legal systems are different and could cause confusion to viewers. President Jimmy Carter's human rights policy, commendable as it was, projected a peculiarly Anglo-Saxon view on the global scene. For millennia, China has never accepted the belief that individuals have rights. For it to believe otherwise, one would have to wait, as a Chinese idiom puts it so expressively, until the iron tree blossoms.

Reporters trained in what I would call, for want of a better phrase, the Western mold, see themselves as self-important figures in society, able at will to encroach on the privacy of individuals, and to bring down a government they accuse of wrongdoing. We forget how true is the aphorism: Facts are the enemy of truth. In our scrupulous desire for accuracy, we often miss the woods for the trees; often the facts are accurate, but the story may not be true. In the Philippines, an "honest" election is one in which both opposition and government have equal opportunity to stuff ballot boxes; to suggest then, as one Western magazine did before the recent elections, that this was the most dishonest in its history misses the point altogether.

We forget that journalists are individ-

uals, no better or worse than the targets of their reportage. We are as good, bad, indifferent, crooked, prejudiced, stupid, mealy-mouthed as the best, or worst, of our fellowmen and women, but we hide our faults as we uncover those of others and we give them exaggerated prominence. A recent book on inaccuracy in the media noted that "newspapers had lied to entertain, to compete with each other, to propagate their political convictions, and to persecute those with whom they disagreed." The reference is to Britain, but it could apply to any country, from Australia to Zaire.

We do not accept the built-in biases with which we write, our public protestations of neutrality notwithstanding. We are upset when courts make our work more difficult by issuing pronouncements that give our journalistic targets legal ammunition and protection to strike back at us: We are the first to cry "foul" when our constitutional rights as journalists are challenged or eroded by the courts. But are we as scrupulously concerned that our investigations into individuals and others could restrict their rights? I am not convinced that we are.

We see and report on events from a contested viewpoint, whether as a Russian writing about Western Europe, an American writing about Poland, or a Ghanaian writing about South Africa. To read of the battle of Waterloo in the history books of Britain, France, or Germany is to read of three utterly different battles. The built-in bias of each country supersedes the historian's search

for objectivity and has to be — indeed, must be — taken into account in any attempt to explain or reform the world.

The brouhaha over *The New Yorker* reporter who manufactured quotes and scenes, and of Janet Cooke's story of Jimmy, the "composite" eight-year-old drug addict, are indicative of our collective thin skins as the general opinion of "us," as practitioners of a respectable trade, declines. There are few reporters who can truthfully say that they have done none of these, for as long as journalism is "popularized" to attract readers' attention, this would be inevitable.

Sometimes it is necessary to invent scenes, as *The New Yorker* writer did, to explain a country to someone with only a vague idea where it is. But the hapless man or woman who is caught is a convenient target for attacks to draw attention away from our own sins. The recent revelation that the one-year-old grandson of Mr. Robert Hawke, the Australian prime minister, was a drug addict only reinforces the central theme of the Cooke story about young drug addicts, who become one because their parents are. But we were so intent on making an example of Miss Cooke that we ignored the larger problem of juvenile drug addiction, and soon forgot about it.

Journalism indicates bias, and the less that bias enters the story, the better it would be. Businessmen, politicians, and interest groups often direct their fire at the media to draw fire away from their own indiscretions and venality; we then are upset and take an introspective look at our handling of the matter. No other trade or profession does this. Businessmen, lawyers, real estate agents, and doctors have gone to jail for breaching the codes of their profession, but their colleagues do not agonize over the morality of it all. Like Caesar's wife, we should be beyond reproach; but ideally so should a doctor, dentist, policeman, shopkeeper, and for that matter, every human being. Only the journalist, however, freezes into impotence when a colleague's shenanigans come to light. We have a right — indeed, we are obliged — to strive for and demand of others exacting standards, but do we have to be their keeper, as well? ■



The Missing Agenda

Dana Bullen

Where the press is free, the people are free.

I would like to touch briefly on what I see as the “missing agenda” in proposals for a New World Information Order. I feel a fresh start should be made on what is needed. It should begin with a clearer view of what *really* limits and distorts news flows — things like censorship, choking off news flows, closing borders to correspondents, closing newspapers, and things like killing journalists to halt their work or intimidate their colleagues.

But first, let me mention a few things about the World Press Freedom Committee, which includes 32 affiliated organizations on five continents. Our program is focused on supporting press freedom and on helping our colleagues in the media in developing countries.

In recent years, the World Press Freedom Committee has provided more than 70 helpful programs and projects to assist colleagues and media in developing countries. These mainly are training seminars, consultancies, and similar things. We have been active with such

projects from Kenya to Kathmandu, from Bangladesh to Barbados.

With regard to issues related to a New World Information Order, we believe that:

► The right to know, to inform, and to be informed, is a fundamental human right. It is not subject to qualifications or restrictions by governments or international bodies.

► The function of a free press is to serve this right of the people to know. Restrictions on press freedom are restrictions on the people's freedom.

► All people are entitled to a free press. There is no nation which is insufficiently developed or its citizens unready for a free press.

These and other principles of a free and independent press are found in the Declaration of Talloires.

Now, I suppose all of us oppose censorship. The guiding statement on such matters is Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At times I've called this the “First Amendment of the World.”

Article 19 provides that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

How are these principles being carried out around the world? Not well. I wish I could tell you differently. In some places, the situation is desperate.

In two-thirds to three-quarters of the world — the figures are, respectively, for

print and broadcast media — governments either control the news media or have a dominant voice in what does or does not appear. Problems facing newsmen and women range from fear for their lives to more subtle pressures to shape what they write according to somebody else's agenda.

The latest report by the International Press Institute in London on the status of press freedom around the world paints a shocking picture of freedom on the run.

“Free speech is a dying right,” reports IPI Director Peter Galliner. “This past year has seen a continuing increase in the number of journalists expelled, jailed, or murdered. There have been more cases of newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting stations forcibly closed.”

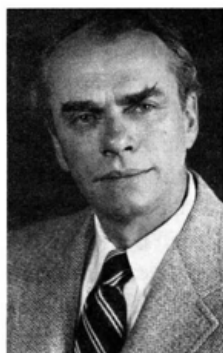
The IPI report goes on to detail abuses against journalists, closings of newspapers, and the like for countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. This dismal record takes 54 columns of fairly small type.

Index on Censorship, the London-based publication, recently took 24 columns of type for its own report on problems facing journalists.

In Indonesia, for instance, censors carefully scan all incoming foreign publications before they reach newsstands or subscribers. According to a recent account, the censors blot out offending material with a thick layer of gummy black ink, then affix a flap of paper over the damp blotch to prevent it from blemishing the inoffensive print on the facing page.

In Nigeria, a recent decree by the government granted itself power to close down newspapers and radio and televi-

Dana Bullen, executive director of the World Press Freedom Committee and Nieman Fellow '67, made these remarks in January during a panel discussion on the New World Information Order at the World Affairs Council of Boston.



(Koby-Antupit Studio)

sion stations deemed to be acting in a manner detrimental to the interest of the government.

In the Sudan, three journalists were sentenced to die just last week for publishing a political pamphlet.

A straight-to-the-point, stark report from Uruguay a while back said simply:

The following publications were shut down by government this week:

- 1) *Somos Idea*. Weekly. Closed down permanently.
- 2) *Busqueda*. Weekly. Closed for 8 editions.
- 3) *Cinco Dias*. Daily. Closed down permanently.
- 4) *La Prensa*. Daily. Closed for 90 editions.
- 5) *Tribuna Amplia*. Weekly. Closed down permanently.

I wish more were being done by the international community to make clear the extent of censorship — and to act against it.

Recently I had occasion to check the titles of 71 booklets prepared since 1955 in UNESCO's series of "Reports and Papers on Mass Communication." There is not one on censorship. The ten titles in UNESCO's series of "Documents on the New Communication Order" do not include one on censorship. Even more startling, in the latest report for 1980-81, the subject index of documents on file at UNESCO on a "New World Information and Communication Order" does not even give censorship as a subject heading.

I find this puzzling. One would think there would be at least somewhere at UNESCO a listing of those countries that censor the press. Unfortunately, many of these are the exact same countries that call so persistently in the United Nations for a New World Information Order. It takes no great leap of imagination to wonder what they have in mind for this.

If the communications revolution is to benefit all people, there should be no impediments to cooperative efforts

toward that goal. Too many of the proposals for a New World Information Order suggest such impediments for a free flow of news.

Specifically, we should *reject*:

► Proposals to define a "right to communicate" that would qualify the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. To specify who should have this right and under what conditions would be a restriction of a universal entitlement.

► Procedures imposed or inspired by governments or intergovernmental bodies for "democratization of communication" or "participation in communication" that would usurp the editorial function and threaten press independence.

► Proposals by governments or intergovernmental organizations to impose "codes of conduct" for the news media. The responsibility of the press is to report and analyze fairly and fearlessly, to the best of its professional capability and conscience. To set other goals — such as the promotion of any specified objective — is to interfere with the content of the news.

► Proposals that would, in the name of "protection of journalists," introduce journalistic licensing, sanction the surveillance of journalists, or place conditions on their entitlement to protection.

Finally, we should reject proposals advanced in the name of "national sovereignty" or "information sovereignty" that would filter or otherwise restrict the distribution or broadcasting of news reports across national borders and around the world.

A more positive approach — one that would fill in what I call the "missing agenda" — would *support*:

► The importance of private and independent news media.

► Editorial independence of state-owned news media.

► Continued efforts by the media themselves — not prescribed by others — to improve the handling of news from developing countries.

► Strengthening the role of the press as a watchdog and as a guardian, against abuses of power.

These — and a number of other things — make up the "missing agenda" of a New World Information Order.

I believe the vigilance of a free and independent press — far from detracting from economic, political, or cultural development — can serve as a major contribution to progress by exposing waste, corruption, and unproductive diversion of resources and providing a forum to debate the goals of national development.

It is true. Where the press is free, the people are free.

To curtail or restrict free and open reporting for whatever stated purpose — national unity, the "national interest," or national development — is to deny the people participation in the decisions affecting their destiny.

In place of a rhetoric of duties, restrictions, and controls, why not put forward an approach at UNESCO, and wherever else a New World Information Order is discussed, that:

► Rejects rather than ignores censorship.

► Promotes the free flow of news as mandated by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, instead of seeking ways to bend and limit this.

► Opposes shutting down newspapers or turning off radio stations for reporting what upsets or angers somebody in power.

► Allocates resources evenly between independent and government media rather than exclusively for the latter, when it sets up an International Program for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

► Opposes the channeling of all incoming news to a country through a government-run agency, blocking direct access for news media.

► Rejects efforts, such as the Kadoma Declaration of southern Africa's "front-line" states, to bar foreign correspondents from traveling between countries by erecting little Berlin walls against the flow of ideas.

And why — I want to say this as strongly as is within my power — why don't we find a way to stop the killing, torturing, and jailing of journalists? ■

THE BOOKSHELF

A Record of the Record

Helms and Hunt: The North Carolina Senate Race, 1984
William D. Snider. The University of North Carolina Press, 1985, \$9.50

by Rick Nichols

It was, in the end, the longest and costliest race for the United States Senate, not simply in North Carolina, but in the history of the republic. And, in the end, incumbent Senator Jesse Helms left his challenger, Governor Jim Hunt, soiled and beaten. For \$22 million, the state might have hoped for more than a mud-wrestling match. But then, mud-wrestling tells you something.

What it told in the North Carolina Senate Race of 1984 was that race and religion are still pressed easily into political service in the New South, that prejudice and fear remain powerful fund-raising and registration tools, that money buys television time — and television is “where it’s at.” It told that the political spots — morning, noon, and night — can define news coverage; that a Jessie Jackson can beget a Jerry Falwell in a seesaw for new voters; that Helms’ old warnings of “the bloc vote” had lost no appeal; that fundamentalists, no longer their social activist brethren, now confidently shape the agenda of the 1980’s.

New Right darling Jesse Helms won with “outside money, inside money, and sanctimony,” said one wag when, thankfully, the campaign concluded. But it will be — or should be — a contest remembered more for what it measured about the mood of the 1980’s, than for its strategies alone.

If there is a flaw in William D. Snider’s account, it is that it dwells on the strategies, but shies from plumbing that mood. It is more impersonal chronicle (much of it based on newspaper cover-

age) than personal exploration; more record than interpretation.

But it is a record well worth reading, especially for political journalists. We meet the sanctimonious Senator Helms, standing on “principle,” a crusader for social causes — school prayer and anti-abortion and morality — flustered in the study of his Raleigh home when a *Charlotte Observer* photographer shows up: “Helms quickly pulled an illustration off the wall and away from the camera. ‘That’ll get me in trouble,’ he told reporter Bill Arthur. The picture showed a smiling, toothy black man wearing a planter’s hat, sitting in a rocking chair on a columned mansion porch.

“He was drinking a mint julep and the caption read: ‘This is what me and Martin Luther had in mind.’”

Would that Bill Snider, the retired editor of the *Greensboro News and Record*, had not put so many thousands of words between such revealing pictures. He buries his candle. It is not until the final pages that he looks up from the press clippings and sees the light.

In a state that produced such a constitutional scholar as Senator Sam Ervin, Snider sees a refinement and extension of the old Huey Long-Theodore Bilbo populism that once fanned the furies of the alienated, small-town South. He sees a Senator Helms who has “managed to make his New Right politics agreeable both to the affluent business community and the blue-collar and rural masses. . . a new force in Southern politics, a 1980’s version of Eric Hoffer’s True Believer.”

Helms, he concludes, is an unvarnished version of Ronald Reagan — hell-

bent on getting government’s hands off business while tightening its grip on personal morals. It is an explosive combination that Snider finds has “seldom made much headway in American politics.”

That Jim Hunt, afflicted by “me-tooism,” lured into negative advertising, was not the man to unseat Helms says something about the candidate, but more about the conservative temper of the times.

Hunt flayed at Helms’ considerable and unabashed links to El Salvador’s right-wing pariah, Roberto D’Aubuisson, but backed the Reagan policy in Central America. He stood against the nuclear freeze and for military spending for the MX and B-1 bomber. He refused to stay an election-eve execution. He advocated voluntary school prayer.

But try as he did to duck the “Mondale liberal” label Helms hung around his neck, Hunt soon became fair game for the racists, demagogues, and haters of North Carolina. “Jim Hunt is Sissy, Prissy, Girlish, and Effeminate,” bleated a particularly notorious headline in a little Chapel Hill tabloid called the *Landmark*.

Hunt’s campaign didn’t hesitate to use the press itself. It reprinted a 1981 *Wall Street Journal* story saying that Helms “apparently had a pet name — a euphemism — for blacks. He calls them ‘Fred.’” Helms’ backers promptly issued a 40-page booklet of nasty drawings of Hunt, one showing him in a pigsty. The caption read: “Will Jim support tax-funded abortion for poor animals?”

Months after the election, in March 1985, Helms would implicitly defend his fund-raising and heavy advertising before the twelfth annual Conservative Political Action Conference. The nation’s top newspapers and networks, he said, were “profoundly out of step with the ideals and goals of the American people.”

To get a fair shake, to burn away “liberal bias,” he was launching the stock-

buyout of CBS. For Helms, the anti-media campaign played well, though he himself was a product of WRAL-TV in Raleigh, where throughout the 1960's, he delivered the nightly *Editorial Viewpoint*.

It was from that electronic pulpit that he blasted "beatniks, prostitutes, and communists," usually for their purported role in Civil Rights marches. And it was from that pulpit that he introduced himself to North Carolina and, subsequently, the nation.

Senator Helms' agenda and his influence — now that a third term looms — is likely to be an "explosive combination" for years to come. It is to his credit that William Snider, in the end, detects the Senator's potency. But it will remain for others to take its full measure; to search, finally, its soul.

Rick Nichols, Nieman Fellow '78, is on the editorial board of The Philadelphia Inquirer.

ing for the arts to strenuous questioning. *The Democratic Muse* does not begin with the founding of the national endowments in 1965. Rather, he goes through chapters that engage in spirited debate over the very questions "What is art?" and "Who decides?" If art can't be defined, weighed, and measured, then how can the public be asked to pay for it; particularly a public that in Banfield's judgment receives minimal benefit anyhow from the treasures of museums, which he maintains are still pretty much private preserves in spite of the so-called outreach programs of the last two decades.

"Not all activities affecting public interest properly merit governmental action," Banfield writes. "Indeed, there is near-universal agreement that government is inherently unsuited to deal with some of them. Religion is a conspicuous example. Most Americans, including unbelievers, would agree that it is in the public interest for religious belief to be widespread. Very few, however, would favor the creation of a National Endowment for Religion; even those who did not fear this agency would infringe upon religious freedom might well expect its activities to be ineffective at best or even counterproductive."

The Constitution effectively preempts the establishment of a National Endowment for Religion, and Banfield contends, there was no pre-ordained, certainly no clear constitutional support, either, for public funding for artists or institutions that house art; not even for institutions that foster education in art. What Banfield does is grab the grandiose and high-blown statements that precede

continued on page 47

Creativity and the Government Dollar

The Democratic Muse — Visual Arts and the Public Interest
Edward C. Banfield. Basic Books, Inc. New York, 1984, \$15.95

by Gerald B. Jordan

Public funding for the arts has reached the big leagues of politics. The dollars — notably the \$164 million that this year will go to funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) — still are relatively minor when one considers the runaway costs and wasteful spending of the Pentagon. But the very fact that arts advocates now spend time lobbying federal, state, and local governing bodies puts them in the same ball park with other so-called "special interests."

In *The Democratic Muse*, an essay for the Twentieth Century Fund, an independent research foundation, Harvard University's Markham Professor of Government, Edward C. Banfield, probes the subject of public funding for the arts with his scholarly zeal. Government support for the arts and arts institutions, including museums, has become so prominent in discussions that it is now part of rigorous legislative debate, and is no longer a simple benign gesture made by politicians. Advocates for the arts have to compete with other lobbyists. Somewhat akin to the widespread

change in popular opinion on such issues as affirmative action and school busing as public policy remedies for past ills, legislative support for public funding for the arts is being tested sternly, sometimes to the point of rejection.

Banfield quotes from a 1966 annual report of the NEA (which was founded the previous year): "We should provide equal opportunity for the actor as well as the physicist, for the poet as well as the biochemist, for the sculptor as well as the mathematician." Then he harpoons these lofty intentions by saying, "Why should career opportunities for artists be 'equal' — whatever it might mean — to those of scientists? Why not of, say, baseball players?" He adds that the concern of the newly appointed NEA director was to "get the NEA underway and create enthusiasm for it." Enter the dragon lobbyist.

Banfield, in fact, subjects public fund-



Nieman Fellows, 1985-86

Twelve American journalists and seven from other countries have been appointed to the 48th class of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University. Established in 1938 through a bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman, the Fellowships provide a year of study in any part of the University.

The eleven men and eight women in the new Nieman class are:

MICHA BAR-AM, 54, photojournalist with *The New York Times* and correspondent for Magnum. Mr. Bar-Am is self-taught, and at Harvard plans to study philosophy, modern art and visual communication, and the Arabic language.

HARRY BISSINGER III, 30, reporter with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. He is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and will focus on international relations, the political philosophies and strategies of the Soviet Union, as well as Russian history and literature.

MADELEINE BLAIS, 37, staff writer with *Tropic* magazine, *The Miami Herald*. Ms. Blais received her B.A. from the College of New Rochelle and a M.S. from Columbia University, School of Journalism. She will concentrate on literature, the Latin language, and psychology, especially social behavioral problems.

LYNN EMMERMAN, 30, a reporter on the metro staff, the *Chicago Tribune*. Ms. Emmerman graduated from Columbia College. During her Nieman year she proposes to study the behavioral sciences, English and American literature, and computer science.

I. ROBERTO EISENMANN, Jr., 47, president, Corporacion la Prensa, Republic of Panama. Mr. Eisenmann is an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania. His study interests include the fields of politics and government, especially the political structure of Central American countries.

MARK ETHRIDGE III, 35, managing editor, *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer*.

He received a baccalaureate degree from Princeton University, and at Harvard plans to study the theory of the distinctive American South through courses in American history, politics, literature, business, economics, music, and Afro-American history.

CARMEN FIELDS, 36, reporter with WNEV-TV, Boston. Ms. Fields holds a B.A. from Lincoln University and a M.S. from Boston University. She will focus her studies on political science, with an emphasis on civil rights; American foreign policy, especially with regard to Central America and/or Africa; Afro-American Studies, as well as the black women oral history project at Radcliffe College's Schlesinger Library.

MARY LOU FINLAY, 38, journalist and television host with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Toronto. Ms. Finlay received her B.A. from the University of Ottawa. At Harvard she will concentrate on studies in economics and international politics, ethical problems of the Fourth Estate, and management skills at the Business School.

GUSTAVO GORRITI, 37, executive news editor of *Caretas* magazine, Lima, Peru. Mr. Gorriti is an alumnus of San Marcos and Hebrew Universities. He plans to study political science, including aspects of the viability of democratic institutions in Latin America and the Third World, as well as the role of vio-

lence, and an alternative to authoritarian administrations.

NADARAJAH KANAGARATNAM, 43, editor, *The Star*, Selangor, Malaysia. Mr. Kanagaratnam is a graduate of the University of Malaya. He is interested in studying international affairs, with an emphasis on power conflicts in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea regions — their governments, foreign and defense policies, and their relationship with the big powers. Also, he wishes to learn management skills at the Harvard Business School.

ATHELIA KNIGHT, 34, staff writer with *The Washington Post*. Ms. Knight holds degrees from Norfolk State College and Ohio State University. At Harvard she will focus on her professional speciality of reporting on the criminal justice system and take courses in the theory of law, the criminal process and the administration of justice, as well as the relationship of the national economy to crime.

GENEVA OVERHOLSER, 37, deputy editorial page editor, the *Des Moines (Iowa) Register*. Ms. Overholser is a graduate of Wellesley College and has a graduate degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. She plans to concentrate on studies in international relations, energy policies, national security, arms control, foreign policy, and recent diplomatic history.

LAURA PARKER, 31, reporter with the *Seattle (Washington) Post-Intelligencer*. Ms. Parker holds the B.A. degree from the University of Washington. At Harvard she will focus her studies on Asia, its history, economics, culture, and politics.

BARRY SHLACHTER, 35, East Africa correspondent, the Associated Press. Mr. Shlachter is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh. He plans to study American policies of foreign aid, economics, the present and future role of the daily press, the power of countries in southeast Asia, and the Japanese language.



FRANK SOTOMAYOR, 41, assistant metro editor, *The Los Angeles Times*. Mr. Sotomayor has a B.A. degree from the University of Arizona and a M.A. degree from Stanford University. At Harvard he plans to explore the important health, legal, ethical, and public policy issues that have been raised in several prominent cases during the last two years. He will take courses in General Education, the History of Science, environmental issues and policies, the history and status of minority and immigrant communities in urban America.

RICHARD STEYN, 41, editor, the *Natal Witness*, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. Mr. Steyn has a B.A. degree from Stellenbosch University, in addition to the LL.B. degree in Roman Dutch Law. His main interests are in the areas of international politics and modern history; his studies will focus on international relations in the twentieth century, the uses of history, politics, and government in the United States, current issues and conflicts in Africa, macroeconomic theory, and international trade and investment.

DAVID SYLVESTER, 34, business writer, the *San Jose (California) Mercury News*. Mr. Sylvester has earned degrees from the University of Chicago and the State University of New York at Albany. At Harvard he wishes to study the natural life cycle of a technological revolution and plans to take courses in American economic history, political economics, the theory of scientific revolutions, the history of nineteenth-century liberalism and its reform movements, as well as the history of American industry.

STANLEY TINER, 42, editor, *Shreveport (Louisiana) Journal*. Mr. Tiner is a graduate of Louisiana Technological University. He will concentrate on studies in twentieth-century American history, government and politics, the American novel, and a course on modern China.

YVONNE VAN DER HEIJDEN, 29, social-economic editor, *Eindhovens Dagblad*, Zuid, Holland. Ms. van der Heijden is an alumna of the Institute for Higher Professional Education in Eindhoven. Her studies will focus on international political and economic relations, including the influence of the

United States on Western Europe, the consequences of industrialization in developing countries, the international information flood, and political and economic developments in the United States.

Funding for two American journalists has been provided by grants from the Gannett Foundation and the GTE Sprint Communications Corporation.

Nieman Fellowships for journalists from other countries are supported by funding from the Asia Foundation, the Martin Wise Goodman Memorial Nieman Fellowship with funds from the United States and Canada, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program. ■

LETTERS

A Press Baron's Legacy

Last autumn NR published a memorable article on the late press lord E. W. Scripps. It was a rumpled-shirt, warts-and-all account of a man with principles even larger than his peccadillos — which were themselves more than life-size.

William J. Miller, author of the article, was taking aim at a *New York Times* book review that lumped Scripps with William Randolph Hearst as defenders of the poor who had "ended up as defenders of the establishment and worse." Mr. Miller demonstrated handily that to the contrary, Scripps remained all his days an unregenerate and unrepentant liberal.

It occurred to me that the *Times* might find in this article a pretext for some at least inferential acknowledgment that to equate a Scripps with a Hearst is a bit like confusing Peter Pan (well, a rather worldly Peter Pan) with Captain Hook. But though I have watched carefully, this letter is my sorrowful report that so far there has been no hint of such an acknowledgment — not so much as a wink or a nod.

WILLARD R. ESPY
New York City

Exchange Is Not Change

Amen to Robert Gillette's suggestion (*Nieman Reports*, Spring 1985) that mistrust between the Soviet Union and the

United States may relate more to understanding than to misunderstanding each other's motives. But how can we be sure of that, or anything else, unless we communicate?

Some misunderstanding may underlie Gillette's admonition that "Soviet leaders with whom ASNE apparently prefers to deal" are "professional well-poisoners."

The USSR Union of Journalists chose its delegation and the board of directors of the American Society of Newspaper Editors chose ours. Neither side was invited to suggest who might represent the other side. We did not anticipate that they would choose patsies.

What ASNE expected to gain from an exchange with the Union of Journalists depends on which ASNE member is asked. Probably no member expected to convert, to be converted by, the experience. The media of any society must be acceptable to the forces that drive that society, ideology notwithstanding.

Probably the most to be expected of such an exchange is that each media might better understand how, and why, the other functions. Our delegation felt that gain, however small and hard-won, was worthwhile.

WATSON SIMS
Vice Chairman, ASNE Committee
on International Communication

(Mr. Sims, Nieman Fellow '53, is editor of *The Home News*, New Brunswick, New Jersey.)

Nathan Caldwell

1913—1985

This editorial appeared in The Tennessean February 13, 1985, and is printed with permission. Mr. Caldwell was a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1941.

Mr. Nat Caldwell, 72, who drowned Monday [February 11] in an accident at his home near Hendersonville, was a reporter who had reached the peaks in journalistic achievement. But he never forgot that he was a working newspaperman with another story to finish.

During 51 years as a reporter for this newspaper he had won a Pulitzer Prize — along with the late Gene Graham [NF '63], another *Tennessean* reporter — and had received numerous other prizes and awards, fellowships, and honors. But these did not affect his humility or take his attention off the next story he was to write. For the next story was the most important one to him, whether it was prize-winning material or a piece about a real estate transaction.

Mr. Caldwell often became a part of the stories he wrote. When he investigated nursing homes he dressed up as a sick old man and joined the other patients, sharing their long nights of loneliness. He posed as a penniless beggar to test the charity of some church leaders in the community. When he was in the coal fields to work on a story he sympathized deeply with the workers and acted as if their troubles were his troubles.

Mr. Caldwell has been credited with great influence in the building of the present-day agricultural-industrial economy of Tennessee and the Midsouth. Former TVA board Chairman S. David Freeman said at a dinner in 1983 that "The TVA is alive today in large part because of Nat Caldwell." The reporter was also responsible for creating numerous projects that contributed to the growth of industry, transportation, and other economic elements in local communities of Tennessee.

Despite possessing such influence and recognition, Mr. Caldwell retained the common touch. His sympathies lay with the underdog — the working man, the elderly. He was at heart a farmer. He was capable of intellectual conversation of a high order, but he enjoyed talking about agricultural subjects. He was always alert to new methods of farming, developments in plant life, and innovations in livestock breeding. He liked to raise Jersey calves, tend flocks of geese, and enjoy the outdoor life.

As a reporter he was at the same time the bane and the delight of city editors. He might disappear for days while the city editor frantically tried to find him to do a story. Then suddenly Mr. Caldwell would turn up with that story or a better one in hand. And for a prize-winning reporter he was remarkably amenable to suggestions for change or additional work. He continued to put in long hours and turn out voluminous copy until he became ill a few days before his fatal accident.

Mr. Caldwell was loved and admired by thousands of Tennesseans. But he was a celebrity among journalists. Anyone entering the city room of *The Tennessean*, however, would be hard put to pick out the celebrity from the other reporters. If not found hunched over his desk hard at work he might be surrounded by young reporters seeking his advice or merely enjoying his good-natured banter.

His corner of the room was a lively spot at almost any hour of the day when he was present. His absence will be painfully felt.

Edwin Paxton (NF '39), retired editor of The Paducah (Kentucky) Sun-Democrat, and now living in Florida, wrote the following tribute:

Nat Caldwell and I were old friends. I first met him at the Harvard War Institute, a brains-picking five-day session which Curator Louis Lyons organized for the relatively few Nieman alumni of those days — the summer of 1942.

In the following year Nat and I saw a good deal of each other as trainees for overseas assignments with the Office of

War Information, at its news center on New York's West 57th Street. We found that we had a great many shared interests. One of these was TVA, which we regarded as the best thing that ever happened to our Tennessee Valley region. Another was a deep suspicion of the private power industry.

Nat never wanted to be anything other than a newspaper reporter, which he remained to the February day when he died in the freezing waters of Old Hickory Lake. When the late Silliman Evans resigned as boss of Marshall Field's *Chicago Sun* to take over as publisher of *The Tennessean*, he tried to persuade Caldwell to take a top editorial position; Nat said No, thanks.

He spent much of a long career schooling other young men to become reporters with energy, imagination, and inquiring (and doubting) minds.

He sneered at the term "participatory journalism." But as a newsman Nat was, and very much enjoyed being, an activist. He and I in the early days shared a dream that the Cumberland River — flowing as it does through my native Kentucky and his Tennessee — would be developed for navigation, flood control, hydro-power, and recreation purposes, like the Tennessee. The Corps of Engineers of the U.S. Army, having lost the Tennessee to TVA, wasn't about to release the Cumberland to another agency. The engineers were willing to do the job themselves, however.

The private utilities had managed to block plans for other TVAs, notably in the Missouri Valley. But they did not consider the Army engineers to be "socialists." So the Corps was allowed to proceed on both the Missouri and the Cumberland; on the latter, they built as TVA had on the Tennessee — downstream, beginning at the best reservoir sites in the headwaters. By the early 1950's they had begun building, or had authorization and some construction money for every planned multi-purpose dam necessary for the taming of the Cumberland, save one. It was the last and largest, and the key to the whole system: the one near the river's mouth in far-western Kentucky.

I was born and lived all my life in

Paducah. Our Congressman for the western district of Kentucky, the late Noble J. Gregory, was a good friend and resident of the neighboring town of Mayfield. Despite the valiant efforts of Paducah's Alben Barkley in the Senate, in fact, the efforts of practically the entire congressional delegation of every TVA state and of the Corps of Engineers' friends all over, there was simply no movement toward authorization, even, of that last, all-important dam. Noble Gregory was against it. And "congressional courtesy" requires that no project or appropriation be voted for any purpose that is objected to by the congressman whose district is directly concerned.

Just after Barkley died in 1956, Nat phoned me from Nashville. "Don't you think the big dam on the Cumberland ought to be named for the Veep?" he

asked. I told him it was a great idea, and that *The Paducah Sun-Democrat* would do all it could to promote his suggestion.

"I'm not going to suggest it — Ed Paxton is," he said. "Once a resolution for it is introduced in Congress, nobody can oppose the authorization and construction money."

He was right. Barkley Dam stands today as the key to the entire Cumberland River system, just as Kentucky Dam does for TVA's system on the Tennessee. We got great support for Nat's notion where it counted most, in the halls of Congress.

I have long felt that Alben Barkley, a real humorist in addition to being a practical politician and astute statesman, must have got a hearty hereafter laugh out of the way Nat Caldwell used the Veep's name to assure the building of the

dam which meant so much to the future of Nat's beloved Nashville.

A little more than six weeks after the accidental death of her husband, Camilla Johnson Caldwell died, on March 29. This editorial appeared in The Tennessean, March 30, 1985, and is reprinted with permission.

Mrs. Caldwell Made a Difference

Mrs. Camilla Johnson Caldwell, retired director of the Metro Social Services Department, died yesterday at her home near Gallatin. She was 75 years old.

Mrs. Caldwell's death came just six weeks after her husband, Nat Caldwell, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for this newspaper, drowned in an automobile accident at their home.

Mrs. Caldwell, a native of Macon County, graduated from Vanderbilt University and later studied social work at Vanderbilt, the University of Chicago, and the New York School of Social Work.

She joined the Social Services Department, then called the Davidson County Welfare Department, in 1953, and retired in 1977. She spent much of her career working with children and before her employment for the Welfare Department was a children's welfare worker in Benton, Carroll, and Humphreys counties, and had done work at the old state boys reformatory. She also had been a Juvenile Court probation officer, a faculty member of Scarritt College, and director of Travelers Aid here.

Mrs. Caldwell was a pioneer in social work in this area and earned a reputation for competence, dedication, and compassion in that field. She and Mr. Caldwell were honored for their contributions to the social good of this region at a dinner here attended by about 700 friends and colleagues in 1983.

Nashville has been made a better place to live because of Mrs. Caldwell's efforts. She made the community aware of social problems and helped to change attitudes toward the underprivileged and unfortunate. She will be sadly missed, but the good she did will long be remembered and appreciated.

THE BOOKSHELF



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the urging of public funding for the arts and reduces them to so much political and cultural rhetoric.

But public funding for the arts takes its cue in legislative debate alongside public funding for mass transportation, for interstate highways, for tax exemptions on home mortgages, and other arguable provisions made by government to the direct benefit of some and to the consternation of others. The question of greater good plays a role in each debate. Banfield asserts that art cannot be proved to be the greater benefit to society.

In his very careful examination of public funding for the arts, Banfield arrives at a position that suggests a kind of deregulation of art institutions.

"Subsidies impair the working of a market. In the absence of subsidy (or other imperfection) the market performs the immensely useful function of discovering not only who wants what but also how much he or she wants it," he writes. "If Jones pays an admission

charge of \$5 to see an exhibition of drawings, then it is reasonable to assume that he expects to get at least as much satisfaction from viewing the drawings as from any other use to which he might put his \$5. Similarly, it can be assumed that in a competitive market the exhibitor who charges \$5 expects to be better off than he would be at any other price. In the absence of market prices, there would be no way of knowing what use of resources would yield the most satisfaction. If, for example, the exhibition were subsidized and admission were free, then the exhibitor might spend \$10 worth of resources to afford Jones satisfaction worth only \$1 to him."

The Democratic Muse counters every argument made in favor of public funding for the arts. It's getting more difficult for arts advocates to urge the passage of favorable legislation simply because it is a "good thing" to do.

Gerald B. Jordan, Nieman Fellow '82, covers arts and cultural institutions for The Philadelphia Inquirer.

NIEMAN NOTES

In gathering the batch of Notes for this issue, we were saddened by the number of obituaries. Personal experience has proved that bookshelves hold appeasement. Herewith, T. S. Eliot, from "Four Quartets":

*The darkness shall be the light,
and the stillness the dancing.*

— 1940 —

WELDON JAMES, 72, former associate editor of the *Courier-Journal*, Louisville, and a retired colonel in the Marine Corps Reserves, died of pneumonia March 14 at Bethesda Naval Hospital. Colonel James, who lived in Alexandria, was born in Horatio, South Carolina. He graduated from Furman University.

He joined the *Courier-Journal* in 1948 and was an editorial writer for 17 years. He had enlisted in the Marines in 1942; he was named information services officer for the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and won battle stars in Europe and the Pacific in World War II. In 1966 he was recalled to active duty for the Vietnam War, and in 1968 he was transferred to Washington where he remained on active duty for two more years. He then joined the National Credit Union Administration, and retired from there in 1972, the same year he retired from the Marine Reserves.

His daughter, Sarah de Besche, owns and operates a gourmet catering service which for the past few years the Nieman Foundation has used for luncheon and dinner seminars.

Word has been received from Douglas Spencer, M.D., of Devon, Pennsylvania, concerning the death of his father, STEVEN M. SPENCER, 79. A retired science writer, he died February 21 in Bennington, Vermont.

He was born in Omaha, Nebraska. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and while a student there began a long association with the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, covering scientific developments and other events at the University. He subsequently became science editor for the *Bulletin*, a position he held until 1943.

After three years in the Public Relations

Department of the E. I. DuPont Company, he joined the staff of the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1945, and later became their Senior Editor for Science and Medicine. He continued in that capacity until the magazine closed in 1969. For the next three years he contributed articles to the *Readers Digest*.

The honors he received were the American Association for the Advancement of Science/George Westinghouse Award in Journalism, the Lasker Award for Medical Writing, the American Heart Association/Howard Blakeslee Award for Scientific Writing, and the American Medical Association Medical Journalism Award.

He and his wife Mary moved to Vermont in 1978. There one of his major community activities was working toward the restoration of Hildene, the historic home of Robert Todd Lincoln in Manchester, and editing the Hildene newsletter.

He is survived by his wife, Mary; three sons, Steven S. Spencer, M.D., of Ganado, Arizona, Douglas M. Spencer, M.D., of Devon, Pennsylvania, and C. David Spencer, M.D., of Chevy Chase, Maryland; two sisters, Kathleen Bruskin of Port Townsend, Washington, and Lois Smith of Lacey, Washington, a brother, Roger of Pasadena, California, ten grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

— 1944 —

ROBERT CALDWELL LASSETER Jr., 74, former newspaperman and real estate investor, died February 6, in Middle Tennessee Medical Center in Murfreesboro, after a heart attack. He was the first weekly newspaper editor in the United States to be awarded a Nieman Fellowship.

A native of Nashville, he spent most of his life in Murfreesboro. He attended Castle Heights Military Academy in Lebanon and began his newspaper career in the early 1930's at the former *Daily News Banner* in Murfreesboro. He later served as editor of the Murfreesboro *Home Journal*.

In 1937, he joined *The Tennessean* in Nashville where he worked as a Capitol Hill reporter, state news editor, and assistant city editor.

In 1940, he canceled plans to seek em-

ployment in Alaska when the late Minor Bragg, then owner of the semi-weekly *Rutherford Courier*, offered him \$1 a day to edit his newspaper.

During his 10-year tenure with the *Courier*, the newspaper won more Tennessee Press Association community service and editorial awards than any other Tennessee newspaper.

For many years, he served as the Murfreesboro correspondent for the *Nashville Banner*.

After leaving the newspaper field, Mr. Lasseter invested in real estate and figured prominently in several commercial and residential property developments in the Murfreesboro area.

He is survived by his wife, Lida Lee Lasseter; two daughters, Elizabeth Lasseter Hull of Murfreesboro, Virginia Keyes Lasseter of Washington, D.C.; two sons, Robert Caldwell Lasseter III of Murfreesboro, Samuel Lee Lasseter of Houston, Texas; two brothers, Jack and Sam Lasseter of Murfreesboro; and five grandchildren.

His daughter, Betsy Lasseter Hull, wrote: "I am enclosing copies of my father's obituary. I was a small child when my father was a Nieman Fellow. I remember lots of snow, air raid [drills], and a statue I renamed Harvard John."

— 1953 —

WILLIAM (Bill) STEIF writes: "I took early retirement from Scripps-Howard and moved to St. Croix with my wife. I had worked for Scripps-Howard 36 years (the first 16 in San Francisco). . . It turns out that there is a journalistic life after retirement. I do occasional stints for Gannett News Service in the Caribbean (Cuba, Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada), a weekly column for Gannett's *Virgin Islands Daily News*, and freelance pieces for all sorts of other publications, ranging from *The Nation's Business* and the city magazine of Memphis to the *St. Petersburg Times'* Sunday Perspective section and *The Progressive*. I do some stringing for *The New York Times* and *Time* magazine. It's kind of a weird mix but fun, and once in awhile I manage a long reporting trip, such as Africa, or, late last year, Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea."

Steif's current address: P.O. Box 3889, Christiansted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands 00820.

— 1958 —

TOM WICKER, associate editor, *The New York Times*, was one of the speakers in the spring series of lectures at Boston's Ford Hall Forum. His subject was "The Reagan Presidency II; the First Hundred Days."

— 1962 —

JOHN HUGHES in January resigned from his position as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs to return to Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where he owns two newspapers.

Also, he is writing a twice-weekly column for the *Christian Science Monitor News Service*; he is a former editor of that newspaper.

YUKIO ICHINOSE writes from his home in Yachiyo City, Japan. "It is three years since I retired from the Kyodo News Service. Most of those years I have suffered from both short and long sickness, but of late I have completely regained my health again.

"Curiously with my regained health, a new, bright horizon of so-called 'computer and communication' age appeared before my eyes and I have avidly been reading books related to this new age with ever 'youthful and inquisitive' mind to my great satisfaction. . . . I would just mention two of them: *Mindstorms* and *The Soul of a New Machine*. . . ."

IAN MENZIES, long-time *Boston Globe* editor and columnist, retired in March after 37 years with the newspaper.

He will become a senior fellow at the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where he will be writing, doing research, and serving as guest lecturer at the institute. He became associate editor of *The Globe* in 1970 and began his weekly column on urban issues that year, which he continued writing until his recent retirement. He will join the McCormack Institute the first of July.

EUGENE ROBERTS, executive editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, received the 1985 William Allen White Foundation Award for Journalistic Merit in February at the University of Kansas. The citation is given annually



From the Picture Files. Irving Dilliard, a member of the first class of Nieman Fellows ('39), sets out for an undisclosed destination. The car sticker on the windshield shows the year 1957.

to a journalist who mirrors the late *Emporia Gazette* editor in "service to his profession and his country." (See also page 20.)

— 1965 —

SMITH HEMPSTONE in March was appointed associate editor of *The Washington Times*. He formerly was editor-in-chief.

Arnaud de Borchgrave, novelist and former senior and chief foreign correspondent for *Newsweek*, is his successor.

— 1966 —

WAYNE WOODLIEF, who for seven years covered regional political news in New England for the *Boston Herald*, is returning to Washington, D.C., as correspondent for that newspaper, writing on state and national politics.

— 1967 —

JAMES R. WHELAN, former editor of *The Washington Times*, has joined the Christian Broadcasting Network as managing director of news. The network, based in Virginia Beach, Virginia, announced in April

that Whelan will direct a buildup of CBN news facilities and staff, adding news bureaus in London and New York to their present bureaus in Washington, Beirut, and Jerusalem.

— 1968 —

ATSUKO CHIBA wrote in April: "I thought you may like to include the following in Nieman Notes: I am now living in New York, freelancing mostly for Japanese publications, while fighting against the third attack of breast cancer.

"My ninth book, *Japanese Idiosyncrasies* (in Japanese), will come out in autumn 1985 from Shincho-sha of Tokyo.

"I have written for *Institutional Investor*, *Forbes*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, *The Australian Financial Review*, and many others."

Ms. Chiba's address: 1 Astor Place, Apt. 11C, New York, NY 10003.

— 1971 —

JOHN PEKKANEN, staff writer for *The Washingtonian*, led a team of three other staff writers and editors to win for *The Washingtonian* the 1985 National Magazine

David Hoffman, Former Saigon Bureau Chief

by Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Staff Writer

David Herbert Hoffman, 52, a former Saigon bureau chief for *The Washington Post* who filed one of the most famous expense accounts in this newspaper's history, died of cardiorespiratory arrest February 15 at his home in Alexandria.

A former Air Force pilot who had flown commercially for Trans World Airlines, Mr. Hoffman came to the *Post* in 1967 from the old *New York Herald Tribune*, where he had been aviation editor. He left the *Post* in 1971, and since then had been a free-lance writer.

His work appeared in *The Washington Post Magazine* and the *Post's* Outlook section, and in many other newspapers and magazines.

The expense account for which Mr. Hoffman long will be remembered at the *Post* was filed in late 1969. It was for several thousand South Vietnamese piastres (less than \$100), which Mr. Hoffman had paid to hire a platoon of South Vietnamese militia to escort him into a South Vietnamese hamlet named My Lai 4, site of a massacre of Vietnamese civilians by American troops. Lt. William Calley later was court-martialed for his part in the incident.

The My Lai story had been broken by Seymour Hersh, then writing for a small news agency. The *Post* had been scooped, but sent Mr. Hoffman from Saigon to the site of the incident to see if he could find any trace of it.

It was the kind of assignment he loved — improbable, a little dangerous, but

likely to provide interesting copy. Upon his arrival in the northern part of South Vietnam, near My Lai, Mr. Hoffman found that the hamlet, part of the village of Son My, was in a contested area where security was uncertain. He decided to try to hire armed escorts, and the local platoon of militia agreed to take the assignment.

Reporting on the scene in My Lai 4 to his readers in Washington, Mr. Hoffman wrote: "A fence of towering bamboo surrounds the cemetery. Peasants say that many more graves lie beyond the bamboo. But the graves cannot be counted. There are mines amid the graves and visitors are advised to take as few steps as possible and to leave hurriedly."

The *Post* initially disallowed Mr. Hoffman's expense account item for hiring the platoon on the grounds that it was not an authorized expenditure. Later, his dispute with the home office was settled amicably.

Mr. Hoffman was born in Coral Gables, Florida, and graduated from the University of Florida. He took a master's degree in political science from Boston University, and later was a Nieman Fellow [Class of 1967] at Harvard University.

Mr. Hoffman learned to fly in the Air Force and later was a pilot for TWA.

An itch to write took him out of the airline business and he went to work for a small weekly in upstate New York. He worked for *Aviation Week* and *Space Technology* and then the *Herald Tribune*, first to write about aviation and later to report from Washington.

Mr. Hoffman's interest in flying led him into one of the great stories of his career, an exclusive report on a scavenging operation by the Israeli government to build four flyable C-97 freighters, an old Boeing aircraft long out of service when this occurred in 1967.

Mr. Hoffmann befriended the Israeli mechanics who stitched the planes together from scrap pieces in an airplane graveyard near Tucson, then flew himself in one of the planes from Tucson to Tel Aviv. The adventure produced two long and memorable articles that ran in the *Post* in late October 1967.

Mr. Hoffman believed that no story was more important than the individuals who were part of it. His description of the chief Israeli mechanic in this operation was typical of his concern for personal detail:

"Moishe [the Israeli mechanic], nearing 40, is from southern Russia. His English, impeccable until he speaks it, carries an overlay of Russian and Hebrew inflection that makes the listener squint. . . ."

After he left the *Post*, Mr. Hoffman worked briefly for *The Miami Herald*, then returned to Washington to free-lance. Many of his pieces were on outdoor subjects, particularly the Chesapeake Bay and its environs. He was an avid sailor.

His marriage to Joan Hoffman ended in divorce.

Survivors include his wife Kay, of Alexandria; a son by his first marriage, Dayle M. Hoffman of Columbus, Ohio, and his father, David Hoffman of Las Vegas.

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Award for Service to the Individual with "How to Save Your Life," a survey of emergency and trauma care in the Washington area. Pekkanen, Gail Friedman, Marilyn Dickey, and William O'Sullivan spent five months examining the services and flaws in local hospital emergency rooms. A result of the article was the replacement of the emergency room staff at one hospital. The citation singled out "fine research, extraordinary writing, and dramatic visual presentation."

Three years ago Pekkanen won a National Magazine Award for "The Saving of the President," an account of the medical teamwork following the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan.

— 1972 —

R. GREGORY NOKES, former State Department correspondent for the Associated

Press, is now diplomatic analyst in the Washington, D.C., bureau.

— 1974 —

ELLEN GOODMAN, nationally syndicated columnist with *The Boston Globe* and a member of The Washington Post Writers Group, was named as one among "America's 25 Most Influential Women in 1984" chosen

in a poll of daily newspaper editors conducted by *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*, published by Newspaper Enterprise Association.

— 1977 —

DOLLY KATZ, medical writer with the *Detroit Free Press*, twice has received a prize for her eight-part series on Michigan physicians and the state machinery that regulates them.

From the Investigative Reporters and Editors group, in the category of newspapers over 75,000 circulation, she won a 1985 investigative reporting award. Also, she was given a National Headliners Award in the 51st annual competition.

She worked on the story for almost one and a half years and studied each of the doctors who came before the state on formal charges from 1977 through 1982. The series resulted in important improvements leading to more reliable medical care for the people of Michigan.

— 1980 —

WCVB-TV, Boston, won a Peabody Award in March for its 1984 profile of Som-

erville (Massachusetts) High School and the urban secondary school system. JUDITH STOIA served as executive director.

— 1981 —

DAVID LAMB, Cairo bureau chief for *The Los Angeles Times*, is one of seven journalists awarded a 1985 Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship. Winners devote a year to travel and inquiry for their project. Lamb will report on "The Arabs Today." (See also Guy Gugliotta, '83).

Sandy Northrop, David Lamb's spouse, was the editor of the National Geographic special, *Miraculous Machines*, a documentary about computers that aired nationally over the Public Broadcasting Service in April.

— 1983 —

GUY GUGLIOTTA, foreign reporter with *The Miami Herald*, has been awarded an Alicia Patterson Foundation Fellowship. His project is to investigate "Argentina: The Military in Power — 1976-1983." (See also David Lamb, '81.)

WILLIAM MARIMOW, reporter with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, is the recipient

of two awards for his series on the K-9 dog squads. In March it was announced that the K-9 stories had won a National Headliners Award for best reporting by a newspaper with a circulation of more than 150,000.

In April he was named a Pulitzer Prize winner for Investigative Reporting. His exposé disclosed how city police dogs had attacked more than 350 innocent civilians "without cause." "Investigations of the Philadelphia Police Department's K-9 unit followed his lengthy story and more than a dozen officers were removed from the unit." In the six and a half months after his first article appeared, K-9 attacks on civilians dropped 71.6 percent.

This is the second Pulitzer for Marimow. In 1978, he and Jonathan Neumann shared the prize for Public Service for "The Homicide Files," a four-part series on how Philadelphia detectives coerced suspects and witnesses into making statements or confessions, and numerous news articles concerning citizen allegations of criminal violence by the police.

— 1984 —

DEE COHN, formerly a reporter in the Washington bureau of United Press International, has joined *The Washington Post* where she is on the metro staff covering schools and education.

NANCY WEBB writes that she has signed a contract with Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston, to do *Reunion*, a book of nonfiction about the American family. Her new address: 14 Athens Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

The other day we had occasion to ponder on the familiar lines from "Trees," where Joyce Kilmer wrote about "a nest of robins in her hair." (An unattractive prospect, in our view.)

Spring brought a spillover of the bird migration right into the yard at Lippmann House. A flock of myrtle warblers (*Dendroica coronata*) twittered and fluttered in the branches of a tall maple tree by the front door.

For most of the morning we were treated to the sound of their trills wavering on the air. Glimpses of tiny wings and bright eyes enhanced the emerging green leaves, and each flash of yellow feathers shone like a jewel.

—T.B.K.L.

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