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# NIEMAN REPORTS

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VOL. XXXIX, NO. 4, WINTER 1985

TOM WINSHIP pays homage to W. E. B. DuBois  
*Retired Globe editor calls for more  
activism in newsrooms.*

HOWARD SIMONS shows how South Africa today  
represents a mirror to Americans.

ELLEN MICKIEWICZ describes the proliferation  
of television sets in the USSR.  
*Americans and Soviets are two different audiences.*

WIL HAYGOOD meets with the stuff of legend.  
*Homer Bigart only wanted a deadline to beat.*

JACK FOISIE asks if correspondents should be  
subject to time limits in their foreign posts.

WILLIAM GORDON reflects on the Calvinist  
history of Holland and its influence  
on the Dutch press today.

# 'Who Is Crucifying South Africa'

Howard Simons

*Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation and Nieman Fellow '59, gave the following address to the South African Nieman Fellows at a November gathering in Johannesburg. The occasion marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of South African journalists' participation in the Nieman program under the sponsorship of the United States — South Africa Leader Exchange Program (USSALEP).*

I am honored to be here. There is little that is more pleasing to me than to be surrounded by journalists, and most especially to be in the company of Nieman Fellows.

Twenty-five years is a long time. It is almost half my lifetime. It is more than half the lifetime of the Nieman program itself. Much has happened over these past twenty-five years. And much has not.

When Aubrey Sussens and Lewis Nkosi arrived in the United States in the late summer of 1960, Dwight David Eisenhower still was President. John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon were carooming around the nation soliciting votes. Man had not yet soared into space to "touch the face of God." Vietnam, a distant country, was a distant Cold War challenge, if at all. The boorish, shoe-thumping Nikita Khrushchev announced that he would visit the United Nations in New York City. The summer Olympic games in Rome dominated the sports pages. Desegregation stories were a regular feature of American newspapers and newscasts. The Congo, where United Nations troops were trying to maintain order, dominated the front page. And news about South Africa was almost nowhere to be read, let alone seen.

What was being read, what was be-

ing seen in September 1960 were stories about the East-West struggle, the struggle for the presidency and, above all, the struggle for civil rights in the United States, which prided itself on being a democratic beacon to a darkly, darkly world.

It was a time of enormous change in the United States — in our view of ourselves and in our view of the world. This was especially true for race relations. Just six months before Aubrey and Lewis arrived, four youngsters refused to leave a lunch counter at a Woolworth variety store in Greensboro, North Carolina, after being refused service because they were black. By the time Sebastian Kleu arrived for his Nieman Fellowship the next September, more than seventy thousand students, whites and blacks, had staged similar sit-ins to break the back of lunch counter discrimination in my country.

It was a time of profound and irreversible change, best captured and best chronicled by Theodore White in his seminal book: *The Making of the President, 1960*.

"The mingling of white and Negro Americans," Teddy said, "has been the most terrible problem of American politics since the Constitution makers first became embroiled in a hopeless

search for its solution; out of their inability to find a humane solution came the Civil War; this mingling of white and Negro remains today, along with peace-and-war and the proper conduct of the economy, one of the three cardinal properties of American life."

Teddy went on:

"It is not so much color that divides Negro and white Americans as the way the past has created different conditions of life and thus different social habits and mores."

He said, too, in 1960, that "What has happened in the past decade is that Negro Americans insist on discussing their own fate with white Americans. . . ."

There are two things to be said about Teddy White's observations of twenty-five years ago. The first is that white-black relations, guns, and butter still are the three most important issues that gnaw and sometimes rub raw the bone of the American spine. The second observation that I would make is that for South Africans, particularly white South Africans, not to hear an echo in Teddy White's words is to be not as blind as a bat but worse — deaf.

I am not so naïve as to think that the situations in the United States and South Africa are identical. Of course they are not. I am not so insensitive as to suggest that the United States has solved its racial challenge or created a perfect society of equality for all its citizens or dug deep enough into its own psyche and purged itself of racism. Of course it has not. And I am not so dumb as to think that the inculcations of three centuries can be uprooted and made to disappear just like that. Of course they cannot.

But, and it is a significant but, there



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**book** (book), *n.* 1. a written or printed work of some length, as a treatise, novel, or other literary composition, esp. on consecutive sheets of paper fastened or bound together in a volume. 2. a number of sheets of blank or ruled paper bound together for writing, recording commercial transactions, etc. 3. a division of a literary work, esp. one of the larger divisions.

*The next issue of Nieman Reports will be devoted entirely to books and will feature essay-type reviews. Among the authors and critics will be Nieman Fellows.*

# Disciplined Intelligence: An Effective Weapon for Social Justice

Thomas Winship

*The following is excerpted from remarks made by Thomas Winship, the first W.E.B. DuBois speaker, at the National Association of Black Journalists Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, in August 1985.*

**M**y friends of the National Association of Black Journalists, you have done me a great honor, and I thank you. I am especially pleased to be asked by you to be your first W.E.B. DuBois speaker.

Dr. DuBois — what a towering figure in American history he was! He devoted his life to redefining the role of black people at home and abroad. His intellectual leadership came from many platforms, those of teacher, sociologist, poet, editor, and writer. He died in Accra, Ghana, where he moved, as he put it, to “pass the evening of his life,” at age 95. The date: August 28, 1963, the very same day Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his “I have a dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln

Memorial during the march on Washington. I am humbled at the thought of even attempting to say anything under the DuBois banner, but as I understand the purpose of the DuBois talk, I am expected to discuss some overriding current issue in our craft.

Dr. DuBois has given me my issue. In the forward of a report entitled “A Policy Framework for Social Justice” by Kenneth Clark and John Hope Franklin, the authors noted that even in the early 1940’s, W.E.B. DuBois was saying that the most difficult stage in the struggle for racial justice in America would be reached when it became clear that basic inequities persisted in spite of litigation, legislation, and confrontation. The success or failure of the civil rights struggle, he said, would ultimately be determined by the ability of highly trained groups of black professionals to use their disciplined intelligence as effective weapons in the battle for social justice.

More specifically, I want to share with you some thoughts on how newspapers can become a more vital force in our everyday life; how they can make a greater difference; how newspapers and you can help to nudge our nation out of the self-centered stupor into which television and government policy have driven it. We, as a nation, and as the press, are in big psychic trouble

at the moment, suffering from too much cynicism, defeatism, and downright selfishness. I am feeling rather grim about the state of the press and the state we ourselves are in these days.

The time has come again for a new generation of social concern and activism in journalism. It is my fervent hope that black reporters and editors will be in the vanguard.

I hasten to add, I do not mean the kind of activism practiced in many newspapers in the 1960’s, when newsroom bleeding hearts were riding so high that a page-one news story and an editorial often were indistinguishable.

I am talking about more activism in the editing assignment process. I am rooting for covering more stories of more social importance. I am rooting for more urgent and constant attention to our people in deep trouble, and for less superficial, show-biz reporting.

We in the news business are becoming too damned comfortable. We simply are not stretching ourselves.

It would be one thing, if the reality of the news in our country and world justified our self-satisfaction and indulgence: there have been such periods in our lives, and we should recognize that. The fact is that today our nation and our profession do not give us grounds to reach around and pat ourselves affectionately. This is not a time to pat

*Thomas Winship, recently retired as editor of The Boston Globe, is an Inaugural Fellow at the Gannett Center for Media Studies at Columbia University. He is organizing a new training center in Reston, Virginia, for mid-career journalists, primarily from developing countries.*





## The press is missing the biggest domestic time-bomb story of the decade. . . .

backs, it is a time to kick rears.

For fifteen years, between John F. Kennedy's election through Richard Nixon's resignation and the fall of Saigon, we faced a series of stark choices from which it was impossible to shrink and which gave off few grays. Overt racial discrimination was wrong or right. The prosecution of a full-scale war in Indochina was either immoral or a noble cause. Nixon was perceived as being hounded by lefty kids or as a crook. Women should be given either equal status in society or kept out of the workplace. Our air and water were either being poisoned or not.

Throughout this heady 1960's and 1970's period of revolutions, one after another, the pressure on newspaper editors was tremendous. A new generation of reporters and editors assaulted me constantly, agitating endlessly to write stories that couldn't have been done before, and in a style previously unthinkable. In the midst of Boston's soul-wrenching confrontation with itself, black journalists came to me more than once, with all barrels blazing. I loved the reporter-demands, welcomed them, even their excesses.

On the occasions when people were way out of line, it was relatively easy to get them back into place. For working on the sidelines to keep a tidal wave of intellectual and political ferment in check and channeled into productive and creditable reportage is not — if you think about it — a frustration.

What is hard is when there is no ferment, no electricity, no anger, no pressure in the newsrooms, which, I fear, is the case today. The fact is that the passionate memos are not piling up in the editor's box.

Groups of young reporters are not lining up to pester the boss, and if the truth be known, our newspapers are in danger not only of becoming less fo-

cused on what is truly important, but also more than a bit dull.

I shall take a moment on this matter of dullness, because it relates so directly to the effectiveness and the circulation of the press. Certainly, newspapers have improved immeasurably in the last twenty years — in scope, in new areas of coverage and expertise, in fairness, in photography, and in make-up.

But in their march toward more respectability, newspapers became a bit too cerebral. Though I consider myself the world's greatest fan of newspapers, I must say I find many papers today cold, remote, and boring. They have lost some of the spunk, the warmth, the sparkle, and some of the funkiness that in the first place made them vital institutions.

I wish editors wouldn't let their dignity show quite so much. In becoming more professional, too many editors have lost the nerve to follow their own creative instincts. I suspect you could publish the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in Phoenix, *The Chicago Tribune* in Philadelphia, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* in Chicago, and it would be days before customers noticed. (There is no significance whatsoever to the examples I have chosen here.)

As metropolitan editors, we have become so peer conscious, we are afraid to retain our old-time identity and idiosyncracies. Readers love weather ears, puns and all. They love, I know, *The Boston Globe's* "Confidential Chat" exchange column where real live people write to each other in the paper, over their *noms de plume*. I think readers like those colorfully named editions (Night Owl, Early Bird, or Red Streak), and even sports sections printed in green. Too often, now, they are written off as old-fashioned or corny.

Morning newspapers have forgotten

they are newspapers. They just about shut down their newsrooms after watching the 6 P.M. local television shows. And local television stations are content merely to update their 6 P.M. report for their 11 o'clock news.

Networks are down for the night and morning television shows have a relatively small audience. So newspapers ought to beef up their night staffs, including a ranking editor or two, re-staff police headquarters, cover late meetings, big and little crime, and sports extensively. Newspapers can and should own the news between 7 P.M. and 3 A.M., and, to compete with television, editors and reporters should be urged to write "second day" stories with a forward spin. This was how evening newspapers were written before the days of television and traffic-clogged cities.

Why are newspapers so timid about giving readers the small items they cannot get on the tube? We should not be so bashful about offering recipes, advice columns, comics, and mini-movie reviews.

There is another underlying reason why newspapers are so homogenized, and so out of touch with their community: It's the bright, young college graduates who populate newsrooms today. They are an ambitious lot. They want to work in the big cities, but cover only big-time state, national, and foreign news. It is this over-infatuation with "glamour" news, spoon-fed to reporters who know this will put them on Page One or on the evening news, that bothers me so much.

Moreover, too many reporters are highly nomadic and consequently don't know their own adopted cities. They don't live in the neighborhoods, except for the gentrified ones, or care about their community's future. I wish young reporters and editors were not quite such rolling stones. By jumping too

We simply are not examining with adequate vigor the broad, rising problems of the poor, much less exploring avenues of possible solutions.

often for a better buck they are short-changing their own development, to say nothing of putting too much emotional strain on themselves, their families, and their communities.

Meanwhile, the press is missing the biggest domestic time-bomb story of the decade. You know what it is. It is the worsening plight of the underclass — black, Hispanic, and white — in our large cities. None of us has grasped the full dimensions of this crisis. This bottom stratum of society is worse off today than it was in the wake of the civil rights movement and all the affirmative action programs, which allowed only the present middle-class minorities to walk through the doors to a better life.

The growth of the starvation-level urban underclass here and in a score of Third World countries is not an easy story to cover. Its roots go down deep, twisting and penetrating into seats of power and greed everywhere.

Meanwhile, the preponderance of impact stories in the press, especially on television, concerns the life and times of the well-to-do folks. And the most popular shows are about the white super-rich. For example, *Dallas* and *Dynasty*.

How does this help destitute people deal with the world as they find it? What does this sense of media priority do for the unmarried 15-year-old mother, or the 17-year-old boy who can't find a job?

Consider also the two weeks of around-the-clock television coverage and page after page of newspaper stories about the hostages at the Beirut airport.

Do we ever see that kind of commitment to the underclass story?

Yes, the report from the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders issued

seventeen years ago still rings true, with its famous description of two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal.

The depressing fact is that real poverty in the United States has been increasing at the same time as prosperity is increasing for the upper half of society.

The crisis in affordable housing is worse than ever, the provision of medical care for those without insurance is a national disgrace, the leadership of our public and private institutions is damn near as lily-white and male as it was after the first show of concern twenty years ago. We may have lost the better part of a generation of young blacks and Hispanics to the twin scourges of inadequate education and minimal job opportunities, as the scene has shifted from confrontation on the streets to passive poverty in the parks and in the projects.

Eleanor Holmes Norton marshalled the facts in unrelenting detail recently in a *New York Times Magazine* piece.

Fact: Seventy percent of black children under the age of 18 who live in female-headed households are being brought up in poverty.

Fact: The average black child can expect to spend more than five years of childhood in poverty; the average white child, ten months.

Fact: Since 1960, the employment rate of black men has dropped from 74 percent to 55 percent.

Fact: And this year, that most constant of all statistics — teenage black unemployment — still holds at 39 percent, two-and-a-half times that of whites.

What bothers me so very much is the lack of sustained effort by the press to take these social crisis stories beyond

the statistics stage. We simply are not examining with adequate vigor the broad rising problems of the poor, much less exploring avenues of possible solutions. Take a ruler sometime and measure the space your newspaper has given to homelessness over the year and compare it to what it gave to the plight of the more broadly defined poor.

Think again of the incredible amount of television time and space given to the hostage crisis at the expense of the non-coverage of segments of people out of work, the rise of tuberculosis among the poor, and people eating out of trash cans, which one sees every day in New York City. The fact is, we're going much more for the obvious human interest story — the tear-jerker — and not digging deeper for tougher, more systemic stories.

The same thing is happening internationally. Look at the space we gave to the magnificent outpouring of support by the rock music world for starvation in Africa. Then measure the number of column inches the press has given to the causes of starvation — starting with the frightening march of the deserts and possible long-range solutions. These stories are coming in far behind. And how many stories have you read recently that focus on international development aid and its shortcomings? And whose fault is it that most of the writing on these topics, which makes its way into print, is so dry and dull it is buried inside the paper?

For the past decade, editors and publishers have spent most of their time and resources bringing our newspapers kicking and screaming into the late twentieth century. We have shiny new

*continued on page 26*



# Soviet and American Television: A Comparison of News Coverage

Ellen Mickiewicz

*A crash program in the USSR to produce television sets has brought them into 90 percent of Soviet homes.*



*The Nieman Foundation and the Russian Research Center at Harvard University presented the program "Preparation for Geneva: Orientation for Journalists Who Want More Information on the Soviet Union." Nearly one hundred newspeople from the Boston area and out-of-state participated in the September day and evening event.*

*One session focused on social and economic developments. The following are excerpts from a transcript of the discussion by Professor Ellen Mickiewicz of Emory University, formerly dean of the graduate school and currently in the department of political science.*

*Marshall Goldman, associate director of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University, and Professor of Economics, Wellesley College, organized the program, which was co-sponsored by the William and Mary Greve Foundation and the U.S. Department of State.*

I would like to talk to you about Soviet media and in particular about Soviet television. I have studied the media in the Soviet Union for a decade or so, much facilitated, about a year ago, by the acquisition at Emory University of equipment to receive Soviet television directly. It is the only place in the country — Washington included — that receives domestic Soviet television in real-time and furthermore, to my knowledge, the only one that receives the major Soviet national network — First Program.

Let me begin by describing the importance of television. There has been a tremendous crash program in the provisioning of television in the Soviet Union. In 1950, there was a total of 10,000 sets in the country. By 1976, seven million sets were produced *annually* and in 1985, television sets can be found in 90 percent of all Soviet households. The reasons why the rate of growth was slow for so many years are several: For one thing, the country has a very inhospitable terrain. There are eleven time zones in the Soviet Union, spread over a vast and often inaccessible land mass. With the invention of modern communication satellites, many of these obstacles can be leapfrogged, and television can finally saturate the national population.

Also, I think the leadership in the

past did not fully grasp the potential impact that television could have in the country. In the Soviet Union, as in the United States, viewers will say that the chief value of television lies in entertainment. That's true in both systems. In the United States, television is the main source of news, and in the Soviet Union, as a recent survey showed, the majority of the population now receives most of its news about the West from Soviet television. Considering the short time that television has been available to the Soviet population, this is an astonishing development. Most popular, of course, are movies, sports, and light entertainment, but two-thirds of the Soviet audience watch the prime-time network news.

Even though television is much newer in the U.S.S.R. than in the United States, television news is thought to be much more credible than written news. Why? Of course, pictures are very, very powerful, and people tend not to understand, either here or in the Soviet Union, that there is an editing process behind these visual images.

The question of feedback is a very interesting one. Soviet leaders thought they knew their audiences. The major national newspapers receive more than half a million letters a year; television and radio studios together receive more than two million letters a year from viewers and listeners. Obviously, those in charge thought they must know the public from the volume of that response. Recently a number of surveys were conducted that showed they were quite wrong, that official assumptions were unreliable.

First, for example, they found that newspaper readers did not understand many of the words frequently used in foreign-affairs newswriting: 50 percent did not know what "imperialism" meant; 75 percent did not know what "colonialism" meant. Another aspect of the media that the officials had not expected was essentially created by their own policies. What has happened — and I will go into this a little bit later — is that Soviet media emphasize the West so much, and in particular the United States, that they have created a

thirst for international news in general, and for news of the West in particular. This has been an unintended result of their very own policy of stressing the importance of the West. It may be negative, but nonetheless it has excited that kind of thirst, that kind of reaction, and it is now causing considerable concern.

Timeliness. As you know, whoever breaks the story first has the edge in persuasive communication. In the past, timeliness never has been a value in Soviet news reporting. It was of lower priority than the educational role of Soviet news. It has now become a matter of some concern. Chernenko, in June of 1983, when he was top ideology official, talked about the West's "information-propaganda intervention." There is increasingly the sense in the Soviet Union that there are information sources around the Soviet Union, whether from foreign radios or interpersonal communication, that represent a kind of threat. It follows, therefore, that some kind of responsiveness and timeliness is going to have to enter into the reporting of news. Soviet reporting of international events, in fact, is given much greater credibility and authority by the Soviet audience than the Soviet reporting of domestic events. Again, as in the United States, it is both commonsensical and borne out by research. There are numerous opportunities for independent verification of an event that has happened near you: You've seen it, a friend has seen it, word-of-mouth transmits it. About international events there are really very few resources that an average American or Soviet citizen can exploit; there is very little evidence other than what the national media report. There is the same kind of difference in credibility, local and national, that you see in systems other than the Soviet, but it is also true that in the Soviet Union, national media are more credible than are the local media.

I will refer only briefly to the effect of Western radios. Probably about 20 percent of the Soviet adult population might listen at some point during the week to Western radio. This could be music, it could be some other program,

not necessarily news, and it would appeal most to the well-educated, urban, European Soviet male.

I noted the fact that Soviet officials were really quite surprised when they had a first look — through surveys — at their own domestic audience. They were surprised by the lack of comprehension of certain commonly used terms and by the kinds of assumptions that they had had. There is evidence — and this precedes the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary — that the Soviet media system is moving to deal with some of the problems they have identified. For example, that dramatic press conference, when Marshall Ogarkov and two other officials talked about the downing of the KAL plane. Or, again, after the Soviets walked out of Geneva. The coverage of the Politburo, which is now done weekly, is an innovation. The new Foreign Ministry press conferences, led by recently appointed Vladimir Lomeiko, give information to the foreign press. I think we will see more departures of this sort, and I think we also will see an enhancement of production values on Soviet television.

Let me turn now to a look at the world in Soviet and American news. This is part of a project I've been engaged in for about a year (not all the data have been coded or analyzed): comparing ABC's *World News Tonight* and the Soviet prime-time news broadcast.

One of the first of the preliminary findings from this study is the difference in centrality, the asymmetry in the coverage of each other: how much more critically important we are for them than they are for us. In fact, the United States is really *the* other country, in terms of what the Soviet public sees in its news. The figures I'm going to present to you come from initial results based on a month of news broadcasts last fall. In that month, Soviet news devoted a total of one hour to coverage of the United States; ABC, a total of four minutes to the Soviet Union. The range of countries covered totaled 30 for ABC, 53 for *Vremya* (Time), the major Soviet news program.



In this period, on ABC, 61 percent of the stories were about the United States and 4 percent about the Soviet Union. On *Vremya*, 37 percent were about the Soviet Union and 10 percent about the United States. ABC broadcast a total of 277 stories during this period, while *Vremya* broadcast 552. The Soviet news is much longer than the American news, and that is in part behind these differences — but only in part. The Soviet news, excluding sports and weather, which I don't analyze, runs about 30 to 35 minutes, but it is elastic. News broadcasts can exceed an hour and a half, if necessary, expanding to whatever has to be covered. ABC, as you know, is 22 minutes of actual news broadcasting, and that is invariable.

Close to a third of all the stories that are not principally about the United States ascribe responsibility to the United States for events occurring outside of our borders. What kind of cognitive map is imposed on Soviet news? It is a map in which the world is coherent, and one reason for that coherence relates to the role of the United States, seen as manipulating, either by itself or through puppet governments, events that happen all over the world. The United States is shown to bear responsibility for much that happens, certainly of a negative sort, across the globe, and much of this is covered in very vivid footage from location.

As to the road to Geneva: If you were watching Soviet television these days, it would be grim. You might not think that there is going to be a summit meeting — not for lack of reference, but because of the tone of Soviet broadcasting. First, there is a barrage of stories, as you might imagine, about the Soviets' plea for weapons and testing moratoria and the American refusal to accept it. Recent ASAT [Anti-Satellite Technology] and SDI [Strategic Defense Initiative] tests have been covered.

In certain cases, Soviet views are presented in stories about third parties. Very significant coverage was given to the visit of Johannes Rau, the SPD [Social Democratic Party] leader in West Germany, and clearly a man who is being cultivated by the Soviets. This

visit coincided with very critical comments on Chancellor Kohl, whose telegram of greeting to German irredentists was seen as a threat to the Soviet Union.

Sometimes sources friendly to the Soviet Union — the Bulgarians, for example — on their national day, speak on Soviet television and refer repeatedly to the climate of danger and the American refusal to accede to Soviet proposals.

Another important technique for legitimizing Soviet positions is the citing of other countries' coverage of the actions of the Soviet government. Soviet media frequently refer to foreign coverage of their country. It is very important for the legitimacy of the Soviet position that *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* or the *Economist* refer to the Gorbachev interview with *Time*.

Another element in Soviet news broadcasting is the assertion that all responsibility for the failure to ensure a peaceful world rests with the United States. Gyorgi Zubkov, the political commentator, recently stated that if there is no movement by the United States on the issue of the "militarization of the cosmos," then "nothing will happen at Geneva." *Détente* is raised again and again by the Soviet Union. I should add that the *détente* to which they refer has specific antecedents and specific components. It is not merely a vague term of approbation. When they invoke *détente*, they have in mind the kind that resulted in: (a) economic benefits — for example, the "great grain robbery" (as American opponents of *détente* dubbed it); (b) the agreement on the principles of conduct negotiated by [former Secretary of State] Kissinger, in a document that we consider less important than do the Soviets, particularly since the Soviet notion of peaceful coexistence seems to have been embodied in the agreement; and (c) the Helsinki Accord, which specifies non-interference in domestic situations and which also ratified the postwar borders of Eastern Europe. That's what they mean by *détente*, and they would like to see it revived.

There has been a distinct change of tone on Soviet television from the time that I was looking at it, say, last fall or around the first of this year. It is more hard-hitting, and more anti-American. Let me give you an example. On one news broadcast, Genrikh Bardovik talked about anniversaries that should be observed: Why not observe the anniversaries of human rights violations by the United States? The murder of Allende, the ghettos in Washington, the thousands who have been killed in Vietnam, the child in Nicaragua who is killed by American strafing planes — these are the anniversaries we should talk about. There has been a great deal about human rights violations on Soviet news; for example, the violations of the rights of the American Indian activist [Leonard] Peltier\*. Obviously one of the points on our agenda in Geneva is the question of human rights in the Soviet Union; these are counter-propaganda, preemptive moves on the part of the Soviet media to display American violations of human rights in advance of Geneva and information about the American position.

One rather remarkable program, almost reminiscent of Stalinist rhetoric, took place in the middle of prime time, 9:40 P.M. Moscow time. It was a documentary film, lasting about an hour. Its

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\*EDITOR'S NOTE: Peltier, a member of the American Indian Movement, was charged in 1975 with the killing of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. In 1977, he was convicted of the crimes and sentenced by Paul Benson, a federal judge with the U.S. Court of Appeals, 8th Circuit. Since then, there have been two appeals, each case heard by the same judge. A new trial has been denied each time.

Representative Don Edwards, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, issued a statement in June 1985 asserting that there is evidence which demonstrates "government abuse of the investigative process, suppression of evidence and falsehood." Edwards has asked for a new trial for Peltier, to be heard by a new judge. [—Based on an article in *The Nation*, June 22, 1985]



subject was the pervasive attempt by American intelligence to subvert the Soviet system of government, carried out brutally in some cases by financing Russian fascist *émigrés* — these are their words — who fought on the side of the Nazis. The viewer saw the carnage of Russian citizens due to these subversives backed by the U.S.A.

The film also showed the CIA as being responsible for and funding the Solzhenitsyn Fund. The Solzhenitsyn Fund, as you know, is supposed to be that collection of money from the royalties of Solzhenitsyn's books which is then given clandestinely to supporters of human rights in the Soviet Union. This program asserted categorically the funding came from the CIA.

The CIA was also shown to be behind Israeli intelligence, and it was implied that the desire of Soviet Jews to emigrate was related to the intelligence mission. The visuals showed not only wartime footage but also footage from the trials of Soviet citizens who explained how Americans had tried to purchase their services.

The same themes of the Soviet peace initiative will be present in different kinds of programs; for example, a show on the Moscow Film Festival was not about film at all, but how film can be used for peaceful purposes — it was really about Cuba and Nicaragua.

Gorbachev is given tremendous coverage, and that is very different from the coverage accorded Chernenko. In the space of five days, there were two news broadcasts which led with a story on Gorbachev. In each, he gave a speech and each one lasted an hour and twenty minutes. There also has been significant reduction in the coverage of all other leaders. Some have just disappeared, like Tikhonov, but coverage of others has been reduced dramatically. And this is not a matter of inelastic time. As I noted, these are infinitely expandable broadcasts. The reduced attention to other leaders and the heavy coverage of Gorbachev is very meaningful in terms of Gorbachev's stature.

Let me close by saying that Gorbachev certainly is personally adept at manipulating the media, both at home

and abroad, especially in comparison with his mummified predecessors! But I would argue that the move to make television more responsive and professional is a much longer-term issue and precedes Gorbachev. And it is related, I think, to the tremendous potential impact that Soviet television has, especially on a public that has been created, a public for whom international issues have become the most salient of all issue areas.



**Question:** You mentioned Bardovik a moment ago. Is there any attempt to build up any single commentator, as a kind of Walter Cronkite figure, or somebody who is viewed as trustworthy because he is seen talking about momentous matters?

**Mickiewicz:** The anchor is faceless and has, I would say, very little impact. But there are commentators, like Bardovik, who are brought out at especially important times and who have a kind of authority and ease which is quite remarkable compared to the rest of the talking heads that you see. Bardovik was the one, for example, who was trotted out for coverage of President Reagan's comment that "We're going to bomb the Soviet Union in five minutes," which Soviet television played in English to show its authenticity. Valentin Zorin is another well-known commentator.

**Comment:** If you look at the newspapers, in contrast to Chernenko, Andropov, and certainly Brezhnev, you don't see Gorbachev's picture in the papers as much. You see the speeches, pages and pages of speeches, which is comparable, but in the newspaper you really don't see him.

**Mickiewicz:** One of the things we intend to do is to look at the differences. And I think what you're looking at are two different audiences in the Soviet Union. As in the United States, when there was a gravitation toward televi-

sion for much of this kind of information, much the same thing is happening in the Soviet Union. This is especially important since in the Soviet Union something like 40 percent of all the people in rural areas, and 20 percent of those in the cities, have not gone beyond the fourth grade. That means they really cannot read newspapers very easily.

**Question:** You mentioned the view of the world that the Soviets are getting from their news programs. What other segments of their programming are influencing them, would you say, in a major way, outside news programming: Would there be things like game shows, or anything else, entertainment?

**Mickiewicz:** There are many children's programs and many sports programs. The sports broadcasts are very refreshing, to me at least, because there's not much commentary: You can just watch a game. There are dramatic shows. Films are by far the most attractive to the Soviet audience, and they are featured frequently. There are also cultural programs, essentially uninterrupted productions of opera or symphony concerts. These, like PBS programs in this country, tend not to be very popular and the viewing audience is skewed upscale in level of education.

**Question:** Are there signs of any type of programming that imitates American programming in any way, for example, soap operas or game shows?

**Mickiewicz:** There are game shows, but they are not played for high stakes. Soviet television, of course, is fundamentally educational. It does not really appeal to greed, sensationalism, or the darker side of the human character.

**Comment:** I want to ask you about the timeliness you mentioned, because I had an opportunity to go to the television studios in Moscow last summer, and I was struck by the fact that at 3 o'clock in the afternoon they were doing a full-scale dress rehearsal of stories, pictures, film reports — the whole

thing — in advance of their 9 o'clock broadcast that night. And I'm curious whether you ever saw any kinds of chunks that were left out . . . or exactly what the time-line is between events and the time that they appear on Soviet television.

**Mickiewicz:** That's an interesting question, and one that we will certainly look at. What we are doing, just to tell you about the research project, is coding for ABC and Moscow television news every story for 27 variables. It will be a rather complex study. One of the things we will look at is the time lag and on which issues. Many of the issues covered by American television, particularly having to do with Soviet-American relations, are being reported on the day or on the next day. Of course it's eight hours earlier in the Soviet Union.

**Question:** Do you see an increase on Soviet television in the amount of coverage of the war in Afghanistan?

**Mickiewicz:** They have been covering Afghanistan certainly since last August when I began looking at the news. They have been covering it not so much in terms of a war of the Soviet and Afghan military battling the guerrillas. They cover it principally in two ways. One is to talk about the social revolution that is taking place, the distribution of land, the distribution of water rights, the education of women, the provisioning of medical personnel, and so on. They portray Afghanistan as developing into a system in the Socialist mode. They also talk about Afghanistan in terms of the intervention of Pakistan, and as a country threatened by Pakistan, behind which stands the United States with its supply of matériel.

To some extent more recently, there have been matters treating the military as such. There is one program, for example, that was a tribute to a rank-and-file Soviet soldier, who disarmed a grenade to save a group of children. There is a good deal of the sacrifice of Soviet troops, the elder brothers helping the Afghans.

**Question:** You've been monitoring Soviet television. Have you come across anything comparable to our so-called white papers when one of the networks will focus on a particular aspect of investigative reporting?

**Mickiewicz:** The closest to investigative reporting is a kind of segment on the news called "Sharp Signal." Such a story would look at a dislocation in the economy for which there is some culpability. For example, the required amount of paper was not delivered to a newspaper plant. Or foodstuffs that have inexplicably and with human culpability or mismanagement disappeared or spoiled en route to the consumer. An investigative report, then, is given, with people interviewed all along the way, with a dire warning at the end that this must be cleared up. These are inserted in a very serious and weighty way into the news, and are sometimes followed a few weeks later by another segment detailing the remedial measures taken.

**Question:** Would you describe the extent of the coverage on Soviet televi-

sion of the debate within the NATO alliance on Star Wars.

**Mickiewicz:** There is tremendous attention to Star Wars as an issue, and it is presented in various ways. The Soviet news does not present the issues in terms of specific plans and specific research that the Soviet Union has undertaken to meet the challenges. But there are two ways that it is countered in terms of stated Soviet policy: One is that the Soviet Union will produce as many offensive weapons as are necessary to counter any defensive shield — that there exists no successful defensive shield.

The other form of coverage is the more vague formula that the Soviet Union will do whatever is necessary to maintain its readiness. In terms of NATO debates, Soviet television portrays every case of deviance within NATO, or other partners of the United States, with respect to Star Wars. The Danish refusal to go along with it, the problems with President Mitterrand, and every similar case is used to show the isolation of the United States, even from its own partners. □

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# HOMER BIGART

Wil Haygood

**N**OTTINGHAM, NH — He no longer drives, and so every morning his wife takes the four-wheel into town to pick up the newspapers, which he says he needs to start the day. There is a vegetable garden on one side of the house and a flower garden out back, and a hard wind that comes down off the Pawtuckaway mountains in the evening.

On the telephone seven months ago he had said, "Don't come out. I don't have anything to talk about." Two months later he said the same thing. But he began to soften three months ago. Then an illness came and he was hospitalized. Two weeks ago, out of the hospital, he said, "You can come out, but I think you'll be wasting your time" — and he put his wife on the phone to give directions.

His name is Homer Bigart and he is ranked with the greatest war correspondents of all time. Most of his career, which began in 1927, was spent with the *New York Herald Tribune*. He went to *The New York Times* in 1955 and worked another sixteen years. When he joined the *Times*, they thought enough of him to take out a full-page ad in *The New Yorker*, heralding his arrival.

There have been awards. A George Polk Award and a Berger Award. The A. J. Liebling Award was for "four decades of single-minded attention to his craft, a persistent skepticism toward all forms of power, and tenacious pursuit of social injustice long before such reporting became fashionable."

The two Pulitzer Prizes, in 1946 and 1951, were for international reporting.

It is the stuff of legend and a little



more, but he has never wanted to make dinner conversation about it. He likes living in seclusion, and is not at all sentimental. There are no clippings of stories in a trunk because he didn't save any. The war dispatches are in libraries and on microfilm.

Homer Bigart has never written a book and there are no memoirs. The season is late now and he still has no intention of writing a book. Maybe it was his pride that kept talk of a book distant. All he ever wanted to be was a reporter, someone with a deadline to beat.

Once or twice a year, someone comes to visit. "Old reporters," says his wife, Else Minarik.

In 1943, he was moving with the 5th Army through Italy:

*On the far side of the field sprawled some dead. One boy lay crumpled in a shallow slit trench beneath a rock. Another, still grasping his rifle, peered from behind a tree, staring with sightless eyes toward the Liri plain. A third lay prone where he had fallen. He had heard the warning scream of a German shell. He had dropped flat on his stomach but on level ground affording no cover. Evidently some fragment had killed him instantly, for there had been no struggle.*

## A failure in architecture

Bigart was born 77 years ago in Hawley, Pennsylvania, a small town that straddles the Pennsylvania-New



York border. They kicked him clean out of the Carnegie Institute of Technology. "I had this damn fool idea I was gonna be an architect. I discovered I couldn't even draw."

He packed and went off to New York University, where he majored in journalism. He never told anyone he was going to be a flop in life if he couldn't be a reporter. He went into journalism because he liked English, and when he found journalism, he found himself. After graduation in 1927 he got a job at the *Herald Tribune* as a copyboy and took an apartment, for three bucks a week, in Brooklyn.

His start at the newspaper was not a gleaming one, as he would remain a copyboy for five long years. "I had fears of becoming the oldest copyboy in journalism," Bigart says. He finally made it onto staff in 1933. He began by writing obituaries, then moved to general assignment, and then to the police beat.

In the newsroom, he sat near John O'Hara. "He had a temper," he says about O'Hara. "I saw him throw an ash-tray at a guy one day. Didn't hit him but it caused quite a rumpus."

The roster at the *Tribune* was heady. Joseph Alsop, Sanderson Vanderbilt, George Polk: they were all there. After work everyone would gather at Bleeck's, on West 40th Street, for drinks.

When it was time to move on from the *Tribune*, many did just that. Sanderson Vanderbilt went to *The New Yorker*. George Polk went to do radio work with CBS. John O'Hara went to write novels. Homer Bigart stayed, watching them come and watching them go. Then, in 1943, the editors told Bigart to start packing. He was going overseas as a *Tribune* correspondent.

He is seated at the kitchen table. There is mist outside the window, and a dying elm tree in the yard that he points to, brooding about: "Lost it this year. A tragedy." The home is more than a hundred years old. When he says he is cold, his wife starts a fire, and soon the wood is crackling in the fireplace, and there is the red light of the fire which warms the war correspondent.

He puts his big hand around a tiny glass with vodka in it, causing the glass to disappear as he lifts it to his lips. The cooked vegetables served for lunch are vegetables he and his wife planted and picked from their garden.

### First overseas assignment

When Homer Bigart found out he was going overseas, he bought a \$45 suit. London was the first stop. "It was January 1943, a quiet time," he says. A month later he found himself hunkered in a plane, flying over West Germany with a convoy. The newsman sitting next to him was Walter Cronkite, then working for the wire services. About ten planes were in the convoy. The enemy attacked, the correspondents ducked, then came up firing guns themselves. One of the planes went down. "We lost a *New York Times* man. Went down right into the North Sea," says Bigart. The *Times* man was Robert Post.

Soon Bigart was filing from the war-wrecked fields of Sicily.

*Lying snug in a tuft of red-top hay, we felt no fear. We were 700 feet above the road, and height gives a deceptive feeling of confidence. We had yet to learn that the Germans could lift a storm of shrapnel to our ledge, ripping some of us to shreds before the day was gone.*

There were some talented reporters covering World War II. A. J. Liebling, Ernest Hemingway, Marguerite Higgins, and Ernie Pyle were there. They would all, along with Homer Bigart, rise, rise as beautifully as you can in war, by writing on the run and sending the stories back home.

Homer Bigart was not covering war as anyone's poet, but his touch seemed uncommonly graceful and perceptive.

When the first wave of American reporters went into Hiroshima after the bomb was dropped, Bigart was there.

*A party of newspapermen led by Colonel John McCrary was the first*

*group of Americans to reach Hiroshima. We flew in today in a B-17, our pilot, Captain Mark Magnan, finding a hole in the clouds over Kure and setting the plane down on the tiny runway of the naval air base there with about seventy feet to spare.*

One war would end, others begin. In the wars following World War II, they would start whispering about Bigart. He would begin crossing the fields as if he had laid the sod, going into foreign countries with road maps, and learning the terrain. He would begin taking the chances that would get some of his buddies killed.

### A journalistic coup in Greece

In May of 1948, George Polk, Middle East correspondent for CBS, was traveling through the hilly countryside of Salonika, Greece, looking for the guerrilla chieftain Markos Vafiades. Polk would be found, murdered, in a ravine not far from Salonika. He had been shot in the back. In Washington, Walter Lippmann was leading the probe to investigate Polk's murder.

Homer Bigart was at the Moskva Hotel in Belgrade when he heard of Polk's murder. Something flinched in him: He would go and find the rebel leader. "I don't know whatever made me think I could get away with it," Bigart says. "But I figured I would take up the trail where Polk left off."

He sent word to the Greek Communists that he wanted to find Markos Vafiades, and waited in his hotel room. There was a rap on the door. "I opened the door. There were three Greeks, one of them a hunchback. They came in. The hunchback spoke English. He said, 'Bigart, I understand you want to see free Greece.' I said 'Yes.'"

"They would test me first. They told me to stand on a street corner in Belgrade at night. I would be met there. I stood on the street corner. Nobody came. A couple of nights later there was another rap. The same people. They told me to make arrangements to leave the country. They told me to tell the

other correspondents I was going to Rome. I told the head desk clerk — who was probably a spy — that I was going to Rome."

He did not tell the *Tribune* where he was going.

"I took a sack full of stuff, left everything else in the hotel. It was night. I stood on a street corner and was picked up by two Greeks who didn't speak English. They took me down to a railroad yard, put me in a compartment. I was there an hour and finally heard it move. We traveled all night." The next day the train stopped and he was loaded into a truck, where the travel continued for one more day. Then they traveled about ten days on mule across mountains and valleys, eating by campfire. "I didn't have enough clothes and had to borrow a coat from one of the rebels," he says. One night a figure on horseback appeared from out of the mountains. It was Markos. Homer Bigart was the first American newsman to interview him.

*The day was beautifully clear, with a breeze so sharp that Markos wore a leather jacket over his British dress. As a precaution against spying aircraft, we sat beneath trees, the General with his maps spread on the ground around him. From the distant Nestorian front came the heavy rumble of Greek Army artillery.*

Later, in the dispatch, Bigart describes Markos:

*Were it not for the rough life of a Partisan chief, he would have a tendency to stoutness. His eyes are closely set and deeply lined from squinting into the wind and sun. The brown hair under his Partisan cap [is] long and bushy. His mouth is broad and expressive. He has the gift of a quick and charming smile that can alter instantly a face which, in repose, seems hard, impatient, pitiless.*

Back in the states, this was the headline: "U.S. Newsman Writes from Greek Rebel Hideout."

Homer Bigart. He was moving now.

He never traveled with the pack. One minute he was in this country, the next, another country.

In May of 1947 he was filing dispatches from Jerusalem. Again, he made the headlines: "The Jewish Underground: Reporter Sees 50 Sworn in — Homer Bigart Taken Blindfolded to Hide-Out of Haganah in Jerusalem Cellar: Is First Foreign Correspondent to View Organization's Ritual."

In 1948 the Hungarian government said his dispatches were too sensitive to the leftist cause, and they told him to leave the country:

*This correspondent crossed the Austro-Hungarian frontier at 8 o'clock tonight, four hours ahead of the deadline stamped in his passport by Hungarian police, who gave no reasons for the summary expulsion.*

When the fields in Korea were blue with smoke and war, he was there. A July 1950 dispatch tells of a day's worth of battle.

*The unit suffered severe casualties and was forced to leave all its heavy equipment behind. This correspondent was one of three reporters who saw the action, and was the only newsman to get out alive. The others, Ray Richards, of International News Service, and Corporal Ernie Peeler, of Stars and Stripes, were killed by enemy fire.*

## In the Congo and Cuba

Bigart joined *The New York Times* in 1955. Again, he was off, to cover the civil war in the Belgian Congo. He interviewed Fidel Castro in the Sierra Mountains in Cuba. When the Vietnam War raged, he went there, too. He was in his mid-50's during the Vietnam War, an old pro in a young man's game. Some correspondents head back to the home office. Homer Bigart stayed out there.

He would be one of the first American correspondents to write critically of his country's involvement in that war.

He covered a generation's worth of civil rights battles, from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Jackson, Mississippi. He interviewed Malcolm X in Central Park; W. Somerset Maugham on a boat off the Hudson Bay, Thomas Wolfe in "some New York hotel where they put him up at."

He covered the court martial of Lt. William Calley down in Fort Benning, Georgia. He went to Europe to cover the trial of the accused Nazi leader, Adolf Eichmann.

One wonders if there was much of a personal life. There was, but it was not without its sadnesses. His first two wives died. But during his last years of work at *The New York Times*, some friends invited Homer Bigart out to dinner. The place was the Moon Palace, a Chinese restaurant. They brought along another dinner guest, Else Minarik, who wrote children's books and whom they wanted Bigart to meet. One thing led to another, and the writer of children's literature married the war correspondent in 1970.

Else Minarik owned this home here in Nottingham. After Bigart filed his story on Friday afternoons, they'd light out of Manhattan, taking to the roads to get here. "We'd stop for dinner and be here by sunset," says his wife, an elegant woman with a Danish accent.

Bigart was blunt with the *Times* during his last year of work: He told them he was taking his wife with him when he went out on the road, didn't want to leave her behind. And they were a team out there, crisscrossing the country over highways. "Oh," she says, "I loved it."

*continued on page 29*

Wil Haygood is a reporter with The Boston Globe.





# A New Broom or an Old Hand?

Jack Foisie

*Does freshness or experience make for  
better foreign reporting?*

Undoubtedly before, but certainly since *The New York Herald Tribune* dispatched Homer Bigart to England to report on World War II, there has been debate within the chambers of editors on what sort of person is best qualified to be a foreign correspondent and cover wars. Sooner or later, there comes the follow-up question: How long should one remain in a foreign post? When does one begin to get stale? When should fresh eyes supplant continuity?

I start with mention of Bigart because Homer, on the surface, had no qualifications at all except tenacity. He had been one of the longest-serving copyboys in the *Herald Tribune* city room; he stuttered; he seemed to lack aggressiveness; and he spoke no foreign language.

I have little knowledge of Bigart's introduction to war. My acquaintance with this benign, bespectacled, skinny fellow came midway through the Sicilian campaign which was proving to be successful, although with hard fighting, at the very critical time when the Allies badly needed a victory to offset their losses to the Japanese in the Pacific.

As a *Stars and Stripes* reporter, I was asked to show this newcomer Bigart the ropes. So we drove by jeep along the north coast to division headquarters for a briefing, then to regiment for another one, and then to battalion for yet another.

Nothing would do for Bigart, however, but to advance on foot to company and then to platoon. There, apparently

visible to the enemy, looking a bit senior in his helmet, carrying a notebook, and dangling a cigarette, he caused a mini-barrage of German mortar fire to descend on us all. As I groveled and scratched at the ground, trying to dig myself in, I growled: "This guy Bigart isn't going to last long."

Well, as we know, Bigart, for the *Herald Tribune* and later for *The New York Times* won Pulitzer Prizes and other honors. Today he lives in New Hampshire retirement with no more scars than an aching back. I don't know how he acquired that ailment, since he never had to bend over to roll up his sleeping bag; we did that because Bigart was an

acting genius posing as a hapless and bewildered individual, unable to do anything — except slowly tap out beautiful journalistic prose.

There have been a surprising number of men and women in our business who, like Bigart, used dogged determination and their own quota of pixieish behavior to succeed spectacularly in both war and peacetime reporting abroad. But, in this day and age, I have come to join the consensus that a firm grounding in a language and a culture is essential to a foreign correspondent. There must be a grinding effort to accumulate an understanding of the issues of a region. The ability to keep



Waiting at Panmunjom, South Korea, Spring 1953

Jack Foisie

learning on the job never must end.

Ever-improving communications, even in remote and primitive areas, make the job more challenging. The necessity to get-up-and-go to be on the scene of a breaking story is more important than ever. I guess I'm suggesting that reporting from abroad is not as much fun as it once was.

This brings me to the flip side: How long should correspondents remain on their beat? Should they be more or less automatically rotated to another foreign posting, or brought home to reacquaint themselves with America every three years or so, which seems to be the norm for American diplomats.

And what about the practice of leaving a newspaper's own foreign coverage to a "fireman," who makes a sortie into a hot spot, does his thing, and then comes home to bask in glory? That seems to be the pattern for papers with a limited budget, but this accelerated use of "fresh eyes" can result in some appalling misconceptions being given to the public.

My long-time foreign editor on *The Los Angeles Times*, Bob Gibson, favored continuity. For nine years he kept me in Southeast Asia, where I was based in Saigon or Bangkok, and so I saw almost the entire period of American military involvement in Vietnam. And until my retirement in 1984, I spent the last eight years of my career based in Johannesburg, reporting on the simmering black protest in South Africa and the minority white government's efforts to forestall genuine reform. The Rhodesian war was another story, ending in independence from Britain and establishing black rule in the country now known as Zimbabwe.

Gibson, a thoughtful and savvy person, is no longer foreign editor. He reasons that a foreign correspondent's most important responsibility, to himself, his editors, and the newspaper's readers, is to make correct judgments. To come up with a good average, Gibson believes that a reporter needs time on the scene — time to acquire knowledge and to evaluate an area's leaders.

Without the nine years spent in Vietnam and in Indochina countries relat-

ing to that conflict, I don't think I would have achieved any meaningful understanding of Asian politics and how they affected the struggle. For example, the surface impression about the Cao Dai was that it was a quaint religious sect whose temple headquarters featured large dragons carved on the walls and mingled with pictures of such patron saints as Victor Hugo. But I came to realize that its estimated two million followers and its private army were sapping the strength of the Saigon government, our ally.

In South Africa: During the eight years I was assigned to Johannesburg to cover that country's struggle, I made three trips into southern Angola to see the black guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi. His fight is against the Soviet-supported regime in Luanda and, therefore, he is backed by the white South African government.

On each foray into Savimbi headquarters, I swore I would never again undertake the flesh-bruising truck ride, but when other opportunities arose, I always went back. The big, hearty, flamboyant, self-styled general and president of his liberation movement is a complicated fellow. Sheepish about his association with the South African white regime, he is shunned by most black African leaders because of that connection. I still am not certain whether patriotism or ambition is his primary drive, but I came away convinced that he has a quality — a bulldog tenacity — which keeps him and his forces edging closer and closer to Luanda and a showdown.

Bob Gibson was not a great communicator with his staffers. I once chided him in a telephone conversation across ten thousand miles for not providing me with more "guidance." He replied somberly, "You're getting paid to make judgments. When we think you're off base, we'll let you know."

It was a flattering, if not entirely satisfactory, response. After being in a country for two or three years without home leave, I worried about being out of touch with the interests of American

readers. How much explanation was needed to explain, say, the underlying causes of the South African racial conflict? How often must it be said, in attempting to understand the racist policies of the South African government, that it took the United States a century and more to achieve legal racial equality for its blacks?

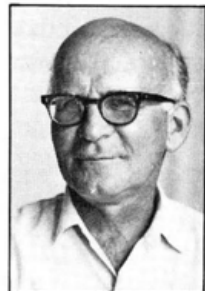
I would snort when reading a newcomer's well-written but surface impression of Soweto, the giant black ghetto outside Johannesburg. But then, perhaps it was time for me to write another feature on Soweto, to explain that it was not a slum as parts of Harlem may be. Soweto life is appalling because more than a million blacks live in monotonous sameness. Row after row, mile after mile, their three- or four-room houses are all alike. The inhabitants' depression gets drowned in drunkenness or is lessened in church-going each weekend.

So I have my own doubts about how long a correspondent should remain in one area. Having not seen American baseball for the twenty years I was almost continuously overseas, I now delight in watching the game.

So I will use a sports simile: Foreign correspondents are like baseball pitchers. The manager — the foreign editor — learns who his best starters are and he has a good idea of their capabilities. He hopes they can go the distance. If they falter, he needs to send in relievers.

It is, as Bob Gibson said, a judgment call. □

*Jack Foisie, Nieman Fellow '47, has retired recently as foreign correspondent for The Los Angeles Times. For the past twenty years*



*he has reported from such overseas posts as Saigon, Bangkok, Cairo, and Johannesburg. Last year he was awarded the fourth annual Joe Alex Morris Jr. Memorial Lectureship at Harvard University.*

# The Press Beneath the Sea

William Gordon

*The Dutch press may be the freest in Europe.*

The Nazi forces took over Holland militarily during World War II, but they failed to subdue the intellect and drive of the Dutch people. If a free press can be a barometer by which to judge a free and democratic society, then this little country of fourteen million people figures high on the list. Nestling gently against the roaring waters of the North Sea, it's the "press beneath the sea."

The four million families in Holland are among the best informed people in the world. Children are taught in the home to read newspapers and magazines at the early age of five and six years. They are also encouraged to pay attention to the issues and news which they see on television and hear on the radio.

"We believe this leads to constructive experience," one member of a Dutch family commented. "It is part of the old family tradition in Holland."

When I lived in New York as a graduate student during the 1940's, I marveled at the crowds that lined up in front of newsstands to buy the morning and evening papers. I was awed also by the crowded subways, with scarcely any space between the people, who, however, never were without a newspaper.

Thirty years later, when I went to Holland, I saw the New York picture come alive again, especially at the newsstands in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague, where people were rushing to buy newspapers and maga-



zines. The difference was that in Holland the Dutch were buying foreign publications as often as their own. Because of their facility with languages, reading for the Dutch comes as a pleasure and not a burden.

Today, television has not dimmed the enthusiasm for newspaper readership in Holland as it has done in so many other countries in the Western world. Every Dutch family subscribes to one or more daily newspapers, plus one or more weeklies, along with several magazines. Some of these subscriptions are from abroad, and every member of the family reads them.

Freedom of the press has existed for many years in Holland, being interrupted only by two major events — the Napoleonic dictatorship and the Nazi occupation.

A Dutch newspaper was being published in Amsterdam as far back as

1618, making the Dutch capital city the first newspaper center in Western Europe. The oldest known French and English newspapers were printed by the Dutch and exported to other countries. These newspapers were also printed in the interest of refugees coming into the country. There were Jews coming in from Spain and Portugal, and Huguenots from France, to a country where they could all live in peace.

Also, down through its history, the country has been a place of refuge for political and religious exiles who were allowed to bring their periodicals with them.

Between 1940-45, during the days of Nazi occupation, the Dutch press experienced its most difficult period. Many newspapers ceased to appear, some voluntarily. But the first day of occupation, in May 1940, also marked the beginning of the underground press in Holland, when a sizeable number of newspapers began publication, even at great risk. Most were opinion newspapers with circulations that ran into the thousands.

Among these was *Trouw*, which is unique historically. Twenty-five members of its staff were killed by Nazis. Today it has a circulation of 150,000. Politically, it leans more closely toward the Social Democratic Party, although it has no official ties with the party.

Like *Trouw*, a few of the other underground newspapers were able to survive after the occupation. The national newspaper, *Het Parool*, was among these, having emerged during the early

days of the Nazi occupation. The communist newspaper, *De Waarheid*, had some support in the beginning but lost it after showing its position on the Hungarian crisis. Some underground newspapers faded away after World War II; some merged with provincial newspapers that were able to make a comeback.

The primary areas of the Dutch press are the daily newspapers, the non-daily newspapers, magazines, and the free-distribution newspapers (supported by advertising only). There are no Sunday newspapers.

Most of the daily newspapers are members of the Netherlands Newspaper Proprietors Association and about 70 percent of the other newspapers belong to the Non-Daily Newspaper Association. The organization which represents the magazine press in Holland is the Netherlands Organization of Magazine Publishers.

Most of the working journalists belong to an organization similar to that of the Newspaper Guild in the United States, called the Netherlands Union of Journalists.

A subscription press, 97 percent of its newspapers go to regular subscribers by direct delivery. In 1979, there were 83 daily newspapers published in Holland, as well as 4,000 other periodicals, including weekly newspapers and magazines. Daily circulation at the end of 1978 was in excess of 4,484,000. At the beginning of 1978, the ten largest newspaper enterprises accounted for 82 percent of the circulation. Newspaper publishing in Holland has followed the route of many other countries, with more and more of the smaller papers being taken over by the larger conglomerates; but under these conditions circulation has increased rather than decreased.

It is an evening press. Only 15 percent of the newspapers published in Holland are for morning distribution. Most Dutch are up and off to their work early in the morning, and they like to read their newspapers and other publications quietly in their homes in the evening. There are twelve national newspapers in Holland, double the

number in the United States; the rest are regional and local. Of course, the small land area is a significant factor, as it is possible to distribute a paper from one end of the country to the other in a matter of hours. Among the most important national newspapers are: *The Telegraph* (the largest in circulation), *Algemeen Dagblad*, *The Volks-*

## Gyms For All

The Dutch are sports-minded people; one out of every five is involved in some kind of sports activity, and the press recognizes this by giving extensive space and airtime to these activities. The citizens are enthusiastic followers of physical fitness programs, especially those aimed at losing weight. It is a rare thing to see an overweight Dutchman. They play soccer, and by far the largest sports organization in Holland is the Royal Netherlands Football Association with more than 600,000 members.

—W.G.

*krant*, *Het Parool*, *NRC Handelsblad*, and *Trouw*. These newspapers are well written and edited, and they do a comprehensive job of covering national and international events. Some of the coverage of affairs about the United States is more thorough than what is done by the U.S. press itself. The Dutch press is more diversified than the press found in many other Western nations. There is always ample choice whereby the reader may obtain a variety of opinions, and there is no threat to freedom of expression.

In terms of quality and content, the printed press in Holland is comparable in content, analysis, and balance to such newspapers in the United States as the *Atlanta Constitution*, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and the *Milwau-*

*kee Journal*. There are no tabloid newspapers in the country, such as are found in Britain. Neither will you find anything existing journalistically on the level of England's *Daily Mirror* in content and format.

The leading weekly newspapers are: *Elseviers Magazine*, *Elseviers Weekblad*, *Vrij Nederland*, *Haagse Post Magazine*, *De Tijd*, *Hervormd Nederland*, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, and *Nieuwe Linie*.

Holland has its share of news-gathering agencies. As of 1979, there were 37 press and news agencies operating in the country, including AFP, France; Antara, Indonesia; Belga, Belgium; DPA, Federal Republic of Germany; Reuters, United Kingdom; UPI, United Press International, and AP, the Associated Press. The Dutch national news agency is ANP, which has its offices in The Hague.

The press is less partisan today than it was fifteen years ago. The time has passed when you could identify a newspaper as representing one religious group or another. *The Volkskrant*, once highly visible in the Catholic world, no longer calls itself a Catholic newspaper. The same is true with respect to some other newspapers that once carried a highly Protestant visibility. The newspaper *Trouw* remains the only paper giving exceptional coverage to religious and church life in Holland, but strictly on a non-partisan basis.

Although sectarianism in the press seems to be waning, it is still reflected in some provincial newspapers where diverse political and religious creeds are represented. In southern Holland, with a predominantly Catholic population, Roman Catholic newspapers are in the majority.

More diversity is found in other provinces because there is a mixture of





Roman Catholic and Protestant-dominated newspapers, along with more politically neutral publications. The circulation of these newspapers also reflects the population density of these provinces, all the way from a few thousand to 90,000.

The provincial newspapers are financially sound; the quality of content is generally excellent. The press in these areas also carries local, national, and international news. The content also reflects the character and skill of journalists who are local people from the same area. The same characteristics can be found in the news over radio and television. The tendency is to adhere to the non-sensational and the non-dramatic presentation of the news, which seems typical of the tradition of Dutch journalism. And this has been the practice in Holland almost from the country's inception.

Holland has a large number of regional newspapers despite its size geographically. The press on the average day carries five times as much foreign news as newspapers in other countries in Europe, the exception being a few leading newspapers in countries such as France, Germany, and Switzerland. Beyond this, the main items of news are those linked with the country's national interest and philosophy. News and interpretation of the news take up most of the space in Dutch newspapers.

There are two groups of weekly magazines in Holland — the popular and the serious. *Panorama*, with a circulation of 400,000, is the most popular, catering to young people, entertainers, and celebrities. *The Review*, with 250,000 subscribers, is the more serious publication, dealing with issues and discussions in depth.

One of the most interesting publications coming out of Holland is *Intermediaire*, widely read by academics, writers, artists, and professionals. It is distributed free to students, and to all professionals under age 40. Older subscribers must pay. It is noted for its in-depth articles on social, political, cultural, and economic subjects. Extensive advertising also accounts for its popularity and economic success.

In 1974, the Dutch government established what it calls a Press Fund, providing newspapers, both daily and weekly, and magazines with loans or credit facilities. This assistance, for those who apply for it, is to help various publications with reorganization or restructuring plans so that they may stay in business or become profitable.

## South Africa vis-à-vis Holland

The Dutch press, strong in its Calvinist tradition of human rights and its orientation toward the outer world, leads most nations in the West in criticism of developments in South Africa. Dutch journalists are constantly attacking the policies of *apartheid* and publicizing what they feel are "unjust practices in that society."

The average Dutchman, whose ancestors may have settled in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, openly refuses to accept the theory that any blood ties still exist between Holland and "white South Africa."

—W.G.

The Press Fund board membership is made up of independent experts. Recommendations for assistance are submitted through the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation, and Social Welfare. The Dutch government claims that such assistance will go a long way in helping the press to maintain diversity and will also encourage the establishment of new publications.

Another factor at work is mergers. From 1967 to 1981, economic conditions in Holland forced many smaller newspapers to merge with larger ones, thus losing most of their original identity. A similar move has taken place among the non-daily newspapers where

more than 50 percent of an estimated 170 newspapers have disappeared since 1965.

Relations among the printed media, radio, and television are relatively independent. One of the major differences is that the press operates on a strictly commercial basis, while radio and television are purely nonprofit operations. Under the law, radio and television, including even cable television, are not permitted to operate on a profit basis.

Radio and television in Holland are not very different from the written press in their news coverage. Run by a number of associations, they cover the news with the same emphasis as the daily and weekly newspapers, but to a limited degree. "We are still a reading people," some Dutchmen say, "despite the small linguistic area we live in. We are publishing a lot of books, between Holland and Belgium. Flemish writers are very popular in Holland."

The broadcasting associations have been in operation in Holland since 1928. They are membership organizations and they work together in a foundation known as NOS, which takes care of all technical equipment used jointly by the associations. The NOS, the foundation, also has its own radio and television programs based on general-interest matters.

There are four radio channels and two television channels. They are quasi-government-owned and operated. The channels are subdivided, reflecting various political and religious persuasions. They are the Social Democrats, the Catholics, the Protestants, and a division representing some of the fragmented groups. The two networks similar to the American model are the ones with the most members. There is also an intellectual network, something like our own Public Broadcasting Service. The Dutch often complain that the programs coming from this network are good in quality but fail to have a substantial number of viewers. NOS also represents Dutch broadcasting abroad and is a member of the European Broadcasting Union. Cable tele-



vision has come to Holland.

In addition to the various associations and organizations representing broadcasting groups, other institutions also have the right to ask for airtime — such as church groups, cultural organizations, and political parties. The government limits itself to granting the power to transmit, to dividing available broadcast time, and to keeping a watchful eye over operations so that broadcasters do not infringe on the public order, morals, or security of the state. If there is a violation, the broadcasters can be called in by the government and their permits can be revoked in case of impropriety. The government divides the airtime between NOS and the various associations.

Holland has had color television since 1967. Although it carries advertising, it is not handled in the manner of commercial television in the United States. Advertisements are programmed immediately before and after the news programs every day except Sundays, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Christmas, and national holidays or days of mourning. Advertising of alcoholic drinks is permitted with some reservations, but tobacco advertising is completely forbidden.

Thirty percent of the films used on television are of Dutch origin, but in recent times, more and more British films are being used. In the past, some television associations, especially the Catholic one, have refused to use many of the American television films. They fail to set a good example for the audience, they claim, adding that too many crime and sex scenes dominate the productions and tend to have misleading



## The Wild West Image

The broadcasting of television programs starts late in the evening. Crime is not played up on the tube. Also, until recently, there were no American soap operas with their sexual themes and bedroom scenes. The Dutch believe that illegitimacy and poverty are high in the United States and that this can be traced to the influence of television.

A Dutch acquaintance said, "We don't have these problems. But we fear that some day they will come. You have more sexual freedom, and you are always talking about sex. You display it and further accentuate it by means of television and your newspapers."

Western cowboy films are still very popular in Holland. The Dutch are awed by the vast mountain scenery and the wide-open spaces of the United States and its frontier spirit. As a result, the press often reports on what it calls "shooting from the hip." The Dutch media feel this is typical of American policy decision-making and that there are too many guns in our country — "Every American seems to have a gun."

In the eyes of Europe, President Reagan is a cowboy. People have a picture of Americans riding horses like Reagan, and they see Americans shooting one another in films. The "wild West" image remains entrenched in their thinking.

—WG.

effects upon their young people. But despite opposition, some of these films are slipping into the country against the protest of the Dutch. When I was in Holland, Dutch television was featuring *Little House on the Prairie*, and it was very popular. Films about the environment and adventure, and especially those about animals, also rate high.

The Dutch have the feeling that English-speaking films, especially those from England, are much better for their audiences. They seem to prefer British English to American English. Only a few German films are seen on Dutch television and even fewer French. Most countries on the continent send their films to Holland in their native language, which is then sub-titled in Dutch.

The appearance of foreign news in the Dutch press has always been extensive. Part of the reason is due to geography. Another reason is Holland's outlook on the outer world (particularly the European continent), and its mari-

time and colonial history. The press reflects this international image. Other reasons include the small, compact size of the country. There are twenty-two million Dutch-speaking people in this area, which includes part of Belgium. Even Antwerp, Belgium's main port and outlet to the sea, is dominated by the Dutch.

Because Holland is a member of the European Economic Community, the press follows very closely the happenings and activities affecting the Community — such as European affairs, defense, and security. Due to Holland's strong Calvinist background, human rights have always been a very important topic in the Dutch press. Overseas developments in emerging nations are another important source of stories because of Holland's experience in countries such as Indonesia.

Holland is an open society, but the people are deeply concerned about

other influences seeping in that may affect old values and old ways. Many still rely on what they call "the strength of the old traditions, which have made us what we are today. . . ." The average Dutchman feels that Holland is the kind of society that is not likely to succumb to adverse outside influence.

Nonetheless, the country's long history as a place of refuge for political and religious exiles has led to the current situation wherein Dutch attitudes toward minorities are changing, especially toward those from Surinam, a predominantly black country. Located on the northern coast of South America between French Guiana and the former British colony of Guyana, Surinam became independent from the Dutch colonial empire in 1975. It still receives economic support from Holland.

During the 1970's, before gaining independence, Surinam experienced a political explosion. Increasing tension developed between those of African and Asian descent and many, especially from the former group, left the country to come to Holland. The influx resulted in a rise of as much as 70 percent in unemployment among the Surinamese. Friction developed also between the Dutch and the Turks, who are in Holland as guest workers. Competition is strong in Holland's low-skill job market. This has brought about incidents of bias and discrimination that are not always reported in the news media.

In fact, there is much sensitivity in reporting news about minorities. When it comes to crime, most newspapers will not mention the race or nationality of those involved, and will print only an individual's initials. Suicides are not reported at all. The few livelier and sensational newspapers will mention ethnic backgrounds.

In a further effort to help the image of the Surinamese people, the Dutch press attempts to publicize the positive side of their presence in Holland and focus on their contributions. You'll read stories on Surinamese bands, restaurants, and bars. The young Dutch are generally sympathetic toward the cause of the people from Surinam who, despite their popularity in Holland, re-

main the "underdogs."

Journalists told me that, nonetheless, "Nobody in Holland lives below the poverty level. We have a very abundant welfare program. We have no poverty and no slums, such as one finds in other parts of Europe. People from Surinam, even those on welfare, can pay their way. But some are on drugs and the labor market is difficult for them."

The Dutch government is trying to create an incentive program similar to the one in Germany which encourages guest workers to return to their homeland after they have completed their work contracts. Such programs are directed especially toward the Turks and others whose habits and customs are alien to Western societies. However, most of the people from Surinam are legally Dutch citizens, so these programs are less effective with this group.

The press strongly supports the concepts and ideals of a free society. It looks to the United States, which it considers the leader of the free world, to take greater responsibility for these concepts. It expects the United States to use all its means and resources to maintain and protect freedom for everyone. The old Dutch have not forgotten the sacrifices Americans made on their behalf in World War II.

There is a great interest in the United States, much more than the average American is able to perceive. The Dutch press is critical of the United States, especially its racial and human rights policies.

Many Dutch journalists wonder how America can talk so boldly about the lack of civil and human rights in other countries when evidence of racism remains so deeply entrenched in its own society. They note that the United States still has its Harlems, its slums, racial and ethnic discrimination, and poverty in a land of plenty. How can Americans continue to tolerate this? The United States is a mighty power that generates fear, and the Dutch press is critical of this vast concentration of power.

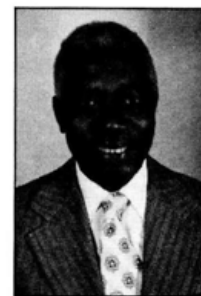
They feel that when the Americans

elect a president, they are electing a president of the world. Holland is a small country and doesn't have to worry about the accidents in the streets. This makes it easier for them to follow American foreign policy through the press. That policy represents 250 million people as a whole. It is not that easy in Europe, for through the Common Market, they are dealing with nine different policies representing the same number of people. This is another reason why the Dutch press gives more attention to the United States' policies and less attention to what is happening in nearby Luxembourg.

I got the feeling from journalists and publishers in Holland that the press also conceives of itself as having a special obligation to lead as well as to inform. "News and information generally carried by the press tend to fall in line with the character of the people," a Dutch journalist told me. "After all, we are a calm and reticent people, not often given to emotions." A thirst for knowledge is also characteristic of the Dutch, and Calvinism remains deeply rooted in their thinking, whether they are Catholics, Protestants, Jews, or atheists.

According to leading Dutch journalist Maarten Scheider, "The daily press remains the most important international spiritual traffic. In this traffic, the Dutch newspapers, although varied, form a solidly constructed and reliable vehicle; the vehicle responds to the needs of the Dutch community, which is marked by highly differentiated political and religious make-up, yet one with a truly democratic character based upon a truly democratic order." □

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# South Africa

*continued from page 2*

is enough sameness between our nations and their racial experiences that South Africa today represents a mirror to Americans; a mirror in which many in my country see themselves then and now; see hatred then and now; see guilt then and now; and if one is an editor, sees news stories.

I was asked by one of your colleagues to discuss why it is that South Africa is attracting an unprecedented media exposure these days, particularly, he said, "in view of the commonly held belief in South Africa that the country is being crucified by the foreign media."

Surprisingly, perhaps, I was asked this same question a few months ago by faculty members of the University of Pennsylvania at a luncheon meeting in Philadelphia. They wanted to know why South Africa appeared to dominate the news, seemingly all of a sudden, and why not earlier, and why now? They wanted to know why Uganda, for example, was not being accorded the same daily news coverage and broadcast prominence? All the more so, they argued, because blacks were mistreating and killing blacks in Uganda in far greater numbers than were dying in South Africa. How come? They asked, how come?

I gave several answers. I confess my answers failed to satisfy some of the Pennsylvania professors and I have no doubt they will fail to satisfy some of you.

I said that newspapers and television news departments in the United States practice their craft the same way that our State Department practices diplomacy — with a crisis mentality and a crisis response. I told them, as I have told others, by way of example, that Cyprus was a running news story ten years ago, Sri Lanka was not, and today Sri Lanka is a running news story, Cyp-

rus is not. Troubles can get you headlines. Big troubles can get you big headlines.

The American press dovetails the State Department in another way, too. News tends to follow United States foreign policy and today American foreign policy is much more concerned with your nation than with Uganda. Also, in the case of the Ugandas of this mad world of ours, it is often difficult getting reporters into such countries to get firsthand news out.

Reporters have to sneak into Afghanistan at great risk and even then their mobility is limited. The northern territories of India are closed. Try to send a correspondent to North Korea or Albania. The press was excluded from the Grenada invasion. Russia, China, and Vietnam control the news by controlling both entry into their nations and movement and access within their countries, once a Western reporter is admitted. All other Communist countries ape the Soviets.

Parenthetically, totalitarian regimes all behave in roughly the same way. They deny entry to reporters whom they know or think might write unfavorably about their nation; they kick out reporters who displease them; they harrass and suffocate and eventually strangle their own free or opposition press; they blame whatever ills they suffer on the media; and they whine that the media, especially the Western media, report only death and destruction and ignore the good news.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that I was deeply saddened on the eve of my departure from the United States to learn that your government succumbed to the tired totalitarian trinity — blame the press, bully the press, ban the press. For the life of me, I do not know what your government hopes to gain, other than to enhance its reputation for repression, and mock protestations that a free press exists in South Africa.

It is fashionable today to poke a censorship stick in the eye of television; assuming that blindness makes for dumbness. It does not. What your government now will get in the free world,

repeated night after night after night, will be file tapes of past rioting and dogs and shotguns and whips and tear gas. Unless your government can find a way to invade every television news library in the free world and expunge from their shelves what has already been recorded, banning cameras from seeing what is currently happening in your townships, in Cape Town, in downtown Johannesburg, will be a futile attempt to control what you cannot control.

Whenever any government attempts to hide its actions, the assumption will be made that it has something to hide and what is being hidden is more often than not sinister. Deception always is dangerous, always costly, always found out, and always boomerangs to cripple the deceivers.

What, pray tell, leads to this paranoid view of the media? Is it the fear of the known? Is it the fear of the truth? Is it the fear of reality?

How sweet it would be to be able to conduct business in complete secrecy. And how dangerous. And how antithetical to democratic belief.

Journalists do not expect such behavior from democracies or from those nations that pretend at democracy. This is what I said to the University of Pennsylvania professors. I also said that the press in the United States holds such democracies and pretend democracies to higher standards of conduct because they advertise themselves as keepers of higher standards than others. Invariably this gets the press into trouble because it sets the press against the self-righteous when the self-righteous mesmerize themselves into thinking they can do no wrong.

I said, finally, that the stories about South Africa are not new to the press. They have been there. Maybe not in everyday prominence. But the best of the American press has paid attention to the anachronistic behavior of South Africa for at least a decade or more. To be sure, the earlier coverage did not enjoy — if I may use that word — the sustained publication and broadcast that it now does. But neither has the unrest in your country. After all, the



incidents at Sharpeville and Soweto were discrete events. They each had a beginning and a middle and an end. What is happening today — what has happened since August a year ago — is different. It is a deadly sputtering with consequences far beyond your borders.

The American media certainly does not have a lock on righteousness, self- or otherwise. Nor does the United States. We bar scholars and writers from the United States with the blessing of the Supreme Court. We still treat the American Indian off and on the reservation with such benign disdain that the American Indian is at the top of every measure of misery — alcoholism, suicide, infant mortality, disease, unemployment. We still mishandle and mismanage old people, blacks, Hispanics, and poor whites and, for a very wealthy country, we still have widespread illiteracy and poverty and a rapidly developing permanent underclass. So we can least afford to be righteous.

But I will tell you what we do have a lock on. We have a lock on what is news.

It is news when working men are kept from their families for a year at a time.

It is news when black spots are removed that have been home for people for decades.

It is news when token representation is given to some minorities in your population and the same is denied to the majority.

It is news when moderates are jailed and when prisoners are tortured and when children are imprisoned.

Of course hurricanes and earthquakes and hijackings and air disasters will drive lesser stories inside a newspaper or deeper into television's half-hour of news or out of newspapers and magazines and off the air all together.

Boredom and sameness can drive stories out of newspapers and off the air, too. At one television newsroom in the United States just a month ago, South African scenes were beginning to look so alike that one newsman dubbed them "wallpaper." That is, they had a terrible sameness. Boredom was setting

## United States — South Africa Leader Exchange Program

Founded in 1958 and incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a charitable educational association, USSALEP is a multi-racial association of Americans and South Africans privately initiated and supported. Administrative offices are in Washington, D.C., and Johannesburg, South Africa.

USSALEP perceives its role as that of a catalyst — quietly fostering the creative interaction of individuals and organizations sharing its concerns and goals. Its major programs include exchanges of professionals who share a dedication to improving the human condition, transforming human relationships, and fostering human dignity in both societies; a Careers Development Project that assists mid-career blacks in acquiring the credentials that will enable them to move to management/leader levels in all areas of South African society; and symposia and team visits that reach across group divisions to break down stereotypes and promote authentic communication among all people by whom the history of South Africa will be shaped.

in. Therefore, television sequences from South Africa were used less frequently.

But do not be deluded.

The hanging of a black poet followed by murder and mayhem downtown in your largest city will bring it right back where it belongs — on the front page and at the top of the television news.

As you all are well aware, television news plays a significant role in shaping images. For an older generation of Americans — blacks and whites — my generation, what is happening in the streets of your cities and townships as captured by the television eye is *déjà vu*. To see dogs snarling at blacks; to see angry men in uniform whipping blacks; to see tear gas-filled streets; to see burning vehicles and looted stores; to see black youngsters being dispersed, chased, and beaten by whites is like placing my generation in a time capsule and transporting us to Alabama and Georgia, Mississippi and Florida, and the burning, looted cities of the West and North twenty-five and twenty years ago.

The late Alexander Bickel, law professor at Yale University, captured the

essence of what it is all about — especially the impact of television images upon the viewers — in a book about our Supreme Court. Addressing himself to Southern politicians' reaction to the Supreme Court's school desegregation decision he wrote:

"Compulsory segregation, like states' rights and like 'The Southern Way of Life,' is an abstraction and, to a good many people, a neutral or sympathetic one. These riots, which were brought instantly, dramatically, and literally home to the American people, showed what it means concretely. Here were grown men and women furiously confronting their enemy: two, three, a half dozen, scrubbed, starched, scared, and incredibly brave colored children. The moral bankruptcy, the shame of the thing, was evident."

"And so," Bickel concluded, "the Southern leaders had overplayed their hand. Mob action led to the mobilization of Northern opinion in support of the Court's decision — not merely because the mob is disorderly, but because it concretized the abstraction of racism . . ."

These racial clashes in our own

South dominated the front pages and the airwaves. For its part, the South complained that it was being crucified by the Northern press. But as Bickel suggests, what had been ephemeral in the abstract became concrete in the reality. It was a magnificent inoculation. Not a cure, mind you. But a sensitization. And to this day, scenes of whites attacking blacks disturb many Americans. They didn't like to see it a quarter century ago. They don't like to see it now — not in the United States, not in South Africa, not anywhere.

The fact that your government has banned television cameras from areas of unrest and made it more difficult for print journalists to report will not help to change this picture. The images already are embedded in the free world's memory and will be recalled with file tape and stories and editorials every time there is a report of unrest in South Africa. Your government can encapsulate itself and hope that the world will go away but it will not. What will go away will be any residual notions that South Africa enjoys a free press because it enjoys freedom.

But it is not just my generation that is upset by what is happening here. Do not underestimate the depth of feeling among the educated young of the United States on this point — those youngsters who are being taught and trained to become the leaders of my country. I have been at Harvard University for little more than a year now and the only issue — the only issue — that unites large numbers of students and attracts crowds, whose emotive feelings and size rival those of the Vietnam era on American campuses, is divestment. Make no mistake about it, divestment is but a symbol of their hatred for *apartheid* as a guiding principle of a supposedly civilized nation in the year 1985.

One might have thought that the Reagan administration's reduction and tightening of student loans would have brought mass protest to the campuses. After all, this is a pocketbook issue — the kind we are told that in a capitalist society should grab future capitalists by their throats and shake them. But it has not. Rather, the issue that has

shaken, and will continue to shake them is South Africa.

And not just at Harvard, not just at the elitist schools with a liberal cant. Daily, in campus newspapers and the general press, there are stories and photographs of students being carried off by the police for blocking doorways in protest or sitting in offices to protest — in Vermont and Illinois and New York.

These are stories, too, by any American editor's definition of news. As long as such protests continue, as long as blacks in South Africa are killed, just so long as *apartheid* exists, so will protest and so will news coverage of that protest.



In a recent conversation with a young student about these campus protests, she wanted me to understand two very important aspects of the protest. I, in turn, want to share them with you because I think they will provide you with additional insights into what is happening in the United States.

Her first observation is that she and her generation — unlike all that have preceded it — are steeped in the very notion of equality. This is so because they grew up when there was no Jim Crow, no legal and officially sanctioned and condoned segregation of the races. "This generation," she said, "will never be convinced that blacks and whites shouldn't be treated equally."

Her second observation is that the protests over Vietnam by an earlier generation and those over South Africa by her generation are profoundly different. Vietnam, she said, was an American adventure with American youth constantly at risk. Not so South Africa. There is no American stake in what happens in South Africa, at least none that directly threatens American youth. Americans are not stepping on *punji*

sticks, or land mines, or being ambushed to death in a remote country. Accordingly, she told me, the anti-*apartheid* feeling is from the heart of many young Americans. The same young Americans who are being dismissed by social commentators as nonpolitical and noninvolved.

I know that there are among South Africans those who think it is just for those reasons that South Africa is an easy mark for American students. This view, I submit, is a misreading and a miscalculation of tenaciously held student beliefs. It would be a mistake to dismiss their actions as capricious and opportunistic. Lyndon Johnson made such a mistake.

So much for us. What about you?

To my journalist colleagues, I want to salute many of you. You have had a much tougher slog of it than I ever faced, or do most editors and reporters face in the United States. For us, screaming "First Amendment" whenever a lawyer with a libel gets within shouting distance, or the government slaps a secret stamp on a document, or a wayward judge closes a hearing is as close as we come to grappling with danger. We do not live in a euphemistic society where the Internal Security Act can close you down; or you are faced with prison or banning; where your livelihood is threatened; where the authorities can send their police after you for displeasing them in print or quoting someone they have decided should have no voice. I know you learn to cope. And some of you do it very damn well. I am not certain I would be able to say that about Howard Simons.

To my fellow Nieman Fellows, I want to suggest that diversity is essential to democracy. I come from a pluralistic inculcation, where disagreements about who should be president or what the policies of the nation or anyone's individual newspaper, for that matter, should be, are an absolute. Indeed, I would not expect all of you to agree on how your nation ought to be governed or your newspapers run, either. Although I do not expect you to agree on matters of state, I do, though, expect you to unite to protect your profession,



your craft, your calling, from the assaults of government — seemingly well-intentioned or not. You should and must unite to protest censorship, to ward off the stifling of ideas and expression, to prevent the expulsion of foreign correspondents and the denial of access to your correspondents and those from abroad. If not, you will be next.

To my younger colleagues, especially my black colleagues, I would say this.

Because your voices have been unheard, there is a temptation and a tendency to adopt the idea that reporters and editors, most particularly Western reporters and editors, have to be either for or against the black struggle. I want to tell you that this is an abhorrent notion to most American editors and reporters. Editorial writers, commentators, columnists, cartoonists, yes — they can take a stand for or against. But not reporters. Rather, our reporters are expected to sublimate their private feelings and their private thoughts, no matter how strongly held, and strive to be fair. Note: I did not say objective — there is no such thing. But in the United States, to maintain a voice that is heard by all members of a community, the appearance of fairness is as important as fairness itself. Over the past forty years, the American press has tried mightily to put committed journalism at a distance. The new journalism of the 1960's sent shivers up the spines of the American profession and has been all but purged, at least from the established press. Do not make the mistake of demanding our journalists to declare themselves. It is not in our tradition. Nor should it be.

We, in the United States, were saddened by the closing of the *Rand Daily Mail*. I, personally, always am saddened whenever a newspaper dies or is put to sleep. As I noted on an earlier occasion — when I presented Allister Sparks with the Louis Lyons Award for conscience and integrity — “if the pattern continues and the voices of conscience and integrity are snuffed out like so many candles illuminating dark places, there will be even more darkness than now exists in Allister's native land.”

And so I say to the government of

## South African Nieman Fellows\*

<u>Year</u>	<u>Nieman Fellow</u>	<u>Affiliation at time of appointment</u>
1961	Lewis P. Nkosi	<i>The Drum</i> , Johannesburg
	Aubrey Sussens	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i> , Johannesburg
1962	Sebastian J. Kleu	<i>Die Burger</i> , Cape Town
1963	Allister Sparks	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i>
1964	Robert Steyn	<i>Cape Argus</i> , Cape Town
1965	Nathaniel Nakasa**	<i>The Drum</i>
1966	Tertius Myburgh	<i>The Star</i> , Pretoria
1967	Louis Louw	<i>Die Burger</i> , Cape Town
1968	Michael Green	<i>The Friend</i> , Bloemfontein
1969	Harald Pakendorf	<i>Die Vaderland</i> , Johannesburg
1970	John Ryan	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i> , Durban bureau
1971	Ton Vosloo	<i>Die Beeld</i> , Johannesburg
1972	Stewart Carlyle	<i>The Financial Mail</i> , Durban; Natal editor
1973	Alf Ries	<i>Die Burger</i>
1974	Ted Doman	<i>Cape Herald</i>
1975	Andrew Drysdale	<i>The Star</i> , Johannesburg
1976	Percy Qoboza	<i>The Daily World</i> and <i>Weekend World</i> , Johannesburg
1977	Hennie van Deventer	<i>Die Beeld</i>
1978	Obed Kunene	<i>Ilanga</i> , Durban
1979	John Mojapelo	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i>
1980	Aggrey Klaaste	<i>The Post</i> , Johannesburg
1981	Fleur de Villiers	<i>Sunday Times</i> , Johannesburg
1982	Ameen Akhalwaya	<i>Rand Daily Mail</i>
1983	Salomon de Swardt	<i>Die Beeld</i>
1984	Ivor Wilkins	<i>Sunday Times</i>
1985	Zwelakhe Sisulu	<i>The Sowetan</i> , East London
1986	Richard Steyn	<i>The Natal Witness</i>

\*Under USSALEP sponsorship

\*\*Deceased

South Africa, how you treat your own press will be how you will be judged by the press of the rest of the free world. I cannot presume to tell you how to interpret your laws *vis-à-vis* the press. I

was blessed to have been born in a country with the single most important concept of freedom — the First Amendment. My own measure of what's right with the world is the measure of press

freedom. Unabashedly, I believe that the freer the press, the freer the society. It is no accident that totalitarian regimes — fascist and communist, those identical twins of repression and the virulent enemies of democracy — wince at and shrivel from and abhor free speech and free press.

I know that governments — the United States government is no exception — often regard the press as an enemy; a detractor of what's right, and a threat to the security of a nation. I, of course, disagree. I can only offer as a counter argument that made by Judge Murrey Gurfein in the celebrated Pentagon Papers case:

"Security," he said, "also lies in the value of our free institutions, a cantankerous press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know. . . ."

Amen.

I now want to leave where I came in.

After Watergate, I often was told *The Washington Post* "got" President Nixon. Nonsense, I replied and still do. Mr. Nixon "got" Mr. Nixon. And when someone in your country suggests to me that South Africa is being crucified by the foreign media, I cry anew, "Nonsense." South Africa is crucifying South

Africa.

Finally, if I live long enough, I would love to return to South Africa in the year 2010 — twenty-five years from now — to see the changes that will have been wrought by inevitability; to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Nieman-South Africa association; to dwell a few weeks in the house of peace and equality; and to break the proverbial bread in a land where hatred and brutality and meanness no longer hold sway. And where fairness, decency, and a sense of each person's worth and dignity are important and vital and cared about and deeply embedded in the marrow of all South Africans. □

## Social Justice

*continued from page 6*

and very silent VDT newsrooms. And wisely, we have invested heavily in special sections providing people with a daily diet of almost every conceivable thing they have demanded.

I say the time now has come for news to make a comeback in our newspapers and society.

And, that's where you come in. I think reporters and editors have been too quiet lately. Where is that social bite of earlier times?

You are privileged to be in an enterprise able to effect change. Do you have the privilege to walk ahead without looking back?

I hope and pray that your generation of journalists will roll up its sleeves. I see good signs. The time has come to shake up the newsrooms of this country again, and the topic must be the unfinished business of society because the safety net has sprung a tear.

I am an optimist; I believe the vigorous practice of vigorous journalism can produce great stories that people

will devour and that will slip a burr under the saddle of what we should still call the "system."

Please light that fire inside the newsroom. Suck in your guts and start making pests of yourselves. You know what stories are not getting into print.

Please be the catalyst for writing about the complex and desperately complicated job of redesigning public education, the need for a better welfare system that does not perpetuate unemployment, the problems of teenage pregnancies and disintegrating families, the need for tax breaks and other subsidies for drawing businesses into the depressed areas.

And covering these smoldering problems out on the street today is not a professional dead-end path. You have the expertise. Put it to work. I tell you — it will pay off in a better job and better pay. Give your all to this story, and you need not worry about distancing yourself from your roots or from your newspaper employers. Work from your strengths, your special knowledge. From the housing projects in South Bronx to the teeming refugee camps of the Sudan, there is some grubby and vital reporting to be done.

It's up to you to keep your editor's feet to the fire. Start producing the memos that produce the meetings in the editor's office that produce the two

inches of forward movement.

Finally, I wager that you will not encounter hostility for your activism. The newspapers that have made it successfully into the mid-1980's are generally led by people with generous visions. But newspapers are largely sleeping giants these days. Wake 'em up.

The spreading ghettos of blacks, whites, and Hispanics are threatening the livability and the very economic base of almost every large city. They are becoming steamrollers that will force a new national crusade for better opportunities for the urban poor. Yes, a powerful "economic rights" movement is upon us. It is your special business to help your newspaper or television station to focus it.

As that appealing Mr. Good Guy, John Chancellor, said recently:

"...When you did get out on the street (as a reporter), life was both glorious and horrifying. . . . You saw day after day things that were wrong with society, and you began to think that something more should be done to make it better. That didn't make you a Republican or Democrat, but it made you think that action is better than inaction.

"If there is a bias in the press," he said, "it is not a bias toward liberalism, it's a bias toward activism." □

# THE BOOKSHELF

## Newshounds on the Trail

### The Responsibilities of Journalism

Robert Schmuhl, editor. University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, \$13.95.

by Richard Dudman

Georgie Anne Geyer, syndicated columnist, worries a lot about today's journalists. She says they are becoming too adversarial, "like some group of self-righteous monks." She says they jump from crisis to crisis, more intent on titillating than informing. Most of all, she worries about journalists who are in the profession for celebrity, money, and power, and she attacks Seymour Hersh's disdain for national security secrecy as "careerism gone mad."

Some others who share her worries took part in the 1982 conference that gave rise to this book of essays. Jeff Greenfield, an ABC News commentator and print columnist, charges the media with arrogance toward both its subjects and its audience and says it risks "undermining its own critically important constitutional freedom."

An outside critic, scarred from past tilts with the press, takes some hefty swings, too. John E. Swearingen, retired chairman of the Standard Oil Company of Indiana, now heads the bailout of the Continental Illinois Bank. He accuses reporters of ignorance, superficiality, lack of preparation, and bias, especially when it comes to coverage of the oil business.

In an introduction, Robert Schmuhl, an assistant professor at Notre Dame, sets the stage for such worrying by recalling the horror story of Ben Hecht's career in Chicago journalism — first as a "picture chaser," rummaging through trunks and closets and making off with pictures of the deceased while the rela-

tives wept in the parlor, and then graduating to reporter, where he got scoops by making up stories out of whole cloth, still operating on the basis that, as Hecht put it in his autobiography, "there were no responsibilities beyond enthusiasm."

Schmuhl quotes a *Chicago Tribune* column in 1983 to show that vestiges of Ben Hecht-style journalism remain: "If you go to journalism seminars, if you listen to learned profs and pompous editors debate the ethics and morals of modern journalism, you get the wrong idea. That stuff has nothing to do with breaking a story and getting it in the paper. There are only two rules of real newspapering: Get the story. Get it out."

Such relics of uncouth behavior, says Schmuhl, are "lamentable yet indigentous to American journalism in all of its rowdy individualism and diversity." But he winds up with the optimistic view that, "as journalism becomes more professional and as readers and listeners become more sophisticated and vigilant, acts of irresponsibility will be unmasked for what they are, and they will generate complaints and criticism."

To help this supposed progress to-

ward responsibility on its way, some of these contributors have a good word to say for the now-defunct National Press Council, an independent, nongovernmental organization that for ten years received and investigated complaints from the public about fairness and accuracy. Some top news organizations, including *The New York Times* and the Associated Press, boycotted the Council, and last year it went out of business.

Max Lerner, author, newspaper columnist, and Notre Dame professor, goes so far as to suggest that the government take a hand in policing the media, along the lines of the British Official Secrets Act.

Journalism has, indeed, changed since the days of Ben Hecht. Television's impact, as Lerner says, reduces debate to "the quick take, the devastating statistic, the iterated slogan." It can destroy careers, tip elections, and bring down governments faster than was conceivable when print was the only medium.

What to do about all this? The real question is how to achieve improved press performance without damaging the wildly diverse institution that has given Americans probably the freest flow of information in the world.

Lerner analyzes what makes reporters tick. He says that an earlier genera-



tion of star reporters — John Reed, Edgar Snow, Walter Duranty, John Gunther, Vincent Sheehan, Edmond Taylor — “got their drive toward uncovering the hidden from two sources, Marx and Freud.” In later times, he detects a “whiff of the satanic to be uncovered” in the reporting of the Pentagon Papers, Watergate, and the Vietnam War.

True enough, but it seems to me that there is a simpler explanation for reporters' zeal. Good reporters are not called newshounds for nothing. Like hunters or sports fishermen, they are driven by a love of the chase. Tamper with that drive to catch what's hard to get, hobble it by too much concern for responsibility and conformity, and you damage the engine that makes it all go.

Sure, Ben Hecht was a caricature, and any good reporter has standards of truth and fairness and exercises some self-restraint. But basically, it's up to reporters to get the news and it's up to the editor or news director to cut out the libelous and the tasteless, to insist on fairness, and, in rare cases, to raise questions of national security — not necessarily resolving them in favor of the government. We all know of cases where national security has been an excuse for cover-up.

Edwin Newman, the NBC anchorman and wordsmith, recalls how the Carter Administration blamed the presence of American reporters and camera crews for encouraging those who held the hostages in Iran and for prolonging the affair. His answer is that the media's job is to cover events, not to leave them uncovered, not to be in the business of suppressing information: “We would take on a tremendous responsibility if we said that the people of the country were not entitled to see what is going on.”

And the responsibility of the journalist, Newman says, “is to be a journalist. That may sound sententious. It is sententious. But what I mean is to be a competent, qualified journalist. That is not easy. There are many forces working against it. Very many. And strong. But that is the job.”

Leonard Silk, the *Times'* economic columnist, like all the rest in the book,

speaks of freedom plus responsibility, but his emphasis seems to be the same as that of the first Joseph Pulitzer, when he said he wanted the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* always to be “drastically independent.” Silk says that the strength of our country and our news media has been their diversity, “and I want papers and individuals who will say what they mean or believe, even if other people think they are outrageously wrong.”

Along with some hot air, there are nuggets of wisdom like that in this short book. It is worth reading, especially for people in the news business.

It does have shortcomings. For all the talk about responsibility, none of the contributors notes that responsibility can cut two ways. Someone is always

telling a reporter to be responsible: Often all that means is that the reporter should kill a story that will cause embarrassment or trouble.

Finally, it's too bad that, with all their talk about the changes brought about by broadcasting, not one of the contributors calls for getting the government out of its control over the content of radio and television news and extending the First Amendment to cover electronic as well as print journalism.

*Richard Dudman, Nieman Fellow '54, retired Washington bureau chief of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, now helps his wife, Helen Sloane Dudman, operate her two radio stations in Maine.*

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## In Support of Columns

### Wits & Sages

Neil A. Grauer. The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, \$15.95.

by Donald W. Klein

If you turn to a colleague and say, “Did you see that great Buchwald (or Buckley or Royko or Russell Baker) column today?” no one is going to say, “Who's Buchwald?” Apart from a few television personalities, few people are better known — or more widely read — than our top columnists. Just how influential they are is another matter.

In any case, Neil Grauer has come up with a wonderfully simple idea: He's written a dozen compelling profiles of our best known, usually provocative, and most loved or hated columnists. If poorly handled, the results could have been *People* magazine sketches in hard cover. Happily, in Grauer's exceptionally deft hands, the profiles are first-rate in all respects. He interviewed each of the columnists, and from these interviews constructed a sketch of how these men and women came to their calling, what they think of the profession, how they go about their work,

what else they do (appear on television and the lecture circuit), and sundry information about their lives and fortunes (which are often substantial).

Grauer never explains why he picked his particular dozen (Jack Anderson, Russell Baker, Erma Bombeck, Jimmy Breslin, David Broder, Art Buchwald, Ellen Goodman [NF '74], James Kilpatrick, Carl Rowan, Mike Royko, and George Will). The level of syndication was presumably one criterion — the number of newspapers carrying the columns ranges from the highs of Anderson and Bombeck (1,000 to 900) down to 60 (Breslin), but most are in 250–550 newspapers. There's certainly a fair balance on a left-right political spectrum. Washington, D.C., predominates as the home base (six of the twelve), followed by New York (three), and Boston and Chicago (one each). Fittingly, perhaps, Erma Bombeck seems to have no base — any kitchen will do.

The book's greatest asset is the way in which Grauer weaves together his own commentaries with each journalist's words. He combed through thousands of columns, and given the literary skills of an Ellen Goodman or a



George Will or a Kilpatrick, it's not surprising to find some fabulous prose. A fine example of Grauer's economy of space and his flawless sense of transition is found in the Royko profile. We are treated to a bit of Royko's devastating wit that simultaneously dismantles a hapless Chicago alderman and defends Chicago's garbagemen. A few lines later, there is a hilarious article on a stray kitten that Royko jokingly threatened to feed to piranhas; one paragraph later, we find Royko's incredibly moving column about his recently deceased wife.

Grauer is gifted also in writing capsule summaries of his columnists. Witness his closing lines on Jimmy Breslin: "Breslin is by turns boastful and sensitive; hard-nosed and caring; boorish and charming; anti-intellectual and intelligent; a joyful teller of lies and a tough reporter of truths. He appears to have as many faces as the city he loves has stories. They were made for each other." Or Grauer will use the perfect self-description of a columnist. An example is Kilpatrick's: "I'm more of an opinion writer than an analyst," he says, breaking into a grin and chuckling softly. "Lots of opinions."

Like many readers, I suspect, I plunged directly into a few sketches of some favorite columnists, thinking that 268 pages were probably about 200 more than I wanted to read. But Grauer's judgments are so solid and his prose style is so engaging that I soon moved from one profile to another, and then realized that this is an important book about important people. That, in turn, led me back to his introduction, which is surely one of the most thoughtful brief things in print about the world of our syndicated columnists. Grauer, a free-lancer formerly on the staff of the *Baltimore News-American*, traces the history of the American columnists, explores their various roles in American journalism and politics, and assesses their importance.

Grauer's ability to ferret out just the right quotation is clear in this excerpt:

Despite any shortcomings, a syndicated columnist could become, as press

critic Charles Fisher wrote . . . "The autocrat of the most prodigious breakfast table ever known. He is the voice beside the cracker barrel amplified to transcontinental dimensions. He is the only non-political figure of record who can clear his throat each day and say, 'Now here's what I think . . .' with the assurance that millions will listen!"

A first-rate collection of first-string profiles, *Wits & Sages* is a fascinating read.

*Donald W. Klein is a professor in the political science department of Tufts University.*



### Books Received at Lippmann House

**Dwarf Rapes Nun; Flees in UFO: A Novel of Journalism.** Arnold Sawislak. St. Martin's Press.

**ENG: Television News and the New Technology.** Richard D. Yoakam and Charles F. Cremer. Random House, Inc.

**Freedom for the College Student Press.** Louis E. Ingelhart. Greenwood Press.

**Role Playing and Stereotyping on Television: An Annotated Bibliography of Studies Relating to Women, Minorities, Aging, Sexual Behavior, Health, and Handicaps.** Edited by Nancy Signorielli. Greenwood Press.

**The Blade of Toledo: The First 150 Years.** John M. Harrison [NF '52]. The Toledo Blade Company.

**The Fall of Saigon.** David Butler. Simon & Schuster.

**Tobin's English Usage.** Richard L. Tobin. R. J. Berg & Company, Inc.

**Video Media Competition: Regulation, Economics, and Technology.** Edited by Eli M. Noam. Columbia University Press.

# Homer Bigart

*continued from page 14*

## Out of the firing line

In the afternoons now, his wife sees serenity in the eyes of her husband. "This is the first house he's ever lived in," she says. It was a career spent on the road, a lot of rootlessness, but that went with the job.

Homer Bigart has had illnesses during these past few years, and he has waged a battle against every one of them. Sometimes he leans on his cane. Sometimes he leans on his wife. He never leans on the memories, can't even recall what the last newspaper story he wrote was about or where it was written from. It just may have been written "from someplace down in Mexico." But he isn't sure.

On September 2, 1945, Homer Bigart was aboard the *USS Missouri* off Tokyo Bay. This is the beginning of the story he filed that day:

*Japan, paying for her desperate throw of the dice at Pearl Harbor, passed from the ranks of the major powers at 9:05 A.M. today when Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu signed the document of unconditional surrender.*

The story was read aloud to Bigart. "I didn't know if that story ever made it into the paper the way I wrote it," he said, smiling, looking at the wife, then laughing, then letting his eyes go to the fireplace.

He wanted to rise from his chair to escort the visitor to the door, but his back hurt and he couldn't, so he said goodbye from his chair, and turned his eyes back to the fireplace. And there he was, a reporter, a war correspondent. He believed in the singular beauty of doing one thing in life and doing it well, of beating the deadlines. □

Reprinted courtesy of *The Boston Globe*.

# NIEMAN NOTES

To one who recently journeyed out of state, the mystery in travel remains. Massachusetts to Florida by rail occupied a luxurious 36 hours, including four between trains to window-shop in New York City. There followed the homey ritual of establishing one's own territory in Car 820, bedroom C; countless catnaps; meals in the diner; restful sleep in a lower berth; and long spells of gazing out the window in dusk and in sunlight as the countryside slipped by.

The return home via jet plane was accomplished in two hours and ten minutes — barely time enough to gobble down a prepackaged dinner and tackle one crossword puzzle.

Waiting by the luggage carousel in the airlines terminal at flight's end, not only was the puzzle unfinished, but also one's pockets were still weighted with a fine layer of sand and a few smooth shells.

Shrugging into a heavy wool coat against the nip of autumn was to experience the unlikely vision of mittens and suntan oil.

Abrupt transitions wreak havoc on the imagination.

— 1939 —

EDWIN J. PAXTON, Jr.'s 46-year-old son, Jack, suffered a fatal plane crash south of Paducah, Kentucky, on September 14 while stunting in his single-engine biplane.

In 1976 he had succeeded his father as editor of their family newspaper, the *Paducah Sun*. Formerly he had been a Vietnam War correspondent for NBC.

— 1950 —

MURREY MARDER, senior diplomatic correspondent for *The Washington Post*, retired in September. He was honored at a staff dinner given by Katharine Graham, chairman of the board of the Washington Post Company, and by executive editor Ben Bradlee. It was recollected that Marder had devised the phrase "credibility gap" to describe the differences between events and what President Lyndon Johnson had to say about them in the Vietnam War era.

Marder plans to devote his time to writing about foreign affairs and is currently "engaged in research for a book on U.S.-Soviet interactions, 1956-85." He adds that it is "a highly ambitious project begun in 1978 with a one-year fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations."

— 1954 —

HENRY TREWHITT, diplomatic correspondent in the Washington bureau of the *Baltimore Sun* since 1974, has been named deputy managing editor for international affairs for *U.S. News & World Report*.

— 1963 —

SAUL FRIEDMAN has taken a year's leave of absence from the White House beat of Knight-Ridder's Washington bureau to teach at Columbia University, the School of Journalism, in New York.

— 1966 —

ROBERT C. MAYNARD, editor and publisher of the *Tribune* (Oakland, CA), has been named to the board of directors of the Associated Press. Because of time constraints, he has resigned from the American Society of Newspaper Editors board of directors.

— 1967 —

JAMES R. WHELAN, former editor of *The Washington Times*, has joined the staff of the Washington-based monthly, *American Politics*, as editor.

— 1968 —

JACK C. LANDAU was named a winner of the sixth annual Hugh M. Hefner First Amendment Award. He is the former executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, Washington, D.C.

— 1969 —

J. ANTHONY LUKAS is the author of *Common Ground*, published in September by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. *Common Ground* is the story of the lives of three Boston families during the school integration crisis in the 1960's and 1970's.

— 1970 —

HEDRICK SMITH, chief Washington correspondent for *The New York Times*,

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has been appointed visiting journalist at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, District of Columbia.

Smith, winner of the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting and his coverage of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, has been with the *Times* for 23 years. He was a member of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team that produced the Pentagon Papers series for the *Times* in 1971.

— 1977 —

Renee and TONY CASTRO have announced the birth of their son, Trey Anthony, on September 6, 1985. Castro is in the Los Angeles office of *Sports Illustrated*.

— 1978 —

DANNY SCHECHTER, a producer for 20/20, has won for ABC News an Emmy for Outstanding Investigative Journalism (Segments) with the program "What Happened to the Children?" The awards were given out in August at the National Television Academy's News and Documentary dinner in New York.

— 1979 —

KATHERINE (KAT) HARTING served as director of Television Training and Production for the Macy Fellowships in Science Broadcast Journalism at WGBH, Boston's Public Broadcasting Service station. Most recently Harting was senior producer in preparation for two broadcasts of the *New England Science Gazette*. These half-hour magazine-format programs were aired in October and November, and portrayed the work the Macy Fellows have done at WGBH.

The Macy Fellowships will start their second year in January. The first half of the program is devoted to the study of radio; the second half, to television. Philip Kuhn is director of the fellowships.

— 1983 —

CALLIE CROSSLEY is co-producer for one segment of a three-part six-hour documentary series titled *Eyes on the Prize*, a chronicle of the civil rights movement from Emmet Till's death in 1954 to the signing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

The series, produced by Blackside, Inc., Boston, is scheduled to be broadcast on the PBS network during the 1986-87 season.

— 1984 —

JANE DAUGHERTY, formerly a reporter with *The Miami Herald*, joined the staff of the *Detroit Free Press* in September as human services reporter. Her spouse, David Robinson, is the new executive sports editor at the *Free Press*.

— 1985 —

Nine of the twelve American Nieman Fellows staged their own reunion in Washington, D.C., during the first weekend in November. The occasion marked *Los Angeles Times*' ED CHEN's assignment for a short stint in the D.C. bureau. The festivities, which included poker-playing and jolly mealtimes, were enjoyed by the following: PAM SPAULDING (*Louisville Courier-Journal*), DOUG STANGLIN (*U.S. News & World Report*), his spouse, Victoria Pope, CAROL RISSMAN (WBUR Radio, Boston), PHIL HILTS (*Washington Post*), and his spouse Donna, JERRY EDDINGS, (*Baltimore Sun*), LUCINDA FLEESON (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), DEBORAH JOHNSON (NBC News), JOEL KAPLAN (*Nashville Tennessean*), and, of course, Ed Chen.

— 1986 —

GUSTAVO GORRITI and his wife Esther announce the birth of their daughter, Galia, on October 15. Born at Boston's Brigham Hospital for Women, the infant weighed nine pounds.

The proud father distributed cigars to his fellow Fellows as well as all members of the Nieman staff. He is executive news editor of *Caretas* magazine in Lima, Peru.

# # #

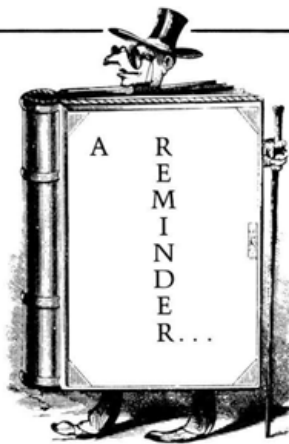
Recent visitors at Nieman headquarters included: Yoichi Funabashi ('74) of *Asahi Shimbun*; Michael McIvor ('79) from CBC Radio, Toronto; Richard Longworth ('69) with the *Chicago Tribune*; William Montalbano ('70) in the Buenos Aires bureau of *The Los Angeles Times*; Edwin Williams ('73) with the *Charlotte Observer*; Pam Spaulding ('85) from the *Louisville Courier-Journal*; David Himmelstein ('83), a screenwriter who lives in Portland, Maine; and Arun Chacko ('78) with *World Report* in New Delhi.

Walking along the Florida beachfront one hot evening, the scene was a picture postcard cliché. To the right, the full moon shed a silver path along the calm water. To the left, the green fingers of palm branches rustled endlessly. In the distance three or four other people were sauntering along.

Perfection seemed undisturbed by a small heap of curbside rubbish until suddenly a cat-sized rat detached itself from investigating the crumpled papers, paused, inspected the now-motionless strollers, and then casually ambled across the dirt sidewalk to the nearby lawn, his long tail bending the grass behind him.

On reflection, the incident could symbolize good and evil, but let's settle instead for a quick reminder of reality.

—T.B.K.L.



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—Martin Farquhar Tupper, 1810-1889

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