

n i e m a n

spring 1976



Anthony Lewis

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Barbara Tuchman

Journalism and War

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Reporting in the Wild West

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Kidnapping, Terrorism, and the Media

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Ethics and Journalism: Comments

New Class of Nieman Fellows • Book Reviews

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Editorial

Media-Law Conflicts: Is There a Solution?

Can the Bar, the Bench, and the Media ever agree on procedures for the avoidance or muting of collisions? Should such procedures ever be institutionalized, formally or informally? Or does virtually any arrangement—except on a brief *ad hoc* basis—endanger the media's rights under the First Amendment?

For two years now, since the Chatham (Massachusetts) Conference of June 1974, reporters, editors, judges and lawyers from the six New England states have been meeting periodically in a specially coordinated effort to grapple with these questions and others. And in June of 1976 a small group of veterans of this experience met in North Andover, Massachusetts to consider some cumulative recommendations.

As reported in this column earlier (*NR*, Summer 1975), this two-year regional effort has been funded in part by a Ford Foundation grant to the New England Conference on Conflicts Between the Media and the Law, a grant jointly administered by Harvard's Nieman Foundation and Institute of Politics. The grant itself has been but one phase of a much wider Ford effort, under the direction of Fred W. Friendly, to "expand consciousness" among press and law practitioners in all parts of the nation. Friendly's fear is that the alternative to increased mutual understanding—and mutual self-restraint—will be escalated collisions, soaring litigation costs, and court-decreed or even legislated shackling of press freedom.

Martin Linsky (editor of *The Real Paper* [Boston], also an attorney and former Massachusetts State Representative) was one of the team of Socratic teachers who had led discussions of hypothetical cases at the various sub-regional conferences. At the North Andover meeting in June, he was the keynoter and summarized his findings.

While some useful goals had been achieved through the meetings, Linsky argued, and such programs should be made available to wider groups, the conferences were not appropriate vehicles for problem-solving or issue-resolution. As for the central problem which had emerged, Linsky described its "three nubs":

First, most judges and lawyers simply don't take the media's First Amendment concern seriously enough; they fail to realize that most journalists regard the Amendment

(Continued on page 24)

"Cantankerous, Obstinate, Ubiquitous": The Press

By Anthony Lewis

If the press has a favorite quotation, it may be Jefferson's: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." I wonder how many Americans ever would have agreed. Surely not many politicians, of any age. In fact, Jefferson's own views are not at all that clear. He made the statement in 1787, when he was American minister in Paris. After he became President he sounded rather less romantic about the press. In 1802, he found the newspapers filled with "falsehoods, calumnies and audacities." By 1807, toward the end of his second term, he had reached the "melancholy" conclusion that "nothing can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle."

Jefferson spoke of calumnies. Chief Justice Hughes referred to "the daily calumnists." Anyone who edits or writes for a newspaper is making a great mistake if he looks for affection from his subjects. Those who wound must expect to be wounded. For press as for Presidents, the rule is: If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen.

The fact that the press is less than beloved is under the heading of Dog Bites Man: not news. The interesting question is whether the American press justifies its special position in our constitutional order — not by popularity but by performance of its function. What is the function of the press in this country? What are its duties, its powers, its limits? Of course there can be no single answer for media as diverse and contradictory as ours. When some angry politician denounces "the eastern establishment press" as if it were a conspiracy, he has no idea how hard it is to get rival editors to agree on anything — even editors on the same newspaper. But there have been identifiable strains in the performance of the American press.

One tradition is really entertainment. There is the old world of yellow journalism, the one often seen in newspaper movies, where hard-eyed men sit around the newsroom in hats, drinking and making up "colorful" — that is,

untruthful — stories by the yard. In that world no suspect ever surrendered; he put up a desperate struggle. In one of those 1930's films, Lee Tracy played a lying gossip columnist whose nastiness was only slightly relieved by his admission, "Gee, I'm rotten." That was the journalism parodied by Evelyn Waugh in *Scoop*, whose foreign correspondents sit at a bar in darkest Africa making up details of a revolution. It was what Sir Walter Scott had in mind when he wrote his son-in-law, "Your connection with any newspaper would be a disgrace and degradation. I would rather sell gin to poor people and poison them that way."

That journalism was ever held so low may be hard to believe in a day when reporters are culture heroes and our cleanest-cut young people dream of being Woodward and Bernstein. The young will just have to take our word that it used to be a less elegant profession. But there were always serious strains along with entertainment, exaggeration, and vulgarity. Jefferson wanted to protect the press, for all its sins, because of the part it had played in winning American independence. He thought some abuse a price worth paying for the corrective function of the press and its challenge to authority.

We have such short memories in this country, so little sense of history, that we tend to think everything is new. Today's phenomenon is investigative reporting. But that kind of aggressive journalism was not born on June 17, 1972. (In case anyone has forgotten, this was the date of a break-in at Democratic Party headquarters, the Watergate, Washington, D.C.) By the latter part of the 19th century, American newspapers were engaged not only in traditional political commentary, and serious war and foreign correspondence, but in discovering the sins of Tammany Hall. Campaigns against political thievery led to exposure of deeper corruption in industry and society: the muckraking

Mr. Lewis, Nieman Fellow '57, is a columnist for The New York Times. The above is the Thirteenth Annual Leary Lecture, delivered at the University of Utah College of Law.

of Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, and others. That is what lies behind the best contemporary journalism, which is not limited to political investigation, but takes in such acute contemporary concerns as the environment, population, economics, health. That gases used in aerosol sprays may reduce the earth's ozone shield — and that manufacturers are resisting corrective action — may not fit neatly into the mold of *The Front Page*, but it is news of life and death.

What has changed in journalism is not so much the techniques as the sophistication and size of the issues. The acceleration of science and life means that trends can sweep around the globe in an instant: not only fads in music and dress, but the use of aerosol sprays and DDT and nuclear technology. The journalist has to be educated to explain sudden new dangers in all their complexities.

The crucial decisions are made at the center, and that is where the corrective function of the press must increasingly be exercised.

Moreover — and this is closer to the question of freedom — we are in an age of concentrated power, political and economic. In the United States the change has been especially dramatic. Within our own lifetimes, for those of us who are middle-aged, what was a genuinely federal system, with power scattered among the states and regions, has become in major respects a unitary government. We look to Washington now for direction on countless matters that were once left to local government or no government at all: the level of economic activity, relief of poverty, the safety of food and industrial products, the environment, racial discrimination, labor relations, the financing of education and the arts; the list is endless. We may disagree on whether the transformation begun by Franklin Roosevelt has been wise — whether we prefer to have New York and Mississippi held to a single standard of racial decency, or to rely everywhere on federal welfare payments. But the reality cannot be waved away. The crucial decisions are made at the center, and that is where the corrective function of the press must increasingly be exercised. Those concerned with the corruption of power may find themselves forced to challenge not Boss Tweed, but the President of the United States.

American government has become not only more national but more imperial, and that has had a large impact on the role of the press. When the United States was on the fringe of world affairs, with no army to speak of, it was a frolic for a publisher to stir up a little local war — as Hearst did in 1898, then printing a delighted banner on his newspaper: "How Do You Like the Journal's War?" When one is

dealing with a nuclear superpower, military adventures are no frolic. Not that jingoism has disappeared: when President Johnson committed this country to war in Vietnam, one columnist, Joseph Alsop, is reported to have remarked that he was a happy man for the first time in years. But the public is increasingly aware these days that operations undertaken in the name of American security, overt and covert, may have painful costs, for others and for us. And the press has done much of the consciousness-raising.

The press did not rush to play a critical role in relation to our national security mechanisms or other central levers of power. On the contrary, as the character of American government altered, becoming more centralized, more powerful, more Presidential, the press was curiously slow to follow. I think the reason is clear. The press's natural relationship to power is an adversary one, but it was reluctant to make an adversary of the President. If the American press thinks of its aggressiveness today as something new, forgetting the muckraking past, that is largely because it was late in focusing its scrutiny where the power had moved. The corrective function is unchanged. What is new is serious, sustained application of that function to the Presidency and its apparatus of power.

As much as other Americans, newspaper men and women were susceptible to the Presidential mystique. Congressmen were human: we drank with them and knew their flaws. Presidents were holy. The attitude was evident at White House press conferences, where there was an atmosphere of respect verging on reverence. In foreign affairs especially, Presidents were treated as high-minded men who deserved sympathy as they struggled with the primitives in Congress. And so, through the post-war years, the press was handmaiden to the growth of Presidential power. Its natural combativeness was sapped by an endemic Washington press disease: coziness with Government officials. Journalists are more important in Washington than anywhere else in the world; they know it, and they like it. Officials played on that sense of importance. They shared secrets, they took members of the press into their confidence, but always on the unspoken understanding that the reporter accepted the official's bona fides. The premise was that they both were working for a higher good, one usually defined by Presidential policy.

Vietnam and Watergate shattered all that. The press corps' symbiotic relationship with official Washington was hard to justify when it could be seen, increasingly, as a device to shield a bankrupt policy from criticism. The most trusting reporter found it hard to believe in the superior expertise of national security officials, or even in their good faith, when the result was endless and futile destruction in Southeast Asia. It was impossible to feel reverence toward Presidents who made a display of their contempt for truth.

When an intimacy that has lasted twenty or twenty-five

years breaks up, a certain amount of bitterness may be expected. So it was with Presidents and the press. It was the worse because of the country's misfortune in having successive Presidents whose sensitivity to criticism approached paranoia. Lyndon Johnson imagined conspiracies, Richard Nixon was consumed by hatred of the press. But apart from these tragic accidents of personality, there was a real change in the relationship — one that would naturally produce some strain. The ultimate symbol of the change was the decision of *The New York Times*, in defiance of Government pressure, to publish the Pentagon Papers. A *Columbia Law Review* article in the wake of that affair said it marked

the passing of an era. . . . *The New York Times*, by publishing the Papers, did not merely reveal a policy debate within the Executive Branch; it demonstrated that much of the press was no longer willing to be merely an occasionally critical associate devoted to common aims, but intended to become an adversary threatening to discredit not only political dogma but also the motives of the nation's leaders.

It is not altogether clear to me that the American press really has so bold an intention. Despite the extensive disclosures of bungling and lawlessness by the Central Intelligence Agency, its director succeeded in persuading our most important news organs to withhold for weeks stories of the CIA's comic-opera effort to raise a sunken Soviet submarine — an effort of which the Russians were almost certainly aware.

Whatever the degree of boldness today, the press as a whole was not eager to challenge Presidential government, not even on Watergate or Vietnam. Most newspapers ignored the Watergate story for weeks and months, treating it as a third-rate burglary. The singular achievement of *The Washington Post* was due in large part to the assignment on the story of two young reporters without status, without friends in the great world of Washington politics and journalism, without awe for the system. One of the most significant episodes described in the Bernstein and Woodward book is their attempt to find out who had authorized wiretaps of thirteen Government officials and four reporters between 1969 and 1971. Woodward telephoned the White House, asked for Henry Kissinger and got through. He said they had information that Kissinger had authorized taps on his own assistants. Kissinger tried to handle the difficulty without actually lying, or rather without putting himself in a position to be caught lying. "I don't believe it was true," he said at one point. At another, asked whether he had approved the taps, he replied, "Almost never." Then suddenly he asked: "You aren't quoting me?" Woodward said sure he was. Kissinger then attempted, retroactively, to put the whole conversation on a background basis. Woodward resisted. "In five years in Washington," Kissinger said, "I've never been trapped into talking like this." That was doubt-

less true. He was used to dealing with big-name reporters, columnists, editors, and publishers who accepted *his* terms for the relationship. Woodward and Bernstein did not care about a relationship with Henry Kissinger.

As for Vietnam, a traditionalist press was hardly comfortable as critic of a war being fought by its country. The publisher of *The New York Times* was uneasy when President Kennedy asked, "Who elected David Halberstam to run our Vietnam policy?" Certainly there has been no comparable experience in American history: such massive criticism of our means and ends in an ongoing war. But that happened because it was a different kind of war, resulting from a process of decision different from the historic form. I think those differences substantially explain the changed attitude of the press.

The publisher of *The New York Times* was uneasy when President Kennedy asked, "Who elected David Halberstam to run our Vietnam policy?"

The way the United States entered the Vietnam War reflected a profound shift in constitutional assumptions. We slipped in, without genuine public awareness, much less support, and without any real Congressional weighing of the issues. There had been Presidential military actions before, but nothing like a 10-year war, costing upwards of \$150 billion and 55,000 lives — all without a declaration of war. Toward the end, President Nixon went so far as to veto a bill prohibiting any further bombing of Cambodia. There was no authority for that bombing in any treaty, statute, or resolution; in effect, therefore, Mr. Nixon was trying to reverse the constitutional order so that a President could enter a war and carry it on indefinitely unless Congress by two-thirds vote of both houses said otherwise. Congress eventually acted to curb that unilateral aggrandizement of power, in Indochina and generally, but only after an evasion of responsibility so prolonged that it came to suggest institutional incapacity. It was as if Congress had become a "dignified" part of the Constitution, to use Bagehot's apt word for British institutions whose political functions had atrophied: the monarchy and the House of Lords.

When the press began challenging the premises of the Presidential war in Vietnam, then, it was filling an institutional vacuum. Indeed, it was drawn into the vacuum by the irresistible force of facts. Halberstam and other reporters did not go to Vietnam as critics; on the contrary, most of them went with the same assumptions that Congress and the largest part of the public had accepted from the executive branch: that we were winning hearts and minds, building a nation, and so forth. But the facts that confronted them on

the ground belied the assumptions. It was impossible to ignore the aroma of wishful thinking and plain falsehood. And so the press to an extent assumed the duty of scrutiny and check that the Framers had envisaged for the legislative branch, above all in the exercise of the war power.

That the press should have played a bolder part . . . was necessary and right. . . . The press had an important role in Watergate, but it surely was not a substitute for the institutions of law.

The theory of the two-party system is that those out of office, the loyal opposition, will keep a steady critical eye on the activities of the state. In the post-war years, that principle fell into disrepair in the United States. In foreign affairs the received wisdom of the day called for bipartisanship; it was regarded as almost unpatriotic to follow the British maxim: the duty of an opposition is to oppose. As Democratic Presidents developed the commitment in Vietnam, there was hardly a murmur of criticism from Republicans in Congress. In domestic affairs, too, Congress seemed to be drained of its ability to think independently or to carry on a sustained examination of a difficult problem: its attention span shrank. Even on an episode as egregious as Watergate, Congress had to be prodded into action.

That the press should have played a bolder part (as Congress became more submissive before the power of the Executive) was necessary and right. But it would be quite another thing for the press to develop a general disdain for our constitutional institutions, or to regard itself as a substitute for them. That danger existed in the Watergate years, and especially in regard to the institutions of law. There *was* reason for skepticism about the legal process in the early stages of Watergate. The Assistant Attorney General who directed the investigation kept the grand jury's attention away from high officials; the kindest view of his performance is that he was blinded by awe of the Presidency. The Attorney General and the Acting Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation were both caught in wrongdoing. But in time the judicial and prosecutorial process did work. If there was a single event that made Watergate uncontainable it was the letter from James McCord, one of the break-in defendants, to Judge Sirica, alleging a cover-up. After that letter was made public, on March 23, 1973, John Dean began talking, and soon President Nixon was forced to accept the appointment of a Special Prosecutor. Archibald Cox carried on his investigation without flinching before

the power of the President, and in due course the higher courts performed their function. The press had an important role in Watergate, but it surely was not a substitute for the institutions of law.

When there is reason to suspect that legal institutions are not functioning honorably, the press has justification for intruding into the workings of the law. It is not unknown for prosecutors in this country to use grand juries for political or punitive ends; is a newspaper to be condemned in those circumstances if it questions grand jurors? From the summer of 1972 to the spring of 1973 in Washington, there was ground for suspicion about the process of criminal justice. But once the Watergate Special Prosecution Force had shown itself to be incorruptible, what higher purpose was served by pressing for leaks from its investigations and publishing reports in fragmentary or distorted form? Some editors would answer that their duty is to publish, but that is an oversimplification. Judgment is always involved in deciding what to publish. And one consideration might be a concern that small, fragmentary scoops would compromise the effectiveness of an honest legal institution.

The issue of press intrusion into the legal process became acute during the federal grand jury inquiry, in Baltimore,

We need institutions. The press's function is to watch them, not to replace them.

into the conduct of Vice President Agnew. Given the history of Watergate, the press had its reasons for wondering whether the investigation would be vigorously carried on. But the competition for grand jury leaks degenerated, in a kind of Gresham's Law, into stories wrongly prejudging the evidence. After Senator Joseph McCarthy, it should not be necessary to argue that leaks from investigative proceedings may deeply hurt persons against whom charges are never even brought. Unless there is solid ground to suspect the prosecutor's good faith, grand juries are not subjects for investigative reporting.

Is it really wise for the press to talk of itself as "the fourth branch of Government"? That sounds institutional, and formal institutional roles tend to be confining rather than liberating. The value of the press, in our system, is precisely that it is *not* a part of the system — that it is informal, irregular, unconfined. Our society usually does not accept irresponsibility in any segment of its formal structure, but we have to accept a degree of irresponsibility in the press, as Jefferson understood, if we want it to perform its nobler function.

Almost fifty years ago, Walter Lippmann warned: "The

press is no substitute for institutions." It had wrongly come to be regarded "as an organ of direct democracy," he said. "The Court of Public Opinion, open day and night, is to lay down the law for everything all the time. It is not workable. And when you consider the nature of news, it is not even thinkable." He compared journalism to "the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision." That is an accurate metaphor for the press. Except for the most monumental occasions, such as Vietnam and Watergate, the attention that most newspapers give to particular issues is episodic — and television more so. Some incident or scandal flares, is examined and discussed, then sinks into the back pages. That is the usual pattern, and nothing to be ashamed of: life is too crowded, for readers and editors, to keep one's attention steadily on all the demanding causes. The press is necessarily episodic, and Lippmann was right when he said we "cannot govern society by episodes, incidents and eruptions." We need institutions. The press's function is to watch them, not to replace them.

Another danger in delusions of institutional grandeur is *hubris* — the overreaching pride that had such terrible effects in Indochina. Arrogance is no better for the press

... Does one really have to argue that there is ... constitutional value in the right to be let alone?

than for Government officials. These days a certain amount of smugness is understandable, if only because so many critics of the press have turned out to be vulnerable themselves. When a dusty clipping shows Senator Edward J. Gurney of Florida in April, 1974, blaming "the propaganda that's come out of the media" for creating an impeachment campaign in the absence of evidence, a smile is irresistible. And the same when J. Fred Buzhardt, former White House counsel, tells an interviewer that the "media coverage we go through in this country can have a disastrous result. It can undermine the confidence in your government." He would rather have "a competent scoundrel" in office, Buzhardt indicated, than "an honest boob." With enemies like Buzhardt, or Spiro Agnew, or Richard Nixon ("The main, main thing is *The [Washington] Post* is going to have damnable, damnable problems out of this one. They have a television station ... And they're going to have to get it renewed"), who needs friends? But they are not the only critics of the press. Polls confirm what every newspaperman knows: that there is a large amount of public antagonism, reflecting lack of confidence in the press's fairness and fear of its power. Those concerns could only be deepened by

arrogance. Henry Grunwald, Managing Editor of *Time*, has warned:

An occupational disease of journalism is self-righteousness, an occasional belief that the Constitution was created only for the First Amendment and that to paraphrase Charlie (General Motors) Wilson, what's good for the press is good for the country.

Some members of my profession believe strongly that freedom of the press should be an absolute value in our constitutional order. I have heard them say that the First Amendment's protection of the press always outweighs such other interests as the right to privacy, the individual's opportunity to make whole an unfairly damaged reputation, the right to a fair trial. But those interests go to the integrity of the human personality. Any civilized society owes them respect.

In an age when perverted technology has found ways to penetrate the secrets of the bedroom and the lawyer-client relationship, does one really have to argue that there is value — constitutional value — in the right to be let alone? If a newspaper publishes a feature on the family of a man who died in a bridge collapse and describes the widow as if she had been interviewed, when in fact the reporter had not seen her, what social purpose is served by immunizing the newspaper from modest damages for infringement of the widow's privacy? If a self-styled "investigative journalist" tells third parties that a reputable executive and philanthropist is a convicted felon, knowing that the statement is false, is it in the interest of the newspaper profession that he should be absolutely immune from nominal damages for slander?

The Supreme Court took an important step for freedom when it decided in 1964 that libel actions were subject to constitutional limits. In *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, it held that one who criticizes Government officials in the conduct of their public duty cannot be required to bear the heavy burden of proving every critical statement factually correct. Officials, the Court said, must be "men of fortitude"; after all, they are immune from suit for their own official statements. And so they can recover damages for a

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— Walter Lippmann

defamatory comment only if they can show that it was made with knowledge of its falsity or in reckless disregard of its truth. Mr. Justice Brennan's classic opinion emphasized that some error is inevitable in free debate, so there must be a "breathing space" for expression, or self-censorship will occur. The wisdom of that decision is evident to any American journalist who experiences life in England, where a barrister sits at every editor's elbow, literally, and a draconian law of libel has what we certainly would consider chilling effects on expression. An official British committee studying defamation law has just rejected a proposal for a milder version of the *Times* rule: a statutory privilege when a statement on an issue of public interest was made in the belief that it was true and after all reasonable care in investigating the facts. The committee referred to American law but showed little sign of understanding, much less accepting it.

But if we value the American constitutional rule, it does not follow that defamation is a simple problem with only one right solution on all occasions: immunity for the press, no matter whose reputation has been injured or how. The Supreme Court has rejected an absolute view of the First Amendment in libel. In a rich and intricate series of cases since *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, the Court has struggled to balance the interests. A move to obliterate the distinction between private citizens on the one hand and officials or public figures on the other, extending the strict *Times* requirement for recovery to anyone involved in "an event of public or general concern," proved abortive. Instead, a majority has concluded that a private person injured by false and defamatory statement should be able to recover actual damages if the falsehood were merely negligent, not knowing or reckless. That seems to me a wise resolution of

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the problem, for reasons convincingly stated by Justice Powell in his opinion for the Court. Officials and public figures, he said, usually have readier means to rebut false charges than private citizens, who are therefore more vulnerable. Moreover, public persons have thrust themselves into the "vortex" of controversy and must run the risk of closer public scrutiny. The interest of the press in protection from liability, Justice Powell concluded, must be accommodated with the individual's right to protection of his good name. That right, Justice Stewart has said, reflects "our basic concept of the essential dignity and worth of every human being — a concept at the root of any decent system of ordered liberty." The press would surely be un-

wise to argue that our system should give no weight to the natural human interest in reputation.

Our society also has a substantial interest in protecting the right to fair trial. We properly shudder when a totalitarian regime holds trials before chanting crowds in a football stadium, and we should be concerned when an American trial is so distorted by newspaper headlines prejudging guilt that it becomes a "Roman holiday." One editor is said to have remarked that "the pursuit of liberty often requires a price," and that may include making a fair trial impossible: "So some guy has trouble getting a fair trial [because of] the First Amendment. So be it." I suspect that such talk is just

The interest of the press in protection from liability, Justice Powell concluded, must be accommodated with the individual's right to protection of his good name.

machismo, and would seldom be put into practice. In fact, newspapers are generally more concerned now with the problem of fair trials — certainly more than they were in the old days of yellow journalism. In good part that is because the Supreme Court, beginning in 1961, has shown much greater sensitivity to the effects of publicity on the possibility of trial by an impartial jury, reversing convictions in egregious cases.

[In June, 1976, in The Nebraska Press Association v. Stuart, the Supreme Court held that in ordinary circumstances the courts may not enjoin newspaper publication of information about a pending criminal case on the ground that it might prejudice a fair trial. But a majority declined to say that the press may never be prevented from such publication. And lower courts may still occasionally pose a difficult question for editors by issuing temporary injunctions, as many had done in the years before the Nebraska case. (A.L.)]

But the question remains whether a newspaper should be required to obey an order that it believes is invalid and that is so held on appeal — obey, that is, until the order is set aside by legal process. That was the issue in *United States v. Dickinson*. A federal district judge in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, forbade press reports on a public proceeding in his court, a hearing on whether to enjoin a state criminal trial. Dickinson and Adams, believing the order to be unconstitutional, ignored it and wrote newspaper articles on the hearing. The judge found them in contempt and sentenced each to a fine of \$300. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit held the order against publication unconstitutional and remanded to the trial judge for

reconsideration of the contempt finding. He reconsidered and reaffirmed the finding and sentences. On a second appeal the Fifth Circuit affirmed, and *certiorari* was denied.

The case outrages most of the press and its lawyers. In our system, they argue, one may violate a statute, gambling that it is unconstitutional, and pay no penalty if it is so held; why should the rule be any different for a judge's order? Moreover, they argue, whatever established law requires generally as to compliance with interim court orders, the First Amendment requires a different result for orders against the press; we are dealing here with ideas, not action, and making the press obey orders unless and until they are reversed on appeal would threaten the breathing space assured for ideas by the Constitution.

I agree that any order forbidding the press to publish matter related to a judicial proceeding should be treated with the greatest suspicion, indeed should be presumptively invalid. The outlandish British examples of suppression by court order, including even a ban on reports of a major social tragedy, the thalidomide affair, because civil suits arising from it have been pending for fifteen years, are warning enough of the dangers in censorship by the judiciary. At a minimum legislatures or the courts themselves should assure that gag orders are issued only after a full hearing — not *ex parte*, as the *Dickinson* order and many others have been — and may be appealed immediately, within twenty-four hours.

But it is another thing to say that there should be a general right to violate court orders by way of testing them, or a special right in the press because of the First Amendment. There has to be final authority somewhere in a system of

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government, and ours is in the courts. We place greater reliance than any other country on judges. We ask them to strike down statutes and stand up to lawless Presidents. If we want them to command the respect necessary to do such things, we shall have to follow a general rule of compliance with their orders. Respect for law is fragile; certainly in this country we cannot take it for granted. We damage it at our peril, and the press not least. If *The Boston Globe* were to disobey a court order, maintaining that the First Amendment exempted it from the general duty of compliance, would the anti-busing forces in South Boston accept the argument, or would they see it as proof that the elite in the community assume a privilege to live under different rules?

We have just had a President who claimed exemption from the ordinary processes of law. The press was critical of that claim, and it should be slow to make one of its own that ordinary people would see as similar. More broadly, I think the press makes a great mistake when it seems to argue that its interest must always prevail in conflict with such other values as privacy, good name, fair trial, respect for law. That posture tends to confirm the widespread public impression that publishers and broadcasters and journalists generally are a self-concerned lot, free with attacks on others but highly sensitive to criticism themselves — in short, guilty of the same fault that they so often find in others: abuse of power.

Respect for law is fragile; certainly in this country we cannot take it for granted. We damage it at our peril, and the press not least.

The issue of special status for the press is raised in acute form by the demands for a journalist's testimonial privilege — an exemption from the ordinary duty to testify in both criminal and civil cases, so that reporters need not disclose the names of confidential sources. There have been efforts in both the courts and Congress to establish such a privilege on a national basis, so far unsuccessful. A five to four majority of the Supreme Court found no constitutional basis for one, though Justice Powell's concurring opinion offered such assurance of protecting legitimate press interests on a case-by-case basis that the author of the dissenting opinion, Justice Stewart, has spoken of it as a four and one-half to four and one-half decision.

There are good and strong reasons for the press to use confidential sources and protect them: they are an essential mechanism against the Government's powerful effort to keep policy secret until it is too late to change — an escape valve, if you will. But the question is whether the way to protect those sources is to write into the Constitution or laws a special privilege for journalists. That may sound like a simple, straightforward idea; but the judges and legislators who have wrestled with it know it is not. For example, exactly what kind of testimony should be covered? Before grand juries? At trial? Should a reporter have a privilege if he actually witnessed a crime? If he was the only witness? If the defendant calls him to corroborate the defense version of events? If an article he published has destroyed a man's reputation, and the journalist is called in a civil libel suit to substantiate his charges? Then there is the problem of defining "journalist" for these purposes. Is the privilege to be only for employees of regular newspapers, magazines, and

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broadcast stations? What about writers for the underground press? Or a man who prints his own broadsheets, like the 18th-century pamphleteers whom the Framers of the First Amendment presumably had in mind? And is it only journalists who have an interest in confidential sources? What if a professor drew on talks with frustrated officials, without naming them, in writing a paper on what went wrong with American policy in Vietnam? Or suppose a commission investigating the Attica tragedy promised confidentiality to prisoners who talked freely, should its private notes be subject to subpoena while a newspaper's are not?

The difficulty of those questions suggests to me that the attempt to define and establish a fixed privilege for journalists will fail — and ought to fail. It should be left to the courts to weigh the conflicting interests in each case, refusing to enforce subpoenas when, in Justice Powell's words, they endanger “confidential source relationships without a legitimate need of law enforcement.” That means that confidential sources will have to rely, in the end, on the word of the journalist or scholar or investigator that he will pay a penalty rather than disclose the source. But that has always been true, and it is not a bad thing. The rare case pressed so far that someone goes to prison, hard as it is on that individual, may serve in our system to arouse the public conscience against wrongful use of prosecutorial power.

There is a larger danger in the exclusivist quality of the journalist's privilege or other press claims for special status. The cases testing freedom of expression have often involved unpopular groups such as Communists, Jehovah's Witnesses, pornographers; but the freedoms they won were available to all. Professor Martin Shapiro (*Nieman Reports*, Winter 1973) points out the political importance of that universality. Particular cases often meet a hostile public reaction; if people came to think that the court was actually favoring pornographers or reporters over the rest of us, the reaction might damage the whole public attitude toward freedom of expression.

Justice Stewart has advanced the thesis that the free press clause of the First Amendment is a “structural provision of the Constitution”; unlike most other parts of the Bill of Rights, which protect particular freedoms, it “extends pro-

tection to an institution.” If the clause merely assured publishers freedom of expression, Justice Stewart argues, it would duplicate the free speech provision and be “a constitutional redundancy.” Thus, for example, he argues that cases placing constitutional limits on libel actions derive from the obligation to protect the press as an institution: “[T]he Court has never suggested that the constitutional right of free speech gives an individual any immunity from liability for either libel or slander.”

Justice Stewart's thesis is provocative. It requires more thorough analysis than is possible here, but at the risk of unfairness I have to say that I find it less than convincing. The historical context of the First Amendment suggests that the Framers had printing presses in mind when they spoke of “the press” and intended merely to protect the written as well as the spoken word — not to give newspapers a preferential status. There is nothing in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan* reserving to the press the new libel immunity for critics of official conduct, and I do not believe the Court would hold the *Times* rule inapplicable to an individual who spoke or privately published criticism of officials.

It seems to me wiser to consider the speech and press clauses together and to see in them, as Zechariah Chafee did, the protection of two interests: “an individual interest, the need of many men to express their opinions on matters

... The attempt to define and establish a fixed privilege for journalists will fail—and ought to fail.

vital to them if life is to be worth living, and a social interest in the attainment of truth.” The press advances the social interest by obtaining and publishing the facts and opinions by which a democratic public can make a judgment on the truth. It acts, as Justice Powell has said, “as an agent of the public.” The rights of the press always depend on that understanding — on that sense of the public interest in press freedom. Justice Stewart would probably agree, and say that there is nothing inconsistent with that view in his speech. The trouble is that his thesis of institutional protection for the press as such may arouse in the hearts of some editors and publishers a *hubris* that lurks there anyway — a notion, surely the last thing intended by Justice Stewart, that the press is outside the law. Having just established that the Presidency must operate within the law, this country does not need any other powerful institutions immune from the legal process. In any event, however much journalists may talk about such status, I think they find special privilege uncomfortable when its nature becomes clear. A New York

State Freedom of Information Law effective September 1, 1974, made certain information available only to "bona fide members of the news media." An official committee under a distinguished journalist recommended two months later that the information should be "made equally accessible to any person without regard to status or interest."

In sum, I think the press has to respect other rights and other interests. It cannot live in splendid — and immune — isolation. It should be especially slow to claim total immunity for itself because it is now a powerful institution and a concentrated one. Mr. Justice White has spoken of "the increasingly prominent role of mass media in our society and the awesome power it has placed in the hands of a select few." It is not only in broadcasting that, in practice, the audience usually has only a limited number of channels from which to choose; in most American communities there is less choice among newspapers. Britain's Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins — that rarity, a politician who is a professional writer — has said correctly that the variety of that country's newspapers to a degree balances, in true freedom, the legal restrictions on its press: "Choice is as essential to a free press as is the prestige of journalists and the protection of resounding constitutional declarations. And choice exists only in a very attenuated form in the United States."

The power of our leading newspapers and broadcast networks and magazines must find its philosophical justification in the need for a counterweight to the power of the state — above all the increasingly concentrated power of the federal government. We no longer have the penny press of Jefferson's day, but neither do we have Presidents so limited in authority and so modest in person that, like him, they walk back to a boarding house after the inaugural and wait their turn for lunch.

If the power and constitutional position of the American press have developed primarily to check the abuse of political authority, as I believe, then it is that function that should come first on the press's list of priorities, not conflict with private rights. Editors and publishers and network presidents would be more convincing when they deliver tough speeches about the First Amendment if they were really prepared to be tigers with Government officials. Alas, Watergate to the contrary notwithstanding, coziness and laziness remain the rule in many news organizations and Washington bureaus. In the Soviet submarine affair, the CIA persuaded all the pillars of the press establishment to withhold the story: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Star*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, all three national broadcasting networks, and the Public Broadcasting System. It sounds like a conspiracy, but it was something worse: a series of independent decisions to give way to a claimed national security interest that, whatever it was, surely fell far short of the "direct, immediate and irreparable damage to our Nation" that it was said in the

Pentagon Papers case could alone justify legal restraint on publication. Jack Anderson, the irreverent journalist who finally broke the tale of the submarine, wrote afterward:

The old pre-Watergate, pre-Vietnam ideals of partnership with government, of cozy intimacy with the high and mighty, of a camaraderie of secrets shared by this peerage but kept from the public, begins to appeal once more to a press concerned that its abrasive successes have earned it a bad name.

Was he wrong?

Alas, Watergate to the contrary notwithstanding, coziness and laziness remain the rule in many news organizations and Washington bureaus.

Of course an editor may make his own decision to withhold or delay publication when he would strongly resist any attempt by the Government to restrain him legally from publishing the same matter. But the next time the Government does go to court, no one should be surprised if its counsel cites the submarine affair as an example of what the press itself thinks is a weighty national security interest. The precedent is not likely to prove a happy one.

If and when there is another great legal contest over the right to publish material in the national security area, the press should not expect an easy win over the Government. Editors treated the Pentagon Papers case as a famous victory, but it was not all that unambiguous: *The New York Times* was in fact restrained from publishing its series for fifteen days. And there are several reasons for the press to expect difficulty with judges on these issues.

First, we must recognize that the battleground for freedom of expression has shifted. The traditional issue was really freedom of *opinion*; that was the Holmesian marketplace for "free trade in ideas." Now the demand is for freedom to publish *facts* — a right that has become crucially important as the Government has cloaked more and more of its vital business in secrecy, denying the public the basis for political judgment. The trial judge in the Pentagon Papers case, Murray I. Gurfein, well understood the point. Reflecting the argument made to him by Alexander M. Bickel, counsel for *The Times*, Judge Gurfein wrote:

In this case there has been no attempt by the Government . . . to stifle criticism. Yet in the last analysis it is not merely the opinion of the editorial writer or of the columnist which is protected by the First Amendment. It is the free flow of information so that the public will be informed about the Government and its actions.

A second reality to be faced is that judges are not by nature enthusiastic admirers of the press. Chief Justice Burger, in the Pentagon Papers case, suggested that the newspaper concerned lacked the morals of a taxi driver. Mr. Justice White, though voting to dissolve the injunctive restraints, virtually invited a criminal prosecution of the newspaper personnel concerned. Mr. Justice Blackmun warned darkly — and fatuously, as events have shown, or rather the lack of any events — that if soldiers died and alliances were destroyed because the papers were published, “then the Nation’s people will know where the responsibility for these sad consequences rests.” Nor do

Should the courts have presumed the regularity of those four men?

judges necessarily have an understanding of how the press functions. In the argument of the Pentagon Papers case before the Second Circuit, judges seemed to suggest that when newspapers obtain classified information, they should submit it to some authority to see whether it can be published without damaging the national security. As Judge Mansfield put it, “the newspaper involved ought to suspend publication at least until the issue is resolved by someone.” But requiring submission of classified material before publication would effectively protect the Government from embarrassment in the whole field of defense and foreign policy, and reduce the press in this area to a mere transmission belt for official views.

If many judges seem to feel that the press is a disreputable lot, they take the opposite attitude toward the United States Government. Despite all that has happened in recent years, most judges extend to federal officials what amounts to a presumption of regularity. That was true through much of the Pentagon Papers proceeding. But consider the reality in that case — the actual human beings who were given the benefit of the presumption. The action was brought by John Mitchell, presumably with the approval of Richard M. Nixon; proceedings began on affidavits by Robert Mardian and J. Fred Buzhardt. Should the courts have presumed the regularity of those four men? Perhaps, as a practical matter, judges must begin with the premise that the United States acts in good faith; but thereafter a certain amount of skepticism would surely be wise.

One difficulty may be that appellate judges are too remote from the federal officials involved in these cases. A good example is the tortuous litigation arising from Victor Marchetti’s efforts to publish, uncensored, a book about his experiences as a CIA official. The Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit held that an agreement signed by CIA employees not to disclose secrets justified an injunction

against Marchetti’s disclosure, after resignation, of anything classified while he was in the agency. There was then a trial to determine whether particular items in the manuscript, to which the CIA objected, had in fact been classified while Marchetti was employed. The trial judge, Albert V. Bryan, Jr., had originally decided against Marchetti. But after hearing the testimony of CIA officials, and observing them on the witness stand, he concluded that their claims lacked credibility — that numerous items had never been classified and that the agency was now trying retroactively to stamp them secret. The judge found that, of 168 passages the CIA sought to delete, only 26 contained information classified during Marchetti’s employment. The Fourth Circuit, which had not observed the witnesses, reversed that decision, saying in its opinion: “There is a presumption of regularity in the performance by a public official of his public duty.”

There was a similar example in the Pentagon Papers case itself, with a happier ending when a Court of Appeals that reversed the trial judge was itself reversed by the Supreme Court. Judge Gurfein had been a wartime intelligence officer, and he began the trial of that case with what seemed to counsel a presumption in favor of the Government. But when he asked the official witnesses to tell him precisely what damage would be done to national security by which passages in the Papers, he got unsatisfactory answers — and he reacted to the reality of that experience as a judge should. He wrote that the Government had had an opportunity to “pinpoint” any “vital breaches” in security that would result from publication but had shown only the possibility of “embarrassment” — which could not justify an order against publication in our constitutional system. Judge Gurfein said:

A cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know.

My conclusion is that, just as the press needs a deeper understanding of the function of law, so should judges come to understand the extraordinary role of the press in this country — understand that it is meant to be cantankerous, obstinate, even disrespectful. The press does not as a rule relish that role itself: it prefers to be comfortable and complacent. But in the extreme situation — in the case of a lawless President — the press, or enough of it, can rise to its great function and, together with the law, protect the Constitution. Mutual admiration is not to be expected. But I love the two institutions so much, and regard them both as so essential to our freedom, that I must hope for greater understanding and respect between those twin pillars of the American system, the press and the law.

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Reporting in the Wild West

By William M. Pinkerton

As a child, I spent as much time studying the West as I spent studying the clarinet, and enjoyed it more. My West lessons came every Saturday afternoon, at the Rex Theater on Main Street. There, we watched the big screen bugeyed as Tom Mix, Harry Cary, William S. Hart and other great Hollywood cowboys rode the range and guided their horses up perilous mountain paths in search of smugglers, bank robbers, and other rascals. The cowboys always prevailed, although William S. Hart always lost the girl. Later, walking the mile home, we rehearsed the lessons and discussed the fine points of riding and shooting and roping and modest heroism. *That* subject had us roped and branded. Yet all the lore and life of the West that I learned failed me later on.

When my friend and instructor at the University of Wisconsin gave me the newspaper job he had urged out of his old city editor in Omaha, I knew I was going West. Omaha was somewhere way out there. The map disillusioned me: Omaha was just the other side of Iowa, and Iowa was right next to Wisconsin. Yet, in fact, Omaha was a cowboy town. The stockyards in South Omaha saw hundreds of beef animals every day, as well as hogs and sheep. South Omaha was cowboy country.

South Omaha was also a school for young reporters. My first test away from the eyes of the City Desk was an assignment to South Omaha—not to report on cows and cowboys, but to cover the police substation there. Any time a citizen suffered sudden death or a bank was robbed, I copied the police report and called in the news. If the case was important, I phoned the family and went around to the scene of the crime and talked to people. This was a great challenge, but by checking at the police station regularly I was surviving against the opposition's old-timer. Then one day I had an excited call from the City Desk. Wasn't there a report of gunfire at a poolhall hangout? Why didn't I call it in? Oh, that. Nobody was hurt, and the only damage was broken windows and bullet holes in the wall. I assumed a bunch of cowboys had been drunk and shot up the place in high spirits. When Al Cohen, the police reporter, finished his investigation, I learned about gangs. The hangout was the headquarters of one of the gangs. The boss had been called to the phone at the rear. While he stood there, a blast of gunfire came through the front window, peppering the wall around the phone booth. They meant to kill him, but didn't succeed. Oh.

I went to the stockyards again in Kansas City. I was working on the Market Desk of the *Star*, taking down reports of sales of grain and sales of livestock for the market page. When the man who covered the stockyards went on vacation, the editor assigned me to report the prices from the stockyards. How would I know the prices, I asked. Just follow the government market reporter around, and note down what he says. I found my way to the stockyards and introduced myself to the government man. He was tolerant: sure, I could follow him around. He had an assistant who noted down the sales as the government man called them out while he walked through the yards. I did the same, and daily called the prices in to the *Star*. Amazing. "My" reports were listed every day without quibble. My respect for the government man grew. As I remember it, a day went like this: "Prime . . . heifers . . . she steers . . . yearlings . . . now hogs . . ." I wrote, and called it in. The person who took down my report typed the sales out and passed them along to the printer. My report was prompt: it made the early

South Omaha was a school for young reporters . . . [And in Kansas City] I learned what the Rex Theater never taught me: a steer is a castrated bull.

editions of the *Star* which were mailed out to distant readers. My "she steers" went through three editions, out into western Kansas and northern Texas where the cowboys are.

And so I learned what the Rex Theater never taught me: a steer is a castrated bull.

Still, a tolerant editor kept me on. I left the *Star* honorably at the end of the summer of 1933. Thanks to President Roosevelt and the New Deal wages-and-hours laws, I went from \$20 a week at the *Star* to a fabulous \$35 a week in Omaha. But I was not out of the stockyards completely. Roosevelt, to achieve a quick reversal of the low prices farmers were getting, ordered the purchase and slaughter of a whole generation of little pigs. The day the farmers trucked their piglets to market, I was sent back to the South Omaha stockyards to observe.

The stockyards were chaos. Those old stockyard markets were great flats cut into square enclosures by wooden board fences. Each trucker, as he came in with his load of animals, was assigned one of those pens. The fences were high and

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firm, of course, to hold the fullgrown animals in place. No worthy porker could have slipped from one pen to another. So the piglets came, and their handlers were assigned pens. But fences built for pigs could not hold piglets. Herded off the truck into a pen, the crowd of piglets wandered around as they pleased—from one pen to another. No farmer could prove that the piglets who happened to be in his pen were his. The harried government agents made what settlement they could—I think they accepted each farmer's report of

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the number of piglets he had brought. And at the end of a wild day the farmers were paid and the piglets sent to slaughter.

Though my Rex Theater education failed me in the stockyards, the markets were generous to me. My friend and guide to Omaha, Ad Schneider, tipped me off to a wonderful opportunity. With every carload of animals shipped out of Omaha, the shipper could send one attendant. Since the farmers seldom wanted to chaperone their herds, the attendant's berth was often open. He rode in the caboose with the trainmen. Henry Fonda left Omaha for Broadway on a cattle train. I saw a great opportunity for adventure and a cheap vacation in a cattle train going west. Loads of cattle didn't leave Omaha for Los Angeles every day or every week, but I put in my bid and waited. When my call came, I learned that I would accompany three carloads of hogs. I put on my old clothes, packed some sandwiches in a paper bag, and set out for adventure. At the stockyards building, I asked conscientiously about my duties as attendant. The clerk looked puzzled. "Well," he said, "when you get up in the mountains, you might poke the pigs with a stick to make them stand up. They catch cold lying on the wet floor in the mountains." I found my train in the yards, climbed aboard the caboose, and handed my slip to a trainman. He didn't welcome me, but he said he guessed I could find a place to sit.

The trip, I think, lasted a couple of days, and my friend Ad pointed out that I would be going through the famous Moffett Tunnel. I'm sure I passed (and possibly I saw) some beautiful American scenery, but all I remember is railroad yards. Big yards, with track after track running side by side, with switch rail curving between them. And sometimes, just beyond the last track, I'd spot a trainmen's cafe. Before we left Colorado, most of the sandwiches I'd brought along

were eaten. And the sight of a warm cafe and promise of a hot meal were tempting. But I didn't dare leave my caboose, for fear a switch engine would haul it off to some far corner of the yard and leave me stranded. So I stayed, cherishing my last half-sandwich. Somewhere out west, a trainman came aboard for his shift, and without a show of pity or friendship gave me one of the sandwiches from his pail. How good it was! Once, when the train stopped up in the mountains, I remembered my hogs up forward. I climbed out of the caboose, ran forward and found a stick, and poked at the pigs. They groaned and grumbled and stood up. Then they lay down again on the damp floor. So I traveled across the West in my caboose, from switchyard to switchyard, while train crews came and went. When the train stopped at last in the Los Angeles yards, I said goodbye to the indifferent trainmen—but not to the hogs. Sooty, unshaven, tired, in grimy clothes, I climbed a long flight of iron stairs to the street. There, to my surprise, my Los Angeles friends were waiting. So was a policeman, watching for Depression bums and vagrants coming out of the stockyards. My friends got to me first.

In Omaha, I had my one pleasant encounter with that other Western institution, the grain exchange. Thanks to my identity with the stockyards and a slender handle I had on economics, I got to know the Financial Editor, one of those silent, competent deskmen who keep newspapers

I went down to the bank and drew out all my savings—\$200. Then I went to the Grain Exchange.

alive. I was walking by Joe's desk one day, and he stopped me. "Bill," he said, "have you got any money in this grain market?" No, I said in some surprise. "Well, you ought to buy. The market's going up fast, and you might as well get in." "What should I buy?" "It doesn't matter. Buy any grain you want, but do it now." I went down to the bank and drew out all my savings—\$200. Then I went to the Grain Exchange. Aware of the hazards of buying on margin, I insisted on paying cash. I came away, I believe, owning two carloads of barley. After that, I watched the grain reports every day. They were beautiful to see—up and up and up, day after day.

Still, I remembered one day, what goes up must come down. I stopped by Joe's desk. "Joe," I said, "when should I sell my grain?" "Don't ask me. That's up to you. I'll tell you when to buy, but I won't tell you when to sell." I unloaded my barley a few days later. I couldn't stand the suspense. I think I doubled my money.

Kidnapping, Terrorism, and the Media

By Sir Robert Mark

The following address was delivered by Sir Robert Mark, New Scotland Yard, London, at the International Press Institute's General Assembly in Philadelphia, May 10-12, 1976.

Thirty minutes is not long in which to outline the problems of kidnapping, terrorism and the media and the way in which we approach them in London. All I can do in so short a time is, as it were, to draw an outline of the skeleton to which you will add the flesh. This will vary in weight and distribution because of differences in the social, legal and constitutional conditions which determine the reaction of the security forces in the countries from which you come. I will, therefore, sketch the outline which applies to Great Britain so that you can compare it with your own.

I think I should begin by explaining that in the whole of Great Britain there are only 51 police forces, of which eight are in Scotland. The 43 forces in England and Wales have exclusive autonomy for law enforcement within their own districts but are all accountable, both to local police committees of elected representatives drawn from local governments and magistrates appointed by the Lord Chancellor, who is the head of the Judiciary, and to the Home Secretary, a senior Government minister responsible for the administration of the police and for law and order generally. There is a close and harmonious partnership between the police, the police committees and the Home Secretary, who has ultimate financial sanctions and other powers to ensure uniformity of organization, procedures and efficiency, but in practice, coercion is never required. We, therefore, have in Great Britain all the advantages of what appears to be a national police force with many common or shared services, but which in practice enjoys the advantages of local accountability, flexibility and, perhaps most of all, initiative.

It was part of the exercise of that initiative which led us in the London Metropolitan force to take a special interest in kidnapping, hijacking and terrorism arising from a number of incidents in London and the Provinces between 1969 and 1973. We decided to send officers overseas to look at the problems and finally convened a conference of police from a number of countries at New Scotland Yard in 1974. Italy, Germany and the United States were amongst those represented and there was an invaluable exchange of experience and opinions.

After that conference my senior colleagues and I decided that we should take the initiative, insofar as London alone was concerned, to explore the possibility of resolving the

problems likely to arise in the capital city in achieving the best possible relationship with the press in the event of a crime such as kidnapping or hijacking. There are nine daily newspapers in London, two television and three competing radio companies. In all, however, we managed to arrange a conference in September 1975 at which no less than 37 representatives of the national, provincial and foreign news media were present.

The resultant discussion revealed very clearly a diversity of views and interests and indicated a need for further extensive exploration which could not usefully be done without the agreement of the Home Office and participation of the 42 other police forces. Before that could be arranged, we were overtaken by events in the form of a kidnapping for extortion which resulted in the most astonishing and encouraging voluntary cooperation between press and police ever known in Great Britain. I will say a little more about that case later.

In England and Wales, as distinct from Scotland, the problem is simplified to some extent, in that apart from a few exceptions, determined by Parliament, the responsibility for dealing with crimes and for deciding the action to be

... To explore the possibility of ... achieving the best possible relationship with the press in the event of a crime such as kidnapping or hijacking.

taken lies with the police, not with the Government or any other prosecuting agency such as a system of District Attorneys. Police officers in England and Wales enforce the law themselves on behalf of the community as a whole and they are personally accountable for their actions to the law and the government, both central and local. But they are not subject to orders from either; their powers and responsibilities can only be restricted or increased by Parliament. Kidnapping, terrorism or hijacking without international political significance or ramifications are ordinary crimes in respect of which we are able to decide our own tactics, make our own operational decisions and bear the ultimate responsibility for the outcome. In all the three recent incidents in London of the kind we are discussing, namely the Balcombe Street and Spaghetti House sieges and the Cypriot girl kidnapping (all of which are *sub judice* and on which I am unable, therefore, to comment in detail), the responsibility for the conduct of operations and the making of

decisions was borne by police. This does not mean that we were not glad to have, and grateful for, the invaluable advice and support of Government, from Ministers, liaison officers and medical experts. But in each of these cases the machinery for decision-making was simple and clearly understood by all.

So long as responsibility for dealing with crime remains with the police (and in Great Britain this is clearly likely even in respect of the great majority of the cases we are discussing), it is for us, the police, to try to reach agreement with the media about how our joint interests and those of the public can best be served. This is naturally not easy in view of the competitive nature of the media, especially in a capital city in which that competition is both extensive and fierce, particularly in relation to such newsworthy crimes. But as we have recently demonstrated, it can be done.

Of course a number of special considerations arise in respect of kidnapping, hijacking or terrorism which affects foreign governments or otherwise has some specifically political dimension, such as an attack on an Embassy, the hijacking of a foreign aircraft or a demand for the release of prisoners. In such cases, the criminal act is directed not just against society or individuals, but against the state; even though the police are in charge of operations, they are bound at least to inform themselves about and have regard for what the Government sees as the relevant considerations of state. That could include special procedures for dealing with the press. What I am talking about now is procedures for dealing with the media in respect of crime, albeit rather special crime; a code of procedure acceptable to both the media and police in respect of ordinary crime ought to form a satisfactory basis for dealing with most of the more newsworthy crimes of the kind we are discussing today.

Such a code was agreed upon between the Metropolitan Police and senior representatives of national, provincial and foreign press, radio and television in 1972. I should explain that the code represents a reversal of the policy formerly governing police/press relations in London, and that the evidence of four years suggests that it is generally satisfactory. The code is published to every member of the Force, has been approved by the Home Secretary and has been brought to the knowledge of every Member of Parliament. Its basic principle was well summarized by Elliot Richardson before relinquishing his recent post as Ambassador to the Court of St. James's in the words "Trust begets Trust," and it gains increasing support from both press and police as experience enhances mutual confidence. For those of you who have not read it I should explain that it was worked out with senior representatives of almost the whole of London's news media, press, television and radio. Briefly it recognizes that it is in the interest of the police, the press and the public that news consisting of facts within the

knowledge of the police, and not subject to restriction because of the *sub judice* rule or the requirement not to impair the privacy of the individual, should be made available at police station level to properly accredited journalists. This may long have been the case in some of your countries or states but it was certainly not so in mine. Relationships between the Metropolitan Police and the press were formerly restricted to limited official channels, were dominated by hostility and mistrust, and encouraged improper clandestine relationships between journalists and policemen, only too often the source of inaccurate or exaggerated news stories.

The new arrangements recognize the need to reduce secrecy in police affairs to what is strictly—I emphasize strictly—necessary, the purpose being to promote and re-

The advantage from our point of view is an immeasurable improvement in our relationship with the press . . .

tain public confidence by demonstrating our willingness to go as far as we can in being accountable to the public as well as to the courts for what we do or fail to do.

The important point is that the change was not made to gain favor or in expectation of immunity from criticism or adverse comment. There is no question of withholding information as a retaliatory measure from newspapers or journalists who occasionally give us cause for complaint, whether justifiable or not. The advantage from our point of view is an immeasurable improvement in our relationship with the press, because of their increased ability to satisfy themselves about our actions. This is reflected in the accounts of our doings in newspapers, on television and on radio, and I am in absolutely no doubt that it has been a major contribution to the fact, demonstrated in three recent independent public opinion polls, none of them commissioned by us, that the police now enjoy more confidence and respect than any other public institution in Britain. Now let us consider briefly how our system for dealing with the press in ordinary matters is affected by kidnapping, hijacking and terrorism.

I have already mentioned that kidnapping, hijacking and terrorism that have no specifically political dimension and are in no sense aimed at the State or at foreign governments, are treated as ordinary crime. In the case of hijacking and terrorism the question of advantage to be gained from secrecy has not arisen and seems unlikely to arise and our ordinary procedures for dealing with the press are applied.

On-the-spot facilities for reporters and cameramen, frequent and regular news conferences, as much disclosure as will not prejudice eventual criminal proceedings, all these are brought into effect at operational level without delay or difficulty. There are, however, two possible complications I ought to mention. The first is that, if there are hostages—passengers or crew in a hijacked aircraft, for instance, whose lives are at risk—we may want to ask the press not to publish details of tactical planning and handling while the operation is going on, so that these details are not revealed on radio or television to the hijackers or terrorists who are holding the hostages. The second complication relates to the probable requirement for military aid, either to deter a possible terrorist attack or to fight a close-quarter battle with a small determined group or armed terrorists. The only difference

[The Spaghetti House siege] ended without harm to anyone, apart from a wound inflicted on himself by one of the gunmen.

in press relations arising from the actual employment of troops in support of the police is that liaison with the press would be undertaken jointly by police, Home Office and the Ministry of Defence.

Broadly speaking, our experience so far suggests that in such circumstances the Government assumes responsibility for strategy, but leaves to the police the responsibility for tactics, answering to the press for their own sphere of responsibility whilst maintaining close liaison with each other.

It will, of course, be obvious to you all that from the point of view of police/press liaison, hijacking and terrorism (such as bombing and assassination and the taking of hostages for political purposes, such as the release of prisoners), are likely to pose quite different problems from kidnapping for the purpose of extortion. In all of the former, the wrongdoer desires publicity in order to exert pressure on public opinion and on those who have to make the decisions arising from their demands. Kidnapping for extortion, in contrast, depends for its success on stealth and secrecy, the first demand almost always being that the police shall not be informed.

There have so far been only two particular problems in which it has been necessary to ask for the exceptional cooperation of the media. The first, the Spaghetti House siege, involved the holding of hostages for six days by three black gunmen in a cellar under a restaurant in central London. The hostages were Italian, which inevitably aroused great interest in that country and its diplomatic representatives in

Britain. It was also thought possible that as the siege continued the ethnic press might misinterpret the situation with possible damage to our relationship with the immigrant community. In this case we followed the simple principle of reminding the press of the *sub judice* rules, which are much more restrictive in Great Britain than in the United States, then telling them without delay what we believed to be the whole of the truth about the situation, including the fact that we had given the gunmen a radio in exchange for a sick hostage. We emphasized the need to avoid provoking tension between the occupants of the cellar, with possible danger to life. The restraint and discrimination shown by newspapers, television and radio was, thereafter, beyond all praise. (Suffice it to say that the incident ended without harm to anyone — apart from a wound inflicted on himself by one of the gunmen from which he has now happily recovered — and with virtually no sign of increased racial tension.)

The second problem, though involving only one victim, was in my view far more difficult, to the extent that it posed for the first time serious questions of conscience for the media as a whole. It related to the kidnapping of a girl against a demand for a ransom of £60,000, and it raised the question of the extent to which the press should comply with requests from the police for silence in order to save the life of a possible victim. The girl was held for nine days; there was no mention of the case in the press or on television and radio, notwithstanding that the police had disclosed the story at the outset with a request for secrecy. The ransom was paid, the girl was released unharmed, and all those alleged to be responsible for the kidnapping are now awaiting trial. It is this case, I think, which really highlights the problems which can face the police and press today, in deciding to what extent the accepted convention of disclosure in the public interest must be set aside voluntarily to save human life or possibly for some other reason thought no less morally compelling. I emphasise the word “voluntarily,” because it is for me the essence of the problem. Understandable press fears that agreement not to reveal a kidnapping at the request of the police may lead to an extension of that practice to other spheres, such as political issues or incidents possibly embarrassing to a government or minister, are less likely in Great Britain, because of the retention by the police of the responsibility for dealing with crime and prosecutions. Such agreements would undoubtedly be more difficult to achieve between government and press than between press and the police force, which is by law divorced from politics in its operational role.

I think that experience in your countries as well as in mine illustrates the disadvantages and difficulties in a free society of relying on statutory limitations on what shall or shall not be disclosed by the press to the public—though for certain matters of state some statutory protection is no doubt

necessary and unavoidable. Control by secrecy or failure to disclose involves the risk that discovery by one enterprising or energetic journalist will ensure an unsympathetic press from all, as well as provoking suspicion about the motives for secrecy. In the sort of case I am discussing the only really effective way to achieve temporary avoidance of disclosure or secrecy without risking very harmful consequences is by appealing to the press for it—this involves frank explanation of the reasons for the request, and the making of a decision by those responsible for the press themselves—rather than by those seeking it.

Those of you with strong views about a free and independent press may question the justification for even voluntary agreements between press and police to maintain silence in a matter of public interest. But consider the various issues briefly: the need to save the life of the victim, to ease the distress of his or her family, to avoid provoking the kidnapper into panicked action, possibly the murder of his victim, to avoid blocking communication between the kidnapper and those on whom he is making demands, to avoid through

The police themselves . . . are seeing the news media in less cynical terms . . .

excessive publicity encouraging exploitation of the situation by bogus kidnappers. There is, too, the likelihood that publicity will inevitably hamper the police and thus to some extent assist the kidnappers. The price to be paid by the journalist can, of course, be high, including the sacrifice of exclusivity through agreement to a self-denying ordinance, the risk of unfair advantage for the less scrupulous, the possible lack of public acceptance of suppression, and so on.

But I submit that the gain in terms of public respect and admiration for a press capable of putting human life before profit, and respect for law above circulation is by no means negligible. It is significant that it is not just the London Metropolitan Force which has emerged from the three 1975 cases with enhanced status; the police themselves, for perhaps the first time, are seeing the news media in less cynical terms and are, therefore, a little more ready to accept them at their own evaluation. That must, in the long term, enhance the public interest as well as the interests of both press and police.

I should perhaps end by mentioning the intense interest and satisfaction felt in Great Britain by the arrest of the two alleged kidnappers, the safe recovery of the victim and the recovery of some \$150,000 ransom money in Detroit only a fortnight after our own case, and after exactly the same kind of voluntary cooperation with the police on the part of the press. It suggests that we do indeed have common interests and can benefit from a general discussion of them.

Science Writing in the American Mass Media

By Günter Haaf

On December 26th, *New Times* ran a lengthy cover story about "The Politics of Pollution," in which it stated that "on all environmental decisions, [President] Ford's choreographers are businessmen, not scientists . . . At a time when the cancer rate is increasing faster than ever before and 85 per cent of cancer deaths in America are thought to be caused by environmental factors, [Ford] wants to weaken pending legislation that would check the flood of man-made carcinogens into our air, water, and food." *The Boston Globe* on January 14th examined scientists who "gather to divide meager U.S. funds for research": "The situation is so grave . . . that the National Institute of Health . . . may have to cut back on current projects and forego new research this year."

More connections between "the politics of pollution" and "meager U.S. funds for research" are at hand with an editorial *Science* published October 31, 1975. There Kenneth E. Boulding of the Institute of Behavioral Science expressed the sorrows of the American scientists:

The recent difficulties of the National Science Foundation, the very doubtful position of science in the White House, the yet unfulfilled promise of technology assessment, and the innumerable frustrations of the scientific community as it tries to interact with government at the state level are all symptoms of the difficulty of cross-cultural interactions between the scientific and political communities, even in the same country.

The difficulties of "cross-cultural interactions" seem not to be restricted to scientific and political communities. Symptoms are detectable in the interactions between layman and scientist, between artist or writer and scientist, and even between scientist and scientist. Surely, too, between science and the media. The cross-cultural problems emerge from books and television movies, from the behavior of citizens, and especially from articles in the press. There these difficulties sometimes are called the "anti-scientific movement."

"The New Dionysians"

Only half-a-decade after the biggest public relations event ever in science and technology, the live broadcast of the moon-landing, both now are accused of a "ruthless inhumanity," which "has made our universe an unbounded

theater of the absurd." (*Psychology Today*, January, 1976). The editors of *Daedalus* sensed the growing distrust of science and technology two years ago. The journal invited 16 authors to express their opinions about "Science and Its Public: The Changing Relationship." Anti-rationalist Theodore Roszak ("The Monster and the Titan") wondered: "Can we be sure that what science gives us is indeed knowledge?" He complained that "when the modern Prometheus reaches for knowledge, it is not the torch of *gnosis* he brings back or even searches for, but the many candles of information."

Gerald Holton, Professor of Physics at Harvard, described the scientist as caught between a large anvil and a fearful hammer: "The one is provided by what I might call 'the new Dionysians'—by authors like Theodore Roszak and Charles Reich . . . [who] tend to celebrate the private, personal, and, in some cases, even the mystical . . . The hammer is wielded by the group I shall call 'new Apollonians.' They [Karl Popper and others] advise us . . . to confine ourselves to the logical and mathematical side of science. . . . Both groups [are] dissatisfied with how science is done, and do not hide their distaste."

Of the "new Dionysians," Holton admitted that "their skill is high and the appeal of their lively prose is large": it is no surprise they found supporters. Only a few years ago, anti-scientific opinion was regarded as the attitude of cranks or mysticism-seeking drop-outs among the youth. But the group of skeptics, critics, and even anti-scientists has gained in quantity as well as respectability. "Now journalists, social theorists, spokesmen for the anti-intellectual counterculture and a tremendous number of young people share a skeptical view of science," writes Richard Olson, a historian of science, in *Psychology Today*. "The mood has succeeded in reversing the college trend of the 1950's, when many of the brightest students took up mathematics and the exact sciences . . . Our optimism about mankind's progressive power over nature has almost evaporated." He fears that "a kind of intellectual civil war is brewing . . . Many scientists themselves now see technological progress as profoundly ambivalent."

In such a language of war, the mood of a critic of science and technology like Robert M. Pirsig seems to be forlorn, a fossil of a lost era. Pirsig's book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, was published in 1974 with instant success. Pirsig, who is not a warrior against science and its logical backbone, rationality, but a searcher for quality in all human enterprise, whether in science, technology, or motorcycle maintenance, concludes: "At present we're snowed under with an irrational expansion of blind data-gathering in the sciences because there's no rational format for any understanding of scientific creativity. We have artists with no scientific knowledge and scientists with no artistic knowl-

edge and both with no spiritual sense of gravity at all, and the result is not just bad, it is ghastly."

What Pirsig seeks is a life in which rationality and spirituality are combined in an ethic of superior "quality"—even in such seemingly rational fields as pure science. The lack of this "quality of life" recently has motivated both intellectuals and average citizens to express their disgust, especially concerning environmental pollution and the dreariness of their mechanized lives.

"When you look at them collectively, as journalists do, you get the illusion of a mass movement, an anti-technological mass movement," writes Pirsig, "but one does not convert individuals into mass people with the simple coining of a mass term." What Pirsig felt, the sociologists Amitai Etzioni and Clyde Nunn of Columbia University, writing in *Daedalus*, more or less confirm: "The public" that is for or against science and technology does not exist. Attitudes vary according to a large number of subpublics." Etzioni and Nunn based this statement on the nationwide

"... There's no rational format for any understanding of scientific creativity . . . The result is not just bad, it is ghastly."

surveys of Louis Harris and the National Opinion Research Center. The figures showed that positive answers to questions indicating a "great deal of confidence in science" declined from 56 per cent in 1966 to 37 per cent in 1973. At the same time the number of those with "some confidence in science" rose from 25 to 47 per cent. "The major shift, then, was not from great enthusiasm to great hostility, but from 'great confidence' to 'only some confidence'—a middling shift by all accounts."

Such a middling shift hardly could explain the outbreak of Olson's "intellectual civil war." But behind the ambivalence about science hides a much larger loss of confidence in the major institutions of the U.S. and the entire western world. As Etzioni and Nunn reported, the "great deal of confidence" in the military declined between 1966 and 1973 by 30 per cent, in education by 24 per cent, in major U.S. companies by 26 per cent, and in Congress by 19 per cent. Result: in 1973, medicine and science ranked first and second in the public's confidence among 16 institutional areas.

Similar results were obtained by Todd R. LaPorte and Daniel Metlay from a study of technology and social change,

Mr. Haaf, Associate Nieman Fellow '76, is a science writer for *Stern*, Hamburg. Portions of this article appeared, in slightly different form, in *Die Zeit*.

based on interviews with 980 adult Californians. In their paper "Technology Observed: Attitudes of a Wary Public" (*Science*, April 11, 1975), they reported that the public makes a distinction in its evaluation of the outcomes of scientific work and technological work, shows some skepticism about the impact of technology upon society, distrusts the institutions associated with decisionmaking in technical policy areas—and that an important segment of the public maintains clear elements of political ideology in its evaluation of technology. "The current assessment of the public as largely, and somewhat vacantly, enamored with science and technology does not hold," they concluded, "nor does a picture of a public generally hostile and alienated by technology. Rather a more mixed picture emerges. Out of that picture, a potential public can be isolated, whose mood it behooves science policy-makers to watch."

This potential public consists, as the researchers suggest, of young people who identify themselves as "liberal."

But the pro-scientific communications revolution has not occurred, and there is some doubt that it ever will happen.

Therefore "technological dissent" cannot "be written off as anti-intellectual and without foundation. It is," they aver, "preeminently sensible."

At a first glance, these findings indicate some reason for irony, given the expectations of politicians and scientists in the mid-sixties about the popularity of science and technology due to a longer and more scientifically-oriented education. Hillier Kriehbaum, Professor of Journalism at New York University, expressed such hopes in 1967 in the final chapter of his book *Science and the Mass Media*: "What the better-informed young adults will bring to their newspaper and magazine reading and their radio and television listening could force a communications revolution such as has seldom been equaled." But the pro-scientific communications revolution has not occurred, and there is some doubt that it will ever happen.

LaPorte and Metlay "can only speculate whether, as these younger people grow older, they will carry their uneasiness about technology with them." They also are concerned about the press: "Another point emerging from our interpretation is how very crucial to continued free scientific inquiry is the distinction between scientific work and technological activities apparently now made by a sizeable portion of the public. Should this distinction become lost, perhaps through continual merging of science's role with

technology's by the popular press, attitudes now mainly associated with technology could spill over to scientific research as well."

"The Rocket-Scalpel Complex"

Such anxiety about the press is widespread among the scientific community, and has roots in the early 19th century. The sins of early yellow journalism are described by Edwin Emery and Henry Ladd Smith in their book *The Press and America*, with the exemplar of Pulitzer's *Sunday World* in the 1890's: "Heading the *World's* Sunday staff was Morrill Goddard . . . He jazzed up his page spreads, exaggerating and popularizing the factual information. Scientists particularly were the victims of the Sunday newspaper's predilection for distortion and sensationalism, and the pseudo-scientific stories of yellow journalism made the men of science shy away from newspaper coverage for the next 50 years."

Things have improved since the booming years of the late 19th century, and between the world wars a new breed of journalists established themselves in editorial offices: the science writers. But while the coverage of science and technology has become more careful, sensational exaggerated stories in which science and technology are intermixed still occur from time to time. And the new electronic medium of television seems still to be in an area of scientific yellow journalism—when there *is* coverage of scientific and technological events. Jacob Bronowski's "The Ascent of Man," a superior series, was a BBC production shown only on public television. David Perlman, science editor of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, wrote in *Daedalus* that "American commercial television is the most bankrupt of the mass media . . . TV networks pay little attention to science news."

In January of this year, *TV Guide* published an acerbic article, "Biased 'Science' Reporting Scars TV Viewers": "Scientifically untrained reporters are scaring the population to death with the idea that incalculable numbers of products are on the market which are [causing] cancer and other dread diseases . . . The networks should stop this scandalous process of allowing the scientifically untrained to air ill-informed, unbalanced, and terrifying opinion to a scientifically untrained public . . ."

Such harsh criticism would seem less appropriate for the printed press. "We try to separate science and technology in our writing for the public," writes Perlman, "and we succeed, I think, more often than not. We try to present news about scientific developments in the context of science as a continuous process, and when space and deadlines permit, at times we succeed. We try to avoid political bias or advocacy when we cover the interaction between science and

public affairs, and here we almost do. We aim for accuracy and try to shun sensationalism, but here our critics say we too often fall short." "We" are the some 400 active science writers of the National Association of Science Writers (NASW).

Some years before Perlman's article, the science editor in the department of public relations at Northwestern University, William K. Stuckey, writing in *Nieman Reports*, put his experience with both journalists and scientists at the battle line of science into one somewhat exaggerated formula:

After extensive dealings with the press, a university science writer might feel that few newspapermen are interested in a scientific finding unless it can cure cancer while in orbit. This could be called the "rocket-scalpel complex." And after a number of contacts with the professors it becomes easy for him to believe that few academicians are interested in press coverage, unless the facts are expressed in mathematical Latin and are heavily qualified to prove that nothing really important happened. This is, of course, the "scientific dignity-protective obscurity syndrome." Scientists . . . sometimes imply that the science writer is really an undercover correspondent for *Keyhole*, *True Confessions* and *Whammo Stories*. Plain English, though correct, is "yellow journalism."

Certainly it is still true, as John Hohenberg asserted ten years ago in his book *The New Front Page*, that "the newspaper is often the only scientific textbook available to a mass audience." This opportunity for reaching a large part of the lay public creates hope and some fear in the scientific community.

The mass media, of course, especially those with well-trained science writers, have improved the public understanding and appreciation of science, or at least of some parts of science. An early example was the coverage of the

But the agreement between doctors, scientists, and science writers has not always been as salutary. There are still severe doubts that the mass media are influential enough to change radically the opinions or, more important, the behavior of the public. Data from surveys about the anti-scientific movement indicate that the role of the press—positive as well as negative—is overestimated by many scientists (and even by journalists). Etzioni and Nunn wrote that "the data suggest that education is more important than age as a predictor of confidence in scientists," and that better education does not imply support for science and technology: "It is possible that there is a small and even growing enclave among better-educated youth that could be called an anti-science counterculture."

The Shift from Rockets to Ethics

The improvement of science writers brought with it an ability to criticize scientific endeavor and technological projects. Uneasiness about the role of technology and even the social context of science among scientists and philosophers of science easily influenced the more critical journalists. In 1974, five years after the moon walk, Hillier Kriehbaum acknowledged that "some marked changes have taken place in what [science writers] write about and how they present the information."

Kriehbaum found that science writers "have turned increasingly toward interpretation of what the news meant," often by using "meaningful piggy-back stories of scientific and technical background about other news events." At the same time David Perlman succinctly expressed the consensus about shifting areas for coverage: "Basic science down. Medicine same. Public impact of science way up. Health care politics way up. 'Relevant' science up." And Joann Rodgers, medical editor of *The Baltimore News American*, added that "the medical and life sciences are recognized as significant at last."

The long-dominant coverage of the space program shrank rapidly after the successful landings on the moon. Ecological problems and the so-called "energy crisis" filled the columns now emptied of rockets and astronauts. Kriehbaum qualified this "new trend" as "accompanied by an increasing skepticism on the part of more science reporters and their reluctance to publicize projects as 'unwilling advocates' with minimum criticism from opponents, as they did for many of the mushrooming space flight programs."

This shift is clearly visible in the results of a survey by Sharon M. Friedman of Lehigh University. In April 1973, Friedman sent a questionnaire to all active members of the NASW living in the U.S. and Canada, seeking information about changes that might have occurred since 1965 in per-

The role of the press—positive as well as negative—is overestimated by many scientists (and even by journalists).

development of polio vaccines in the early 1950's. Dr. Hart E. Van Riper, then medical director of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, stated in May, 1954 that "the public attitude toward polio has been changed from wild fear to reasoned precaution by telling the truth about the disease." Van Riper praised "science writers, editorial writers, and the press as a whole [who] quickly rose to the defense of our vaccine field trials and were not deterred by the snipers. In the final analysis, I think, attacks on us taught us who were the real friends of scientific truth."

ceptions and attitudes toward science and the public. She defined science widely, as most science writers do, to include technology as well as pure and applied research in the biological, chemical, physical, medical, behavioral and environmental areas.

Newspaper reporters as well as writers for more specialized publications answered that they were writing more interpretative than "straight" news articles—and three-fourths of the journalists said that science stories in

Close to half of the writers reported attempts to counteract public hostility [toward science].

their publications received adequate or better space allotments. Friedman: "Because science articles are more interpretative and focus on people-oriented issues, they often present science from a more unfavorable viewpoint when compared to 1965 . . . Increasingly, the public is becoming aware of science's harmful as well as beneficial characteristics."

The survey disclosed that the increasingly critical approach to science writing goes hand-in-hand with better-educated science writers ("91 per cent having four to seven years of college education, compared to only 70 per cent in 1957"), and younger science writers, with better science backgrounds ("80 per cent took five or more science courses during their collegiate years"). These younger writers "appear to be more skeptical of science: three-fourths said they questioned science sources more now than previously and about half believed their articles were becoming more critical of science."

The question of who influenced whom—science writers the public, or the public the science writers?—resembles the famous question of the chicken and the egg. The journalists did not act (or react) as monolithic group. More than 50 per cent indicated some change in their own attitudes toward science as a result of shifting public opinion. Two-fifths, however, reported no change. More younger writers reported a change in attitude than did those over 30.

Close to half of the writers reported attempts to try to counteract public hostility, or to try to be more careful about accuracy or objectivity—possibly a reaction to the feeling of most writers that their articles have some impact. How much public opinion is changed by science reporting in the press remains unanswered.

Friedman cautiously explored the connections between so-called "élite influence groups"—environmentalists, consumer activists, and popular scientist-critics who tend to be

negative and in some cases even hostile towards science—and the more negative perceptions of science writers: "First, these groups seem much more negative toward science than the public appears to be. Second, members of these élite groups frequently make use of the media through press conferences and press releases and often talk to reporters. It is not difficult to see how they could influence science writers into thinking the public is more negative than it actually is about science."

Even when the influence of science writers on their readers is not as big as some scientists may fear, there remains "a relatively closed communication network between members of élite influence groups, science writers, and members of scientific and governmental organizations in relation to information on how they themselves and the public feel about science. Within this network, information passes from one group to the next and then loops right back again to the first group."

Friedman's conclusions were published in the *NASW Newsletter* of December, 1974: "One would suspect that as the science writing profession continues to mature, more science writers will increasingly take into account the public's view of science and its impact on daily life." In the long run, this could mean that given the apparently circular judgments of the "communication network," science itself may lose some of its freedom.

The "Visible Scientists"

But scientists are not simply passive spectators of this changing public. More and more scientists are willing to voice their opinions outside the laboratory or the academic circle: to sit back sulking in the corner doesn't improve their increasingly tense situation within the society. As those scientists and engineers take part in the public discussion, the attack on science may result in a closer relationship between science and the public, no longer denying the social context of science, and therefore possibly stabilizing the ups and downs of science policy.

There are and have always been such "visible scientists," as Rae Goodell of M.I.T. named them. The call for more visible scientists does not mean that they should take over the jobs of science writers or even television anchormen. Today's splitting of professional and artistic skill in different professions seems irreversible. But scientists should be more visible in fields where their opinion and advice are useful, their expertise essential, their knowledge instructive.

But within the last ten years, an entirely new breed of visible scientists have appeared, "not known for their research discoveries . . . nor for influential positions in Wash-

ington. On the contrary, they tend to be outsiders, mavericks in the scientific community." Goodell continues: "In fact, rather than pushing science, figures like Barry Commoner often make science more unpopular, by pointing out the disadvantages of technology."

Today's visible scientists often are members of one of the "élite influence groups," known for their involvement in politics and controversial issues: energy, environment, population, health, arms control, drugs, genetic engineering, IQ, the Indochina war. Goodell studied eight at length: Margaret Mead, B.F. Skinner, Barry Commoner, Linus Pauling, Paul Ehrlich, William Shockley, Glenn Seaborg, and Isaac Asimov. She reports Howard Simons' comment: "It's a quasi-political, quasi-activist, quasi-social, non-scientific list, right off the top."

"Visible scientists . . . have what it takes to interest today's press and public. If a scientist were to try to become visible today, he could get several pointers from current

We like to think that reporters know how to handle publicity seekers.

visible scientists," concluded Goodell. She lists seven principles:

1. Focus on a relevant, "hot" topic.
2. Take controversial positions on issues: "As [the visible scientists] say, even when science as a topic is out, controversy is always in."
3. Be colorful, cultivate an image, emphasize your idiosyncracies: "Asimov writes at lightning speed."
4. Cultivate your verbal ability: "They just have a knack," as David Hendin put it, "that every line that comes out of their mouths is a good quotation."
5. Work from an established personal or institutional reputation: "Visible scientists are not quacks. Many of them, such as Ehrlich, Pauling, Mead, Skinner, have a reputation for being controversial in their own specialties, as well as in their positions on public issues."
6. Be tough: "Criticism is often severe . . ."
7. Learn something about the press: "Visible scientists are relatively sophisticated about how the press works, which has many advantages for both reporters and scientists. Having more experience with the media, the visible scientists are seldom critical of the press. They expect small inaccuracies, and are not bothered by them. Said Ehrlich: 'There is nothing so dead as yesterday's news; no matter how hideously garbled it is, it's all over.'"

The utility of such advice can be questioned. We like to think that reporters know how to handle publicity seekers.

The better-trained science writers, we assume, will assiduously check their sources. And the more powerful élite influence groups grow, the louder their counterparts will speak out. But it is up to the writer to select what seems true, which source reliable. Science writers seem, at present, better trained than ever before to do their exacting job.

"The Supplementary System"

Basically, this rather small group of specialists among the journalists exists because of a basic public interest in scientific and technological news. This interest is in no way a fashionable phenomenon of the 20th century: even in the earliest newspapers, there were reports about nature and remarkable natural events, as well as notes about, for example, Galileo's development of the telescope. Not until the 1930s did a group of specialized science writers crystallize from the mass of journalists. Yet their numbers are small: as of May, 1974, the NASW had 37 life members (those who had belonged for 25 years or more), and 407 active members (those working half the time or more for media). The rest were associate members (generally public relations people). Slightly less than a fifth of the NASW members were women.

"This total of 444 life and active members included practically all of the eligible science writers with media in the country except for those who are chronic nonjoiners," Kriehbaum wrote in a study. "As expected, science writers are located where print and broadcast outlets are concentrated and where the larger and more productive science and technology centers are"—153 in New York City and suburbs, 48 in the District of Columbia, 31 in California. But while *The New York Times* employs eleven writers who cover science, technology and medicine, some newspapers have only two full-time science writers: one who covers the biomedical sciences and health care, while the other does the "hard" science and technology, everything from physics to manned space flight; most American newspapers have no specialist for science at all. Their science coverage depends entirely on the wire services and on rare reports from freelancers.

Thus a large proportion of American newspaper readers is inadequately served. Individual science writers often suffer from deadline pressure and space restrictions; such coverage often appears superficial and random, with little background. Science writers alone hardly can be blamed for the erratic coverage; despite remarkable improvements, this remains a problem for the press as a whole.

Even severe critics of inadequate science writing, however, should acknowledge that ideal science coverage is restricted by the varying tasks of the media. Though far

from perfect now, there is a kind of informal "supplementary system" among various media. Not every note about a new discovery can include all possible social consequences. Background reports tied to scientific events—conferences, publication of important research papers, political-technological hearings and the like—as well as longer articles in Sunday papers, newsmagazines and other journals of general interest can, viewed over time, serve as a fairly good indication of the state of science in relation to politics, the economy, and society. This supplementary system seems to be underestimated even by science writers, who tend to be science reporters with newspapers and therefore deal with their own special problems of deadlines and impact. The newsmagazines sometimes produce well-researched accounts of new developments.

Beside the mass media, the public can gain science news from the range of specialized science magazines at the borderline of layman comprehensibility. In an overview of the scientific journal in *Harvard Magazine* (January 1976), William Bennett examined a "certain uncomfortable asymmetry" in the famous two-cultures doctrine of C. P. Snow: "Somehow the burden has fallen upon non-scientists to acquire literacy in science far more than it has upon scientists to learn English or read history." Bennett reviewed seven magazines: *American Scientist*, *Natural History*, *Nature* and *Science* ("the *Time* and *Newsweek* of the scientific world"), *New Scientist*, *Popular Science* (devoted to technology . . . written by professional journalists in a style that has its closest counterpart on newspaper sports pages"), and, with nearly a third of his space, *Scientific American* ("the most venerable of all").

All of these magazines can be useful sources of information and background material for science writers with the mass media. But they can only occasionally, with the excep-

tions of *Science* and *New Scientist*, serve the demand for critical overviews of the connections between science, society, and politics.

The Stance of the Press

The end of the "golden age" of science and technology—and possibly of glorious science writing—came after the decline of the space program in 1970. Coverage of these spectacles was intensive and sometimes orgiastic, but seldom as critical as it could have been. The critical approach to science and technology in the context of society and politics is the major characteristic of the science writing of the seventies.

But science writing in American print media is still far from superb. Too many newspapers still don't have science writers; sensationalism and headline trouble are not uncommon; coverage in magazines often appears to be randomly selected or uncritical (or, increasingly, hypercritical). A prime deficiency is the lack of artistically as well as scientifically satisfying illustrations, both graphics and photographs. Since the death of *Life* magazine, this important tool of science reporting is only occasionally remembered in illustrated reports in newsmagazines or specialized journals.

Improvement in the quality of science writing possibly will be slow, and there is not much hope that editors will spend much money, in these days of economic uncertainty, on science writers. For science reporters, jumping on the bandwagon of the anti-scientific movement can do great harm in the long run: science writing is inescapably linked to the success of science. A new optimism about science in the public's eyes hardly can be created out of hostility between science and the press.

Media-Law Conflicts

(Continued from page 2)

as an article of faith and in fact would go to jail rather than compromise their view of it.

Second, most journalists have no consistent set of ethical standards—either as individuals or collectively, within media institutions or as members of a profession. (There ought, says Linsky, to be some, at least for the individual.)

And third, a major factor in First Amendment issues is the enormous cost of litigation; newspapers must now more than ever make judgments as to whether to print a story or not on the basis of the potential costs to be incurred, not just on the risk of loss or the public interest in publication.

Linsky also offered suggestions for future action which blended into some of the several specific draft recommendations that the conference had been called to consider;

the next full day was devoted to intensive discussion of the draft recommendations. Their titles are telegraphic: "Reference Panels [of Lawyers] for Journalists"; "Media and Law Enforcement Consultation"; "Law Study Programs for Journalists" (amended to include "Journalism Seminars for Bench and Bar"); "Media Critics" (of the performance of one's own organization *and* of the performance of others); "Internal Procedures for Media Organizations" (including in-house education on sensitive legal/ethical issues and in-house codes of journalistic conduct on such issues); "Fair Trial/Free Press Guidelines and Expedited Appeal Procedures"; a "New England News Council"; and "Continuing Organization" to push further the effort of the last two years.

Some of the ensuing discussion in North Andover paralleled the dialogue at the preceding conferences:

Journalists remain very skittish about anything approaching "guidelines"—fully conscious that courts have found it

excessively convenient to borrow any agreed-upon guideline (in an industry or profession) and adopt it to the purpose of a judicial decree. A safer word, say journalists, may be "procedures"; and even that term they would prefer to keep in-house—meaning, a set of procedures for law-media issues that the *Daily Planet's* editors would recommend to their reporters. As for "News Councils," whether state or regional in scope, or even sub-regional (one for Northern New England, one for Southern), there is skittishness here, too. Who will choose its members? From what groups? What will be its mandate? What, if any, sanctions will it have available? And who will "guard the guardians"?

Bar and Bench types seem less skittish—except for those attorneys who have represented media clients (and a very few heterodox judges, like Harold Medina, who has urged the press to "fight like tigers" for an absolutist interpretation of its First Amendment rights).

Andover's participants did seem to agree that the route to media-law conciliation was a two-way street: that the educational process between the two adversary institutions must be mutual. Bar-bench types *must* better understand journalism's role, under the First Amendment, as journalists begin to better comprehend the law.

Is there a solution—or is there a series of solutions (beyond continued dialogue underwritten by benevolent foundations)—to the media-law conflict in New England and the rest of the nation?

The North Andover meeting took place prior to the Supreme Court's decision in the Nebraska case, and that case hung heavy over our proceedings. In its wake, a semi-victory for the press, the ground rules for the dialogue can at least be better defined. And there is no substitute for further dialogue along the path Fred Friendly and his colleagues have led us.

Yet it still seems to me, a somewhat detached observer—neither a journalist nor a lawyer—that in a society founded on distrust of most government and concentrations of power, there is so far but one solution to press-law conflicts that remains acceptable to journalists: the appointment of editors who have a well-considered and consistent set of personal and professional ethics, and who can inculcate similar standards in the reporters they employ. In other words, people of ethical concern hiring others capable of developing such a concern. Out of such interaction can emerge procedures for self-criticism and compassionate self-restraint.

It is a fuzzy, in-house, pluralistic, unenforceable solution. But virtually every other solution seems to carry with it unacceptable threats to that rare and precious American inheritance, the free-press portion of our Constitution's First Amendment.

—J.C.T. Jr.

Ethics and Journalism

Among those who attended the final Nieman dinner on ethics in late May were Harvey Cox, Professor of Divinity at Harvard; Krister Stendahl, Dean of the Divinity School; and Jerald F. ter Horst of the Detroit News, President Ford's first press secretary, who resigned over the matter of the Nixon pardon. One of this year's Fellows managed to catch segments of the dinner on tape; upon hearing it, the editors decided that some of what was said deserved a wider audience.

We begin with Harvey Cox:

I think the power of Hannah Arendt's book about Eichmann is that like all books of that depth, it does show us something about ourselves and something larger. I see that really, in a way, as the underlying moral crisis, and it pushes me back to a very theological perspective. When one looks, for example, at the New Testament and sees, and one looks at the way in which Jesus deals with people who come to him posing moral issues or moral problems, he very rarely, in fact almost never, entertains the issue in the terms in which it is presented. In doing this he's very much of the rabbinical tradition at his time and since then; that is, he almost always answers with a story or with a question which is designed to shatter the way in which the issue was posed and to drive the person into a different perception—to open up a whole new way of seeing the world or feeling the world so that the person is then perhaps more capable of making choices from a perspective of love or virtue or something else.

So I get a little impatient with some of the discussions I hear about ethics, because if we had a population of people, whether they were right for newspapers or teaching divinity schools or whatever they do, who are already aware of the fact that they are confronted every day (and we're confronted as a people), with a range of choices, and are merely asking us, now what do we bring to bear on these choices: values or ethics, or whatever? then I think we are a very long way down the road. I think our moral problem is a certain finality: there's a certain kind of anesthesia or a kind of semi-unconsciousness which prevents us from actually seeing the choices which are there for us as individuals and as a nation. And therefore, I have to say, and I hope it doesn't sound simply like the "*déformation professionnelle*," that the moral issue drives one back to the whole issue, a more profound issue, a religious issue, to questions of one's basic and cardinal perspective on the world—one's capacity for imaginatively entertaining and feeling the pains of other people, one's capacity to enter into some kind of empathy

with people whose situations are not one's own. But I think we would be missing the point if we talk as though we were simply in need of some kind of help in making choices which are already forced.

I want to make another point which may seem to have nothing to do with this, but I think it's related. I keep asking myself, why this condition of being anesthetized? Why, when we look around, do we find a certain kind of half-consciousness about these issues? I remember talking a few

He saw a kind of erosion of what he thought was the human capacity even to run away or cover up . . .

years ago with Carl Stokes, when he was the Mayor of Cleveland, who spoke to a very small group like this one time, toward the end of his term as Mayor of Cleveland. He was feeling very dejected and discouraged about his career as Mayor, especially about the crime at that time in Cleveland, and told us about two crimes that had been committed in Cleveland that week, both of them holdups: one with a murder during the holdup and one with a shooting which eventually might have caused the death of that person. The strange thing, he felt, about both incidents was that the people who had perpetrated them, after having robbed the store and shot the storekeeper, simply drove back to their apartment house, parked the car and began to watch television. Then the police came by and simply picked them up and arrested them. They apparently made no real effort to avoid detection and arrest. They went somewhere but they didn't make any serious effort to get away.

Now this was almost a killing blow to Stokes. Not that crime was a serious problem (not *just* that crime was a serious problem) in Cleveland, but he saw a kind of erosion of what he thought was the human capacity even to run away or cover up after one had done something like this and he simply couldn't understand it; he was almost in despair.

So I have to ask myself the same question. I don't know the answer to this. But I want to just suggest one idea, one that the more politically-oriented writers here might want to think about as a Bicentennial possibility. You grow up in junior high, high school, and college in the United States learning that in 1776 there was a Declaration of Independence, after which we had a *terrible* period in American history, that period under the Articles of Confederation which was finally ended, thank God, by the adoption of the United States Constitution, the victory, in fact, of the Federalist Party, the Federalist conception of the American

Republic. Everybody learns it that way. We all learned it that way, didn't we, that the Articles of Confederation were a monstrosity. However, recently, here and there as the Bicentennial unfolds, an occasional writer raises the absolutely heretical idea that perhaps the concept of politics which was being defended by the anti-Federalists, by those whose ideas were really expressed better through the Articles of Confederation, may have had something: because the concept there was that all of life was political and politics is especially the moral participation of the citizen in his or her home, in local, day-to-day existence, a very intense and very local scale, whereas for the framers of the *Federalist Papers* and later for the Constitution, the idea was that politics is really a much more restricted thing: we don't really have time for that, most of us, we have to make our money, we have to run our families, so that once a year or so we vote for representatives, who then do our politics for us. We communicate with them and talk with them and write to them, and so on. But the whole understanding of what politics is, is a much more restricted and much more distant kind of concept.

Now I don't want to go on and sketch this debate, some of you know more about this debate than I do, but I've been thinking for the last few years and I wonder if now might be the time to raise again the idea that at least some of that notion, that what moral participation in the light of the nation means, has to do much more with the intense local and continuous participation of persons in their local settings, and much less to do with the concept of an inevitably

I think the problem of ethics is posed at a level which does not really uncover our fundamental crisis.

distant, enormously large, and, from most persons' point of view, unreachable government. It is at least one of the factors which has entered into the feeling of anesthesia, distance, fatalism, cynicism, and, to use a very overworked term, alienation, which one finds everywhere today in the United States and, I guess, in a lot of other places.

I don't think there's a simple political solution to this. (I'm not suggesting that we celebrate the Bicentennial by abolishing the Constitution and going back to the Articles of Confederation—it might be worth a try!) But at least the underlying vision of what politics is, what participation is, and where the link between morality and politics exists in these two concepts might be interesting to explore. I don't want to suggest that there is a political solution, because I

want to plump for my first point more than any other: there is a link between moral perception and a deeper religious organization which I think we can't avoid talking about, even though it's embarrassing to talk about these things in our wonderful pluralistic religious society. . . .

My trouble with most of the discussions that I hear and that I have with a lot of my colleagues on ethics, has to do with the fact that I think the problem of ethics is posed at a level which does not really uncover our fundamental crisis. Most of the discussions that I hear about ethics, although they are not quite slot-machine models, work something like this: when confronted with an ethical decision, what criterion or criteria does one bring to bear in making considerations, in thinking through it in order to make a choice. Now we have various things that can be brought in—you can bring in values, you can bring in natural law or religion, or character or something else. But *already one has perceived oneself* before a decision that has to be made.

—Harvey Cox

Well, I was struck by two things, one from Dean [Stendahl] and one from Harvey Cox, in connection with my own experience. First the concept of equality of justice, and then the banality factor which Harvey mentioned related by Arendt's book on Eichmann. I guess we all come from where our roots are, and where we are today—we never totally walk away from that, no matter how we may try, if we ever try indeed. I'm first generation Dutch, actually spoke Dutch before I spoke English, and my parents arrived here just in the nick of time to have me born here, and so I learned my English in the first grade. I'm part of a very Calvinistic, Dutch Calvinistic family, both in school and in everything else. So when I confirmed this matter of the Nixon pardon, it was almost automatic that I would think in my own mind [about] the President's forgiving or pardoning Richard Nixon—in my own mind it was almost automatic that I would think of how one pardons someone else who hasn't said he's sorry. To me a pardon is an act of forgiveness and forgiveness implies a sense of contrition, and as hard as I had worked on Ron Ziegler by telephone to San Clemente, it was very evident that no statement of contrition was going to be forthcoming to this country, which I felt was at least a minimum ingredient, a requirement in my own personal book.

I didn't have all that much time to think about these things, because I didn't hear about the pardon until the day before it was to be announced, and the only reason I heard about it then was because it was my duty as press secretary

to handle the mechanics of getting the story out—you know, the press and TV coverage and everything else. And the decision was made: I had no opportunity to argue pro or con the issue of the pardon. So I never looked at it very personally.

And I recall very distinctly coming home that night—it was a Saturday night—very late and that first month was a horrendous month for hours anyway. I was coming home about eight o'clock Saturday night and telling my wife that

Here this opportunity for national reconciliation was about to be blown away, and nobody in the White House seemed terribly concerned . . .

we'd have to be there at six o'clock in the morning, Sunday morning. And she yells, "Sunday, too, at that hour!" I said, "Yes, an important thing is coming along; but I'm also going to resign tomorrow." Well, you know, at that point I had to do a lot of explaining.

But, that's where this, the so-called Eichmann issue—I hadn't thought of it that way—but it's on the mark, I think. The Eichmann sense came into my feeling in this way: here, I felt, was a President who had been given a chance, really given a chance by the whole country, to start fresh and start new, after Watergate and then Watergate added to the horror of Vietnam. And here this whole opportunity for reconciliation within the country was about to be blown away, and nobody seemed to be terribly concerned about it in the White House. Really, I mean there was no agony or . . . I mean, I was not aware of any agony, or deep-felt feelings about what is right: should we do this? what was the importance of it? It was a case of where the decision had been made by the President and everybody was going to go along just accepting the idea that, well, you know, after all he's President and he's making the decisions, so therefore our staff will be loyal and we'll be supportive and we'll do what's necessary to carry it out. And that bothered me too.

—Jerald F. ter Horst

I'm a Biblical scholar, and I would refer everybody to the second chapter of the first Book of Romans—that conscience is a common human phenomenon and any idea that the power of conscience would be especially related to religion is wrong. There is a power of conscience as its mutual argument so that the value of the religion, as I see it, is not in that specific realm, rather to me it is in the fact that

if one believes in God it gives a wonderful feeling, because one really does believe—I really do believe—that the world is in the hands of God and God has a future. Now whether that would mean that my way of life, or my culture or my this or that, will always be on top, I'm not so sure about. There's a relativizing of a lot of human values so that you place your hope in your trust in God, and not in your trust in your own system of survival. I think that is the ultimate level of any kind of religious hope. It's the ultimate liberation. And that's why when the Roman Empire collapsed, the crazy group that kept on praying "Let this dirty earth go to pieces," and "Let Thy Kingdom come" were the ones who had enough guts to start to build again, because somehow they were seeking roots. And that is really, I think, the ultimate function of religion, rather than to prop up one system or another.

Lately there is one perspective on this that struck me very much. I wonder if it is true to say that in American history, one has usually not been concerned about justice—that is to

. . . You place your hope in your trust in God, and not in your trust in your own system of survival . . . It's the ultimate level of religious hope . . . the ultimate liberation.

say, one has solved the problems of justice by opportunity. (It is very striking that the drive in this country is always really toward legislation of equal opportunity.) That is perhaps unique to the American way of solving moral problems. Much of the legislation has opportunity language. The way in which one thinks doesn't count; as long as you give equal opportunity, there *is* a basic health in the system. Now that way of thinking, which I take is one on which this country was more or less founded, presupposes a frontier, or presupposes a relatively fast-growing economy, or it presupposes, either by rhetoric believed or by reality, a new frontier, as Jack Kennedy used to speak; that opportunity presupposes that there are always opportunities. Somehow the concept of distributive justice, which I think is one of the basic ethical suppositions, is not very much spoken of. Now there isn't that much growth and there isn't so much more frontier and the basic problem of the world is an equalization between the rich and the poor nations and the rich and the poor regions. Then one starts to wonder whether the opportunity model (opportunity and justice) works anymore. And I happen to believe that that is the modern crisis. There is something in the way one solves moral problems, which are problems of justice, that some-

how doesn't quite fit with the situation in which we find ourselves, a situation which, to a large extent, looks like that quotation from John the Baptist when he said, "It is as it should be: that He increases and I decrease." An equal opportunity ethic—or any kind of opportunity-ethic—doesn't function very well in such a world. That is to me the basic problem of the modern crisis.

The person who is moral . . . is on the inside, as on the outside. It isn't easy to be such a person when you meet the press.

And then I would like to add to that (and then I'll stop), that in contemporary theoretical or historical studies there is a great new interest in something that is called character, the study of character. I don't know very much about that. But I have read some things, very intriguing, and the villain in the game in these studies seems to be the great old Immanuel Kant, who managed to shape Western culture to a very large extent. Looking at moral problems from the point of view of the will, he set up a style of dealing with values where the main thing was an ethical will which was in antagonism to both the temptations and the instincts—an enormously will-centered pattern of character—over against what is often described as the Elizabethan character, where the point was to somehow have the outside be coterminous with the inside, to be a cold person so that that which appeared to be was that which really was. You might say, the diametrical opposite to the Madison Avenue method of selling toothpaste or Presidents. And it may well be that one of the most interesting things in dealing with ethics in the next years will not be the question of . . . oh, euthanasia or criminal cases or medical ethics or the kind of slot-machine ethics where you put in the question and out comes the right answer. Start to retrace the whole question of, "What is a moral person?" Maybe a moral person is not primarily the person who performs certain so-called moral acts. The person who is moral is so in the sense that he is on the inside or she is on the inside, as on the outside. That's not easy in an advertisement culture. It isn't easy to be such a person when you meet the press.

—Krister Stendahl

Correction:

In the last issue of *Nieman Reports*, Louis Banks was mistakenly identified as a Visiting Nieman Fellow. In fact, Mr. Banks was the first Nieman Research Fellow.

Journalism and War: Observer or Participant?

In early March, Barbara Tuchman, journalist, historian, and winner of two Pulitzer Prizes, spoke to James Thomson's Leverett House Seminar. What follows is a lightly edited transcript of her presentation and the ensuing discussion.

Barbara Tuchman: Dr. Thomson asked me to talk a little about the value of journalism as a source for history. After I'd looked back over the books I'd written and checked the bibliographies to remind myself what I had used — I concluded that journalism amounts, I think, to two kinds of sources. One is observation — the material that you use because the writer has been on the spot and noticed something particular about the physical scene that he's writing about, the details, the weather, the visual material which you might not get in any other way. This is very useful source material. It is a basic need for a historian, not only for his own writing which he or she wants to make as vivid or visual as possible, or at least I do, but also for necessary factual information. I remember in one of the opening battles of World War I: it was a question of whether it was raining or sunshine. Not that it was terribly important historically, but when one source says one thing and one says the other, you want to get it right. The search was not easy because the first month of World War I, which was the subject of my *Guns of August*, they didn't let any press to the front because both the French and Lord Kitchener, who was in charge of the English War Office, thought the war was going to be over in six weeks and anyway they didn't want anybody around being inconvenient. Most American journalists were in Belgium, where they did permit them.

I made a list of all the journalists I had in my bibliography — Irwin Cobb; Richard Harding Davis, whose name is probably the best known; Alexander Powell; Wickham Steed, who was the foreign editor of *The Times of London*; and Herbert Bayward Swope, who wrote from Germany while we were still neutral. The most vivid detail I remember was the description by Irwin Cobb of the German

advance through Belgium and a rag doll that he saw under the feet of marching men. One of those tiny details that a writer can use that makes everything so vivid. It meant to him the trampling of Belgium, of course. And it carried that to the reader, as the kind of thing that stays in your mind. That is an example of the observer.

The other role is that of journalists as participants, which is sometimes more significant historically. That occurs more frequently than perhaps you might suspect. I'm speaking only from the material in my own books because, while there's a great deal more, this is what I know about. In *The Zimmerman Telegram*, which has to do with a spy story that precipitated the American entry into World War I . . . Perhaps I should stop . . . I never know, when I'm talking to a college generation, what kind of information I can rely on your *having* that relates to what I'm talking about.

James Thomson: How many people have heard of World War I?

Tuchman: How many people actually — it would be an interesting question — would have an idea of its historical significance? I mean, what would you say it was? Would anybody care to . . . ? Would you?

Student: The significance of World War I or of the telegram?

Tuchman: Of World War I as a whole.

Student: It was probably the final breakdown of a balance of power system within Europe, sort of a globalization of world politics, or of European politics.

Tuchman: Well, I think that's valid. I saw it also, really, as the crucible that shaped what's happened since; all the 20th century's problems go back to that. But at least we all know now that it was important!

Well, in *Zimmerman*, which is the first book I did on that period, there was a newspaper called *The Providence Journal*, which still exists, and which became very important because they — that is, the British secret agent in this country, who

was of course attempting what he could to get us into the war — made contact with a Czech patriot named Emmanuel Vaska, who lived in this country and was the head of what was called the Bohemian Union, which was, of course, very anti-German. Vaska began collecting information about German sabotage and various tricks, and feeding it to the British, who got in touch with the editor of the *The Providence Journal*, a man named John Rathom, who was Australian-born and English-educated. They gave him this material and he published it, and *The New York Times*, by arrangement with Rathom, would get it and print it every day under the opening line, “*The Providence Journal* will say this morning . . .” which became famous in those years.

Now that is not so much journalism as it is an editor becoming a historical factor in his use of his newspaper. Then there is the case of E. L. Godkin. I don’t know if any of you have taken American history of the late 19th century, and the history of the anti-imperialists around the turn of the century. History generally underplays the losers. We all

It’s very hard for us to realize the passion and intensity of the people . . . against the Spanish-American War, because their position lost; therefore the textbooks don’t tell us much about it.

know much more about American imperialism, the movement toward the Pacific and the taking of the Philippines than we know about the resisters. In fact the anti-imperialists of the 1890s and the 1900s were an extremely important part of American society and politics, and held just as strong and valid a position as the anti-war activists during Vietnam — but they lost.

Thomson: By one vote. In the U. S. Senate.

Tuchman: You mean the Philippine treaty. Yes, they lost by one vote. Dr. Thomson is absolutely right. Well, one of the moving spirits was Godkin, who was the first editor of *The Nation*. I don’t know if *The Nation* means anything to any of you either. In its present form it has dwindled and declined, but in its early years — it is now over a hundred years old — it was very influential.

Godkin was its first editor. He also succeeded Carl Schurz as editor of the *New York Evening Post*. He was English-born, incidentally. According to William James he made *The Nation* the “towering influence on all thought concerning public affairs,” and according to James Russell Lowell, *The Nation* under Godkin was the best periodical in the world. The *Post*, according to James Bryce, was the “best paper printed in the English language.” The measure of its

influence can be seen in Theodore Roosevelt’s remark in a letter to a friend that he feared the “fearful moral degeneracy” that resulted from reading the *Post* or *The Nation* as a steady diet.

If any of you look forward to careers as journalists or editors, I hope you may at some point find the peak of your achievement in causing “a fearful moral degeneracy” in some of your readers of differing opinion.

It was men like Godkin who were able to galvanize and help the anti-imperialist movement — even though, as Dr. Thomson has said, it lost the crucial vote on the Philippine Treaty by one vote. It’s very hard for us to realize the passion and the intensity of the people who belonged to that group against American expansion, against the taking of the Philippines, against the Spanish-American War, because their position lost; therefore the textbooks don’t tell us much about it. But I would call Godkin another example of the journalist, or, in his case, the editor, as participant. Editors are often in a position to become participants. The classic example of newspaper as participant is the Dreyfus Affair, which to me is a central episode of the period immediately prior to World War I.

My book *The Proud Tower* was not really — I’m afraid I have to take issue with your professor — was not really about international relations: it was a cultural history. It was an attempt to try and examine the society out of which this great disaster came. I did not want to do another study of diplomatic origins, which seemed to me to have been done far too often, but rather of what kind of society produced the world war. Clearly so great a disaster could not have come out of a golden age.

Thomson: Are you calling attention to the fact that I haven’t read the book?

Tuchman: Yes, dear — subtly.

Thomson: Not very subtle.

Tuchman: Well, only you understood that. I didn’t mean to, I was trying to be polite about it. However, I’m not the kind of writer who thinks everybody should have read all her books.

In any case, that book, since I obviously couldn’t describe all society in this quarter-century before 1914, was a selection of eight episodes, eight groups of things or people or whatever, in which the Dreyfus Affair was almost the central one, not because it had to do with anti-Semitism but because it seemed to me to express the combative forces at work. In fact I called the chapter “Give Me Combat,” which was a phrase from Romain Rolland, who was one of the Dreyfusards, and who expressed the terrific excitement when he wrote, “God give me struggle, enemies, howling crowds, all the combat of which I am capable.” I felt that the Dreyfus Affair expressed the amount of steam that was coming to a head and the terrific degree of passion and energy and violence and hostility that was being created in

the final years of the 19th century for various reasons, which, since this is not a history class, I won't go into.

The press itself really made the Dreyfus case become an Affair — both the right-wing and anti-Semitic press which built it up, and the editors and journalists of the left or the Dreyfusards, who began to try and uncover what had happened and cancel the verdict. And of course the great men of the period kept the case alive through what they wrote in the press, whether or not they were journalists. Zola with the famous "*J'accuse*" — although again I may be talking about something nobody here knows about. Emile Zola wrote his historic piece, "*J'accuse*," in a Socialist newspaper; Clemenceau wrote a whole series on the trial; Jean Jaurès, the great Socialist leader, also published a series in the newspapers. They were promoting and uncovering and raising the issues through the press — it could be called a classic case of press confrontation. To study it you have to go and read the press, unless of course you want to read Tuchman, which is possible too. I spent a long time at the BN in Paris, the Bibliothèque Nationale. Incidentally, it was an interesting experience because the press of 1898, 1894 to '98, was marvelous to read because of the quality of the paper. It didn't fall apart. Everytime I've done research in American newspapers, it all crumbles, but the French newspapers of the 1890s were still rag paper, and they were beautifully kept in Paris. For one thing they don't heat their libraries the way we do, and those journals were a pleasure to use compared to ours.

I now come to those journalists who have that particular quality of perception, which is a rare thing, but when you find it, tells you a great deal about an episode or a time, an atmosphere, a mood. I picked out one to read to you from

Editors are often in a position to become participants. The classic example of a newspaper as participant is the Dreyfus Affair . . .

The Proud Tower, from the chapter on the Hague Conference, or the two Hague Conferences on disarmament in 1899 and 1907. The first one was perhaps the more important, an international conference of all the European countries and the U. S., in which, of course, they got nowhere, because they never do at disarmament conferences. There was a chap from *Le Temps*, the major French paper, whose reports were marvelous. He perceived what was happening, which is difficult to do when you're in the midst of it. He wrote in one column — and they apparently gave him a great deal of leeway — "Why does no one write '*Mene, Mene,*

Tekel' over the door of this conference?" May I assume that all Harvard students know what "*Mene, Mene, Tekel*" refers to?

Thomson: They don't; don't assume it.

Tuchman: Don't assume anything. Those were the words written by the finger on the wall in Babylon, in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. How do you explain to people who have

After 1918 nobody could write the word "dastardly" seriously, nobody could write "the rules of civilized warfare," or take that seriously, because we learned after 1914-18 that there was no such thing.

never read the Bible? Does anybody know the Bible? Well, it was the warning finger. Have you never heard the phrase, "The warning finger writes"?

Thomson: It takes a Baptist. . . .

Tuchman: Well, the warning finger appeared and wrote these letters over the door of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, meaning, "Warning, things are going to crumble, watch out." Anyhow, that is what the correspondent of *Le Temps* wrote at that time. Then he described watching the children playing in the streets of The Hague. He wrote: "If this great assembly does not achieve its purpose, the stupid rivalries of states may one day mow down these young people and lay their corpses by millions on the battlefields." He wrote that in 1899, fifteen years before it happened. But he saw what was to happen right there — which is easy enough for us to see from hindsight; but occasionally a journalist like this man, who was anonymous, saw it too while he was in the middle of it. This is the quality of perception — sometimes they have it and sometimes they don't. It depends on an individual, I don't think you can generalize about it.

There was another report that I felt was exceedingly significant, not so much for what the journalist saw, but for the way he wrote, the language. It was a report by an American journalist in 1914 which struck me with great impact and was, in fact, one of the reasons why, *after* doing *The Guns of August*, I went back to do a book on the previous period. He was reporting an episode in Belgium when the Germans were trying to break through in a great hurry. They had expected the Belgians to give up, which they didn't do, and this infuriated the Germans because they had a very exact schedule. They were supposed to get through Belgium in 14 days, and the Belgian resistance held up everything, and of course they hate being messed up in their timetables.

One device they thought of was to try and kidnap the Belgian general defending Liège. They sent a force of sol-

diers in unmarked uniforms that looked British to his headquarters, but one of his aides spotted the disguise and shouted: "They're not English, they're Germans!" Immediately the Germans shot him down, shot him dead, and the American reporter — I don't suppose he was there, but he must have heard about it — wrote that the aide's comrades, "maddened at the dastardly violation of the rules of civilized warfare, spared not but slew."

Well, the reason this had such an enormous impact on me was the language, and what it meant for its time. Because I knew instantly that no journalist of my day could ever again write like that. After 1918 nobody could write the word "dastardly" seriously, nobody could write "the rules of civilized warfare," or take that seriously, because we learned after 1914-18 that there was no such thing. And nobody could write "spared not but slew" in this marvelous romantic Victorian language. To me this whole sentence represented a time that had gone, and wasn't possible anymore. Suddenly, you know, one has moments of revelation like this one, that make things come clear.

The seminar proceeded to a discussion of editors' decisions: what sorts of copy, especially personal testaments from war correspondents, might be printed today, and what might be cut.

Tuchman: It depends on a man with a perceptive mind, who is a good writer. An editor sees it, and if he has any sense he'll pass it.

Student: Well, I don't know. I think in the Vietnam War, for example, there was a tremendous amount of that kind of personal imagery, particularly, for example, in the coverage of My Lai and the exposure of that —

Tuchman: Well, actually My Lai — excuse me for interrupting — was not covered. It was exposed later.

Student: I mean the point at which it was exposed . . .

Tuchman: Yes . . . but I think that's too bad, if true, that you feel that this has no place in modern journalism.

Student: Well, I think it should have a place, but I'm not sure that it's happening now.

Tuchman: Well, the Irwin Cobb story, in which he simply described a rag doll under the feet of the marching men, I'm sure could appear. That was a visual detail, and he used it for what it said, and I don't think any editor would cut that out. The other example, by the man from *Le Temps*, who said that if they don't do something here, they'll mow each other down by millions — that would not be in a news story, that's quite true. That belongs more in a column. But that's pretty much what he was writing. He had a lot of leeway and he was writing both daily reports and what we would call columns.

Student: Since they had so much leeway, in your research did you find any that were just totally off the mark? You said

that there were some people who were quite perceptive. Did anyone just totally blow it and say, well, there's going to be peace forever, or —

Tuchman: No, they didn't. I think I would have put down something totally off the mark. I don't remember any such thing, but there certainly have been journalists who have been off the mark. Frequently.

Thomson: Would you cite Joe Alsop? Or . . .

Tuchman: Oh, I'd be happy to. Joe Alsop was quite a problem to me in writing about Stilwell and the war, the American war in China, because he was — he is a journalist who was at that time a participant. He had himself named aide to General Chennault, who was the air man and Stilwell's opponent in strategy and policy. He's a very passionate man, Alsop, and really not fitted in a sense to be a journalist, because he takes things so seriously and passionately that everything becomes a *crise de coeur*. In any case, I had read all his letters — being a cousin of President Roosevelt, he was writing him personal letters before he ever got to China and they're all up at Hyde Park. I had read them all in the course of my research, so I knew exactly what his point of view was. In fact, his most passionate denunciation of everything was written from San Francisco before he ever got to Chungking. He also had written a series of pieces after the war in the *Saturday Evening Post* denouncing the whole Stilwell policy, and presenting what was really the Chennault line. I had read it all. When he heard I was doing this book, as many people did, he began to get worried, and

There certainly have been journalists who have been off the mark. Frequently.

insisted that I come and talk to him. I didn't want to, because I already knew what he would tell me and I didn't want to get on personal terms. I suppose that was the wrong point of view, but I hesitated. Then he got to my publisher, so I said, "All right, all right," and I went. When I was in Washington, I invited him to come over to the hotel but, oh no, I had to come to his house for dinner. Well, I didn't want to do that because then I would be a guest, but he was very insistent. So I figured well, that's *his* headache. . . . What am I saying all this for? I'm not proving any point here, except that he wrote as a journalist about a situation in which he had been a participant and a very violent activist on one side of a controversial issue.

Thomson: This would comment on Mark's question, "Was anyone all wrong?"

Tuchman: Well, I think Alsop is usually wrong, or at least — Well, there again, you run into the difficulty of talking

about events of your own time, a very different problem from events of the past. In your own time you feel committed to one side as against another in a controversial situation. I personally think Alsop was wrong, and I think Chennault was wrong in his insistence on the priority of American aid going to the Air Force, which meant that we couldn't get it on the ground, as Stilwell wanted. Stilwell claimed that an air force was no better than its airfields: if you couldn't protect the airfields, there was absolutely no point to an air force. As it proved, this was true, because the Japanese took the airfields. However, that's a dead issue now.

Another person I wanted to mention as a participant who played an enormous role in history was Theodore Herzl. Does anybody know who *he* was?

Student: Yes.

Tuchman: Good. He was a journalist for the *Neue Freipresse* of Vienna, I think. He wrote what were called then

Why was the White House press corps perfectly content to sit on their fannies and wait for press releases?

feuilletons, or columns, elegant pieces, cultural criticism. He was Jewish, but what was then called an assimilated Jew, who was not at all part of the Zionist movement. But he went to Paris, where he heard the mob shrieking "*à mort Dreyfus!*" and he was outside the courtyard when they stripped Dreyfus' medals off, and when he was convicted. It did something to him. The whole thing suddenly became clear, and he went to his hotel and holed up, and stayed there for a week and wrote this famous *Judenstaat*, the Jewish state, in which he laid out the entire idea of the revival and reestablishment of a Jewish state — just like that. The rest of course is history — which again I won't go into.

Perhaps I should stop here and let you people take part, and comment or ask questions.

Thomson: How about the general subject of journalism as an antidote to official reportage, from the government's vantage point. Is there any balancing that becomes clear in your mind, as between the two kinds of archives?

Tuchman: Well, of course — particularly in the years we've just all of us gone through, investigative journalism is immensely important. But while we all know how much we owe to the journalists who uncovered Watergate, My Lai, and so on, it seems to me that what is worrisome is that they didn't do it before. That there wasn't more honest presentation of what was happening in the Nixon Administration by this extraordinarily able, talented, highly-paid corps of

journalists in Washington. Why were we getting so little, really, of undercover reporting, or rather, reporting of undercover activities? Why was nobody nosing around, looking into CREEP, telling us what was happening? It would have been perfectly possible. Why was the White House press corps perfectly content to sit on their fannies and wait for press releases? I feel that, much as we owe to journalism as a counterbalance to the government press release, it should be doing better. It has become too wedded to the press release, which I think is a heinous development of modern life. Too much that is now printed is a release from somebody or other — either a PR firm, or a PR man for the government, or business of one kind or another. They are sending out what they want to have said about them, and journalism is relying on this far more than it should.

The communiqué is another example of this. I remember once reading in *The Times* a communiqué of some bombing, not in the Arab-Israeli war, but during the interim. The Egyptians charged that the Israelis came over and bombed something or other, and the Israelis denied that any planes had left the ground. The denial showed up only afterwards in a tiny little space; the original statement was much larger. I happened to have been talking a few weeks earlier to Turner Catledge, who was then the editor, and I wrote him a letter asking: why does *The Times* print a communiqué from the Egyptians instead of sending a journalist to see whether the place was actually bombed? What is the point of this eternal publishing of communiqués, most of which are lies? What does it accomplish? It merely gives the public an impression which is not true.

Now in World War II, in China, the Chinese used to issue communiqués which were literally fairy tales. They would talk about how they pushed back the Japanese, and how they had a big battle down here, and 600 men were killed,

I asked Mr. Catledge why, just because *The New York Times* considers itself a newspaper of record, it feels a duty to publish communiqués?

and one thing and another. Our newspapers religiously printed these, every single day. Now this became a historical factor in itself because it gave the American people, in addition to all the propaganda we were getting about the Chinese, an impression of these brave, wonderful, marvelously fighting Chinese, who were pushing back the Japanese. And Stilwell once wrote in despair, "If the American people keep thinking the Chinese are doing all this work, why am I asking for all this matériel so desperately? Why are we risking American lives flying matériel over

the Hump?" The very fact of the impression that the American public got of what was happening, of what the Chinese army was doing — which in fact was nothing, nothing whatever — became a factor in the history of the war itself.

This can happen through too much reliance on the communiqué. The campaign in Burma, I discovered, was being reported at one point in *The New York Times* from London, presumably because the journalists couldn't get in; they were simply using the communiqués which were getting out to London, because the British were handling the communications. They were picking them up in London and using them as news, which was absolutely useless, of course. Entirely useless.

I asked Mr. Catledge why, just because *The Times* considers itself a newspaper of record, it feels a duty to publish communiqués? Wouldn't it be just as well to forswear all communiqués and only print what a journalist can see for himself? And never use press releases, either. Now I know this would eliminate a great deal of information, but it would certainly ginger up the press corps enormously. They would have to go out and look for stuff, instead of simply rewriting PR things.

Student: I was wondering what answer you got as to why this was done. I mean, *Broadcasting* magazine recently did an editorial that made the point that this thing was very common across the United States, and they cited as an example a Seattle newspaper which had printed verbatim a press release from the Boeing Company, with bright and shiny things about "We're going to put pianos in our new planes" and all that sort of thing. And then about the third paragraph down, they said, "By the way, we're also laying off 50,000 workers." Everybody thought that ought to be the headline, but there it was, the third or fourth paragraph down. It seems to happen. What answer did you get as to why they do this?

Tuchman: I don't remember, but I don't think it could have been terribly useful, otherwise I would have remembered it. I think he just said, "We're a newspaper of record, and this is our custom, we print official communiqués."

Student: I just wondered, in wartime, I wonder if forswearing communiqués would really work? The example I think of is in *The First Casualty*; Knightley talks about the Soviets barring journalists from the front during the battles, particularly Stalingrad, where no journalists were allowed until the active battle was over. Of course, the choice was between acceptance of the Soviet communiqués, or simply giving a report on the sounds of the battle; on the other hand, a reporter would have to assume it was reasonable to try to put something in the paper . . . the nation was at war, the United States was at war with the same enemy. . . .

Tuchman: Well, that's true. But suppose we said to them, "No, we will not print any communiqués. If you want news

about your battle you're going to have to let a pool in, or a few, or something," and we just refused to use communiqués. Because a communiqué is a propaganda weapon. No general staff issues a communiqué on what actually happened if it's going to be unfavorable to them. They compose them for a purpose.

Student: But aren't war correspondents propagandists? What about World War II?

Tuchman: I don't think the honest one is, necessarily, no.

Thomson: What if we're fighting the devil? In Vietnam, it was not the devil that checked out, but Hitler appeared to be, and so we all must pull together in the great cause . . . World War I was different, too.

Tuchman: It's true, it's certainly true that for example the press in China was unable to write frankly of what it saw in Chunking, because they had to sign a promise, didn't they? that they would submit their material to censorship. Also

I don't think there's any way of requiring or even hoping that a press will be objective or totally clear of the government in a national crisis like [a war]. However, there's a great deal of life that's *not* a major war.

they would want to go back, or their paper would want to be able to send another person back, and that was one reason why the news coming out of China was far too glowing.

Student: I think another point about publishing communiqués or press releases is part of the philosophy, "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," in that press releases are definitely a propaganda weapon. . . . Agencies may get press releases from Congressmen's offices to go to the local newspaper. There's no news, nine times out of ten those releases contain absolutely nothing of what will affect anyone's life, or will be of any political significance. But the newspaper is accommodating the Congressman by having his name appear in the paper, and —

Tuchman: I'm not so sure they're doing that so much as filling their columns. I think that's what TV does. It seems to me it would be a tremendous advantage for all of us if American TV did not go on all day. Because of the necessity of filling the airtime, they put so much garbage, rubbish, rather, into the air and absorb so much of this press release stuff, because they have nothing else to use. I think this is true of the press too, they use this stuff out of sheer laziness to fill their columns.

Student: It's probably cheaper for them, too.

Tuchman: Cheaper, that's another thing.

Student: Also that if they can promote a person or, in case of a war, you know, their government's view . . . what happens when they come back later to do some investigating, they would find the people more cooperative because *they* had been cooperative.

Second Student: But you often reach that point when what you're trying to find out about them turns out to be negative, then the [backscratching] stops at that point, so you've actually not gained any advantage in having done a favor in the first place. Because if you print a thousand releases by a person, but then you want to print a story saying that he's cheated on his income tax for ten years, I'm sure you'll not get the same cooperation from him.

First Student: That's true. But if you're trying to uncover something about his agency, you might. . . . A great deal of investigative reporting in particular is based on the willingness of people who are involved in the institutions to talk.

Second Student: Right. There are also many people — I've had personal experience with people who will be willing to do that kind of thing, without them meaning to curry favor. It's been my experience that the people who are willing to do that are those who are not in a position where they would want to curry favor from the press in the first place. I mean, it's not always your person near the top of the agency who's —

Tuchman: Well, I think you might lose a great deal to make a blanket rule like this. I know that a great deal of information from press releases is useful. On the other hand, it would be very difficult to apply a rule that wasn't blanket, because you would have to adjudicate each case, or evaluate each situation. Well, I suppose that could be done. Editors could certainly use better judgment about swallowing whole so much canned material. They could require more activity from a journalist instead of his just going to listen to Ron Nessen say "Yuh, yuh, yuh."

Student: Is it, in your perspective, somehow immoral — an abdication or violation — for the press to coalesce with the government and, in an instance like the Second World War, for the press to provide a propaganda service of a sort, such as was provided? Do you think that in the end something is lost by that?

Tuchman: I don't think that it's a question of wrong or right. I think it's what will happen, because in a crucial situation such as a war, a war that a country believes in — and there wasn't much very important anti-war feeling in World War II — the country *wants* to win, and wants to encourage its allies and do whatever it can, both by the public and press, to reach a victory. So it's natural this will happen. I don't think there's any way of requiring or even hoping that a press will be objective or totally clear of the government in a national crisis like that. However, there's a great deal of life that's *not* a major war.

The Boys in the Press Center

By Richard C. Longworth

When President Ford attended the 15-nation NATO summit meeting in Brussels last spring, some 200 Washington reporters came with him. To help them out, NATO installed a special press room at its headquarters near the airport, where they could work and easily telephone Washington. But in the two days the summit lasted, no one used the room. Barely a handful—maybe five or six—of the visiting Americans bothered to come to NATO, where the summit itself took place and where the other 14 nations held their briefings. The rest never strayed from the Sheraton Hotel downtown, the U.S. Press Center, with its ready access to pool reports and Ron Nessen.

This mode of coverage is common on most Presidential trips abroad and contains a number of drawbacks. The greatest, readily apparent at the Brussels summit, was that the Washington reporters never learned much about the thinking, gripes, and policies of America's 14 NATO allies. And neither, of course, did their readers.

I throw no stones at the ability and energy of the White House press corps and its fellow travelers on Presidential visits. Nor do I knock Nessen and his crew, nor suggest that their briefings are incorrect or even occasionally "inoperative." In fact, as we shall see, the problem may lie in the fact that they do their job so well.

Rather, my complaint is largely with a system that has evolved in such a way as to isolate the Washington press corps on Presidential trips abroad, that breeds a parochial preoccupation with the "American angle," nurtures an ethnocentric ignorance of the problems of other nations, produces one-sided stories, and wastes a golden opportunity to tell Americans what the rest of the world is thinking and doing. For one of the great justifications of summits (or any other big international meeting) is their educational role. Whether or not the meetings accomplish anything, they *do* seize the public attention for a few days, enabling reporters to drive home a few facts—about finance, defense, France, the Middle East or whatever the meeting is about—before the news and its readers move on to some new topic. If such an opportunity is missed, it will not soon recur.

As with the NATO summit, so with most of the other

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dozen-plus Presidential visits to Europe and the Middle East which I, as a Europe-based American reporter, have covered in recent years. At the Rambouillet economic summit in November, few if any members of the White House press corps bothered to stroll over from their HQ at the Hotel Georges V to the Kleber Center, five minutes away, where reporters, spokesmen and experts from the other five nations had set up shop. During the Salzburg meeting between Presidents Ford and Sadat, the chatty Egyptian spokesmen received few Americans, even though their office was adjacent to the main American press center.

The problem is less severe for the wire services and the few papers with foreign staffs which bring in their local people to dig up the other side of the story. But even these

It matters not that Nessen may tell the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth. For in any international meeting, there are always two sides to be heard . . .

organizations allow the President, his words and his doings, to dominate—probably because the lead story is written by the traveling correspondents from Washington who, surrounded by all the familiar faces and undisturbed by the world outside, can perhaps be forgiven for feeling that they never left home. In the process, the foreign point of view is submerged and lost to all but the most attentive readers.

A Presidential trip is a sort of an international version of *The Boys on the Bus*. The pool reporters fly from Washington in Air Force One with the President and the "senior officials," while the bulk of the corps—50 to 200 of them—come on a special press plane. On arrival, they pile into press buses and go to the press center, usually located in the same hotel where they live. There they stay, except for the pool reporters who are ferried out in small and harried bands to watch the President pass or to listen to the inane pleasantries that summiteers exchange while waiting for the photographers to leave.

The press centers themselves are formidable operations that dazzle European reporters used to more squalid quarters and casual hotel-room briefings. They are usually established in a ballroom, with ranks of typing tables, lots of telexes, special Western Union fixit men from Washington, a desk manned by U.S. Embassy personnel to handle local problems, and an office full of White House Press Office people, churning out pool reports, texts of speeches and toasts and verbatim accounts of briefings. Each reporter gets a well-printed booklet of local information, handy tele-

phone numbers, names of officials, even the addresses of good restaurants. Direct phone lines link reporters to Washington. There are, when necessary, closed-circuit television broadcasts. Briefings are herd affairs, with Ron Nessen behind a lectern, facing a phalanx of microphones. It is all very formal, very institutionalized: Nessen, being so visible, certainly must be the most-quoted and best-known spokesman in the world. (Can anyone even name the spokesman for Brezhnev, or Waldheim, or Giscard? The spokesman for Harold Wilson is every bit as unpleasant as Ron Ziegler, but only the reporters in London know him: instead of perverting daily briefings, he has simply stopped them.)

The White House reporters occasionally grouse about the inefficiencies in this operation. But for an outsider, it is a marvel of utility. It is possible for a reporter, never stirring from the press center, to attend and record every American briefing, to receive regular pool reports on the President's activities, to hear occasional backgrounders from White House experts trotted out for his benefit, to watch the President on closed-circuit television, to learn authoritatively what the President ate and the decor of the suite in which he slept, to write a story and send it, even to whistle up food and drink. It is, in sum, possible (and even common) for a reporter to cover a Presidential visit without once laying eyes on the President in the flesh.

"You know what Salzburg reminds me of?" a visiting Washingtonian asked me during one of Richard Nixon's stopovers in that baroque Austrian town. "Peking. Same press center, same briefings, same telexes . . ."

And more. It is possible (and even usual) for a reporter to cover a Presidential visit hearing nothing of the issues dis-

It is possible (and even common) for a reporter to cover a Presidential visit without once laying eyes on the President in the flesh.

cussed except what the White House chooses to tell him. It matters not that Nessen may tell the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth. For in any international meeting there are always two sides to be heard—ours and the other guy's. In this era of multinational summits, there may be six or sixty sides—and these sides are not being heard. The White House press setup is so efficient, so mighty, so seductive, that it is an independent reporter indeed who deserts this womb in search of a second opinion, let alone a sixth, or a sixtieth.

It is not necessarily a problem of laziness. The White House press corpsman at full throttle leads a terrible life,

particularly when a Presidential trip involves several stops. Up before dawn, wrestling with luggage, on and off planes, battling over rooms, squeezing deadlines, eating when he can, burdened by long hours, plagued by primitive communications when the President journeys to the Middle East and other electronic backwaters—the reporter thus beset frequently arrives home exhausted, surly, with his bowels in rebellion. Reporters who draw regular pool-duty suffer especially and are often rained on. The pity is that so much work, torment, and travel produce stories that read as if they could have been written in Washington.

In fairness, the American press center abroad is a comforting if inadequate alternative to the perils of trying to cover the natives. The Europeans, understandably but lamentably lacking in American know-how, do not attempt to match our efficiency. They seldom have press offices as such. Briefings happen haphazardly, often when a spokesman, seized by thirst, strolls to the press bar, there to be surrounded by a shoving clutch of correspondents. Everything is word-of-mouth: apart from the occasional leaked document, Europeans seldom write down the speeches of their leaders and distribute them to the press. There is precious little background material offered, since reporters are presumed to have done their homework before a meeting starts. Besides, Europeans speak funny languages and the average monoglot White House correspondent is forced to hang on the fringes of a briefing, feeling foolish, until he can corral a European to rebrief him in English on what's been said. In short, it is hard work, conducted in sweaty surroundings, with poor acoustics. And there is only one good thing to be said for it: it is necessary to anyone wishing to write a well-informed story.

A reporter who is satisfied with one version from one spokesman is kidding himself, his newspaper, and his readers.

This is not to say that European spokesmen, any more than their American counterparts, are fountains of truth. The job of a spokesman is to present the day's events from his government's point of view, to stress his leader's contribution, to emphasize the morality of his nation's policy, and to lay a rosy gloss over its retreats and compromises. American spokesmen do this. European spokesmen do this. Everybody does this. It is the way spokesmen earn their pay. There is no harm in it, so long as a reporter ingests several of these briefings (plus as many expert backgrounders and other sessions as he can lay hands on), balances one version

against another, tests one nation's compromise against another nation's concession, compares facts, half-facts and fancies. From this *mélange*, something emerges akin to the truth. A reporter who is satisfied with one version from one spokesman is kidding himself, his newspaper, and his readers.

In some ways, the situation seems to have improved since the tightly-programmed Presidential visits of the Nixon era. On those trips, reporters were given a never-ending series of non-events to report: public appearances, dinners, motorcades, outings, shopping trips with Pat, wreath-layings and the like. All provided color without substance. But reporters were kept so busy that they barely had time to write their stories—and no time at all to ask awkward ques-

The European press, often inferior to the American press, generally does a better job of covering summits . . . A constant and cooperative swap of information goes on . . .

tions or to reflect on what had happened. One assumes both the pace and the consequences were planned by the White House. Occasionally, an event would take place that cried out for probing analysis, *e.g.*, the announcement during Nixon's Cairo visit that the United States was prepared to sell nuclear reactors and fuel to Egypt. But there were no experts on hand to explain the implications of the sale, and no time for the harassed reporters to seek out their own experts. The Ford road show is more relaxed.

The European press, often inferior to the American press, generally does a better job of covering summits; it may be useful to see how their reporters do it. Usually, reporters prepare themselves with briefings at home, then arrive in the host capital (on their own toot—no press planes here) a day or two before the summit begins to get the story from other points of view. During the summit, they usually hang out at a press center set up by the host government, collecting briefings from national spokesmen who happen by, haring off for private sessions with their own contacts, ready to move out if a national briefing is announced in a hotel or some other site. A constant and cooperative swap of information goes on: some nations limit briefings to their own reporters; others, such as the Dutch or Italians, are often linguistically inaccessible to most correspondents. But reporters happily fill each other in. Competition may suffer, but any reporter, simply by being present, will know each nation's attitude by the end of the day. On occasions, European presidents or premiers will meet privately with their national press corps, usually for an off-the-record

briefing on the summit's progress. This obviously is easier when the reporters are few in number and known personally to the leaders: the American equivalent, perhaps, is the briefing which Henry Kissinger gives to the poolers on Air Force One before and after a summit.

The American position, of course, is not ignored. European reporters, knowing that the American President is a heavyweight at any meeting he attends, make frequent forays to the American press center to pick up background material and listen to Nessen. They invariably are impressed by and envious of the efficiency of it all, but they do not make the mistake of considering it the only game in town.

If there are solutions to this problem of American coverage—and I think there are several—they must spring from a change of attitude, from a recognition that no longer

The President, then, must be treated increasingly as just another leader among many, and the White House reporters must consider themselves just one more press corps . . . But there is no sign that [the process] has begun.

does the President of the United States, while representing the Western world's only superpower, automatically dominate every summit: he occasionally must bow to the desires and political imperatives of other governments. At the least, he must pay attention to the whims and wishes of these governments, and the reporters who attend him must do the same. The President, then, must be treated increasingly as just another leader among many, and the White House reporters must consider themselves just one more press corps. This, of course, is part of demythologizing the Presidency. Although everyone seems to agree the process is necessary, there is no sign that it has begun.

What practical reforms could flow from this change of attitude?

1. For one thing, the separate American press center should be abolished: American reporters and their confreres from other nations should share one center. This would involve an expansion and improvement of the facilities usually provided for the non-Americans. But since the host governments already contribute heavily to setting up the American centers, this should present no problem. All briefings of all nations could be held in one place. Newsmen of all nations would work together, producing journalistic cross-fertilization. Europeans would benefit

from the better facilities; Americans would benefit from the greater flow of information.

2. The White House press corps should fly to the summit city a day or two ahead of the President. Reporters could put that time to two good uses: recovering from jet lag and boning up on the non-American side of the summit. Host governments could be asked to line up briefings and backgrounders with local experts—for there will be precious little time for these once the summit begins—or reporters more familiar with the foreign scene could find their own experts. If possible, reporters should hang on after the summit for follow-up stories on what really happened and what it meant.

3. Some nations restrict briefings to their own reporters. This is retrogressive. The American government, which opens its briefings to all comers, has clean hands in this respect and should pressure its allies to unlock their doors. Granted, this could turn intimate briefings into mob scenes: perhaps a small pool of White House reporters who speak the languages could be deputed to cover these briefings. The idea will be resisted both by some governments and by some European reporters who prefer the friendly exclusivity of the present procedure: it will not be accepted without a heroic push by the White House.

4. Would it be possible to reduce the number of reporters flying from Washington to cover summits? Every reporter knows that the quality of coverage goes down as the number of reporters covering a story goes up. The over-

The initial push and pressure [for reform] must come from the reporters. One hopes there are enough of them who know what they have been missing . . .

staffing of summits, like the efficiency and isolation of the White House press operation, has served only to get between the reader and the news. In these days of rising costs, editors and publishers might ask themselves if they are getting their money's worth out of summit coverage.

Some of these reforms are up to American newspapers, or the White House reporters themselves. Others can come about only with the willingness and effort of the President, his spokesman, and the White House press staff. Since they now have the press corps all to themselves, there is no reason to suppose they would be enthusiastic about such journalistic trust-busting. The initial push and pressure, then, must come from the reporters. One hopes there are enough of them who know what they have been missing to get this job under way.

Letters to the Editors

To the Editors:

I've been meaning to write for weeks to commend you for your magnificent *Nieman Reports* on the South African situation. I'm not normally one for writing letters-to-the-editor, but that really was a splendid issue and couldn't have been better timed.

As a long-time South Africa watcher, I was delighted to see the Nieman program tackle such an important and under-publicized subject. It seems to me that the Nieman publication can make a significant journalistic contribution with multi-dimensional reports of this sort . . . I hope we'll see more of them in the future.

Timothy Leland
Editor-in-Charge

The Boston Sunday Globe
Boston

◇

To the Editors:

Yesterday I returned from a trip abroad and found the autumn and winter copy of *Nieman Reports*. Last night I took it home with me.

It is, in my judgment, the best edition I have ever read. It is a quality book.

I just wanted to let you know.

John Seigenthaler, NF '59
Publisher

The Tennessean
Nashville

◇

To the Editors:

I just got the latest, fattest, and best *Nieman Reports* and am fondling it for a while; then I'll read each article with pleasure. I did, however, dip into the editorial about Africa. (I remember that Louie Lyons also took an African trip. He dropped in on us in Ghana on his return.) A totally fascinating and in some ways terribly depressing situa-

tion. But I do want to compliment you for the excellent *Reports* number. . . .

Angus MacLean Thuermer,
NF '57

Middleburg, Virginia

◇

To the Editors:

Congratulations on your excellent last issue, particularly "Focus on South Africa." It was an extremely readable, informative, and timely service. Well done. Thanks.

Kevin Buckley, NF '73

Cambridge

P.S. While we're at it, can't you do something about paragraphs that begin "Hot damn!" or the people who write them?

◇

To the Editors:

. . . I would like to thank you especially for the issue of *Nieman Reports*. Obviously the South African content was most interesting, but I must tell you that I found the rest of the magazine most valuable. I would esteem it a great honour if you could see your way clear to sending me the magazine at my South African address.

Rabbi Richard G. Lampert
Temple Emanuel
Johannesburg, South Africa

◇

To the Editors:

I was moved to write and commend you on the current issue of *Nieman Reports*. I especially liked the article on the CBC, "A Strange Case of Libel." This story was well written and well edited, and could have run in any national/popular magazine.

More stories like this one might help revive interest in *Nieman Reports* which has in the past suffered from its close proximity to Harvard. By that I mean that *NR* has been a little stuffy and the subjects have sometimes been too esoteric. There have been few hard-hitting, or even controversial articles in *NR*, and maybe we should consider what *NR* is. Is it merely a journal where

all Niemans, past and present have a forum? Or should it be more of a *Columbia Journalism Review* or even [MORE] type of publication?

More than anything else, I think *NR* suffers from an identity crisis. It often seems that *NR*'s only common thread is that the contributors are either Niemans, or have had some connection with the Nieman experience. Is this enough to bind a magazine together (disregard the puns, I can't break the habit), or should the founding fathers coalesce and try to develop some sort of theme? Perhaps it could become a standard of media criticism different from *CJR*, but at the same time similar to *CJR* in that it is sort of looked to for some sort of standard. In the past, *NR* has often contained articles of questionable interest except to a few on rather obtuse subjects, and often at considerable length. Some important changes are in the works which will affect journalism for a long time, *i.e.* Nebraska gag rule—and I have seen nothing in *NR* on that subject or others like it. And yet we have Niemans galore who are competent and in the neighborhood. Soooo, in a word, let's have more "relevant" articles.

Ron Gollobin, NF '74
Brookline, Massachusetts

◇

To the Editors:

May I say how very excellent I have found the past few issues of *Nieman Reports*. One can see a really first-class editorial mind at work here, one free of the shibboleths and conventions so (almost) universally accepted by editors.

I especially liked James Aronson's "A Radical Journalist in the 1950s"; "U.S. and Angola," by Percy Qoboza; "A Reporter's Reflections," by Richard Strout; and Ronald Farrar's article on journalism schools, "A Nouveau Riche Environment?" . . .

Charles P. Edmundson, NF '41
Memphis, Tennessee

(Continued on page 48)

From: Janos Horvat, Nieman Fellow '76
To: Friends and Sympathizers
Re: The Nieman Year

The following are excerpts from an official-personal correspondence, which became less official and more personal over the 15 months it continued.

From: Janos Horvat, Hungarian Television
To: Nieman Selection Committee

February 27, 1975

Dear Sirs,

I was delighted to receive your letter which enables me to apply for a scholarship at Harvard University. I enclose herewith my application form, the description of my journalistic experience, the summary of my proposed studies . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: James C. Thomson Jr.,
 Curator, Nieman Foundation
To: Janos Horvat

July 7, 1975

Dear Mr. Horvat:

Confirming my cable of June 27th, and acknowledging your response, I am writing to certify that you have been selected as an Associate Nieman Fellow at Harvard University for the 1975-76 academic year under sponsorship of the German Marshall Fund . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Lois Fiore Joiner, Assistant to the Curator
To: Janos Horvat

July 30, 1975

Dear Mr. Horvat:

. . . there is a furnished, one bedroom apartment available that you may find interesting . . . the living room is a good size, with a large bay window (making the room full of light) and a wall with many bookshelves . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Jim Thomson
To: New Nieman Fellows

August 19, 1975

As a follow-up to my earlier letter, I am writing to let you know the schedule of events for something that carries the forbidding title of "Nieman Orientation Week" . . . Nieman don't register; you are "officers" of the University . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Tenney K. Lehman (Ms.), Executive Director
To: Janos Horvat

August 28, 1975

Dear Mr. Horvat:

Confirming my cable of today's date, I am pleased to enclose a Harvard University check in the amount of \$1,150 to cover your round-trip air travel from Budapest to Boston . . .

From: Logan Airport
To: Nieman House

Sept. 10, 1975

. . . Jet lag . . . Where can I get a good cup of coffee? . . . A little White House . . . And 19 coffee cups for 19 Nieman Fellows, a name on each, 14 Americans, one French, one German, one Japanese, one South African. And one Hungarian. (Who has been drinking from my cup?)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman House
To: My House

Sept. 10, 1975

(A note from my new "landlady.")

Dear Mr. Horvat,

Welcome to Cambridge. If we are not at the house to greet you ourselves, we'll return late Sunday afternoon, and explain any eccentricities of your 3rd floor apartment . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: President and Fellows of Harvard College
To: Janos Horvat

Sept. 8, 1975

SIR,

I beg to inform you that at a meeting of the President and Fellows of Harvard College you were awarded an Associate Nieman Fellowship for the pursuit of studies of your own choice during the academic year 1975-76.

Your obedient servant,
 Robert Shenton
 Secretary

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Cambridge Trust Company
To: Janos Horvat

Sept. 12, 1975

Smile! This picture is for your savings account I.D. card. (One month later: This is your balance. Smile . . . if you can.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Janos Horvat
To: Lechmere Stores
 Check #1 \$112 (A TV set)

Sept. 13, 1975

(I am a TV correspondent. I must watch American TV. It's part of my profession. But, two months later, I am still pasted to the screen. Did I really come all the way to Harvard to watch TV?)

From: *The Boston Globe*

Sept. 13, 1975

"Foreign Newsmen Get Nieman Grant"

(They spelled my name correctly. Spiro Agnew was wrong.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman Calendar

Cocktails at the Thomsons'

Sept. 15, 1975

— Mr. Thomson, I presume?

— Jim Thomson. And you are Janos.

— Cheers.

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman Calendar

Nieman (Dis)Orientation Week, September 15-19.

— I'm, I'm, I'm . . .

— Who? What? Where? When? Why? Wow!

(I am a TV correspondent. I must watch American TV . . . But, two months later, I am still pasted to the screen. Did I really come all the way to Harvard to watch TV?)

From: Jim Thomson

To: All Niemans

Sept. 15, 1975

Sartorial Memorandum

It should take about five days, more likely three, to discover the various (usually casual) ways people clothe themselves in Cambridge—and for what kind of events. Past experience reveals, however, that Niemans and spouses get unnecessarily uptight about this. So here are some guidelines . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: James C. Thomson Jr.

To: Professor William Bossert, Lowell House

Sept. 23, 1975

Dear Bill:

I am delighted that you are willing to affiliate Nieman Fellows Janos Horvat and Lester Sloan with Lowell House in 1975-76 . . . Each year many Niemans have found great satisfaction in their House ties and the access to faculty and undergraduates that such ties provide . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: The Master of Lowell House

To: Janos Horvat

Oct. 1, 1975

The Master and Mrs. Bossert request the pleasure of your company for High Table. *Black tie* optional. (Thank you for the Sartorial Memorandum.)

From: Lois

To: All Niemans

Oct. 3, 1975

So, here are the arrangements for our Clambake and directions to the place where it will be held . . .

♦ ♦ ♦

From: President of the Naval War College

To: Janos Horvat

Oct. 6, 1975

Dear Mr. Horvat,

It is with a great deal of anticipation and enthusiasm that I announce the Naval War College, Newport, R.I. will convene its fourth Military-Media Conference on 24-25 November 1975 . . . We think that you will find the conference exciting and worthwhile and hope you will be able to join us.

♦ ♦ ♦

From: A Television Movie. (*Three Ring Circus*)

Oct. 7, 1975

Zsa-Zsa Gabor: "In my country there are no fences."

Dean Martin: (Kisses her) "I like your country."

(A kiss from Zsa-Zsa is enough to prove it—in the movies, anyway.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: The Voice of America

To: Janos Horvat

Oct. 15, 1975

— Would you grant an interview in Hungarian to be broadcast by our station?

— Sorry. The terms of my fellowship prohibit me from engaging in professional appearances during my stay at Harvard. (In other words, expletive deleted.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Jim Thomson

To: All Niemans

Oct. 22, 1975

Subject: Possible Canada Trip in January.

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Janos Horvat

To: James C. Thomson Jr.

Oct. 24, 1975

Dear Jim:

Here is the list of the courses I'll take in the academic year:

Gov 171. U.S. Foreign Policy and Europe since 1945.

(Guido Goldman)

Gov 279. A New American Foreign Policy.

(Graham Allison and Joseph Nye)

Soc 246. Latin American and Latin European Societies: Structure and Change.

(Gino Germani)

M.I.T. 17.701. Public Opinion and Propaganda. (Ithiel de Sola Pool)

M.I.T. 17.705. Mass Media and Communication. (Ithiel de Sola Pool)

Gov 181. International Politics: Communication and Change.

(Karl W. Deutsch)

From: Nieman Calendar
 Morris Udall,
 Dem. Congressman from Arizona
 Brandy and cheese

Oct. 27, 1975

(He sounds convincing, but there is no Budapest Primary.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman Calendar
 Soundings: Showing of Janos Horvat's films.
 (I was told the evening was a great success. The beer and cheese were excellent.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Cambridge
 To: Gloucester

Nov. 27, 1975
 Thanksgiving
 Day

Ingredients: A very kind "landlord" family,
 A very tasty turkey,
 A very stuffed Janos,
 A very pleasant day.

♦ ♦ ♦

"... There's this fellow from Hungary who is red, red, red and I've never had any contact with Communists. He's a great guy and despite our political disagreements, I love him very, very much."

♦ ♦ ♦

From: *The Boston Globe*

Nov. 30, 1975

Interview with my Fellow Nieman, Percy Qoboza from South Africa.

"... There's this fellow from Hungary who is red, red, red and I've never had any contact with Communists. He's a great guy and despite our political disagreements, I love him very, very much. The Communists are not the demons they were made out to be, they're real flesh and blood."

(Acceptance at last, though Qoboza later claimed to me in private that he was misquoted. A check with the *Globe* reveals that he really was misquoted. He used the adjective "red" only once...)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Countless Americans

To: Janos Horvat

"How does it feel to be the first... What are things like behind... Are you really a member of the... How did you get... Will they let you... Free... not free... really free... really not free..."

From: Janos Horvat

To: Countless Americans

"There are two sides to every curtain. Have you seen the *Globe* today?"

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman Calendar

Holiday Recess December 20-January 11.

From: Boston to Philadelphia (a farm in Bucks County) to Baltimore (Christmas with American friends) to Atlanta—incredibly long drive to the Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association (among other discussions the final battle of the Vietnam War, Jim Thomson vs. Dean Rusk) to New York (New Year's Eve in Times Square to Washington (a visit with the president, Mr. Benjamin H. Read, of the German Marshall Fund) to Boston.

(There is no place like home!)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Nieman Calendar

Lottery

Jan. 12, 1976

Japan has invited Nieman Fellows for a visit. Catch 22: Japan has invited only 8 of the 14 American Fellows—and none of the non-Americans. The highly scientific Japan selection is based on intelligence, experience, knowledge of Asian affairs. Result: 8 Niemans drew a little green bean out of the bag of green and red ones, and were selected.

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Boston

To: Ottawa, Quebec City, Calgary, Ft. McMurray, Edmonton, Toronto, Boston.

Jan. 29-Feb. 8, 1976

— Have you ever seen the Athabasca Tar Sands in February?
 — Have you ever tried to pronounce "Athabasca Tar Sands" when it is 28 degrees below zero?

(But we were more than compensated for the cold temperatures by the warmth of our Canadian hosts.)

On the plane from Quebec City to Calgary I was startled out of a nap by a lady describing me in Hungarian to her friend:

— Look at this sleepy gangster! See how he lays there, hogging three seats to himself.

— OK, Lady, I understand. I'm Hungarian, too.

— So am I! (voice from the row behind)

— Me too! (voice from the row behind that)

Six voices altogether, all Hungarians. (The pilot seemed to speak fluent English over the intercom. But one never knows.)

♦ ♦ ♦

From: Widener Library, Level 4

To: Widener Library, Level D

March 1, 1976

(One could get lost in the stacks of a library this large. Hungary did get lost. Somebody has filed it under "A," for "Austria.")

From: Cambridge
To: Ritz-Carlton, Boston

March 11, 1976

Transcript of a breakfast briefing with Henry Kissinger. (Everyone is on time. Coats and ties as ubiquitous as the Secret Service men.)

Nieman Fellow: Mr. Secretary, I'd like to ask about (off the record).

Kissinger: Well, let me reply this way (off the record). And so it went.

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Logan Airport

March 20, 1976

Eight scientifically selected Nieman Fellows leave for 2 weeks in Japan.

(Continued on page 44)

Independence Day, New York

By Foster Davis

I take it on faith and from experience that if our Sunday of sails, fireworks and song moved New Yorkers, it moved the nation. By that measure, the Bicentennial worked.

New York is something of a hobby of mine; I once lived there and I tend to follow news of that town the way a World War II veteran might keep track of his old outfit.

Sailing is another hobby and on Saturday afternoon I guess I read one too many paragraphs about Operation Sail. Anyway, by 5 p.m. I was on a plane headed for New York, something I'd considered and rejected at 3 p.m.

Now as practically anyone will tell you, New York isn't what it used to be, and never was. The city is above all cynical. New Yorkers wear that trait as tourists wear Big Apple T-shirts, at first proudly, after a while unconsciously.

Yet in the sun and showers of Sunday New Yorkers were able to drop their guard and, for once, truly relax. It took me most of the day to realize this, you understand.

There was the walking about in lovely Fort Tryon Park at Manhattan's upper tip, watching New Yorkers actually taking turns peering through the few holes in the summer foliage at the sailing ships on the Hudson below.

There was the sudden shower, with huge raindrops thudding like hail in the Harlem park I'd reached walking south along the river. A Jamaican couple, a Puerto Rican mother with her three children and I arranged cardboard boxes as a shelter and from our vantage point watched people laughing in the rain.

Foster Davis, Nieman Fellow '76, recently became an editorial writer with The Charlotte Observer. He formerly was a CBS News correspondent in Saigon, Los Angeles, and Atlanta.

All very nice, but I know when I became convinced that the Bicentennial had touched not only New York, but New Yorkers. It was shortly after 8 p.m. and shortly after the 116th Street stop of the Seventh Avenue subway. I was on my way to Battery Park at Manhattan's lower tip to watch the fireworks explode over the lady who looks out over the harbor and the cynicism.

The subway was crowded and sweaty, which is normal. Some of its occupants were smiling, which is not. Conventional demeanor is a frozen stare behind which trapped eyes glitter with masked paranoia.

Yes, there were some smiles, but it was a restrained, New York crowd of strap hangers when the guy with the bamboo flute stepped aboard at 110th Street. He wore cutoffs, a Coors beer T-shirt, a white hardhat and an American flag. The two-foot flagpole was taped to his hardhat. He had to duck to get aboard.

He straightened up, smiling, and to the racketa-racketa of the accelerating train began playing "Yankee Doodle." Then, "America the Beautiful." Two guys with him began to sing.

One of them shouted, at the chorus: "C'mon, everybody, sing!"

And these New Yorkers opened their mouths and sang.

He wore cutoffs, a Coors beer T-shirt, a white hardhat and an American flag. The two-foot flagpole was taped to his hardhat. He had to duck to get aboard.

Not on command, you understand, but by self-conscious twos and threes.

A few remained aloof, others looked as though they wanted to sing, but didn't dare. Yes, I sang. Most people aboard did.

This was a local train. At each stop a few people got off and as many more crowded on. They would inch aboard and take in the singing, casting quick, nervous glances about, wondering how to react. Then they would sing.

Our ride ended four stops short of Battery Park. The train in front of us was stalled and what better New York touch could there be than a broken-down subway?

So we walked that last mile to see the fireworks and the lady across the harbor, and to sing, this time with hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, the song we had sung beneath Manhattan's streets.

The lady might have been proud.

(Reprinted by permission from The Charlotte Observer.)

From: Cambridge
To: Boston. Genji Restaurant

March 21, 1976

The scientifically unselected Niemans gorge themselves on sushi at a consolation dinner. This restaurant, unfortunately, does not serve green beans.

◇ ◇ ◇

From: My Mother
To: Me

March 27, 1976

Dear Son,

I have just received this strange piece of paper from the U.S. The only thing I can make out are these big numbers: 1040 and the

"In large part because of [Mr. Horvat's] success, the President of [the German Marshall Fund] has decided to request from the trustees funds to carry on the Nieman program for European television journalists."

letters I.R.S. . . (The computer has tracked down my mother!) On April 1, appropriately enough, in an overheated, overcrowded room at the Boston I.R.S. office, I fill out my first return. The clerk says: "You owe \$300."

So I fill out the form again.

The clerk says: "You owe \$180."

So I fill out the form again.

The clerk says: "We owe you a refund of \$60. But, please, don't fill out any more forms."

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Janos Horvat
To: All Niemans

April 17, 1976

Your presence is requested at a Hungarian Goulash Party . . . (As the year wears on and the stomach wears out, there will be a Southern Revenge Chili Party, a Japanese Night, a Bavarian Beer fest.)

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Tenney Lehman
To: Harvard Payroll Office

April 20, 1976

. . . I write to request that Janos Horvat's final stipend for the month of May be included with his April check . . .

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Master of Lowell House
To: Janos Horvat

April 30, 1976

. . . The Senior and Award Dinner is a kind of farewell occasion . . .

From: Tenney
To: Janos

May 2, 1976

I write to ask if you would be willing to write something for the next issue of our quarterly, *Nieman Reports*. You recall that Percy had a piece about Angola, Günter has given us his paper on "Science Writing in the American Mass Media"; Robert has promised us an article about French-American journalism—so I would now be delighted to have some work from you and from Yoichi. If you are willing, we could discuss the deadline . . .

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Nieman Calendar
Final Week. May 10-14

◇ ◇ ◇

From: Janos
To: Tenney

May 14, 1976

I have received your request for an article in the next issue of *Nieman Reports*. I'd love to do such an article. But, as you know, my schedule is so tight. What with classes, studies, briefings and research I have very little time . . . , but I promise you . . .

◇ ◇ ◇

P.S.

From: German Marshall Fund
To: My Boss

May 4, 1976

I am mindful that we owe you many thanks for your assistance at an early stage in making it possible for Janos Horvat to take advantage of a German Marshall Fund Fellowship at the Nieman Foundation at Harvard . . . In large part because of his success, the President of our Foundation has decided to request from our trustees funds to carry on the Nieman program for European television journalists for another three years. We all hope that, if our trustees do approve the extension, more journalists from the socialist countries will be among the Nieman candidates.

◇ ◇ ◇

Next?

. . . Of all the things that I have ever seen at Harvard the thing I would like most to be is a Nieman Fellow; you have more fun than anybody . . . It seems like a very marvelous thing to be able to do, to have a whole year to do what you guys are doing.

—Harvey Cox

VIEWPOINT

Educational Priorities: Our Stake in the News

By John De Mott

Preoccupied with its pleasure over President Nixon's embarrassment, the nation's press is ignoring a scandal that makes the sleazy Watergate caper look like an old-fashioned Sunday School picnic.

That scandal is the woeful percentage of energy and talent, and of the nation's economic resources, being devoted to the reporting of public affairs—Watergate, oilgate, or inflationait.

In no community, anywhere in this country today, are there one-tenth as many newsmen as there ought to be. In no community does any newspaper cost what it ought to cost. In no university system does education for journalism command the support that it ought to command—for the needed improvement of our profession, one of those indispensable in a democratic society.

That disgraceful situation is anything *but* new, which makes the negligence of the press, in not calling more attention to the scandal, inexcusable. The situation was pointed out many years ago by A. J. Liebling, journalism's grand old gadfly, in this way:

The American press makes me think of a gigantic, super-modern fish cannery, a hundred floors high, capitalized at eleven billion dollars, and with tens of thousands of workers standing ready at the canning machines, but relying for its raw material on an inadequate number of headline fishermen in leaky row-boats.

Neither in Liebling's time nor in ours can the inadequate amount of our national resources allocated to the actual reporting of news be blamed upon just the crass materialism of some newspaper publishers.

In a recent survey, a Gallup poll only found about 70 per cent of this nation's people willing to say they would pay 20 cents for their newspaper. Some newspapers have nevertheless raised their price to 20 cents. Most of the country's newspapers are still selling for less, however—about 25 per cent of them for 15 cents, most of them at 10 cents, and even a few at the ridiculous price of 5 cents.

Yet there is no logical reason why newspaper prices should not be raised to at least 25 cents immediately. But, despite the rate of inflation in recent years, most newspapers are still not able to convince readers that they're worth that quarter—and I think it's a national scandal.

The bizarre degree to which the scandal has developed is illustrated in remarks made by Allen H. Neuharth, president of the Gannett Newspapers, at a recent convention of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association. The economics of the newspaper business dictates a 25-cent daily, Neuharth said. Even today, he suggested, a good newspaper is easily worth as much as a cup of coffee. The public, he said, is getting a unique dividend on its investment of a dime in a paper. In some areas, Neuharth said, it may take 10 years before the daily newspaper "takes its rightful place alongside the cup of coffee."

Despite Neuharth's observations, however, few newspaper publishers have increased the price of their newspapers to 25 cents. Many aren't even talking about it, and the fact that any newspaper executive feels reluctant to talk about the prospect of a 25-cent newspaper is part of the scandal.

The price of newspapers ought to be

climbing right along with the rate of inflation, as should the percentage of national income going into newspapers and other information services. Any society willing to pay more for a pack of cigarettes or can of beer than for a newspaper is in real trouble—a truly sick society.

There are more beauticians than newsmen in many towns. More liquor salesmen. More tobacco store proprietors and employees. More art teachers. Not only are there more, but a great many of the people engaged in occupations in no way vital to the essential welfare of society are being paid more than newsmen.

There is something radically wrong with any country where basketball players, talk show celebrities, rock music makers, television and pornographic movie actors make more money than the editor of any town's newspaper.

The same sick system of priorities is illustrated in the educational system—in the budgets of schools and departments of journalism, compared with departments of art, music, English, history, etcetera. There is a comparable shortage of well-paid, well-qualified, professionally experienced, and otherwise distinguished journalism teachers. There is a disgraceful shortage of laboratory newspapers, broadcasting stations, and other needed facilities.

Contrary to all logic, however, we continue spending as much money teaching people to put on theatrical productions as we do training them to edit newspapers and manage broadcast stations, as much money training high school football coaches and band leaders as information specialists.

Now, a good newsman has nothing against the local band master or football coach. But as we move toward greater competence on the professional level, good high school football coaches and

Mr. De Mott is chairman of the Department of Journalism at Temple University.

band leaders are going to have to take their proper place in a mature society's occupational priority system.

Should the high school football team blow a 25-point lead, and drop the big game, what harm is done? But when the reporting of news involving government is incompetent, we're all hurt. Obviously, you say.

Yet those obvious priorities are not reflected in our country's system of higher education. At one university, for example, a graduate assistant who has no journalism degree is serving as a "teaching assistant" in an undergraduate course, working with students who have more skill than he. He's just not competent to do the job he is expected to do. It's hard to fault that university, however, or such a student—he's doing the best job he can, it's fair to assume—because there is no money available to attract better help. On the other hand, students enrolled at that university have a legitimate complaint, and they should complain.

The fault lies not in the incompetent graduate assistant, making vain efforts to "teach" his better-educated undergraduate "students," but with the university administration and its system of priorities.

Beyond the university administration, and even the legislature of that state, the fault lies in the priority system we hold—a people who consider cigarettes more valuable than newspapers. But the blame doesn't rest just with politicians and university administrators, but with journalists and the general public—newspaper publishers, journalism professors, newspaper reporters, you and me.

At this point, I'd like to make a confession. In my own years as a newsman, I never found myself concerned deeply with the amount of money allocated to journalism education, the small number of reporters the other media in our area had at their disposal, the salaries of newsmen across the country, or the price the publisher got for his product. I

tended to see all those matters in strictly individualistic terms—selfish terms.

And that's the problem—the scandal—isn't it?

Peculiarly, none of the codes of ethics "governing" our profession impose upon us positive moral obligations to promote and support better education for journalism, or even in-service activities designed to upgrade our performance—another aspect of the scandal, as well as a serious reflection upon our profession.

It's past time to put the nation's priority system straight. So, let's put first things first: namely, the First Amendment. Although everyone pays lip service to it, the spirit of that noble statement of purpose and principle has never been translated into money.

We say we cherish and covet that indispensable public intelligence of cur-

The fault lies in the priority system we hold—a people who consider cigarettes more valuable than newspapers.

rent events. But our actions belie our statements. We're hypocrites, or at least behaving like hypocrites.

Personifying such hypocrisy in its most reprehensible form is the newspaper editor or publisher who preaches sentimentiously about the importance of a free press in a democratic society, and then leaves most of his money to something like a school of music.

If freedom of the press is so important, and good journalism so indispensable to a democratic society, then why don't all newspaper publishers leave all their money to schools of journalism—or other institutions or organizations devoted to improving our profession?

Because many newspaper men are

hypocrites. That's why. You just can't sensibly answer the question any other way.

To do justice to organizations like the Gannett newspapers, *The Wall Street Journal*, Hearst, Scripps-Howard, and numerous others, we need to remind ourselves that an increasing number of journalism's millionaires are recycling the earnings of our profession through financial assistance to schools and departments of journalism.

However, the educational system needs to feel the impact of our profession's political power, also. Politicians need to be made aware that the press is going to fight just as hard, and courageously, for a journalism school's right to top consideration in the allocation of public funds as it is going to fight for reporters' access to some public meeting or right to inspect some public record.

Because of our profession's need to maintain its independence from government, the press has avoided and should avoid seeking any kind of subsidy. That does not mean, however, that the press should not insist that adequate resources be allocated for the support of programs through which news reporters receive their initial education, and even in-service training.

If we really believe, as deeply as we say we believe, in the importance of our profession, then it's impossible to condone the half-hearted manner in which we sometimes have gone about seeking additional funds for journalism-centered education and programs.

Surely no newsman is under the illusion that the existing provisions for mid-career education of journalists are adequate. There is no amount or degree of education, really, that fits any newsman to practice this "impossible" profession of ours as well as it needs to be practiced.

Strangely, our press sees itself as the bulwark of liberty, as the crucial catalyst of the democratic process: our schools teach the children of this nation that the very life of democratic society depends

upon the free and responsible reporting of current events.

But for all that, we're willing to pay only a dime or 15 cents a day for our daily newspaper. Being as devoted as we are to a "free and responsible press," capable of providing us a full report of the day's events in a context that gives

[The American public] gave the churches, public schools, U.S. Supreme Court and Congress more confidence than newspapers.

them meaning, we're willing to provide as much money to train reporters as we are to train high school band leaders. Isn't it time we translated into educational terms the importance that we say we give to our Constitution's First Amendment?

In the public interest, we have to ask ourselves this tough question: which educational services contribute most to the public interest? Does the public have a greater interest in the education of good doctors, good lawyers, good engineers, good public administrators, good social workers, and *good newsmen* than in the education of better poets, better novelists, better playwrights, better painters, better saxophone players, better advertising copywriters?

Let's face it. If Company A's advertising department is better than Company B's, no damage is done to the democratic process. If my favorite newspaper's reporting staff is incompetent, however, that's another matter.

Given today's economic forecasts, the only way that schools and departments of journalism are going to be able to hold their own, and therefore maintain their standards—standards vital to the better reporting of news in this nation—is for them to obtain more

money at the expense of other interests in the academic community.

Any young man or woman who wants to be a movie actor or novelist shouldn't have the same claim to the taxpayer's pocketbook as one who wants to be a doctor, forester, nurse, conservationist, social worker, public servant, or *journalist*.

The fact that he does, now, is a national scandal. What can be done about it?

First, let's report the story. Explain the basic facts. Take a long, hard look at those conditions that constitute this scandal: the inadequate number of newsmen in almost every community, their insufficient access to educational resources and training facilities, and the inadequate funds allocated to journalism education on all levels.

For example, every newspaper editor should make it a point to determine if the high schools in his area provide adequate education in the use of mass media. Is the high school journalism program a sound one? Is the teacher qualified, academically and by experience?

On the junior college level, is the journalism instruction sound, professionally and academically? Have instructors had the necessary experience in the profession? Is "mass media and society" a required course for all students, so they are able to appreciate the problems of our profession, to evaluate our performance intelligently and fairly, and to appreciate our need for more support of all kinds?

On the university level, is the state's program for training professional journalists financed adequately? Supervised sufficiently? Are professional standards maintained, both in requirements and personnel? Is there a good laboratory newspaper, supervised by professional newsmen? Or are students perhaps being given academic credit for playing newspaper man on a student newspaper? Is the university conducting off-campus programs to provide in-service training for professional news-

men in the field? Is it conducting a sound program of basic research for the benefit of journalists in its area, and around the country? Are special training institutes and conferences being held for the benefit of professionals in the area?

If not, then the program is inadequate. If it is inadequate, then it needs to be brought up to standard, even if that means taking money away from the art department, theater department, or some other department not as important to the public interest.

Those are problems that many newspapers hesitate to tackle because they can be criticized for pursuing their own special interests. But what gutsy newspaper backs away from other tough political or social issues because some critic might claim self-interest?

We crow a lot about the power of the press. Perhaps journalism's potency was demonstrated most dramatically in the Watergate exposure. We have power to destroy, but perhaps little power to create. It may well be that we can destroy a public official, or any individual, but can't persuade people to pay at least 25 cents for a newspaper—or give a department of journalism enough

Surely no newsman is under the illusion that the existing provisions for mid-career education of journalists are adequate.

funds to provide us qualified recruits for our profession.

Because we haven't commanded adequate public support for programs designed to improve the performance of professional newsmen, and better education for journalism generally, we haven't been able to convince the public

that we are deserving of greater support.

On the contrary, more persons responding to Gallup's most recent poll on attitudes toward newspapers said that, as time goes on, they have a less favorable—not more favorable—attitude toward newspapers. In addition, they gave the churches, public schools, U.S. Supreme Court and *Congress* more confidence than newspapers. Newspapers only rated higher than television, big business, and labor unions.

Much of our trouble, it appears, lies in the poor ratings given newspapers on things like accuracy, bias, and handling of controversial issues—precisely those areas of performance that should be improved through the allocation of more resources to the profession.

It's a particularly vicious circle, but one that has to be broken. And to do so—to clean up this disgraceful scandal of such long duration—it's going to take a lot more reporters. Better reporters. Better education for journalism. More education.

25-cent newspapers, certainly.

Perhaps 50-cent ones.

BOOKS

The Media in America

By John Tebbel

(Crowell; \$10)

The first printing presses to clunk down onto the beaches of the American colonies were anything but free. In some colonies, presses were licensed by legislatures and governors who decided what could and could not be printed. Elsewhere in the New World, presses were banned altogether for many years, because civil authorities knew the perils of these devices.

Freedom of the press nevertheless took root in America in the 18th and 19th centuries. But now, in the 20th century, that freedom is on the wane and will return to its original state unless something is done about it, says John Tebbel, who has spent a lifetime

telling the history of mass communications.

To justify this astounding conclusion, Tebbel's new comprehensive history, *The Media in America*, cites such things as government licensing of broadcasting, official attempts to discredit the press, attempts to coerce public television, gross withholding of governmental information, official lying, an actual attempt at prior restraint by a President, and, worst of all, a seemingly unenlightened public that tolerates all of this.

But Tebbel's assessment of press-government relations probably is an overreaction to the heat of the moment in which it was written. He finished the book in April, 1974, and those were ominous days, indeed, with a conniving President in office.

But soon after that date, the Supreme Court forced President Nixon to turn over his most embarrassing tape recordings to Congress, and his Presidency ended ignominiously. His attempts to manipulate the government, the public, and the media ultimately failed.

And now that Nixon and his anti-media wrecking crew are gone, the abandonment of press freedom seems much less likely. It is hard to believe Tebbel would write such apocalyptic words today.

I must admit to some uneasiness, however, about being so sanguine. Indeed, with such threats as President Ford's proposed intelligence legislation, possible action against Daniel Schorr and proposed revisions of the U.S. Criminal Code hanging over us, I may turn out to be the one misled by the spirit of the moment.

If Tebbel in fact was obsessed with the heavy events of the Nixon days, it is unfortunate he did not wait to apply a broader perspective.

The real story of the media in America is not that it has been buffeted

Letters to the Editors

(Continued from page 39)

To the Editors:

... I must say that when I first went through the issue I thought, My God, there's a ton here about South Africa, and what in all the words could be new? Then I began to read, and much was new. I think publishing [John] Corr's articles was a plus...

Aside: a few days after I received *NR*, and one night shortly after I came home from the Word Factory, a neighbor knocked on my door, and demanded I hand up my copy of "Pecksniffs." The neighbor graduated from Columbia School of Journalism, and he has a complete set of *NR*s from 1955. He had gotten his new copy, and was so shaken by being on the same street as a *NR* contributor he could hardly keep from

wetting his pants.

Back to Africa: I would hope that in a future issue you set aside space to print whatever reaction, foreign and domestic, you get from these articles. And, I would suggest that you consider doing the same for cities and states in the U.S. Ambitious, too ambitious, you might say. I reply, yes, but there are Niemans everywhere, and most would respond to an assignment. Some might even be surprised, shocked even, but most are still wordsmiths, and why couldn't they be told to file 3-5,000 words on a project?...

Edward Norton, NF '73

New York Daily News

New Jersey Edition

West Orange, New Jersey

by repeated official hostility, but that it has survived these attempts. Censorship in America has succeeded only during wars, according to Tebbel's own account. And even wartime press conditions have improved in the last half-century, as demonstrated by the profound media dissent of the Vietnam era in comparison with the repression of the Sedition Act of 1917.

Other incidents have blotted our record of press freedom, to be sure: James Franklin and John Peter Zenger were jailed for their barbs at public officials. Theodore Roosevelt tried to sue *The New York World* for libel and for jeopardizing federal property. And Richard Nixon tried to suppress the Pentagon Papers, which strangely gets only brief mention in this book. But all these attempts were unsuccessful or short-lived.

Tebbel's near-omission of the Pentagon Papers episode points up one of the book's real shortcomings: its hasty treatment of the last 35 years. Aside from his running commentary on how one President after another got along with the boys in the press corps, Tebbel fairly brushes off modern media history. Television gets no systematic treatment, and Adolph Ochs' legacy of the nation's foremost newspaper gets no treatment at all.

By the time he reaches the modern period, Tebbel seems to have lost interest in history. He spends his words instead apologizing for the state of the media and sermonizing on the woes about to befall an ungrateful public.

The public is blamed for the media's shortcomings today, as well as throughout history. In the Revolutionary era, for instance, some editors tried to present the news objectively. One was James Rivington of *The New York Gazette*. But after his shop was destroyed by a Sons of Liberty mob that would tolerate no objectivity, even Rivington became a polarized combatant, says Tebbel.

In our own time, Tebbel goes on, "All criticism of the medium [televi-

sion, in this case] ought to be seen in terms of that audience's composition," which he describes as having poor education and even poorer tastes. He states that two-thirds of the American population over 25 has not graduated from high school. But he is wrong on that point, according to the Bureau of the Census, which puts the figure at 40 per cent.

In the end, Tebbel questions "whether Americans even deserve a

Elsewhere in the New World, presses were banned altogether for many years, because civil authorities knew the perils of such devices.

free press whose freedom is guaranteed uniquely by the First Amendment."

Tebbel cannot be allowed to get away with blaming the public and implying it prefers trashy sensationalism. Most journalism delivered to the public is not sensational. It simply is shallow and insignificant. It consists of the most easily-measured quantities. We find it easier to write about the launching of a new educational program than to investigate, three years later, whether that program succeeded. So we write about new programs.

The bulk of the blame for the way news is covered should be placed upon the people in the media—the bosses and the laborers. And they should not be excused simply because they have to turn a profit. Otis Chandler, who is not mentioned in Tebbel's book, vastly improved *The Los Angeles Times* because he chose to do so, and he has survived financially.

Some of Tebbel's best material is his treatment of book publishing history, much of which probably is a distillation of his partially-completed three-

volume history of the publishing industry. His chapters on magazine history also are good. Both accounts become rather encyclopedic at times, but the material is informative.

And Tebbel keeps it in perspective. He does not spend all his time on the classic works of Hawthorne, Emerson, and Irving, as our high school teachers did. Tebbel covers at length the stuff the public really was reading: the dime novels, the paperbacks, the overwrought romances of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, whom he calls the Jacqueline Susann of the 19th century.

The reason for Tebbel's waning interest in modern history might be that modern media people are not as colorful as the ones Tebbel finds in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. And they are not so involved in violence. Tebbel is at his best with action stories about the mob plunder and murder of President Madison's media foes, Lincoln's shaming of Joseph Medill, the Bonfils and Tammen circus in Denver, the eccentricities of James Gordon Bennett Jr. and Sr., Henry Raymond's armed de-

Most journalism delivered to the public is not sensational. It simply is shallow and insignificant.

fense of Uncle Horace Greeley, David Sarnoff's 72-hour stay at the wireless to get the list of Titanic survivors, and, of course, Pulitzer and Hearst.

The trouble is that Tebbel lets all this action carry his history. He can't get away from people and events long enough to examine the very item under consideration: The Media. He never gives us a good idea of how the media looked and sounded to the people day after day.

In the Jacksonian era, Tebbel concentrates on the President's feuds with

newspapers rather than on the uninformative newspapers themselves. He could have told how "news" had to vie for front-page space with ads for linseed oil and tooth-pullers and how the biggest stories of the day—industrialization, the common school movement and the westward movement—scarcely were mentioned. But he doesn't.

With eminent justification, this book could have been strung out for another 100 pages (in addition to its present 407), with descriptions and samplings of the media of all eras. But, then the book would not be so dramatic or forceful, which seems to be the point.

—Gregor W. Pinney

The China Hands — America's Foreign Service Officers and What Befell Them

By E.J. Kahn, Jr.

(The Viking Press; \$12.95)

This newest book by *New Yorker* writer E.J. Kahn Jr. is a major achievement. It puts together a heretofore untold story about some heroes in our land: the China Foreign Service Officers (FSO's) who generally predicted that Chiang Kai-shek would lose and Mao Tse-tung would win the Chinese civil war, and who urged that the U.S. Government adjust to that probable outcome in Asia. Like messengers bearing bad tidings, however, these FSO's were dealt with very harshly, thanks to the efforts of Senator Joseph McCarthy and his many despicable accomplices.

I was a college freshman, just back from nine months of travel in China, in the first year of the McCarthy era, 1949-50. A child of educational missionaries, I had returned from China

with a strong desire to go back there some day in the U.S. Foreign Service.

I had also returned with a pretty good hunch about who had actually "lost China" to the Communists: not American diplomats or professors (or Commies and pinkos in our midst), but rather the Chinese Nationalists themselves. So I watched with a special fascination and horror, over my extended student years, as the orgy of recrimination burst upon our nation, destroying or maiming the careers of virtually everyone who had spoken up and been right about China policy.

On reflection I modified my plans: turned down an offer from the Foreign Service, got myself a PhD in Chinese history, joined the State Department as a junior political appointee under Kennedy, and later fled to teach at Harvard when Vietnam policy became intolerable. Better the relative freedom of a university, I decided, than the lingering post-McCarthy constraints on honest reporting within the U.S. Government.

One of the things I have taught since, and still teach, is the McCarthy era's impact on American-East Asian relations. But it is a difficult message to communicate. Despite Vietnam, Watergate, and new waves of revulsion against the National Security State, it is increasingly hard to convey the mix of bullyism, paranoia, and cowardice that sustained the witch-hunters for so long.

Our older generation, like the "good Germans" of the Hitler era, generally prefer to forget. Our younger people find it too long ago (now which war *was* that?), after a while too boring, and generally an unnecessary additional confirmation of the iniquities of The System.

And why indeed should we care that McCarthyism's juggernaut happened to destroy the most talent-rich and effective division of our foreign affairs establishment, the China service? Well, one reason is that if we had followed the China FSO's advice, we might well have developed some sort of peaceful relations with the Chinese Communists in

1949, instead of 1972. Another is that we might thereby have averted the Korean War entirely, or at least its expansion and China's participation. A third—grimly poignant—is that we would very probably then have also averted the Vietnam War, or at least twenty years of entirely senseless American Indochina involvement from 1955 through a year ago last April.

Yet these points are still curiously hard to make, inside and outside the university. And one horrifying but precious piece of American experience has seemed on the verge of disappearance—the characters aging or dying off, the lessons lost, China now "solved," thanks to Nixon and Kissinger. Of course, some histories have been written, and belated memoirs

... It is increasingly hard to convey the mix of bullyism, paranoia, and cowardice that sustained the witch-hunters for so long.

have appeared. But what has been missing is something big that captures the *dramatis personae*, the mood, the details, the richness of the scenes; something that communicates the humor and pathos, as well as the heroism and tragedy.

Which is why E.J. Kahn Jr.'s masterful and absorbing account is so welcome. Kahn combines a low-key anecdotal style, a wry humor and an ear for irony with—it becomes clear—relentless pursuit of interviewees and substantial reading and research. He uses a distanced nonchalance in tone to control something quite different and important: his rising tide of outrage that such things were done to such people, and with such consequences to the nation.

This becomes, therefore, a curiously effective book on a very complicated

subject. It reads initially as if written for a wide, uninformed public—and it should certainly be read by those who care little about the subject but enjoy a fast-paced story. But it moves quickly into a gear that must command the respect not only of students trying to understand our China purges and the policies that ensued, but also of teachers who may know a lot but will learn a host of new things. For all readers, I should add, there is a "glossary" of the major victims, a fat section of footnotes on sources, and a helpful index.

Kahn has dealt superbly with a trans-Pacific story whose ironies hang heavy. Richard M. Nixon, as Congressman a chief persecutor of the China officers, becomes the President who twenty years later vindicates them by adopting their policy. At Nixon's State Department, in early 1973, the Foreign Service Association belatedly honors all those previously dishonored or banished—John S. Service, John Carter Vincent, John Paton Davies, Oliver Edmund Clubb, and a dozen or so others—at an extraordinary gala luncheon at which Service is chief speaker. Yet only five years earlier, under Johnson, such a thing would have seemed sheer political madness.

Meanwhile, other characters weave in and out of the story—FDR's worst appointment anywhere, the stupid, vain, and vindictive Oklahoma Republican, Patrick J. Hurley, who detonated the original charges against the FSO's back in 1945; Alfred Kohlberg, New York lace importer and godfather of the China Lobby; and the Chinese, of course—the Chiangs and Soongs and their retinue on the one hand, Mao and Chou and their followers on the other. And there are cowards as well as villains—men who dared not help out the accused. As Kahn reports, "few men had ever been so mightily defamed by nasty people and so meagerly defended by nice ones."

A final irony, surfacing now and then, is that FSO's in Vietnam in the 1960's had learned the lesson of their earlier

China brethren—and trimmed their reporting accordingly.

I began by telling how I encountered the McCarthy era, why it fascinated me, and how hard it has been to try to teach about it. I will end by saying that Kahn's book will not only ease the teaching of the era; it will also assure that some of the era's lessons will be spread far and wide.

—James Thomson

(Courtesy of The Boston Globe)

A Newspaper History of The World

By Michael Wynn Jones

(William Morrow; \$15.95)

About 10 years ago, when I was working on the now defunct *Paterson Morning Call*, the first chore each day was to read the opposition. It's the same everywhere. But in Paterson the opposition consisted of: *The Paterson Morning News*, *The Newark Star-Ledger*, *The New York Times*, *The New York Herald Tribune*, and by noon we had the early editions of: *The Passaic Herald News*, *The Newark News*, *The Paterson Evening News*, *The New York Post*, *World Telegram & Sun*, and *The Journal American*. Some days reporters didn't hit their beats until 3 p.m. None complained, however, as we were all more than happy to blacken our hands with the ink of some of the best newspapers in the nation.

We turned the pages with nervous fingers, hoping there wouldn't be any beats in North Jersey that we missed, and secretly thrilled that we on a small city daily had such powerhouse competition in the New York metropolitan region.

At first glance, *A Newspaper History of The World* would lead the newspaper buff to believe it was a history of Mr. Pulitzer's prize. It isn't, although *The New York World* is contained in it. The book is rather a history of the modern press in Britain and the U.S., showing the actual page one of each paper's proudest moment.

The book is, therefore, a must for those today who are secretly anguished that they can't read *The New York Times'* account of Lindbergh's landing, or the Pearl Harbor attack.

Jones is a British journalist who has worked on various English magazines and newspaper supplements. He obviously contracted the life-long print disease, and his book will please fellow carriers.

There is something about seeing and reading the actual page one of *The Times* for July 22, 1871, listing the secret accounts of the Tweed Ring, that stirs the blood. Or the complete newspaper saga of how Henry M. Stanley, late of the Frontier Indian wars, was sent to Africa to find Dr. Livingstone. Or, wrapped in the Red, White and Blue, how *The World* and *The Journal* of New York fought the war of 1898—in 120-point bold headlines, and 14-point bold body type, with journalistic hyperbole raised to a new art form.

The changes in the business came swiftly after 1895—the brassy headline, the "catchy" one, the Sunday comics, the photo. By the 1920s the tabloids, patterned after *The London Daily Mirror*, were grabbing circulation in the U.S. Changes there were, but the news marched on. Unlike bus drivers and mill workers, newspapermen like to take their work home with them. This book, together with a comfortable chair, a good drink, and maybe a warm fire, is all you'll need to feed your all-consuming print habit.

—Edward C. Norton

A River Runs Through It and Other Stories

By Norman Maclean

(University of Chicago; \$7.95)

Norman Maclean is in his seventies; among the accomplishments of his earlier years were the teaching of English at the University of Chicago and the fathering of a Nieman Fellow, John (NF '75). Teaching English and fathering children have their rough similarities, we may imagine, bringing with them a care for language and for memory, for testaments that are articulate and loving, descriptive enough, and forthcoming enough, to be educational, even inspirational.

His children had begged him for years, we are told in an engaging, shy, and rather self-conscious introduction, to write down the stories he had told them when they were small; this thin and lovely book is his beginning, his first witness, for which we have John and his sister Jean to thank.

Maclean's conceit is that these are children's stories, and hence can be allowed morals, with signposts advertising them when we readers grow lax. But the morals are often complicated and hesitant, full of mystery: an adult's humbled conclusions, specific enough on whores and whisky, poker and the hatred of brothers-in-law, yet suffused with reverence about brothers, wives, fathers, spirit, beauty, language. These stories predate his children and ignore them: they are the work of the older, retired Maclean—and whatever their inspiration, they are neither for children nor about them.

There are three stories in *A River Runs through It*, all accomplished and winning in their way, but only the first, the title story, is touched with grace, and of a most enviable kind. The middle

story is perfunctory and predictable, and might have been dropped entirely but for its title: "Logging and Pimping and 'Your Pal, Jim.'" It is his first shot at fiction, and does not so much go wide of the mark as have no mark at all, neither on first reading nor in memory. It is a tale of a Montanan rite of passage, as are they all, but a child's rite: everything is new, so little is learned. Even hatred is enthralling, and "toughness" appears as virtue. The long, final piece, about a summer at 17 in the early years of the U.S. Forest Service, is too much like Hemingway's "Nick" stories for anyone's good, but the tone is perfect, the action lively and controlled, and the history and ecology lesson about Montana in 1919 is gentle and unassuming. The telling is artful, the lessons distilled with some care.

But the title story veers toward being a masterpiece, so much so that it makes the others seem paltry, mere exercises, engaging enough but so minor as to throw the volume severely out of balance. One has, strangely, some sympathy for the publisher, whose first volume of original fiction this is: to venture placing the title story last, where it belongs, would be to risk reviewer indifference, sententious skimmers as most are. But placing it first is deeply unsatisfying: one reads a marvel, expecting more, but finds oneself drifting idly down a broadening, meandering river of pages, full of small gems to be sure, but gems one notices oneself rather desperately overvaluing.

Still, "A River Runs through It" sanctifies the rest (which is, after all, finely written), and interests us in it; the novella enlarges upon second-reading, and I expect also upon a third. It is almost perfect art, and yet is not "artful" as Joyce's "The Dead" is artful, in the sense of inevitable form and a muting, resonant, foreordained conclusion. The story has the shape of the rivers that run through the lives of these people, giving them place, and sustenance, and spirituality. Maclean is the son of a Scottish Presbyterian minister and fly

fisherman: the story is about family, fishing, and God. "Family" is the indeterminate, "fishing" and "God" the absolutes, but they provide no lasting epiphanies: they are where one flees when overwhelmed by the first and most interesting of the trinity.

Toward the end of the story, Maclean's wise father asks,

After you have finished your true stories sometime, why don't you make up a story and the people to go with it? Only then will you understand what happened and why. It is those we live with and love and should know who elude us.

But Maclean does not choose to make up a story, at least not one that he can

Maclean is no moralist, but fears dissolution: he does not understand his brother, so he fishes with him, this family's sacred, binding anodyne.

understand: it is the elusiveness of those he writes about that interests him: "Now nearly all those I loved and did not understand when I was young are dead, but I still reach out to them." This story, then, is his reach, and he touches us deeply.

The one who eludes him to the end is his younger brother Paul, a reporter in Helena, a gambler and drinker and a masterful fly fisherman—there, at least, touched by art and by grace. The first line: "In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." To their minister-father "all good things—trout as well as eternal salvation—come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy."

Maclean reveres his brother, who, when fishing, is palpably embraced by God; but he fears for him the rest of the time, when Paul embraces the devil.

Maclean is no moralist, but fears dissolution: he does not understand his brother, so he fishes with him, this family's sacred, binding anodyne. He cannot see his way through to any other kind of help, for Paul sees the need of none, and would not accept it, however appreciative he is for Maclean's awkward attempts. His father, also, can offer only this mute, masculine camaraderie. "That should have been my text," the father says, "We are willing to help, Lord, but what if anything is needed? I still know how to fish . . . Tomorrow we will go fishing with him." Perhaps it is only a Westerner who might have such faith in the moral efficacy of fish and fishing: here it is not enough.

For while fishing the world shrinks very small, becomes enchanted. And the description of it is exquisite, fine details neatly seen and rendered, the river, the fish, the accoutrements of pole and flies and beer. Yet there is self-knowledge, also: even when the fish seems hooked, there is always the possibility of disaster, when the enchanted moment goes sour, the vision again becomes earth:

The body and spirit suffer no more sudden visitation than that of losing a big fish, since, after all, there must be some slight transition between life and death. But, with a big fish, one moment the world is nuclear and the next it has disappeared. That's all. It has gone. The fish has gone and you are extinct, except for four and a half ounces of stick to which is tied some line and a semitransparent thread of catgut to which is tied a little curved piece of Swedish steel to which is tied a part of a feather from a chicken's neck.

Paul, the artist of the river, botches his life: he cannot make the connections, cannot transfer the grace, despite the drinking and whoring. He is found dumped in an alley, bludgeoned to death with the butt of a revolver. Maclean and his father grope gingerly together for a kind of resolution, of understanding, but they find neither.

They talk softly of how most of the bones in Paul's casting hand have been broken.

The story follows the river closely, yet it has the river's flow only if rivers are there solely to fish. But Maclean and his father can contemplate the river, as Paul cannot, being of it; his father tells him of reading the first verse of John on the banks: ". . . It says the Word was in the beginning, and that's right. I used to think water was first, but if you listen carefully you will hear that the words are underneath the water . . . The water runs over the words." In the form of the story Paul's death is the sharpest bend, a precipitous fall. Maclean, transported, floats near to the fall, then retreats to conscious memory again, and to *logos*, the words and thoughts that express it. "I am haunted by waters," he ends, and we must be grateful—for the transport, for the memory, for the words, for the reaching out.

—Steven Erlanger

Fair Enough: The Life of Westbrook Pegler

By Finis Farr

(Arlington House; \$8.95)

This curious little book opens with the author's account of his check-in at the Holiday Inn, "a damnable motel" at West Branch, Iowa. He had journeyed there to inspect the papers of the late Westbrook Pegler, whose literary remains are housed, appropriately, in the Herbert Hoover Memorial Library.

It seems that the young lady with desk-duty insisted, as local law required, on some form of identification. Instead of showing her a driver's license as requested, Mr. Farr showed her money—\$2,000 in traveler's checks.

The bewildered young woman,

mindful of the law, persisted until the indignant author at last produced something acceptable. His revenge, however, was to move out on the following day—to take quarters for his long research project in another motel, where

... Even a blind hog will find an acorn now and then, [so Pegler] was bound to score a few hits.

the owner was less persnickety about the law and more respectful of the money.

This episode would have warmed the heart of Westbrook Pegler, and it also serves quick notice upon the reader that he is about to read the work of a sympathetic soul. Mr. Farr clearly believes Westbrook Pegler to be the most influential columnist of his time—a time which included Heywood Broun and Walter Lippmann (whose name is not mentioned in the book, although Walter Winchell's is).

And yet it is a good biography. It has, to be sure, one serious flaw: the author tends to wander off into his own third-rate philosophy, denouncing such radicals as Woodrow Wilson in diatribes that would be Pegleresque except that Mr. Farr lacks the old columnist's gift for pungent expression. At times his capacity for personal abuse is positively startling. For example, with all his manifold faults, does the late J. Edgar Hoover deserve to be characterized as "personally repulsive . . . a product of . . . the white lower-middle class, one degree above trash, a former low-grade government drone who saw his chance to build an empire of toadies in the bureau"? (Pegler's own attacks on Hoover were much less personal and, in light of later developments, may even have been prescient; but even a blind hog will find an acorn now and then, and

since Pegler attacked almost everyone of consequence in his time, he was bound to score a few hits.)

Yet beneath Mr. Farr's excessive moralizing, his book presents a plausible portrait of this enigmatic and essentially tragic figure in American journalism—a tragedy recognized by Heywood Broun as early as the 1930s.

Pegler was born of conflicting loyalties, of an Irish-American mother and a

Society, which in time grew weary of his preoccupations.

Toward the end of his life, Pegler clearly was a seriously disturbed person—although Mr. Farr comes no closer to saying this than a reference to Pegler's "impatient excessive rancor." Consumed by his own hatred, and ironically so anti-Semitic that he would have found Hitler a kindred spirit, he died in 1969.

Why, one may ask, should we celebrate such meanness of spirit with a biography? What is the relevance of Pegler?

Perhaps there is a certain warning in this little volume for journalists of any age, including this one. Heywood Broun once remarked that Pegler had been bitten by an income tax too early in life.

It may well be that many talented youngsters entering journalism these days, half-a-century after Pegler came upon the scene, may have been bitten

Heywood Broun once remarked that Pegler had been bitten by an income tax too early in life.

wandering Englishman father, and young Westbrook never seemed able to settle his identity problem quite clearly in his mind. To the end, he remained devoted both to his long-suffering mother and his vain, selfish, adventurous father, a journalist limited both in talent and ethical standards.

This union produced what Farr calls "a personality of warring opposites," a paradoxical, profoundly insecure figure who was able to write, on the one hand, a moving column about the plight of the Jews in Germany at a time when the full measure of Hitler's maniacal fury was only dimly perceived, and, on the other, a column which applauded a barbarous lynching in California.

Although Pegler himself was almost obsessively sensitive to criticism, his attacks grew more intense and irresponsible, until he finally came to grief by libeling his fellow journalist, Quentin Reynolds. (Mr. Farr suggests the verdict was the result of an inept and unenthusiastic defense.)

His credibility utterly destroyed, he repaired to his home in the desert (symbolically apt, perhaps) to write only for such outlets as the John Birch

It is the journalist's unhappy lot to walk a tightrope of skepticism between the great chasms of credulity . . . [and] cynicism.

too early in life by moral superiority. At least this Old Reporter—and I use the term not so much to reveal age as to separate myself from the New Journalists—perceives this danger in some of the journalism extant in the land today.

It is the journalist's unhappy lot to walk a tightrope of skepticism between the great chasms of credulity on the one hand, cynicism on the other. Pegler simply was not up to that feat. Perhaps there are not many of us who are.

—Ray Jenkins

Giai Phong! The Fall and Liberation of Saigon

By Tiziano Terzani
Translated by John Shepley

(St. Martin's Press; \$10)

It is difficult to place a simple label on Tiziano Terzani. He carries an Italian passport and writes for the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. Different Vietnamese have come up with different judgments about him. In March 1975, the Thieu regime called him a Communist and banished him forever, or so they thought, from Vietnam. They had found fault with his reporting of the fall of Ban Me Thuot, the event that precipitated the end of the war. He defied the blacklist in the last few days of April by arriving on the last Air Vietnam flight to enter the country. By that time most of the immigration police had fled and no one paid any attention to someone apparently foolish enough to be arriving in Vietnam when so many others were desperate to leave. Once there, he resisted the panic of the evacuation because "I had never shared the principles and policies of the Americans' intervention in Vietnam and therefore saw no reason now to share the risks and emotions of their flight." He stayed for 94 days, watching, listening and questioning the new Communist authorities. They eventually decided, contrary to the judgment of Thieu's police, that he was "a susceptible bourgeois." His book makes it clear that if nothing else he is a hard working reporter. *Giai Phong!* (which means "liberation" in Vietnamese) is a vivid, intensely readable, provocative account of Vietnam and the Vietnamese during an extraordinary episode in their history.

Wartime Saigon always seemed to be a blend of the horrible and the hilarious

and, according to Terzani, it was just the same last April 30th when 117 years of foreign domination came to an end. "Then I saw a policeman walking erect toward Thieu's monstrous Monument to the Unknown Soldier, in front of the white palace of the National Assembly. I saw him stand at attention, take his pistol from his holster, and fire a bullet into his temple. He lay there in a pool of blood, alone for a few minutes. Then a soldier on a motorcycle stopped, took the pistol, and drove off; another took his watch." Retreating A.R.V.N. paratroopers crowded into the courtyard of the Psychological Warfare Command near the abandoned American Embassy. Terzani's witness, an A.R.V.N. colonel, described what went on. "Two paras aimed their machine guns at each other's stomach, counted one-two-three, and fired. They were Catholics and didn't want to commit suicide."

A few blocks away, the crew of tank number 843 of the Liberation Army had become lost. Their mission was to get to Doc Lap Palace, Thieu's former headquarters. Needless to say, the young North Vietnamese had never been to Saigon before—so they asked directions from a young girl on a Honda. "You're on Thong Nhat Avenue," she replied. "There's the palace, right in front of you." The crew reached the palace and bounded up the steps, demanding to know where Duong Van ("Big") Minh was. "Keep calm," Minh

said to the young soldiers. "We've already surrendered." More of the triumphant tank crews poured into the palace and approached the members of the fallen Government who were standing on a luxuriant yellow carpet adorned with blue dragons. One of the soldiers shyly stepped back from the carpet and removed his rubber sandals.

Terzani gratefully acknowledges the assistance of a journalist named Cao Giau, who had worked as a reporter and translator for many years for both *The New Yorker* and *Newsweek*. Cao Giau's own experiences, threaded throughout the book, suggest what life must have been like for many Vietnamese as peace came to Vietnam. Just hours after the surrender he returned home and found an unsigned note directing him to go to a certain address. He found his youngest brother, whom he had not seen since 1954. The brother had arrived in Saigon a few days before with a commando sabotage unit, and that morning, even before the tanks had arrived, he had gone to see his mother. Cao Giau had resisted intense pressure to join the evacuation. "The revolution sets me to dreaming," he explained, "and I want to see it with my own eyes." Some weeks after the end of the fighting Cao Giau and Terzani went to a concert in Cholon of traditional Vietnamese monochord music that had been banned by Thieu because it had become a symbol of the underground.

While they listened, Cao Giau wept. "It's like rediscovering you're Vietnamese," he said. "I'm cured forever of nightclub culture."

Gradually, according to Terzani, the hysteria and panic of the first days ebbed as it became evident that the blood bath that had been promised by the American Embassy was not going to happen. Slowly, the sort of reconciliation that had taken place in Cao Giau's family was repeated thousands of times all over the country. As he tells it, it happened both spontaneously and as a result of the new government's "reeducation" programs. Every reeducation session began the same way: "Giai Phong has been everyone's victory. There are no longer either victors or vanquished among the Vietnamese. The only ones who have been defeated are the Americans." His story of the first months of peace in Vietnam has its full share of misery, but, eventually, it is an account of healing and hope. He quotes an old man in the Delta. "Now I look at a tree and I'm not afraid. I no longer think there's somebody behind it who might take a shot at me. A tree is a tree again. That's part of the revolution too."

—Kevin Buckley

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Notes on Book Reviewers

Kevin Buckley, Nieman Fellow '73, was a *Newsweek* bureau chief in Saigon, where he reported from 1968-72. He now teaches at Boston University's School of Public Communication and is writing a novel about Americans in Vietnam.

Steven Erlanger teaches fiction-writing at Harvard College.

Ray Jenkins, Nieman Fellow '65, is editor of the Editorial Page, *The Alabama Journal*.

Edward C. Norton, Nieman Fellow '73, is assistant assignments editor of the New Jersey edition of the *New York Daily News*.

Gregor W. Pinney, Nieman Fellow '74, is the education writer for *The Minneapolis Tribune*.

James Thomson, Curator of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, teaches the history of American-East Asian relations at Harvard. He is the author of *While China Faced West*.

Nieman Fellows, 1976-77

Thirteen American journalists have been appointed to the 39th class of Lucius W. Nieman Fellows to study at Harvard University in 1976-77. The Nieman Fellowships were established through a bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, who founded *The Milwaukee Journal*. The Fellows come to Harvard for a year of study in any part of the University.

The new Fellows are:

Robert J. Azzi, 33, photojournalist with Magnum, Incorporated. Mr. Azzi attended the Rhode Island School of Design, the University of New Hampshire and the Boston Architectural Center. At Harvard he will study social anthropology, Third World history, economics, and the problems of mass communication.

Tony Castro, Jr., 29, reporter, the *Houston Post*. Mr. Castro holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University, and will focus on international economics and American foreign policy. He will also undertake some work on race, ethnicity, and urban problems in the U.S.

Rodney W. Decker, 34, columnist and editorial writer, the *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, Utah. Mr. Decker is a graduate of the University of Utah, and will pursue a program in criminal justice, American history, state law, and government problems.

Melvin M.S. Goo, 28, editorial writer, the *Honolulu Advertiser*. Mr. Goo received his bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, and will concentrate on studies about China, including its language, government, politics, and literature, in addition to the political development of the Third World.

Kathryn Johnson, 48, news reporter with the Associated Press, Atlanta. Ms. Johnson is a graduate of Agnes Scott College, and at Harvard plans to study criminal law, political science, economics, and sociological trends.

Dolores J. Katz, 30, medical reporter, *Detroit Free Press*. Ms. Katz received her bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin. She will pursue a program to explore the relationships between research, health care, and health, with courses on human genetics, health economics, and the history of medical science.

Alfred S. Larkin, Jr., 29, Assistant Metropolitan Editor, *The Boston Globe*. Mr. Larkin attended Northeastern University and at Harvard plans to study urban and ethnic sociology, psychology, and urban problems in the U.S.

John E. Painter, Jr., 37, staff writer, *The Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon. Mr. Painter graduated from the University of Oregon, and proposes to study urban economics, municipal finance, bond and investment policies, public service, fiscal policy formulation, and budgeting processes.

Barbara A. Reynolds, 33, urban affairs writer, the *Chicago Tribune*. Ms. Reynolds holds a bachelor's degree from Ohio State University, and will focus on social welfare programs, major urban crises under contemporary Presidents, and modern domestic policy in the U.S.

Paul Solman, 31, Associate Editor and reporter, *The Real Paper*, Cambridge. Mr. Solman is a graduate of Brandeis University. He will specialize in courses on accounting, business law, tax law, and economics.

Cassandra Tate, 31, reporter, *Lewiston (Idaho) Morning Tribune*. Ms. Tate attended Idaho State University and the University of Nevada. At Harvard she will concentrate on ecology, environmental health, natural science, and women and the American experience.

William O. Wheatley, Jr., 31, National Assignment Editor, NBC News, New York. Mr. Wheatley holds degrees from Boston University and Boston College. He will focus on American studies and the inter-relationship of urban neighborhoods and public systems, including history, social institutions, the media and society, public education, criminal justice, and labor unions.

Jack E. White, Jr., 30, Atlanta correspondent for Time-Life News Service. Mr. White attended Swarthmore College, and at Harvard plans to study American history, economics, the African nations, and archeology.

The Fellows were nominated by a committee whose members were: Patricia Albjerg Graham, Dean of the Radcliffe Institute and Professor of Education at Harvard University; Robert J. Kiely, Professor of English, Harvard University; Clayton Kirkpatrick, Editor of the *Chicago Tribune*; Robert C. Maynard, columnist and editorial writer, *The Washington Post*; Richard E. Neustadt, Professor of Government, Harvard University; Carol Sutton, Managing Editor, *The Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky; and James C. Thomson Jr., Curator of the Nieman Foundation.

Announcement of the appointment of Associate Nieman Fellows from abroad will be made later in the summer.