
NIEMAN REPORTS

VOL. XL, NO. I, SPRING 1986

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on
Harold Ickes

Books

Ashmore
on
FDR's White
House

Books

Blais
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James Agee

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Denton
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Racial Attitudes

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Engel
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Sussman
on
Generic News
Rules

Books

Wakefield
on
Inman's Diary

Progeny by Print

Books, said Jonathan Swift, are the children of the brain. None can doubt the historical accuracy of his definition, for the drive in human beings to procreate the race is nearly as strong as the compulsion to record life experiences. Since ancient writings on stone and the earliest known books — the clay tablets of Mesopotamia and the papyrus scrolls of Egypt — hands and hearts have joined efforts to capture concretely the stuff of daily life as well as its more exalted moments.

Such endeavors have continued, undiminished, down the ages to the culmination of the present era's explosion of information.

Books for centuries have been repositories of such records, but they were for those who could read — scientists, scholars, clergy. Their impulse to keep ship's logs, accounts of discovery, travel diaries, and journals of experimentation always has provided building blocks and vantage points for the exploration of frontiers. Technical records survive to serve their purpose, then become nuclei for more complicated and sophisticated achievements. Revelation begets revelation. The cries of "Eureka!" echo through the years, and further knowledge is entrusted to the written word.

In the Middle Ages, erudition was preserved in the precious vehicle of manuscripts that were hand-illuminated by scribes and monks working at their desks from dawn to dusk, and even later by candlelight. Parchment pages, knobby with blisters of gold leaf and droplets of bright color, gave the form as much care and esteem as the content.

Only after the invention of the Gutenberg press was it possible to produce a mechanically printed page. Books proliferated and, for the first time, they were available to more than the learned few. Knowledge broadened its range

of disciples. Printing became a lively profession and, in time, a dangerous one when it was used to foment change.

Hundreds of years later, the discovery of illuminating gas added hours of reading to each day, and earnest consumers of books increased their demands. Today electric lights are a given and, despite the lure of electronics, we remain a civilization of avid readers.

We seek out books as men and women always have — for education, pleasure, or escape. To find all three between one set of covers is a treat and a reward for diligence.

Books also have practical uses. They are effective paperweights. Family tomes serve as cushions to raise smallest members at the dinner table to a convenient height. Legendary battlefield stories tell of pocket bibles or diaries that absorbed the impact of a bullet or shell fragment and shielded the heart.

For protection of another sort, books for the serious collector of first editions and other rarities represent a financial investment that translates into sound value and increasing assets.



Along with acquisition, one also can purchase a sense of satisfaction, for example, when holding or beholding a leather-bound volume hand-tooled with gold leaf borders in classic design; or, on infrequent occasion, by handling a book with that most unusual of art forms, the fore-edge painting: A scene appears as the pages are fanned out. An illustration of folk art can be found in a booklet made of birchbark, sewn down the middle with heavy thread, its cover edged with a pine needle welting, held by twine in overcast stitches. Two pages contain writing. An inscription reads, "To George Winda in memory of his first trip to Mushoka. Sept. 23rd, 1914. M. Arneo." The other entry notes, "By Jasus [sic] I shot a Snake. By Jasus. George."

At the other extreme of gratification, based only on appearance, there are book-owners who get fulfillment from the sight of shelves lined with colorful volumes — perhaps in shades blended to match the room's decor. One can surmise that this affectation has led to the ultimate in superficiality — a facade of "books" glued together in a row of empty spines, each titled, to lend a certain ambience, like a stage setting.

On the other hand, people find real comfort in books. Robert Frost never traveled without his "bedroom suitcase" books. Among those packed in his valise, there always was one of his editions of Latin poetry and his trigonometry textbook. When he couldn't sleep at night, he would get up and do a trig problem.

The advent of the printing press was a turning point in Western culture. At the outset, a flow of mechanically produced books emerged; to this day it continues without let or hindrance.

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South African Journalist Receives Lyons Award



Lucinda Fleeson and Howard Simons present Allister Sparks with the Lyons Award for "conscience and integrity in journalism."

Joe Wrinn

Allister Sparks, correspondent for the *London Observer* and *The Washington Post*, has won the 1985 Louis M. Lyons Award for Conscience and Integrity in Journalism for his courageous reporting from South Africa.

Sparks, a South African journalist, was chosen for the award by a vote of the 19 Fellows in the Nieman Class of 1985. The award, named after former Nieman curator Louis M. Lyons, carries a \$1,000 honorarium.

Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, and Lucinda Fleeson, head of the 1985 Award committee and a staff reporter with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, presented the prize to Sparks in September at the opening reception for the incoming class of Nieman Fellows.

Also attending were members of the Harvard faculty, local alumni/ae, and other friends of the Foundation.

Sparks has reported on *apartheid* and other conditions in South Africa since 1951, and filed reports last year from Sebokeng Township, Bethanie, and Sharpeville that described riot-torn towns and mounting racial tensions. He has risked legal sanction from the South African government for writing about and quoting "banned" persons, and in 1983 his home was searched by security police who went through his books, papers, and files. Later, his wife, Sue Sparks, was detained for fingerprinting and interrogation.

Sparks was editor of the now-defunct *Rand Daily Mail*, but was dismissed in 1981 following a decision by the company's board of

directors to make the paper appeal more to affluent whites and less to poor blacks.

"It takes courage and integrity to report on South Africa today and requires a journalist to resist the pressures of official repression while maintaining a balanced perspective," said Fleeson.

"We chose Sparks because his fierce dedication may have put him in danger from both sides, but he faced down intimidation from both white government officials and black rioters. He ignored roadblocks to travel to rural towns, where he reported the stories of the people who bear the brunt of the official policies the world has come to know as *apartheid*. He has paid the price for being a dissenter in a closed society. He has demonstrated the professionalism, integrity, and meritorious journalism that Louis Lyons personified and taught," she added.

Sparks was born in Cathcart, a farming village in eastern Cape Province, South Africa. He is a Nieman Fellow, Class of 1963.

The 1985 Lyons Award committee established new criteria for the award and contacted more than one thousand news organizations around the world to invite nominations for the annual award.

Past winners include U.S. correspondents who covered the war in Indochina; Tom Renner, a *Newsday* reporter, for his coverage of organized crime; Joe Alex Morris Jr., a *Los Angeles Times* reporter who was killed while covering the Iranian revolution; Joseph Thloloe, a South African journalist jailed for owning a banned book; and in 1984, Maria Olivia Mönckeberg, a Chilean journalist for *Analisis*, for her reporting in the face of official harassment.

Newspapers and Community Crisis

Martin Linsky

Common Ground – A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families

J. Anthony Lukas. Alfred A. Knopf,
New York, 1985, \$19.95.

I trust that you have heard about J. Anthony Lukas's book, *Common Ground*. Lukas was a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1969 and this is, after all, the *Nieman Reports*. Besides, you would have had to have spent the last six months in outer space to have missed the fanfare after it was published.

Beginning with a front-page review in *The New York Times Book Review* last September 15, *Common Ground* has been showered with adulation from coast to coast. It has already copped its first big prize – the American Book Award for non-fiction – and has been the subject of panel discussions, symposia, and the inevitable talk shows. The book even enjoyed a

Martin Linsky is a lecturer in public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University where he teaches about the press. He was one of the hundreds of people Anthony Lukas interviewed in writing Common Ground. In addition, Lukas's wife, Linda Healey, is Linsky's editor at W. W. Norton & Co., which this spring is publishing his book entitled Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policymaking.

little time on the best-seller list. Not bad for a 654-page tome priced at \$19.95 which recounts in excruciating detail the stories of three Boston families – one black, one Irish, and one WASP – and their efforts at coping with the court-ordered desegregation of the Boston public schools.

For Bostonians, the arrival of this book had a special significance. Like Lukas's publisher, we waited a long time for it. Lukas had been something of a fixture around here for the better part of a decade, hanging around town while doggedly in pursuit of his facts. There are no accidents, however, and I am not at all sure that we would have been ready much before now to read and absorb this powerful account of one of the most difficult periods in the history of this city. It is good that the major public figures in the story all have left center stage. Kevin White is no longer mayor. Cardinal Humberto Medeiros is dead. Louise Day Hicks has returned to obscurity. Judge Arthur Garrity is finally extricating himself and the federal courts from the administration of the Boston schools. And Thomas Winship is no longer editor of *The Boston Globe*. I lived those years near, but not at the center of, the action, first as one of the drafters of the racial imbalance law as Lieutenant Governor Elliot Richardson's research and legislative assistant, then as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives from suburban Brookline, next as an editorial writer for *The Boston Globe*, and finally as the editor of the Cambridge-based alternative weekly newspaper, *The Real Paper*. I think I picked up *Common Ground*, nearly ten years after the

events in the book took place, finally open to hearing whatever it was Lukas found about what we had wrought.

"God is in the details," my colleague Bob Leone exhorts his students. *Common Ground* is a long book, made readable by the craft of a great writer, but it is through the details of the stories that Lukas convinces us of what we need to know. Without ever lecturing or being patronizing, Lukas and his characters drive home the uncomfortable truth. The overriding value which explains the push to desegregate the schools by way of a massive busing plan was not the elimination of racism or the pursuit of morality, but the passions of class. Boston's character and eccentricities are critically influenced by one simple reality which distinguishes it from many other great American cities: Most of the people who wield power within the city sleep in the suburbs. The hard truth about Boston's busing ordeal is that it was imposed on the city largely by white middle-class suburbanites who would not be directly affected by the result. During the crisis, that charge was made by angry whites but their complaints were dismissed by those finely-tuned liberal sensibilities as merely more racism. The only Bostonians who could escape were the ones who could afford to do so, and many of them did. Ironically, some who could afford to move found that the suburbanites who favored integration for Boston were less receptive to integrating their own home towns. The people with money and clout pitted poor whites against poor blacks in a struggle over an educational system not good enough to fight about.

The legacy of desegregation has been to further separate rich and poor. Boston's middle class has all but disappeared. As I write, *The Boston Globe* has just published an entire issue of the Sunday magazine on the subject of poverty in Boston. How can it be, it asks, that with the dramatic economic revival of the past five years, the percentage of people living below the poverty line in the city is growing? School busing is a part of the answer. It is good

Through its news pages and its editorial pages, the *Globe* was instrumental in legitimizing *de facto* segregation as an issue, thus changing the public agenda from quality education to desegregated education. The only way that the Boston public schools were going to get much better would have been if Winship and his fellow suburbanites, including me, were willing to ante up more tax dollars to be shipped to Boston or to create a metropolitan

There was concern on the editorial side that the newspaper might be too far in front of the rest of the community.

that the *Globe* is spreading the news, but after reading *Common Ground* you have to wonder what responsibility the *Globe* itself has for the conditions it recently discovered.

Lukas describes the role of the *Globe* through the whole history of the desegregation issue in a brilliant 35-page chapter which ought to be required reading in journalism classes, press courses, and newsrooms. The chapter has stimulated at least one undergraduate thesis, and it deserves to spawn a whole lot more research and debate. It is full of ideas about such meaty stuff as the social impact of newspapers, the impact of competition on coverage, the changing editor-publisher relationship, and barriers facing minorities in the news business. Most important, however, Lukas's story raises serious questions about the responsibility of news organizations to the communities in which they exist and the governments they cover, especially when fundamental issues are at stake.

As Lukas recounts, at the time the desegregation crisis began, the *Globe* reflected the character, values, and sensibility of its editor, Thomas Winship. Like at most newspapers, the editor's passions and attitudes affected who was hired and what was news.

school system. Desegregation of the Boston schools, on the other hand, required no money from suburbanites, only their righteous indignation, moral certitude, and political clout.

The story of *The Boston Globe* and the desegregation crisis is one of well-intentioned people caught between their opposition to racism and their obedience to the journalistic shibboleths of distance and objectivity. Under Winship, the *Globe* had been actively involved in pursuing its vision of the public interest. For example, through him and others at the *Globe*, the paper enjoyed a close relationship with many politicians, including John F. Kennedy. Winship had brought the *Globe* into an alliance with Kevin White, the Mayor of Boston. The relationship was forged primarily during White's mayoralty campaigns against anti-busing leader Louise Day Hicks in 1967 and 1971. It was Winship who initiated the push that made the *Globe* into one of the earliest newspaper opponents of the war in Vietnam. And he led the paper into other issues, such as the bottle bill. To his great credit, Tom Winship never pretended to be objective.

But school desegregation was a more complex issue for the *Globe* than Vietnam. For years, the *Globe* had been

closely identified with the forces advocating change in Boston's segregated schools. Lukas's chapter opens with shots being fired into the *Globe*'s lobby, presumably by white anti-busing extremists. Five days later, the *Globe* ran a black-on-white rape story on page one, as if to show the racists that the paper was willing to overplay "their" stories as well. Then the black reporters on the paper protested and demanded that the paper appoint a black editor and a black editorial writer. Eventually Winship did. The business side meanwhile was concerned that continued advocacy would lose circulation. And there was concern on the editorial side that the newspaper might be too far in front of the rest of the community, ahead even of the blacks who favored desegregation but were just as interested in the quality of education their children would be receiving. There was pressure both inside and outside from the old Irish constituency on which the *Globe*'s readership had been built. So Winship (against all his instincts is my guess) imported Robert Phelps from *The New York Times* to establish a sense of objectivity for the *Globe*'s desegregation coverage. The strategy was massive coverage — sixty reporters were deployed around the city on the opening day of school — combined with a plan to de-emphasize the violence and accent the positive aspects of whatever took place. The *Globe* made it through the opening of schools without any more shots being fired into the lobby, but well after the crisis was over, the effort to institutionalize the Phelps sensibility throughout the newsroom failed, and Phelps was quietly moved upstairs.

The Lukas account of the *Globe* during the desegregation of the Boston schools is a dramatic example of an intractable dilemma which every large metropolitan newspaper faces. Objectivity and distance are snares and delusions. A newspaper cannot be objective in covering the city because it must make decisions every day which reflect

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The Paradox of Change

Herbert Denton

Racial Attitudes in America – Trends and Interpretations

Howard Schuman, Charlotte Steeh, and Lawrence Bobo. Harvard University Press, 1985, \$22.50.

The voice of President Eisenhower, fading in and out, sounded annoyingly hesitant and equivocal to me. My mother fiddled with the dial of a portable radio as several neighbors stood with us, huddled in front of our house listening to the press conference in Washington. It was the afternoon of September 3, 1957, the day when nine black children, who were friends of ours – mostly from the neighborhood – had tried to enter all-white Little Rock Central High School. They were stopped by a surly, threatening white crowd and by the Arkansas National Guard soldiers Governor Orval Faubus had posted on the school steps in a surprise move to defy a federal court desegregation order.

On the radio, UPI's Merriman Smith was pressing Eisenhower for his reaction to the events of the day. But the President was clearly not going to be pinned down. To the dismay of those of us gathered around the radio, the old general's rambling, tentative response made it sound as though his gut sym-

pathies were as much with the howling white mob as with the brave black students.

"Now, time and again, a number of people – I among them – have argued that you cannot change people's hearts merely by laws," Eisenhower said. "Laws presumably express the conscience of a nation and its determination or will to do something."

A few days later, of course, the President did summon the will to enforce the law by dispatching federal troops to the city and the rest is, as they say, history. But a generation later, the inner conflict between the hearts of white Americans and the conscience of the nation that he expressed remains unresolved. To be sure, the old theories of white supremacy that were the articles of faith for the mob on Central High's steps are now in disrepute. Few whites anywhere in the country would openly object to having nine studious and well-scrubbed black youngsters attend their otherwise all-white high school. Most white Americans now at least pay lip service to the ideal of equality of opportunity. But often their support for that principle is still highly theoretical. They tend to balk when the discussion is shifted to specific remedies for overcoming racial discrimination, especially when their own lives will be affected. Northern whites applauded Eisenhower's actions in Little Rock and supported government efforts to end school segregation in the South. But later, when the courts sought to break up the *de facto* segregation in northern schools, the northern cities' support for government intervention began to swiftly evaporate. My favorite example of the

contradiction – one is tempted to say the hypocrisy – in white attitudes described in this excellent book is in the way that whites in opinion surveys respond to questions about the integration of neighborhoods. Nine out of ten say they believe blacks ought to be able to live wherever they can afford to purchase a home. But ask the question a different way. Ask white Americans whether they believe whites have the "right" to keep black people out of their neighborhoods – if they want to – and only four out of every ten responding will strongly disagree.

Schuman, Steeh, and Bobo, the authors of this book, have analyzed polls taken over the past four decades by the Gallup organization, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, and the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan. Their painstaking and clear-eyed analysis of the voluminous record strips away much of the cloak of euphemism, evasion, and denial characterizing much of our national discussion on race. (It should be noted that this is a book mostly about the racial attitudes of whites. Only one of the six chapters is devoted to the racial attitudes of black Americans, and it is the spottiest in the book. But more about that later.)

The authors agree neither with the rosy optimists, who contend that racial discrimination has virtually disappeared as a factor in American life, nor with the gloomy pessimists who proclaim a massive white backlash. Change has come – but erratically: It has not been as steady and consistent or across-the-board as one might expect. The authors argue convincingly

Herbert Denton, based in Toronto, is Canada correspondent for The Washington Post.

that there is a "lag effect" in changes in white attitudes on race. Acceptance of change has come most often only after government has intervened to enforce principles, and after the principles themselves have been deeply internalized. For example, a huge majority of Southern whites strongly opposed school integration. But after a decade of living with it, their support for the principle had approached the opinion level of Northern whites. Resistance to government intervention to insure blacks' access to hotels, restaurants, and theaters faded away after the sit-ins and public accommodation battles of the 1960's.

President Reagan encountered this phenomenon when he campaigned in Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1984. To achieve school desegregation thirteen years earlier, the city had been the scene of a bitter battle over busing that led to a landmark Supreme Court decision. But when Reagan attempted to use the same issue to arouse the partisans at a rally in 1984, calling busing a failed "social experiment that nobody wants," he was met with silence. Later the Charlotte newspapers gently rebuked him for his remarks. Although both Reagan and U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese show no signs of having learned anything from that or other similar experiences, the point seems to be that it is easier to scare whites with the prospect of disruption in the future, than it is to rally them to turn back the clock, once they have gone through a painful change and lived with both the discomforts and the benefits.

The presence of a large and degraded black population has stood throughout American history as a glaring paradox for a nation founded on ideals of equality and justice. Thomas Jefferson, whose own life as a slave-owning democratic idealist so perfectly defined the contradiction, wondered whether the deep-rooted prejudices of whites and the "ten thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained" would make peaceful co-existence forever impossible. More than two centuries later that is, for me,

still an open question. Resistance to integration among whites in the North and South rises when the proportion of blacks increases in an integrated setting. If there is widespread acceptance of integration in the public spheres of life, there is still scant enthusiasm for government action to end discrimination in more personal spheres such as jobs, housing, and schools.

"The racial situation in the United States defies understanding," the

For most whites,
issues of race
tend to be
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a constant reality.

authors quote social psychologist Angus Campbell. "The complexity and variety of the relationships between members of the two major races is so great that both white people and black tend to rely on simple generalities which reduce the problem to manageable terms."

I would argue further that relations are complicated even more by our national tendency to dissemble and lie when we talk about racial issues. Pollsters long ago discovered that what people say they think about matters involving race depends on whom they are talking to.

I learned this firsthand in 1972 when, as Maryland editor of *The Washington Post*, I sent a team of reporters to talk to voters in several Dixiecrat precincts on Maryland's Eastern Shore. George Wallace had rolled up large majorities in the area during his crusade for the presidency four years earlier. The sole black member of the team, Jean Fugett, at the time a tight end for the Washington

Redskins, and an intern for the *Post* in the off season, knocked on doors all over the area. In stark contrast to his white counterparts, he failed to find a single person in a single household who would admit to having voted for Wallace.

As to the racial attitudes of black Americans, they can be just as disingenuous. When asked, for example, whether they think all black families should fly an American flag in front of their homes, their responses vary widely, depending on whether the question is posed by a white person, a mild-mannered, middle-aged black woman, or a militant-appearing young black man.

Long regarded as merely passive players in the great national drama, blacks mostly have been ignored by researchers surveying racial attitudes in America. The American dilemma has been regarded generally as the white man's dilemma; but what does emerge from the fragments of research is a growing impatience among blacks with what they perceive to be a grindingly slow pace of change.

Neoconservatives, blacks and whites, often have gleefully seized on bits and pieces of research to buttress one or another of their pet arguments. Those revisionists recently have been taken with findings showing that despite the priority traditional black civil rights leaders give to such goals as school busing and affirmative action, most blacks have deep misgivings. But the point these analysts appear blind to is that the apparent underlying emotion is a deep frustration. Blacks tend to fault civil rights leaders not for the policies they espouse, but because they have come to feel that these leaders are not pushing hard enough.

For most whites, issues of race tend to be pretty abstract, slipping on and off the screen. For blacks, race is a constant reality. If Reagan has failed in his efforts to turn back the clock, he has succeeded in halting further progress. He has shifted the burden of the debate onto blacks, thus assuring whites im-

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An Improper Bostonian Writ Large

Dan Wakefield

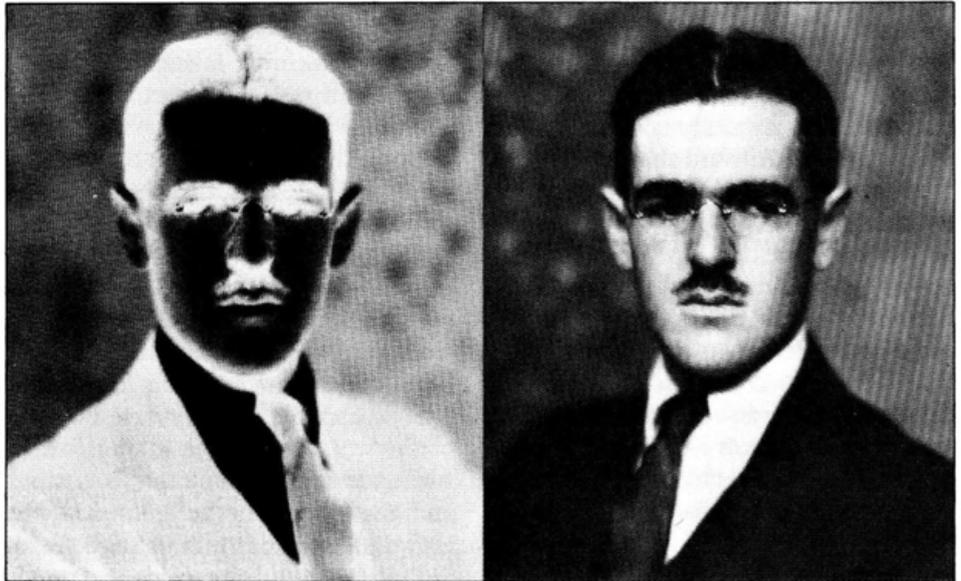
The Inman Diary: A Public and Private Confession

Edited by Daniel Aaron. Harvard University Press, two volumes, 1985, \$50.00.

Wanted: persons who have had interesting experiences and who can tell them interestingly to talk to an invalid, \$1 an evening. Telephone Back Bay 5553 between 9:00 and 10:30 A.M. or call Garrison Hall, Garrison Street, Boston, 7:00-8:00 P.M. Mr. or Mrs. A. C. Inman.

This ad appeared in the Help Wanted section of *The Boston Evening Transcript* on December 22, 1924, and those who responded included "a singer on the Lyceum circuit, the daughter of a Forty-Niner, an ex-editor of a country newspaper, and a prizefighter." The hired volunteers were ushered into a darkened room in a shabby-genteel Back Bay hotel and questioned about the most intimate details of their lives (Did they believe in God, love their wives or husbands, take drugs?) by Arthur Crew Inman, a neurotic, restless, reclusive, ambitious, bigoted, semi-invalid scion of a wealthy and socially prominent Atlanta family (grandfather Samuel Inman made a fortune in cotton) who hoped not only to "picture myself" but also

Dan Wakefield is a Nieman Fellow from the Class of 1964. His latest book is the novel *Selling Out*.



Inman loved details, and he wanted to record everything he could, like a journalistic pack rat. . . . He bequeathed to his editor 55 volumes containing 17 million words.

"picture America" in a kind of "ultimate diary" that would someday win him fame, and in the meantime provide an "escape valve for my thoughts and emotions" and even a reason for living. ("The mainspring of my existence is the keeping of this diary.")

A little more than two decades after Inman finally succeeded in the suicide he had so often contemplated and twice before attempted, the magnum opus he gave up on trying to publish in his lifetime (Walter Lippmann had "found it hard to lay it down," but believed the subject matter too "intimate" for anything but private publication) was brought out last fall in a boxed set of two volumes (reduced to this feasible but still formidable size from ten times the amount of mater-

ial), and its author won the literary celebrity he so longed for in life and aided even after his death by a publishing subvention provided by his estate to The Harvard University Press.

Reception of the work has ranged all the way from a rave in *The New York Times Book Review* ("This is an American diary that ought to endure as long as our literature," John Gross proclaimed) to a put-down in *The New York Review of Books* ("Harvard University Press has given us the cork-lined chamber without Proust," Louis Auchincloss said in icy summation). Justin Kaplan lauded the diary as "a compelling piece of social history" in *The New Republic*, while Benjamin DeMott, in a kind of literary backlash, argued in *The New England Monthly*

that praise of Inman's "gift as a prober of lives different from his own" was "wrong-headed," and that comparison of his work to Dreiser "traduces real literary values."

The most unsavory aspect of the work for admirers and detractors alike is Inman's blatant racism and berserk enthusiasm for fascism. After citing some of those ravings, including the diarist's love of Hitler and hatred of Roosevelt ("Devoutly do I hope for the further illness and possible death of Roosevelt," Inman wrote in 1944), Louis Auchincloss commented: "I can only ponder bemusedly how his words ever persuaded Harvard that his goal as a historian had been even remotely approached."

It is not, however, as a "historian" in any conventional sense that Inman can claim attention. The editor of the work explains in its pages that the diarist's "hope of becoming an interpreter and representative of his times was absurd. He was too confined, too prejudiced, too uncritical. . . a perfect specimen of what a historian friend of mine has called the 'paranoid style' of political thinking." Inman himself referred to the diary's "contemporaneous inaccuracy of the historical perspective."

Inman's obsessive (even desperate) effort to portray himself and his times (born in 1895, he worked on the diary from 1919 to his death in 1963) more honestly and unsparingly than anyone had done before would still be unintelligible — or at least largely inaccessible — were it not for the six years of labor of his editor. If the good luck of Inman's tormented life was his attractive, long-suffering, understanding wife Evelyn (she not only tolerated but helped recruit the endless stream of teenage girls her husband questioned, entertained, and fondled in his darkened rooms, but offered to provide birth control for the few women with whom he went beyond "petting" to engage in sexual intercourse), his great posthumous fortune was in getting Daniel Aaron as the editor he had so long addressed, admonished, and instructed in his mammoth opus.

Harvard professor emeritus of English and American language and literature, author of highly regarded works of literary and intellectual history such as the classic *Writers on the Left*, and president of the Library of America (the distinguished publishing enterprise that is making available in uniform editions our national literary canon), Aaron took on a challenge that made the legendary trunk full of manuscripts that Thomas Wolfe lugged into Maxwell Perkins' office seem downright skimpy. Inman bequeathed to his editor 155 volumes containing seventeen million words.

Not only the sheer bulk of the thing was daunting, but also the dark and troubled nature of the *persona* behind it, for Aaron soon realized that he had encountered in this massive *cri de coeur* what he bluntly calls in his introduction "the classic sick soul." As he plunged ahead, Aaron found that "the vulnerable and perverse creator" of the work was also a man of "mitigating decencies and curious genius," and that the scene he created — the crowd of assorted "talkers" and "readers," helpers and doctors and friends and lovers who poured out to Inman their darkest secrets in the dim confessional netherworld of his curtained room — "abounds with life." Aaron in a sense entered that world himself, becoming a "character" in the form of the long-awaited "editor" and concluding the final volume with an abridgment of the last diaries through his own letters to one of the surviving members of Inman's inner circle.

Since the rambling, twisting work (Inman refers to it as a "thrashing snake") has no real precedent in form or content, Aaron offers the reader five different possible strategies for approaching it: as case history ("the autobiography of a warped and deeply troubled man whose aberrations call for psychiatric probing"); the story of an unreconstructed, transplanted Southerner; an overview of Boston from the 1920's to the 1960's; a "street-side" social history of America; or as a non-fiction novel.

It has the texture and flavor (though

not the conscious narrative art) of one of those nineteenth-century novels out of Russia or England — a cast larger than Tolstoy, more intrigues and injustices than Dickens, and the voice of a Dostoevsky protagonist. (Inman often sounds like the narrator of *Notes From Underground*, as when he laments in his diary "What a bruised, spineless, squirming semblance of a thing I am.") Sometimes it seems more like a Vonnegut novel with a wacky anti-hero who imagines himself the editor of his own newspaper.

In the mornings Arthur Inman was driven around Boston in his Pierce-Arrow or 1919 Cadillac, looking for material ("diary fodder" he called it), and from his bed the rest of the day and night he not only listened to peoples' stories but also sent his "staff" out on "assignments" like some driven editor running the city desk from his sickbed. One night he dispatched his wife Evelyn to the Scollay Square Theatre to interview a French explorer and the nine Ubangis he had brought on tour from the Belgian Congo. When a willing but perplexed Evelyn wondered how she would get them to talk to her, Arthur suggested she pose as a reporter from an Atlanta paper, which she did, faithfully bringing home the story that was then transcribed into the diary: "There were the members of the chorus, small dark girls with velveteen jackets, powder on their own costumes. . . a dancer wearing only a small strap and painted from feet to head with bronze paint. . . ."

Hedda Williams, a grocery clerk and office worker affectionately known as "Woodwork," who was one of the most faithful members of Inman's circle, asked Arthur how she could help him fill his diary now that she had already told him everything about herself. He gave her instructions that any good journalism teacher might impart to an introductory class (no doubt omitting the first and last "assignment"). "Pick up a man a day. Go through factories. Take a trip to beaches and study human nature. Find out how a depart-

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Prose Power and Banalities

Madeleine Blais

James Agee — Selected Journalism

Edited, with an introduction, by Paul Ashdown. The University of Tennessee Press, 1985, \$17.95.

William Butler Yeats was once asked by a concerned protégé whether the poet's articles and essays, appearing in the ephemeral journals of his day, might be a waste of his talents. The poet replied, "Yes, unless they are worthy of appearing between hard covers. And then, no."

It would be a mercy if James Agee could have invoked Yeats's pithy response and put an end to what seems a distinctly useless debate over whether Agee's gifts were wasted on the pages of *Fortune*, *Time*, and other periodicals during the 1930's and 1940's and whether or not he might have become a Great Writer had he not been gainfully employed by various news-gathering organizations.

Agee was in fact both a great writer and a terrible one, and although it may be literary heresy to say this, the two works in which his genius is generally said to have been sustained and to have reached the dizzying level of promise fulfilled (the novel *A Death in the Family* and the non-fiction work *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*) seem today to be curiously, if not tragically, flawed. And the lesser pieces, lesser because they are shorter and in some crucial ways less ambitious, are infinitely more controlled, showing a cool, pure beauty as opposed to the tiresome

tirades that occasionally undermine the longer works.

This contrast between the shorter and longer works is evident thanks to a new collection entitled *James Agee: Selected Journalism*, edited, with an introduction, by Paul Ashdown, professor of journalism and assistant dean of communications at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

The book is vintage Agee, with a sampler of pieces on subjects as various one from the other as cockfighting, orchids, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and even a cruise of Havana. Here we have the sharp harnessed writing of a master. (See excerpts.) If they are too short, they nevertheless have the appeal of all confections: they live long, and tantalizingly, in the memory.

It would benefit any writer to reread the longer pieces in conjunction with this book. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a study of the impoverished sharecroppers of Alabama, was undertaken in 1936 as an assignment for *Fortune*, along with photographer Walker Evans. Evans caught the grainy deprived reality on film, while Agee scrambled to produce an equally intense prose equivalent. The joint enterprise remains today a monumental effort and a model for young journalists who may be laboring under the unfortunate belief that personal passion and superior journalism are enemies, when in truth, the opposite is the case. When Agee and Walker first showed up amid the shanty houses, the word went out that they might be Communist agents out to destroy America and the first to speak to them did so out of a sense of pity for the ragtag duo. When Agee returned to New York and submitted his

manuscript to *Fortune*, his editors refused to run it and although he and Walker persisted, finally finding a publisher, the first printing sold approximately three hundred copies and promptly passed from print, only to be rediscovered during the early 1960's when fashion once again permitted the flourishing of social consciousness.

Agee never enjoyed this delayed reception to the work. Nor did he live to bask in the acclaim afforded *A Death in the Family*, his autobiographical fiction about the death of his father when Agee was a boy of seven. The book was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1957, after Agee's own death.

"By some chance," wrote Agee in the novel, describing his family, "here they are, all on this earth; and who shall ever tell the sorrow of being on this earth, lying, on quilts, on the grass in a summer evening, among the sounds of night."

The quiet lyricism of this passage, repeated in *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, is marred in both books, grievously, by incredibly long passages that consist of nothing but pious rantings in which a sentence is not so much a sentence as a word orgy. This, in short, is both the blessing and the curse of James Agee's longer works: unforgettable prose next to insufferable prose.

Editor Ashdown deserves thanks for his careful presentation of Agee at his sustained, surefooted best. There is much to be learned from Agee's short pieces. At the least, they demonstrate the sort of prose power that journalism can achieve — even under deadline. Yeats, no doubt, would agree that Agee's shorter pieces deserve their new showcase: between hard covers.

The compassionate eye which Agee brought to sharecroppers in Alabama becomes wicked and winking when gazing upon middle-class American tourists. "Havana Cruise" (Fortune magazine, 1937) has the momentum and sense of social foible of certain classic short stories by people like Cheever or Fitzgerald or O'Hara.

— M.B.

Havana Cruise

James Agee

Force of habit awakened elderly Mr. and Mrs. B. early and they were strolling the long decks hand in hand a half-hour before the dining saloon opened at eight. Two heavy women in new house dresses helped each other up the stairs, their lungs laboring. They were Mrs. C. and her feeble sister. They and the B's nodded and smiled and said what a lovely morning it was and moved on in opposite directions. Mr. B. replaced his alpaca cap and told his gentle, pretty wife how fine the sea air was and what an appetite it gave a fellow. The sun stood bright on the clean, already warm decks, the blue water enlarged quietly without whitening, and sang along the flanks of the ship like seltzer.

Miss Cox appeared with her aunt Miss Box, a frugal and sweet-smiling spinster. Miss Box wore a simple print and a shining black straw garlanded with cloth flowers; Miss Cox was in severely informal new sports attire. Like most of the other young women, low-salaried office workers upon whom the self-sufficiency, the inde-

pendence of city work and city living had narrowed their inestimable pressures of loneliness and of spiritual fear, she set a greater value of anticipation upon this cruise than she could dare tell herself. For this short leisure among new faces she had invested heavily in costume, in fear, in hope; and like her colleagues she searched among the men as for steamer smoke from an uncharted atoll.

Small and very lonesome in a great space of glassed-in deck, an aging Jew in a light flannel suit gazed sorrowfully at the Atlantic Ocean. A blond young man who resembled an airedale sufficiently intelligent to count to ten, dance fox trots, and graduate from a gentleman's university came briskly to the dining room in sharply pressed slacks and a navy blue sports shirt, read the sign, dashed away, and soon reappeared plus a checkered coat and a plaid tie. The dining saloon opened. Among big white tables glistening with institutional silverware all the white-coated stewards stood in sunlight with nothing yet to do. They were polite, but by no means obsequious; like the room stewards and the rank and file of the crew they had had a good stiff draught of the C.I.O. The headwaiter, a prim Arthur Treacher type, convoyed his guests to their

tables with the gestures of an Eton-trained sand-hill crane in flight. His snobbishness rather flattered a number of the passengers.

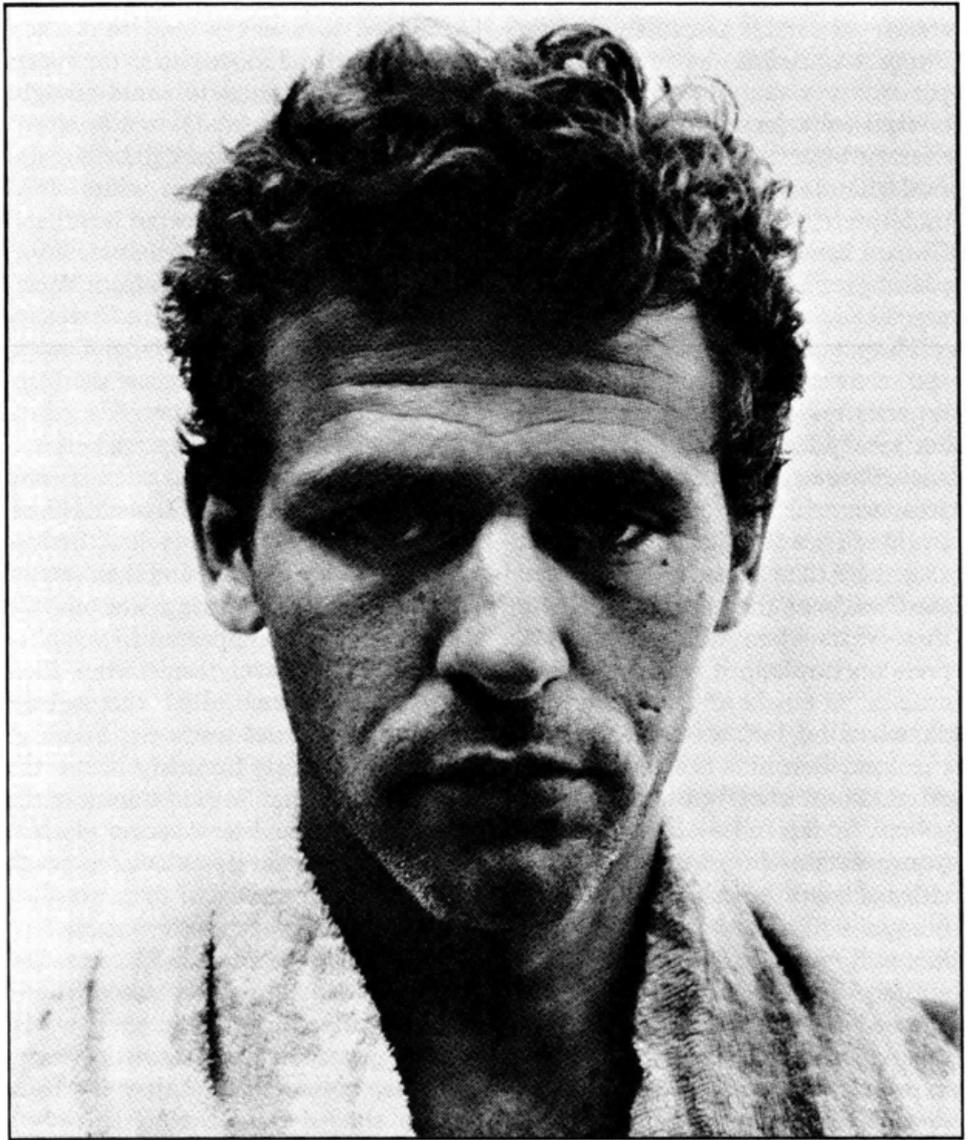
Mr. and Mrs. B. studied the pretentious menu with admiration and ordered a whale of a breakfast. They may charge you aplenty, but they certainly do give you your money's worth. M. L., a bearish Jew, and his wife, the hard, glassy sort of blonde who should even sleep in jodhpurs, tinkered at their fruit and exchanged monosyllables as if they were forced bargains. The airedale pricked up his ears as two girls came in and as quickly dropped them and worried his Krispies, hoping that to two girls already seated he had appeared to establish no relationship with the newcomers, who were not at all his meat. Mr. and Mrs. L., in the manner of the average happily married couple, brightened immediately and genuinely as friends entered. The cool china noise and the chattering thickened in the cheerful room while, with the casualness of concealed excitement, studiously dressed and sharply anticipatory, singly and by twos and threes the shining breakfast faces assembled, looking each other over. The appraisals of clothes, of class, of race, of temperament, and of the opposed sexes met and crossed and flickered in a texture of glances as swift and keen as the leaping closures of electric arcs, and essentially as irrelevant to mercy. These people had come aboard in New York late the evening before, and this was their first real glimpse of each other.

All told, there were a hundred and thirty-two of them aboard. Perhaps twenty of them, mostly Cubans, were using the ship for the normal purpose of getting where they were going, namely, Havana. The others were creatures of a different order. They were representatives of the lower to middle brackets of the American urban middle class and they were on a cruise. Forty of them would stop over a week in Havana; they were on the thirteen-day cruise. Sixty-eight of them would spend only eighteen hours in that city. They were on the six-day cruise. Most

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of them were from the cities of the eastern seaboard; many were from the New York City area. Roughly one in three of them was married, one in three was Jewish, one in three was middle-aged. Most of the middle-aged and married were aboard for a rest; most of the others were aboard for one degree or another of a hell of a big time. The unattached women and girls who were aboard partly for a good time and partly for the more serious, not to say desperate, purpose of finding a husband, outnumbered the unattached men about four to one going down and six to one coming back. There were few children. It wasn't a very expensive outing they were taking: most of them spent between \$84 and \$110 for passage, but \$70 was enough to cover every expense except tips for six days, including two conducted tours of Havana. Besides that there were bar expenses; and plenty of the passengers, particularly the younger ones, had invested pretty heavily in new clothes they could feel self-assured in; for most of them had never been on a cruise before, and had rather glamorous ideas of what it would be like. Few of them could swing this expense lightly, and plenty of them knew they should never have afforded it at all. But they were of that vast race whose freedom falls in summer and is short. Leisure, being no part of their natural lives, was precious to them; and they were aboard this ship because they were convinced that this was going to be as pleasurable a way of spending that leisure as they could afford or imagine. What they made of it, of course, and what they failed to make, they made in a beautifully logical image of themselves: of their lifelong environment, of their social and economic class, of their mother, of their civilization. And that includes their strongest and most sorrowful trait: their talent for self-deceit. Already, as their eyes darted and reflexed about the grapefruit and the coffee, they were beginning to find out a little about all that.

The ship these passengers were aboard was the turbo-electric liner *Oriente*, the property of the New York



& Cuba Mail Steamship Co., which is more tersely and less gently known as the Ward Line. The T.E.L. *Oriente* is fashioned in the image of her clientele: a sound, young, pleasant, and somehow invincibly comic vessel, the seafaring analogy to a second-string summer resort, a low-priced sedan, or the newest and best hotel in a provincial city. She can accommodate some 400 passengers, and frequently enough carries less than half that many. She makes fifty voyages a year, New York — Havana — New York, carrying freight, mail, and passengers, of whom a strong preponderance are cruising.

All the big lines and plenty of the minor ones run cruises any distance from round-the-world on down and at any toll from \$5 to \$25 or better per

day. Of the passenger traffic of all flags sailing from U.S. ports in 1935 the cruising passengers accounted for 10 per cent. In the same year, according to the Department of Commerce, 83,000 passengers left U.S. ports on cruises. Of these 72,000 were U.S. citizens and 69,000 sailed from New York. Not more than one in four of them shipped on U.S. vessels, and U.S. shipping took only \$1,000,000 of the \$15,000,000 U.S. citizens spent on cruising. The cruising trade on the whole is sharply on the upswing. For 1936, the Department of Labor estimates a 25 per cent increase in cruising population. For the first half of 1937 as against the first half of the previous year the Italian Line reports an increase of 50 per cent; Cook's an in-

crease of 38.2; Canadian Pacific's *Empress of Britain* an increase of 25 per cent in advance bookings (she was booked solid for 1936). The *Empress* does the biggest world-cruise business; the Italian Line has the Mediterranean trade pretty well sewed up; in 1935 Cunard handled about as many cruise passengers as all U.S. ships lumped together.

The popularity of cruising in general and of the particular cruise naturally depends respectively upon economic and local political conditions. In times answering to the names of peace and prosperity the Mediterranean and the world cruises take the class; and Canada, the Atlantic coastal islands, and the Caribbean the mass trade. During those years when prohibition and depression overlapped, the short cheap cruises "to nowhere" and to Bermuda did a howling business in more senses than one. Bermuda is still the strongest draw for short cruises. Just now people in the cruise business see a future brightening over the coastal cities of South America as it fades over Europe. Both the *Normandie* and the *Rex* will cruise to Rio de Janeiro this winter; by middle July, 500 of the 700 planned for had already booked passage on the *Rex*, though American Express travel service had made no promotive gesture beyond publication of an announcement.

By the time the *Rex* and the *Normandie* are cutting south with their carriage trade the *Oriente* too will once again be carrying what one officer, speaking in summer, described as "a better class of people." Winter is always best; late summer is the low. In July and August the unattached women, most of them schoolteachers, outnumber the unattached men ten and even twelve to one. On the trip we are talking about, which occurred in early summer, she carried what was in every respect just a good average crowd; and their cruise, accordingly, was going to be a good average cruise. It was that from the moment when the first pair of strangers nodded and shyly smiled; it was that all through breakfast; it kept right on being that as they

changed to sneakers and took their sun-tan oil and moved up to the sports deck. It continued to same straight through the trip.

Up on the sports deck in bright sun a gay plump woman in white shied rubber rings at a numbered board and chattered at her somber female companion. The gay lady was from Washington and had friends at the Embassy in Havana. She admired Noel Coward almost fatuously and sat at the Captain's table. She was the godsend-of-the-week to the Captain, a Dickensian-built Swede who enjoyed gallantry and wit and whom even the stewards liked. A slender Jew made a few listless passes at shuffleboard and then settled down to obstacle putting. The airedale and a duplicate appeared in naughty trunks, laid towels aside from their pretty shoulders, oiled themselves, and, after a brief warm-up, began to play deck tennis furiously before the gradually assembling girls. Some of the girls wore brand-new sports clothes, other wore brand-new slacks or beach combinations. Some of them traveled in teams, most of the others teamed up as quickly as they could. They strolled against the wind, they stood at the white rail with wind in their waved hair, they swung their new shoes from primly crossed knees, they lay back with shaded eyes, their crisp white skirts tucked beneath them in the flip-pant air, they somewhat shyly laid their slacks back from their pale thighs, they lay supine, skull-eyed in goggles; their cruel vermilion nails caught at the sunlight. They examined each other quietly but sharply, and from behind dark white-rimmed lenses affected to read drugstore fiction and watched those beautiful bouncing blond boys' bodies and indulged the long, long thoughts of youth. The airedales were fast and skillful, and explosive with such Anglo-Saxonisms as Sorry, Tough, Nice Work, Too Bad, Nice Going. Later they were joined by a couple of other bipeds who had the same somehow suspect unself-consciousness about their torsos, and the exclamations of good sportsmanship came to resemble an endless string of

firecrackers set off under a dishpan and the innocent childlike abandon of the exhibitionism acquired almost Polynesian proportions in everything except perhaps sincerity and results. To come to the quick of the ulcer, it is generally estimated that the sexual adventures of the entire cruise did not exceed two dozen in number and most nearly approached their crises not in staterooms but aboveboard; that in no case was the farthest north more extreme than a rumpling hand or teeth industriously forced open; that in 70 per cent of these cases the gentleman felt it obligatory to fake or even to feel true love and the lady murmured either "please" or "please don't" or "yes I like you very much but I don't feel That Way about you," or all three; and that the man, in every case, took it bravely on the chin, sincerely adopted the attitude of a Big Brother, and went to his own bunk tired but happy.

Mr. and Mrs. L. sat quietly in the heightening sun. Mr. L. leaned far forward to let the sun fight its way through the black hair on his back and swapped business anecdotes with a man with epaulets of red hair; Mrs. L. incisively read *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* until the strong sun slowed her and she slept. Miss Cox, conversing with two young men, tried with her eyes to sharpen competition between them and to indicate that she was whichever they might prefer: good fun or an incipient good wife. Each of the men tried to establish excitement in her and jotted her on his mental cuff as useful if worst came to worst. Miss Box sat in the shade and read *Lost Ecstasy*. In the writing room Mrs. C. wrote a lot of postcards for herself and her sister who hadn't the energy. She wrote all morning and then wondered how to mail them back to Connecticut. On the promenade deck Mr. B. was saying, "When I retire my wife and I just want to travel from one end of the United States to the other." Mrs. B. was telling of an adventure her nephew had had in Yellowstone National Park when his car broke down. A stocky smiling blonde in an alarming cobalt bathing suit sank into her chair and

disposed all that was lawful of her body before the sun. The airedales wagged their tails and did their gentlemanly best to lose themselves in good clean exercise. In the cool shadow of the empty lounge a tall nurse with an extraordinarily pure forehead lazily laid out self-taught breaks on the shallow-toned grand piano. On the shady side of the ship a torpid husband sat under five fathom of the *Sunday Times* and stuffed in the state of the world without appetite while wife caught a beauty sleep with her nostrils inverted, her goggles cockeyed, and her mouth open. People went past him and then more people and he knew something must be going on. He shoveled his way out and followed, in his new, brilliantly white sneakers, into the glassed-in dance floor.

Nearly everyone was on hand in folding chairs and the place was rustling, curiously subdued under one voice, with occasional pigeon-like rushes of shy and uncertain laughter. The Cruise Director, whose name was Earle M. Wilkens, was staging the Get-Together. He gave out information about landing cards and shopping and the good times ahead, introduced the deck steward, a professionally Cute Character whose popularity is significant of the whole nature of the cruise, and spent his best efforts trying as tactfully as possible to tell his charges not to be utter fools, not to be afraid of each other, that it was perfectly sound etiquette to speak to whom you pleased here without introduction. The audience remained amiable and embarrassed. Nine out of ten of them, much against their wishes, retained their onshore inhibitions to the somewhat bitter end; few individuals got to know more than four or five others better than faintly well.

The lunch bugle ended the meeting. A few men and fewer girls sloped into the modernistic bar; the rest went below to dope out some more costumes they could feel secure in. The drinks were cheap, a quarter for cocktails and thirty cents for highballs, and were weak out of all proportion even to that price. Though plenty of the

passengers had anticipated Drinking quite as much as Sex, few of them drank much during cruise; apparently because few others drank much. Not even the trip's toppers spent more than \$20 or so.

There were a number of shifts of table assignments at lunch as new acquaintances got together. It was standard, sterile, turgid, summer-hotel type food, turkey, duck, the sort of stuffing that tastes like kitchen soap, fancy U.S. salads, and so on, and served with a pomp and circumstance that would have sufficed for the body and blood of Brillat-Savarin. The average passenger behaved a little as if this were his regular Thursday evening at the Tour d'Argent, and staggered upstairs to digest at the horse racing.

The horse racing was done with dice and varied with handicaps and gag races. The betting unit was a quarter. Two-thirds of the passengers were on hand; about half of them bet steadily. On the outskirts a small neatly made girl in blue slacks who had operated a horse race in a summer hotel was wondering how profitably the ship jockeyed the odds in its favor. It broke up in about an hour; and the sports deck filled, and the passengers disposed themselves once again among the diversions and facilities of the morning.

Mrs. C., her sister, and a pleasant younger woman sat and passed the time of day. Mrs. C. said: "The water in the thermos bottle in our stateroom is not as cool as the water in the cooler in the corridor." The younger woman said that hers seemed to be. Mrs. C. said to her sister: "She says the water in the thermos bottle in *her* stateroom is as cool as the water in the cooler in the corridor." A mean-eyed freckled young woman whose mahogany hair shone with black lights spoke to a new male acquaintance in the remarkable language of Arthur Kober: "I hate mountains; somehow they don't cope

with my life." Mr. B. was saying that he and his wife both loved to see new places and try out new drinks, not really getting drunk of course but just seeing what they tasted like. It certainly was a lot of fun. Having Wonderful Time was saying "I don't mind my freckles any more but I used to be terribly sentimental about them; used to cry all the time when people teased me." Mr. B., whose wife was below resting, struck the ash from his popular-priced cigar and said, secure and happy: "Well if I should die tonight I'd leave my wife four-teen hundred dollars, but matter of fact I hope to make that more before I'm done." The younger woman said to Mrs. C., "I noticed you were reading *News-Week* this morning. How do you like it?" Mrs. C. replied that she thought it was awful cute.

There was a fire drill, with everyone looking sheepish in life belts and a few cracks about the *Morro Castle* and for that sinking feeling, travel on the Ward Line, and after the drill a rather pompous tea, with dancing, to the spiritless commercial rhythms of a hard-working four-man band, and then the dinner horn at whose command dressing was for the third to fifth time that day unanimously resumed.

The redressing for the evening ran the whole range — formal, semiformal, informal, with every variant that open insecurity or pretended sophistication could give it. There was a good deal of glancing around and checking up during dinner and quite a few made immediate revisions. After dinner *John Meade's Woman* was shown, with breaks between reels, to a packed house that received it with polite apathy. The floor was cleared of chairs, the tables filled, blue and green bulbs went on among the leaves of the dwarf tubbed trees, the weak drinks were ordered, and the band redistributed the platitudes of the afternoon among warmer colors in a warmer light.

Some of the married couples sat alone; others had found each one other married couple. The latter swapped among their foursome, the former danced together all evening. The four



airedales scampered about with two pink girls who looked like George Washington, the cobalt bathing suit and a couple of other blondes, and once in a while, with a face-saving air gracefully combined of wild oats and democracy, swung the more attractive Jewesses around the floor. The inevitable Ship's Card, a roguish fellow of forty, did burlesque rumbas and under protection of parody achieved unusual physical contacts amid squeals of laughter. An earnest and charming young Jew, brows bent, did better dancing than the music would support. The seconds among the girls fell to the elder of the unattached men and most of them (along with the men) got stuck there. The third run sat and smiled and smiled until their mouths ached and their cheeks went numb, while the men passed them with suddenly unfocused eyes. Six Cuban college boys sat at a ringside table drinking and looking very young and not dancing at all. The wow of the evening was a blonde who was born out of her time: her glad and perpetually surprised face was that which appears in eighteenth-century pornographic engravings wherein the chore boy tumbles the milkmaid in an explosion of hens and alfalfa. Her dress was cut with considerable extra *élan* to set off her uncommonly beautiful breasts, which in the more extreme centrifuges of the dance swung almost entirely free of ambush. She had a howling rush and a grand time. The six Cuban boys watched her constantly and chattered among themselves. Whenever she approached their corner their plum-jelly eyes bugged out with love. Twice, without a trace of anything save naive admiration too great to be restrained, they broke into applause.

The dancing stopped and the bar closed at the ungodly hour of 1:00 A.M. A few couples talked quietly in dark parts of the over-lighted decks, but by two they were all in bed and a gang moved up the darkness grooming the decks and then went below; and the wet decks yielded a tarnish of light and the ship, with a steady throe like that of blood, poured strongly through the

shaded water. After a while the morning opened upon the mild stare, the insane musical comedy blue of the Gulf Stream, whereon the *Oriente* crept like a jazzy little toy; the decks dried and brightened in the lifted sun; in those hierarchic depths of a ship that passengers scarcely suspect, the crew and the service crews were waking, like rain-chilled insects that fair weather warms; the passengers were assembling themselves toward consciousness; the breakfast horn laced the ship with its bluff brightness; and another day had begun.

It had precisely the same shape and rhythm. Breakfast brought the passengers together, and cast them forth upon their own resources: sports, flirting, bathing, reading, sleeping, talking, tanning. The lunch horn gave them something to do, they dressed; they ate; they played the wooden ponies; more sports, flirting, bathing, reading, sleeping, talking, tanning; tea dancing brought them together with something to do; they dressed for dinner; they ate it; they played Bingo; they danced; they went to bed; they slept. There were certain variants and certain developments. Mr. L. showed his tremendous sunburn to a young woman but it was all right, his wife was there reading *I Can Get It For You Wholesale*. Two Cubans nearly beat two airedales at deck tennis. Miss Box no longer enjoyed *Lost Ecstasy*, which is a piece of housewives' problem fiction about the troubles of a sophisticated deb who marries a big clean cowboy; it was too serious. The head deck steward found still some more passengers to fascinate with his modest account of the *Morro Castle*. A steward and a passenger talked enthusiastically about Spain and the C.I.O. A girl won three straight pots at Bingo. Earle Wilkens skillfully disposed of a heckler. There were gag dances with inexpensive prizes, an elimination number dance, a musical-chair dance. Two contest dances were announced but were not staged; there weren't many good dancers. The high point of gayety for the cruise was reached at the rough climax of the musical-chairs game. After the dancing

was over quite a crowd lingered on deck in the obscenely ticklish darkness and drank stiff Scotches and rums. One of the Cuban boys played a trumpet very softly; another played the guitar and with extreme quietness, their faces softened, they sang. First they sang popular Havana tunes whose very banality made their beauty manifold, then they sang sorrowful romantic ballads, lyrics of fighting and of homesickness, and dirty songs. The guitarist kept singing straight at a blonde who sat directly in front of him, her knees withdrawn from touching his. Her partner touched her shoulder and murmured Let's take a walk around the deck. She said In a minute, not looking at him. After a little he leaned above her and murmured When you're ready, let me know. She did not answer. Her knees relaxed. He poured himself a steep Scotch and kept his nose in it. The peculiar quality of the night had everyone as shaky as a well-determined kiss. Far out to starboard, small, frail, and infrequent, lights walked past. They denominated the low and bone-white coast of pre-Columbian unimagined Florida, and of that dilapidated playground where wasps whine in hot voids of disheveling stucco, and Townsendites sit in squealing rockers under the slow fall of their ashes, and high-school girls are excused from civics class to snap into their one-piece bathing suits and demonstrate the teasing amenities of their hot, trite little bodies for the good of the community; and the trumpet sprang agile gold on the darkness, and the guitar spoke in the Spanish language, and the eloquent songs continued, and the remote lights thickened and were Miami; and Miami spread, and sank into the north; and the lights thinned, and just at this time there was a new feeling through the body of the ship that could not at first be analyzed; then a couple guessed that the ship was changing her course, and silently detaching themselves from their companions, strolled back to the stern. The faint wake, spuming with phosphorus, trailed abruptly bent behind them, and straightened even as they watched, and

their guess had been right. The ship had left the shelf of the continent behind and had directed herself upon the world's deep water. Not very far ahead now, beyond a bulge and world shape of this water, tumescent beneath the shade of the summer planet, her whole sleep stirred and streamed in music such as this, Havana lay.

The passengers saw their best of Havana before they set foot in it. The instant they landed they submitted themselves to the guidance of a spectacled brown-uniformed hog with a loud retching voice who stuffed them into a noisy flotilla of open cars and took them on two tours, called the City Tour and the Night Tour. On the City Tour they saw the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, a cigar factory, the Maine Monument, and a cemetery. On the Night Tour they saw a game of jai alai, Sloppy Joe's, the Sans Souci, and the Casino. Between tours the *Oriente* served a goose dinner for those who mistrusted the dirty foreign food.

At the church they saw a number of bruise-like Italianate paintings, an assortment of wax martyrs under glass among shriveled real and fresh wax flowers, and the high altar with all the electric lights on. A collection was taken as they went out. At the cigar factory they saw a dozen men with bad eyesight working overtime for their benefit in bad light, handmaking high-grade cigars for British clubmen. Cigars were on sale as they went out. At the Maine Monument, which is capstoned by the quaint word Liberty, the hog reminded his little charges how the U.S. gave Cuba Hobson's (not by any chance Iscariot's) Kiss and made our little brown boy friend safe for the canebrake, the sugar mill, and the riding boss, and his island a safe place for decent American citizens to do business in. At the cemetery he pointed out the \$197,000 black marble modernistic mausoleum of a lady in high society who had died in Paris; a monument to certain students who had desecrated a general's grave and been shot for it; and the monument to the American Legion.

Some of the men liked the jai alai

and placed bets but a lot of the girls were bored and the general impression was it was a queer sort of a game. At Sloppy Joe's, the Grant's Tomb of bars, at which no self-respecting Cuban would be caught dead, the tourists themselves seemed a little embarrassed. They huddled rather silent at the bar and few of them ordered more than one drink. Night life in one of the whoriest cities of the Western Hemisphere was represented by the Sans Souci, meaning CareFree, and the Casino, meaning Casino. Lowing gently, the tourists stepped out of their vans. The marble floors were absolutely beautiful. The trees were just exquisite. The music was every bit as smooth as Wayne King and even the native Cubans that went there seemed an awfully nice, refined class of people. Everyone had such a good time they didn't get back to the ship till nearly four o'clock in the morning.

An heroic majority wrenched themselves up from four hours' sleep and spent the morning buying cigars, perfumes, rum, and souvenirs. Later they hung at the rail and talked of Havana, and watched men and boys dive for coins in the foul olive water. Of those who liked Havana the elder spoke of it as quaint, the more youthful as cute. Most of the passengers disliked Havana and were glad to be leaving it. One man raised his voice among a group and, in one of those mental dialects that are perpetually surprising by virtue of their genuine existence, summed up: "Well, I'm telling you. When you see the Statue of Liberty you're going to say this is the country for me." The group nodded as one. Someone threw another Cuban penny in the sewage.

Slowly, regretted by few, Havana shrank in the lunchtime sun and faded. All afternoon the exhausted passengers slept; and awakening, came slowly to realize that somehow the best of their cruise was over. Only a



few of the middle-aged, those who desired and demanded least, those who feared each other least, those innocent and gentle and guileless whom little can harm, seemed to escape the blight that, as the next two days dragged on, fastened upon the others more and more pitilessly. All novelty was gone out of the ship, her facilities, her entertainments. Married couples, used to spending their long days apart, were wearing on each other. New acquaintances had run out of small talk and had no other and did not know how to get rid of each other. The girls knew now that none of them was going to find a husband or even any excitement to speak of. There were even fewer men coming back than had gone down. Only one airedale was left and his nose was hot all the way home. The new passengers were no help. Most of them were families of Cuban bourgeois on their way north for the summer. One new American, a brutal spinster whose life seemed to have been spent on cruises for the sole satisfaction of snotting everything she saw, was soon left to her own cruelly lonely devices. Two moderately but genuinely smart couples, one German, one American, caused some excitement at first. They talked like Frederick Lonsdale first acts and looked like a page out of the late *Vanity Fair*, and accordingly represented the average passenger's most cherished dream of a cruise and of what he himself would be on one. But they turned out to be worse than useless for they kept hermetically to themselves and made visible wit about the passengers.

Friday was worst of all. The Gulf Stream was gone, the water was cold and gray, the weather was cold and gray and rather windy, and by afternoon the ship was traveling very slowly in a deathening absence of engine pulsation, for it had been decided to delay docking until Saturday morning. The passengers were depressed beyond even appetite, and a majority of them stayed below. The tea dancing was notably gelid and when the dressing horn flared through the corridors everyone got stiffly and gratefully from

his rumped bunk and took a very hot bath and put on what crowning creation, if any, he or she had managed to hold in reserve for the last evening aboard.

At the last supper, with its tasseled menus, its signal flags, hats, and noise-makers, things picked up. As each late-comer entered everyone made noises, yelled Yaaay, and applauded. There was a sudden blast of music and everyone took up Happy Birthday To You (slurring the name) dear Whosis, We're Glad to See You, and peering around to make out who it was they were glad to see. A waiter brought in a large cake flaming like a Catholic shrine and set it before an old woman, who was totally astonished. Everyone cheered and her tablemates urged her to get up. Reluctantly and with difficulty she helped her aged body half erect and sat quickly down again blushing and swallowing back tears. The lights went out a baby spot went on and balloons fell from the balcony in a slow bouncing shower while the band played Bubbles.

Customs thickened around the bar that evening stronger than ever before. This was the last night now, the last few hours. Nobody had anything to lose and something, perhaps, to gain. Inhibitions began to drop off like the clothes at a Norman Rockwell swimming hole. Several of the girls to whom a good time meant most and who were in that proportion the most cruelly disappointed members of the cruise, began to get pretty drunk and pretty loud. People who had thus far only nodded and smiled began to order each other drinks and to put hands on each other's shoulders. An amateur photographer got busy with flash bulbs. He made friends with three drunken girls and sat them on the bar and made a picture. A ripe redhead with hot warlike eyes came up and stood very close to him and asked him would he make a pitcher at her table. One of the girls said, "Would you mind going away from here?" She replied yes, she certainly would mind. Another of the girls said, "Would you kindly move off our territory before I break your jaw?" The amateur, who had probably never

before overheard himself described as territory, became very careful. The girl moved away. One of the girls said in a narrowed murderous voice: "If you take a picture of that bitch I'll never speak to you again." He overheard another say to her friend, glaring at him meanwhile, "Let him go ahead. Let him take her pitcher. She'll sleep with him." He put up his camera.

By now the band was playing and somewhat lit couples were making use of it. Many more than usual of the middle-aged sat smiling on the sidelines, indirectly lighted by the good fun the young people seemed to be having, and very cautiously trying to learn from each other how much to tip whom. A hitherto shy young man volubly told a girl who had at no time been shy that like all American girls she was disgracefully inhibited about her dancing and that there were a number of other things he could teach her and would be delighted to. He showed her how the knee is used in pivoting and she cried: "That's it! Pivot! Pivot! Pivot!" After a great deal too much persuasive applause one of the Vanity Fair couples took the floor alone and executed a 3.2 rumba. A bald, heavy man palmed coins and did handkerchief tricks at the bar. A lot of people became fond of him and he set them up to drinks and they set him and his girl up to drinks. The more amorous of the ship's officers were working four and five girls each, in a somewhat nerve-racking synchronization of duty and pleasure.* The Vanity Fair foursome, in a mood for scornful parody, ordered champagne — a thing no one else had thought of doing. They drank a toast and smashed their glasses. A wife and husband sat in a dark corner talking intensely: two phrases kept re-emerging with almost liturgical monotony: keep your voice

*The officer's duty: cheering up disappointed girls. His pleasure: flirtation, one way out of his boredom, which in time becomes titanic. The operation is nerve-racking because no better than any steward can he afford to provoke the least conceivable complaint from a passenger on any sexual ground.

down, and god damn you. And god damn you too you god damned. Quite suddenly she struck her full glass of planter's punch into his lap and they left the table walking stiffly, their whole bodies fists. The International Smart Set broke some more glasses. A waiter asked them please not to break glasses and set them down some more. They broke them immediately and ordered that a bottle from the next table, whose occupants were dancing, be put on their table. The waiter refused as politely as possible. They ordered it again as if they had not heard him. He slammed it down in front of them as hard as he could. Everyone craned at the noise. In an icy rage they told him they would take this matter up with the Line, and left their table. The pleasant young Jew who danced well went around getting names signed on a petition stating that the service had been excellent and that the waiter had been provoked beyond human endurance. The husband came back with his suit nearly dry and drank two Scotches rapidly and danced unskillfully but viciously with a blonde girl. The band played Good Night Sweetheart and packed up their instruments. He quickly ordered four more Scotches and retired to a dark corner. The bar shut down. It was one o'clock. Everyone was troubled and frozen in the sudden silence. Life had warmed up a good deal during the evening but not enough to get on under its own steam. Tentative pacts had been hinted at but not strongly enough. The bafflement sank into embarrassment, the embarrassment into straight tiredness, and very soon nearly everyone, muted and obscurely disappointed, drained off to bed. At one table around a diminishing bottle several girls, two male passengers, and two officers hung on. They were determined, they kept telling each other, to stay up till four, when the passengers would be called and breakfast would be served. Their talk and sidelong looks, their flirtation and their frustration, ground along like a crankcase without oil. The damp husband finished the last of his whiskey, wove over, hung above the table

like a lame dirigible, with thanks refused an invitation to sit in, and went to bed. They cherished their liquor but it was running low. Each of the girls wanted a man but had to abide his leisure. Each of the men wanted a girl but they were concentrated on two girls and on the others only as second-best stopgaps. Each of the prettier girls had developed loyalties toward a homelier girl. Everyone was playing the hopeless game of waiting everyone else out. About two-thirty, half nauseated with liquor and fatigue and frustration, they all gave it up at once and went alone to their respective bunks.

At four the cornetist blasted up and down the corridors. He played *The Sidewalks of New York* and *Home, Sweet Home*. A Spanish steward knocked on a friendly door, leaned in, and said, "Better wake up: see Statch."

The passenger was too tired to care to catch the toastmistress of Bedloe Island, but after a little he went to his porthole and looked out. The ship was riding in silence softly past the foot of the island. The water lifted and relaxed in one slow floor of glass. The city lifted, it seemed, a mile above it, and very near; and smokeless behind the city, morning, the mutilation of honey. The city stood appareled in the sober purple and silver of supreme glory, no foal of nature, nor intention of man, but one sublime organism, singular and uncreated; and it stretched upward from its stone roots in the water as if it were lifted on a dream. Nor yet was it soft, nor immaterial. Every window, every wheatlike stone, was distinct in the eye as a razor and serenely, lost, somnambulists, the buildings turned one past another upon the bias of the ship's ghostly movement, not unlike those apostolic figures who parade with the clock's noon in Strasbourg.

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"A Soldier Died Today" is from *Time* magazine, April 23, 1945. Copyright 1945 Time Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission from Time.

This eulogy to FDR (Time magazine, 1945) is a splendid example of the beauty and economy which characterize many of Agee's shorter pieces.

— M.B.

U.S. at War: "A Soldier Died Today"

In Chungking the spring dawn was milky when an MP on the graveyard shift picked up the ringing phone in U.S. Army Headquarters. At first he heard no voice on the other end; then a San Francisco broadcast coming over the phone line made clear to him why his informant could find no words. A colonel came in. The MP just stared at him. The colonel stared back. After a moment the MP blurted two words. The colonel's jaw dropped; he hesitated; then without a word he walked away.

It was fresh daylight on Okinawa. Officers and men of the amphibious fleet were at breakfast when the broadcast told them. By noon the news was known to the men at the front, at the far sharp edges of the world's struggle. With no time for grief, they went on with their work; but there, while they worked, many a soldier wept.

At home, the news came to people in the hot soft light of the afternoon, in taxicabs, along the streets, in offices and bars and factories. In a Cleveland barbershop, 60-year-old Sam Katz was giving a customer a shave when the radio stabbed out the news. Sam Katz walked over to the water cooler, took a long, slow drink, sat down and stared into space for nearly ten minutes. Finally he got up and painted a sign on his window: "Roosevelt Is Dead." Then he finished the shave. In an Omaha pool-hall, men racked up their cues without finishing their games, walked out. In a Manhattan taxicab, a fare told the driver, who pulled over to the curb, sat with his head bowed, and after two minutes resumed his driving.

Everywhere, to almost everyone, the

news came with the force of a personal shock. The realization was expressed in the messages of the eminent; it was expressed in the stammering and wordlessness of the humble. A woman in Detroit said: "It doesn't seem possible. It seems to me that he will be back on the radio tomorrow, reassuring us all that it was just a mistake."

It was the same through that evening, and the next day, and the next; the darkened restaurants, the shuttered nightclubs, and hand-lettered signs in the windows of stores: "Closed out of Reverence for F.D.R."; the unbroken, 85-hour dirge of the nation's radio; the typical tributes of typical Americans in the death-notice columns of their newspapers (said one signed by Samuel and Al Gordon: "A Soldier Died Today").

It was the same on the cotton fields and in the stunned cities between Warm Springs and Washington, while the train, at funeral pace, bore the coffin up April's glowing South in reenactment of Whitman's great threnody.

It was the same in Washington, in the thousands on thousands of grief-wrung faces which walled the caisson's grim progression with prayers and with tears. It was the same on Sunday morning in the gentle landscape at Hyde Park, when the burial service of the Episcopal Church spoke its old, strong, quiet words of farewell; and it was the same at that later moment when all save the gravemen were withdrawn and reporters, in awe-felt hiding, saw how a brave woman, a widow, returned, and watched over the grave alone, until the grave was filled.

Ambitious Agenda for the Press

Andrew J. Glass

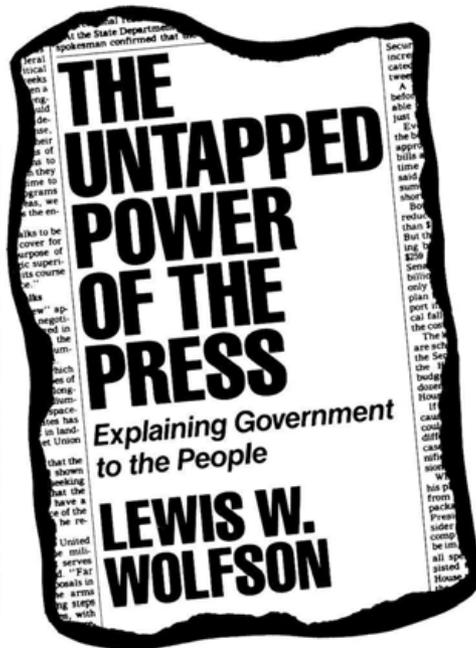
The Untapped Power of the Press: Explaining Government to the People

Lewis W. Wolfson. Praeger Publishers, 1985, \$28.95 hard cover, \$9.95 paperback.

Napoleon once observed that each soldier of France carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack. As he saw it, extraordinary valor on the battlefield should earn an immediate promotion.

A decade or so ago, an updated version of this credo came into vogue in journalistic circles, if not among editor-generals at least within the ranks of the reportorial infantry. Those were the years when a spate of young journalistic yeomen had gone off to Vietnam. They built their reputations by unmasking official lies. Having been in the right place at the right time, some of them went on to earn their epaulets in the upper rungs of the news business.

It was the Watergate scandal, however, which changed the rules of the journalistic game as it had played in the nation's capital. For quite a while, establishment Washington reporters by and large ignored the case. It was, after all, a policy story. There were, moreover, few incentives to probe deeply into the manner in which Richard



Nixon & Company conducted themselves behind closed doors. Those doors were hard to pry open. Those officials who would talk to the press, notably Henry Kissinger, invariably did so only on a self-serving basis. Established reporters knew that investigative efforts would most likely yield professional problems, with no assurance of success. Ron Ziegler, Nixon's press hound, had a way of placing snoopers' telephone calls at the bottom of his call-back list — if, that is, he bothered to return their calls at all. The net result would be that a reporter's ability to cover official news — the kind of news which editors usually view as their basic assignment — could be impaired.

So it was left to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, two young reporters on *The Washington Post's* metropolitan staff, to ferret out some of the Watergate facts. When, after much effort and several false starts, they managed to do

so, few people believed them. Their articles in the *Post* had no discernible impact on the 1972 presidential election — a contest in which Nixon trounced George McGovern. Only in the following year did the Watergate scandal break open. And that happened because Judge John Sirica let the lower-level conspirators know that they would be spending a long time in the cooler unless they agreed to rat on the higher-level officials who had put them up to it.

Typically, in his valuable and admirable book, Lewis W. Wolfson deals with the reality rather than the myth of Watergate. The scandal, he tells us, rather than being a press triumph, was, in fact, as much a press failure. Professor Wolfson, who teaches communications at Washington's American University and who once served as Washington bureau chief for the Providence (R.I.) *Journal-Bulletin*, recalls that quite a few editors and reporters accepted the torrent of official White House denials at face value, refusing to believe that anything was seriously amiss.

Things began to go seriously wrong for the Washington press corps, however, only after Nixon was exposed as a cheat and sent packing in disgrace. Belatedly, Woodward and Bernstein won riches and honors for their accomplishments. That was as it should have been. Less desirable was the spate of often slipshod investigatory stories about supposed governmental or personal wrongdoing which followed in their wake. For a while, they became the fashion. Relatively petty indiscretions in first the Ford and, later, the Carter administrations were blown out

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of proportion and marketed by the press as big deals. Often as not, these "scandals" faded quickly in importance after the targeted official either hired a lawyer or fled from the scene. The stories were spawned for the most part by a new breed of eager journalistic sleuths who, at times, operated without the benefit of the sort of clear editorial channel markers by which Woodward and Bernstein had steered.

Inevitably, a jaded public reacted unfavorably to this unbridled period of Washington-based investigatory reporting. The press, so recently the hero, was now seen as a villain, and an arrogant villain at that. Conservatives encountered no difficulties in funding campaigns to castigate the establishment press. Even some widely respected editors, sensing that matters had gotten out of hand, called for a greater degree of caution and restraint in the coverage of government. Finally, the election and triumphal re-election of Ronald Reagan ushered in a period in which a president saw as one of his highest callings a duty to make people feel good about their country, as they once had under Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy. The Reagan years proved to be an inauspicious time for the newly chastised Washington press corps to take on the federal establishment.

With these unsettling events as a backdrop, Professor Wolfson nevertheless plunges ahead to create an ambitious agenda for the press. His working thesis is that the news media weaken government — not because they are overly critical, but rather because they are far too timid. What is needed, he argues, is a press corps willing and able to set its own agenda in analyzing and explaining in depth the political process and institutional relationships behind the "news."

The best reporters, including, at one time, Wolfson himself, do this kind of work already. Their work, however, usually appears in magazines with limited clout in Washington and the nation at large, magazines such as *The Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New Republic*. Yet, as Professor Wolfson also notes, *The Wall Street Journal*

also regularly runs pieces which attempt, with some success, to reveal the real story of government without being pretentious or dull about it. One senses that Professor Wolfson would like to see the kind of stories which

but presumably soft circulation, seems to be a Wolfson target. And yet, as he is well aware, *USA Today's* razzle-dazzle make-up and graphics have shaken up quite a few U.S. newsrooms in the past few years, probably to the

The view of the press as a powerful lobby did not emerge full-blown with President Reagan and his merry manipulators.

the *Journal* regularly sniffs out in Washington, and which other well-edited and well-endowed newspapers also occasionally print, appear regularly within a much wider orbit.

This seems as good a time as any to put Wolfson's thesis into practice. It is a time in which the Reagan administration cynically manipulates the press. It chokes off the sources of enterprising reporters who seek to get behind the heavy curtain of secrecy and ferret out the story. In dealing with print-based reporters, save for a few columnists, the prevailing attitude within the Reagan White House is one of lackadaisical contempt. Apparently, the Reaganites have decided that television, and not much else, drives public opinion. Both thoughtful analysis and tough exposés in newspapers are largely ignored — except when a fear arises among the insiders that such stories might be picked up for retransmittal on video screens. Then, and only then, attention is paid.

The struggle which Professor Wolfson examines with the most precision and care in this volume is the one which is being waged within the news business itself. To him, the enemy is the "forces who preach brevity, sensation, and oversimplification." Homogenizers of the news, he notes, call for "electronic gadgets, gaudy graphics, and capsule summaries." To be sure, even *The Wall Street Journal* remains partial to capsule summaries. Gannett's bland *USA Today*, with its large

good.

Actually, as Professor Wolfson observes, "daily journalism need not be a simplistic choice between thought and speed — between *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, or between a TV documentary and a 30-second update. [For] America's news media have developed remarkable skill at blending the two."

What the press hasn't done, however, at least not nearly well enough, is to persuade either its sources in the government or its readers that it genuinely endeavors to represent the public interest — no more and no less. This administration tends to view the media as yet another powerful interest group — one which needs at times to be coddled and at yet other times to be swatted down. The idea that the press is, or at least should be, serving the role of a disinterested watchdog, and doing so as an altruistic public trust, simply appears to be dismissed out of hand. I suppose from the vantage point of the White House, if you deal with enough media stars, each of whom is pursuing his or her own hidden agenda, one can become jaded and even cynical about the true purpose of the press. And, to be sure, the view of the press as a powerful lobby, or even a shadow government, with its own ax to grind, did not emerge full-blown with President Reagan and his merry manipulators. It's only that they seem

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Press Sins: Venal and Mortal

Michael Gartner

The News At Any Cost

Tom Goldstein. Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1985, \$18.95.

Tom Goldstein has written a book, and the person at Simon & Schuster who wrote the blurb on the book jacket says it's a "penetrating, carefully researched and sure-to-be controversial" book.

Let's give the blurb writer one out of three.

Goldstein's book — *The News At Any Cost*, subtitled *How Journalists Compromise Their Ethics to Shape the News* — is carefully researched. It is not penetrating. It is not sure to be controversial.

What Goldstein has researched are the sins of the press, and he has laid them all out in one place. Here we meet again Janet Cooke and Foster Winans and Laura Foreman. Here, again, we read all about *The Chicago Sun-Times* setting up a bar (remember the Mirage?) and Alistair Reid fabricating a scene and George Will lending a hand to Ronald Reagan. Here, again, we are reminded of those book reviewers who peddle the books they were given, of those sports writers who pig out at the Super Bowl, of those newspaper executives who put working-press license plates on their cars.

Michael Gartner used to be a newspaper editor in Des Moines. He expects to be one again someday.

Indeed, there probably isn't a press sin, venal or mortal, of this generation that isn't recalled by Goldstein.

It's all very neatly done. The reporting is thorough and accurate, as you'd expect from reporter Goldstein. (He was on the staffs of the Associated Press, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Times*.) The brief (remember the subtitle: "How Journalists Compromise Their Ethics to Shape the News") is clear and persuasive, as you'd expect from lawyer Goldstein. (He's a member of the bar, but he doesn't practice.) The lessons are authoritative, repetitive, and well-organized, as you'd expect from teacher Goldstein. (He has taught at the University of Florida and now teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.) And the message is forceful, as you'd expect from politician Goldstein. (He was, for a while, press secretary to Mayor Ed Koch.)

Still . . .

The book — careful, persuasive, authoritative, and forceful as it is — doesn't help. It barely touches on the real problems — the thorny ethical problems of balance, of fairness, of objectivity, of independence, of reply — and it offers no solutions. What we're all groping for — in our ethics codes, our journalism schools, our industry meetings, our editorial musings, our saloon prattlings — are solutions. And Goldstein offers no help.

He has some ideas about right and wrong, but they're hardly revolutionary. "Journalists have no business accepting cash prizes from groups whose activities they report on; this approaches bribery," he says. Of course. "Too many prizes occupy too many

journalists," he writes. Of course, again. Newspaper people shouldn't take freebies and junkets. "A journalist is paid to write stories, not assist the government." Reporters shouldn't pose as other people. "The First Amendment is not a license to trespass, to steal, or to intrude by electronic means into the precincts of another's home or office." Of course, of course, of course, of course.

Those are the easy issues. It's true that anyone — a reporter, a lawyer, a teacher, a politician or a person who's all four of those — can find myriad examples of journalistic abuse in these areas. Whether that abuse proves that newspaper people "compromise their ethics to shape the news" is, at best, arguable. But that's not the point. The point is this: If you're going to write a book about journalistic ethics, why stick to the outrageous?

"A problem whose solution is so obvious that it can be reached without discussion is really no problem at all, noted [NF '67] Phil Meyer's 1983 report on "Editors, Publishers and Newspaper Ethics." Everyone knows Janet Cooke was wrong, Laura Foreman was wrong, Foster Winans was wrong. So why not get into the thicket of fairness, of balance, of objectivity? Those are the ethical issues the industry needs to debate, the public needs to understand, the academics need to ponder.

How does a small paper walk the line between good journalism and good boosterism? How does a large newspaper deal journalistically with its corporate self? How do you deal with ethics codes when you know they

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Complications of Policy and Personality

Cecil D. Andrus

Harold Ickes of the New Deal: His Private Life and Public Career
Graham White and John Maze.
Harvard University Press, 1985,
\$20.00.

I read with special interest *Harold Ickes of the New Deal* by Graham White and John Maze. (White is senior lecturer in History and Maze is associate professor of psychology, both at the University of Sydney, Australia.) Ickes, one of the New Deal's most controversial figures, was Secretary of the Department of the Interior under President Franklin D. Roosevelt for thirteen turbulent years. As a former Secretary of the Interior, under President Carter from 1977 to 1981, I learned for myself about one of this country's largest and most complex federal agencies. Before assuming that office, I had only a general idea of the great power that the Secretary of the Interior has to do good or evil. Even six years as Governor of Idaho, where I wrestled on a daily basis with tough questions about natural resources, did not prepare me fully for deciding the difficult issues which the Department of the Interior must confront.

Cecil D. Andrus, a former governor of Idaho, served as Secretary of the Interior from 1977 to 1981. Currently he is president of Cecil D. Andrus, Inc., a resource management consulting firm in Boise, Idaho.



I soon realized that the Department can affect in ways too numerous to list in this space our nation's water, air, soil, forests, and minerals — even our foreign relations. The Secretary and his administrators are expected to be stewards of our wilderness heritage. But they also must manage the economic exploitation of our productive natural resources. This inherent tension — between conservation and development — shapes all decisions made by the Department. Whether those decisions correctly balance the two missions depends in large part on the vision and character of the Secretary.

I left the Department in 1981, believing that I had done the best I knew how to manage our natural resources wisely. But, like any normal human being, I had doubts about the wisdom of some of the policy choices I had made. Harold Ickes, who served as Sec-

retary of the Interior from 1933 to 1946, seldom admitted having such healthy doubts. Ickes believed with the zeal of a fanatic that he, and often he alone, was acting in the true public interest. He criticized nearly everyone who opposed him in terms that indicated both his deep belief in his own morality and his conviction that his opponents were wrong-headed and often immoral. This combative outlook constantly entangled him in emotional, highly publicized battles with his political foes.

White and Maze have attempted in this book to explain why Ickes injected so much of his personal emotions into his administration of the Interior Department. They have asked why Ickes was so prone to public rages and private collapses. They have, in short, attempted to analyze his public career in terms of the way he lived his private life.

Unfortunately for Ickes's historical reputation, he wrote at great length about his private life in terms that, some fifty years later, seem almost obsessive. I am no expert in psychology, but reading Ickes's journal entries leads me to conclude that he was at times a very disturbed man. White and Maze have examined Ickes's diaries and letters thoroughly and have been, for the most part, careful and sympathetic biographers. But I came away from this book wishing that I had not known quite so much about Ickes's private torments. His admirers probably will be distressed that their hero often had such mean-spirited views of humanity, and his enemies will be satisfied that they were correct in dismissing him as a vain and misguided man.

This book has its merits. The authors have provided a fairly detailed portrait of the way Ickes managed a major federal bureaucracy. Too little has been written for the student of government and politics about the leaders of great administrative departments. My experience in Washington has convinced me that these people influence the formation of policy quite as much as they do its execution. Historians of American national politics

the early years of the New Deal from the perspective of one who, for half a dozen years, was one of FDR's inner circle. Ickes was the longest serving Secretary of Interior in history. I chuckled quietly when I learned that Ickes held his post for thirteen years, considering that my four whole years in Interior with President Carter were viewed as an unexpected achievement in longevity. From 1933 to the beginning of the Second World War, Ickes

less logically collected in Interior. *Ickes* explains concisely how the Forest Service was divorced from the other resource agencies and analyzes the effects of that decision, taken nearly thirty years before, on Ickes's own battle to recover the agency for the Department of the Interior. In 1909, Gifford Pinchot, chief of the fledgling National Forest Service, accused his boss, Secretary of the Interior, Richard Ballinger, of turning a private profit from the Alaskan national forests. President Taft, eager to rid his administration of one of Teddy Roosevelt's most zealous conservationists, thereupon fired Pinchot for disloyalty. Even though Congress ultimately cleared Ballinger, the vigorous press attack on his management of Interior eventually led to Congress's transferring the Forest Service to the seemingly less corruptible Department of Agriculture.

Few modern presidents have so magically dominated the formation and execution of their agendas as Franklin D. Roosevelt.

have tended to focus on the presidents and their agendas for the nation. But in so doing, they often have neglected to explain why some presidents are so successful in realizing their agendas, while others leave the capital feeling disappointed and unloved. In my opinion, successful presidents have grasped the bureaucratic nettle firmly and have bent the wills of the great executive departments to their bidding.

Few modern presidents have so magically dominated the formation and execution of their agendas as Franklin D. Roosevelt. Through this book, one can see his management style in action. I finished *Ickes* with a greater appreciation and deeper respect for FDR than for the book's subject. Who can fail to sympathize with Roosevelt as he struggles gracefully to direct his unpredictable Secretary of the Interior away from vicious personality conflicts and toward the great tasks of getting the unemployed back to work and managing the nation's productive resources with an eye to the future? Harold Ickes required constant encouragement balanced with firm direction. Roosevelt provided both with good humor and near-perfect timing.

Ickes also offers an insider's view of

also directed the Public Works Administration, which built some of the New Deal's most enduring monuments: bridges, roads, and public offices where none had been before.

Even here, though, White and Maze cannot help but present Ickes as a man who managed to do good literally in spite of himself. Ickes's years with the PWA were marred by a vicious, debilitating struggle for power and influence against Harry Hopkins, who headed the public relief component of the New Deal, the Works Progress Administration. The authors do a convincing job of showing that what Ickes was really fighting for against Hopkins was FDR's heart. His diaries paint the picture of a man imprisoned by very complex emotional needs for male friendship. Roosevelt apparently sensed Ickes's ambiguous feelings and manipulated them sensitively.

From my perspective, the book also does a fine job of describing the controversy over the control of the United States Forest Service. Casual observers of federal resources management often remark on the seeming absurdity of the Forest Service's placement in the Department of Agriculture while all other federal lands offices are more or

There are sound reasons why federal agencies entrusted with conserving and developing our nation's natural resources should also supervise federal policy over our 191 million acres of national forests. Like all the Interior agencies, the Forest Service is responsible for ensuring that federal decisions about resource use correctly balance economics and conservation. For example, forestry practices, established by the Forest Service on our public lands, play a major role in determining how clean and plentiful much of our fresh water will be, how much soil erosion we will suffer, and whether we will enjoy adequate supplies of wood and paper for the next two hundred years.

While I was at Interior, I carefully reviewed the issue of the Forest Service's proper administrative home and came to the same conclusion as Ickes: that it belonged in the Department of the Interior with the other natural resource agencies. However, I reached my position for very different reasons than did Ickes. The authors show convincingly that Ickes fought like a wounded tiger to return the Forest Service to Interior only partly because it made good

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The Man Who Tried To Do Good

Richard Harwood

Ralph Ingersoll — A Biography
Roy Hoopes. Atheneum, 1985,
\$19.95.

Over the year-end holidays, *The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors* arrived on my desk. On its cover was a photograph of a besuited woman schlepping suitcases and other paraphernalia up a ladder. The reefer asked an obvious question: "Why Aren't More Women Climbing Corporate Ladders?" There were two messages here. One had to do with the status of women. The other had to do with the status of American journalism in the 1980's: "corporate" journalism.

The *Fortune* 500 list of 1985's largest industrial enterprises included a dozen newspaper corporations; five of the twelve had revenues of between \$1 billion and \$3 billion. When the *Fortune* list is published this year, at least two more newspaper companies will have joined the billion-dollar club. A billion dollars, for those who have not counted lately, is greater than the combined gross national product of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Nearly a third of all of our daily newspapers are in the hands of twenty companies and they account for more than half of our daily newspaper circu-

lation. These "media" companies own radio and television stations, forests, magazines, paper mills, publishing houses, cable television systems, baseball teams, aircraft, electronic enterprises, commercial data banks, and cellular telephone networks. *Time* magazine recently joined AT&T, Bank of America, and Chemical Bank to create a nationwide system of electronic banking and brokering.

It was this kind of world, a world of journalistic giantism and megabucks, that Ralph Ingersoll wished, throughout his life, to inhabit. His biographer, Roy Hoopes, writes: "He was not motivated by the ambition that drives many newspaper publishers — that is, the desire to build a communications outlet that would give him power and influence in a community and/or the nation... what he wanted most was the money the newspapers produced..."

Ingersoll, in the fables of our craft, was supposed to be different. In the green, left-wing years of my youth, he was a personal hero and was so perceived, I suspect, in virtually every newsroom in America. He had, so we believed, created in New York a newspaper — *PM* — that met all the requirements of our fierce and intolerant idealism. He not only told advertisers to go to hell; he refused to sell them space in his newspaper.

It was a "people's newspaper," staffed in large part by socialists, liberals, communists, and ex-communists. It raged against injustice, the "interests," the Fascists, and Cold Warriors. Its credo was drafted by Ingersoll: "We are against people who push other people around." Its appeal to American jour-



Ingersoll's business plan was simple enough; all revenues would come from circulation and no advertising space would be sold.

nalists is reflected in the numbers who wished to work for Ralph Ingersoll and *PM*. More than eleven thousand applied for jobs when *PM* was born in 1940. The roster of those hired is impressive — Max Lerner, James Wechsler, Dashiell Hammett, Margaret Bourke-White, Penn Kimball, Lillian Ross, I. F. Stone, Heywood Hale Broun, William Walton, Dorothy Parker, Walter Winchell (writing under a pseudonym), Kenneth Crawford, the senior Hodding Carter, Henry Lieberman, Louis Kronenberger, Sidney Margolis, and Albert Deutch. "The paper had the cachet," Kronenberger later said, "of being something you'd kick yourself for having missed."

The man behind the enterprise, as

Richard Harwood, *Nieman Fellow '56*, is deputy managing editor of *The Washington Post*.

he emerges from Hoopes's authorized biography, is surely one of the strangest personalities of his time. He was the child of socially prominent parents, described by Hoopes as "ancestor worshippers." Ralph appears to have been something of a disappointment to them: "(He) was a discontented, whining child, who, to the horror of his relatives, clung to his nursing bottle until he was ten. He was obnoxious, fat, and spoiled. . . . an introvert who liked to come from behind and hit people with rolled-up newspapers and who stuffed platefuls of butterballs into his mouth like marbles. In grade school he was known as 'Fat' or 'Stinky.' He slimmed down on his way through Hotchkiss and Yale but he never shed the obnoxious side of his personality."

While at Yale he showed literary ability and formed friendships with Briton Hadden and Henry Luce who later became one of a succession of wealthy Ingersoll patrons. After college he wrote a book on Mexico, worked briefly on the New York *American*, and in 1925 was hired at *The New Yorker* by Harold Ross. The magazine then, as now, was an intellectual toy for the rich, and Ingersoll was part of the crowd. Ross once told James Thurber that he employed Ingersoll "because he knows the clubs Percy R. Pyne belongs to and everybody else. He has entrée in the right places. He knows who owns private Pullman cars and he can have tea with all the little old women that still have coachmen or footmen or drive electric runabouts."

Ingersoll made a fast start at *The New Yorker* and was soon its managing editor. Over the next five years he was a diligent and controversial figure at the magazine. Wolcott Gibbs in his memoir on *The New Yorker's* early days minimizes Ingersoll's contributions: "He is remembered by pioneer members of the staff as an untidy man of formidable energy — the creator of elaborate systems for simplifying office routine, the author of prodigious memoranda on every subject under the sun, a valuable authority on the fashionable doings of Park Avenue and Long Island.

His desk was a pharmacist's treasury of pills, disinfectants, and hair-restorers, for he was convinced that his health was precarious. . . ." Others, such as Thurber, thought more highly of him. But by 1930 he had tired of Ross and Ross had tired of him.

Henry Luce, his friend from prep school and college, took him on at *Fortune* magazine and for the next decade Ingersoll was an important figure in the world of Luce and Time, Inc. He

A "new order,"
the intellectuals believed,
must emerge and
they would be
its philosophical midwives.

was a senior editor at *Fortune* and *Time*, one of the creators of *Life* magazine, a general manager of the company, and the publisher of *Time*.

During those years he entered into the life of the New York intellectual community which was in political turmoil. The United States floundered in the Great Depression. Capitalism seemed to have failed. A "new order," the intellectuals believed, must emerge and they would be its philosophical midwives. Many of them looked to socialism as an answer. Others were drawn to Communism and the Soviet Union. Ingersoll, loving money and the good life, and at the same time intellectually hating the hardships of the common man, found himself in a dilemma. "His feet (were) planted squarely in both camps," Hoopes writes. "On the one hand he was sympathetic to the social and economic revolution that (Archibald) MacLeish and most of the *Fortune* writers were caught up in. . . . On the other hand. . . he was ambitious and liked the corporate world."

Lillian Hellman, one of his serial

mistresses during this decade, pushed him toward the left and, while serving as the publisher of *Time* magazine, he became a member of a Communist Party study group, a fact that would have shocked Luce and *Time's* readers if known. But he could never go all the way. When Hellman, during a furious argument, insisted that he must choose between socialism and capitalism, he replied: "God damn it, no!" Instead, he said, he would "invent" another system, incorporating the best of both worlds. That invention never materialized because Ingersoll, in his soul, was no egalitarian; money meant too much to him.

His personal life during these years was a mess. He was attractive to women, had three wives and many lovers, but was addicted to prostitutes and massage parlors. He had problems with men, too. According to Hoopes, "when he encountered a father figure such as Ross or Luce he felt a 'demonic need' to challenge and destroy him." Ingersoll, after years of psychoanalysis, had his own explanation for his behavior. He suffered, he said, from a "good old Oedipus complex. . . . (My) mother belonged to him (his father), not to me. . . . I indeed would have killed him. . . . if I could have found a way."

His "demonic need" perhaps led to his break with Luce in 1939 and to the creation of *PM*. In style and format, he envisioned a daily newspaper patterned to some extent on *Time*. It would have compartmentalized sections and good writing. It would have a "permanent research staff and public opinion samplings, as in *Life*. . . (and) a 'Goings On About Town' department, as in *The New Yorker*." And it would have higher and more noble purposes than Ross or Luce espoused — a "free newspaper willing to slug it out for the people."

Luce encouraged him in the project. So did Franklin Roosevelt and other New Dealers such as Thomas Corcoran who helped him raise money from left-leaning millionaires, most notably young Marshall Field, who subsidized

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The Industry Impervious To Satire

Robert Kiely

Selling Out

Dan Wakefield. Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1985, \$16.95.

Selling Out by Dan Wakefield [NF '64] is a good-natured, easy-going kind of book. It tells the story of a good-natured reformed alcoholic in his forties who writes short stories and teaches at a small college in Vermont and his level-headed wife, a photographer specializing in trees and plants. When the novel opens, the couple are in a plane en route to Hollywood where Perry, the husband, has been invited to adapt one of his stories for television. Recalling the mixture of envy and disapproval expressed by their colleagues, the couple (especially Perry) anticipate with increasing pleasure their fantasy fling. They take off in a haze of champagne and roaring engines, confident that Vermont and reality will be waiting for them when they have had enough. If Jane, the wife, has qualms, they are temporarily mollified by her love for Perry and her trust in her own common sense.

Even if the novel had not been called *Selling Out*, the reader can see what is coming after the first few pages. Over-confident Eastern academic couple arrives in Hollywood determined to enjoy the glitz without becoming a part of it; soon (that is,

almost immediately) the husband begins to succumb to flattery, money, bronzed starlets, swimming pools, and more Japanese restaurants than you can shake a chopstick at; wife balks, warns, sulks; they fight; she leaves; husband stays on a while longer until he too sees how awful it all is; he repents and returns to Vermont; fade-out.

Such advance summary of the plot is not only unavoidable, but it sounds a bit like the kind of quick distillation Perry hears about his own work from the various producer-directors as they rush around between helicopter trips to Mexico. Perry's producers, however,

Hollywood is not
as easy a target
for satire as
one might suppose.

would add some spice to such a tame story: an underworld connection, a car chase on Big Sur, an overdose of something or someone, and so forth and so on.

As the producers are quick to point out, there is nothing wrong with letting the reader or viewer know what to expect. There is a certain pleasure in seeing our expectations fulfilled or even disappointed (so long as the disappointment is only incidental and

minor). It is nice to know who the good guys are, especially if they are Eastern academics and you are an Eastern academic. It is also reassuring and fun to be able to despise without reservation the baddies, those dolled-up swine who inhabit Hollywood and seek to destroy Perry's script, marriage, self-confidence, moral integrity, and just about everything else he has brought along on the plane with him.

Since it is clear from the start that the good-natured hero will get back his senses and return to his wife, it is sort of entertaining to watch him being taken in by the crass glamor and false promises of movie and TV-land. We can enjoy watching Perry slip because we know that he will not fall. To say that the novel bears little resemblance to Camus is not necessarily to complain. Many readers will be relieved to know it. This is a relaxing read, a good book to curl up with on a plane to California or, even better, on a plane coming back from California. This is an honest book that promises what it delivers and delivers what it promises.

Then why, except out of sheer ill-naturedness, does one feel a bit discontented with it? There are very funny moments. And the razzing on Hollywood is unrelenting. From dentists to real-estate agents, everyone is tanned and trim and dressed as for a set, in battle fatigues, gold chains, jumpsuits, or dresses that would be outlawed by Lord and Taylor. The West Coast names are also wonderfully cosmetic: Archer, Kenton, Ravenna. And the cars are not your sturdy New England wagons and trucks, but sleek,

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Robert Kiely is Loker Professor of English at Harvard University.

Truth Under Siege

William K. Marimow

When Information Counts

Edited by Bernard Rubin. Lexington Books/D.C. Heath and Company, 1985, \$23.50 hard cover, \$13.95 paperback.

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, writing about the First Amendment in a 1929 dissent, said that "if there is any principle of the Constitution that more imperatively calls for attachment than any other, it is the principle of free thought — not free thought for those who would agree with us but freedom for the thought which we hate."

It is to those principles, of free thought and free expression — however unpopular, radical, or even repugnant the idea — that the volume *When Information Counts* is dedicated.

A collection of thirteen essays, edited by Bernard Rubin, a professor of governmental affairs and communication at Boston University, the book is divided into three major sections with an overall theme of evaluating the performance of the media. The first four selections, entitled "Grounds for Concern," focus on the shortcomings — as discerned by the essayists — of the print and electronic media. Following those critiques are five essays detailing the free press's role at home and abroad

William Marimow, *Nieman Fellow '83*, is a staff writer with *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

in identifying important public issues and serving as a bulwark for free speech. The final section assesses the press's ability to analyze and explain complex issues to the citizenry.

The essayists include ten professors; a film coordinator at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the editor and publisher of *The News* of Southbridge, Massachusetts; and the redoubtable Tenney Barbara K. Lehman, editor of *Nieman Reports* (and — to keep the record straight and avoid even the appearance of any conflict — a good friend of this reviewer).

At their best, the essays in this collection stimulate a reader's appreciation of free speech in America, while at the same time they increase one's awareness of the potential for improving how we communicate matters of governing importance to our audience.

Other essays in the 244-page volume seem to bear only an arguable relationship to First Amendment principles. One chapter, for example, which examines the intellectual basis for President Reagan's Soviet policy, consists almost entirely of a carefully crafted and convincing refutation of a 1977 essay in *Commentary* by Richard Pipes, the senior Soviet specialist on the National Security Council in 1981 and 1982. As a piece of intellectual scholarship on a critical world affairs issue, the essay appears to be a valid, important work. But its relevance to freedom of expression — except for the fact that its publication is an exercise of that very freedom — is more difficult to discern.

Among the most provocative essays in the group are two by editor Rubin and Anne Rawley Saldich, an assistant

editor of the *Journal of Economic Literature* at Stanford University. Both writers lament the state of television news, but hold out hope for its future.

Rubin, recalling Walter Lippmann's 1922 study, *Public Opinion*, asserts that television generally provides its viewers with "stereotype," superficial news — news that is black or white, zero or one hundred, devoid of nuance, devoid of subtlety, devoid of complexity, and, ultimately, seductively and misleadingly simple.

Assessing the state of contemporary television, Rubin writes that for every production "that shows a person or group as a psychological, sociological, economic, or philosophical whole, there are scores that rely on cosmetic cartoon characterizations. Until we all admit that, we haven't achieved much more than Lippmann — indeed, much less, since he showed us the basic geography of the stereotype — we will go on lamenting reliance on superficiality in mass communication. Stereotyping contrary to democratic goals of fairness will prevail so long as we believe that television is inherently second-rate in comparison with print. That just isn't so!"

While Rubin chooses the macrocosmic approach to evaluating television news, Saldich takes the microcosmic route and arrives at a similar conclusion. Relying on 13.3 hours of national network news on the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, made available by the Television News Archive at Vanderbilt University, Saldich concludes that "television news has improved considerably since the Vietnam War."

Whereas the networks occasionally aired "government issue" film during

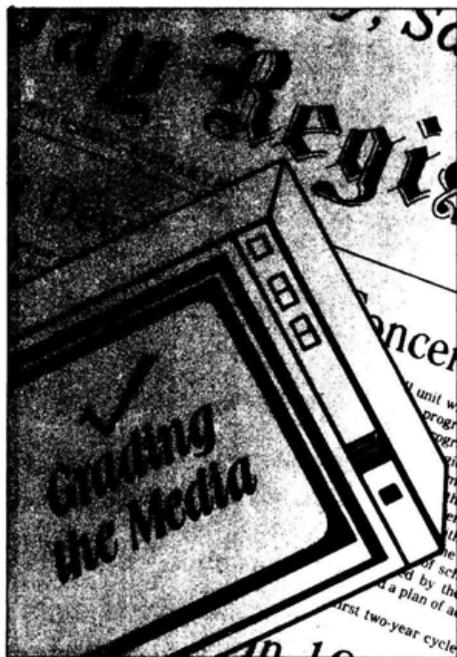
the Vietnam War without identifying it as such, the networks over the four years studied by Saldich often labeled material as "file footage" or "White House photo." Likewise she found that reporters and anchor persons also informed viewers that one production was a cooperative venture between the Afghanistan government and the network, or that film was provided to the station by the Afghanistan rebels. Such attribution, Saldich writes, "allowed viewers to make informed judgments about what they saw. It also added to the credibility of the news."

What troubled Dr. Saldich was not the accuracy or thoroughness of network newscasts on Afghanistan but rather their lack of depth, context, and analysis. Facts alone, she writes, were not sufficient to maximize public understanding of the social, economic, and political causes and consequences of the Soviet invasion and the ensuing world reaction. Instead, she writes: "If news is to reach maturity, its managers will have to stop believing the big lie: 'Facts speak for themselves.' They do not; they never have; they never will. . . . There is a place for news bulletins, for brief highlights of events. However, anything that is worth three minutes out of a twenty-six minute news hole deserves an intelligent wrap-up. The networks need a new motto: 'If it's worth reporting, it's worth interpreting.'"

Of special interest to working reporters and editors are chapters by T. Barton Carter, a communications lawyer and Boston University professor, on television cameras in the courtroom, and by Tenney Lehman on eight organizations dedicated to protecting and perpetuating free expression around the world.

Carter's well-researched, well-written essay reviews the historical and legal roots of the debate over whether cameras should be permitted in the courtroom. At present, many states permit television cameras in the courtroom, but they are not allowed in any federal court, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

The debate focuses on the issue of



whether the insertion of cameras in the courthouse will in some way distort the quest for fair and impartial justice. Will the presence of cameras unnerve the jurors? Will a politically ambitious prosecutor or defense attorney engage in unwarranted theatrics to woo voters watching on television? Will an already tense defendant be even more uncomfortable when summoned to the witness stand?

As the author points out — and this reviewer/reporter would agree — televising trials "can be used to increase the flow of information. Even a complete transcript fails to communicate many details about a legal proceeding. The witnesses' tone of voice, their facial expression, and their delivery are all items of valuable information that can best be conveyed through television."

Thus, Carter concludes that televised trials will enhance public understanding of the criminal justice system and that whatever the risks of "irresponsible press conduct, the harm caused by them is outweighed by the benefits resulting from a more informed public."

An issue like the closing of courtrooms is an important matter for re-

porters in the United States, who are used to unimpeded access to civil and criminal proceedings, from the often boisterous hearings in neighborhood police districts to the sometimes arcane oral arguments in the chambers of the U.S. Supreme Court. Also important are attempts to narrow the Freedom of Information Act and the alarming trend toward ever larger libel verdicts.

But imagine if the issues facing American reporters were whether they had the right to publish accurate stories raising questions about the judgment of government officials or the qualifications of a candidate for public office. Or, worse yet, what if the issue were whether publication of a story might lead to imprisonment, torture, or death for the reporter or publisher?

For many of our colleagues around the world in nations like South Africa, Turkey, and Bangladesh, that issue — whether to publish and thereby perish — is a matter of chilling concern. Lehman's essay, "A Spectrum of Press Watchers," is a sobering, informative, comprehensive guide to eight organizations monitoring incursions on free expression at home and abroad.

Data from the Committee to Protect Journalists, cited by Lehman, show that from January 1981 through early 1984, 76 journalists either disappeared or met violent deaths; 194 journalists were jailed or detained; 33 journalists were either prohibited from reporting or expelled from their countries; 14 news outlets were permanently shuttered; and 48 issues of publications were confiscated.

To the extent that essays like these enhance public appreciation in the United States of our special freedoms of expression and of the press — and the best of these essays accomplish that — the authors have performed a public service. To the extent that such work also enhances working reporters' appreciation of their freedom and the urgent needs of their more fettered, endangered colleagues around the world, it also provides a service to journalism.

The Sticky Question of Ideologies

Deborah B. Johnson

Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family
Shirley Christian. Random House,
1985, \$19.95.

A little while ago a French television crew interviewed me about my network's coverage of Central America. The questions were familiar ones: Why is the news so rushed? Why do we choose the stories we do? What's our ideology? Ever since I've worked in television news, I've made attempts to answer those questions from people who don't. A good deal of last year — my Nieman year — I spent discussing the networks with Fellows from other countries, most of whom are appalled by our coverage. But although I'm familiar with the discussion — and can answer for a television interview in twenty-second sentences — I'm still dissatisfied with the answers.

Television news rushes because we have less than twenty-two minutes for the news of the day and whatever other features and explainers go into the program. Network news is automatically highly simplified, because that's the only way to get it on the air within the

Deborah B. Johnson, Nieman Fellow '85, is foreign producer of the NBC Nightly News. During her Nieman year she concentrated on Latin American studies and she spent the summer of 1985 in Central America as a producer for NBC.

limits. As for choices on foreign news: There's a belief among those who make decisions in the networks that an American audience would prefer to hear about Americans. And if we're covering foreign news, it should have an obvious connection with the United States. Central America is a handy story for connections, be they a history of marine occupations, or the present investment of millions of U.S. tax dollars to overthrow one government or keep another in office.

The question of ideology always is a sticky one, especially with people from other countries. Most of the people I work with — on all rungs of the hierarchy — believe themselves free from ideology. We all have the concept of objectivity drummed into our heads, or at least a belief in a journalist who strives to be fair. The vast

majority try — but at times the trying leads us to other problems — reportorial cynicism, to name a big one. The attempt to free oneself of a personal ideology leads journalists to profound suspicion of any strong belief or enthusiasm. So when we're faced with a country like Nicaragua, where emotions run high and contradictions are rampant, we have problems.

Obvious, naive-seeming idealism is dismissed. When American journalists see — and have to spend days covering — wide-eyed, ill-equipped North Americans who come to help harvest the revolution's coffee and cotton, the journalists take to referring to them as "sandalistas." And the reporters who spend years watching the promise of a revolution put on the trappings of a military state don't always take kindly to the folks from back home who can still see the idealistic efforts and tell us that they're going home to tell "the real story" of Nicaragua to their community groups. They've been dubbed TCAs: Totally Confused Americans.

American news organizations sometimes appear more confused than the tourists of the revolution — and I think a good deal of that confusion comes from this above-ideology attitude. Coverage sometimes seems schizophrenic because individual reporters, with different perceptions of what's going on, rotate through the area regularly. So one person may cover an area where dissatisfaction is high and the contras are getting lots of recruits; while another might concentrate on the destruction and anger caused by those same contras. Eventually, I think this kind of *mélange* ends up giving the viewer a picture of



the whole country, but each of those reporters individually believes he or she is above the ideology of the subject. A lot of good reporting can be done while one is enmeshed with one side or another — but to believe that it's the total picture is a disservice to our audience.

And that's what disturbs me about Shirley Christian's *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family*. There's some excellent reporting in it; it's especially thorough covering the jockeying for power in the years immediately preceding the overthrow of Anastasio Somoza. But it's so wrapped up with one side — that of the losers in the power struggle — that it leaves vast areas untouched.

The winners in that power struggle are quite capable of encouraging reporters to pay attention to the critics. Take, for example, what is now a national holiday: the anniversary of the Sandinistas' takeover of the National Palace. In her book, Christian has a lovely description of Eden Pastora's daring commando raid: 25 revolutionaries stormed the building, held the Chamber of Deputies hostage, and got away with not only their lives, but also about 50 freed political prisoners. Christian tells it from the point of view of a young Sandinista supporter who helped escort a truckload of Pastora's troops to the National Palace. "You have to see to it that the truck reaches the palace," he was told. "It does not matter whether you make it or not."

Last August I watched hundreds of black-and-red-kerchiefed children, armed with wooden guns, rampage happily through the halls of the National Palace re-enacting the takeover. Exhibits of photographs and newspaper clippings in the Chamber of Deputies recalled the day, and one of Pastora's sub-commandantes was there to tell her story of the event. Pastora, however, was missing. Since 1983, he has headed a Costa Rican-based group trying to overthrow the government. Not one photograph showed him; the newspaper clippings bore the scars of the censor. As far as those who were teach-

ing the children about their recent history were concerned, Pastora — the mastermind of the event — had not been there.

A few days later, I asked an official at the Ministry of Education about the

... the folks from
back home —
they've been
dubbed TCAs:
Totally Confused
Americans.

re-thinking of history. It was a day of celebration, he said. And the commandante's present actions were so unpleasant. Why confuse the children with something so unpleasant?

In a much subtler, much less drastic way, Christian has done the opposite: covered only the unpleasant actions of the government, in a country where there's much more than that going on. The book lays out very thoroughly the case of the influential Nicaraguans who felt they deserved to run the country after the 1979 Revolution. It details their frustrations with the Carter administration, their negotiations with the Sandinistas, their sometimes immediate and sometimes gradual disillusionment with the new government, and it ends with a justification of U.S. funding of the contras. The book ignores those who might have well-reasoned arguments for supporting the Sandinista government, or who might be benefiting from its programs.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this account is Christian's choice of sources. Several anecdotes establish her easy closeness with Adolfo Calero, head of the largest group of contras. Christian's listing of sources for the five chapters covering January 1977 through the overthrow of Somoza in July of 1979 names 27 people. By my count, only three are presently part of

the Nicaraguan government; the nine other Nicaraguans on the list are either in exile or are strong critics of the Sandinistas still living in Nicaragua.

It leads to some odd moments. Much of the action of July 19, the day the Sandinistas won, is seen through the eyes of a Red Cross official who was trying to save lives of Somoza's National Guard by finding them sanctuary in embassies.

The boosters of the revolution aren't the only ones missing from the book. One line in Christian's chapter on the end of the revolution notes that 90 percent of the 10,000 Nicaraguans killed during the fighting "were civilians." It's almost the first we've heard of this crowd, so deep has the narrative been in politicking. There's virtually no discussion of living conditions before the revolution, and no indication of why tens of thousands of those civilians joined the fight.

Those outside of the economic elite don't appear in the book until after page 200, in a chapter on the church. A chapter entitled "Workers and Peasants" (eight pages) dismisses the Sandinistas' social programs, such as land reform and the literacy campaign, as vehicles for propagandizing the gullible masses.

Christian uses Nicaraguan workers and peasants occasionally to punctuate her points. But they're rarely permitted to tell any story other than an anti-government one, and the richness and texture of these people is absent from her account.

The author has similar problems when writing about the bitterly divided elites. The book gives much attention to the government's repression of *La Prensa*, the country's biggest-circulation newspaper. The Chamorro family looms large here: members run all three national newspapers. But we never get any idea of why the pro-Sandinista Chamorros believe what they do, or why they continue to put out pro-government papers. In one chapter, a profile of Violeta Chamorro, the widow of the assassinated editor of *La*

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Tensions of Blinkered Vision

Richard S. Steyn

Move Your Shadow

Joseph Lelyveld. Times Books/
Random House, New York, 1985,
\$18.95.

What is it about distant South Africa that so excites the attention of the American media? Several explanations suggest themselves — none entirely convincing on its own. A fascination with Afrikaner Nationalism's singular contribution to the history of man's inhumanity to man is one. Perverse satisfaction that the United States — with its racial mix inverted — had the wit to resolve its own black/white conflict differently is another. A third, which the author believes, along with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker (about the only time they do agree), is that for economic, cultural, and religious reasons, South Africa is "part" of the United States and thus an American responsibility. A simpler explanation might be that South Africa continues to be more accessible to visiting journalists (the latest restrictions notwithstanding) than most similarly repressive societies. One of the country's many paradoxes is that the degree of freedom allowed the media ensures an unceasing flow of human interest stories which wreak such

damage to its image on the front pages of *The New York Times*.

For several years, in two spells of duty with fourteen years between them, these stories were written by Joseph Lelyveld, among the most perceptive and industrious foreign reporters to have worked in South Africa. *Move Your Shadow* (the artful title is derived from a patois phrase which white golfers say to their black caddies) is a superbly written, impressionistic account of these years. I say impressionistic because the author makes no claim to have written a definitive book about South Africa — scant or no mention is made of some of the most significant forces and players in the current drama, among them the United Democratic Front, Inkatha, Mandela, Buthelezi, and Boesak — and it is unfair to accuse him, as some critics have done, of having left out more than he has put in.

Lelyveld views South Africa through the lenses of an American liberal, one who deplors the consequences of revolutionary fervor as much as its causes. Yet it is upon those causes that he chooses to focus — to telling effect. Along with Anthony Trollope, he regards South Africa as a "black" country with a "white" problem, not the converse, as Pretoria would have the world believe. Though critical of the racialism of Afrikaner Nationalism's fore-runners — chief among them Jan Smuts — his deepest contempt is reserved for those who have elevated racial discrimination into a doctrine; whose successors, while preaching reform, have continued to create resettlement camps in the midst of plenty as a deliberate act of state policy. *Apar-*

theid may be based on the myth that there is such a place as "white" South Africa, but it is a myth now cast in the concrete of separate living areas for people of color and the dust of the barren homelands, "a screen which hides the vast reality of black South Africa from the vision of most whites." As Lelyveld rightly observes, it is this blinkered vision of how blacks actually think and feel that is primarily responsible for the racial and ethnic tensions which cleave deeper than class in South Africa and bedevil even the most genuine attempts at reform.

Lelyveld's credo as a reporter — that everyone is an expert on the circumstances of his or her own life — allied to his resourcefulness and energy led him into some of the deeper recesses of South African society: into a black commuter bus leaving the KwaNdebele homeland for far-off Pretoria at 2:30 in the morning; into the distant homeland abodes of migrant workers; into the pass law courts and resettlement camps; into the confidences of trade union leaders and activists tortured by the Security Police; into the offices of the black Security chief of the Ciskei, a sinister Amin-like figure since deposed for plotting against his brother, the epitome of a system which not only pits one race against another, but blacks against themselves.

Lelyveld also broke bread with a wide range of Afrikaners — farmers, politicians, military officers, churchmen, and social scientists. Less in sorrow than in anger he identifies the huge contradiction in their thinking — the freedom they sought for them-

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Watching a Moscow-Watcher

Richard C. Longworth

Sovieticus — American Perceptions and Soviet Realities

Stephen F. Cohen. W. W. Norton & Company, 1985, \$12.95.

In the introduction to this slim and uneven collection of his old columns from *The Nation*, Stephen F. Cohen says he once considered leaving Princeton University, where he is professor of Soviet politics and history, to become a Moscow correspondent for an unnamed American newspaper. It's a shame he didn't act on this urge. On the evidence of his books and, to a lesser degree, of these columns, he is a well-informed Moscow-watcher who could have been a good correspondent, once he submerged his instinct to write editorials and settled down to reporting. Even more, he might have picked up some understanding of the way correspondents in Moscow work and an appreciation of the contribution of these front-line observers to the vexed American debate on Russia and how to deal with it.

Of the 24 columns included in this book, all but four are reprints of Cohen's reactions to events frequent in 1982-85, such as the deaths of Soviet leaders, White House pronouncements

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on Kremlin perfidy, and new plans for reforms within Russia. As timely attempts to guide readers' thinking in the heat of events, they had their transient value; allowed to cool and then forced into awkward categories between hard covers, they have the stale smell that surrounds all collections of old commentaries. Such compilations, as *Harper's* editor Lewis H. Lapham once said, "read like a definitive study of a formation of clouds." Too dated to be journalism and too topical to be history, they occupy a sort of literary halfway house, with solid points on Soviet affairs bobbing in a sea of old guesswork. All this is muddled by the author's *ex post facto* editing, so that Andropov, for instance, is given the past-tense treatment in a column written fourteen months before his death.

It is the first columns that give the book its title and tone and hold the most interest for *Nieman Reports* readers. It is here that Cohen makes the undeniable point that American perceptions seldom jibe with Soviet reality, and then levies the more debatable accusation that the blame for this mismatch lies with the press.

"The problem, as I see it, [he writes] is that too much American newspaper and television coverage is one-dimensional, speculative, or otherwise misleading. . . . Press coverage of the Soviet Union [is] inadequate. . . . Do mainstream American newspapers, magazines, and television networks, with their collective power to shape public opinion and influence government policy, give concerned citizens a balanced view of the Soviet Union? Whether purposely or inadvertently, they fail to do so in three fundamental

ways."

The first, he says, is a focus on the negative side of Soviet life, ignoring such positive events as "expanded welfare programs and the rising living standard." The second is the use of language loaded with values and bias — e.g., that America has a government, security organizations, and allies, while Russia has a regime, secret police, and satellites. The third is that the press regularly assumes that "the Soviet Union is guilty of every charge made against it" — e.g., trying to assassinate the Pope, invading Afghanistan to get at Iranian oil, increasing military spending by four to five percent per year.

The second charge is easily met, with a *mea culpa*. The press is indeed guilty of this linguistic double standard. The United States has world responsibilities, the Soviets seek world domination. We disseminate news on the American way of life, they spread disinformation. We have defense spending, they have military spending. And so on. The point has been made often. My sense is that Moscow correspondents (and the real sinners, their editors and headline writers at home) are more sensitive to this. But Cohen, in his zeal to prove his point, reduces that point to absurdity by criticizing "what passes for informed analysis even in widely respected publications" and then using, as an example, a screed from *The Wall Street Journal* by the neoconservative academic, Irving Kristol.

The trick, as Cohen points out, is to avoid prejudicial language without giving the impression that the United States and Soviet systems are identical.

The FBI, for all its faults, is not the KGB: even Cohen, elsewhere in the book, refers to the KGB as the "political police." The word "elections," Soviet-style, really does belong in quotation marks. If Moscow cannot crack the whip over Eastern Europe as it once did, its domination of the Warsaw Pact still cannot be compared to the U.S. status within NATO, where we are no more than *primus inter pares*.

I have made no textual analysis of reporting from Moscow, but I'd bet that such a study would not support Cohen's third point, that the U.S. press corps there regularly finds the Soviets guilty until proven innocent. The press, as a whole, certainly does this, but the fault here lies with editorial writers and, dismayingly, with Washington correspondents, who seem only too willing to accept the White House and State Department versions of events. In my experience, the Moscow press corps, while certainly skeptical of Soviet claims and actions, does its best to put these claims and actions in the Soviet context and to relate them to Soviet priorities. The press corps is there, after all, to try to understand the Soviet point of view and to get that point across in stories. These reporters accept what many Americans cannot — that even in Soviet-American relations, two sides exist to every story. During the hysteria over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, for instance, it was the Moscow press corps that pointed out the Kremlin's concern over its southern border and the threat of unrest spreading to the Soviet Moslem population.

Cohen's first point — that the Moscow correspondents accentuate the negative and eliminate the positive — is the most interesting. Journalists everywhere, of course, are familiar with the complaint that "you only report the bad news." Cohen's charge is a variant on this, but it carries more impact since the Soviet Union, more than most countries and certainly more than the United States, is unknown territory for most American readers, who must rely totally on the press for what they know about the

place.

And what do they get? According to Cohen, "a media image of the Soviet Union [as] a crisis-ridden and decaying system that includes a stagnant and unworkable economy; a 'sick' society and cynical populace; a corrupt, bureaucratic elite; and an alternately reckless and paralyzed leadership," all adding up to a system that "has utterly failed to deliver on its basic domestic promises over the years" and is "tottering on the edge of an abyss."

Well, there is certainly something to this. No correspondent that I read has actually said that Russia "totters on the edge of an abyss"; all experienced observers of the Soviet Union know that there is a big difference between stagnation and a disaffected populace on the one hand, and a pre-revolutionary situation on the other. But that Russia faces a real economic crisis seems beyond doubt. Tomes of facts and reports, journalistic and academic, underpinned by increasingly blunt speeches by Soviet officials themselves, attest to economic stagnation, declining productivity, technological backwardness in the civilian economy, poor quality, shortages of consumer goods and, as a result, a growing unwillingness by workers to work. Of course, the economy is not "unworkable," but Mr. Gorbachev himself seems to concede that it works very badly indeed.

Similarly, alcoholism, bureaucratic careerism, casual corruption, commonplace thieving at the workplace, high living by a tiny elite — all these problems, which have corroded Soviet society for decades, seem to have become epidemics in the Brezhnev years. Again, if Cohen doubts this, Gorbachev does not, to judge by his speeches and some of the draconian new laws he has put into effect. Are these negative phenomena only incidental to a healthier overall society, as Cohen seems to argue, or are they basic to the Soviet reality, as almost every other observer says? In other words, are correspondents overdoing the gloom, or are they only being accurate?

Cohen argues that the Soviet gov-

ernment is in tune with the people in its emphasis on national security, its appeal to Russian nationalism, and its conservative stress on law-and-order (including its suppression of dissidents, whose following within Russia seems to have been small at the best of times). This is true but it strikes me as irrelevant except to topple the straw man of incipient revolt. Any police state can boast the same achievements; but this hardly adds up to success, except in the narrow sense of keeping the lid on.

Cohen goes on to claim general popular satisfaction with the Soviet cradle-to-the-grave welfare system and the constantly rising standard of living. Here he is on shakier ground. Recent reporting, including some stunning work by former *Washington Post* correspondent Kevin Klose, indicates there are plenty of holes in the welfare net. And the living standard, while rising, is going up too slowly to satisfy a population only too aware of the much higher standards in most of Eastern Europe, let alone in the West.

Cohen cites statistics showing that the Soviet Gross National Product quadrupled, and per capita consumption tripled, between 1950 and 1980, that the 1983 harvest was the best in five years, that it is cheaper for Russia to import grain than to produce more. Okay — but so what? The U.S. GNP and per capita consumption grew by one thousand percent in that period; West European economies, starting from the same ravaged base as the Soviet economy, grew even faster. The 1983 harvest followed four disasters, and no nation with the agricultural potential of the Soviet Union should find wheat cheaper to import than to grow.

Cohen accuses the press corps of ignoring the growing and excellent academic output on the Soviet Union. This is ridiculous: In my experience, Moscow correspondents are probably the most scholarly in the world, constantly reading and studying their subject, and generally are as well and deeply informed as academics. The latest books on Soviet affairs are im-

ported to Moscow as soon as they are published. And when these books arrive, the correspondents are able to read about a "Soviet economy beset by increasingly serious problems" of "declining productivity, shortages, and bureaucratic corruption," and a country "that increasingly resembles the lumbering bureaucratic Russia of weak czars." Cohen can hardly complain if the correspondents accept such confirmation of their own reporting, especially since these quotes come from his own columns.

Probably the best recent book on the Soviet economy, by Marshall I. Goldman, was titled simply *USSR in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System*. And it is a failure, for two big reasons. First, the Soviet Union is a superpower. Cohen says, correctly, that America's Soviet policy would be more rational if we granted Moscow this status and recognized their right to "interests and entitlements in world affairs comparable to our own." But if Russia wants to be a superpower, it must be judged by superpower standards, and that includes having an economy that offers more rewards than that of a middling Third World nation. Secondly, Marxism is a materialist religion. Unlike other religions that offer "pie in the sky when you die," it promises the goods, here and now. In its early days and after World War II, it could blame its economic backwardness on the war, or foreign encirclement, or other externalities. But it is now 68 years since the Revolution and 40 years since the war. If the Soviet system is going to deliver, it should have done so by now.

But it hasn't, and this is leading to a brand-new problem — the apparently widespread loss of faith among the Soviet people in Communism's ability to produce a decent economy. Since this faith in the historical rightness of Marxism is the only source of legitimacy (apart from naked power) justifying Soviet power, the development amounts to a religious crisis. Several writers have commented recently on this event: One of the best is *The New York Times'* David Shipler, whose

book, *Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams*, is among those recommended by Cohen.

Cohen accuses the press of alleging that Soviet citizens are "alienated . . . to the point of indifference, or even rebellion." There is plenty of evidence of "indifference," almost none of "rebellion." Again, it must be stressed that no reputable correspondent on the ground in Moscow is predicting revolt. But Cohen, by this juxtaposition, is

Moscow correspondents,
even more than
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able to link those reporting on indifference with ideologues, mostly tucked inside foundations in the United States, who see a new revolution at hand.

The basic problem here seems to be Cohen's statement of his own creed: "That *détente* is both imperative and possible." Clearly this requires not only a better understanding of the Soviet Union by American elites, but also a certain confidence among Soviet elites — an ability to deal from strength, both military and economic. An economic crisis at home is a poor basis from which to launch *détente* abroad. Therefore, for *détente* to be "both imperative and possible," signs of economic collapse must be denied.

The workaday correspondent is not burdened by such ideological baggage. He is not in Moscow to defend the possibility and necessity of *détente*. He is, however, required to report on the conditions of that possibility, including the state of the economy. If he finds those conditions absent, he is required to say so.

This is the reason why Moscow correspondents, even more than most

newspaper people, catch flak, no matter what they write. There is scarcely a person alive who doesn't know what he thinks about Russia, whether or not he knows anything else about the place. The facts almost never live up or down to these preconceptions. Therefore, almost every story from Moscow can be guaranteed to offend someone and, usually, everyone. Cohen, offended, has taken it out on the correspondents, who have survived worse.

Cohen's cheap shots give the wrong answer to the right question — if the Moscow press corps is doing its job, why are Americans so abysmally informed about the Soviet Union?

I would suggest, first, that the Moscow correspondents do an astonishingly successful job in reporting both the flavor and the facts of the Soviet Union, considering the obstacles and burdens that face them daily. But these obstacles and burdens define and limit the life of a correspondent in Moscow, and explain why correspondence from there is not as good as it could be.

Most newspapers and networks are limited to one correspondent in the Moscow bureau: Even the wire services are allowed only four. These tiny staffs must cover the world's biggest and, possibly, most diverse nation. Further, these correspondents may not live on the economy, comparing their daily lots with Soviet neighbors, but are assigned flats in the golden ghettos where only foreigners may live. Getting formal interviews with officials can take months.

About half the country can be visited; the rest, including major industrial cities, is off limits. Government and academic reports, statistics, background briefings, studies, informed leaks, all the staples that flesh out the stiff official pronouncements and which are so readily available in other capitals — all are denied to Moscow correspondents.

They never can do what a correspondent anywhere else would do — hire a car, drive off to another city, and pop in for a lunch and a talk with the local newspaper editor, factory manager, and

union leader. Instead, they can get additional information and insights from diplomats, who are often equally in the dark.

They can make friends with "official Russians" — journalists or foreign ministry officials — who deliver a more informal version of the official line. They can make friends with dissidents, who provide valuable information on the realities of Soviet life but know less than the correspondent about official thinking. Beyond that, they are restricted to collecting bits and pieces of data which may or may not add up, someday, to a story. It is tedious, frustrating work in which scholarly background, judgment, and experience count for more than shoe leather.

Despite this, much Moscow coverage is excellent. Political coverage is better at explaining why something happened than predicting what's going to happen; even so, Cohen is flatly wrong in saying that the correspondents miscalculated the rise to power of, first, Andropov and, then, Chernenko. No Soviet study available to the press has ever laid out chapter and verse on the economy, but correspondents, through rigorous string-saving, have amassed the information necessary for solid economic reporting. Coverage of dissidents and political trials is thorough. Even Cohen, who accuses the press of overemphasizing the dissidents, devotes some of his best columns to them, because they are so accessible. Given the Soviet mania for secrecy, good reporting from Moscow on military matters is almost impossible. Stories on living conditions — housing, food, transportation, shopping, etc. — can be gleaned from first-hand reporting, at least in Moscow. Stories on plane crashes or natural disasters seldom appear in the Soviet press or on TASS. Nevertheless, the efficient Soviet grapevine usually insures reasonably accurate information for a well-connected correspondent. Most of all, the press corps there provides plenty of deep and solid commentaries on Soviet attitudes, policies, national customs, and viewpoints.

This being so, I am always amazed to hear discussions like one that took place on public television in Chicago before the Geneva summit. The question was raised whether Gorbachev, like Reagan, was under any pressure from public opinion to move toward an agreement. The three experts explained that while Soviet citizens do not have a free vote, they have quite clearly stated, through their working and buying habits, their disgust with the Sovi-

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et economy, putting great pressure on Gorbachev to control the arms race in order to free up funds for civilian investment. My amazement was not at the explanation, which was impeccable, but at the need for it. I personally have been writing on this aspect of Soviet life for nearly twenty years, and certainly I am neither the first nor the only correspondent to do so. One would think that, by this time, the point would have sunk home.

Why, if the major newspapers do a credible job of Moscow reporting, is such public ignorance so intractable? Possibly because fewer Americans than ever get their news from newspapers, and more get it from network television — especially the daily newscasts. By and large, these telecasts do a terrible job of reporting anything remotely complicated. Certainly, President Reagan can palm off his economic eccentricities on the voters because these networks seldom bother to report in any depth on economic realities. The same holds true of foreign documentaries on the Soviet Union, but how many persons watch these, compared to those who ingest the 45-

second headlines on the evening newscasts?

Again, very few Americans travel to Russia and have any idea what the place actually looks like: A lot of knowledge can be imparted even during a ten-day guided tour.

Finally, Americans always have been prone to a simplistic, black-and-white, good-versus-evil view of the Soviet Union, and it will take much to overcome this. When a popular president reinforces this comic-strip view by insisting on seeing Russia as "an evil empire," instead of a rival superpower with legitimate goals and concerns, then the problem is multiplied. Cohen seems to blame the press for the administration's juvenile beliefs, such as one official's statement that "the Soviet state has contributed practically nothing at all to science, culture, art, industry, agriculture, or to any other field of human endeavor." Well, the fellow got this nonsense somewhere, but he didn't get it in a news story with a Moscow dateline. The press, for all its shortcomings, cannot be blamed for the whimsies of President Reagan and his cohorts, who seem to hear and see things that are inaudible or invisible to the rest of us.

Cohen's press-bashing is regrettable, both in its refusal to recognize the generally excellent job done by a small band of courageous and incredibly hard-working correspondents in Moscow, and because it detracts from measures that could make their work even better — solid academic grounding in Soviet affairs, for instance, and greater fluency in Russian. Too often, editors treat Moscow as just another foreign assignment, where the correspondent can pick up the background on the job.

The job of all Moscow correspondents is to interpret the Soviet Union as accurately as possible, for audiences that often don't want to listen, in an environment designed to keep them as far as possible from the facts and reality of their stories. The wonder is not that the correspondents sometimes are wrong, rather, the wonder is that their batting average is so high.

Survey Research and Generic Rules

Barry Sussman

The Newspaper Survival Book – An Editor's Guide to Marketing Research

Philip Meyer. Indiana University Press, 1985, \$20.00.

In 1979 *The Washington Post* revised its Sunday television magazine. Editors and graphic artists worked on the design for months. A number of new pages were added, the size was changed, and so was the day-by-day format.

Readers hated it.

Phones immediately rang off the hook with complaints. Reporters and editors, who had had no part in the changes, were waylaid Monday morning by frustrated *Post* newsroom telephone operators who were taking the brunt of the public anger.

In a matter of days, thousands called and wrote letters; many stopped their subscriptions to the newspaper. Then Ben Bradlee killed most of the revisions and things settled down.

In 1985 the *Post* once again made extensive changes in its Sunday television magazine. What was the reaction this time? Are you familiar with the commercial that shows a man coughing and sputtering to illustrate how badly his car needs a tune-up? And then he hums smoothly to show how

it ran after the tune-up?

The reaction was a lovely hmmm-mmmmm. Few people call newspapers to say something nice. This time hundreds did, with favorable calls outnumbering nasty ones by 20 to 1. There were no cancellations of the *Post* but one called to say he had dropped his subscription to *TV Guide*, that he didn't need it any more.

What made the difference was survey research. There was none the first time around but plenty the second.

Few would maintain that survey research provides solutions to most newsroom problems, but it certainly helps in some of them.

The difficulty is knowing when to use it and when not to, and how best to interpret findings. I remember only too well the days when, as managing editor of a small daily, I was urged by my publisher to try for 18 or 20 stories on the front page, and no jumps. That wasn't his idea, but newspaper consultants told him it was what readers liked and he accepted it.

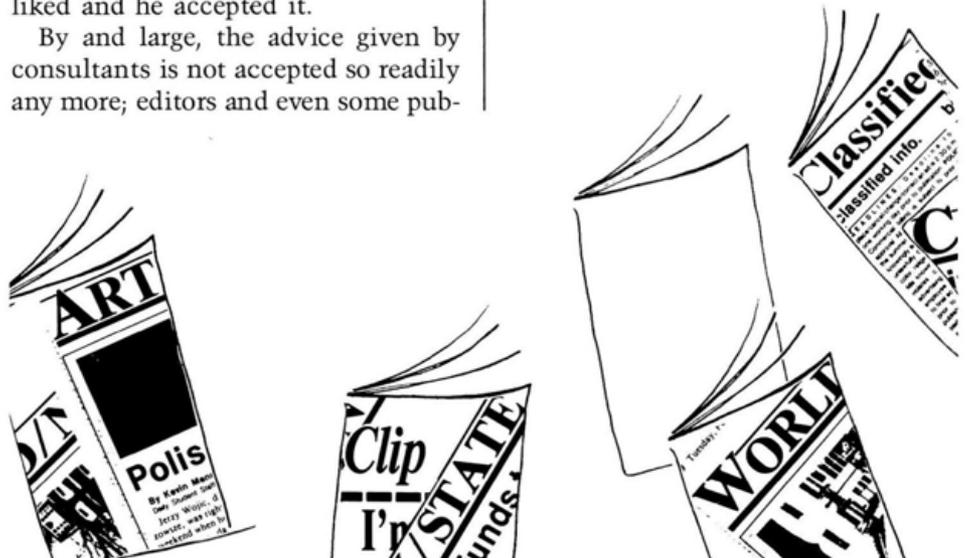
By and large, the advice given by consultants is not accepted so readily any more; editors and even some pub-

lishers are more knowledgeable these days, and the advice itself is less doctrinaire. But it is still confusing for many editors to deal with the mumbo jumbo of computer printouts and fast-talking consultants. There is a real need to know how best to use the readership surveys that publishers pay good money for.

Aimed at filling that need is Philip Meyer's new work, *The Newspaper Survival Book: An Editor's Guide to Marketing Research*.

Meyer, a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1967, was one of the first journalists to extend survey techniques beyond simple public opinion polls and make use of them in news articles. (He won the Nieman, he says, by issuing a call for help: He had failed badly doing newspaper pre-election polls in governor's races in 1962 and 1964, and said in his application that he wanted the Nieman to learn how to do research properly.)

Working for Knight-Ridder, Meyer



Barry Sussman is a pollster and public opinion analyst for *The Washington Post*.

did surveys in Detroit after the 1967 riots there that showed, to the amazement of many, that it was not only unemployed angry young blacks who looted stores but also a good number of middle-class working people.

Through that and subsequent efforts, along with a good deal of proselytizing on his part and a book called *Precision Journalism*, Meyer helped to introduce major changes in the way editors go about putting out newspa-

those alternatives. The task given the researcher is a formidable one: to predict the future outcome of a proposed policy move and set quantified standards for action."

The result, as Meyer notes, is often extremely satisfying. Management, knowing what it was after in the first place, is given a means of implementation.

Meyer lays out what he calls some "generic rules" for most newspapers

. . . surveys in Detroit after the 1967 riots there showed that it was not only unemployed angry young blacks who looted stores but also a good number of middle-class, working people.

pers these days.

In part due to him, fewer sweeping judgments based on reporters' sensibilities or intuition now make their way into print. Man-on-the-street interviews are widely discredited as means of describing the public mood, as well they should be.

In Meyer, Knight-Ridder managers discovered, they had a real rarity — a newsman who knew as much about survey techniques as many marketing people. He was moved to the corporate side, spending a few years in the firm's Miami headquarters and working on some of the projects that are described in his new book.

"Taking a poll to see what the readers want and then giving it to them is not good marketing," writes Meyer. "The dynamics of the relationship between a newspaper and its readers are much more complicated than that."

One procedure Meyer praises is what he refers to as the setting of an "action standard," similar to what the *Post* did in revising its television magazine last year.

In such instances, he writes, the newspaper has "clear alternative policies in mind and uses research tools to reduce the risk in choosing between

that have been derived from research findings. Among them are these:

- Make television work for you. In the early days, newspapers avoided news about television, some gave less play to news stories if they appeared on television first. "What research tells us," Meyer writes, is that television "creates interests in the public that, if followed up by careful editing, can drive people to the newspaper."

- Emphasize specialized content. When space is short, editors may be given to running pieces with broad appeal, cutting those aimed at narrower audiences. Wrong, Meyer says. "A newspaper is a mosaic of many small special but intense interests, and if you cut back on those interests when space is short, you stand to lose more net readership than a cutback of more general material would."

- Don't be afraid of media overkill. On big stories, editors often get bored before their readers do. "The more the media are playing a story, the harder newspapers should work to cover it, too," Meyer writes. "People will snap it up long after the point where the editor gags."

Meyer goes into a wide range of modern newspaper research techniques, sometimes, I feel, getting a little beyond most editors, as when he shows a correlation between a person's age and daily readership: "Figure 1 yields a smooth curve with an accelerating rate of diffusion. The equation that describes it is $\text{Log}Y = .052X - 101$, and it explains 96 percent of the variance."

Come on, Phil, give us a break.

He also deals some with problems of the few, not the many, devoting a chapter to Videotex. And my own experience leads me to distrust some of the advice which he passes on as conclusive — for example, that editors should believe surveys showing keen reader interest in foreign news.

At one point Meyer says the *Washington Star* folded because it did not dominate its market. I think that is far too kind to Time Inc., the last owners of the *Star*, who brought it to ruin.

Meyer is much better when it comes to areas of use to editors who may be somewhat cowed by printouts and research lingo and who need help in coping with standard marketing advice. I am referring in particular to what he has to say about many newspapers' curtailment of hard news in recent years, which came to pass not because of a valid interpretation of readership survey findings but because editors gave in to spurious claims of consultants.

In my experience, every survey that offers a choice shows that what readers want first and foremost is hard news. Nevertheless, Meyer is quite correct in saying that "editors took off in pursuit of soft content and service features with such enthusiasm that they sacrificed traditional hard news content to make room for stories about how to paint your kitchen yellow."

At another point, Meyer describes certain analytical research techniques that "are so powerful that they will produce an appearance of meaning and pattern where none exists."

Editors need reminders like these, and the *Survival Book* has many of them.

Questioning the Status Quo

Margaret Engel

Keeping in Touch

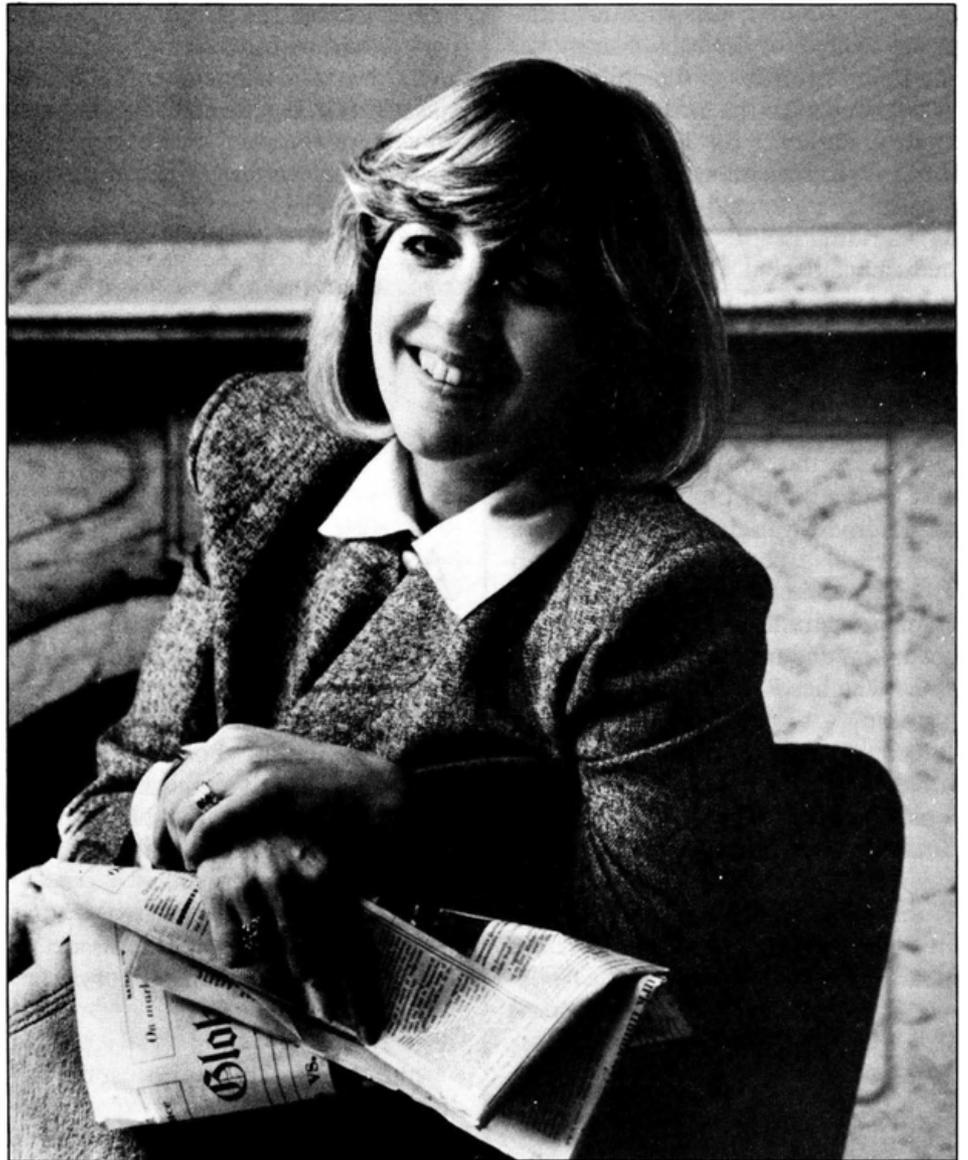
Ellen Goodman. Summit Books/
Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1985,
\$16.95.

Some readers have a mysterious bias against buying books by columnists that are a compilation of past work. "I read the columns when they appeared," the dismissal usually goes.

For columnists who tie their pieces closely to a news event, this might be a fair argument. But it's not valid for *Boston Globe* columnist Ellen Goodman [NF '74], whose books never echo "rehash." Instead, the aggregate gives you a sense of the writer's ability to take an issue and give it unique shape and illumination.

This volume contains 138 of Goodman's best columns from the last four years. Give this collection to any op-ed page editor who foolishly doesn't run Goodman, or runs only a few of her columns each month. In the 1970's, her columns began reshaping op-ed pages across the country. She gave a voice to women on a page long dominated by a handful of essayists whose contributions often are ponderous and predictable, but whose reputation confers a kind of brand-name approval to the page.

Hers are the definitive words on



abortion, yuppie pretensions, workaholicism, sperm banks, revisionist history books, maternity business suits, swimming in Maine, divorce, and bystander rage.

Others may have clever words on similar subjects, but Goodman's good

research and economy of description give her views power and persuasiveness.

The selection is of issues large and small, the ones that crawl under our everyday skins. She gives needed attention to outrages occurring across the

Margaret Engel, *Nieman Fellow '79*, is a Washington Post reporter.

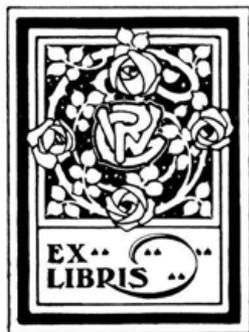
country that are often dismissed in sparse wire service pieces that don't begin to capture the story.

It was Goodman who reminded the public about the fate of the 11-year-old Kalamazoo, Michigan, girl, pregnant after being raped. The judge deciding whether the preteen could have an abortion delayed the case until he ruled it was too late for such an operation. Goodman wrote about the case months later, when the girl again faced court proceedings, this time for emotional neglect of the baby. She makes the point strongly — the child's case is not over with the anti-abortionist's victory. Rather, it is "just born."

Many commentators wrote about former dancer Ronald Prescott Reagan, 24, standing in line for an unemployment check.

But read how Goodman put it. She notes that "we have elaborate and expensive entitlement programs partially because millions of us would rather go to a bureaucracy than a brother-in-law . . . Reagan the Son finds it easier to take \$125 a week from the government than from Reagan the Father. For better and for worse, our independence often depends on the same government programs which the President has threatened. Ron-dad might think about that as he watches Ron-boy 'making it on his own.'"

Here are her thoughts on another subject: "Those of us who failed to look like Brooke Shields at seventeen can now fail to look like Victoria Principal at thirty-three and like Linda Evans at forty-one and like Sophia Loren at fifty." Many readers may have been feeling the irritation at the Hollywood beauty standard being promoted



for new age groups, but Goodman gave it a name and said it best — "The Cult of Midlife Beauty."

She is a fan of one-liners. Many are appropriated by others as the quick tagline that summarizes the issue. Some are even worthy of tombstone inscriptions, or tattoos. How about every new father getting this Goodmanism: "The secret ingredient of fatherhood is approval.?"

If there's any complaint with these pieces, it's that the format of a newspaper column requires snappy rejoinders and glib summations of complex stories. But it is clear that Goodman takes care that her witticisms don't overwhelm her reasoning, no matter how tempting certain alliterations

must be, although some readers may feel that she yields to temptation too often.

Her writing also is tuned into American culture and is accessible to all, whereas many columnists write in the rarified air that the rest of us don't breathe. They are quoted infrequently. I hear Goodman quoted a lot. Women and men find she articulates what they've been searching to say. She says it in their language, not in newspeak.

If you've wondered why Ellen Goodman has become one of the nation's most popular commentators, with legions of fans who clip and discuss her columns regularly, *Keeping in Touch* is the proof. The skill shines through.

Committee Named to Select Nieman Fellows

A committee of three journalists and three academicians will select twelve members of the American working press for Nieman Fellowships at Harvard University, academic year 1986-87, Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, announced. Formerly managing editor of *The Washington Post* and Nieman Fellow '59, he is chairman of the committee, whose members are:

Alan Brinkley, Dunwalke Associate Professor of American History, Harvard University

John Emmerich, Editor and Publisher of *The Greenwood Commonwealth* and President and Publisher of the McComb *Enterprise-Journal*, Mississippi; Nieman Fellow '62

Karen Elliott House, Foreign Editor, *The Wall Street Journal*, New York

Thomas C. Schelling, Lucius N. Litterer Professor of Political Economy in

the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Professor of Economics, and Director of the Institute for the Study of Smoking Behavior and Policy, Harvard University

Eileen J. Southern, Professor of Afro-American Studies and of Music, Harvard University

William O. Wheatley Jr., Executive Producer, NBC Nightly News, New York; Nieman Fellow '77

Nieman Fellowships provide a year of study at Harvard University for persons experienced in the media.

Announcement will be made in May of the American journalists appointed to the 1986-87 Class of Nieman Fellows.

The Fellowships were established in 1938 by a bequest from Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, Lucius, founder and long-time publisher of *The Milwaukee Journal*.

The White House As Masthead

Harry S. Ashmore

Propaganda in an Open Society: The Roosevelt Administration and the Media, 1933-1941

Richard W. Steele. Greenwood Press,
Westport, Connecticut, 1985,
\$35.00.

Webster's least pejorative definition identifies propaganda as "ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause." It follows that every American president, with the possible exception of George Washington, has engaged in the practice, not only for the self-serving purpose of getting elected, but also to advance and protect the common good as he saw it.

Statesmen, then, as well as demagogues, propagandize in order to attain the working consensus required for governance in a democratic society. Ideally this should be achieved through education, with the leadership role confined to informing and enlightening the constituency. In the real world, however, these pristine limits are regularly violated as politicians seek to manipulate public opinion to serve their predetermined ends.

Since its form and impact are determined by the communications media,

successful propaganda requires news management, and thus is generally represented by journalists. The cherished tradition of the free press assumes a disinterested and, if necessary, an adversary relationship between the reporter and the source of the news. But that is hardly possible now that the media are largely dependent upon the packaged information and pseudo-events provided by public relations functionaries who serve the special interests of the newsmakers.

It is not that current media proprietors and managers are more pliable than those of an earlier day, when newspapers commonly nailed a partisan banner to their mastheads and shaped their news reports and commentaries accordingly. The wholly independent publishing enterprise, headed by an owner-editor, its freedom guaranteed so it could serve as a public watchdog, simply has been overwhelmed by technological change.

The relationship of national officeholders and the press was profoundly altered when wire services and improved transportation made it possible to reach millions of readers with a single version of events in Washington. Richard W. Steele, professor of history at San Diego State University, cites William McKinley as the first president to recognize that it had become possible to institute "systematic and continuous efforts to influence public opinion by conscious use of the press."

McKinley's innovations were improved upon by his ebullient successor, who treated the White House as a "bully pulpit." Theodore Roosevelt was by nature a "media personality" who welcomed reporters and provided them

with plenty to write about. In return he managed to manipulate their coverage to enlist an aroused public in support of his campaign against "malefactors of great wealth."

The pulpit was left unmanned during the soporific tenure of William Howard Taft, but it was employed to full effect by his scholarly successor. Woodrow Wilson initiated the regularly scheduled press conference and, when war in Europe divided the American electorate, he mounted a full-blown domestic propaganda effort through a Committee on Public Education headed by George Creel.

Truth, it has been observed, is the first casualty in any war, and the excesses of the Creel Committee aroused the concern of many intellectuals. But they induced no reservations in Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had his first Washington experience in the Wilson administration. He was, as Steele puts it, the natural heir of the tradition established by McKinley:

"Propaganda — that is, the more or less systematic effort to shape mass attitudes on controversial issues — was not something that had to be sold to FDR or imposed upon him by wily or cynical media advisors. The disposition to form public opinion and a keen sense of how this might be done were integral parts of his political outlook."

Most historians would agree that the first necessity facing FDR when he took office in 1933 was the restoration of shattered public confidence in the nation's public and private institutions. This required words as well as deeds. "The cooperation and political support upon which national achievement depended would rest on public

Harry S. Ashmore, Nieman Fellow '42, is at work on a biography of Robert Maynard Hutchins to be published by Little, Brown and Company.

faith," Steele concedes. "When FDR asked skeptical depositors to redeposit their money in a discredited banking system or defense workers hungering for higher wages to forego strikes, he drew mainly on the good will his gov-

But the centerpiece was the charismatic FDR. The oldest Washington hands still cherish the memory of the informal press conferences where a score of White House regulars jammed into the Oval Office while the Presi-

It was no accident that the three key aides FDR brought with him to the White House were former newspapermen seasoned by practical experience in public relations.

ernment commanded."

Roosevelt was not an ideologue who came to power with an embracing theory of how the government should be reorganized to overcome its evident failures. Faced with economic crisis in the beginning, and world war in mid-passage, he proceeded by trial and error. This kind of experimentation, Steele notes, "requires the time and the relatively free hand that made an effective public relations program a necessary part of government."

It was no accident that the three key aides FDR brought with him to the White House were former newspapermen seasoned by practical experience in public relations. Louis Howe left the *New York Herald* to devote the rest of his life to advancing the career of the young governor of New York; Marvin McIntyre, a former city editor of the *Washington Times*, had served with the Creel Committee; and the veteran Washington correspondent, Stephen T. Early, had been FDR's advance man in his 1920 campaign for the vice-presidency.

The flow of information from all of the federal agencies was coordinated under the supervision of Early, the press secretary, and newsgathering in Washington became easier and more pleasant than it ever had been. And, Steele notes, "for the first time since the onset of the Depression, informed, timely, and sympathetic stories flowed from Washington in great number."

dent, cigarette holder at a jaunty angle, tossed out off-the-record wisecracks along with the hard news. He even reminded them that he used to be a newspaperman himself, as editor of *The Harvard Crimson*, and did not hesitate to suggest leads that were usually translated into headlines across the nation.

Even so, this honeymoon, like all those tendered new occupants of the White House, did not last. As the bold New Deal reforms eased the hardships of the Depression, ideological opposition to the great expansion of the central government began to mobilize and to be reflected on the editorial pages of leading newspapers. The New Dealers reacted by openly questioning the objectivity of the press, lumping its proprietors with the Wall Street tycoons who had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo.

When FDR went forth to campaign for a second term, he freely used the press as a convenient whipping boy. But Steele does not believe that this was deliberately contrived to reduce the effectiveness of growing criticism of the New Deal, and of the President himself:

"He believed that most Americans were sensible and rational and disposed to support his programs if they understood them. Convinced that the public wanted what he did, he attributed opposition to ignorance or the negative propaganda sponsored by the

majority that stood to lose from his policies. The 'real' people need not be harangued or propagandized, merely informed."

Thus Roosevelt, like most of those who preceded him and all who followed, rationalized propaganda as education. This no doubt contributed to his thin-skinned reaction to press accounts of major defeats, such as the failure of his Supreme Court-packing plan, his abortive effort to purge dissident southern Democrats, and the wing-clipping of the National Recovery Administration's blue eagle (NRA's logo).

As his personal relationship with the more independent White House regulars cooled, it warmed with those who offered unabashed sycophancy. Overt White House management of the news could hardly be disguised when so reputable a political writer and correspondent as Paul Mallon was barred from the press conference on unspecified grounds of inaccuracy, while private access to the President was enjoyed by the likes of Walter Winchell, whose syndicated gossip column and radio broadcasts were notable for their slavish devotion to the President and, as Steele notes, "their sensationalism and character assassination."

As Roosevelt's unprecedented personal success at the polls demonstrated, the alienation of much of the newspaper press was not a serious political handicap. It might have been otherwise had not advancing communications technology produced three national radio networks ready and willing to give the President direct personal access to the majority of American families, and, as a public service, to disseminate the information output of the bureaus.

Steele provides impressive documentation of the manner in which the networks, in part out of fear of adverse regulation by the Federal Communications System, volunteered their services shortly after the first inaugural. To offset the charge of partisanship, they professed neutrality, but the result was that "everything the Adminis-

tration had to say went over the airways without the intercession of reporters, editors, or publishers. Not only did radio carry the government's message without adulteration, it carried it farther, more immediately, and more effectively than newspapers."

This cozy arrangement was threatened by the advent of radio commentators who not only reported the news but also analyzed it in a fashion as critical as that of the newspaper editorialists. Aided and abetted by the White House, the broadcast executives promptly purged the most strident of these, Boake Carter. When his sponsor, General Foods, found his CBS broadcasts "irrationally critical" he agreed to tone them down, but his contract was not renewed and he soon disappeared from the airwaves, leaving "the broadcast of news to a handful of commentators distinguishable only by style and nuance."

The neutrality policy was formalized by the National Association of Broadcasters in a "fairness" code which provided that news programming "shall not be editorial" and that any "analysis and elucidation" must be free of bias. It also stipulated that time could not be sold for political advertising except during election campaigns.

As applied by broadcast executives, these provisions guaranteed that the great debate over intervention in World War II that marked FDR's second term was hopelessly one-sided from the outset. In the beginning, the President shared the hope of most Americans that Hitler's rampage across Europe could be contained without directly involving the United States. Although he didn't say so, he changed his mind after the continental nations folded and left Great Britain standing alone. He then faced the formidable task of bringing into line a sizable and respectable body of opinion that held that the best hope of preserving freedom in the world lay in keeping this country out of the war.

When Roosevelt undertook his step-by-step mobilization of American resources to supply the embattled Allies, he still insisted that this could be done

without involving American armed forces. He took no part personally in the mounting debate between isolationists and interventionists — even though it was evident that the activities of organizations like the Commit-

which draped its entertainment films with red, white, and blue, while populating them with Japanese and Nazi villains. With the advent of the Soviet Union as an American ally, the strange bedfellows came to include even those

As Roosevelt's unprecedented personal success at the polls demonstrated, the alienation of much of the newspaper press was not a serious political handicap.

tee to Aid the Allies were being orchestrated from the White House.

Radio dutifully gave the opposition group, America First, airtime to answer the interventionists' formal appeals. But speeches on foreign and defense policy made up a small portion of the airtime devoted to portraying the creation of an "arsenal of democracy" to support European freedom fighters. Steele documents the disparity that submerged the great debate under the volume of public service programming which tended to support the administration's position.

Whether this would have been sufficient to overcome the widespread reluctance to send Americans to fight in foreign wars remains an open question. It was, however, rendered moot by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which produced a surge of patriotism that rallied most of FDR's adversaries to support the wartime commander-in-chief, and silenced the others. As it had in Wilson's time, overt propaganda became the order of the day — defended as essential to building national morale and greatly facilitated by the requirements of military secrecy in the determination of what information should be made public.

Steele ends his study with a detailed account of the mobilization of the airtime propaganda effort, in which the media willingly collaborated. He covers not only newspapers and radio, but also the motion picture industry,

on the radical left.

Steele provides a telling, if somewhat pedantic, account of a critical phase in the development of the communications system that gives pause to most of those who consider its profound effect upon contemporary politics. What is said here about radio, and its ability to cancel out the criticism of the print media, becomes even more significant in the new age of television — the dominant medium that largely determines the average citizen's view of the world.

It provides, too, an answer for those who are puzzled by Ronald Reagan's obviously sincere admiration for the President whose New Deal he has set out to dismantle, and whose compassionate view of the role of government is so clearly counter to his own. It is, I suspect, a matter of one Great Communicator recognizing another, an acknowledgment of Roosevelt's mastery of the techniques that serve the present incumbent so well. What Steele says of FDR and his men applies with equal force to the vastly expanded corps of propagandists now engaged in selling the "Reagan Revolution" to the American people:

"Each facet of their work reflected the hand of government — here providing information, there withholding it, everywhere encouraging, coordinating, facilitating, and discreetly shaping what was by design a collaborative effort."

Newspapers and Crisis

continued from page 6

choices about what is important. It can be cautious, but that is not objective; caution is a commercial strategy to insure a newspaper's inoffensiveness and commercial success, not an editorial or news principle.

Similarly, a newspaper cannot avoid being a participant in the fundamental issues facing the city. Having an impact is inherent in reporting — or in not reporting — news of great local import. If a newspaper has an impact, it is no longer simply an observer.

For the *Globe*, doing the right thing for years meant leading the city into the desegregation crisis because those running the newspaper believed that the actions of the Boston School Committee were a moral outrage. Then the strategy changed, and doing the right thing meant understatement and evenhandedness. The first strategy infuriated whites; the second angered the blacks and left both sides feeling as if their view of the world was not reflected in the city's dominant newspaper. In retrospect, Lukas strongly suggests that massive busing was not the right solution, or perhaps that desegregation was not the right problem. In hindsight, that looks right, but what are the lessons from that experience for newspapers? Shedding the twin illusions of objectivity and distance places a responsibility on a news organization that seems at times almost too great to bear. In ridding itself of these myths, a newspaper exposes and relies on the knowledge, values, and good judgment of the top editors. If they are sound, it will be all right. If they are not so sound, the enterprise will be at risk.

The issue is vision and leadership. Editors and their reporters should care about the city in which they work, have an interest in its future, and use

the power they have to lead the city toward solutions which they believe would be in the public interest in the long run. They should be counterweights to those individuals and institutions with clout and influence who do not need their help. Under the early editorship of Tom Winship, the *Globe* performed this way. Most of the time, history rewarded his vision. In the case of desegregation, the vision was faulty because the editors and reporters had stakes in the outcome different than the families whose lives were going to be turned upside down. When Winship and the senior management of the *Globe* realized they were in too deep in support of a volatile and questionable desegregation plan, they backed away and abdicated their leadership responsibilities in the name of the journalistic conventions of objectivity and distance. All they got for their efforts were frustrated readers, a new social and economic crisis for the city — and a Pulitzer Prize.

Paradox of Change

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implicitly that they have done all that is required of them to eliminate racism and discrimination. It is now up to the blacks to pull their socks up, so the argument goes.

There is no question that for me and for many other blacks from striving black families, doors have opened. There have been abundant new opportunities scarcely imagined by my father's generation. And there should be no argument about the need for blacks themselves to take responsibility to do something about such serious, festering problems as crime and illegitimacy. The frightening irony is that when the door to opportunity was partly open, it was a traditional leader-

ship class that rushed through, leaving the ghettos for better jobs and newer homes in the suburbs. They left the great mass of blacks behind and in deeper isolation. One thing blacks will have to think about in the coming years is whether it is desirable to rebuild some of the old black community institutions that were abandoned in the 1960's and early 1970's, in the naive belief that total acceptance by whites was immediately forthcoming. Blacks will also have to reconsider alliances. The old coalition between the civil rights organizations and labor and Jews is moribund, although there is a reluctance to face up to that fact. But those whites who seem to think that blacks bear sole responsibility for the fix a large segment of the black community is in, and that the solutions must come only from a bootstrap effort, are dangerously deluding themselves.

There are a lot of dark clouds on the horizon. Frankly, I tend to be more pessimistic than the authors of this book. If the large majority of whites seems comfortable with the progress that has been made, there are troubling numbers who are not. There are segregationist diehards still lurking in the shadows in the South and there is a fierce brand of racism rising in blue-collar white neighborhoods of the North. Although you almost never hear whites crying "nigger" any longer in my hometown of Little Rock, or even in Jackson, Mississippi, you do hear such epithets in Boston and Brooklyn. When you think about that, and when you consider the bubbling cauldrons in the black ghettos and the streetwise young black men who are not content to sit around and wait for another lurch forward in white attitudes, I think you have to worry about the future.

I have from time to time in the last couple of years stood on the sidelines watching Louis Farrakhan attract larger and larger crowds with his message of hate. Although most press coverage emphasizes his odious anti-Semitic remarks, this is not what seizes the crowds. Nor are they much

moved by his proselytizing for Islam, his vision of separate black states, or his appeals to stop smoking marijuana. His audience comes alive when he talks elliptically about guns and when he unguardedly fantasizes about beating up a white man with a stick — not just Jewish white men, but all of them.

Race always has been the great exception to America's bright vision of itself. And the problems will not disappear without a determined national effort to solve them, however much many white Americans might long for that to happen. The Civil War, the greatest paroxysm of violence in American history, was rooted in race, and there has been blood shed in our own time. I wish I could be sure there will not be more.

Improper Bostonian

continued from page 10

ment store works. Go to the legislature and hear the politicians wrangle. Ask questions. Poke. Prod. Explore. Choose some Yankee and try to make a human out of him or her."

Inman loved details, and he wanted to record everything he could, like a journalistic pack rat. His wife wondered once why he wished to put in his diary an account of a flea trainer: "Well, I answered, if Mr. Farnsworth has been able to make a living for thirty years exhibiting trained fleas in the U.S., the very fact seems to me to exemplify one phase of American life and therefore pertinent to the object of this diary."

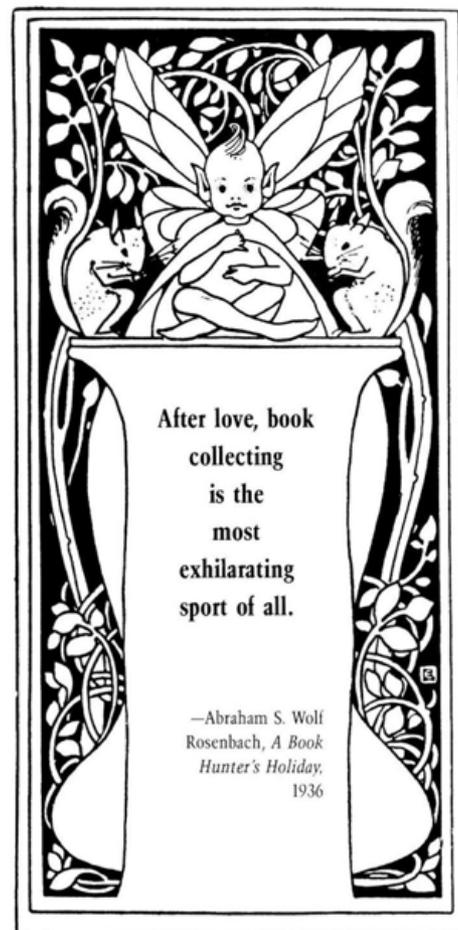
Despite his self-absorption and self-indulgence, Inman showed a genuine interest in and sympathy for "the lives of the commonplace people at my disposal," which he found far more interesting than "persons of the class into

which I was born." One of the driving ambitions he had for his diary was to preserve some account of the lives of those "ordinary" people who, he feared, "may, unless I record them, be a hundred years from now as though they never were."

In the midst of his myriad physical complaints ("pelvis pains, migraine headaches, swollen hemorrhoids, blurred vision, aching teeth, sensitivity to light and noise" is but a scattershot compendium) and his own often depressed mental condition ("Curse life. Curse myself. Curse God."), Inman had real empathy for his "characters" (Auchincloss found them "often pathetic") and saw in their struggle and confusion a striving. When he joined a correspondence club to gather more material, he felt the seventy or so "lonely hearts" letters he received "have thrown a light on the inner souls of many lonely people" and he perceived that in joining such clubs "it is as though they were fumbling for a way out of something or into something, a blindish effort toward a change of some sort."

Inman succeeds in preserving for us the essence of many of his characters — the cocky, wheeler-dealer chauffeur Eddie Simms with his proudly shined shoes; the former chorus girl Patricia Caffree who went to Hollywood, and, like many unsung women of her time, became not an actress but a waitress; the indomitable driver and gardener Edna Mercer who was running an entire candy factory at the age of fourteen before she was sent back to school; the articulate black cleaning woman Ella James whose trip to a YWCA convention showed her the shocking shallows of lip-service liberalism.

In addition to the ways of reading *The Inman Diary* that Aaron suggested, it might be taken also as a kind of supplement to the sociology texts of the times, a more personal view of grand theories and cold statistics. Reading some of these stories I was reminded of hearing a journalist I admired demand of a renowned sociologist whose book he had just read: "I believe the conclusions, but *where are*



the faces!" Inman gives us the faces (Hedda Williams' "green eyes with their wide, fear-gazing pupils cause you to forget cheeks, hair, all. They are unapproachable eyes, withdrawn, like those of an animal crouched ready to flee at the mouth of a cavern"), and the voices (Theresa Raleigh as a young wife telling how she gets along with the husband she first feared: "Ever since I turned the salad plate upside down on his head when he made me mad and then threw a glass of milk in his face and I stood there watching the oil and milk, the green vegetables drip down over him and he looking bewildered and surprised, all his dignity lost, I've had no awe of him.").

There are scenes preserved here that are part of our history that very little fiction or sociology I know of portrays in such excruciating detail, like the account of the abortion of the librarian Sarah Mitchell in Boston, in 1931,

when The Doctor “. . . ushered her into a back room at the end of the hall where were a huge desk, some chairs, and a rubber plant. He cleared the flat top of the desk, ordered her to remove her bloomers, laid her on the desk. He brought some instruments and a piece of gauze with a string tied to it. He gave her no anesthetic. . . .”

The dark and painful side of our national experience is recorded on an intimate scale, and Inman's determination to be “honest, honest, honest” gives us a disturbing account of the contortions of his own prejudiced mind. The fascinating aspect of Inman's blatant bigotry (“I hate the Jews, the English, Roosevelt, life, myself,” he rants, forgetting to mention his aversion to blacks, and even “blue-eyed people”!) is that it so often collapses on individual encounters. He says of Ella James, the black cleaning woman: “In many expressions of her nature, Ella is more akin to me than anyone I know.” He sympathizes with his Jewish friend Naomi Levitt when she and her husband are barred from buying a house in the “restricted” suburbs, and wonders at one point if he should join the Jewish faith (“the only one that made sense to me”). He continued to wrestle with the bigotry that bedeviled him: “I do not want to be influenced by racial prejudice but am. Why? It lies deeper than I can control. . . .” So it does and has for many Americans, and Inman's self-reported “case” could serve as a useful study of the illness. (Aaron observed that the virulence of Inman's bigotry rose and fell with economic conditions, as it tends to do nationally.)

In the midst of social and personal pain and confusion, real beauty sometimes breaks through these pages. Inman may not be Proust, but his own sense-stimulated memories are surely worth recording: “I verily believe I associated each experience I underwent with the smell of it. I can recall the moldy smell of Market Street in Philadelphia when I walked it on a rainy day. I can recall the ozone of electric motors on streetcars. The wet fallen-leafmat in Pennsylvania woods in win-

ter comes back to me like magic. I remember the sour oil smell of journal boxes on railway trains when men oiled them with long-spouted cans. I recall the wild ginger and the sassafras of Georgia woods. No end to my nasal recollections.”

There was no end of stories for Inman, either, whether his own or others,' and he gathered and recorded them like Scheherazade, till the very end. I was reminded of Joan Didion's reflection that “We tell stories in order to live.” That is what Arthur Inman did, and that is what he bequeathed us in this compelling, exasperating, memorable monster of a memoir.

The Man Who Tried

continued from page 26

the paper from its beginning in 1940 until its demise in 1948.

Ingersoll's business plan was simple enough; all revenues would come from circulation and no advertising space would be sold. His audience would be the “lower middle class” and, of course, the intellectuals were thrilled at the prospect of a genuinely radical newspaper in New York. Ingersoll figured that 200,000 sales a day at a nickel a copy would allow him to make an adequate profit.

The first issue sold 450,000 copies, but within a few months circulation had declined to 31,000. The paper never became self-supporting. Hodding Carter, Jr. [NF '40], one of the original *PM* writers, analyzed its failure years afterward. “It was not the Communists (on the staff), mismanagement, or interoffice jealousies that did *PM* in so much as the ‘dreary, humorless, consecrated insistence upon conformity to a fixed and condescending liberalism.’ And he quoted comedian Henry Morgan's remark that a *PM* story always

began: ‘My name is Minnie Moscowitz and I live on Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, and I think it's a shame. . . .’”

Ingersoll went into the army in 1942 after a much publicized battle with his draft board. He was promoted rapidly with the help of political friends, served on the staff of General Omar Bradley for a short time, and obtained an early discharge in 1945. He returned to *PM* which was in its death throes, had a falling-out with his patron, Marshall Field, and in 1948 said goodbye to “big-time journalism.”

Worried as always about money and his life style, he found another patron, a wealthy Texas oil man, who helped him buy an interest in several small newspapers which eventually became the Ingersoll chain and provided him in his last years with an income of more than a million dollars a year. He died last March before this book was finished.

Ralph Ingersoll is an “authorized” biography, based in large measure on Ingersoll's recollections and on his voluminous papers. This might seem a shaky foundation for a book, especially since Ingersoll was renowned as a liar. But he always was embarrassingly candid with Hoopes, who has produced a fascinating study of a man and his times and of a newspaper that tried to do good.

Progeny by Print

continued from page 2

The printing press also spawned a myriad of related fields.

Consider: libraries, librarians, indexing and retrieval systems, paper mills, ink manufacturers, publishing firms, bookbinding, bookplates, bookends, bookmarks, and, in this century, publicity departments, book fairs, copyright laws, microfilms, microfiche,

best-seller lists, second-hand book dealers, book jacket designers, book fairs, schools of journalism, floppy discs, literary agents, magazines, newspapers, editors, typesetters, proofreaders, book preservation, and — book reviewers.

Herewith, *NR* presents the critiques of sixteen reviewers, whose pieces include a variety of topics and times.

The need to ponder and scribble still thrives. That in itself, like progeny, is a tip of the hat to immortality.

—T.B.K.L.

Ambitious Agenda

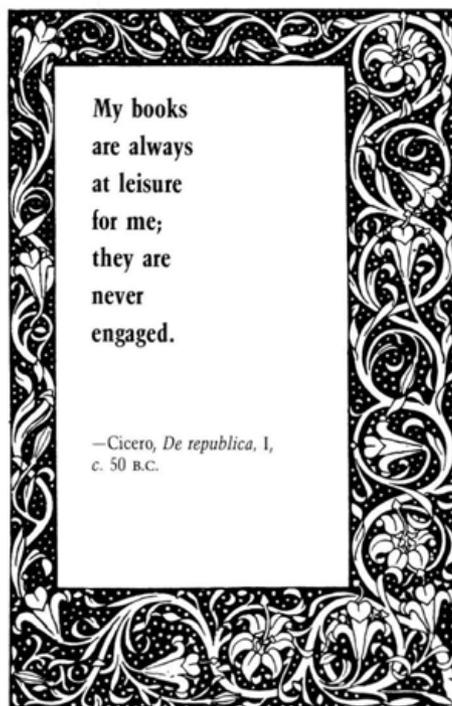
continued from page 21

to embrace these views with more ardor than their predecessors.

Given the situation in Washington and the country, Professor Wolfson's valid proposals for journalistic reform are unlikely to make any real headway without a large-scale campaign to change public attitudes to pave the way. This may not be as difficult a proposition as one initially would imagine. For I sense that with yet another turn of the wheel, the press may soon spring back. In short, we may be on the threshold of regaining in public esteem what was lost through the wretched excesses of the post-Watergate period. If that happens, and the press is for a time no longer widely viewed as an arrogant monolith, an opportunity for measured change of the institution might present itself.

A recent survey by the Times Mirror Corporation, the parent company of *The Los Angeles Times* and other major newspapers, shows that Americans, by a margin of two to one, hold

a positive overall opinion of the press, even while they criticize some of its common practices. Yet, as the survey also shows, such popular support remains much wider than it is deep. It also should be borne in mind that those who hold the most negative



views of the press include some of the heaviest consumers of the news, as well as some of the most vocal and powerful segments of American society.

Professor Wolfson no doubt will be distressed to learn that Americans, judging by the Times Mirror survey, expect the press to do nothing more or less than report the news. Interpreting events, analyzing trends, recommending positions on issues, examining values, and even evaluating products and services, emerge much lower in the public's scale of priorities for the news business.

Professor Wolfson, on the other hand, wants reporters to stop reporting on "media events" which, he says, "don't necessarily reflect what really goes on in government." In the manner of large corporations and other heavyweight institutions, he urges the press

to engage in strategic planning. He would deny presidents and their factotums the absolute right to set the agenda for a public dialogue about the issues.

It is a commendable goal. But Professor Wolfson, one suspects, also would be the first to admit that it is an exceedingly difficult and elusive goal to achieve.

Impervious Industry

continued from page 27

sparkling red, low-slung, and invariably equipped with supersonic stereo systems.

Amusing as all this is, Hollywood is not as easy a target for satire as one might suppose. Wakefield's hero recognizes the problem:

The Christmas trees on Hollywood Boulevard were blond. Kind of peroxide color.

Perry smiled, shaking his head in wonder and appreciation. The amazing thing about this crazy fabulous place was that you couldn't honestly satirize it, even in your imagination, because before you did, it always beat you to the punch, coming up with something so flagrant that it parodied itself far more effectively than any outsider could manage to do.

This is a shrewd insight into Perry's dilemma as well as into the nature of Hollywood. But the statement of the problem does not entirely resolve the difficulty for Wakefield's novel. The jokes and their acid content are aimed at a sassy, smart, knowingly outrageous, and openly cynical industry that seems not only impervious to satire but also ingenious at absorbing and co-opting whatever touches it and turning even its assailants into products of its own kind.

The one fault of really good books is that they almost always produce a great prodigy of bad ones.

—G. C. Lichtenberg, *Reflections*, 1799

Even the Vermont of this novel seems to be a Hollywood creation of artificial snow and sleigh bells tinkling; and one wouldn't be entirely surprised to hear that Bing Crosby was putting on a show at the Faculty Club. When Jane returns to spend Christmas with Perry in California, her presents include a pipe and fleece-lined slippers while he has restrained himself and spent only seven thousand dollars on pearls and a few other frivolities. The contrast is too pat. It makes Jane less interesting than we might like her to be. Perry did not write this scene. Neither did Archer or Kenton or Ravenna. But with a few police sirens in the background, they would love it.

It would be unfair to label all happy endings as "Hollywood endings." Long before Hollywood existed, comedies were written and stories ended not only happily but with virtue triumphing in the hero's and heroine's hearts. But there are endings and moral awakenings that are earned and those that are not. A book like *Moll Flanders* takes the reader through hilarious and racy episodes in the heroine's extremely checkered career only to proclaim at the end that this was all for our edification and that we should consider ourselves warned not to follow her naughty path.

Selling Out is not quite like that.

Though it does not dig savagely or brutally into Hollywood, its satire, mild though it may be, is consistent and earnest. And though it does not probe into the political and economic power base of this disgusting and corrupt excrescence of our culture, it does hint now and then that the fat vested barbarians (not in gold chains and jumpsuits) who fly in now and then from the New York banks have something to do with it all.

In many ways, the book is probably an accurate representation of the politics and psychology of the mid-1980's. Perry and Jane are not suicidal existentialists or revolutionaries or expatriots-in-the-bud. All they want to do is go back to Vermont, slushy springs, and Valpolicella and to forget all about California Chardonnay and hot tubs. Who can really blame them? Not Hollywood, that's for sure. Kenton and Archer and Ravenna would probably love to make a movie out of this book.

Press Sins

continued from page 22

might be used against you as standards, not guidelines, in libel suits? How do you deal with the cozy, but not necessarily harmful, relationships that reporters develop with sources? How does the person who edits the paper deal with the person who owns it, and vice versa? How do you remain independent but not arrogant, fair but firm? How do you remain responsible and responsive?

Goldstein — who, incidentally, is an old colleague and a genuinely nice and thoughtful fellow — doesn't get into these issues. That's all right, of course; it is, after all, his book and not yours or mine. But it's disappointing. *The News at Any Cost* is not, as the jacket heralds, "the most important investiga-

tion of the press in years." It is not an exposé of "how journalists compromise their ethics to shape the news." It is, rather, just a list of old sins and old sinners.

But — and I say this after realizing there's not much in this essay that would prompt you to buy the book, which you probably should have for one reason or another — the book has some great gossip stuff about *The New York Times*.

Blinkered Vision

continued from page 32

selfes has meant the freedom to impose their terms on others: "Africa's first anti-colonialists have established one of the world's most repressive colonial systems." He writes with affection, however, of dissident Afrikaner churchmen like Beyers Naude and the late Frikkie Conradie, whom, along with other religiously inspired blacks, browns, and whites he regards as "South Africa's glory if not its hope; its moral if not its political centre."

White South Africans like to insist that they are the upholders of Western civilization on the African continent. By these standards they are judged by liberal Westerners and found wanting. In my defensive moments I wonder why we don't ask to be judged by the standards of black-ruled Africa, where, in the words of a recent American television documentary, "virtually every country... is a one-party state, only the degree of oppression and corruption vary." Yet to all intents and purposes, South Africa is a one-party state also, its white politics no less tribal than any other, a point the author acknowledges implicitly by his cursory treatment of English-speaking whites. Both beneficiaries and victims (in the sense of having no real say in

their destiny), Anglo South Africans are confined to the political sidelines, part players in the looming showdown between Afrikaner and African nationalisms, and Lelyveld treats them as such, regarding only industrialists like Harry Oppenheimer and Gavin Relly as worthy of attention. So much for the Suzmans and Sparkses, the Patons and Gordimers, and their like in the law, in education, the press, and the churches who have helped to mitigate the harshest effects of *apartheid* and are surely worth more than a passing acknowledgment that they are "among the most admirable people we had ever known." Detribalized Afrikaners and Indian and mixed race South Africans receive similarly dismissive treatment, I can think only because they do not fit into this book's unrelenting theme of Afrikaner thesis and black antithesis, never synthesis.

One of the finest chapters in the book has to do with American-South African relations — the link between the two countries going back as far as 1836 when an American missionary's wife became the first white woman to be buried in the Transvaal. Since then, American involvement in South Africa has been marred by ambivalence and contradiction. While Jimmy Carter and Andrew Young were beating Pretoria about the head with threats, their economic policies were driving up the price of gold and helping South Africa overcome the effects of domestic upheaval. The more conciliatory Reagan has torpedoed the gold price, making it impossible for Pretoria once again to buy its way out of political crisis. Call it, if you like, "Crocker's Law of Unintended Consequences."

What of the future of this land of "immense human possibilities and immense human failures"? Lelyveld is not sanguine about the prospects of a negotiated peace. The question is not whether there will be violence, he says, but whether there ever will be an end to it. In his view, whites will continue to churn out political blueprints with black consent having no function in their schemes. (If he has ever heard of the Buthelezi Commission's proposals

for a Zulu-led Natal, he betrays no sign of it.) Though scornful of Afrikanerdom's persistent efforts to dress up *apartheid* in other guises, Lelyveld acknowledges that its political difficulties cannot be easily resolved without setting fires that might easily rage out of control. He is honest enough, too, in the book's closing anecdote, to mock his own capacity for self-delusion by relating a gruesome account of black killing black in newly independent Zimbabwe, where underdog had become overdog with predictable results.

Move Your Shadow does not make for easy reading, but it is a brilliant, sustained piece of reportage, studded with anecdotes and fresh insights, which explains as effectively as any book I know the roots of the enduring conflict in South Africa. If it persuades American readers, as I fear it may, that they should have even less to do with my troubled country, I confess to hoping that it will not be too influential. I wish rather that every supporter of *apartheid* would read it.

Policy and Personality

continued from page 24

administrative sense. He pursued this prize, almost to the point of hysteria, primarily because of his deep-seated need to "cleanse and purify" the Interior Department. Recovery of the Forest Service, which was wrested away during the Department's "shameful" period under Ballinger, would restore his agency's virtue and redeem his own need for personal power.

Again, without intending to wound, the authors have done little for their subject's historical standing. Their account of the "Forest Service Wars" left me with the opinion that Ickes was immature and psychologically unbalanced. To their credit, the authors examine this problem more clinically. Nevertheless, at the end, they seem as

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Books should be tried
by a judge and jury
as though
they were crimes,
and counsel
should be heard
on both sides.



—Samuel Butler, *Note-Books*, c. 1890

exasperated and impatient with Ickes as any of his contemporaries who had to deal with him daily.

Ickes is a psychological biography of a public figure. This historical method has advantages. No one would deny that many of our acts reflect our personalities. A public figure is not immune from this basic principle of psychology, and since public figures are not in the habit of inviting us into their heads during their time in power, we must await the historian and psychologist to unravel the complicated threads of personality and policy.

But, to me, *Ickes* is flawed both as biography/history and as psychology. It is not a complete biography, nor does it pretend to be. The authors are mainly interested in those events in Ickes's life that show his personality working itself out in public. Nor is it a thorough history of Ickes and his times. The book treats the last five years of Ickes's tenure as Interior Secretary in scarcely more than ten pages, while spending ten times that on the first eight years in Interior.

But the book's most serious shortcoming is precisely in the area which the authors have claimed as their own: Ickes's psychology. In the first place, as the authors admit, their interpreta-

tions of Ickes's psychological attributes are theirs alone and certainly not definitive. Without making apologies for my lack of formal psychological training, I find some of their conclusions pretty far-fetched, considering the evidence on which they base those conclusions. Finally, however, the reader is left with a basic question about all of White's and Maze's psychologizing: Do they believe it themselves? By the end of the book it was not clear to me whether the authors themselves had any great deal of confidence in their psychological analyses of Ickes's actions.

Because White and Maze never fully decide whether *Ickes* is a complete psychological portrait of an historical figure or merely some curious private insights into a very unusual man, the book does not quite achieve the objectives set by the authors. For all that, I do recommend it to anyone interested in the shaping and execution of federal policy over natural resources. They will recognize the historical antecedents of the battles we fight today.

Sticky Question

continued from page 31

Prensa and a member of the original revolutionary junta, she sighs over the family's inability to talk to each other any more. We never hear the other side sigh.

Nicaragua is a country going through extremely hard times. It's an economic mess: United States policies, the fact that the country is at war, and the government's poor management have all contributed to that. And there's no question that free speech is severely curtailed. Travelling through the country, it's easy to find people who are angry with the government. But it's also possible to find those who

are proud of it. Last summer as I was flying over Lake Nicaragua in a single-engine plane, the pilot, a man in his forties, gestured to the green fields by the shore: "That used to be Somoza's land," he said, "but now it's *ours*." The government had confiscated it after the revolution.

Waiting for the plane, in a field that passed for an airport, an officer in the army reserves talked about why he continued to support the government. He was in his thirties and described himself as a businessman from the city of Granada. His memories of life under Somoza were strong: the palpable fear of the National Guard, the indifference of the government to the injustices. Some of the younger recruits joined our conversation and, in between questions about American rock music, spoke in more automatic ways about before the revolution, when Somoza made things bad, and now Reagan does. But the officer was speaking from the heart: a citizen who had suffered but who believed in his government. People like him don't exist in Christian's book.

One of the things I find so frustrating about *Nicaragua: Revolution in the Family* has to do with my envy of print journalists. They can write long articles and explore more complexities. For us, a complex story runs four minutes; a normal news story about a minute and a half — that's about fifteen sentences. And a book — what a luxury! Time to research, time to write, space to explain. Christian's explanation simplifies without a need to do so. And does so to make a political point.

Before I went to Central America, one of the executives where I work counseled me not to get frustrated if it was difficult to get stories on the air. "There are no good guys and bad guys there," he said. "And without the white hats and black hats to tell us what's going on, the story doesn't stand a real good chance on television."

Shirley Christian has added the hats, maybe without even being conscious of having done so. The sad part is, it wasn't necessary.

Fay Smulevitz Joyce, 1949 – 1985

Fay S. Joyce, a former reporter for *The New York Times* and other newspapers, was found dead of an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound on December 2 at her Manhattan apartment.

She had resigned from the *Times* on November 15 to become a political and general assignment reporter for *The Atlanta Constitution* and was to have begun work in Atlanta on December 2.

Born in Berlin, Fay attended Syracuse University and graduated from the State University College at Old Westbury, Long Island, New York, in 1970.

She began her newspaper career as a reporter for *The Savannah (Georgia) Morning News* in 1970. She then was news editor of the *DeKalb News Era*, a weekly in Decatur, Georgia, from 1971 to 1974; a reporter for *The Atlanta Constitution* from 1974 to 1976, and a reporter and political editor for *The St. Petersburg (Florida) Times* from 1977 to 1983. She was a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1982.

Fay joined *The New York Times* in 1983 as a national correspondent in Atlanta and covered a wide variety of regional and political assignments. In 1984 she covered the presidential campaign of Senator Gary Hart and other aspects of the presidential race. More recently, she had been a member of the *Times's* metropolitan staff.

She is survived by her parents, Joseph and Sally Smulevitz of Savannah, and a sister, who is an attorney, Pearl Schaikewitz of Atlanta.

A memorial service was held in St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University, on December 12. There were four speakers. Howell Raines, deputy editor of the Washington bureau, *The New York Times*, spoke about Fay's being a Southern journalist in the 1970's, her love of life and rock music, and her high spirit. David Jones, national editor, *The New York Times*, read from

Fay's work. Joseph Berger, reporter with *The New York Times*, who, like Fay, is a child of survivors of the Holocaust, commented on the impact such children feel on their sense of self and place. Johanna Neuman, White House correspondent for Gannett News Service and *USA Today*, spoke on behalf of the Nieman Fellows, Class of 1982. Her remarks follow:

Johanna Neuman:

The Nieman Class of 1982 remembers Fay with her eyes dancing and her laugh singing. We do not deny her pain. But we choose to remember her.

We celebrate her style. She could be so fragile one moment, so feisty the next – misting as a black journalist from South Africa told of his struggles, the next night dancing to Motown at Ahmed's, head tossed back, a turquoise jewel dangling from her headband as she reveled in the beat.

We applaud her talent. Fay wrote a paper about music when she was in the sixth grade. Her teacher told the class, "Whoever wrote this should become a journalist." Fay did more than that. She became a tough reporter who wrote with grace. Walter Lippmann looked on proudly one year as Fay, a political editor, won an award for science writing. Chris [Bogan] remembers reading the piece, marveling at the stretch of her insights. So we were not surprised when the *Washington Journalism Review* highlighted one of her stories as an example of powerful writing, calling her "a prose pro."

We take pride in her commitment. Fay explained to Anita [Harris] once why she became a journalist, crediting her parents. She recalled that her parents' history – and its parallels to the South of her youth – produced in her a conviction that if people only knew – about mistreatment, about preju-

dice – that it might make a difference. She told Anita recently that she would never be an editor. What she loved about journalism was the quest, the discovery.

We delight in her spunk. Judy [Rosenthal] remembers that during a Harvard symposium on discrimination against women, Fay recalled how an editor had early on balked at hiring her, arguing that if he had to send her on a physically arduous assignment, someone might look up her skirt. Fay replied, "I'll wear pants." And then there was the soft-ball game, an annual challenge to the Nieman by the staff of *The Harvard Crimson*. Gerald [Jordan] recalls that we were losing so badly in the late innings that the *Crimson* had stopped keeping score. But our second baseman grabbed a sure three-run hit up the middle and threw the batter out at first. I wish I could tell you it turned the game around. It didn't. But it did make us cheer, that she could be so brave, so late in the game.

Mostly, we cherish her words. Like any family, on parting, we pledged to keep in touch. Unlike most, we did. Fay was the editor of our Thanksgiving letters, that first fall after Cambridge. She gathered them from as far away as Rome, Italy, and as near as Greeneville, Tennessee – and sent them off in a package from St. Petersburg. She wrote that the Nieman year had made her a more discriminating judge of people, since "You gotta be taller than John Galbraith, smarter than Daniel Bell, and funnier than Gerald Jordan to impress me." And in a cover letter that bundled the messages of readjustment to civilian life, she wrote, "Letters, pictures, calls, and visits with several of you have made me feel like we will all be friends for a long time to come. Distance may separate us, but memory and affection span the miles."

And they still do.

NIEMAN NOTES

— 1964 —

As we write, it is the season of winter carnivals and snow fests. In preparation for a gala in Harvard Square recently, enormous blocks of ice were stacked up in the plaza in front of Holyoke Center. Two or three workers were tapping the ends in place. Above them, hanging from part of the loading crane, was a hand-made sign in thick black letters, "WANTA VOLUNTEER?"

It was unclear if the message invited one to apply chisel to ice and attempt a personal piece of sculpture, or if helpers were needed to fetch and carry.

In any event, the casual question swaying above the passersby was an unexpected contrast to the display in a nearby newsstand, where it is possible to buy publications ranging from scholarly quarterlies on esoteric subjects to magazines shiny with color photographs, wrapped in plastic to deter peeping. Choice is everything.

— 1950 —

MAX HALL is the author of *Harvard University Press: A History*. Published in February by the Harvard University Press, the book describes the origin and development of what has become that organization. In 1638, the first printing press arrived in British North America; Harvard College later became the owner. The "real" Harvard University Press was founded in 1913. The author chronicles its various forerunners, then focuses on the subsequent decades during which a total of 4,500 books were published.

From 1960 to 1973, Hall was the Press's first Editor for the Social Sciences.

He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

— 1953 —

JOHN STROHMEYER visited Lippmann House in January. He was writing the last chapter of his book, *Crisis in Bethlehem: Big Steel's Struggle to Survive*. Adler and Adler, a new firm in Washington, will publish the book next autumn.

Strohmeier, retired editor of *The Globe-Times*, is living in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

MORTON MINTZ's latest book, *At Any Cost — Corporate Greed, Women and the Dalkon Shield*, was published in November by Pantheon Books. The author examines the safety claims of the company that manufactured the shield and describes the disastrous results suffered by many of the shield's users. His account raises crucial questions about corporate ethics and the responsibility to society.

Mintz has been a reporter with the *Post* since 1958. Among his other books are: *By Prescription Only; The Pill: An Alarming Report*; and, with Jerry S. Cohen, *America, Inc.: Who Owns and Operates the United States*.

ROY REED wrote from Arkansas in January: "I recently had lunch in Cape Town with BOB STEYN, a fellow member of the Class of '64, and his wife Marie. Bob was with the *Cape Argus* when he came to Harvard. He now works with the South Africa Media Council in Cape Town. One of his more difficult tasks is mediating disputes between the press and the government. Bob has also become a Unitarian minister, and he conducts a lot of weddings for mixed-race couples and others who would not be welcome in the more conservative churches. Tony Heard, the editor of the *Cape Times* and one of the better known critics of the Botha government, told me that Bob Steyn is the conscience of Cape Town.

"I was in South Africa for two weeks as a member of a 'fact-finding' delegation of American academics and lawyers. I fall into the academic category. I've been teaching journalism at the University of Arkansas



since I left *The New York Times*' London bureau, seven years ago. Norma and I live on a small farm near Fayetteville."

— 1969 —

J. ANTHONY LUKAS was honored as the recipient of the 1985 American Book Award in the nonfiction category for his book, *Common Ground*. It tells the story of school desegregation in Boston and how it affected three families. (See page 5 for review.)

Lukas is a former *New York Times* correspondent and Pulitzer Prize winner for reporting. His previous books include: *Nightmare: The Underside of the Nixon Years*; *Don't Shoot — We Are Your Children*; and *The Barnyard Epithet and Other Obscenities: Notes on the Chicago Conspiracy Trial*.

— 1970 —

CLIFFORD TERRY, writer for the daily features section of *The Chicago Tribune*, has been named television-radio critic. He formerly was a writer/editor for the *Tribune's* Sunday magazine, and earlier was a film critic.

In 1975, for his feature pieces in the Sunday magazine, he was the first winner of the *Tribune's* Special Writing Award, now an annual prize.

— 1974 —

ELLEN GOODMAN, columnist with *The Boston Globe* and member of the Washington Post Writers Group, has had her third book of columns published. Entitled *Keeping in Touch*, it was printed by Simon & Schuster, Inc. (See review on page 39.)

Also, in the latest *World Almanac and Book of Facts*, Goodman's name is listed among the syndicated columnists as one of America's most influential women in 1985 — the result of a poll conducted by the Newspaper Enterprise Association, publishers of the almanac.

— 1975 —

DAVID HAWPE, former managing editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* in Kentucky, has been named managing editor/news in charge of local, regional, business, and sports news for both *The Courier-Journal* and *The Louisville Times*.

Hawpe served on last year's Nieman selection committee.

— 1977 —

ZVI DOR-NER is the executive producer of *The Nuclear Age*, a 13-part documentary that will be aired nationally on public television in 1987. The series, a production of WGBH, Boston, will show the 40-year history of nuclear weapons, nuclear strategy and policy, and arms control. Professors from Harvard University will be joined by faculty from other schools, including Princeton University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to participate in the production of the serial documentary.

Dor-Ner previously has produced shows on nuclear policy and the military for television broadcasts of *Nova* and *Frontline*. He also produced WGBH's 1974 series, *Arabs and Israelis*.

AL LARKIN, currently assistant managing editor for local news at *The Boston Globe*, has been promoted to deputy managing editor, effective March 1, as announced by editor Michael Janeway in January.

Larkin has held his present post since 1982. A *Globe* employee since 1972, he has been a general assignment reporter and has served variously as a political reporter, education reporter, assistant metro editor, and editor of the *Sunday Globe Magazine*.

— 1981 —

DOUG MARLETTE, political cartoonist with *The Charlotte Observer*, and with King Features Syndicate, was named one of eight runners-up for the fourth annual John Fischetti Editorial Cartoon competition.

Marlette also is the creator of the syndicated comic strip, *Kudzu*.

— 1982 —

CHRIS BOGAN, a feature writer with

the *Dallas Times Herald*, wrote in December that he and his wife, Mary Jo Barnett, have "moved into a new house in an old section of Dallas. Mary Jo is the counselor at Stark Elementary School. . . . She is the guiding light for 450 children. . . . Most people ask about which subjects elementary school children need counseling. . . . [Topics] range from divorce and child abuse to innocent questions about friendship. . . .

"At times in the past months we've wondered if our yard has not commanded us, so long and hard have we labored outside in the soil. We remember Robert Frost once remarked that whenever he felt like praying, he went out and dug in the garden. Well, we are certain we could have erected a cathedral on all the prayers we've said over the clay soil which covers our portion of God's acre. Nevertheless, for the last nine months we've planted and sown, planted and sown. Slowly we've transformed a gutted urban lot into a thing of beauty, lush with English ivy, hollies, crepe myrtles, live oak trees, and many other plants. It has brought us a great deal of satisfaction to see the landscape so transformed."

FAY JOYCE, most recently a reporter for *The New York Times*, died on December 2. See page 51.

— 1983 —

GUY GUGLIOTTA, foreign reporter with *The Miami Herald* and presently on an Alicia Patterson Fellowship, was among the recipients of the Inter American Press Association's 1985 awards. IAPA gave him honorable mention for his analyses of events in Central and South America.

DAVID HIMMELSTEIN wrote the screenplay for the movie, *Power*. Directed by Sidney Lummet, the film had its premiere in Himmelstein's home city of Portland, Maine. Starring Richard Gere, Julie Christie, Gene Hackman, and others, it dramatizes the packaging and selling of candidates for political office.

— 1984 —

BERT LINDLER, reporter with the *Great Falls Tribune*, Montana, forwarded us a copy of the holiday greeting letter that he and Kristi DuBois sent to their friends. Excerpts follow:

"During the past year Kristi and I have occupied ourselves with a variety of projects, most involving wildlife or outdoor recreation. This being the case, I will tell the story of our year through the various species we have become involved with.

"Geese. Kristi has taken a job in Kalispell — 235 miles from Great Falls — where she is studying Canada geese on the Flathead River. The project she is assisting with has placed neck collars and radio transmitters on geese nesting on the river. The study is to determine the effect of hydroelectric dams on the geese.

"Wolves. One of my first outdoor pages since becoming responsible for the cover of the Thursday sports section told how wolves are returning to a corner of Montana bordering Glacier National Park. The page has been a pleasant task since it allows me to combine good color photography with writing about outdoor recreation and conservation. I write occasional columns as well.

"Grizzly Bears. This spring Kristi and I went to a ranch 50 miles from Great Falls where grizzly bears had been raiding beehives. We took pictures and watched as a helicopter flushed the bears from willows along a stream bottom. The bears were tranquilized and placed in wheeled traps. Although they were taken a hundred miles before being released, they were back a month later. Electric fences protected the beehives on their return, so there were no further problems. However, our thriving population of grizzlies has been using areas near ranches and towns many miles from the mountains. Bear lovers are few. Bear haters are legion. Continuing coverage is anticipated.

"Ospreys and Eagles. Besides assisting on the Canada goose study, Kristi has her own study of ospreys and eagles which nest or feed along the Flathead River. Kokanee, a landlocked form of the Pacific Sockeye Salmon, are a favored treat for bald eagles. Each fall hundreds of bald eagles pass through Glacier National Park as they feed on spawning kokanee. This fall there were more than 500 bald eagles on the spawning area at one time. I have a picture of 22 bald eagles perched in one tree.

"Elk. I spent a week traveling by horse with a pack mule in tow while hunting elk with the bow this fall. My physician friend

has the horses and mules, but I get the fun of learning about stock by sharing the suffering that comes with inexperience. This fall he made the mistake of packing a bow-stand on the mule's back in such a manner that a chain clanked with every step the mule made. The mule set a land speed record, shedding gear as it went. Mule and gear were recovered and travel resumed. Missed one elk.

"Deer. Both Kristi and I shot deer this fall on a ranch near Great Falls. We got both deer the same morning. Although they were bucks, Kristi's was much larger than mine. So much for the myth of the male hunter."

— 1985 —

EDWIN CHEN, legal affairs writer for *The Los Angeles Times*, was the host of a small dinner party in Chinatown for his classmate CHING-CHANG HSIAO, special correspondent of *Wen Hui Daily* newspaper in Shanghai, China, and Hsiao's wife, Mei Rong Yang, correspondent for the *Liberation Daily*, also in Shanghai. Among the guests were several members of the Asian American Journalist Association. Both Hsiao and Yang spoke:

"My newspaper has a circulation of about 1.7 million; my wife's a circulation of one million," Hsiao said, adding that their papers had only four pages of print.

"We have visited many newspaper companies — *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, the *News and Courier* in Charleston, South Carolina, and *The Washington Post*," Yang said. "We spoke with many American journalists in these cities. We will take back the new technology. We still use the old traditional methods; we do not use computers. We are interested in an exchange program with the United States for newspaper editors."

Hsiao concluded, "Everything here is new to me. What impresses me the most is the spirit. For the last 20 or 30 years, we thought that the United States was rich only in material things and not rich in spirit. But we have found it different — Americans are not poor in spirit. First of all we must learn from Americans your kind of independence, aggressiveness — in a good sense — like competing in the Olympics."

ZWELAKHE SISULU of Johannesburg is editor of a new black newspaper, *The New Nation*, published fortnightly by the South

Africa Catholic Bishops Conference. Tabloid in format, it is community oriented.

Sisulu's Nieman classmates took out a half-page ad in *The New Nation* to welcome and support the publication.

In his first editorial, Sisulu wrote that the commitment is "to establish a newspaper that belongs to the people and is accountable to the people, a paper that will have democratic structures in which the masses of our people will have a direct say. Above all, we stand for a non-racial democratic South Africa that will be free of exploitation, oppression, and racism.

"We stand for a society free of the prejudices of ethnicity, tribalism, and sexism. We do not claim that the birth of a new nation will be easy. What we do say is that its birth is inevitable.

"At the moment it is time for change and change cannot be stayed. We believe that the time has come for all South Africans to confront reality and discard illusions.

"The reality is simply this. Only a truly democratic peoples government can guarantee peace for our country."

Sisulu started his journalistic career with the now defunct *Rand Daily Mail* and eventually became news editor of the now banned *Sunday Post*. At one time he was president of the black journalists trade union, the Media Workers Association of South Africa (Mwasa). He is the son of Walter Sisulu, who is serving a life sentence with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, and of Albertina Sisulu, an outspoken activist who was recently released after detention. Zwelakhe himself has been detained without trial and banned on occasion.

— 1986 —

MADELEINE BLAIS, staff writer with *Tropic* magazine, *The Miami Herald*, and John Katzenbach, her husband, became the parents of a baby girl, Justine, on January 20. Born at Mt. Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, the infant weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. Nicholas, her brother, is four years old.

Justine is the second Nieman baby in the Class of '86. The previous issue of *NR* carried the October 15 birth announcement of Galia, daughter of Peruvian journalist GUSTAVO GORRITI and his wife Esther. As far as we know, this sets a record for new arrivals in a Nieman year.

LYNN EMMERMAN, metro staff reporter for *The Chicago Tribune*, and John

Crewdson, Los Angeles correspondent for the same newspaper, shared the honors as first-time recipients of the Children's Express Award of \$2,000. The prize cited the two journalists' series on sexual abuse of children as the best reporting on children's issues in the past ten years. The award was presented in New York City at a November symposium on topics of special importance to children.

Children's Express, a division of United Press International, is staffed by children and acts as a wire service, giving young people's points of view on the news. From now on, the award is to be given annually to journalistic efforts that deal with child-related issues.

RANDOM NOTES

Among the jurors selected to submit nominations for this year's Pulitzer Prizes in journalism are seven Nieman Fellows. They are: WILLIAM GERMAN ('50), executive editor, *The San Francisco Chronicle*; ROBERT H. GILES ('66), editor, *The Times-Union and Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester (N.Y.); DAVID KRASLOW ('62), publisher, *The Miami News*; ACEL MOORE ('80), associate editor, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*; GENEVA OVERHOLSER ('86), deputy editorial page editor, *The Des Moines Register*; ALVIN SHUSTER ('67), foreign editor, *The Los Angeles Times*; and HOWARD SIMONS ('59), curator, the Nieman Foundation.

In addition, EUGENE ROBERTS ('62), executive editor, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, is a member of the Pulitzer board.

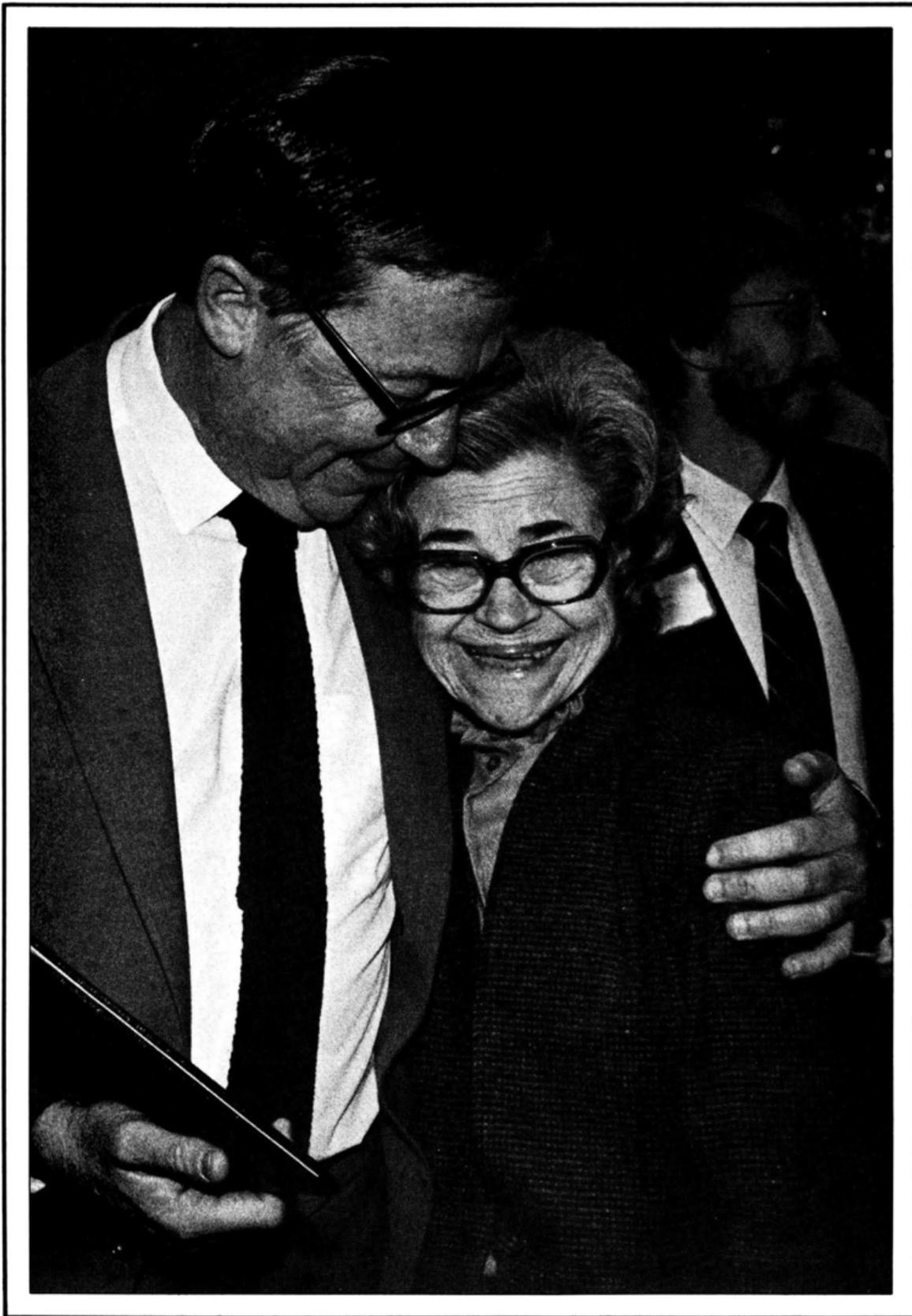


A different kind of ice sculpture can be seen most mornings here, now that the noonday sun pushes its rays through frigid soil to the root systems of trees and plants.

Sap in the maples courses up their trunks in the daytime; at night, below-freezing temperatures solidify the watery tricklings. On the way to work, one can count the glassy pendants on the branches.

For anticipation and sweetness, that sight matches the taste of New England's maple syrup. Yum.

—T.B.K.L.



On receiving the Lyons Award, Allister Sparks embraced Totty Lyons, widow of Louis M. Lyons. The prize, originated by the Nieman Fellows, Class of 1964, is in tribute to the twenty-five years of Mr. Lyons's curatorship of the Nieman Foundation. (See page 4.)

Joe Wrinn

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