

# NIEMAN REPORTS

VOL. XLI, No. 3, AUTUMN 1987

South Africa and The  
Press — See Page 24

STANLEY KARNOW probes the Vietnam Era and proves how narrow the line between "Era" and all-out war.

MARY LOU FINLAY captures the feel of a tormented country and its people — El Salvador — where no one smiles.

JAMES A. ROUSMANIERE JR. studies newspapers in another country — India — where the editing hand is heavy and the issues turbulent.

DERRICK JACKSON talks about the burdens of the blacks and the bigotry of the whites — both bring on nightmares.

## BOOKS

FRED BARNES on a cartoonist who, with point of pen, unveils the hypocrisy of the pious.

SHARON CROSBIE on a sweet mystery of life that may result in "nasty surprises."

RICHARD DUDMAN on a columnist pinpointing stories that should have been handled differently.

JULIUS DUSCHA on the manipulative skills of journalists — from the viewpoint of government officials.

ROBERT H. ESTABROOK on a disputatious subject — ethics in journalism.

CHARLES FENYVESI on the ties that bind the ethnic press with its readers.

WILLIAM GERMAN on "a verray parfit gentil knight" covering stories.

PETER JAY on two women writing prose about wartime living that reads like poetry.

JOHN MACCORMACK on the travails of a tough Texan breaking into free-lance writing.

SARAH MCCLENDON on a First Lady whose strength was legendary, whose every act and word were fine-tooth combed by press and public.

DAVID NYHAN on an author who defines conservatism and its followers with a backward glance of admiration.

WATSON SIMS on the distrust and ignorance that imperil "us and them" — the two superpowers.

# Three Cheers and a Fanfare

**W**e the people enjoy a celebration. Our calendars are crowded with dates to be observed — Thanksgiving, Independence Day, Halloween, Valentine's Day, Labor Day, anniversaries, birthdays, and religious holidays. On these occasions, in the company of friends and family, we rely on balloons, fancy food, candles, gifts, fireworks, and songs to dispel ordinariness from the day.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Constitution of the United States. Festivities are appropriate, of course, but the most fitting exercises will be quiet ones, as thoughtful men and women choose to read, or re-read, the articles and amendments that are the fabric of the Constitution.

The First Amendment warrants the particular regard of journalists. Without it, the tasks of newsgathering and dissemination would resemble the media in countries where the flow of information is controlled or wholly suppressed.

The Autumn number of *Nieman Reports* touches on some of those areas.

Stanley Karnow ponders the nuances of the Vietnam conflict, as well as the current struggle in Central America.

Mary Lou Finlay describes a recent visit to El Salvador.

Conditions in the South African press are summarized from a panel discussion.

James Rousmaniere travels to India, where the concerns of editors and reporters parallel issues faced by their American counterparts.

Derrick Jackson recalls personal incidents of racial discrimination and harassment.

A collection of book reviews offers a diversity of subjects, including political cartooning, the institution of marriage, a highly specialized dictionary, the news in back of the

news, views of foreign and domestic reporters as they see each other, political decisions and the press, and the biography of a remarkable woman.

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That a document as modest in appearance as the Constitution of the United States can uphold and sustain the workings of a democratic society is a tribute to the fine minds that conceived the design of those 7,367 words and what we honor today as their staying power.

— T.B.K.L.



## A Pleasant Mystery

An old saying warns that three moves are as good as a fire. At the Nieman Foundation — in one instance, anyway, and to our good fortune — we have had a different experience.

It's a fact that the office has been moved the requisite three times. First, from the original headquarters in Holyoke House to the second floor of a wooden structure at 77 Dunster Street, thence to both floors of a simple Victorian dwelling at 48 Trowbridge Street and, finally, to the present site in the mid-19th-century Greek revival house at One Francis Avenue.

While preparing for this most recent relocation, we came across an old file of inconsequential correspondence. However, crammed in the midst of the brittle pages was a tattered cardboard box. To our astonishment, it contained a framed, handwritten note above the signature "Walt Whitman." It reads:

Camden May 6 '91

Thank you heartily — & thank

Clement & all — for that deep deep  
 ☽ in May 4th T. [or J.?] ab't me at  
 date [illegible]: It is in some respects  
 the most delicious morsel ever proffered  
 to me & goes to the right spot  
 curiously — An old fellow's heart's &  
 brain's gratitude to you all — I am  
 stumbling & tottering purlblindly  
 along these last concluding few days  
 & paths & essays — my mentality &  
 right arm responsive — the rest utterly  
 wreck'd —

Love to you & fran — & the Editor  
 & all the boys — If Clement sh'd care  
 for this note, give it to him with best  
 remembrance

Walt Whitman

The strong penmanship and clear message confirm Whitman's own evaluation that his mentality is "responsive." In 1891 he was working on his final edition of *Leaves of Grass*, an accomplishment proving yet again that the barrier of physical limitation often gives way to the force of motivation. By that time, the journalist-become-poet had suffered at least two strokes — the first early in 1873 — and was living as a semi-invalid in his Camden, New Jersey, home.

A photograph taken that year by Thomas Eakins shows Whitman sitting in his rocker beside a window. A huge fur rug is thrown over the chair. The poet's flowing white hair and beard are as luxuriant as the pelt that cushions his large frame. His left hand gently holds a cane.

According to the date, Whitman wrote this note of thanks less than a year before his death in March, 1892.

Attempts have been unsuccessful to find out how this special piece of Americana ended up in the Nieman files. (A class gift?) At any rate, in these pages we bring it to light again in the hopes that someone will know the answer to this worthwhile puzzle.

— T.B.K.L.

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Vol. XLI, No. 3  
Autumn 1987

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Nieman Reports (USPS #340-650) is published quarterly by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. Copyright ©1987 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Subscription \$15.00 a year; add \$10.00 for foreign air mail. Single copies \$4.00. Back copies are available from the Nieman Office.

Please address all subscription correspondence and change of address information to P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts, and additional entries. POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to P.O. Box 4951, Manchester, NH 03108.

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# The 1987 Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lecture

Stanley Karnow

*A foreign correspondent covers a country that has become a metaphor for a lost cause.*

Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, talked about Joe Alex Morris, Jr. before introducing Stanley Karnow, the 1987 lecturer.

Joe Alex Morris, Jr. was a superb foreign correspondent; he was a Harvard graduate, the Class of 1949. Thirty years later in pursuit of the craft that he loved and that loved him, Joe Alex Morris was killed by a sniper while covering street fighting in Teheran for the *Los Angeles Times*. In 1981, Joe Alex's family and friends, fellow journalists, and classmates at Harvard established the Joe Alex memorial lecture given annually to an American overseas correspondent, a media commentator on foreign affairs.

Two years before Joe Alex left Harvard, Stanley Karnow escaped into the wonderful world of journalism, where he became, and remains, one of the best of the business. I know that because Stanley and I worked

together at *The Washington Post*, and I know that because Stanley's reputation is that of a newspaperman's newspaperman. And I know that because his books are classic. Indeed, it would be instructive for all, in these days of China's discontent, to read or reread his study of the cultural revolution called *Mao and China: From Revolution to Revolution*, which he wrote here at the Kennedy School on a fellowship in 1970 and 1971. He was also a shared fellow with the Fairbank Center [for East Asian Research].

important, Stanley was a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1958.



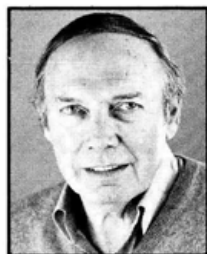
Howard referred to the Vietnam War or Wars; officially it's not called the Vietnam War, officially it's called the Vietnam Era, since it wasn't a declared war. In fact, we haven't declared a war in a long time — since 1941, actually. It was a war, nevertheless, the longest war in American history, and the first defeat in American history, and Vietnam has

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Are we getting involved in another Vietnam in Central America? Is the Philippines potentially another Vietnam? Are there new Vietnams developing in other places that we have no inkling of?

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Stanley Karnow, Nieman Fellow '58, has been a correspondent for *Time* magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Washington Post*. He has written



Catherine Karnow

both a book and a television series about the Vietnam Era. Another book and television series about the Philippines will ensue from his latest travels.

Stanley was marinated in French in France, and then the Far East, where he served as a correspondent for *Time* magazine, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Washington Post*. More recently, he brought us a stunning television series that recreated Vietnam wars and a book about the same called *Vietnam*, and most recently Stanley has been traveling to the Philippines, where he's gathering material for a book and a television series on what's happening there. Finally, and perhaps most

become a metaphor, a symbol, a kind of code word that's applied to every, or almost every, new crisis. The jargon words at the Pentagon are "low-intensity conflicts," as opposed to high-intensity conflicts, which I think probably means nuclear war, which no one would be around to define afterward.

So questions are being asked like: Are we getting involved in another Vietnam in Central America? Is the Philippines potentially another Vietnam? Are there new Vietnams devel-



oping in other places that we have no inking of? We're not the only ones that are saddled with this Vietnam analogy. The Russians are supposedly involved in a Vietnam in Afghanistan, and the Vietnamese are involved in a Vietnam in Cambodia.

I think we have to be a little careful about making these comparisons—there are differences and similarities between what happened in Vietnam and what's happening in parts of the world today. I'd like to share my historical view of the Vietnam war of "experience," "era," whatever you call it—tell you some of my own experiences in it, and talk a little bit about what I think are the lessons and the legacies of the war. You may not agree with me. The Vietnam War is open to interpretation.

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We're not the only ones that are saddled with this Vietnam analogy. The Russians are supposedly involved in a Vietnam in Afghanistan, and the Vietnamese are involved in a Vietnam in Cambodia.

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As I look at some faces here, I would say that some people weren't born when we got involved in the Vietnam War—that doesn't make any difference, you're entitled to have your opinions about it. I've been doing a lot of talking about Vietnam since my book came out and since our television series came out; and traveling around the country promoting and getting involved in these all-night talk shows for insomniacs; or sometimes getting

squeezed in between a lady wrestler and a cooking class in a morning television program and being asked to sum up the whole situation in 35 seconds. Whether I've been talking for four hours or listening to questions for a long period of time, or trying to sum it up quickly and answer the questions, it sort of shaped my own framework, because the questions that people ask, and I think they're very valid questions, are: one, how did we get involved in Vietnam; two, what went wrong; and the third question, which brings us up to date or takes us into the future is, how do we avoid getting involved in another tragedy like that again?

I think these are good basic questions. Before I get into them, I'd like to set the scene briefly by saying a word about Vietnam itself, which is where the war took place. The Vietnamese, despite some notions we had about them before we got involved, were not a primitive, passive people. They had developed over the years, over the centuries, a rather sophisticated culture and institutions borrowed from China. They also had a sense of national identity, largely from having fought the Chinese on and off over the centuries. For long periods they fought each other, and in the 19th century during one of their periods of civil war, they were conquered by the French, who, like the other European powers of the time, were on an imperialistic binge.

French rule was rather paradoxical; the French tend to be paradoxical. It reintroduced Western concepts of liberty and equality to the Vietnamese, and then denied them the practice of the same ideals. So modern Vietnamese nationalism largely grew out of the frustrations of the Vietnamese, who were not allowed to practice what they had been taught. And I would single out one man who personified this frustration—the Vietnamese nationalist leader Ho Chi Minh. He had spent seven years in France, from

1917 to 1924. He got on a ship in Saigon, traveled around the world, lived in Brooklyn for a while, worked as a pastry chef in London, then drifted over to Paris. He lived there for seven years and became quite Frenchified. Back in the mid-1950's when I was a reporter in Paris, I was given the assignment of trying to retrace his footsteps, and in those days there were people still alive who remembered him, and out of these recollections, I discovered a very fascinating character.

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[Ho Chi Minh] was something of a dandy who wrote poetry and produced a play. He once covered a boxing match for a French magazine . . . but the whole thrust of his article was a denunciation of the contamination of the French language by English terms, such as *le knock-out* and *le manager* and *le round*.

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He was something of a dandy who wrote poetry, and produced a play. He once covered a boxing match for a French magazine—he didn't know anything about sports—but the whole thrust of his article was a denunciation of the contamination of the French language by English terms, such as *le knock-out* and *le manager* and *le round*. You couldn't have been more Frenchified than he was, and in fact, he addressed a letter, an appeal to the President of France asking him to outlaw English words in the French press—

*Franglais*, as they're called. He was also a Vietnamese nationalist.

At the beginning, he was quite moderate. He wanted autonomy for Vietnam within the framework of the French empire. In fact, he tried to see President Wilson who was in Paris for the peace treaty in 1919; he was rejected. Out of this pressure, he joined the French Communist party which was formed in the early 1920's. At the time, the Russian revolutionaries were supporting the anticolonial struggle. He later said that his motives were more nationalistic than ideological. He did become a member of the Comintern, the Communist international organization, and became a Communist agent.

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The struggle against colonialism in Asia . . . would not have made much progress if it hadn't been for the Second World War. The Japanese swept down through Southeast Asia, they crushed the European colonial powers and opened the way for Asian nationalism to fill that vacuum.

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The struggle against colonialism in Asia, I think, would not have made much progress if it hadn't been for the Second World War. The Japanese swept down through Southeast Asia; they crushed the European colonial powers and opened the way for Asian nationalism to fill that vacuum. When you look back to that period, it's almost hard to

imagine there was a time when Singapore, which was the great British bastion in Asia, was considered to be impregnable. Well, the Japanese overthrew it — they came into Hong Kong; they overran French Indochina and Burma. Many Asian nationalists sided with the Japanese, who were, after all, Asians like themselves. Ho Chi Minh was an exception. He thought the Japanese were no better than the French, and he organized the guerrilla movement to fight them. Now ironically, and this is one of the ironies of history, he later became our enemy number one, but during the Second World War, the United States armed and trained his men.

To continue with these historical ironies: When Japan was defeated, Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of Vietnam. He believed at the time that the United States would help him. President Roosevelt had denounced colonialism, and so at [Vietnam's] independence ceremony in 1945, Ho Chi Minh read the American Declaration of Independence. When the French returned after the Second World War to reimpose their colonial rule, President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson decided to help the French, and it was then, about 1949 and 1950, that we began to get involved in Vietnam. Somewhere, there's the conception that we got involved when the Marines hit the beach in Da Nang in 1965. In fact, we were taking our first steps into Vietnam as early as 1949 and 1950.

Now, to begin the answers to the questions. How did we get involved? Why did Truman and Acheson decide to help the French? Well, for many reasons. For one, the Cold War was then gathering momentum in Europe. The United States — the Truman administration — wanted France to participate in the Atlantic Alliance, and specifically to concede to the rearmament of West Germany, France's traditional enemy. So, as a trade-off, Truman agreed to help the French cause in Asia.

Secondly, Truman had declared war on communism as early as 1947 during the civil war in Greece. He said the United States would fight external and internal aggression everywhere. Ho Chi Minh was a Communist, undeniably; therefore, it was automatically assumed that he was a part of this great international Communist offensive, that he was a puppet of Moscow.

Those were the days of course when all Communists were puppets of Moscow. It was a concept in Washington that someone sat at a control panel in Moscow and pressed buttons and revolutions broke out everywhere. This concern, this fear of this worldwide Communist offensive direct from Moscow also increased when the Chinese Communists took over in China in 1949. Then the Korean War broke out.

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. . . the men like Dean Acheson and Dean Rusk, who were liberal internationalists recalled the 1930's when the democracies failed to stop the Nazi aggression. They saw history repeating itself and this time they felt they had to stop Communist expansionism. . . .

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I think one thing that should never be underestimated in foreign affairs are domestic political pressures. There was growing political pressure at home, on the president, and especially on the Democratic administration. One could not seem to be soft on communism. These were the days of Senator Joe McCarthy, the witchhunts, the anti-Com-

munist hysteria, and so that was another factor. And one more thing I might mention is that the men like Dean Acheson and Dean Rusk, who was then the Assistant Secretary for Asian Affairs in the State Department and later Secretary of State, who were liberal internationalists, recalled the 1930's when the democracies failed to stop the Nazi aggression. They saw history repeating itself, and this time they felt they had to stop Communist expansionism, and so there were all these pressures at work.

The Eisenhower administration shared this view, so we paid for 85 percent of the French war, which was about \$3 billion in the days when a billion dollars was really worth something. Senator Dirksen used to say, "A billion here, and a billion there, and the next thing you know it runs into real money" — and the money was squandered. The French were defeated in 1954 at the famous battle of Dien Bien Phu, and at the peace conference in Geneva, Vietnam was divided into two zones, North and South. Communists kept the state in the North, the South was anti-Communist, and there was supposed to be an election in 1956 to unify the country. Well, the election never took place. The anti-Communist government in the South that was supported by the United States and headed by Ngo Dinh Diem refused to participate and the United States backed him up. President Eisenhower estimated that if there had been an election the Communists would have won 80 percent of the votes, and that was one of his reasons for renegeing on the election, because, you know, we're in favor of democracy except where it works against us.

Interestingly though, neither the Soviet Union nor China, both of whom had supported the Vietnamese Communists, really raised a squawk about it. They had other concerns at the time, and in 1957 the Russians even proposed that the two zones of Vietnam be admitted to the United

Nations as separate states. Washington rejected this view. The notion was that you would legitimize Communist control if you gave up any real estate. We still had the notion in those days that we would roll back the Communists. The Vietnamese Communists, who had counted on winning the election and reunifying the country under their own control, instead, started an insurgency in the South. President Kennedy increased the commitment to South Vietnam and, during his brief administration, the number of American military advisers in Vietnam and South Vietnam rose from 700 to 16,000. By late 1963, American aid was running at about a half billion dollars a year.

This regime that we had set up and propped up, run by Ngo Dinh Diem, really could not cope with the growing insurgency. I spent many an hour with Mr. President Diem. A stranger choice for the job I had never seen. He was a little, fat, round man whose feet hardly touched the floor when he sat in his chair, and he chainsmoked, and he spun out great abstract theories about things. But he never left his palace, or if he did sometimes, it was a sort of public-relations gimmick. People would show him how new trees were being planted in such and such a place when, in fact, they were just branches stuck into the ground. He was a Catholic in a country that was about 90 percent Buddhist, or at least non-Catholic. He relied for support on the urban middle class in a situation that was largely a peasant revolution. He was almost entirely dependent on his family in the old Confucian style. He only trusted his family, and, in particular, he trusted his brother — he depended heavily on his brother for advice.

His brother was a man called Ngo Dinh Nhu. He was a strange eccentric with intellectual pretensions, who had, I think, a rather strong addiction to opium. But he too was more of a theorist than anything else, and he also had a nasty temper

and tended to alienate people. At any rate, gradually this regime began to antagonize its own people at the same time that it was at war with the growing Communist insurgency. And Diem's generals began to plot against him.

In 1963, as their conspiracy was advancing, the Kennedy administration encouraged them to continue with that conspiracy, with their plot against Diem, thinking that these generals would be more effective. In November 1963 they staged a *coup d'etat*, and they assassinated Diem and his brother.

The American ambassador in Saigon at the time, someone from this region known as Henry Cabot Lodge — a familiar name — was really an accomplice. He encouraged this *coup*. He did not know about the assassinations. It shocked him that they had taken place. In the famous-last-words department, in November 1963 after Diem was overthrown, Henry Cabot Lodge optimistically cabled Washington and said the prospects now are for a shorter war. Diem's successors, the men who had overthrown him, were even more incompetent, and Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded President Kennedy, faced a very tough dilemma throughout 1964. You may disagree with me, and if we were back in the 1960's, I'm sure you would — I don't think that Lyndon Johnson wanted to get into Vietnam, if he had his choice or his "druthers," as he would have put it. His dream was domestic, the Great Society, progressive in social and economic programs. He hoped to be bigger and better than Franklin D. Roosevelt, his hero, and he hoped the Great Society would be bigger and better than the New Deal.

But he was haunted by something that's haunted presidents before him, and presumably has haunted presidents since then: he didn't want to be the first American president to lose a war. And as the situation deteriorated during 1964, as the government in Saigon kept falling apart



— dissension within the government, the Communist insurgency escalating — he was driven and, I think, drove himself. It's not that clear that he was dragged into the war, but I think it's also unfair to say that he was a warmonger. At any rate, in early 1965 he started bombing North Vietnam, and began for the first time to send American combat troops there. Johnson used as his authority something called the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which is a blank check that Congress gave him in August of 1964.

I'd like to say a word about this, since we live these days in Washington in an atmosphere of dissimulation, or lying, if you want to use a clearer word. Johnson and his assistants had drafted this resolution, beforehand, in the spring of 1964. The resolution gave the president authority to use combat troops — to go to war. It was — as his attorney general later said — the moral equivalent of a declaration of war. It's a kind of interesting collection of words there. But I don't think at the beginning that Johnson really wanted this resolution because of its authority to put combat troops into Southeast Asia. He wanted it for domestic, political reasons. He was running against Barry Goldwater — Superhawk — who was teasing him and nagging him about not being tough enough against communism, and Johnson wanted to deflate Goldwater, and the way he saw it, he could deflate Goldwater by getting bipartisan support in Congress. And, that's what he did.

The resolution was triggered by a supposed incident that took place off the coast of Vietnam. Supposedly, a Communist gunboat attacked an American destroyer. In fact, nothing happened. Lyndon Johnson himself, at the time when all the information he thought he was getting was extremely fuzzy, made the remark that probably those sailors on that destroyer were shooting at flying fish. At any rate, here was his opportunity to get his resolution, and he

did. It was passed unanimously in Congress, except by two senators, who foresaw the danger of giving the president this authority. I think they're worthy of mention — one was Wayne Morse of Oregon, and the other was Ernest Gruening of Alaska — names that should be engraved somewhere for blowing the whistle on a potential danger. The American troop buildup continued after 1965 until we had more than a half million men in Vietnam at the end of 1967.

going on as Lyndon Johnson was. In any case, their failure did not translate into an American victory. It *did* reveal that Johnson's optimism was misplaced. Slight digression here — the conventional wisdom is that this tremendous offensive, with the Communists coming out of the woodwork everywhere, changed American public opinion and turned the American public against the war. The opinion polls showed that Americans had turned against the

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The . . . polls show that Americans had turned against the war months before . . . mostly for hawkish reasons . . . the prevailing view in this country was, "Let's win it, but if we can't win it, let's get out." . . . it was hawkishly antiwar, rather than dovishly antiwar.

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President Johnson, General Westmoreland of blessed memory, and others issued optimistic statements about how well everything was going. They saw the "light at the end of the tunnel," from an old phrase that a French general had used in the French war. They translated it into English; it sounded better. At the end of January 1968, the Asian lunar new year — *Tet* — a tremendous event occurred. The Communists came out — these Communists we were defeating came out and attacked every town and city in South Vietnam, and even got a suicide squad into the American embassy compound in Saigon.

I've been back to Vietnam since the end of the war. The Communists will now tell you that the offensive failed to fulfill their hopes. They had thought that they would spark uprisings throughout the South. As it turns out, they were just as misinformed about what was

war months before. And, incidentally, mostly for hawkish reasons. In other words, the prevailing view in this country, and you may dispute this, but I think it is borne out by opinion surveys, was not that the war was wrong or immoral. There were many people who did believe that. And these were the people who, I think, demonstrated. But what Richard Nixon later called the "Silent Majority" — and there is a certain amount of truth to that despite the fact that Nixon invented the phrase — the prevailing view in the country, was, "Let's win it, but if we can't win it, let's get out." In other words, it was hawkishly antiwar, rather than dovishly antiwar. And also for hawkish reasons, Lyndon Johnson's approval ratings dropped precipitously just after the Tet offensive. Again, people felt, or many people felt, that he was not prosecuting the war effectively enough, forcefully enough.

A turning point was the New Hampshire primary of 1968, in which there was a peace candidate, Eugene McCarthy, poet and sometime senator. He came within 300 votes of defeating Lyndon Johnson in the primary. But we went back and reexamined this; we discovered that most of the vote for McCarthy was more as protest against Johnson, and, interestingly enough, we discovered that most of those who voted for McCarthy in the primary voted for George Wallace — the Superhawk — in the general election in November. Of course, these people may have thought they were voting for Joe McCarthy in the first place — I don't know about that. At any rate, it was a protest against Johnson. And the New Hampshire primary revealed that the war had become a political liability.

And along came Richard Nixon with the slogan — which I think did respond to at least the general mood in the country — “Let's have peace with honor.” It's been written that he had a secret plan to end the war; we in the press have examined that, and discovered it was a mistake by an AP reporter, but it became a part of history. It was not true; he had no secret plan. He had no plan at all. All he had was a slogan. At any rate, he was elected — we can argue about whether he got elected because of the slogan or whether it was because George Wallace swept the Democratic party or because Lyndon Johnson refused to unleash Hubert Humphrey. Nixon did get elected, and his strategy was called the Nixon Doctrine, which was to pull out American combat troops and leave the fighting to the South Vietnamese, whom we would train and equip and advise.

But the South Vietnamese couldn't hack it, especially after the ceasefire agreement was signed in 1973 — and it deprived them of the American advisors and airpower. And so in April of 1975 the Communists swept into Saigon and took over all of Vietnam, and America was defeated. Now

what was wrong — what went wrong?

The first mistake was to have supported the French in the first place. I think we were bucking the tide of history. The British had granted independence to India; the Dutch had reluctantly given up Indonesia; we ourselves had turned the Philippines back to the Filipinos; and here we were, supporting a lost French cause. We couldn't even persuade the French to encourage a credible, non-Communist nationalist movement. There were nationalists in Vietnam who were not Communists. There were many who were anti-Communist. The French, instead, picked as their standard-bearer of Vietnamese nationalism a little, plump emperor called Bao Dai, who spent most of his time on the Riviera. Why not? It was more fun to be on the Riviera than to be a French puppet in Saigon. It's interesting, you go back and read the cable traffic at the time, we were trying to get the French governor who occupied the palace in Saigon to give it up to the emperor. The French governor wouldn't move out of the palace, so the emperor had no place to live except a hotel, and of course, he preferred to go to his villa on the Riviera.

We ignored the nature of Ho Chi Minh's communism. There's no doubt that he was a Communist; there was no doubt that he had been a Comintern agent, but he was also a nationalist. Sometimes I have been accused of claiming that he was a nationalist and not a Communist — no such claim — you can be a Communist and a nationalist at the same time. One thing I'm sure of is that he wasn't a Soviet puppet, at least in this period — the period of the early 1950's. We had a rather sophisticated policy then and in the late 1940's. We supported Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, who had broken with Moscow. We didn't explore the possibility of making a deal with Ho, even though there was evidence that he was not totally in the Soviet camp.

What was the evidence? Well, he declared the independence of Vietnam in 1945 — the Soviet Union didn't recognize his government until 1950. Also, as I mentioned, enemy number one, or at least the number one apostate among the Communist countries was Marshal Tito. When Ho Chi Minh declared independence, he solicited and got recognition from Tito for his government — hardly a thing that would be done by a Soviet puppet. There was, when you go back and read the secret documents that are no longer secret, some advice on the part of the people in the State Department and the CIA that the United States try to send an emissary to talk to Ho Chi Minh. To give you a little bit of the insight into the thinking in the government in those days, and who knows, maybe it's still the thinking in the government, Secretary of State Dean Acheson said if we sent a secret emissary to see Ho Chi Minh, we couldn't send a white man, and if it wasn't a white man, how could he believe in what he told us? Maybe Ronald Reagan talks that way — we haven't found out yet. To continue with my catalog of horrors, we made the mistake of seeing the Communist nations as united during the early 1950's when in reality there were divisions and splits.

For example, at the Geneva conference in 1954, the Russians and the Chinese, both Communist, forced their Vietnamese comrades to accept a divided Vietnam. Of course, these days when you can get the Communists in Vietnam to talk a little more freely, they will tell you that they were double-crossed. In fact, they *were* double-crossed by the Soviet Union and China. As I mentioned earlier, the Soviet Union proposed admitting the two Vietnams to the United Nations, which would have completely nullified their claim to being, for the unification of Vietnam under their control. As we became involved in Vietnam, we didn't really take the trouble to learn much about the country. The



French had been there as a colonial power. There was a lot of French scholarship. We didn't study it. For example, one of the definitive books on the sociology of the French war, *The Sociology of Vietnam*, was written by a French scholar who, in fact, was teaching at Yale. His book has never been translated into English. We encouraged the *coup* against Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963.

As I said earlier when I talked about him, he wasn't going to win any popularity contests, but it was his country, and we were intervening to support a *coup*. Now what happened as a result is that it deepened our involvement in the country. I was there at that time, and the Vietnamese turned around after it was all over and said, "Great, you've gone in there and you've done something. Now it's your war; now it's your problem. You take it over." And I think that led us almost inexorably — I don't want to use the word inevitable, and inexorable is not the same — into putting combat troops into Vietnam. It became our war; it became our responsibility. And the Vietnamese began to say, "Let the Americans do it." One Vietnamese once said to me during the war, "The difference between us and you is that you want to win the war — we just want to end it."

Nixon's pledge to achieve peace with honor achieved neither. He started withdrawing American forces, and that worked against his efforts to persuade the Communists to compromise in peace negotiations. Obviously, if you're going to take your trump cards out of your hand, you're not going to have any left, and the American forces were what he had as trump cards. So, from [the Communists'] point of view, their strategy was to wait until American forces got out, and then things would work in their favor. The American troop withdrawals also undermined support in Congress for the war. There was a growing antipathy toward the war in Congress, but if you look at the con-

gressional votes from 1965, when the first combat troops went in, until 1973, when the last ones came out, in something like 145 votes, especially on money matters, on appropriations, Congress voted the money every time. You could always

nam, Kissinger exploded, and said, "What do you want us to do, stay there forever?" And, in a sense, he was right. At this stage I think there was no choice but to continue with this withdrawal. The biggest blunder in my view was our failure to under-

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You could always blackmail a congressman by saying, "You have got to support our boys out there." . . . once the American troops were out, Congress turned off the faucet. They were not voting appropriations for the sake of the Vietnamese.

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blackmail a congressman by saying, "You have got to support our boys out there." Now once the boys were no longer there, Congress said there was no need to vote appropriations for them. They weren't voting appropriations for the sake of supporting the Vietnamese, they were voting appropriations because American troops were there, and once the American troops were out, Congress turned off the faucet.

Nixon also gave the Communists what they wanted when he dropped his demand that the North Vietnamese forces in the South be withdrawn. He had demanded that the forces that had come down from the North be withdrawn as American forces were being withdrawn. The Vietnamese Communists answered, "Wait a second — you Americans are here in a foreign country — we're here in our own country. We don't honor this partition anymore." For a long time Nixon insisted on mutual withdrawal. Then he dropped that demand, and once those North Vietnamese forces were left in the South, they were poised to take over Saigon at a future date. When one of Henry Kissinger's aides proposed that the concession would doom South Viet-

stand the determination and the tenacity of the enemy we were up against.

General Westmoreland called his strategy the strategy of attrition. This was not a war for territory. What he intended to do was to use the enormous weight of American firepower to grind down the Communists and compel them to surrender. And, in fact, the United States won every battle in the Vietnam War, but it all turned out to be irrelevant. On the eve of the war with the French, Ho Chi Minh had said to a French official, "I'm going to lose 10 men for every one you lose. In the end, I'll win and you'll lose the war." And, in the war with the United States between 1965 and 1973, conservatively, I'd say that the Communist forces probably lost 600,000 men, which if you compared it in terms of population to our own population would be 10 to 12 million Americans. They showed no signs of surrender. And their tenacity — in my view, people fight for causes they believe in, sometimes wrongly. During the Vietnam War you'd hear people like Westmoreland, as they saw the number of enemy forces being killed, say

things like, "These are Asians, they don't have the same regard for human life that we do" — forgetting the fact that 50,000 British troops died in one day at the Battle of the Somme in 1916, or that 20,000 Americans died in one day at the Battle of Antietam. These casualties were comparable to what we saw in Vietnam. And the tenacity of the Communists in Vietnam had an impact on opinion in America.

In people's minds, wars were like World War II: the Allies would land in Normandy in June of 1944, and in August they'd take Paris, and they're on their way to Berlin, and you'd stick pins in maps and say, "We're making progress." But there was no way to show progress in Vietnam.

We'd show piles of bodies of dead enemy troops, and they were meaningless, because if you kill 5,000 in a battle in an area, six months later there'd be another 5,000 back there. So, instead of grinding down the enemy, this endless war ground down America's patience, until these people whom I quoted earlier — this bumper-sticker mentality — who said, "Let's win or get out, began to say, "Let's get out." I remember Dean Rusk, an authentic farm boy, told me one time that during the Vietnam War he had a call from a cousin in Cherokee County, Georgia, who said, "Dean, when's this war going to end?" And Rusk said, "You know, I couldn't tell him, just couldn't tell him." This brings us to the final question: How do we avoid this dirty kind of business? I think it's wrong to see every new crisis as another Vietnam. There has been a lot of talk of Central America being another Vietnam. I went down there last year, just as a sort of tourist, because people would ask this question, and I figured I couldn't even begin to answer it unless I went down and looked around. It didn't take me long to see that I was not in Southeast Asia. I came to the conclusion that Central America is not Vietnam. Quick conclusion, quick trip.

However, I got back to Washington

and I discovered that Washington is still Washington. And there are similarities, I think, in the way the Reagan administration has been approaching Central America and in the way we began to get involved in Vietnam. For one thing, there is a tendency to portray the problem in Central America in terms of America's confrontation with the Soviet Union, and with Cuba, and this is the same kind of mistake we made in Vietnam when Ho Chi Minh was a puppet of the Soviet Union, and some guy in Moscow was pressing buttons, and the Vietnamese Communists and other Communists elsewhere were responding. I'm not denying that the Russians and Cubans are exploiting the situation in Central America for the sake of their own interests, but the Sandinistas quite clearly were not fabricated or made in Moscow. The Evil Empire just isn't that omnipotent or competent. Neither, I think, does Mr. Reagan understand the pluralism of communism. The term has become quite meaningless. Look at Southeast Asia today. We see the Vietnamese Communists are at war with the Chinese Communists, and the Chinese Communists are squabbling with the Soviet Communists, and in Cambodia the Vietnamese Communists are propping up a Cambodian Communist regime which is being opposed by a Cambodian Communist . . .

The notion was that if one domino fell, they'd all topple. And the argument was used that if we lost Vietnam you'd see all these dominoes toppling until we were fighting on the beaches of Waikiki. Actually, I'm quoting Lyndon Johnson — he did use that phrase. So, here too, if the left wing — the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua — is not overthrown, Los Angeles is going to be poisoned. There's a tendency in Washington — not necessarily in the Pentagon, incidentally — to think that military force is the answer.

The most credible critic of that thesis, interestingly enough, is

General Paul Gorman, the former American commander in Central America, who has said repeatedly that the Contras aren't worth a "plug peso." There's a dream, as there was in Vietnam, that if you could only defeat the revolution, the old bourgeoisie would prevail — all the good guys would come back again, and you wouldn't have to worry about anything. And this notion, I think, of turning the clock back is one that's been prevalent in this White House. I'm not saying for a moment, incidentally, that I think Communist guerrillas are invincible or do I believe in historical predetermination and the victory of the revolution everywhere, and some places that have gone through the revolution are pretty horrible places. I've been back to Vietnam. . . . But, you know, defending the status quo is really a losing game.

However, I think it's important to distinguish between talk and action, and between rhetoric and deeds. Whether President Reagan deserves credit for this or not, I think much of his tough talk has been just talk. Let's look at some examples. He intervened in Lebanon, put Marines into Beirut, at the end of 1983. When the barracks were bombed and 250 Marines or so were killed, he pulled them out. "Strategic retreat" — or something — it was called. One could imagine turning the clock back — Lyndon Johnson would have put a division of Marines in. In fact, he put in combat troops in very similar circumstances. Of course, it was different — it was a war. You find President Reagan threatening to punish the Russians and then backing away from sanctions on the trans-Siberian pipeline. He's not going to make a deal to secure the release of Nicholas Daniloff [NF '74], and then he makes a deal. He's not going to bargain with Iran over hostages, and then he bargains with Iran over hostages, and so on and so forth. In short, you see a kind of prudence there, I think, and this is

*continued to page 55*

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# Letter From El Salvador

Mary Lou Finlay

*The way of life in a Third World where army gear and guns are more familiar than bread and butter.*

*In a divided world, in a world divided between communism and democracy, that side will triumph that understands revolution. And that understanding of revolution can't be substituted for by resort to counter-revolution. And so the idea that you can somehow halt change...and to see every change in the world as somehow inspired by Moscow and communism, is simply intellectually lazy and doesn't reflect the world as it is.*

Robert White, former U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador

**T**he only surprise that awaits a visitor to El Salvador is that there are no surprises. The capital and its surrounding countryside are exactly as you would expect: the dusty, rolling hills, the poverty, the bad roads — and everywhere the familiar youth decked out in camouflage gear and a submachine gun, perennial symbol of a world beset by misery and conflict — the Third World.

The military is the only growth industry in El Salvador. It is estimated that people bearing arms now number over 50,000, not counting the guer-

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rillas, of whom there are another six to nine thousand. There is the regular army and airforce; there are special counterinsurgency forces; there are paratroop battalions; there are local militia and treasury police and security forces.

If there were no guerrillas in El Salvador, the government would have to invent them.

The day I arrived President José Napoleón Duarte was speaking to a gathering of Salvadoran businessmen, begging them to cooperate with him in his efforts to cope with the situation — the situation being a failing economy, widespread disaffection, and a guerrilla war that has dragged on for more than seven years. A week later the business people gave Duarte their answer: they boycotted the biannual international trade fair in the capital. A large, half-empty hall echoed the complaints of the oligarchs.

Chamber of Commerce President Victor Steiner accuses Duarte of socializing the economy, of killing

free enterprise with high taxes, import controls, and corrupt practices: "They have no respect whatsoever for the participation of the private sector in the economy."

Victor Steiner is especially bitter about President Duarte. In the agrarian reform that began in 1980 — and is plagued with problems — his wife's family lost all their holdings. The government expropriated their land in return for some cash and some bonds, but the bonds, says Steiner, are worthless, and the purchase price was too low. It was based

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The military is the only growth industry in El Salvador. ...people bearing arms now number 50,000, not counting the guerrillas...another six to nine thousand.

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on the value of the land as declared in the owner's 1975 and 1976 tax declarations.

The peasants are equally disgruntled about land reform — because it doesn't go far enough. Union leader Marco Julio Lima says that land reform has affected only 14 percent of the land and 15 percent of the peasant population.

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Mary Lou Finlay, Nieman Fellow '86, is a documentary reporter and producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in Toronto.



CBC



Land reform has been the clarion call of all the revolutionary movements in the region for the last several decades. In El Salvador the big landowners have been particularly successful in resisting it. In 1932 their response to a *campesino* revolt was the *matanza* — an army massacre of ten to twenty thousand peasants. By 1975, El Salvador had the highest ratio of landless families to total population in Latin America.

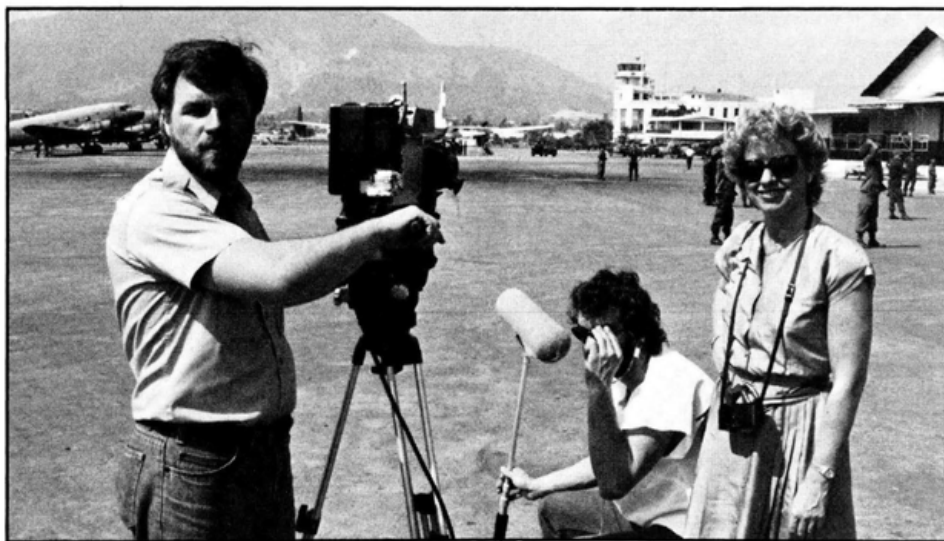
Phase I of the land reform measures of 1980 was carried out like this: The government bought a number of large farms. On a given day, on the designated farms, all the workers who were then living on the properties became co-operative owners, who would then manage and run the farms and assign some of their earnings to the banks that held the mortgages on the properties.

The result has been rocky ploughing so far. The owners feel aggrieved at the seizure of the farms. The farmers who worked the land, but did not live on the farm, feel cheated by the arbitrary fashion in which the cooperatives were established. (One worker told us that even resident farmers who happened not to be on the property on D-day were denied membership in the co-operative, and continue to live as mere tenants and workers.) And the farms lost all the managerial skills of the previous owners.

The co-operative system is a little odd. Although technically owners, the co-op members may not sell their shares to anyone, nor can they pass them on to anyone else, including family. If someone wants to leave, he loses his share, that's all.

A United States Agency for International Development (AID) report on the current agrarian reform is generally optimistic. Output is roughly equal to or higher than what it was before reform, and the new stake they have in property makes the *campesinos* less inclined to tolerate, much less support, the incursions of guerrillas.

But the same study points out that



*Mary Lou Finlay and crew at Ilopango airfield near San Salvador. Normally off-limits to civilians and press, the base was opened to them to witness anniversary celebrations of the Salvadoran Paratroop battalions.*

most of the co-operatives are not keeping up with mortgage payments, and that the government is not current on its debt to the previous landowners. Many of the expropriated lands are still being litigated. And many of them are still subjected to raids by guerrillas, making them at best unprofitable, and at worst totally uninhabitable.

Two U.S. AID workers, farmers from Iowa and Arkansas, told me that of all the Phase I co-operatives, about a third are doing well; another third are having trouble; and the remaining third are basket cases.

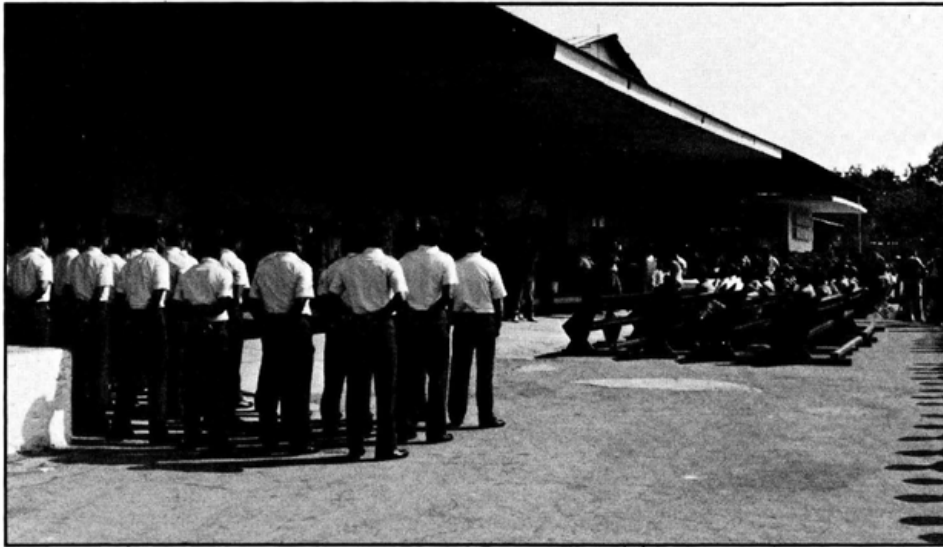
These men took me to visit one of the co-ops just outside and to the south of San Salvador. The topography here is coastal plain, quite different from the rugged hills that adorn the rest of El Salvador. Not coffee country.

This farm is planted mainly in sugar cane and rice, with some beans and a few other food crops. It's one of the "prosperous" third — clearly a showcase. The co-op managers proudly displayed their new school and health clinic, a new livestock barn, and rows of new houses for the co-op members, clustered around the entrance drive to form a small village.

In the broiling heat of noon, there were still a handful of men cutting sugar cane, their arms scratched and blackened from the 20-foot stalks that were falling under their machetes. The cane had been burned before cutting, explained one of the Americans. They shouldn't burn it, he said, because it loses about 40 percent of its value if it's burned first, but it makes the cutting easier. And, anyway, the price for sugar is so low that the stuff is practically worthless. Duarte has to subsidize the price of sugar; if he didn't, all the sugar-cane properties would be bankrupt. "Why don't they grow something else?" I asked. "They should," he replied, "but it's hard to find a suitable crop. The infrastructure for processing sugar is all there; it represents a large capital investment; and they must have a crop that will continue to be labor-intensive, or there will be more people out of work."

No one commented on the seeming irony of the United States government actively conspiring in the running of a collective venture, controlled by the Salvadoran government, as part of an overall fight to ward off communism.

The afternoon of the farm visit we were back in the capital to witness a



*Salvadoran Paratroop battalions celebrate an anniversary at Ilopango airfield. It was a rare chance to photograph the Salvadoran military and United States military advisors.*

noisy student demonstration outside the United States embassy. The embassy in San Salvador looks more like a maximum security prison than an embassy, a towering structure with steel-plated walls, surrounded by another wall of concrete, topped at the corners by gun-towers. Visitors with appointments are searched by Salvadorans inside the main gate, then searched again by Americans.

The embassy is located in the center of the city just a couple of blocks from the University of El Salvador, where the demonstrators assembled before marching off in full warpaint and masks. There were only a couple of hundred of them, out of a total university enrollment of 30,000, so it wasn't much of a turnout. What it lacked in size it made up in noise and rudeness. Armed with loudspeakers and spray cans, they shouted obscenities and painted slogans on the concrete wall: *YANQUI GO HOME* and *AMERICA IS SHIT*.

Beside the wall, blocking the entrance to the driveway, stood the Salvadoran guards. The demonstrators tried to provoke them into action, while American guards watched nervously from the gun-towers above. The Salvadoran guards

restrained themselves. But someone in a compact gray car, who may have been annoyed at finding the street blocked, crashed through the crowd and hit one of the protesters. He then picked up speed and raced away. No one expects him to be arrested for hit-and-run. The victim was loaded into a van belonging to an American television crew and taken to the hospital.

Shortly before dark, the demonstrators marched back to the campus and set off fireworks, which seemed to be good for their spirits, even though we were all in more danger from the wildly rocketing flares than we were from the guns at the embassy.

The United States presence in El Salvador is a mixed blessing to say the least. When he was mayor of San Salvador, José Napoleón Duarte had harsh words to say about American policies in Central America. Now his tone has softened, as befits the recipient of nearly \$2,000,000 a day in American aid: "I had made speeches in the National Press Club of Washington saying that historically the United States is living a democracy but it's exporting dictatorship. This is changing because we have to recognize that for the last years

there's been a trend in which the United States is trying to support democracies in the world."

Others are less sanguine.

"The United States presence in El Salvador has brought some profits to one part of the population and also to the political process," admits Father Ellacuria, president of the Catholic University in San Salvador, but "among those who really analyze the situation there is a feeling that the United States presence overall is more negative than positive."

Critics of American policy in El Salvador cite mainly the failure to end the war and the concomitant militarization of the country, along with the failing economy. President Duarte says that economic recovery cannot occur until the fighting stops. Others respond that the fighting will not stop until the people feel that they have achieved some social justice.

Almost everyone we spoke with complains about the lack of negotiations with the guerrillas. There's a lot of vague talk about negotiated solutions, and a dearth of concrete proposals about how a government of national reconciliation might work, given the wide gap between the demands of the right and left. But there is, nevertheless, a strong desire for peaceful accommodation, and some people think that the United States strategy makes this impossible.

José Luis Galdez is a sociology professor at the University of El Salvador. "Nobody can tell exactly what is the right solution to the conflict," he says. "The Salvadoran people have to sit down and discuss it — the government, the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN), Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the legal opposition, the unions — everybody that has something to say. Our country has to find a solution to its conflict, but a Salvadoran solution. First of all, we have to start by putting an end to the United States meddling in our affairs. Then the Salvadorans can discuss the war problem and seek a solution for a



true and just peace."

In the meantime, the war soaks up resources and lives. The guerrillas, fewer in number than they were, are still active in wide regions of the country. A United States aide unabashedly points out these regions on a map: Morazan, San Miguel, Usulután, La Libertad, Chalatenango — and Oaxapa.

Just 30 kilometers from San Salvador, Oaxapa has been the target of Operation Phoenix: an all-out aerial war against the guerrillas said to be tunneled into the sides of the volcano. In the village just outside the target zone, people point to the patches of smoke rising from the volcano and tell us, "That's where they bombed last night." Or, "That's where the army is burning things" — dwellings, huts, whatever they find that might be useful to the enemy. The villagers are quite used to it.

From the villages inside the zone pour some of the hundreds of thousands of refugees whom the war has created. In a refugee camp on the outskirts of the capital, a Canadian nun oversees the care and feeding of 700 people at a time. Sister Andrea says that the United States ambassador thinks she harbors subversives, and that the army has descended on them several times in an apparent attempt to intimidate them. But having lost her patience with the soldiers once, and literally chased them out of the camp, she has tested the limits of the government's willingness to harass her.

At the Human Rights Commission offices in San Salvador (not the *government* Human Rights Commission), small children chase each other around a small, dirty courtyard amid stacks of documents and affidavits, while volunteers prepare lunch for the people who have temporarily sought refuge here. There are nine portraits on one wall, pictures of those most recently killed or those who have "disappeared." Another wall charts the total deaths since 1981 — 56,626 in all, 1,821 last year.

The government admits there are

still killings; casualties of the war, they say. This Human Rights office says the dead are casualties of the army. How many civilians have been killed by guerrillas?, I ask. "We don't know of any," he replies. But this very day the newspapers carry reports of the "execution" of two village mayors by guerrilla forces.

The existence of two Human Rights Commissions — one of the right and one of the left — is evidence of the polarization in El Salvador. Officials of *this* Human Rights office have been picked up and held in jail for months at a time for supposed subversive activities. The rule of law works better for some segments of society than for others.

A United Nations committee recently tabled a new report on human rights violations in El Salvador. After examining documents and conducting its own interviews, the committee concluded that substantial government abuse, in the form of imprisonment, torture, and death, still exists.

Since the election of President Duarte in 1984, and the victory of his Christian Democratic Party in the legislative elections of 1985, the U.S. believes El Salvador is on the road to salvation, if only there is no interfer-

ence in the form of aid to the guerrillas from neighboring Nicaragua. The United States government believes that with some guidance and a lot of money, El Salvador can beat back the revolutionary forces and overcome the desire for revolution among the people. President Duarte himself, when he isn't addressing the Chamber of Commerce, fairly boasts of his own revolutionary ideals. His heart may be in the right place, but the problems he faces are grave and his chances of success not overwhelming.

People are tired of the war to be sure, but having come this far and paid so dearly they are not likely to give up their demands for a new social order and a radical redistribution of resources. For this to happen, Duarte will need some luck in restoring the economy and seeing that his people feel they are benefiting from change. He is hampered by the emphasis on military strength that the U.S. seems to insist on; by the intransigence of the right and the business class; by the fact that guerrilla leaders like Guillermo Ungo remain unwilling to settle now for anything less than a radical left-wing restructuring of the government; and by charges that his own party



University students demonstrate outside the United States Embassy in San Salvador, signalling their discontent with the continued American presence.

members are involved in corruption.

Most of all, perhaps, he is hampered by a 500-year history of colonial oppression and strife that has taught Salvadorans a lot about corruption and cheating and violence, and very little about peaceful change and democracy.

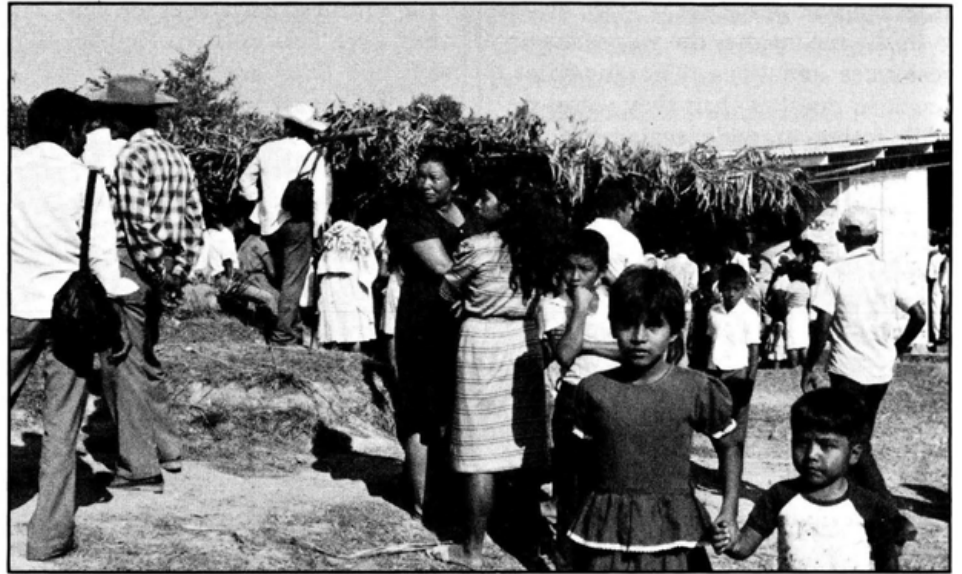
On a Thursday morning at six o'clock we set out for Santa Cruz Loma to witness a "civic action" at work. Just outside San Salvador there is a commotion on the highway. We wonder if it is a roadblock and if we will be allowed to pass, not having bothered to pick up our official letter from the army press office that tells the soldiers that the *jefe* has approved our travel. It's not a roadblock but merely a traffic accident. A small car has been rammed by a large truck and a man lies dead at the side of the road. The driving habits of Salvadorans make it easy to suppose that this is a common occurrence.

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...A woman army officer is bleating out government messages  
...the grain is piled up on one side of the hill. All the sacks are labeled AID,...except for one...from Canada. It looks as though it got there by mistake.

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Once off the main road, though, there is little chance of serious accident. The side roads, deeply rutted and twisted, present a formidable challenge to the passage of any vehicle. The streets of the villages through which we pass are worse: they are cobbled, after a fashion, and nearly impassable. Along the way we



*The people of Santa Cruz Loma gather on a hilltop for a civic action day, but the food giveaways, medical services, and band music fail to bring smiles.*

see hundreds of people walking, heading out to work. The children, on their way to school, wear bright clothes, spotlessly clean and freshly pressed.

Santa Cruz Loma is not so much a village as a large hill, with a church hidden along the winding path. Atop the hill is the skeleton of a school, and, outside, a large canopy that will afford a little shade to the army band when it arrives, and to the local priest who will celebrate mass before business gets under way. By eight o'clock the sun is blazing down on our heads and we jostle among the others for a piece of the shade. There are about a hundred people here and they will continue to trickle in all morning.

The army arrives shortly after us, three large wagons loaded down with soldiers, sacks of grain, and doctors, dentists, and barbers. In no time, a loudspeaker system is installed and a woman army officer is bleating out government messages, interspersed with patriotic music from the band, while the grain is piled up on one side of the hill. All the sacks are labelled AID, except for one that bears a red label from Canada. It looks as though it got there by mistake.

When I was interviewing Salva-

doran refugees in Canada last fall, I met one who told me he had worked for the government department responsible for distributing food around the country. He discovered, he told me, that some army officials were stealing the grain and selling it on the black market, and when he reported these suspicions to his superior he began to receive death threats. So he, his young wife, and baby son fled the country. Today, the grain is being given away.

The mass is said, and the real business begins. People line up to get free haircuts and have their teeth looked at, or pulled. Other people haul in great slabs of roofing materials which will help them finish building their school. And mothers with babies in their arms line up to see the doctors. It could almost be described as a carnival atmosphere — except that no one smiles. An army officer with a little English wants to try to match my little Spanish and tell me about the war. He asks me if I know Mrs. (Jeane) Kirkpatrick. I tell him that I know who she is. "A great lady," he says. "She was here a while ago to speak to us. That same night some guerrillas dressed as army stole into the village in the middle of the night

and murdered several people." When I ask someone later about this incident, his only response is, "How would guerrillas get hold of army uniforms?"

the time of the existence of the guerrillas on the one hand, and the brutal hand of the military on the other. When the power fails for a few minutes in San Salvador, people say

as guerrilla activity. By now the war is a way of life.

"*No hay salvador para El Salvador*," quotes President Duarte. El Salvador — The Saviour — has no saviour. He hopes to put the lie to that saying.

It is a beautiful country with a sad history. It has a chance now to build a future out of the embers of its troubled past. The United States has a chance to bolster its own security against a hostile southern front by judiciously promoting a third alternative to the twin pillars of communist dictatorship and right-wing tyranny that have come in this century to represent the only choices for the people of Central America. It will be a delicate task, one not well understood by all the forces that shape American government today and hardly noticed by the majority of American people who themselves generally share only two concerns about the region: They don't want another Vietnam, and they don't want another Cuba. Presumably, they would welcome a third option for the Third World on their doorstep. □

*Excerpts of this article first appeared in Peace & Security, the magazine of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security.*

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The mass is said...the real business begins. People line up to get free haircuts and have their teeth looked at...mothers with babies in their arms line up to see the doctors. It could almost be described as a carnival atmosphere — except that no one smiles.

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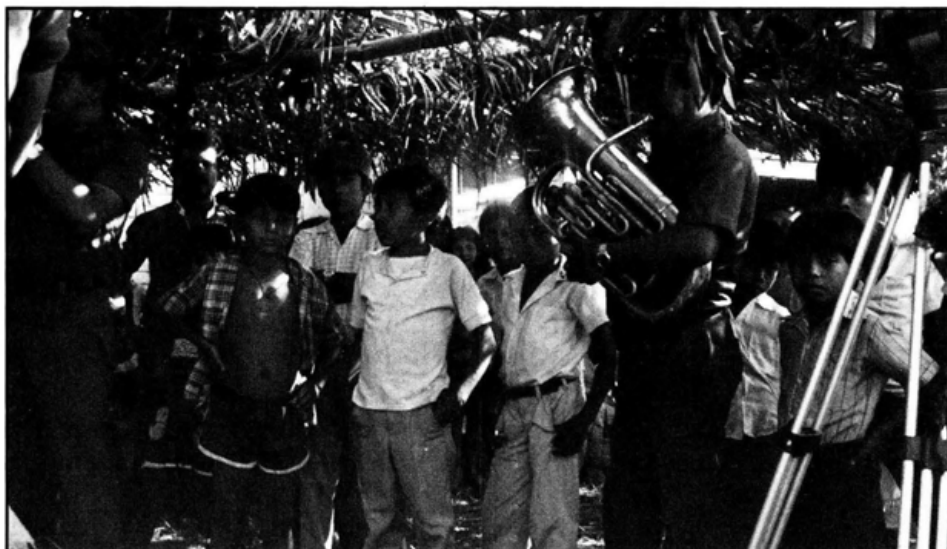
"Civic action" is said to be an important part of the United States' overall strategy for winning the war. Applying lessons they learned in Vietnam, the Americans are training the Salvadorans in propaganda techniques and pacification methods. They know they can't win by bombs alone — or indeed by allowing the military to simply eliminate all their perceived enemies. They know that winning can only happen if the people stop supporting the guerrillas; if the people can be taught that sympathizing with the guerrillas will only bring trouble; that the government is their true ally.

The success of this hearts-and-minds campaign is hard to measure. But everyone on this hilltop knows that there are guerrillas on the next hill, probably watching the whole operation. And the Salvadoran soldiers here are watching *them*.

We leave Santa Cruz Loma well before the army trucks. It's bad planning to travel anywhere in the company of an army convoy — they are always targets.

Compared to 1981, when reporters gathered each day in city dumps to count the corpses that had collected there overnight, things are quiet in El Salvador. But the calm has still a surface feel to it. Everyone is aware all

it's the guerrillas; they've blown up a transmitter. My protest that power failures are not unknown in many places not possessing guerrilla forces does not convince them there could be any other explanation. Walking home one night from a restaurant, we arrive at the hotel to find thick black smoke pouring from a shopping plaza across the street. Next day the papers report that unknown persons set fire to two supermarkets and a cinema. One radio station reports it



*An army band plays patriotic music in the village of Santa Cruz Loma as part of a nationwide effort to win the sympathy of the peasants away from the guerrillas.*



# Newspapering in India

James A. Rousmaniere Jr.

*The practices of a few journalists — blackmail and character assassination — loom heavy on small newspapers.*

Some differences are apparent right away. In the newsroom of *Eenadu*, a new and prosperous daily in the central Indian city of Hyderabad, there are few typewriters. The copy is edited by hand on simple desks, and then it's carried to a computerized typesetting chamber just off the newsroom floor. To get into the glass-walled chamber, you take off your shoes. The collection of sandals and shoes out front of the typesetting room gives the door the casual look of a temple entranceway.

The customs of the newsroom are not the most striking things about *Eenadu*, however. The Telugu-language newspaper is only about 10 years old, but it churns out more than a quarter of a million copies a day from printing plants all over the state.

It is one of the very many new Indian-language dailies whose circulation has exploded in recent years, as improvements in both

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Improvements in both literacy and consumer economics have built huge new newspaper audiences.

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literacy and consumer economics have built huge new newspaper audiences.

This growth is taking place in an environment at times so foreign that it's hard to image how Western notions of an independent press can survive. Political purpose is obsessively read into many published stories, to the point where some readers readily dismiss legitimate news. And the government is extensively involved in licensing, outfitting, supplying, punishing, pressuring, rewarding, and otherwise using the press to suit its public-information needs.

But as different as all that makes the Indian press, there are shades of similarities here. Talk with India editors and reporters long enough, and soon their experiences leave you thinking about journalism concerns at home. For instance, does writing about terrorism and riots encourage more terrorism and riots? And what are the responsibilities of an editor for what he publishes?

Earlier this year I took part in a government-sponsored newspaper

lecture tour in India. I saw a press that is very much in the public eye; I came across these headlines in a two-week period, just casually reading English-language newspapers.

Editor assaulted.

Editor arrested for contempt of court.

Editor released from jail.

Newspapers censored by Press Council.

Editor arrested for running a brothel.

Editor campaigns for homeless people.

And then this, from a recent edition of the Press Institute of India's periodical *Vidura*:

"Journalist Pratap Kar, representing the Bhubaneswar daily *Sambad* at Sundargarh, had a narrow escape when miscreants led by Sundargarh municipality chairman, Raju Srange, attacked him as a result of a report he published in his paper on the 'mismanagement' of the Sundargarh municipality.

"Meanwhile, the press photographer of the Patna edition of the *Hindustan Times* was assaulted by the employees of the newspapers and publishers of the *India Nation* and *Aryavarta* in Patna. The incident took place when Mr. Ashok Karn, the photographer, tried to take some pictures of a fire in the building of the two dailies on Frazer Road."

The dynamics of Indian newspapering are generally more lofty than these unfortunate events. I'll touch on some of them here, in two ways: exploring the experiences of newspaper proprietors, and outlining

James A. Rousmaniere Jr. is editor and president of The Keene (New Hampshire) Sentinel. He was in India this past March and April on a newspaper



lecture tour sponsored by the Indo-U.S. Subcommittee on Education and Culture. In the 1985 Autumn issue of *Nieman Reports*, he wrote on the newspaper industry of Bangladesh.

some of the philosophical issues that presented themselves in talks with newspaper editors.

At the highly successful daily *Bhaskar* ("Sun") in Bhopal, editor Ramesh Agrawal insists on printing short stories using simple words. "The newspaper caters to the new literates," he explained.

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At a successful daily newspaper in Bhopal the editor insists on printing short stories. "The newspaper caters to the new literates," he explained.

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A master of this formula, Agrawal is a model of commercial success. He is opening new printing plants for regional editors around his state, and soon he will begin publishing magazines to capture national advertising revenue. In his drive to expand vastly his print empire (revenues have quintupled in the last three years), he wears his success on his sleeve.

Handsome and portly, in his thirties or early forties, he either works hard at cultivating the image of a playboy or he is the real article. His clothes are fine, his retainers many, and his surroundings opulent. He commands his company from sleek new headquarters with the most modern of equipment, and his own office resembles something out of *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, except for his desk phone, a remarkable piece of rococo that rings as loud as this man's successful life.

Three hundred kilometers south-east of this new magnate is another newspaperman, one of considerably lesser circumstance. He is Ashok Koshal, a 36-year-old editor who has struggled enough within India's tortuously complex press-government relationship to merit his haggard look. But he, too, wears the flush of self-confidence.

The son of a newspaper distributor, Koshal started a fortnightly in the town of Seoni, an undistinguished regional center, in the early 1970's. He borrowed money from the government to buy a flatbed press, but about 10 years ago he got into trouble when he ran some stories about local government corruption. His

paper was closed and he was jailed — not because the stories were wrong, he says, but because they were right.

His father, who had made a name for himself fighting in the Indian independence movement, was able to prevail upon the government not to foreclose on his son's press loan during the incarceration. When Koshal got out of jail 17 months later, he set out to start a daily newspaper.

He managed to get another government loan, and he scraped together more capital from friends. He soon was publishing *Samvadkunj* ("Dramatic Speech"), a two-page daily printed on paper supplied through the government newsprint monopoly. Unlike many of the new small "language" newspapers — his is in Hindi — Koshal's paper is devoted exclusively to local news: new bus lines starting up, sugar shortages, complaints by government workers about their pay, sports, local speeches by religious leaders. And, a ready fare: wrongdoing by government officials.

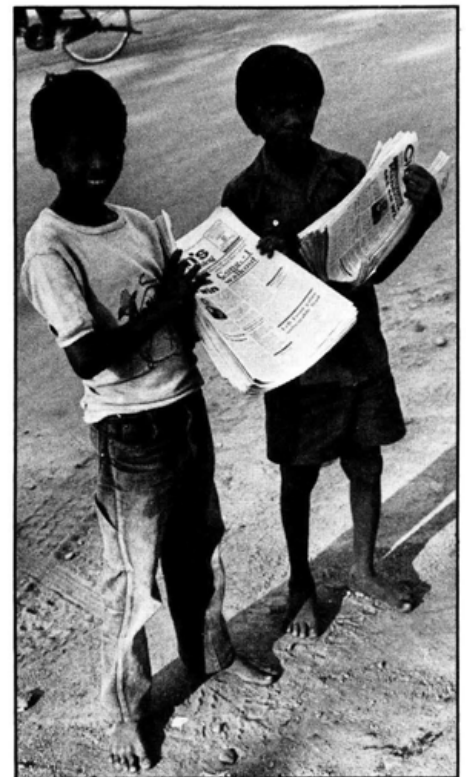
Five years ago, Koshal published a story about a local government official who had been charged with rape. "No problem with the facts of the story," he said through an interpreter. "The story was right."

Immediately, his newspaper's prime

source of revenue — government advertising — was cut off.

Many small newspapers would have folded right there. The government pays for advertising — for equipment purchases, jobs for the many state-run enterprises, consumer products — pretty much as a favor to many small papers, and, given the size of the government's role in the Indian economy, its advertising is often a newspaper's lifeblood. Such was the case with *Samvadkunj*.

Driven by his mission to mold public opinion and keep people informed, Koshal did not close down when the money was cut off. Instead, he went hunting for private sector advertising in a consumer marketplace that was just then coming to life, and he got ads for retail clothes, household goods, and the like. A rarity among Indian newspaper editors, today he publishes his daily without a single rupee of government advertising.



Newsboys on the street in Hyderabad, Central India.

Photographs by the author.



His newspaper is chronically short-staffed and he prints with primitive equipment. Koshal himself is not rich and he has no illusions about being so. "I accepted a journalist's life, and it pays me adequately," he said.

The stories of these two newspapermen, the commercially thriving Agrawal and the doggedly spirited Koshal, tell only the brighter side of the rapid growth of the nation's regional press. There is a darker side.

"We are receiving a lot of complaints against small newspapers about blackmailing and character assassination," said G.K. Batra, the deputy secretary of the Press Council of India, a sort of watchdog organization. In conversation, many editors themselves confirmed there are unethical newspapermen who find ways to make money not on what they publish, but on what they don't print. Banking on the slowness and inefficiencies of libel and slander trials, these newspapermen threaten to publish unsavory and untruthful articles about prominent

officials unless they are paid off. And many of them apparently are successful.

Among serious newspaper people, there are real concerns over the conduct of the press. Not just over the unethical sorts who use their newspaper licenses for private gain, but over problems in the actual practice of journalism.

"There's a line between investigative journalism and sensationalism," said G.S. Varadachari, an editor at the Telugu-language *Eenadu*. But he conceded he does not know precisely where that line is on some sensitive subjects.

Perhaps the most sensitive current subject is communal strife.

There is an unofficial code in Indian journalism that newspapers do not mention the names or castes of individuals involved in what is termed "communal" violence — warring between factions of society.

Here's how the rule is presented in *A Complete Guide To Journalism For All*, a pulp guide to the profession in India.

"The press in India has set a good

example in recent years in dealing with the menace of communalism. When a communal riot takes place, the press merely reports the number of people who died or were injured as a result of a communal riot. It does not disclose the identity or the community to which such persons belong, lest such information should trigger off a communal flare up at other places also."

So well established is this unofficial rule in journalism circles that, in one news dispatch I read from Bhopal, a reporter in his copy castigated a local police official who, in a news conference, named people and groups involved in a riot. The reporter's story did not include the names cited by the police.

These concerns — which are not too distant reminders of *The Boston Globe's* self-imposed restraints during the school-busing riots of the 1970's — go beyond the use of names. According to media critic Bidyut Sarkar, the term "Sikh terrorism" is only sparingly used in news copy, and then only after it has appeared in news dispatches originally written for foreign magazines and papers.

Despite these restraints, the Indian press has been blamed for encouraging terrorism in much the same way the Western press is criticized for encouraging terrorists in the U.S. and the Middle East. Sarkar's response: "The number of terrorist killings in the Punjab in 1986 was 520, according to an official tally by the state government. Considering the average of 10 murders a week, it was not press coverage that could be accused of overkill."

Still, the press occasionally invites criticism. Press Council official Batra raised the following case in casual conversation. While the topics of the stories are distinctly Indian, the type of error was not.

"A newspaper carried a story on the front page that was about communal violence in the Punjab, where Sikhs have been agitating. On the



Newspaper reporters outside the press building in Lucknow.

continued to page 30

# My Bad Dreams and Bad Realities as a Black

Derrick Jackson

*A journalist minces no words and spares no feelings — not even his own.*

The nightmare had me rolling up in a car toward some large power plant with the word EDISON in red neon letters. I was on my way to do a story on the place. That part made sense. The woes of Consolidated Edison and Boston Edison have been the subject of some of my reporting. Their bills have made my checkbook cry.

The nightmare had me coming out of my car, notebook in hand. Suddenly a roar came from behind a hill. I turned. Over the hill came an army of screaming white people. They came in leather jackets. They came in military fatigues. They came with baseball bats, guns, and rocks in hand.

They came after me.

I ran into "Edison." They followed. This was the wrong time to discover that blacks were not genetically quicker off the mark than whites. They were catching me. A rock whizzed by. Long narrow halls reverberated with primeval yells.

The yells made my head ache so much I stopped. I turned. A white man raised a spiked club high over

his head. I braced to be hammered. I began to yell. I woke up in dark, sanctimonious silence. I was shaking. I forced my eyes to stay open until I was certain that when I went back to sleep I would not rejoin my dream in progress.

The nightmare took place two days after the incident at Howard Beach [Long Island, New York], where three blacks were chased by white youths and beaten until one stumbled onto a parkway, where he was hit by a car and killed.

As a reporter for *Newsday*, I have covered many incidents that involved racism or allegations of racism.

use of a lavatory at a convenience store in Connecticut.

Last year, while we were receiving suspiciously slow service during brunch with black friends in Woodstock, Vermont, one of them discovered spit in her glass of soda.

But in 31 years, neither professional nor personal encounters with racism had ever scalded my psyche to the point of ruining my sleep. Until Howard Beach.

No racist act that I have ever observed was so clear-cut. It was the very kind of lynching that convinced my father to give up on rural Mississippi three and a half decades ago.

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I have been called "nigger" while jogging in Wisconsin; while serving on a tennis court in Missouri; on vacation in Vermont. I have been denied housing in New York, and the use of a lavatory in Connecticut.

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Derrick Jackson, Nieman Fellow '84, chief of the New England Bureau of *Newsday*, introduces his son Omar to the readers of Nieman Reports.



As a citizen, I have been called "nigger" while jogging the lakefront in Milwaukee, while serving on a tennis court in Kansas City, Missouri, while walking along a freeway in Kansas after my car ran out of gas, and on vacation in the streets of Burlington, Vermont. I have been denied housing in New York and the

Perhaps most troubling is that Howard Beach came not from adult Bull Connors but from virtual children. Jon Lester, allegedly the spearhead of the attack, is only 17 years old. Jason Ladone, who reportedly saw Timothy Grimes, Cedric Sandiford, and Michael Griffith in a pizzeria and yelled,

"Niggers! Get them!", is 16.

Nor can their act be written off as the behavior of paranoid working-class white youth.

At the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, scores of disappointed white Red Sox fans assaulted black Mets fans. Racial epithets have been spray-painted at more than one elite college in the Northeast. At the University of Alabama, there was a cross-burning. At the Citadel, a military school in Charleston, South Carolina, whites in quasi-Ku Klux Klan outfits chased a black cadet out of school.

The signs are clear that rather than choosing to improve the world, young whites, poor and rich, have learned only too well how their parents have kept my people in place. The signs are clear to blacks that our struggle to create rightful places for ourselves in this country is getting tougher, not easier.

From what I see around me, I consider myself lucky to have had only a bad dream. Most blacks live a slow nightmare every day. Michael Griffith, the black man killed while trying to escape the Howard Beach mob, will never wake up.

In the midst of all the laudable rhetoric from black and white leaders about cooperation in the wake of Howard Beach, I am weary.

I have a bright-eyed 13-month-old son and I am already hearing the most friendly of people say he'll grow up to be a basketball player. Basketball player? The kid is two-and-a-half feet tall. Is the NBA the only place for a black man? I tell them he is going to be a United States senator.

The struggle ahead in race relations lies not in jumping on the bandwagon against an incident as easy to define as Howard Beach. It lies in rooting out the slow, monotonous currents of day-to-day racism that first created the monster.

Most important, the responsibility lies within a white America that has failed to talk to its own youth.

My own childhood reveals no racial incidents of a violent nature, yet the milder racism I encountered changed my life. I started the sixth grade in Milwaukee saying that racism would be gone in my lifetime. What I could not understand was that my white classmates were already warped.

That year, 1966, I mentioned to some whites how cool the Temptations and the Supremes were on the Ed Sullivan Show. Instead of reciprocating my interest in the Monkees, Beatles, and Dave Clark Five, they told me that the Temptations and the Supremes were trash. I almost cried.

In the seventh grade, I gave a book report on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. The only black in the class, I made a point of stressing later parts of Malcolm's life, which were more cooperative in tone with whites. To no avail: Literally half of the class did not speak to me for a month.

Now, 18 years later, I see race relations layered over with rhetorical veneer but rotten underneath.

Among the black middle class, I increasingly hear students, embittered about their experiences at predominantly white colleges, say they wish they had gone to a black college.

Among the black underclass, I have repeatedly heard stories from young blacks in Queens, Harlem, and the Bronx who never have ventured to midtown Manhattan because they feared harassment as potential muggers.

In a recent issue of *The Atlantic*, a black man wrote that he whistles Beethoven on subway platforms to make whites think he is safe.

Rather than attack racism, white America grasps at straws. William F. Buckley, Jr. clumsily proclaims in a column that the fact that Bill Cosby's show is number one on American television means that racism is gone. He conveniently

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## A black man wrote that he whistles Beethoven on subway platforms to make whites think he is safe.

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In the eighth grade, my best friend was white. Together with my brother and a black friend, we were the first integrated team to win a junior bowling title at our local bowling alley. We visited each other's homes, shared many soggy hamburgers and froze together at arctic bus stops. One day, out of the clear blue, he said he wanted me to be baptized in his church.

I told him that I had been baptized twice, in Baptist and Lutheran churches. He told me that wasn't good enough. He said I needed a special baptism. I asked why.

He said because black people have the mark of the beast.

forgets Cosby's show is also number one in South Africa. Black comedians, like athletes, have long been accepted in the United States as harmless entertainment symbols in industries that refuse to accept them as directors or coaches. I quit going to New York comedy clubs in the early 1980's because all the humor pertaining to blacks was negative.

My newspaper is filled with stories about racism, but when I tell colleagues about racist encounters in the search for housing in New York, most stare at me in utter disbelief and say, "Really?" My sister was told — by a black — in a minority job conference at the University

of Wisconsin that if she wanted to succeed in business she had to wear chemically straightened hair and abstain from any jewelry that hinted of Africanism. My wife, a physician, said that, unlike white male physicians, who often dress casually, she must wear her white jacket at all times lest people bar her from entering hospital wards.

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I quit going to New York comedy clubs in the early 1980's because all the humor pertaining to blacks was negative.

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To *The Washington Post* columnist who justifies the morality of crime-fearing jewelers who refuse to buzz black men into their stores, I want to say: How would your patience wear if you were me, well dressed and cursing on Manhattan corners as taxis I hail whiz past to pick up white passengers a half block away.

All this is said in the full knowledge that I am lucky. I am one of the handful of black people who, at critical career stages, received the guiding, unpaternalistic hand of both blacks and whites. I can trace the hand from a federally funded Model Cities writing program for teenagers to managing editor at *The Milwaukee Journal*, who asked me as a college freshman if I was interested in a cub reporting spot. I am living affirmation that affirmative action works.

But rather than drink in the delusion of being a chosen one, I see the very road I traveled on being ripped apart just behind my heels. Instead of more blacks going to college, student-body percentages of blacks at mostly white colleges are at their

lowest since I graduated in 1976.

Such a fallout at the top of the ladder of opportunity can only foretell tragedy for the majority of blacks who never got a step on the first rung. High unemployment, dropout rates, infant mortality, rates of imprisonment, the fact that the leading cause of death for young black men is homicide — all these are the result of a long, insidious process of alienation that leads to total despair.

In my own neighborhood, which was not a slum but not great, either, most of the people from my adolescence were stunted not by lack of desire, but by society's low expectations. A buddy who competed with me for the best grades on the block was abruptly told by a counselor in his private high school that he was a little slow. He ended up in the Army. Others who were smart received no counseling at all, opting in the end for assembly lines, storefront ministries, pregnancies, and stints in jail.

These silent deaths rarely end up in a newspaper. If middleclass blacks cannot search for houses without the likelihood of doing battle with racist real-estate people, what right does white America have to expect black folks in the ghetto to bootstrap themselves to the dream of a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage?

A deep pessimism makes it easy for me to see that unless white America makes clear to black America its intention of curing racism beyond buying a Michael Jackson record or seeing an Eddie Murphy movie, the prospects for further ugliness are flaming on the horizon.

Instead of waking up to jobs or increased educational opportunities, blacks wake up to an All-American environment in which white people cheer a Louisiana sheriff's decision to stop and question all blacks entering his jurisdiction, in which whites in Arizona elect a governor who declares that one of his first acts will be to wipe away Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, and in which major

newspapers editorialize that it shouldn't be taken as a fatal flaw that Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist had a clause or two in his house deeds forbidding future sales to Jews and nonwhites.

On a micro level, instead of being persistently defensive, whites must learn to ask blacks sensitive cultural questions, questions based on respect. Virtually all of my white high school relationships were based exclusively on useless, Eddie Murphyish banter of stereotyped racial jokes. And that, occurring in the late 1960's and early 1970's, may have been a peak of sorts in communications.

Most of the inner-city black teenagers I have interviewed in the last three years, from Los Angeles to New York, have not had one genuine friendship with a white person. A

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I am lucky. I am one of the handful of black people who received the guiding hand of blacks and whites — from a federally funded writing program for teenagers to an assistant managing editor who asked me if I was interested in a cub reporting spot. I am living affirmation that affirmative action works.

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disturbing number of black students who attend predominantly white colleges tell me they are graduating without one genuine friendship with a white person. That is America, 1987.

That America is a nightmare. □  
Reprinted from *Newsday*.



# South Africa and News Censorship

*A joint conference co-sponsored by the Nieman Foundation and  
The African-American Institute*

*The enigma of that country presents a dilemma to the media — the cover-up story is seldom told.*

**H**oward Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, opened the conference by expressing concern over a former Nieman Fellow, Zwelakhe Sisulu [NF '85], editor of *The New Nation*, who was still in South African security police detention.

Frank Ferrari, senior vice president of the African-American Institute, said that South African censorship and the emergency situation affected even the conference — those who could not attend also included Rashid Seria, editor of the Cape Town weekly, *South*; Percy Qoboza [NF '76], editor of *City Press*; and Aggrey Klaaste [NF '80], of *Sowetan*.

## South Africans' Experience With Censorship

Anthony Sampson, author and editor of *The Sampson Letter*, chaired the conference's opening session. In introducing the three panelists from

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*The joint conference on April 29-30, took place in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Conferees included media from the United States who had covered South Africa, and journalists from that country. Nadine Gordimer, the South African novelist, stressed "the climate of uncertainty and unease" there. She placed emphasis on "how to make people aware that they are getting not just half the story, but perhaps only a line or two of the story."*

South Africa, he said that perhaps the most critical problem that faces any group of editors and journalists is how to cover a crisis at a time when the truth is extremely scarce, when the truth is a commodity that is very deliberately concealed.

Harald Pakendorf [NF '69], director of Harald Pakendorf Informa and former editor of *Die Vaderland*, said South Africa has a tradition of a relatively free press, but there have always been restrictions, which are gradually getting worse. These restrictions include a ban against writing about the acquiring of arms or oil, or writing anything about the police unless it is the "truth." But there are ways of getting around these restrictions.

South Africa has also had a relative freedom of opinion, but never complete, since you cannot publicly say what you think of the African National Congress (ANC), or discuss the South African Communist Party. The new emergency regulations, however, are aimed directly at the press: it is difficult now to get anywhere near the unrest and therefore virtually impossible to give a correct picture of what is happening in South Africa. The only people who don't know what is happening in the country are the white readers of the white newspapers.

Self-censorship is another concern. Newspapers do not push hard enough at the edge of the restrictions; the state is probably not that keen on a head-on clash with the newspapers. Pushing back at the edges would remind the state, and the readers, that something is wrong.

In the longer term, what is the future for a return to the relative freedom of the press? Soon, there will be a black government and will there be the same concern then for freedom of the press? There is a form of racism involved in reporting on South Africa — the Western correspondents live in white suburbs, mix with whites, and know the people back home are mostly interested in the whites. There is also a double standard, since people in the United States are not as concerned with freedom of the press in Mozambique or Zimbabwe as much as with South Africa. Also, how many newspapers in the U.S. use a black journalist as a foreign correspondent?

## Censorship and South Africa

Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois), chairman of the Senate subcommittee on African affairs, observed that journalists sometimes pay more attention to the frivolous than the substantial, and sometimes tend to look inward too much, which is a reflection of American society.

Censorship in general tends to make us avoid facing reality. In the case of South Africa, that means inching closer and closer to a violence that can be avoided only by facing reality. What if during the Vietnam War we had been prevented from seeing in our living rooms what was happening in Vietnam? We might have been in Vietnam a lot longer.



In this country, newspaper editorials are too bland. They tend to be pious sermons, without follow-through. Editorials should follow foreign policy issues, pay more attention to policy questions in congressional deliberations. Press coverage on the African National Congress tends to be on the order of "Marxist-oriented ANC"; hardly ever is it pointed out that Nelson Mandela wanted to rid the ANC of Communist influence but was persuaded that the organization should be all-inclusive.

There are not enough American black journalists involved in South Africa and the black journalists of South Africa are not used as much as they ought to be.

On policy issues, the United States should be pushing the European Economic Community (EEC) for a ban on South African coal — in 1975, South Africa exported 2.7 million tons of coal, and in 1985, 44.8 million tons, two-thirds of it to the EEC, \$1 billion worth. The United States also ought to pay more attention to the frontline states. We should keep in mind that change is possible, especially if the business community feels the pinch. Part of change is also standing up for what you believe, as Jimmy Carter did on human rights. There should have been editorials, outrage even, when the United States vetoed the United Nations resolutions against South Africa.

The United States should be encouraging dialogue, because change in South Africa is going to come in a constructive way in part to the extent that we can encourage dialogue between the principals. A great testing place for humanity is South Africa — can we build a structure of peace, justice, freedom and opportunity there brick by brick?

### The Community Press

Keith Hartogh, business manager of *The New Nation*, explained that the newspaper is a national weekly,

launched in November 1985, and has established itself as one of the premier alternative media in South Africa. The role of *The New Nation* is to prepare the people of South Africa for inevitable transformation, from the racist, oppressive society to a free democratic, nonracial society. *The New Nation* identifies unambiguously with trade unions, the youth, and all the oppressed people of South Africa.

To publish a weekly newspaper does require self-censorship. Journalists practice self-censorship; the copy is then sent to the newspaper's lawyers, then to the distributor's lawyers, then to the printer's lawyers. It is practically impossible to publish a "subversive" statement. It is also impossible to document police or defense force operations. The most ominous restriction is the Internal Security Act, which provides for holding a person in detention incommunicado for an indefinite period. The effect is that newspapers opt for self-censorship.

The emergency clampdown hides the real picture of a country at war. This is what the government wants — to establish the impression that no news is good news, that everything is under control. The government is introducing more stringent censorship measures all the time; hundreds of banning orders have been issued against activists in media work, particularly those in monitoring groups who endeavor to expose details about detentions and forced removals.

### Psychological and Physical Pressures

Ameen Akhalwaya [NF '82], editor of *The Indicator*, said press censorship began in the 1950's and was aimed mainly at the late *Rand Daily Mail*, which was the only newspaper prepared to write about what was going on in the black communities. After that came laws forbidding the quoting of banned people, which effectively killed off reporting on the

exiled organizations.

Coupled with the closure of news to whites is the government's massive propaganda campaign, including the financing of several newspapers. The plan is to control and manipulate the news. The black newspapers, the community press, are trying to counteract this propaganda. *The Indicator*, for example, would not accept campaign advertisements from people running for seats in the parliament. This was because the paper could not publish ads from organizations that wish to see the election boycotted, since to call for a boycott is illegal.

There is a difference in how the government treats white and black journalists who defy censorship. Whites get off much more lightly; very few black journalists who write about politics have not been detained or beaten up at some time. More ominously, there are people watching our offices, our homes, and following us. What we are really fearful of is "vigilantes." If people like Zwelakhe Sisulu are killed by "necklacing," it is very easy for the government to say, "He supports the ANC and this was done by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) or Azapo," or the other way around. They censor you by getting rid of you. If they destroy Zwelakhe Sisulu, what effect will that have on other journalists? You are working under psychological pressure, physical pressure, just the sheer hell of trying to bring out a newspaper.

Not only is there censorship in South Africa, but also outside the country — journalists in the U.S., for example, complying with the censorship regulations. Is it right for the Americans to comply with that censorship?

In the discussion, an American asked whether, given the restrictions and compromises confronting American journalists, United States newspapers would be better off not having correspondents in South Africa and instead covering stories by telephone and other means? Mr.

Akhalwaya replied that if correspondents are not going to enter the townships but merely await government handouts and are afraid to challenge the regulations, then they have no business being in South Africa. Foreign correspondents risk only expulsion; they do not face the risks that black South African journalists face every day. Mr. Hartogh added that foreign correspondents rely heavily on black journalists; the new breed of journalists in South Africa, the alternative journalists, are more than capable of handling correspondent duties.

An American asked why, if the white community is so badly served, white journalists do not set up alternative newspapers for the white community? Mr. Pakendorf cited the costs of setting up such a newspaper and added that *The Weekly Mail* partly fulfills that function. An American asked how precarious is the financial position of *The New Nation* and *The Indicator*. Mr. Akhalwaya said raising money was an ongoing battle and obtaining advertising is difficult because of the control exerted by the advertising agencies. Mr. Hartogh said the cost of running *The New Nation* was \$1.2 million annually, a sum guaranteed by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference for the first three years.

## Others' Experiences With Censorship

Anthony Lewis [NF '57], columnist for *The New York Times*, chaired the conference's second panel, dealing with how American news organizations handle working under South African censorship.

Joseph Lelyveld, foreign news editor of *The New York Times*, discussed the expulsion of *The Times* correspondent, Alan Cowell, in January. Serge Schmemmann, who was designated to replace him, was

denied a visa and, when the South African authorities made it clear that any other proposed correspondent would not get a visa, *The Times* then hired a South African correspondent. But it is important to have a non-South African there.

It is not the responsibility of *The Times* to enforce the South African press regulations. There are all kinds of realities to go after in South Africa, not all of them surrounded by the restrictions. There is fundamental curiosity about how that society is working, what is going on in people's minds, blacks and whites. Any effective correspondent has to react to the news and go with his own agenda as well, which may involve moving away from the central story and plunging into the rural areas. There is plenty of room for cunning, for testing the limitations. As Ameen Akhalwaya pointed out, the Western media have a lot less to lose than South African journalists.

There are stories not being written that are probably writable under the restrictions. But an American correspondent is probably met with more suspicion than before, for the whites because of sanctions, and for the blacks because of Reagan administration policy. As for the authorities, they never complained that *The Times* distorted the situation; they complained that the paper covered it too much. It is not a discussion of objective coverage; it is a discussion of how much coverage. By having a contract South African journalist, the paper may be doing exactly what the authorities want. However, it is the only option left.

## Television Coverage Of South Africa

Ken Walker, correspondent for ABC News, said that with very few exceptions the American media generally had practiced self-censorship in South Africa long before the emergency regulations. Until quite recently, the American news media was guilty of a failure of will and a

failure of nerve in South Africa.

At ABC News, *Nightline* undertook its 1985 effort in South Africa only after years of lobbying by black employees at ABC and the growth of the Free South Africa Movement. *Nightline* staff were granted visas shortly after *60 Minutes* did a flattering piece on South Africa; apparently the Pretoria authorities expected a similar job by *Nightline*. Each night of the broadcasts, the South African government threatened to withdraw its participation and eventually did so on the last day. All of this is to point out that blacks in the American media spend too much time trying to persuade white news managers to do what they ought to be doing with alacrity.

The American news media generally has not cared about the South African story; they still don't care, and the coverage reflects that. The emergency restrictions have been quite effective. For the television networks, the number of stories has been reduced remarkably over the past year. There have been no black American correspondents based in South Africa. Even baseball is more desegregated than the American news media.

In the discussion period, Mr. Walker said he did not believe there was a wide discrepancy between television and newspaper coverage of South Africa. But if the journalists are not going to function as Americans expect journalists to operate, then a fraud is being perpetrated on the American public. Mr. Lelyveld said that limitations on access had cut down on newspaper coverage. Mr. Walker said the lack of video on television news was rooted in the desire not to be thrown out of South Africa; in the Eastern bloc countries, however, the restrictions on access are frequently flouted by journalists. Mr. Lelyveld said *The Times* had never held back from printing a story for fear it would threaten the bureau in South Africa.

Mr. Walker said the American news media is generally far too

parochial, reflecting the isolationist bent that characterizes the American public. And the decisions of news managers regarding South Africa are still complicated by race. Mr. Lewis said the American news media follows the government lead in defining what the news is, but that was not true in South Africa where the news media followed a social phenomenon. Mr. Lelyveld said that *The Times* had done some strong coverage of the frontline states; this coverage was a message that *The Times* was not going to shut down in that region and would cover outside as well as inside South Africa.

An American commented that it was preposterous to dismiss most foreign correspondents in South Africa as never leaving their first-class hotels, and that his organization had been told unofficially by the South Africans that a black journalist or Commonwealth journalist would not be allowed in as a correspondent. Mr. Walker responded that for an American news organization to succumb to racial restrictions on its coverage in any country is indefensible; the South African government has forced American news organizations to practice apartheid, which is unconscionable. He added that for news organizations to accept the pretense that South Africa is part of the Western, civilized family of nations is a fraud on the American people.

An American participant commented that editors need to look at the issue of more black journalists, just as they must for more women, in correspondent and management jobs, to get another perspective. An American noted that there are about 25 black South African Nieman Fellows who could do the job.

## The Writer and The South African Censor

Anthony Sampson, author and editor of *The Sampson Letter*, in-

troduced the South African novelist Nadine Gordimer, who is also an executive member of the Anti-Censorship Action Group in South Africa.

Mrs. Gordimer said the climate of uncertainty and unease in South Africa is very strange. People who depend on television for information have slowly begun to realize that they're not being told anything, and the word, almost in a Biblical sense, has come to mean tremendously much in South Africa. Probably no one realized this until last year — with the states of emergency and proclamations restricting freedom of expression; it boils down to the freedom of the word, and it really is up there, that simple four-letter word in capitals.

For fiction writers, that is as far as it goes, because they work very slowly. What happens to them and what happens in the world around sinks in and then may come up months later in the form of a poem, a story, or a novel. But the immediacy of it is simply what every other citizen feels.

An aspect of protest that is fairly new in South Africa is the cooperation between journalists and writers. They tended to have different associations and to keep rather apart, but in August 1986 some writers, journalists, academics, and educators formed the Anti-Censorship Action Group. Here was an area where journalists and writers could work together because censorship in its many forms is so pervasive.

What are the purposes of ACAG? It hopes to keep the public informed of what it's missing. And to keep it aware, above all. It's very difficult to do this because it is like a rat chasing its tail. In South Africa, the problem is how to make people aware that they are getting not just half the story, but perhaps only a line or two of the story. The usual things have been tried, the box saying "This May Have Been Censored," the general flyer across the newspaper saying "Some of the Materials in the Paper May Have Been Censored."

But we all know what happens. The first time there were empty pages in *The Weekly Mail*, it was a shock. And of course then along comes a law that prevents the newspaper from having an empty page. So, you make a move and the government jumps on you. You make another little move and they jump again. But you've just got to keep on moving and the problem is to find where to move next. In the newspapers in the U.S. you have the same problem. The American reading public is getting a third, an eighth perhaps, of the story.

In various centers, in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, there are committees monitoring comparative reports of events and matching this wherever possible with sources of information about the same events from unofficial and indeed, one might say casual, and sometimes underground, sources. There should be a kind of library for visiting journalists and others who want to be informed about how events are perceived and how they are reported in South Africa, and what is suppressed by one source and published by another. There must also be monitoring of radio and television, because the selectivity there is really even more striking.

There's another aspect to censorship that doesn't appear directly when you look at the consequences of the states of emergency and the various proclamations. That's the problem of distribution. Quite often it is the distributor who has bought the license to distribute foreign magazines and journals in South Africa, and he makes the decision about distribution. It's a big moral problem. Should it be left to people of conscience to bring pressure on the distributors not to do this, or should journals abroad make quite sure this is not done? Is it better to have a bowdlerized journal with perhaps some facts that wouldn't get aired in South Africa, or should one sacrifice the journal altogether?

Another side to distribution, and



it affects journals and newspapers as well as books, is that all the outlets, the bookshops and places where serious journals are sold, are in the white suburbs. There are very few outlets in black townships. That again is something totally oriented toward whites. It is hard to understand why publishers don't see that they're losing an enormous potential market there. If the books are there and the journals are there, people will buy them, but if you're not exposed to these things you are totally dependent on your radio and on television, except for the daily newspapers you pick up when you're at work in town.

And the aspect of the *word* that concerns writers so much, through imaginative literature, is completely withheld. There's no exposure at home where people live, as far as blacks are concerned. The schools have few if any books; the libraries are pitiful in the black areas. This, too, is a form of censorship, the withholding of access, and it's all connected to the great octopus of censorship everywhere.

## Dealing With South African Censorship From Abroad

Howard Simons [NF '59], curator of the Nieman Foundation, chaired this panel, and introduced the first speaker, Richard Cohen, senior producer of CBS News. Mr. Cohen said television has more impact in America in forming public opinion and perceptions than any other medium. Pictures, however, drown out the words; pictures can be used to project whatever image is wanted. Television images can move people, can cement in the heads of people in living rooms all over the world their impressions of what is going on.

In South Africa, with the states of emergency, there no longer are the images of oppression, of poverty.

Those are the pictures that can't be shown anymore. The focus on television pieces has thus moved to try to show the Afrikaners, to illuminate the various dimensions of sanctions. These "context" stories can be very satisfying but they are not the story of South Africa, they are not showing what is going on in Soweto, in the homelands, in Crossroads. South Africa is a story that CBS covers diligently; there are more stories on CBS News originating from Johannesburg than from Moscow.

In dealing with censorship, when are we better off in walking out and not playing this video appeasement game with the South African government? As long as we're going to stay in South Africa, we have to play the game. But anybody in a news organization who does not assume he is going to be thrown out tomorrow and plan accordingly is a fool.

### The Washington Post's Coverage

Michael Getler, foreign editor of *The Washington Post*, said his newspaper had been able to report everything of significance in South Africa, although undoubtedly things were being missed, but not major aspects. *The Post* tries to cover South Africa the same way it covers every other country; it is better to be there than to walk out on principle. The paper could be kicked out of the country for any reason, say, an editorial the authorities didn't like, but there is no point in second-guessing the government. The paper will continue to report as aggressively as it can without compromising. So far, it has been successful.

*The Post* has black stringers but does not use their names because they don't want that — it would put them in great danger.

The reason the South African government views the emergency measures as successful is because they have removed the newsmakers by detaining over 25,000 people,

many of whom were on the cutting edge of the story: the boycott organizers, demonstration organizers, community leaders and so on. Do not forget that the restrictions are really on black South Africans, while the press restrictions are less of a factor. Now, it is much harder to get a sense of what is going on in the townships because the people reporters would talk to are in jail, in exile, underground, or they have been economically ruined. That also makes it hard to get black stringers.

A lot of the really good reporting is in the black alternative press. For the American newspapers, it is hard to pick up all the detail.

### Difficult To Report, But Possible

Robert Rosenthal, foreign editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, said that when he was in South Africa it was an easy place to work because so many committed people were willing to take great risks to talk to reporters. To tell the American reader what was going on, you had to talk to people, to victims, to the police. Now, with the restrictions, the story can still be done, but there are more difficulties. *The Inquirer* has black stringers, but they face risks.

The dilemma is that the paper intends to do what we think is best, and if they throw us out, they throw us out. While we are there, we are going to do everything possible to reflect the reality of South Africa.

In the discussion, a South African commented that the speakers had mentioned using black stringers who did not want their names mentioned, but as far as he knew there were no black journalists who did not want their names used. Mr. Getler said they were not stringers filing stories, but people in the townships that correspondents talk to. Mr. Rosenthal said it was the same with *The Inquirer* and he might have misused the term "stringer."

Another South African said black South African journalists do a



balanced job, so why doesn't the Western media trust them to work for it? Mr. Rosenthal said *The Inquirer* generally does not use stringers. An American asked why, if Allister Sparks [NF '63], a white South African is hired on a contract basis, a black journalist can't be hired on the same basis. Mr. Rosenthal said there was nothing to prevent a black journalist from being hired. Mr. Cohen said the fact there are not more blacks in key positions overseas raises questions about white-dominated news organizations. An American noted that when a news organization sends a Jewish correspondent to Israel no one questions his "objectivity." A South African said black South African journalists are never asked to work for the Western media.

A South African asked why Western journalists are fascinated with Afrikaners — is it identification of white journalists with whites? Mr. Cohen said he was not really aware that such a phenomenon existed, but Mr. Rosenthal said Afrikaners epitomize the power of South Africa, the instruments for the dehumanization of the blacks. An American said the story of the Afrikaners told by American journalists is an over-told story, reflecting the belief of many journalists that change will come by other means than revolutionary upheaval.

Another American suggested that the focus on the Afrikaner in the Western press is because a lot of foreign correspondents reflect the discussion that goes on in South Africa; some of it is just lazy journalism. A South African said that blacks are totally uninterested in white politics and elections.

## Responses to Censorship

Frank Ferrari, senior vice president of The African-American Institute, who chaired this panel, said

that breaking the censorship laws is the fundamental challenge that conference participants have been dealing with, but the consequences for the South Africans might be not just the elimination of the job but the elimination of the person; for foreign journalists, the consequences might be expulsion or elimination of the bureau.

Irwin Manoim, co-editor of *The Weekly Mail*, said censorship can be viewed as a fuzzy matter because the regulations are convoluted, almost unintelligible, and change at astonishing speed. The strength of the censorship regulations is that they are difficult to comprehend and highly ambiguous, and thus strike fear into editors. Editors fear the regulations more than they should. Ambiguity is also censorship's great weakness; there are any number of loopholes.

Newspapers can be more creative by broadening out over the areas covered by the regulations. Labor, for example, is a critical aspect of South African life and there are no emergency regulations that close up labor any more than it was before. But relatively few newspapers have been following the labor movement. Forced removals is another issue that newspapers can and should cover. The "independent" homelands are also not covered by the regulations, nor is destabilization of neighboring countries. Survival under censorship is simply a matter of attitude. Journalists should not be the first ones to throw in the towel.

## The Establishment Newspapers

Andries van Heerden [NF '87], assistant to the editor of *Die Vaderland*, agreed that there is a lot of scope for testing the press restrictions but it is not being done by the mainstream newspapers. If you read the whole range of newspapers in South Africa, you can get a pretty good idea of what is happening. The reason the Afrikaans newspapers are not testing the restrictions is obvious — because of their traditional

alignment with the government. For example, the biggest income for the Perskor group, which owns *Die Vaderland*, comes from government contracts, especially school textbooks and other printing.

When the newspaper reported on the ANC the government was angry, but it was angrier on something seemingly more mild, reports on mixed-race schools. The Transvaal Education Department sent threatening letters to the board of directors, so they fired Harald Pakendorf, the editor, rather than lose the contracts. The English establishment papers belong to the same mining houses that are responsible for apartheid in the first place, to make big profits out of cheap labor.

Our problem is different from the American problem: for us South Africa is not only a story to cover but a life to live. We cannot say we'll defy the regulations come hell or high water. We have to ask ourselves to what degree we play hero and risk the closing of the paper.

## Newsweek's Coverage

Robert Rivard, chief of correspondents for *Newsweek*, said the magazine had been in trouble in South Africa, an indication it was not pulling its punches. Correspondents were kicked out in 1985 and 1986. The magazine's attitude is that censorship laws are arbitrary rules; every week the magazine contains technical violations of the laws. The government feels smug about the effect of its pressure on the American media; they believe they've turned down the volume. We operate the bureau on the assumption that South Africa is not a Western democracy, and the magazine would rather be there than stand on a misguided principle. The day may come when we're in Harare, and that would be unfortunate, but the magazine will never not run a story.

One question that is not asked is, did we go over there and cut a deal with the South Africans to reopen

our bureau? The answer is categorically no. They have a misguided idea of how the Western press works; they get convoluted summaries from their embassy in Washington. Another element is the existence of two tendencies in the National Party: one is smug about toning down the foreign media, the other does not believe the Western press should be there at all.

### Feast-or-Famine Reporting

Paul van Slambrock, international news editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*, said there is now a commitment on the part of the American news organizations to the South African story and that is a way to deal with censorship. There is a danger, however, of feast-or-famine coverage. There are no photographs, for example, and that has impact on the coverage. The coverage now is tapering off, and will accelerate only when the next explosion comes. *The Monitor* has deliberately avoided that over the last 20 years, does not subscribe to the big bang theory, but provides a context of coverage so that when the explosions occur American readers can have some intelligent assessment of what is going on and why.

The concern over censorship boils down to "The better part of wisdom is to ignore the censorship laws." Self-censorship is the biggest danger and that creeps in steadily if you pay too much attention to the restrictions. You end up blunting the story, removing the vitality, the point of the thing. It would be tragic if the day came that the Western press had to walk away from the story. It may, however, become necessary, if you cannot cover the story.

In the discussion, a European commented that the media has not shown a key point of the emergency regulations, whether black resistance has been undermined by the repression. Mr. Ferrari noted that the alternative press in South Africa

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## Newspapering in India

*continued from page 20*

same day on the front page was a story from Kanpur (a city in another part of India) about a bad family dispute, where two men killed each other. By coincidence, the two men were Sikhs, and the headline read: 'Two Sikhs Killed In Kanpur.' The editors put the story on the front page right next to the story on violence in the Punjab. To readers, I think it looked like the stories were linked, and that could have sparked new disturbances."

The major newspapers I could read, the ones in English, were careful on the subject of communal violence. They have relatively high standards of conduct, and though circulation of the English-language newspapers has been passed by the local language press, they still pretty much chronicle and inform the political debate in the country. Copies of *The Times of India*, *Indian Express*, *The Hindustan Times*, among others, are seen around Parliament.

They are lively newspapers, because the political debate is raucous.

"We are the most fractious people in the whole world," said U.R. Kalkur, the chief editor and general manager of *UNI*, one of the two nationwide news wire services in India.

This fractiousness expresses itself in political strife. The country, in its 40th year of independence, had been ruled pretty much by one dynasty — Nehru, his daughter Indira, and now his grandson Rajiv Gandhi — but political life is roiling. You can see it in two ways in newspapers: in the extremely heavy play given inside-baseball politics in the papers, and in the use of papers as vehicles to get into public office.

Adarsh Patra is a highly educated young man who six months ago, founded a newspaper in the southern

city of Bangalore. His goal in life is not to be a newspaper publisher but to be, as he puts it, "head of the country."

He explained, "There are 520 members of Parliament, and 25 percent of them were once editors or publishers. This is a way to get into government — the newspaper."

Patra's strategy, to use his paper to achieve political ends, is only slightly more self-aggrandizing than others I heard voiced by editors and hopeful publishers in different parts of the country. Most want to use their presses to influence government and society, not just be passive carriers of news and advertising information.

One of the more articulate was a 40-year-old All-India Radio newsman in the south who said he was fed up with the way newspapers were concentrating so much on the minutiae of politics.

Given the recent explosion of newspaper readership throughout India, the man, A. Ramakrishna Rao, said he is confident he can establish just what is needed, a newspaper he defined as a "non-political press."

His paper would cover more community news, he said. There would be more "people stories" and reports about changes in the community. He would report on problems, like drinking-water shortages and road-building problems.

"I will present a problem first. I will write about it, and then government will act to correct the problem," he said.

And what if government does not act?

"Then I will generate support. I will use the newspaper to get people to build momentum to get government to act," he said of his plans for a nonpolitical press. □

# Foreign Nieman Fellows 1987-88

**E**ight journalists from abroad have been appointed Nieman Fellows at Harvard University for the academic year 1987-88. The foreign Fellows will join 12 American journalists whose names were announced in May as members of the 50th Class of Nieman Fellows to study at Harvard.

The foreign Fellows are:

**ROSENTAL CALMON ALVES**, 35, foreign correspondent for *Jornal do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He is a graduate of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. At Harvard, Alves, who is based in Argentina for his newspaper, plans to study the American system of government as it pertains to the Congress, foreign policy, and justice.

**AGNES G. BRAGADOTTIR**, 34, political journalist with *Morgunblaðid*, Reykjavik, Iceland. She has degrees from the University of Iceland in English and German. She proposes to study American politics and foreign policy, East-West relations, and modern literature.

**EMILY O'REILLY**, 29, senior reporter with the *Sunday Tribune*, Dublin, Ireland. O'Reilly has degrees from University and Trinity Colleges in Dublin. While at Harvard, she plans to study international politics, specifically, United States relations with Central America; Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors; and the history of certain African countries.

**DENNIS PATHER**, 41, editor of *Post Natal*, Durban, South Africa. He studied science at the University

of Durban-Westville. Pather plans to use his year studying the American civil rights movement, the American Constitution, trade unions, and political science.

**JUAN MANUEL SANTOS**, 35, deputy publisher, *El Tiempo*, Bogota, Colombia. He is a graduate of the



University of Kansas, has studied at the London School of Economics, and has a master's degree from Harvard University. As a Nieman Fellow, he proposes to take several courses in history and literature.

**MITSUKO SHIMOMURA**, 48, senior staff writer with *Asahi Shimbun*, Tokyo, Japan. She is a graduate of Keio University and has a master's degree from New York

University. Shimomura proposes to study all aspects of the United States-Japan relationship.

**RIGOBERTO TIGLAO**, 34, economics editor of *The Manila Chronicle*, Manila, the Philippines. He is a graduate of the University of the Philippines. He plans to study development economics, the developments in Third World countries with emphasis on Central America, and political science.

**EDUARDO ULIBARRI**, 35, editor-in-chief of *La Nacion*, San Jose, Costa Rica. Ulibarri is a graduate of the University of Costa Rica and has a master's degree from the University of Missouri. During his Nieman year, Ulibarri wants to study international policy-making processes, crisis and conflict management, international economics, and the challenges of development.

The Nieman Fellowships were established by the bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman, widow of Lucius Nieman, founder and long-time publisher of *The Milwaukee Journal*. The first foreign journalists to be awarded Nieman Fellowships were members of the Class of 1952; since that time, more than 180 journalists from other countries have studied at Harvard as Nieman Fellows.

The Nieman Fellows from abroad are funded by sources that include the Asia Foundation, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the United States-South Africa Leader Exchange Program. □

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# THE BOOKSHELF

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## Elmer Gantry — Move Over

### There's No Business Like Soul Business.

Doug Marlette. Peachtree Publishers, Ltd., 1987. Paperback \$6.95

by Fred Barnes

Doug Marlette, so the story goes, is the only cartoonist to be awarded a Nieman Fellowship. But he's been able to overcome that — many, many haven't — and go on to do wonderful work in his comic strip *Kudzu*.

Working as editorial cartoonist for *The Charlotte Observer*, he has been in precisely the right place to see the excesses of televangelism, and to lampoon its practitioners. Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, after all, were right down the road, offering him daily inspiration. Thus emerges this collection of strips about that great Marlette creation, the Reverend Will B. Dunn, the most transparent and silly bounder ever to wear a collar.

But first, a serious note. Even where the Bakkers are concerned, there's a thin line between making fun of television preachers and ridiculing their religion. The one is fine, the other isn't. Too often these days, journalists are quite willing to indulge in both. In fact, it's fashionable to do so. But Marlette sticks to zinging the reverends with the 800 phone numbers and fat bank accounts, not Christianity.

I'm glad for this. It makes his cartoons all the more funny. And while Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell may not be laughing, some of their followers are likely to be. Oddly enough, the two best characters (besides the Reverend Dunn) in this

collection aren't Protestant ministers but spiritualists of a different sort. One is actress Shirley MacLaine, who shows up to flog her latest book on the Reverend Dunn's television talkfest. "Shirley," he says, "you're a great believer in reincarnation . . . In fact, you're appearing today as one of your past lives. Am I right?" A toaster responds, "That's right, preacher." In the same strip, her brother, actor Warren Beatty, appears as an electric mixer.

The other great character is Bhagwan Hasheesh, who also appears on Dunn's show. Dunn, ever interested in what attracts a flock, asks, "What exactly is your spiritual message that has proven so popular among your followers here in America?" The Bhagwan is blunt. "My message is this: have a nice day." Dunn is stunned. "Well," he says, "that's the dumbest thing I ever heard." "Do you own a fleet of Rolls Royces?" the Bhagwan shoots back. "Have a nice day!" agrees Dunn.

As you might expect, Dunn is obsessed with money and the trappings of television. When Mother Teresa drops by his program, he introduces her in extravagant terms as a saint, Nobel Prize winner, and all-around wonderful person. "How did you do it without a satellite?" Dunn asks.

Marlette is tough on Robertson, Falwell, and Oral Roberts. Standing in for Robertson, Dunn asks the Lord for a sign of heavenly approval or disapproval of his plan to go into politics. With a tremendous rumbling, letters emerge from the earth that say, "FORGET IT." Dunn ignores them and goes on asking for a sign. "You know . . . like a rainbow, or a dove, or a burning bush . . . Whatever." The Falwell character is an ig-

noramus in Marlette's rendering, though in truth Falwell is one of the smartest and most politically savvy of the television preachers. In this cartoon Falwell looks like Patrick J. Buchanan, the former White House communications director, and heads an organization called The Legion of Just Plain Folks. Its speciality is book burning. Jerry Falwell explains, during an appearance on Dunn's show, that he likes to spend an evening at home with a book. He holds a book in one hand, a blowtorch in the other. The most controversial caricature is that of Oral Roberts, or Oral Oral in the strip. By making light of Roberts' claim that God would take him to heaven if he didn't raise enough money on earth. Marlette managed to get his strip banned in Tulsa, the home of Oral Roberts University and Roberts' television ministry. Dunn tells Oral that his fundraising device is extortion. "Surely nobody believes" that God will kill Oral if donations fall short. "We already raked in millions," says Oral. Looking sheepish, Dunn says, "Y'know, I ain't been feeling so good myself."

I've probably overemphasized the television preacher stuff in Marlette's work. There are also in this collection, a lot of very funny strips about Dunn's role as a marriage counselor, parish priest, etc. He keeps running up against married folks who hate each other, and of course he gets sued for malpractice when a couple he counsels gets a divorce.

In one strip, a nerdy-looking couple shows up for counseling. The husband says the problem is that "Godzilla here doesn't understand me." The wife says that "He's got the brains of a Nerf ball." Dunn listens, looks over the couple, and thinks, "Okay — we can rule out lack of communication."



The point is that Marlette doesn't need the hijinks of television preachers to come up with awfully humorous material. So I'm not worried about what will befall him once Jim and Tammy fade and Pat Robertson isn't running for president and Oral Roberts isn't so prominent. There will be plenty of excess for Will B. Dunn to wallow in. □

Fred Barnes, Nieman Fellow '78, is a senior editor on the staff of The New Republic.

### Meet the Artist

Doug Marlette's editorial and comic strip cartoons are sometimes controversial, but always edifying. Most depict the colossal ego of politicians, certain evangelists and their followers, and other fringe fanatics. (For more about Mr. Marlette see 1981 Nieman Notes, Page 58).



# Meet The Preacher...

REVEREND WILL B. DUNN IS JUST A SIMPLE COUNTRY PREACHER...

**PEWER'S PROFILE**

**REV. WILL B. DUNN**

HOME: Bypass, USA

AGE: Younger than Methuselah

OCCUPATION: Expert in Human Relations

HOBBIES: Spiritual Aerobics, Soaps, Ministry to Domestic Animals

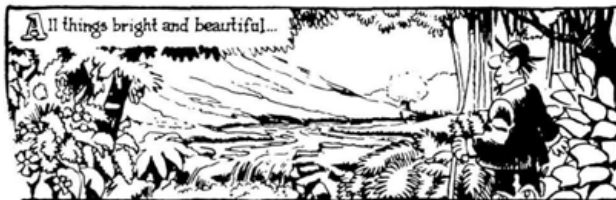
LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Teakwood deck around Baptismal pool

GOALS: His own personal satellite and an unlisted "800" number.

QUOTE: "There's no business like soul business!"

DRINK: Pever's grape juice -- Communion, or on the rocks.

...TO A SMALL, BUT DEEPLY TROUBLED CONGREGATION...



"GIMME THAT OLD TIME RELIGION!"



JIM AND TAMMY DRIVING THE MONEY CHANGERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE



"THAT'S RIGHT -- JIM AND TAMMY WERE EXPELLED FROM PARADISE AND LEFT ME IN CHARGE!"

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# A Penetrating Glare at the Marital State

## Intimate Partners: Patterns in Love and Marriage.

Maggie Scarf. Random House, 1987. \$18.95

by Sharon Crosbie

One could be forgiven for thinking that in the field of human relationships there are no mysteries left.

Over recent years we have been inundated by books promising solutions for even our smallest irritations — love me, love my foibles.

Self-help, assertiveness, I'm O.K., you're O.K., dumping the blame on Mother — there is an excuse for everything. However, despite this proliferation of printed instructions, life is still full of nasty surprises, not least among them the institution of marriage which can change like a mountain weather forecast, totally and unexpectedly after years of apparent stability. This must be why so many fine minds keep poking and prodding at it.

Maggie Scarf [NF '76], seems to be possessed of a fine mind and in this book, *Intimate Partners*, she has prodded at a fair few marriages — by invitation only of course — and she has turned up some nasty surprises for those couples who have told her their problems.

She has used tact and discretion; she has no doubt been of great help, so why is it so profoundly depressing to have case history after case history laid out for us?

Her reputation as a science writer and her ability to throw light on psychological subjects should have readers clamoring for more, grateful for the insights she provides, but this reader was left with the "blahs."

It is a hard book to read objectively because all along the way one

glimpses facets of one's own personality in other people's encounters, so the reader is forced to reassess past (checkered) relationships.

That's my fault, not Maggie Scarf's, I guess, but somehow we are all so targeted and labelled and classified by advertisers and sociologists and psychologists these days, it just makes one want to go out and behave against the grain — to be the exception that proves the rule, goddammit! But I bet they can even explain that!

These days it seems the experts are able to tell us everything about us, blame it on the family and junk food; then stick a label on each of us. Not much room to maneuver. (And probably a prelude to incipient consumer paranoia). Never mind.

The individual process of adult growth and change can work like dry rot in a marriage. As Maggie Scarf points out, time and the shifting circumstances of life mean "challenges and demands for adaptive change." Who can argue with that? It is just that change is so often painful, no matter how clear the explanation for it.

This book is nothing if not clear, and leaves little to chance. Ms. Scarf has set out to explore "those basic psychological truths about intimate attachments which cut across social and economic dimensions. . . . the way marriages are made: the basic materials that are used . . . and how these affect the structure of the relationship that develops."

She defines "intimacy," not as candle-lit romanticism; rather as something "closer to each person's ordinary reality . . . an individual's ability to talk about who he really is and to say what he wants and needs, and to be heard by the intimate partner." But of course.

What clogs up the drains, though,

are the motives we have for settling on the partner we marry.

It is, alas, as if we were preprogrammed. It is almost as if blind choice has had nothing to do with it. Hence this reader's feelings of frustration and helplessness.

Ms. Scarf's triumphant proof that we work in cyclical fashion is furnished by her "genograms" which prove the existence of "a system for being in an intimate relationship."

A genogram is like a family tree, a way of looking at each partner's "natural context — the family subculture in which he or she was reared — and discerning those repetitive themes, issues, myths, patterns of behavior, etc. which have been brought forward from the past and resurrected in the marriage of the present."

One's position in the family, the relationship with parents and grandparents, loss and deprivation — either physical or emotional — put down layers of silt that will have an effect on us later — bet on it.

As a result, we do things as we saw them done when we were growing up, or as a *reaction* to the way we saw them done. A harsh mother causes great leniency in the parenting behavior of her daughter, but in time, as a reaction, the granddaughter will "develop a critical and tyrannical stance." The behavior is turned inside out. If anger, resentment, envy, and despair are not dealt with, they will make an unwelcome appearance some way down the track.

It may not be obvious at first. That is where "projective identification" comes in. Feelings that have been totally submerged cause the individual to be unaware of his rage (or whatever), but he is still able to trigger the negative emotion he cannot express in his spouse; then fall back surprised while she explodes with anger enough for both of them.

We choose the wrong partner in the eyes of the world, perhaps, but however awful the problems the marriage presents it is likely that

they are problems we have lived through before. However ghastly, we can cope with the familiar.

It can be no coincidence, claims Ms. Scarf, that we end up living in a situation similar to the one in which we grew up, or our children do. "Families," she says, "seem to have their theme songs, their problematic issues. Alcoholism, inappropriate anger, over-close attachments between a parent and a child, depression . . . are songs sung by different individuals at different times from different perches on the family tree. But what is astonishing, when one stops and looks at that tree in its entirety, are the persistent ways in which certain core passages . . . are repeated again and again. They are passed along from generation to generation, picked up here and there, and then worked on anew."

Coincidence? No way. The more we have been in a tough family situation the more likely we will recreate it as we search for a different ending — for a resolution. For many of us, the resolution is not forthcoming and we remain stuck in the groove of repetitive fights, ongoing unhappiness, marital infidelities till death (or divorce) us do part.

But lo, through yonder window comes Ms. Scarf with the solution. It is all laid out in Chapter 11. She knows we can change the rules of the marital system as they exist if we persevere with some deceptively simple tasks that force us out of the rut, and encourage us to behave like real grownups.

Why didn't we think of them? Talking and listening, asking to be heard and in silence, so real feelings can be aired. No nasty name-calling though; just "this is how it is for me, right now" is as far as you can go.

There is no way we can argue with that. Such good sense. But you can lead a horse to water — surely there is a point beyond which there is no chance of getting a hearing, and I wonder if the tolerance and effort made by Ms. Scarf's five client couples isn't because they were highly

motivated, educated, and housed.

So far, sex has only lurked in the background. Sexual problems are very much to the fore when a marriage is in crisis. As Ms. Scarf puts it: "(sexual symptoms have) a poisonous effect upon the relationship (and) upon each person's sense of self-worth and integrity."

Amazingly, in this permissive age, a great many of the problems stem from straight-out ignorance. Chapter 14 puts an end to that once and for all. Titled "What, Precisely, Happens During Sex?", it leaves us in no doubt — there is nothing magic about it when it's down there in black and white! But every little bit helps as does the chapter on sexual cures.

There is an enormous amount of

information packed into this book. Infidelity, emotional triangles, couples starting out, couples halfway there, couples who have reached a workable compromise, couples who have teenagers ready to leave home, couples in the post-parenting phase thrown together again with no more Little League as an excuse to get out of the house.

But excellent though Maggie Scarf's efforts are, we still must ask: do we risk missing the scenery because we were too busy looking down at the road map? □

*Sharon Crosbie, Nieman Fellow '85, is a journalist with Radio New Zealand in Wellington.*

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## Missed Stories

### Behind The Front Page: A Candid Look at How The News is Made

David S. Broder. Simon and Schuster, 1987. \$18.95

by Richard Dudman

If every reporter had the perception and wisdom and ethics of David Broder, the news business would be in better shape than it is today, but the brickbats still would be flying. Error and excess are inevitable, as shown by his own admitted lapses and those of his newspaper, *The Washington Post*.

Broder won a Pulitzer Prize in 1973 for his work as a syndicated columnist, but this book is mainly about successes and failures and encounters in his equally distinguished career as a hard-news reporter.

He and most others missed for years the political significance of the Reverend Jerry Falwell and the religious element in the New Right. The same with Betty Friedan and her book *The Feminine Mystique*, the bi-

ble of women's liberation. True enough, and Broder seems to have spotted at least part of the reason why most of us were slow to catch up with those stories: Both were not part of the routine events that most reporters and editors consider to be news on the various reporting beats. With reference to Betty Friedan, he could have added that most of the reporters and editors were men.

Another in Broder's personal list of missed stories was Arthur Laffer and supply-side economics. He credits *The Wall Street Journal*, and in particular a *Journal* editorial writer, Jude Wanniski, with recognizing the importance of Laffer and his theory of economic growth through cutting taxes. The now retired executive editor of the *Journal*, Fred Taylor, has a different account of the newspaper's role in supply-side economics. Taylor says, only partly in fun, that he is personally responsible for the huge federal budget deficit. He says this young editorial writer was bubbling over about an economist friend with a theory that an across-the-board tax cut would lead to increased output and increased tax revenues. Taylor says his mistake was in not telling



Wanniski to go to hell.

Instead, he got rid of him by telling him to go write an editorial-page article about the theory. Wanniski sold the *Journal's* editorial page and Representative Jack Kemp on the idea, and Ronald Reagan eventually bought it for his 1980 presidential campaign. The deficit grew in due course.

Spotting, or failing to spot, a trend is one thing, but peddling an idea and manufacturing a trend is something else. Broder needn't feel bad about that one.

In a chapter called "Misjudged Characters," Broder traces a recurrent "new Nixon" theme, in which reporters seemed to compete with each other to make the case that the bad old Nixon was safely gone and in his place was an open and straightforward statesman who had put aside his former furtiveness and deviousness and who had even acquired a sense of humor.

Broder avoided that trap, but he asks whether he and other reporters could not have done more to expose the manipulative nature of Nixon's 1968 campaign and to warn their readers about the character of any candidate who employed such tactics.

Wisely, he backs off from any thought that news reporters should try to psychoanalyze the candidates. But he does maintain that they can provide voters with clues by telling illustrative anecdotes about the candidates' behavior. As an example he cites Don Oberdorfer's report in *The Washington Post* of "what seemed to be a minor anecdote — but one that was designed to raise some basic questions in the reader's mind" about Jimmy Carter.

Oberdorfer reported that Carter flatly denied in 1976 interviews that he had rejected Governor George Wallace's request that he make a seconding speech for Wallace's nomination at the Democratic National Convention in 1972.

Later, after Carter's aides Jody Powell and Hamilton Jordan had produced documentary evidence to the

contrary from Carter's files, he telephoned Oberdorfer and said, "Jody was right and I was wrong. . . I was just completely wrong."

The reporter put that incident alongside Carter's repeated promise that he would never lie or make a misleading statement. The point seems to have been that Carter had broken his promise not to lie — not that he had volunteered a correction to his own statement that had turned out to be false.

In my own recollection, few if any of the reporters who covered Carter's 1976 campaign would have given Carter the benefit of the doubt. They didn't trust Carter, but, more important, in my view, they didn't like him. His cold stare put them off. He gave no indication that he enjoyed the game of politics or his exchanges with reporters. Politicians generally flatter reporters or even genuinely like and respect them. Carter disdained them and showed it. They hated him for that, and their hatred colored much of their copy.

Broder makes a spirited defense of the way election campaigns are covered. He says the "horse-race" aspect of a contest must be reported, along with "the issues," because readers want to know who is going to win. He has one proposal that could lead to a better elucidation of the issues. He suggests that television stations invite each candidate to speak for 10 to 15 minutes on an assigned subject each week during a campaign. No candidate could refuse, and that length of time would offset the 30-second spots that convey so little in the way of information.

As for the presidential debates, he says flatly that they should be limited to the candidates. Reporters should ask their questions at news conferences and interviews, not during debates.

But none of these prescriptions is going to end the criticism of the press. Reporting is by its nature intrusive. In a free-enterprise system, news is a commodity. Competition in publishing is bound to lead to

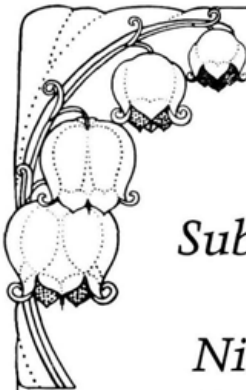
error, distortion, and sensationalism. And yet, a controlled press would be worse.

Walter Lippmann wrote that "the theory of a free press is that the truth will emerge from free reporting and free discussion, not that it will be presented perfect and instantly in any one account." He said the ultimate burden must fall upon the individual citizen: "If he wishes to be well informed he must read widely in the press and listen widely to the broadcasts. No one example of either can serve him more than very partially."

To this, Broder adds an appeal to his readers: If you don't like the performance of your paper, don't cancel your subscription — get into a dialogue. Like representative government, the relationship between newspapers and readers is a give-and-take proposition. Let the paper know when it leaves you unsatisfied or when you think its values and prejudices bend the news out of shape.

Newspapers and their readers can and must be partners in our democratic system. □

*Richard Dudman, Nieman Fellow '54, retired as chief Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and now lives in Maine.*



**Subscribe  
to  
Nieman  
Reports**

*(See page 42)*



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# Reining in the Power-Hungry

## Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policymaking.

Martin Linsky. W.W. Norton & Company, 1986. \$19.95

by Julius Duscha

Are Washington reporters as important as they think they are? Can they all by themselves make or break officials' lives, their policies, or even governments? Or is the Washington press corps mostly reactive in its coverage, and more concerned with "scoops" that will make the front page or the evening news rather than with broader issues of government policies?

These are some of the basic, and old, Washington questions at the heart of this interesting, at times thoughtful and insightful, but shamefully repetitive book. Author Linsky, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, also has been an editorial writer and reporter for *The Boston Globe*, and is a former member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Although so far as I know he has had no direct Washington experience, he obviously brings much more than just an academic view to his subject.

The book deals with several case studies of press-government relations designed to show how reporters directly affected government policymaking through stories they dug up or leaks they received from government officials. The case studies are examined from the viewpoint of the officials rather than the reporters. Linsky concludes that "everything we have learned here thus drives us to the conclusion that policymakers will be more successful at doing their jobs if they do better in their relations with the press. To put it more provocatively, having more policymakers who are skilled at managing the

media will make for better government." That is pretty provocative to those of us who remember when news management became a battlecry of the 1960's and 1970's.

"Officials," Linsky adds, "who are adept communicators, are often taken to task, particularly by reporters, for controlling the news. But there is a crucial distinction between managing the news — for example, trying to put the best possible face on an issue or setting an agenda — and lying or deliberate misrepresentation."

Yes, there sure is, but as Linsky also knows reporters are just as suspicious of officials trying to put the best face on a decision — which quite often makes it suspect — as they are of officials caught lying. Good policy still makes good news, often, unfortunately, buried in the back of the paper, and bad policy decisions make interesting news for the front pages, as witness the Iran-Contra story.

The case studies that make up the bulk of this book and are reviewed again and again — did the book have no editor? — range from *The Washington Post* reporting by Walter Pincus, during the Carter administration, that killed the neutron bomb which would target people while sparing buildings, to the bad press generated by the Reagan administration as it tried to remove cheaters from Social Security disability rolls.

Other cases include the persistent leaks as the Nixon administration's Justice Department was preparing its case against its own Vice President Spiro T. Agnew; the decision of the Carter administration to move residents from the Love Canal housing site after a leaked report was published in *The New York Times*; and the efforts of the Reagan administration to put a technical "face" on its decision to continue a federal tax exemption for the Bob Jones

University despite its openly discriminatory practices.

Each case is a little different, and in each situation the role played by the press is somewhat different. Except for the neutron bomb story, the press was primarily concerned with the story, and getting it on the front page. In the case of the neutron bomb, *Post* reporter Pincus had strong personal feelings against the "people bomb," which kept the story in the news for several months before the decision to stop work on the bomb. Reporters are supposed to keep personal feelings out of their stories, but that is hard to do, and in this case I think Pincus was right to follow his beliefs.

In the case of the Agnew story, for example, I am sure the leaks continued because the prosecutors were trying to keep the heat on the Nixon administration. The Social Security disability cases embarrassed the Reagan administration, as they should have, because they revealed the hard-hearted flintiness behind the presidential smile and cordiality. As for Love Canal, it has been a disaster, it has always seemed to me, no matter who got into it. And who did the Reagan people think they were kidding when they tried to plead a technicality in helping out their fundamentalist friends at Bob Jones University?

In addition to presenting us with case studies, Linsky gives us excerpts from interviews with former government officials ranging from the late Wilbur Cohen [Health, Education, and Welfare Secretary 1968-1969] of Kennedy and Johnson days to Henry Kissinger, Elliott Richardson, and Cyrus Vance [Secretary of State 1977-1980] of more recent times. Not surprisingly, Linsky concludes from the interviews that the Washington press corps is tougher than it used to be, and that officials who spend a lot of time with reporters usually get better press. Edwin Lahey [NF '39] once said that we should not fawn upon the great, but as we all know it is hard to be mean or nasty when you

have drunk or supped regularly with a Secretary of State or a White House Pooh-Bah.

I have been around Washington for most of the last 40 years, and I must admit that I bristle a bit when writers like Linsky seem to think that investigative reporting is rather new in the capital. Has he forgotten the Truman scandals, Sherman Adams, and many other big stories from the 1940's and 1950's that would not have been exposed if it were not for Washington reporters? I can even remember a few I could take some credit for helping to get on the front pages.

Yes, the press has become more aggressive, but I don't recall reporters ever being quite the lap dogs the youngsters now want to call us old-timers who are still around. Is the press more important than it used to be? All of us certainly think so, but at times I am not so sure.

During most of the Reagan administration, for example, the White House has been expert at setting the national and often international news agendas and the press has been its usual reactive self. The press remains event-oriented, and, with the notable exception of the Iran-Contra affair, the White House has been superb in controlling the news since 1981.

Yes, government officials must take into account, as Linsky emphasizes, how a particular decision will look on the evening news or read on tomorrow morning's front pages. But if the decision is a good one that ideally almost explains itself, it will play well in the day's news. It is when decisions are flawed and convoluted, as in Iran-Contra, Social Security disability payments, Bob Jones University, and many other cases, that government officials find themselves in trouble, and they should.

"Policymakers," Linsky observes, "usually have personal and professional stakes in the outcome of policy debates. Journalists are like stockbrokers who care less whether

the market moves up or down than whether or not it is moving. Unlike Walter Pincus in the neutron bomb story, most reporters have no stake in a particular policy result, but have a huge interest in the continuing story. . . and in the story continuing."

The role of the press is best summed up in the book with a quotation from James McCartney of the Knight-Ridder Newspapers Inc. Washington Bureau, another old Washington hand, who says: "I believe in the adversary relationship between the press and the government. I believe it is my job to try to test them against every abstract standard I can think of to see if they're doing what they say they're doing. . . I believe it's my job to assume that they may very well be lying and misrepresenting because all of my experience suggests they probably are." Yes, harsh words, but I don't think many journalists who have been around Washington long would disagree with McCartney.

Nor would they disagree with Stuart Eizenstat, one of President Carter's chief White House advisers, who told Linsky: "If you can't articulate and convince people that what you have done is right, maybe what you did isn't right. And if you can't answer questions adequately, put to you by the press, about why you made the decision and why you didn't make the opposite decision, then perhaps you made the wrong one."

So, despite the interesting evidence of the book's case studies, and all the sound advice Linsky has for policymakers giving more attention to the press and its crucial role in reporting and explaining governmental decisions, the adversarial role between press and government is going to continue, and I think that is healthy for all of us, however inconvenient it may be at times for government officials.

As we have seen once again in the Iran-Contra affair, presidents have far too much power and too often regard themselves as above the law. Con-

gress and the courts serve as something of a check on presidential power, but I think Congress in particular grows weaker by the year as its own power is dissipated among a plethora of subcommittees and exhausting and often pointless partisanship.

This then leaves the press as the great countervailing force to rein in power-hungry presidents, national security advisers, and secretaries of everything from state to interior (You haven't forgotten James Watt already, have you?). The press, too, is bigger and more centralized than it used to be, but the competition is still keen in a place like Washington where *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other major papers are fierce rivals and where NBC, CBS, and ABC now have become important and serious players, too. The press often may be more of an irritant than a constructive critic, but that's all right. The body politic usually needs a lot of irritation. □

*Julius Duscha, Nieman Fellow '56, is director of The Washington Journalism Center.*

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## Charles arrives

Mbabane (UPI) — Prince Charles arrived in Swaziland for a hectic two-day schedule that includes dancing by skimpily dressed virgin maidens wielding sharpened machetes. His arrival at a banquet was delayed by a cat which balked at leaving the parking space reserved for the Prince's limousine.

*The Independent* (London, UK)

There are more ways than one of delaying a prince.

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# Is Objective Reporting Fiction?

## Ethical Journalism. A Guide for Students, Practitioners, and Consumers.

Philip Meyer. Longman, 1987.  
\$18.95

by Robert H. Estabrook

Professor Meyer [NF '67] focuses an informed eye on many of the foibles, clichés, and self-delusions of contemporary journalism. His book may ruffle the composure of some in the profession who have been smugly confident of their own rectitude. It also may irritate some who have trouble with his suggestion that the conscience of a newspaper can somehow be quantified and measured in an annual ethics survey.

As the William Rand Kenan, Jr. professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, Professor Meyer draws extensively on his experience as a reporter on *The Miami Herald* and then as director of news research for the Knight-Ridder Newspapers Inc. He does not shrink from questioning such sacred cows as the notion that newspaper ownership of a ball club is a public service, and the presumed right of some newspaper executives (including editors) to take cheap sea voyages on the paper boat.

In a useful review of the First Amendment, the author defines what he calls the "slippery slope problem" — the reluctance of many journalists to testify in criminal cases about which they have knowledge for fear of setting a precedent. "News people would be better off," Professor Meyer asserts, "if they abandoned their claims of privilege and cast their lot with the general public, fighting for their rights as public rights, not for recognition as a privileged class."

As a statement of principle for press behavior, that is admirable. He

seems a little cavalier in dismissing apprehensions that Supreme Court modifications of *The New York Times v. Sullivan* rule so as to permit examination of a reporter's (or editorial writer's) state of mind may constitute license for fishing expeditions. In the net, though, he saliently concludes that "the most efficient and effective way for journalists to improve the free flow of information may be to clean up some of their own bad habits."

Perhaps not surprisingly in light of some of the excuses that have been offered for failure to call offenders to book, Professor Meyer has a rather dim view of formal codes of newspaper ethics. They seem to him to be more concerned with appearances, with public relations, than with insuring ethical performance.

What may actually govern, he indicates, is an unwritten code of practice. Who has not encountered the habit — on some newspapers — of de-emphasizing or knocking down an exclusive obtained by the opposition, irrespective of its news value? Professor Meyer condemns the reluctance of some papers to acknowledge mistakes forthrightly. He also terms a "knee-jerk reaction" the unwritten rule on some papers always to publish what has been learned, irrespective of the cost.

Pressures from advertisers and "business-office musts" are among the more obvious influences that can distort editorial treatment. Professor Meyer also discusses junkets, and the more subtle influences such as free tickets and books. It may not have occurred to many journalists to see impropriety in accepting for personal use the newspaper's contract rate for a car rental or hotel room.

What he describes as the traditional "wall of separation" between the news and advertising departments inevitably breaks down on small papers on which individual staff members

may have several different functions. It sometimes can be a problem to persuade those steeped in the notion of editorial purity to recognize that their colleagues in the advertising department are not inferior beings with a loathsome disease, and that continued paychecks depend on cooperation. Professor Meyer hints at skepticism concerning the belief that the editorial side is the sole repository of newspaper ethics.

Some readers may boggle initially at his assertion that "the notion of objective reporting is itself a fiction." He finally qualifies this by acknowledging that although the story is inevitably conditioned by the lenses and thinking patterns of the reporter, to strive for objectivity is still a worthwhile goal.

It is, nevertheless, useful to consider how much a nominally objective account can be skewed by prejudices, assumptions, and stereotypes. The journalistic injunction to present "both sides" of the story also implies a value judgment that both sides are equally credible — a judgment belied by the efforts of the tobacco industry to discredit scientific findings about cigarettes and lung cancer. Older readers may remember the initial editorial judgments that gave prominence to charges made by Senator Joe McCarthy merely because he uttered them, even though they were demonstrably exaggerated and the full truth had a hard time catching up. This was a time when some of the press made a farce of "objectivity" rules by following them out the window.

Deceptions practiced by journalists give rise to some of Professor Meyer's sharpest criticisms of press behavior, and his treatment of the issue is illuminating. There is no universal agreement. Many would agree that journalists ought not to lie or deliberately misrepresent in order to get a story. But what about less flagrant deceptions?

Is it morally offensive, for example, for a reporter to wear clothes that someone else may assume are those



of a particular group or profession? What about a reporter who pretends to be a convict in order to obtain an inside report on prison conditions or prisoner attitudes? Is it permissible to deceive so long as you leave it to others to draw conclusions and do not yourself actually lie? This is a nice ethical question.

Janet Cooke has been denounced from all sides for inventing an eight-year-old drug addict in a story in *The Washington Post* for which she initially was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. Similar creations in the *New York Daily News* and *The New Yorker* also have occasioned criticism. Yet suppose Miss Cooke had acknowledged at the outset that she was making up a fictional composite character to illustrate a real situation. Would that be an ethically permissible technique?

More of Professor Meyer's penetrating barbs are reserved for invasions of privacy. He relates a personal experience in which he was asked to interview the family of the pilot of a missing airliner who happened to be a neighbor. He admits to having broken a supposed rule against showing affected persons his story before he turned it in. In doing that, he displayed far more sensitivity than some of the television "interviews" in which someone jams a microphone in front of a grieving mother to ask how she felt when her son fell under a truck.

From invasions of private grief it is but a short jump to the kind of insensitivity shown by the *Los Angeles Times* in identifying as gay the man who saved the life of President Gerald Ford by deflecting the gun of a would-be assassin. What possible constructive purpose did this identification serve (unless, perversely, to show that gays can be as heroic as the next person)?

On the basis of editorial staff surveys Professor Meyer has a good word for conscientious publishers: "The happiest newsroom is found at the paper whose publisher takes an active role in producing and enhancing the editorial product." He

discusses the role of the ombudsman, a concept of which he approves, and the operation of the National News Council, the death of which he laments. He also describes the relative success of the Minnesota News Council.

Finally, he provides some measuring rods for the reader to employ as a watchdog of newspaper performance — among them whether the paper has a vigorous editorial page, and whether it provides continuity of news coverage. This process leads to a somewhat unsatisfying recommendation for newspapers to publish annual ethical audits of their performance, compiled through interviews with members of the staff and based on such factors as the number of inaccuracies and how corrections are handled. To this reviewer, that seems to stretch an infatuation with statistics and research into a philosophical principle.

One point I find missing is the recognition that on small papers and in small communities conflicts of interest are virtually inevitable among

journalists, as they are among lawyers and public officials. The best that can be hoped is that such conflicts will be identified publicly and that those involved will recognize the hazards and seek to guard against them. Merely because a monk may be cut off from contact with the outside world is no guarantee, of course, that he will think noble thoughts and lead a virtuous life. Even though it can't be quantified, the best formula for fairness may be simply a determination to try to be fair.

Professor Meyer has written an incisive, provocative book. Its most useful function may be to induce readers to re-examine and question some of the assumptions that they have long regarded as unquestionable. □

*Robert H. Estabrook is editor and publisher emeritus of the Lakeville (Connecticut) Journal, a country weekly. From 1946 to 1971 he was on the staff of The Washington Post as an editorial writer, editor of the editorial page, and foreign correspondent.*

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## O Brave New Readers!

### **The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historic Analysis and Handbook.**

Edited by Sally M. Miller.  
Greenwood Press, Inc., 1987. \$65

by **Charles Fenyvesi**

The best of the American press challenges the wisdom and the integrity of those in power, and turns a nice profit in the process. Independent of other institutions of society, editors and reporters are trained professionals who frequent the same bars and stage yearly conventions. A brisk trade in personnel undergirds a fierce competition for circulation and prizes.

The nation's ethnic press lives by

another set of standards.

From its beginnings in the 18th century, its principal mission has been to offer immigrants from outside the British Isles information on getting by in this strange new world. When an ethnic publication has embraced a political cause, it usually has had to do with a conflict that engaged the community the readers left behind on the other side of the Atlantic or the Pacific.

Traditionally tied to churches and immigrant associations, and sometimes to parties and governments overseas, few of the many thousands of ethnic newspapers and magazines have ever turned a profit. But, except for publications that closed down for lack of funds, being in the red has not really mattered. Most of



the publishers, editors, and reporters were — and are — in ethnic journalism for the love of the language, religion, community, or culture. Some of them have elicited passionate personal and ideological loyalties from readers who are not always immigrants with rudimentary English, but are occasionally, generations removed from the Old Country. Few of the dailies, weeklies, and monthlies are competitive, and a scoop is no big deal. Only a minority of ethnic journalists could be called professionals.

For instance, the founding fathers of the Finnish-American press have included a painter, a printer, a watchsmith, and the proprietor of a steamship agency.

Even if their editorial offices were located in the same ramshackle downtown building, journalists from the increasing diversity of ethnic groups reaching these shores have traditionally ignored one another, often studiously so. National and communal hostilities in the Old World continue to keep apart those who write in, say, Croatian and Serbian, Ukrainian and Russian, Turkish and Armenian. A dispute can be even more furious within the same group, as it was in the Chinese-American press during the 1950's and 1960's, with the issue of Taiwan responsible for an unbridgeable gap. A trade association of America's ethnic press is as quixotic an idea as world peace.

*The Ethnic Press in the United States* covers the presses of 28 ethnic communities, from Arabic to Ukrainian. While each ethnic press is examined by a scholar competent in the language, there is no overview. The quality of the articles is uneven, with the majority reflecting thoughtful analysis, and a few making do with just a cursory glance.

The book is a useful guide, but by no means comprehensive. Most unfortunate are the omissions — there is no mention of the most recent waves of immigrants — Southeast Asians and Iranians, Ethiopians and Afghans.

In identifying themselves, those toiling in the different vineyards of the ethnic press attach a hyphen and the word American after naming their particular ethnic group. They honor the English-language press with the adjective "mainstream," and some of them poormouth their own place as "backwater."

Among ethnic journalists, Joseph Pulitzer was one of the few who crossed over to the mainstream. An immigrant from Hungary, he began his career in 1868 with the *St. Louis Westliche Post*, a first-class German-language paper, before moving on — and up — to the English-language newspapers, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the *New York World*, the morning paper, and the *Evening World*.

The German-American press, producing a record number of some 5,000 publications over a span of more than 250 years, has the distinction of having been singled out for attention by such an outstanding mainstream American as Benjamin Franklin. Franklin had political and financial designs on the German-American community. In 1732, he launched what scholars believe was probably America's first German newspaper, the *Philadelphische Zeitung*. "He had financial resources, influence, and a printing press," observes James M. Bergquist. "But he lacked German type, standing with the German community, and skillful help with the language." His paper, which might well have been the first journal of America's ethnic press, expired after only two issues.

Far more typical of the entrepreneurial spirit of the ethnic press is that which spurred the editor whom Bergquist calls "the pioneer of the German press." One year after he immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1738, Christopher Sauer started the monthly called *Der Hoch-Deutsch Pennsylvanische Geschichts-Schreiber*, which translates as the High German Pennsylvania Chronicler. Sauer's purpose was to defend the pietistic sects against the estab-

lished Lutheran and Reformed German churches. The Lutherans' leader acknowledged that Sauer's paper, "universally read by the Germans," killed once and for all an ambitious plan, backed by Benjamin Franklin as well, for a German-language school system.

Writing about the Irish-American press, Eileen McMahon defines it as a medium of Irish-Catholic clergymen "to instruct their displaced flock in a confusing new world." The same definition holds true for the entire ethnic press. Writing about the Danish-American press, Marion Tuttle Marzolf notes: "The immigrant press would garner strength as friend, guide, teacher, and advocate through its decades of service to the new settlers."

The scope of the ethnic press has been narrow. The article on the Filipino-American press quotes Donn Hart describing its various publications as devoting "a little space to news about the United States or world affairs unless the latter have special significance for Filipinos or the Philippines." Writing about the Slovak-American press, M. Mark Stolarik observes that even if its publications will be wholly written in English a generation from now — a trend which may be shared by all the ethnic presses — it will survive "if it continues to report news from Slovak communities across the country, something which the mass-circulation English-language press has never done."

From the beginning of their immigration, the Irish had one advantage: Their language was English, which allowed them to take over the urban American Catholic Church. As early as 1830, diocesan newspapers became vehicles for the Irish point of view, which included arguing for the liberation of Ireland from the British. This type of lobbying has been common for the ethnic press, and the passionate appeals have often spilled over to the opinion pages of the mainstream press.

From its genesis in 1843, the Jew-

ish press has had a full plate of causes: protesting pogroms, rallying against Hitler, and arguing for support for an independent Jewish state. In Yiddish and Hebrew, in Russian, and nowadays mostly in English, the Jewish press has been intensely partisan.

The same may be said about other, less-known groups. Stolarik notes that the Slovak-American minority, now numbering between one and two million people, has published at least 220 newspapers since 1885, and more than half of them have reflected "four distinct political orientations: Slovak nationalist, Magyarone, Czechoslovak, and socialist or communist." Published in the principal areas of Slovak settlement — Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, New York, and New Jersey — these newspapers have also mirrored the religious composition of Slovak immigrants: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Greek Catholic.

The ethnic press has been a barometer of a universal immigrant tension: assimilationists versus preservationists. Another type of immigrant friction is in evidence in virtually all the communities covered in Miller's book. For instance, from the beginning of the Slovene immigration in the 1890s, writes Joseph D. Dwyer, "there were two major groups within the community. One was the more conservative and religious group whose life centered around its church and the religiously oriented fraternal societies and press. The other group was more labor-oriented, pro-socialist, freethinking, and anticlerical in nature, and centered its life around the so-called progressive organizations and press."

The freedom offered by America encouraged lines of thinking forbidden in the Old Country. For instance, some Polish-American publications rose and fell with the fortunes of Polish national uprisings. A.J.Kuzniewski observes that while over the years critics have faulted Polish-American journalists for "instability"

and "irresponsibility" — and "the bastardization of the Polish language" — the press they produced was "thoroughly American, in the broad and pluralistic sense of the term . . . In retrospect it seems almost inevitable that, in reading and responding to their press, the immigrants and their descendants learned to act — and to think — like Americans."

A list of the titles of Finnish journals sums up the functions of the entire ethnic press: *The People's Friend*, *The Liberator*, *Free Speech*, *The American Echo*.

What H.M. Lai says about the Chinese press may be applied to all the ethnic presses: "Publishing a Chinese newspaper never was, nor is it now, a lucrative business."

The demise of the ethnic press is ruefully prophesied at every immigrant association meeting. The reasons cited are the same: lack of interest in and knowledge of the language, and the accelerating pace of Americanization. A. William Hogleund notes that in 1983, the editors of the four Finnish-language

papers met in Minneapolis "lamenting their common fate and dreaming of new ways to prolong their literary tradition. However, no practical resolutions were forthcoming. It may be that the 1980's will mark the passing of the Finnish-American newspaper."

Writing about the Mexican-American press, Carlos E. Cortes permits himself a measure of optimism. He argues that as mainstream advertisers discover the Hispanic market, the Mexican-American press could benefit if it demonstrates that its special market cannot be reached by other means. Cortes says that the result may well be an "unprecedented growth of the Mexican-American media, both print and electronic." He cautions however that the current "dynamic era for Hispanic journalism" may not ultimately benefit the Mexican-American press but only "those Chicano journalists whose goals are integration into mainstream media."

These days, it is safe enough to predict that the ethnic press will not wither away in the shadow of the

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mainstream news media. Escapees from wars and revolutions keep knocking on our doors, and they huddle together in this land of political and economic safe haven. They seem equally anxious to blossom into Americans and to cherish their foreign roots. As refugees and as Americans, they must vent their outrage. They feel duty-bound to speak for their relatives and friends silenced in the Old Country. But in the event that things improve in the

homeland, few of them will return. They will stay in the United States, raising children and treasuring memories. Since the mainstream press will not – and cannot – serve as a regular forum for their special pleas, the ethnic press will survive and prosper. □

*Charles Fenyvesi, a reporter for U.S. News & World Report, has been an editor of The National Jewish Monthly, and Washington Jewish Week.*

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## A Gentleman of the Press

### The Making of a Journalist.

William S. White. The University Press of Kentucky, 1986. \$22

by William German

This is an autobiography of a working lifetime. William S. White looks back at his 50 years in journalism and offers a strong argument that it was better in the good old days – and that it will never be as good again. The rules were nicer, the reporters were well-behaved, and, if you looked hard enough, there were even a few competent editors.

White's personal participation in a half century of history was remarkable. From the mid-1920's through Watergate he managed to be right there in the eye of every news storm. Whether it was a sensational murder trial, the first landing on D-day, or the Kennedy departure for his date with an assassin in Dallas, there was Bill White taking careful notes and reporting the hectic events with dignity and deference.

The Bill White résumé is an absolute classic of onward-and-upward in the journalism trade: Goes to work for the local paper while still a student in Texas. Hired away by the Associated Press in the state capital. Makes it to New York in the tough Depression years. Becomes an AP

general editor. Goes to Europe as a top echelon war correspondent. Switches to *The New York Times* as chief congressional reporter. Wins Pulitzer for Taft biography. Quits *The Times* and becomes influential columnist for newspaper syndicate and for *Harper's* magazine. Pal and confidant of presidents and world-class celebrities.

All this success was achieved, White stresses, without violating the etiquette then de rigueur in the profession's higher levels. It was a courtly and clubby etiquette, even if it did make for a rather uneven code of conduct. Gossip was not meant for print. Investigative reporting was a mucky thing. Yet secrets were shared with news sources. Tips and advice were fed to favored politicians. Harsh facts about conspiring South African journalists went unpublished because the culprits were, after all, members of the fraternity.

White looks at today's journalism and scorns what he sees as a continued trend toward sensationalism and irresponsibility. "If one assumes as I do that [journalism's] purpose is to serve neither as a punitive force nor as entertainment, but rather as a source of information and opinion, then this Old Journalism had much to recommend it. At any rate, it is the kind of journalism I have always practiced."

In the course of the anecdotes that

abound in his recollections, White frequently examines his journalistic conduct in the light of this definition. He says he would note now, as he did then, that his was the correct and professional way.

"I could, for example, have written with complete accuracy," he declares, "that all was not well between John and Jacqueline Kennedy, just as I could have written more than a year ahead of time that [Lyndon] Johnson was not going to seek reelection in 1986."

He explains that he chose not to because of bonds of friendship and a personal view that to have reported such news would have hurt the national interest. Nevertheless, he prefaces this explanation with just the hint of self-doubt. "I suppose," he writes, "that in the present mores of journalism this attitude would be regarded as at best quaint and at worst a betrayal of 'the people's right to know.'"

Could it be that such critics might be right? In the course of his nostalgic journey, White supplies unintentional reason to think that they might be. The accounts of his positive reporting are seldom as interesting or as pertinent as his revelations – belatedly – about the newsmakers or institutions he had reason to dislike. His indictments of people such as Thomas Dewey, U Thant, Robert McNamara, the French underground, or just about any copy editor make fascinating reading.

Occasionally, White even lets his guard slip, and regrets having been so kind in his contemporary endeavors. Recalling a favorable report on a flowery speech by Adlai Stevenson, "Instead of being moved," White writes, "we should have roundly reported that Stevenson was what Kennedy was later to call him – 'a weeper' in the end."

Right on, Bill White. Making a journalist the old-fashioned way doesn't make a journalist old-fashioned. □

*William German, Nieman Fellow '50, is executive editor of the San Francisco Chronicle.*



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# The Noodle Cart — A Souvenir

## Shallow Graves: Two Women and Vietnam.

Wendy Wilder Larsen and Tran Thi Nga. Perennial Library, Harper & Row, 1987. Paperback \$7.95

by Peter Jay

By 1970, the war in Indochina was clearly in some sort of transition.

The Americans were leaving Vietnam, but that process had only just begun. Saigon was as noisy and chaotic as ever. U.S. troops, as well as civilian advisers, psy-war specialists, diplomats, spooks, contractors, correspondents, and assorted other round-eyed hangers-on were still much in evidence, in the major outlying provinces as well as in the capital.

But here and there were signs that the tide had begun to ebb — an outpost deserted, a major American base turned over to the South Vietnamese, a service function previously provided for privileged Americans suddenly curtailed or eliminated. What was going on was no secret; the decision had been made, and the only policy discussion was whether or not the pace of withdrawal should be stepped up.

But though a retreat was in progress, it was, at that point, so orderly as to appear to be something else. There was no siege mentality. The fighting itself, though real enough for those who were doing it, seemed from Saigon to be muted. The Communist allies, the indigenous Viet Cong and the regular forces from the North, had been badly hurt in winning their great psychological victory at Tet two years before. They were either lying low or regrouping in Cambodia, to which Richard Nixon had just extended the war.

In writing about this period, most American reporters in Indochina —

and I certainly include myself — tended to focus more on their own countrymen, the pilots and grunts and generals and diplomats, than on the Asians. We wrote perfunctorily about politicians such as Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky, and tried to write about the frontline Vietnamese soldiers, but those pieces were insided by editors at home. The Americans were the story.

Yet the American correspondents, like the American soldiers and the American diplomats, were in many ways dependent upon the Vietnamese. We had Vietnamese cooks, maids, drivers, and trusted interpreters and assistants. Sometimes we made tenuous friendships with them. And when such people expressed concern about what would happen to their country, and to them, when the Americans were gone, we tended to dismiss these fears as paranoia. Couldn't they see the war was winding down? Everything would be better in a few years, we assured them.

Into this in-between period in late 1970 stepped Wendy Larsen, then the wife of the newly assigned *Time* magazine bureau chief.

She was a blonde, cheerful, unpretentious young woman, who had not at all expected to find herself on the periphery of a war. Her husband had previously been assigned to Hollywood, and when he told her they were going overseas she had rather hoped for London.

For the year or so that she was in Asia she lived the comfortable and sometimes lonely life of a correspondent's spouse. She did not especially enjoy it, but she had the curiosity and good sense to learn from it.

The Larsens had a pleasant apartment in which they often entertained, a *Time* bureau chief having certain social obligations. But the life was still a leisured one. To fill her days,

Mrs. Larsen taught English literature to Vietnamese university students, and with the help of Tran Thi Nga, the bookkeeper in the *Time* bureau, tried hard to learn the Saigon ways. This wasn't easy, for Saigon seemed as alien to her as did *Macbeth* to her students.

She studied Saigon and Vietnam not as a journalist or a scholar, but as a practical person needing to know how to get around the city and cope with its strange mix of Eastern and Western ways.

Some of this involved learning the lingo — acronyms like MACV and CORDS and JUSPAO, military slang (Hueys, Loaches, dustoffs, RPGs, "Say again?" and "Roger that"), and pidgin Vietnamese.

She learned to despise White Mice (the corrupt Saigon municipal police) and admire Ruff-Puffs (Regional Forces and Popular Forces militia troops). She learned to have her cook shop at the local markets but to do her own shopping at the military commissary, where accredited correspondents and their spouses were accorded the privileges of majors in the United States Army. (Curiously, the Vietnamese always seemed to know first when a new shipment of some luxury, such as French cognac, arrived at the commissary.)

She learned what to bring back from a rest-and-recreation trip to Hong Kong; Chinese mushrooms were always in demand, as were American greenbacks. And, of course, she learned how to distinguish the distant sounds of incoming from outgoing artillery fire — or at least to pretend to know the difference. ("What was that?" nervous newcomers would ask over dinner, and the hardened veterans would say, "Oh, only outgoing.")

Unlike some bored Americans, Mrs. Larsen wasn't adventurous in a foolish sense, and didn't seek to visit places considered especially dangerous. Instead of trying to wangle her way to the DMZ or the Parrot's Beak, she played tennis at the Cercle Sportif, and when the

British-trained economics minister provided a plane, she went on occasional Sunday beach junkets to an island in the South China Sea.

She happened to be in Phnom Penh with her husband in early 1971 when the airport was shelled and closed for several days, and made no bones about her terror. As I recall, she stayed out of Cambodia after that. And I remember that when she left for the States — the world, as the troops called it — she was openly happy to go.

This ordinary, somewhat timid young American, without professional writing or reporting credentials, is not the person I would have expected to produce a significant book about Vietnam. Yet she's done so. And in *Shallow Graves*, she's written one of only two or three books I expect to return to — in the years to come — to remind me how it was.

If the book were only composed of Wendy Larsen's vignettes of Saigon in 1970 and 1971, however, it would have been interesting but without punch; the vignettes are perceptive, but limited and one-sided in the way that most American reporting of that period was. But as a counterpoint, Mrs. Larsen provides the perspective of her friend Tran Thi Nga, the book-keeper from the *Time* bureau. The two viewpoints, like the twin lenses of a pair of binoculars, make a powerful combination.

Mrs. Nga, born in 1927 and now living in the United States, has fled the Vietnamese Communists not once but twice. As a young widow she left Hanoi in 1954, when Vietnam was partitioned after the French defeat, and came south. And in 1975, in the tumultuous collapse of the Saigon regime, she and most of her family managed to escape again. Five years later, she re-encountered Wendy Larsen.

Both sections of the book they have jointly produced, though actually in prose, are arranged as blank verse. I'm not sure this adds much to the text, but it serves a couple of

practical functions, giving the little book a respectable length of almost 300 pages, and encouraging the reader to skip back and forth instead of plodding dutifully through from beginning to end.

Such forward and backward reading heightens the contrast between the two women's accounts, one of a few months as a foreigner in a country at war, the other of a lifetime filled with extraordinary tragedy.

"Saigon was a natural place to start a consciousness-raising group," writes Mrs. Larsen. (I have returned her words to prose form here.) "We were eight women, all wives of journalists. I remember sitting in a hot small room, a punkah fan creaking overhead, our knees forming a circle, as we discussed why baby girls are dressed in pink, boys in blue.

"Outside, a peasant woman driven into the city by the bombing slept in the street on a newspaper, a child pulling at her breast."

Mrs. Nga's tale, as told to Mrs. Larsen, is also composed of poetic glimpses, but they form a kind of a narrative, taking her from her birth to Vietnamese parents living in China to her forced marriage to a Chinese general, to the Japanese occupation and the war between the French and the Viet Minh, and then to Saigon. There was a troubled second marriage, overseas travel, and finally the years in the *Time* bureau, the 1975 collapse, and a last-minute escape.

Her broad-scale observations, blunt as a rifle butt, are unsurprising. Corruption was everywhere, in large measure because the Americans had too much of everything and no inclination to keep track of it. "All the buses leaving Long Binh Base had false hollows under the seats filled with steaks, chickens, bacon. As soon as the buses were out the gate, everything was sold."

Why did honest people put up with that? "It was simple. If you were corrupt, you stayed on top, had money for your family. If you worked under these corrupt officials and were not,

you were sent to the battlefields."

Her job at *Time* was "to watch over the books and make sure no one was stealing from the company." She implies that it was not an easy task, but no doubt she did it well.

I don't actually remember Mrs. Nga, but I do remember *Time's* highly regarded Vietnamese assistant, Pham Xuan An, on whom the magazine relied for political insights. Mr. An did not flee Saigon after 1975; it turned out he had been working for the Viet Cong all along, and took a post in the new government. Neither Mrs. Larsen nor Mrs. Nga mentions Mr. An in their book.

But I should also note, parenthetically, that while *The Washington Post* bureau's Vietnamese infrastructure was smaller than *Time's*, I never saw the slightest indication of any dishonesty on the part of any of its members. I would have confidently trusted *The Post's* top Vietnamese staffer, Vu Thuy Hoang, with any of my belongings — or my life.

Mr. Hoang and his extended family, some of whom I had the honor of sponsoring when they first came to this country as refugees, are now living in the Washington area. Hoang himself works for *The Post* in the library. They left Saigon in circumstances much like Mrs. Nga's, and knowing their story gives me confidence in the authenticity of hers.

One of the most poignant anecdotes in *Shallow Graves* is that of the noodle cart.

Before leaving Saigon, Mrs. Larsen decided she wanted a cart like those she had seen used by noodle-soup vendors in the streets. She asked Mrs. Nga to find her one. It would be an up-scale souvenir, with much more cachet back in the world than a ceramic elephant. But finding one was not easy.

Mrs. Nga: "Finally I found a man in Saigon who wanted to sell his cart. He had a second wife in Can Tho and wanted to move down with her. The father and son fought. The father refused to sell. The son said he had

to. The father cried. The son told me to sneak back in the evening and take the cart. I had to find people to push it to the warehouse.

"My boss's wife was pleased with the noodle cart. 'It's perfect,' she said. She had it shipped home to the United States."

Mrs. Larsen: "Now the noodle cart stands on my brother's porch in California stocked with little green bottles of Perrier water (and) Mr. and Mrs. T's Bloody Mary Mix."

I wish I'd written the story of the noodle cart. It's a perfect metaphor for the whole tragic mess our country took on in Indochina, compounded,

and then fled ignominiously from.

Those who can understand that can, by spending the hour or so it takes to read this little book, feel again the pain and futility of the Vietnam experience. *Shallow Graves* isn't great literature, but it's a very moving piece of retrospective journalism. □

*Peter Jay, Nieman Fellow '73, was the Saigon bureau chief for The Washington Post from late 1970 until early 1972. He is the owner and publisher of the Susquehanna Publishing Company Inc. in Havre De Grace, Maryland.*

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## In Pursuit of a "Rum Life"

### None But a Blockhead: On Being a Writer.

Larry L. King. Penguin, 1987. Paperback \$7.95

by John MacCormack

*When he returned with my Scotch, (MacKinlay) Kantor said, with an expression close to a sneer, "And I suppose you are one of those tortured and tormented young writers who go in for symbolism and find themselves the darling of the critics?"*

*"No such fucking thing," I said. "I'm just a goddam storyteller like you, that's all."*

From *None But a Blockhead* by Larry L. King.

Mercifully enough, despite its subtitle, *On Being a Writer*, there are two things that Larry L. King's [NF '70] hilarious autobiographical rambling is not.

It's neither a do-it-yourself manual on writing for fun and dollars nor is it a sticky wallow through the travails of the Young Writer bent on creating Great Literature.

Rather, this is the barstool yarn of

an unreconstructed West Texan who claims he was born with the writin' fire already hot in his belly and then spent much of a lifetime in its mad pursuit.

Think of it as a travel piece to all those who came behind.

"What I have to say is for the citizen who is locked in serious combat with his or her typewriter and who may be wondering when, or if, the battle will be won. I want to give that hopeful some idea of what to expect."

And what should one reasonably expect in what King calls "the rum life" of the freelance writer?

Well, the first hint is the book's title, clipped from a remark by Samuel Johnson who observed that "no man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money." After reading King's tale, one wonders whether money, always uncertain, is even enough. He gives fair warning.

"A writer. . . cannot claim to have ridden through life in a golden chariot, using the right salad fork and bestowing a manly sweetness if he has actually come through it across rocky roads on a bareback mule while barking and howling and claw-

ing, and he shouldn't be expected to."

And King pulls no punches: the lows were low and the highs were high, from fighting off hungry drunks intent on swiping his food stashed on the ledge of a basement window in a fleabag Washington hotel, to telling Nelson Rockefeller, the presidential candidate, to keep his \$1,000-a-day offer to hire King as a speechwriter.

It's not that the book is devoid of useful information to the would-be writer. Along the way, King tells of how to go about breaking a book-publishing contract (twice), finding an agent, coping with groin shots from book reviewers, hyping a work on the bookstore and television circuit, and taking \$130,000 in book advances and then never writing the promised books.

"You will note I have not mentioned how much advance monies I received for my last three books, including this one. That's because there was none. . . Be sure your sins will find you out."

The King résumé stretches from a first job, landed with a phony résumé, on the *Hobbs* (New Mexico) *Daily Flare* in 1950 to his considerable success, just a few years back, as co-author of the Broadway musical *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*.

In the years between, he achieved critical note for his magazine articles, including *The Old Man*, a much anthologized portrait of his father, and his various books, most notably *Confessions of a White Racist*.

He also worked as a Capitol Hill aide for two legislators, taught classes to "young richies" at Princeton, tried to write successful novels, and spent most of two semesters in Cambridge as a Nieman Fellow.

Mostly, however, King found his metier as a magazine writer, enjoying pacific if temporary moorings at *Harper's* magazine during that magazine's golden age from the late 1960's until 1971 when Willie Morris was its editor.

The story of how the *Harper's* crew jumped ship after Morris was forced out by the magazine's owner and a



business manager is just one of the insider episodes that any reader of those years can savor.

As he writes this latest book, King is a fairly secure and happy man, snug in Washington with a smart young lawyer wife and two fine children. The checks roll in whether he writes or not, and his name is at least well enough known to cause occasional confusion with that of a late-night talk-show host.

But such success, dallied in arriving, and when it did, it knocked more or less as a stranger. King recalls the day, not too far gone, when the mailman delivered an unexpected \$46,000 check, royalty income from the *Whorehouse* musical.

"I tried to develop a decent sense of shame, but it just wouldn't come, even though I reminded myself of starving little children in China and such. No, by God, I had paid my dues: taking odd jobs as a delivery boy and a busboy when almost 40 years old in order to practice the writing craft while my calendar contemporaries had become senior partners in law firms or bank executives and had been establishing generous retirement benefits.

"I had gone far out on a thin limb to survive or perhaps perish as a writer. So, I said, again aloud, 'By God, I ain't about to apologize if a great deal of good luck has finally come my way.' But if I didn't feel the need to apologize, why did I so insist I wasn't required to?"

Why apologize? Perhaps because of the tribute paid along the way.

The tab, spread over 30 years of furious typewriter pounding of articles, books, reviews, plays, and newspaper columns, included his alcoholism, one divorce, another wife lost to cancer, failure to be a successful novelist, and many a solitary interlude of manly despair.

But even when he is down, sick as a dog and flat on his back, King's saving grace is to sustain a certain country western juke-box humor to it all. King, after all, is a storyteller and, in himself, he finds his own best

straight man.

Take for example, his reaction to being crucified by the book reviewer who found his first novel, *The One-Eyed Man*, dearly wanting.

"I prowled and cursed for hours, tossing down a fresh beer about every three minutes, alternately smoking dope and nicotine. Periodically, I issued long wailing moans like some poor wretch on the rack being pulled apart a rib and a tendon at a time. Rosie [his wife] rolled joint after joint, and comforted herself with a parade of vodka martinis."

Throughout the book, the reader laughs at King the impulsive bungler, King the madcap drunk, King the prince of peculiar situations, King the naive, and King the cynical. Always, the reader laughs with King, even while sharing the cup's bitter last dregs.

Another such rock-bottom episode: New York City, Independence Day 1976.

"July Fourth. Much hoopla in the city. Fireworks displays. A parade. Politicians nakedly exposing their patriotic reflexes in yahooings bordering on the obscene. The Tall Ships sailed into New York Harbor to commemorate the nation's 200th birthday."

And where was our hero?

"Spent the entire holiday on my back, staring at the bedroom ceiling and spouting great sighs like some fat beached whale. I have never felt more alone or hopeless. Besides a general crippling depression I had a granddaddy of a hangover, a fever, a painful chest cold and a racking cough. Dr. King treated the latter by smoking three packs of cigarettes.

"I simply can't write. The LBJ book is dead, beyond resurrection or resuscitation. The play about a Texas whorehouse lies neglected in a corner; I think it is laughing at me. The novel. . . about the tribulations of its burned-out writer-protagonist — guess who, gang? — started with such hope and fervor a few weeks ago, has fizzled out. I don't know what will happen to that damned

Bobby Baker book project. I would guess not very much."

And by the time success came (with the *Whorehouse* play), even a West Texas writer with redneck roots had learned a few things and kept track of scores to be settled for injuries endured along the way.

To King's credit, he does not shy away from the dirty task of setting accounts right with book reviewers, book agents, LBJ, Hollywood types from producers to accountants, Ivy League students, plagiarists, and television talk-show hosts, none of whom, King claims, has read a book of an author whom they presume to interview.

The lesser scoundrels get only a sharp kick in the butt, but those who committed high crimes receive more extended treatment. Special pains are taken to excoriate reviewers, academics — "little men with tiny hammers" — and Lewis Lapham, the current editor of *Harper's* magazine, whom King feels acted ignobly in the crisis of 1971.

A whole chapter, complete with reproduction of Universal Pictures accounting tables, is devoted to King's wranglings with Hollywood over the divvying up of movie profits.

Cambridge landlords also get their due in King's treatment of his Harvard adventure. Here, he concentrates on the two themes most dear to all Fellows: The interview and housing.

When he applied for the Fellowship in 1969 it was a desperate stab for some temporary escape. His wife Rosie was sick with cancer, and he was charred around the edges from work and worry.

Nevertheless, his instincts were impeccable.

"My letter of application stressed that I was old, ignorant and uneducated in pleading that my last chance at refurbishing rested in Harvard's hands," he wrote.

In the interview, he chose tall tales over scholarship, got the laughs, and also, so he thought, the early hook.

"I forthwith set about telling color-

ful LBJ yarns one after another; a few of them might even have been true. My audience laughed and hooted. . . Then all too abruptly, Nieman Curator Dwight Sargent said my half-hour had expired and steered me toward the door. I was dumbfounded."

And then there was the traditional call to his waiting wife. The despairing message: "I just simply made an ass of myself. . . No way we're going to Harvard."

And of course, soon after the letter of acceptance arrived, King found himself grappling with the final test of the Fellowship process: finding a place to live in Cambridge.

"We had dispiritedly paraded through creaky old row houses, smelly walk-ups, cold-water flats: places I wouldn't have kept pigs. I was reminded of small towns suddenly blessed by burgeoning military bases during World War II where landlords charged ransom sums for converted chicken coops.

"The same flinty greed prevailed in Cambridge. Landlords didn't care whether prospective tenants signed up: someone more desperate, they

knew, would soon be along, hat in hand."

The book is divided into three parts, most of the best reading to be found in the opening section which chronicles King's writing career. The second and third sections are patched together from bits of essays, journals, and published pieces, only a few of which deserve to be skipped over.

Noteworthy here are King's ruminations on several of "The Dead Greats" of American literature: Hemingway as the bully-boy cannibal, Twain (his hero) as the henpecked husband and domineering father, and Steinbeck, as the honest sentimentalist.

Perhaps best of all of these short pieces is the last entry, "That Terrible Night Santa Got Lost in the Woods," a remembrance of King's own fourth Christmas in West Texas. It's a simple classic of the genre, one that at least one reviewer will be reading to his own children come December. □

*John MacCormack, Nieman Fellow '88, is South Texas bureau reporter for the Dallas Times Herald.*

treatment as a public figure far beyond the usual scrutiny in the goldfish bowl. Her every statement was weighed by her husband as to whether it met his official goals, his personal political ambitions, and his chauvinistic attitudes. This despite the fact that she could have wrecked his career easily by taking the divorce route after she learned, as early as 1918, about his affair with her social secretary, Lucy Mercer Rutherford. But Eleanor remained on, not as wife, but as loyal aide, advisor, runner, and eyes and ears.

Almost every time Mrs. Roosevelt opened her mouth, she was analyzed, dissected, appraised. This was, of course, partly because she was the First Lady of the land, and partly because she was a woman, but mostly because she had new ideas to express that were sometimes neither traditional nor conventional. Just to mention many of these ideas took considerable courage. The transition period for women added to the criticism of her. Yet she had the moral courage to come back after the blows and to keep fighting for what she knew to be right. The fact that the country was benefitting from her debates at the same time people were stoning her made it all the more unjust that Mrs. Roosevelt had to take the abuse. A weaker person would have dropped the fight.

She was not trained to be a writer or speaker, but she developed these skills. Hope Ridings Miller, one of the newswomen who benefitted from her women-only press conferences at the White House said, considering with what she was equipped in these fields, she did a remarkable job, and certainly she did much for women in journalism.

The title of this book, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media* is unfortunate. It narrows the story of Eleanor Roosevelt. The media is not the message of her life. The subtitle, *A Public Quest for Self-Fulfillment*, reflects the narrow premise of the author concerning the goals of Eleanor Roosevelt. I do not think that

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## Her Roles Were Manifold

### **Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media: A Public Quest for Self-Fulfillment.**

Maurine H. Beasley. University of Illinois Press, 1987. \$24.95

by Sarah McClendon

Eleanor Roosevelt must be one of the most abused women, certainly among the intelligentsia. It is astonishing to think how she was mistreated — by her husband, many in the media including editors and publishers, and even by newspaperwomen whom she had assisted in furthering their careers and often

befriended during their personal crises.

Mrs. Roosevelt was certainly a self-made success in several of her chosen fields — public service, communicating with humanity, writing, housecleaning in government, serving as the conduit between government and people, investigative reporting, and acting as world peace-maker.

She was womanhood in transition, between the women who stayed at home with the children and the women in public life. In this, she experienced many personal adjustments like her doubts about the Equal Rights Amendment.

Mrs. Roosevelt was subjected to ill

Mrs. Roosevelt sought out the media with a plan for her own fulfillment. If she used the media to put over her ideas, there was nothing wrong in that.

Mrs. Roosevelt did much to elevate the media. She broadened and educated it by introducing new subjects for coverage which the narrow, often trite, limited coverage and censorship of thought by many editors and publishers had kept out of the reading domain. The author, Dr. Maurine Beasley, associate professor, College of Journalism, University of Maryland, keeps coming back to her own premise throughout the book.

This book is a sad commentary on women journalists. Mrs. Roosevelt did more for them than any one else had or than they did for themselves. Her press conferences excluding men journalists caused many newspapers and wire services to hire women for the first time to cover her side of the White House. Then, instead of being grateful, the newswomen began to criticize the First Lady's statements, expressions, her guest commentators, and the length of the press conferences. Finally, they began telling her what to talk about, and how to say it. They formed an association to run these press conferences, adopted limiting rules, kept others out, expelled many, while all the time they were enjoying the special privileges of covering news, and entry to the White House which most of them could not have obtained had it not been for Mrs. Roosevelt.

A working journalist in her own right by then, she was almost blackballed by the Women's National Press Club (now no longer in existence), but then they relented and admitted her.

Perhaps the harshest criticism of her came later, from Henry Morgenthau III, producer of an educational television program for Brandeis University (the forerunner of public television of today), who said: "She would spend no more time thinking or preparing herself for something of this kind than she

would, say, if an old school friend had asked her to talk to a group of girls. . . She also did this in her writing. . . She would spend no more time writing her column than she would dashing off a letter to a friend. And I think sometimes she didn't even read these columns."

But the world can be grateful that some editors and publishers did give her key outlets and kept printing her column, "My Day," and her magazine articles. Thus she was able to give the public a new kind of journalism, focusing on humanity's problems.

It is interesting to see that many trends in today's hectic journalism were not out of the ordinary for Eleanor Roosevelt. She faced all the hazards of investigative journalism — threats from subjects, cancellation by editors if she voiced opinions or appeared to be supporting views they disagreed with, charges that the public did not agree with her views on politics and therefore thought she should be denied outlets in print and on the air, warning from editors not to be political, whether these warnings were deserved or not.

All hail to Eleanor Roosevelt. I am ashamed that I did not give her more time. I only went to several of her press conferences, and thought that the newswomen there were being too subservient to her, treating her

like a queen. But now after having experienced Washington's pack journalism for 43 years, and being one of those who likes to step outside the limits of reporting established by others, I want to say that Eleanor Roosevelt was the greatest woman yet on the American scene.

Since this book tells about her struggles, it should be read by everyone — but especially by women seeking role models. The book is repetitious, but then so was her life. It is dull for the first 100 pages, but then improves. The book is an important contribution to history. Its notes and documentation make it doubly valuable. As a chronicle of one of the highest-paid women writers, it should be must reading for journalism-school students. And it is an encouragement for all aspiring writers. □

*Sarah McClendon heads the McClendon News Service. She describes herself as "a bridge between big government and little people." She has covered nine presidents since 1944, and has also covered the Capitol and the Pentagon. Mrs. McClendon, who has been featured on radio and television programs, is the recipient of the 1987 Boyer Award for her contributions to women's rights issues.*

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## Tilted Toward the Right

### Dictionary of American Conservatism.

Louis Filler. Preface by Russell Kirk. Philosophical Library, Inc., 1987. \$29.95

by David Nyhan

Asking me to review this book is like asking a vegetarian his opinion of a steakhouse. I happen to have definite views, though I'm not

of that particular persuasion myself. So I'm sure there are others more qualified and sympathetic to the thousands of little decisions that went into the compilation of Louis Filler's *Dictionary of American Conservatism*.

Journalists will discern from which point of the compass Mr. Filler hails by turning to his entry for "Media," (alas, he eschews "press" for the ruder, broader, electronic-encompassing term). He



hastens to lay at the media's clay feet responsibility for having "discouraged patriotic unity during the Vietnam involvement." Further, he charges, conservatives feel "the media sought to influence the public by such devices as raising eyebrows, emphasizing key words in reported statements, creating code words, and asking loaded questions rhetorically to interviewees."

May I interrupt here to raise an eyebrow, emphasize a key word (Tilt!), create a code word (I'll think of one, just give me a minute), and ask a loaded rhetorical-type question? (I just did.)

There is a certain quixotic charm about the selectivity exercised by the author. The entry for "Kennedy, Edward Moore," says only: "See Chappaquiddick." In the following entry ("Kennedy, John F."), Filler shunts readers off to another of his books, in which, presumably, the late president is discussed at more length.

Sure, this is a dictionary of conservatism. But even R. Reagan finds it useful to try and cloak some of JFK's policies (tax cuts, most notably) in conservative cloth.

Like a moth to the flame, Filler is drawn to spin out his definition of Chappaquiddick for half a page, beginning: "Chappaquiddick, as symbolic in many ways for the public assessment of the Democratic Party and its Kennedy legacy as was Watergate for that of the Republican Party. . . ."

Who but the most rigidly encrusted conservative ideologue could equate Chappaquiddick, and whatever wrong was done there, with Watergate, and the panoply of wrongdoing that preceded and followed that attempt to unravel the Constitution, obstruct justice, pervert the political system, and the rest.

Let us hasten to see how Filler defines Watergate: "The Watergate affair was a problem for conservatives," he begins, rather in the fashion of an account of the

*Titanic's* maiden voyage starting: "The *Titanic* took on a rather large and unexpected shipment of ice. . . ."

Filler's warp and woof is rather cruelly exposed in the ensuing lines: conservatives had been "ambivalent" about the break-in, and were "dubious over the ethics of the undercover operations emanating from the White House and involving President Nixon."

Ambivalent? Dubious?

Filler goes on, merrily: Watergate's impact "declined," other conservatives came to power "with clean hands," Nixon "was soon in demand as an analyst at home and abroad," "other Watergate participants grew rich from best-selling books and other dealings," *Time* magazine polls showed the public's attitude had "softened," and, he is finally able to report, "Thus, the 'legacy of Watergate' appeared in danger of fading into insignificance."

Insignificance?

It will be swiftly dispatched to insignificance if historians like Filler are allowed to get away from this sort of dispatching. I've heard how the victors get to write the history books, but this is ridiculous.

My reservations are not shared, however, by the roster of right-wingers quoted on the dustjacket. They are the usual suspects. "Wonderful," says Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation; "Fascinating and useful," seconds William F. Buckley, Jr., whose writings and success are extolled at considerable length by Mr. Filler, a GBFOBB (Great Big Fan of Bill Buckley) of the first water.

(References to Buckley are sown liberally, if I might use the term, throughout the book, though Filler's half-page entry under Buckley's name says: "Buckley awed many with his extensive information on an array of subjects. His grasp of the cultural factor in liberal-conservative controversies was perhaps less sure.")

Back to the blurbs:

"Even-handed and objective . . .

(an) extraordinary scholarly effort . . . The book should be in all educational and public libraries as well as those of scholars," enthuses Thomas C. Cochran, Benjamin Franklin Professor of History *emeritus*, University of Pennsylvania. How *could* one find this work even-handed? You could make the case.

Since there's no accounting for taste, I'm happy to concede that Filler is a man well-acquainted with the academic world; his publishers boast — if that is the right term — that "He has taught and been visiting professor at more than 20 universities and colleges," which testifies to his durability, if not necessarily his even-handedness.

Mr. Filler is obviously a man of vast erudition, and great catholicity in reading, if not in philosophy. Some of his entries go far beyond the competence or staying power of a mere dirty-fingernailed political journalist, e.g.: "Strausz-Hupe", Robert (1903- ), Vienna-born foreign-policy analyst. His services to American conservatism were somewhat comparable to those of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Eric Kuehnelt-Leddihn in adding a European dimension to American concerns. . . ." Honesty compels this reviewer to admit that he is in no position to weigh the relative contributions to American conservatism of Messrs. Strausz-Hupe', de Jouvenel, and Kuehnelt-Leddihn.

As a practical matter, the book suffers from the lack of an index, so that anyone searching for a reference must leaf through the volume, wondering how an entry might be headed.

This lack of an index — certainly not an excessively expensive consideration for a movement so well-heeled as conservatism — reinforces my suspicion that the book is meant to be a sort of coffee-table thesaurus for like-minded folk, who'd enjoy browsing through it for the odd turn of phrase or recap of a career of a minor political theorist or academic.

One man's view of any topic as

vast as the wilderness of mountains, valleys, veldts, and ravines encompassing conservatism is, like any one man's view of the world, or science, or astronomy, just that: one man's view.

So it's a big unfair to carp about the slant, the selectivity, the organization of the material: he did it this way, and take it or leave it.

Me, I'd be tempted to leave it, but for reasons that are as much philosophical as anything else. Though it does offer a handy compendium of what The Other Guys are thinking.

There's this sort of incredible kind of inferiority complex operating throughout, that I find characteristic of many conservatives. They have the White House, the Supreme Court, they had the Senate till the last elections, they have their adherents in control of virtually every American corporation of any size, the vast proportion of American newspapers support their philosophy and their political candidates, they've had everything going their way for nearly a decade now, and they're still not happy: they want to go around changing the laws, changing the foreign policy, whipsawing the government into their preferred configuration; there's no pleasing them.

Take Filler's entry for "Bugging." Please. Wiretapping one's political opponents is a bad business, period. There should be no liberal-conservative split on this. Even one of the most conservative current columnists, William Safire, is a bugging victim who is almost paranoid on the subject. But Filler? He begins by recalling that "Bugging figured prominently in the problems of the Nixon administration. Many liberals and others conjured up visions of a police state, prepared at any time to use illegal surveillance in offices and private homes." As I recall, a pretty fair number of conservatives also felt Nixon's bugging was beyond the pale.

Filler can't resist the temptation to try to exculpate Tricky Dick by pointing out that wiretaps had been

employed by Democratic presidents Kennedy and Roosevelt, but those episodes were "downplayed and contributed to a general public skepticism about the operations of government."

Any scholarly effort that bends over backwards with such grim determination to flex should be marketed with a red warning label in capital letters that shrieks "TILT" to the unwary purchaser.

Not that a lot of political innocents are going to have their minds warped in the starboard direction by this. It is apparent to anyone who hoists this tome that it is a partisan screed. And fair enough. If a fellow can persuade a publisher to print up his political prejudices and bind them between hard covers, I say good luck to him.

For those who won't find it in the rack with the rest of the airport paperbacks, I culled a few excerpts:

Franklin D. Roosevelt, for instance, "initiated the welfare system in the US. As a result he has traditionally been denigrated by Republicans and conservatives. . . ."

Liberalism, it says here, is a shifting and shifty -ism which "tolerated, and even cooperated with the rioting of the 1960's."

And McCarthyism? "Although the concept of McCarthyism as a persecution of individuals for their beliefs is in many ways contrived and inaccurate, its persistence in popular lore suggests elements which conservatives evade at their own costs." Rather unsatisfying, that, but he's trying to tell us something.

On any of the buzz phrases of conservatives, he shades to the right, as in Right to Work, the shorthand term for the battle against compulsory union membership in trades where unions are strong enough, and state governments are permissive enough, to allow union shops.

"Unionists," writes Filler, "often found themselves under the dictatorship of union chieftans, foremen, and even strong-arm men.

They were often better off than their predecessors of a generation past, but subject to burdensome dues, constricted work conditions, and important losses of income during strikes called for reasons of union intrigue rather than legitimate goals."

There are two entries for Rockefellers, predictably acerbic; John D. was "once feared as a threat to American freedom and opportunity as a 'Robber Baron'," and Nelson A., "a man of great wealth and with ultimate conservative aims, he and they were not of a quality to attract the sympathy of conservatives . . . liberal Republicans of Rockefeller's stamp, operating within welfare-state premises, seemed to differ from Democrats only in their promise to bring greater administrative skills to bear on government."

Is that sufficient? Are all Democrats to be lumped together as statist liberals? Is there no difference between a Robb and a Cuomo, no distance between Carter and Ted Kennedy, no breadth between a Dukakis and the kind of Democrat who gets routinely elected in Florida or Mississippi?

I like Filler on entries like: "Romanticism: not on the scale of conservative priorities, it has nonetheless been a force to cope with throughout history, involving individualism, love of nature, the attraction of youth to youth, chivalry, and the mysteries of life." That's, well, nice.

But Filler, alas, has no nearby entry for something as important as "Rock and Roll," or "Roll, and Rock" which has to be one of the great anti-conservative movements of all time, bar none.

His foreword owns up to those of his prejudices that he himself discerns: "This is not a Who's Who of conservatism, past or present. Representative figures, visible personalities, and symbolic slogans and ideas have been sought."

His very first entry, "Abolitionism," includes the interesting but unsatisfying observation that "Abra-

ham Lincoln's growth during the Civil War showed a turn from a cautious conservatism to one verging on liberalism." His next entry, "Abortion," offers a useful and lengthy reprise of the abortion issue. He turns contemporary with his third entry, "Abscam." He's crazy about the Adams family; no fewer than seven of those distinguished Yanks are mini-profiled.

Filler is mercifully brief on "Agnew, Spiro", the bribe-taker who was Nixon's designated law-and-order hitman: "Agnew's claim that he could have proved his innocence, but at the expense of his family's peace of mind, is untenable."

Filler does not resort to the most blatant type of whitewashing. For instance, in his entry for "Capp, Al," wherein he treats the conservative swerve late in life by the creator of the comics pages' "L'il Abner," Filler notes that Capp's attacks on the hedonism and hypocrisy of the youth movement of the 1970's was compromised by Capp's own failings in the realm of morality. "Evidence that he had compulsively sought to use female students libidinally cast shadows on his campaign, and though the scandal was treated lightly in the news it harmed the conservative cause."

That cause is obviously dear to Filler's heart, and perhaps explains the rather considerable lengths to which he goes in order to portray conservative excesses in a sympathetic light.

Occasionally his head overcomes his heart, as in "Depression, The," wherein he admits "The Depression has never been a favorite conservative topic, since it originated in a Republican era and from Republican policies."

There are plenty of interesting nuggets, as in his brief recapitulation of the career of Sarah Hale, who wrote *Mary had a little lamb*, or his summary of the abortion issue, in which *Roe v. Wade* was based on the pregnancy which stemmed from the gang rape of a female housepainter

who bore the child and gave it up at birth. Lots of people never knew that, myself included.

It's a bit quirky; "Kirkpatrick, Jeane J.," gets 37 lines, to only 19 for "Kissinger, Henry," who, while perhaps less popular these days with conservatives as Filler chooses to define them, nevertheless had a much greater impact on American policy. And both entries are dwarfed by the 88 lines Filler assigns to Russell Kirk, the intellectual godfather of modern or New Right conservatism.

I admit to being disappointed that Kirkpatrick's entry contains no mention of what is perhaps her most nasty mellifluous phrase: "San Francisco Democrats," in which she manages to malign a city, a political party, and a mindset, imputing perversion to all opposed to the New Right's current defense posture, all done in such cute fashion that it's hard to mount a defense for what is really fairly clever innuendo. All in all, that's quite a piece of work for one phrase, and I'd have thought Filler would think it worth crediting to her, in an extensive bibliography that includes such works as: "Leader and Vanguard in Mass Society: The Peronist Movement in Argentina."

As for Mr. Kirk, as it happens, and I imply no toadiness here for Kirk's place is already well-established, Kirk contributes the preface to the volume, which amounts to an argumentative defense of conservatism. Writes Kirk: "Conservative convictions and policies being in the ascent in America nowadays, it is of some importance to know whereof one speaks, and not to mistake the American conservative impulse — always a strong influence in the U.S. — for some neat and impractical ideology."

At the risk of offending Kirk, I must say that a neat and impractical ideology is what I deem conservatism to be molting into yet again. The movement began its vigorous pendulum swing toward power from the rubble of Barry Goldwater's 1964

debacle, and by my shaky calculations, reached a 20th-century zenith under Reagan, only to begin its cyclical fade from the GPO's loss of the Senate in the 1986 election, and the coincidental exposure of the Iran-Contra cover-up.

At further risk of offending Kirk, I quote Filler: "Kirk believed in ghosts, and thought he had seen them. . . ."

Kirk's preface offers the interesting fact that Filler was born in Russia — Odessa, to be precise — thereby shedding light on the rigorousness with which Filler flays liberals, who, as we've all been lectured a thousand times, are soft on communism.

If you look up "Communism," you find Filler begins: "with its variant of socialism and collectivism, the major enemy of conservative thought."

Some entries will be of obvious help to youngsters writing papers or cramming for history tests, e.g., "The Rosenberg case," where Filler offers a pithy summary of that atom spy business.

There's lots of research and scholarship on various political phrases and philosophical concepts, but I put the book down feeling that on anything of consequence, I'd have to run it through the sheepdip to get rid of the bias.

Rather than end on that negative note, however, I choose to conclude by saying that Filler is obviously a man of great breadth of knowledge and considerable dedication to his task. He shows impressive familiarity with the philosophical and historical underpinnings of conservatism, and serves his muse loyally, if perhaps too blindly for my taste.

I'll own up to the fact that if I were pressed to write a contrasting volume, on Liberalism, I couldn't do the job with half as much dedication and scholarship that is on display here. There, I've said something nice. □

*David Nyhan is a political columnist for The Boston Globe.*



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# We Are Adversaries — A Perilous Relationship

## The Other Side: How Soviets and Americans Perceive Each Other.

Robert D. English and Jonathan J. Halperin. Transaction 1987. Paperback \$9.95

by Watson Sims

In all history, no international relationship has been more crucial to man's survival than the 20th-century relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Other powers competed for dominion over their times, but not with weapons to imperil all life on earth and perhaps the universe itself. Of what is the relationship between the superpowers of the nuclear age composed? The authors of this thoughtful and ambitious book find its principal ingredients include misunderstanding and distrust, uneasiness and alarm.

"... We are adversaries," declares the introduction to *The Other Side*. "We treat each other as such, competing for power, access to resources, and influence around the globe — from Poland to Nicaragua and the Philippines. Our leaders point at each other, posturing for their audiences. . . . Fears are heightened, time for reflection and judgment are shortened, and reasoned discourse can be (and often is) replaced by anxious rhetoric."

The purpose of the authors is to examine how America and Russia came to be locked in such a perilous relationship. To do so, they examine major perceptions each nation holds of the other, and they trace the rise of these perceptions in terms of historical events, and how the events were presented on each side.

Basic perceptions are easy to

establish. Russia, in American eyes, is a predatory beast, seeking world domination through force and subversion, while Uncle Sam, in Russian eyes, is a heartless capitalist who builds wealth on the exploitation of the working class. No less easy to document is that fact and popular impression frequently disagree. On both sides, emotion and ignorance often have more to do with perceptions than the very real differences between the two societies. To illustrate this premise, *The Other Side* encapsulates, often side by side, Soviet and American presentation of events in newspapers, textbooks, magazines, and motion pictures.

From the earliest days of Communist rule in Russia, appalling gaps are found between reality and impressions presented to the people of both countries. Reproduced from the *Congressional Record* is a fiery 1920 speech by Montana Senator Henry L. Myers denouncing the Soviet "Bureau of Free Love." Such a bureau never existed, and a decree cited by Senator Myers was a fake. Speeches by such leaders as Francis Cardinal Spellman, and Senator Joseph P. McCarthy are cited as sources of fear that communism in Russia threatened the end of freedom in America.

Where in America could one find an account of the Russian Revolution that was not colored by such fear? The authors say the answer was nowhere: not in the media, not in books, not in films, and not in the speeches of political leaders. Their documentation includes a finding by Walter Lippmann, the most eminent American journalist of his time. After a study of United States newspaper reporting from 1917 to 1920, Lippmann and Charles Merz, later

to become editor of *The New York Times*, concluded that "news" from Russia had been consistently colored by the wish of reporters and editors to see communism defeated. "From the point of professional journalism the reporting of the Russian Revolution was nothing short of a disaster," the study concluded. "On essential questions the net effect was almost always misleading. . . . Whatever the excuses, the apologies and the extenuation, the fact remains that a great people in a supreme crisis could not secure the minimum of the necessary information on a supremely important event."

Russian authorities were no less guilty than Americans of shaping facts to fit their fancies. Many areas were closed to reporters, and most Soviet officials were unavailable for questioning, even when questioning was sought. A passion for secrecy marked the Russian Revolution and has by no means vanished today, even when openness has become a slogan of Soviet leadership.

Misperception of each other permeates institutions that shape public opinion in both nations, including textbooks, television programming, and motion pictures as well as newspapers. The affluence of the American lifestyle receives less attention in Soviet literature and school texts than the fact that some Americans are homeless. Productivity of American agriculture and industry is minimized or ignored, while difficulties of the jobless and poor are magnified. Blacks and minorities are routinely presented as victims of oppression.

American portrayals of Russia, on the other hand, rarely deal with heroic or even human aspects of that nation's history. Especially galling to Soviet eyes is the cavalier treatment in American textbooks of Russia's role in World War II, which saw 20 million Russians give their lives to defeat Nazi Germany. Also obnoxious to Russia are such movies as the *Rambo* series, and television programs such as the 1987 *Amerika*

series, describing a fictitious occupation of the United States by Russia. Although Russian invasion has often been the theme of paperback and television thrillers, no Russian troops have set foot on American soil. American troops, however, were part of an unsuccessful Allied attempt to overthrow the Soviet Communist government after World War I.

The book notes that Americans have not only often ignored but sometimes been at pains to delete information favorable to Russia. A rare sympathetic movie, *The North Star*, was produced in 1943, depicting a Russian village under siege by Nazi troops. Before being reissued in the 1950's the movie was trimmed by 23 minutes to minimize Russian valor.

A striking contrast is reported between the study of American authors in the Soviet schools and a virtual absence of Soviet writers from American curricula. James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allen Poe, Washington Irving, Walt Whitman, and many other American writers, including contemporary authors such as Joyce Carol Oates and John Updike, are known to Soviet students at many levels, while Russian writers make few and limited appearances on American reading lists.

Concern for the dangers of such a relationship between nuclear powers underlies the origins of this book, the first of a projected series to be published under the general title of *Beyond the Kremlin*. The sponsor of the series is the Committee for National Security, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, whose stated concern is "Our Nation's drift toward excessive reliance on military power to resolve complex foreign policy problems." The authors of this volume are Robert D. English, a former analyst for the United States Department of Defense, and Jonathan J. Halperin, a former management consultant. Several of America's best-known Soviet scholars acted as

advisers to the authors.

The obvious solution to the problems presented by *The Other Side* is to remove misperceptions and build understanding, which, if it does not prevent collision, would at least make the reasons for collision clear. That is the major point of this telling of *The Other Side*, and in this admirable enterprise this series deserves the goodwill of both nations.

Designed primarily as a textbook for high schools and junior colleges, it was first published in March, 1987, and is now in a second printing of 5,000 copies. Other books scheduled for publication in the series will deal with the Soviet military establishment and the role of women in the Soviet Union.

The putting right of misunder-

standing between nuclear powers is obviously of no less concern to one side than the other. Unfortunately, the publishers know of no parallel venture in the Soviet Union, and, for the present at least, America's story remains to be told on the other side. □

*Watson Sims, Nieman Fellow '53, was a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors delegations to the Soviet Union in 1984 and 1986. He is the ASNE negotiator for an exchange in 1987-88. Since retiring last year as editor of The Central New Jersey Home News in New Brunswick, he has been a senior fellow at Rutgers University's Journalism Resources Institute.*



#### Books Received at Lippmann House

**Are We To Be A Nation? The Making of the Constitution.**

Richard B. Bernstein with Kym S. Rice. Harvard University Press.

**Media Ethics: Cases and Moral Reasoning.**

Clifford G. Christians, Kim B. Rotzoll, Mark Fackler. Longman Inc.

**Search Strategies in Mass Communication.**

Jean Ward and Kathleen A. Hansen. Longman Inc.

**Talking Tombstones & Other Tales Of The Media Age.**

Gary Gumpert. Oxford University Press.

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# 1987 Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lecture

*continued from page 11*

going to sound a little convoluted, but in a way the Iran-Contra affair, the secret arms deal, is a symptom of caution. I think he proceeded in secrecy. And here is where I think there has been a change since Vietnam. Because he's been restrained by public opinion from public adventures. And this brings me to what I think has been one of the principal legacies of Vietnam. The public has become cautious. People don't want to get involved. They have voted for Mr. Reagan's smile — but, for example, 70 percent consistently say, let's keep out of Central America, or other commitments of that sort. Strangely enough, the caution is particularly strong within the military leadership among the Vietnam generation who are now the colonels and generals.

I wanted to quote a remark from Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, from November of 1985, reflecting the mood in the Pentagon. He said we have learned that there are limits to how much of our spirit and blood we can afford to forfeit in meeting our responsibility to keep peace and freedom. Now compare that to President Kennedy's inaugural address in 1961, when he pledged to "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty." So, I think what we've adopted is what I call the Rambo principle. We're going to win our wars in the movies rather than on the battlefields. I don't think this means that Americans will become isolationists. Again, surveys show that Americans would intervene to defend Western Europe or Japan or

Israel. But Vietnam has taught us all to be more selective. We're no longer the world's policeman. And Vietnam has also taught us to ask questions. In 1964, as I mentioned earlier, we had 16,000 American advisors in Vietnam, we were spending a half billion dollars. A public-opinion survey asked the question: What should we do next? And 70 percent of the people responded that they weren't paying attention to the problem. But many more people are skeptical now, I believe, and are asking questions than have before. Some eager strategists in Washington have used a term to deplore this caution — they call it the Vietnam Syndrome. If you look it up in the dictionary, syndrome is a mental disorder, and, frankly, I think there's nothing healthier than asking questions.

After all, it's our life — our lives and our money — at stake. And we do see now, I think, in the wake of Vietnam, people and congressmen responding to the public mood, asking questions and being skeptical. As Professor Daniel Bell put it, Vietnam ended America's sense of exceptionalism, which, I also think, is a sign of maturing.

We're not a nation of John Waynes. We're joining the rest of the world in recognizing our limitations. A very high price was paid for this lesson. Two or three million Vietnamese are dead and 60,000 American names are engraved on the memorial in Washington. I would not like to see that happen again. Thank you. □

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# South Africa & News Censorship

*continued from page 30*

covered this aspect, and if this coverage is going on inside South Africa, why can't it occur outside?

## The Opposition Press Must Be Helped

In closing remarks, Thomas Winship, president of the Center for Foreign Journalists and former editor of *The Boston Globe*, said that those who care about good journalism should consider how they can help the desperately struggling press of South Africa to survive and grow in this anguished society. The most embattled segment of the press in the drive for freedom of words is the remarkably brave alternative press. It should be the principle concern of all the press, because it is so important for access to more news. In this country, there seems to be a new awakening to the importance of the South African opposition press. Please lend a special hand, and give some real creative thought, to those heroes of this most spotlighted fight in the accelerating war for liberation at a time of increasing censorship. □

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# NIEMAN NOTES

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With the appointment of the 1987-88 Nieman Fellows, the number of Nieman classes totals 49 — one year shy of the golden 50.

These numbers make a fine set of statistics, but their real value accrues with the notes and visits from each of you. It is especially heartening this time around to have connections with the first Nieman class, as well as the most recent.

— 1939 —

IRVING DILLIARD, retired Princeton University professor, in July wrote from his home in Collinsville, Illinois.

"Dorothy and I are about to leave for 'New Englandish' Chagrin Falls, Ohio, to visit daughter Doris Lee and husband Jim, long in the Pittsburgh area. Then in early August we plan to go out to Billings, Montana, for the annual (19th) gathering of the Lewis and Clark Trail Heritage Foundation. The attendees are delightful people and the daily bus trips are always enjoyable and informative — to Custer's Last Stand, for one this time."

— 1946 —

At the chapel of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston on July 11 Theresa M. Slomkowski, assistant to the editor of the Boston Publishing Company, was married to ROBERT T. MANNING, editor in chief of the company, a book publishing concern. The ceremony was performed by Msgr. Francis J. Lally and the Reverend Thomas J. Manning, the bridegroom's brother.

The bride, a graduate of Williams College, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley P. Slomkowski of Middlefield, Connecticut. Her father is a retired dairy farmer.

The bridegroom, a widower, is a son of Mrs. Joseph J. Manning of Binghamton, New York, and the late Mr. Manning. Robert Manning was formerly editor in chief of *The Atlantic Monthly*. He served as Assistant Secretary of State for public affairs under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. His late wife, Margaret Raymond Manning, was book

editor of *The Boston Globe*.

— 1951 —

EDWIN O. GUTHMAN, editor of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for 10 years, is retiring from the newspaper and will be succeeded by his deputy, David R. Boldt.

Mr. Guthman, a Pulitzer Prize winner in 1950, is moving to Los Angeles to teach at the University of Southern California. He joined the *Inquirer* in 1977 after 12 years with *The Los Angeles Times*.

DWIGHT SARGENT, based in New York City as an editorial writer for Hearst Newspapers, was awarded a plaque at the 1986 autumn meeting of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. The citation was given for his 40 years of perfect attendance at the annual NCEW meetings, including the initial gathering in Washington, D.C.

NCEW is dedicated to "the conscience and the quality of the American editorial page."

Mr. Sargent is a former curator of the Nieman Foundation.

— 1953 —

JOHN STROHMEYER, a Pulitzer Prize winner, and former editor of the *Bethlehem (Pa.) Globe-Times*, will be the sixth journalist to hold the Atwood professorship for the coming school year in the Department of Journalism and Public Communications at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. He succeeds Richard D. Smyser, former president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, who has returned to this position as editor of the *Oak Ridger* in Tennessee. The chair, established in 1980, is funded by Robert B. Atwood, publisher of *The Anchorage Times*, and Evangeline Atwood.

Mr. Strohmeyer previously was the McFadden Visiting Professor of Journalism at Lehigh University.

Among the former Atwood professors is MORT STERN ('55), former managing editor of *The Denver Post* and currently chairman of the journalism department at the University of Northern Colorado.

— 1954 —

ROBERT C. BERGENHEIM, publisher of the *Boston Business Journal* and *Boston Business* magazine, plans to sell his publications to MCP Inc., according to an account in *The Boston Globe*, July 28. MCP, based in Minnesota, publishes nine newspapers and magazines in that state and in Louisiana.

The sale marks the end of six years of his autonomy as publisher. However, he will continue as day-to-day manager of the two publications and will serve as a board member at MCP.

Mr. Bergenheim founded the *BBJ* "on a shoestring" in 1981; the circulation is 45,000 at present. Revenue from the *BBJ* spawned two other publications: *Boston Business*, a bimonthly magazine founded in 1985, and the year-old *Providence Business News*, a weekly.

LIONEL HUDSON of Sydney, Australia, visited Lippmann House briefly in May on his return from a vacation in Maine. He is a documentary film-maker and the author of *Dingo*, a story of Australia's wild dogs.

— 1955 —

SAM ZAGORIA writes that he has "just returned from a Fulbright Lectureship in Denmark. . . . I served as labor arbitrator and I am completing a book on ombudsmen and local government. I am interviewing ombudsmen around the world."

— 1956 —

DON S. MARSH, editor of the *Charleston (W. Va.) Gazette*, was one of six to receive the ASNE Distinguished Writing Award last spring in Washington, D.C. He was honored in the category of commentary/column writing for "hard-hitting columns dealing with West Virginia politics and the economy."

Winners were selected from about 450 entries submitted for consideration from daily newspapers in the United States and Canada.

— 1959 —

HOWARD SIMONS, curator of the Nieman Foundation, is one of two new members elected to serve on the Pulitzer Prize Board, the panel that oversees the selection each year of the Pulitzer Prize winners.

The other new member is Peter R. Kann, associate publisher of *The Wall Street Journal* and executive vice president of Dow Jones & Company.

The two men fill vacancies created by the departure from the board of Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., chairman of the Pulitzer Publishing Company and subsidiaries, and Warren H. Phillips, chairman of the board of Dow Jones & Company.

The elections were announced by Michael Sovern, president of Columbia University.

— 1960 —

REG MURPHY, publisher and president of The Baltimore Sun Companies, was elected to the Asia Foundation Board of Trustees in April.

The Asia Foundation, a private, non-profit, grant-making organization, lends American assistance to Asians for the growth and development of their societies, to promote Asian regional cooperation, and to further Asian-American understanding, cooperation, and friendship. The Foundation's headquarters are in San Francisco, and it maintains offices in Washington, D.C., and in 10 Asian nations.

Mr. Murphy also serves as a member of the Board of Overseers of the National Center for Freedom of Information Studies, Loyola University, Chicago, and the board of directors of United Way, Central Maryland.

He also is a trustee of Johns Hopkins Hospital and serves on the advisory council of Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

— 1962 —

JOHN O. EMMERICH JR., publisher of the *Greenwood (Miss.) Commonwealth*, won re-election to the directorship of the Associated Press board of directors. He represents newspapers from cities under 50,000 population.

— 1965 —

JAMES McCARTNEY, national correspondent and columnist in the

Washington, D.C. bureau of Knight-Ridder Newspapers Inc., has been elected president of the Gridiron Club. He recently visited Lippmann House when he was in Cambridge to interview Harvard professors for a series he is writing on President Reagan's foreign policy.

MOLLY SINCLAIR, his wife and a reporter with *The Washington Post*, is a member of the Nieman Class of '78.

To the best of our knowledge, there is only one other all-Nieman married couple. ELLEN GOODMAN ('74) and ROBERT LEVEY ('69) are with *The Boston Globe*.

— 1968 —

ATSUKO CHIBA, a Japanese journalist living in New York City, died July 9 at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. She was 46 years old.

Miss Chiba wrote a column titled, "Living with Cancer," which was published every Friday beginning in 1983 in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, a daily newspaper with nationwide circulation in Japan. It also has a United States edition. Her final column appeared May 15.

Born in Shanghai, Miss Chiba received her bachelor's degree in economics from Gakushuin University. She worked as an economics reporter for three years for *The Tokyo Shimbun* before she was awarded a Nieman Fellowship. She also worked as the Tokyo correspondent for the *Asian Wall Street Journal* when it was established in the 1970's and later worked as a freelance journalist for many American, British, Australian, and Hong Kong publications.

In 1981, Miss Chiba underwent surgery for breast cancer in Tokyo. She moved to New York in 1983. From there, she wrote about the differences between Japanese and American views toward cancer. She also wrote 13 books, including *A New Woman* and *Living with Cancer in New York*. She founded a monthly newsletter for Japanese career women.

She was one of the first Japanese journalists to write about cancer, and shocked some people with her forthright descriptions of how the disease had affected her life. In one book, *Cancer Can't Defeat Me*, Miss Chiba criticized the Japanese medical establishment and condemned the Japanese public's general insensitivity to cancer patients.

In a 1981 interview, she said, "Now I know how I will die, writing something

until the end." And friends said that she was worrying about deadlines until two days before her death.

All proceeds from the sale of her property will go toward a fund for journalists from developing nations in Asia.

Miss Chiba is survived by her mother and three sisters, Nobuko Matsuura, Fumiko Chiba, and Haruko Chiba, all of Tokyo.

— Excerpted from *The New York Times*, July 19, 1987.

Editor's note: At the time when Atsuko Chiba was awarded a Nieman Fellowship, she was the only woman journalist in Japan writing about economics.

The Nieman Class of 1968 included one other woman: CASSIE MACKIN, who died of cancer in November 1982. She had been Washington correspondent for ABC News.

— 1969 —

GEORGE AMICK is creating a stir in the philatelic world with his new book, *The Inverted Jenny: Mystery, Money, Mania*, published by the Scott Publishing Company/Amos Press Inc. in Sydney, Ohio. His book, about a 24-cent inverted stamp, blends history, mystery, and greed into a fascinating story. Mr. Amick is editorial-page editor for *The Times* in Trenton, New Jersey.

PAUL HEMPHILL, in town to promote his new book, *Me and the Boy*, visited Lippmann House in June. Published by Macmillan, the book describes the journey that he and his son, David, made along the Appalachian Trail, which runs from Maine to Georgia, and the discoveries they made about each other during their "long walk in the woods."

Mr. Hemphill is writer-in-residence at Brenau College in Gainesville, Georgia. He is also the author of *The Nashville Sound*, *Too Old to Cry*, *The Good Ol' Boys*, *Long Gone*, and *The Sixkiller Chronicles*.

— 1970 —

GENE GOLTZ was among the dozen Texan journalists involved in the winning of 13 Pulitzer Prizes during the past 31 years who were honored last spring at a special luncheon at the Driskill Hotel, Austin's historic political hangout. The Texas Associated Press Managing Editors

were hosts for the affair, and the Pulitzer winners were congratulated by Liz Carpenter for "putting real quality into Texas." Liz Carpenter is former press secretary to First Lady Lady Bird Johnson.

Mr. Goltz was the *Houston Post* winner of the 1965 prize for local investigative specialized reporting, with an exposé of government corruption in Pasadena, Texas, which resulted in widespread reform.

Previously, in 1968, he was the co-holder of a Pulitzer Prize won for the *Detroit Free Press* for coverage of the Detroit riots. At the time he was awarded a Nieman Fellowship, he was a reporter with the *Free Press*.

— 1971 —

RONALD WALKER, former city editor of the *San Juan Star* in Puerto Rico, last spring accepted the position of special assistant to Resident Commissioner Jaime Fuster in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Walker joined the staff of the *Star* in 1962 as a reporter and subsequently held other positions at the paper, including news editor, editorial board chairman, senior editor, editorial-page editor, and managing editor. He has served also as an administrative assistant to Rep. James H. Scheuer (D-NY); editor of the *Virgin Islands Daily News*; and press secretary to the governor of the Virgin Islands.

— 1975 —

DAVID HAWPE, managing editor of the *Courier-Journal*, Louisville, Kentucky, in September became editor, responsible for news and editorials. He succeeds Michael Gartner who is leaving to become a country editor on a newspaper he owns in his native Iowa.

Mr. Hawpe, who grew up in Louisville, joined the *Courier-Journal* as a reporter in the Hazard bureau in 1969, from a job as an editorial writer with the *St. Petersburg Times* in Florida. He has held positions as editorial writer, copy editor, and assistant state editor for the *Courier-Journal* and as city editor of *The Louisville Times* before becoming *Courier-Journal* managing editor in 1979.

FRANK SWOBODA, assistant managing editor of financial news at *The Washington Post*, in July moved to the national news staff. He specializes in

reporting on labor issues and the changing American workplace.

— 1976 —

ROBERT GILLETTE, most recently based in Warsaw, Poland, for the *Los Angeles Times*, has returned to the States and is currently in the Washington, D.C. bureau of the newspaper to cover energy and environmental issues. His replacement is another Nieman — CHARLES POWERS, Nieman Fellow '87, who has traveled to Poland to be the foreign correspondent in Warsaw for the *Times*.

— 1979 —

Word has come to us recently that JOHN HUFF JR. is national editor/projects editor of the *Orlando Sentinel* in Florida. He was one of the Niemans for whom we had no record of current affiliation, so we are pleased to be brought up to date.

HANNS VICTOR LEWIS, assistant foreign editor of *The Boston Globe*, is one of 12 journalists who last spring spent eight weeks of intensive study and foreign orientation as a Jefferson Fellow at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. Study sessions at the Center provide an overview of the historic and cultural background of nations in the region.

— 1981 —

DAVID LAMB's book, *The Africans*, first published by Random House in 1983, is being printed in an updated edition that will contain a new epilogue covering recent events and a report on the author's visit to Ethiopia during the famine.

Mr. Lamb, a reporter with the *Los Angeles Times*, is also the author of *The Arabs: Journey Beyond the Mirage*, published by Random House earlier this year.

DOUG MARLETTE joined the editorial-page staff of *The Atlanta Constitution* in April. He previously was an editorial cartoonist for the *The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer*.

Mr. Marlette was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, and raised in Laurel, Mississippi, and Sanford, Florida. He has been drawing newspaper cartoons since he was 16 years old. He joined the staff of

the *Observer* in 1972. His editorial cartoons are syndicated to more than 199 newspapers in this country and overseas. He is also the creator of the comic strip *Kudzu*.

He has received numerous awards for his work, including the National Headliners award "for consistently outstanding editorial cartoons," the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Award, the 1985 Sigma Delta Chi Distinguished Service Award, the 1986 First Amendment Award, and first place in the John Fischetti Editorial Cartoon Competition.

His editorial cartoons have been collected in four books, the most recent being *It's a Dirty Job But Somebody Has To Do It*. His *Kudzu* comic strips have been published in four collections.

— 1982 —

CHRISTOPHER BOGAN and his wife, Mary Jo Barnett, announce the birth of a son, Evan Christopher Emerson, on March 14.

Mr. Bogan is currently studying at Harvard's School of Business Administration. He formerly was a reporter with the *Dallas Times Herald*.

— 1983 —

*Comeback: My Race for the America's Cup* by Dennis Conner with BRUCE STANNARD was published in the spring by St. Martin's Press. The foreword is by Walter Cronkite.

Mr. Stannard, an Australian journalist, covered the 1983 competition in Newport, Rhode Island. He makes his home in Killara, New South Wales.

*Comeback* recounts the loss of the America's Cup to Australia in 1983 and the success of Dennis Conner and his Stars & Stripes team to win the trophy back in the 1986-87 America's Cup series.

— 1985 —

EDWIN CHEN, assistant metropolitan editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, is one of 17 journalists, scientists, educators, and corporate executives named to serve on a National Advisory Board to the new Science Journalism Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The School of Journalism opened the Center last February to help journalists covering science and medicine. The Ad-



— 1986 —

visory Board will meet for the first time in September at the National Library of Medicine, a component of The National Institutes of Health, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Mr. Chen is the author of *PBB: An American Tragedy*, a book about an environmental pollution case in Michigan in the 1970's, which won top honors from the Society of Midland Authors in 1979 in the category of nonfiction: politics and economics. His other awards include, in 1985, the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award; in 1983 and 1984, the State Bar of California's gold medallion; in 1977, award of merit from United Press International for a series on Medicaid fraud in Michigan; in 1981, top prize for investigative reporting from the San Diego Press Club for a series of articles disclosing research fraud at the University of California.

JERELYN EDDINGS (Jerri), a *Baltimore Sun* columnist, will temporarily forsake that work for a three-month assignment as a roving reporter covering countries in Africa, and writing stories with datelines from Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and Angola. Ms. Eddings plans to leave for her African trek in the middle of September, and will return just before Christmas. South Africa, the country she was to have covered, denied her a visa. But several of the countries Ms. Eddings will visit border on South Africa — there is no doubt that news from and about that country will filter its way to the Baltimore reporter.

During his vacation, PHILIP HILTS stopped in at Lippmann House in July with his children Benjamin, Alexis, and Sean. They had been traveling in New Jersey, Long Island, Manhattan, and had spent a couple of weeks on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. At that time he visited friends and colleagues in Woods Hole, where he was a Marine Biological Laboratory Science Writing Fellow last summer. The family went on to New Hampshire and stayed at a cabin on Lake Sunapee. They saw classmate MIKE PRIDE and his family several times.

Mr. Hilts is a reporter with *The Washington Post*.



GUSTAVO GORRITI has resigned from his position as executive news editor of *Caretas* magazine in Lima, Peru. He is the recipient of a H.F. Guggenheim Foundation grant as of last January to do research and write a book about the Shining Path, the leftist Peruvian guerrilla group.

In September he will return to Cambridge for the academic year as a Fellow at the Center for International Affairs, and will continue with his book project.

Some members of the Class of 1986 were able to attend a last-minute, impromptu mini-reunion in Florida. The early May affair was occasioned by RICHARD STEYN's 24-hour stopover in Miami from South Africa en route to the Inter American Press Association meeting in Buenos Aires.

Gathered at the home of MADDIE BLAIS (former staff writer, *Tropic* magazine, *The Miami Herald*) and John Katzenbach were: LAURA PARKER and ATHELIA KNIGHT (both with *The Washington Post*); MARK ETHRIDGE III (*Charlotte Observer*) and his wife Kay; GENEVA OVERHOLSER (*The New York Times*) and her husband Michael Schaeffer and their two children Laura and Nell; Buzz Bissinger (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), appearing just a week and a half after winning the Pulitzer Prize; and ROBERTO EISENMANN (*La Prensa*) and his wife Maruja, living in Florida in exile from Panama.

Classmates MARY LOU FINLAY (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and DAVID SYLVESTER (*San Jose Mercury News*) telephoned greetings.

Richard Steyn is editor of *The Natal Witness*.

Maddie Blais and her family moved from Miami in August, as she will be joining the faculty of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to teach journalism.

— 1987 —

Five foreign journalists from this class visited Concord, New Hampshire in the spring. They were the guests of the *Concord Monitor* and MIKE PRIDE ('85), editor of the newspaper. Visitors were: DRIES VAN HEERDEN, an editor from Johannesburg; MARITES VITUG, a reporter from Manila; SONGPOL KAOPATUMTIP, an editor from

Bangkok; JAMIE LADD, a columnist from Vancouver, Canada; and MAHA SAMARA, a reporter from Beirut. The group addressed the reporters and staff of the newspaper in the afternoon. Following dinner at a local hotel, they spoke at a public gathering in the evening.

An editorial in the *Monitor* commented that "their visit was not intended to be an advertisement for the First Amendment, but they were almost unanimous in their envy of American press freedom. That was not, however, their only common message. They also lamented the selfish vantage point from which Americans view the rest of the world. Both are points well taken."

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## RANDOM NOTES

Two of the six new directors elected at the American Society of Newspaper Editors' annual convention last spring are Nieman Fellows. They are: JAMES D. SQUIRES ('71), editor and executive vice president of the *Chicago Tribune*, and LARRY ALLISON ('69), editor and senior vice president of the *Long Beach (Calif.) Press-Telegram*.

Among the other officers elected was JOHN SEIGENTHALER ('59) as treasurer. He is editor and publisher of *The Tennessean* in Nashville.

Additional and recent visitors to Nieman headquarters include: WILLIAM GORDON ('53) from Washington, D.C.; MASAYUKI IKEDA ('81) of Radio Japan, NHK; MARY LOU FINLAY ('86) with CBC Television, Toronto; and PAUL SHEEHAN ('86), Washington correspondent for the *Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald*.

Gathering news about Nieman Fellows for the autumn issue of the magazine is an exercise that spans two time periods.

The past, which seems so recent with the still-fresh departure of the "old" class in the spring, leads directly to anticipation of the autumn and the new academic year.

The tones of nature's four seasons may seem at odds with the university's calendar, but they do share the unending process of growth, renewal, and fulfillment.

— T.B.K.L.

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