
NIEMAN REPORTS

VOL. XL, No. 3, AUTUMN 1986

ZWELAKHE SISULU addresses an historic conference on education in South Africa.

Democratic people's committees are preparing to take more control over the running of schools.

DONALD TRELFOED, a British editor, dissects his country's newspapers — and ours.

In Britain there is freedom to express opinions — there is little freedom to discover facts on which to base opinions.

HOWARD SIMONS explains the dilemma of a Washington journalist.

It is impossible to do a daily job without bumping into a secret.

ROBERT C. TOTH weighs the media in its coverage of arms control.

Its warts are visible, but its strengths outweigh its shortcomings.

NIEMAN FOUNDATION and The African-American Institute sponsor conference on newsgathering in South Africa.

There are inconveniences, Catch-22s, and danger in covering that country.

Building the Pages

The terror that some writers feel when facing a blank page is not unlike the fear of prospective homebuilders surveying an empty lot. They share the dread process of creating something from nothing, and even the prospect of fulfillment is insufficient to dispel their initial apprehension.

It is one thing for the imagination of an architect or carpenter to construct a dwelling — here, the front door; there, the bow window; beyond, the kitchen ell. It is quite another for the writer to capture skittish words and arrange them in a sensible form to accommodate ideas and ponderings.

Poet and essayist David McCord calls the English language "a most marvelous instrument." Possibly the demands of such marvelousness are what cause the agony of getting one sentence to follow another.

Nonetheless, four times a year we attempt to construct a magazine on a solid foundation of truth, ethical sensitivity, and provocation.

This Autumn number houses, for example, a proclamation of freedom

and a plea for understanding, as South African journalist and editor Zwelakhe Sisulu seeks dialogue within strictures of his country's political system. Colleagues in the United States gather for a conference and share their concerns over apar-



theid as a commodity and its international diffusion.

In separate endeavors, Donald Trelford and Howard Simons view issues of press secrecy and related conditions that continually are permeating newsgathering and report-

ing. Robert Toth addresses the multifaceted subject of arms control.

Finally, we include "library space" so that readers may browse among an array of book reviews.

"Anything that isn't writing is easy," commented Jimmy Breslin.

As for builders, they use a little machine called a ladder assist. The gasoline engine under the small platform is fastened to the bottom rungs. When the brake lever is released, a stack of bricks, a sheet of plywood, or a bundle of shingles is zoomed up the ladder's length to workers waiting on a floor above.

The onerous chore of moving words could use such a contraption. Texts may need the steadying weight of adjectives or adverbs. Their proper placement is an architectural task. Too many, and a baroque style overwhelms the basic structure. Too few, and a spartan facade lacks welcome.

As our pen joins word to word and we nail sentences together, we hope you know that with this construction, our house is your house. □

T.B.K.L.

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People's Education for People's Power

Zwelakhe Sisulu

Collective strength and a united stand can achieve things never imagined possible.

In late June, hooded gunmen broke into Zwelakhe Sisulu's home in Soweto and abducted him. It was subsequently learned that he was being held at the John Vorster Police Station. International protests against his detention led the South African Government to concede that he was being detained. Three weeks later, he was released. At no time was Zwelakhe told why he was being held or why he was released. At last report he was back editing his newspaper.

Friends, Comrades, I welcome you to this historic gathering, a meeting of people from all over the country, from every province, from big and small towns, rural and urban areas. We gather here as a meeting of people drawn from all

Zwelakhe Sisulu, Nieman Fellow '85, is the editor of a newspaper, *The New Nation*, in Johannesburg. Mr. Sisulu gave this keynote address before the National Education Crisis Committee at the Second National Consultative Conference held in Durban, South Africa, this past March. In his first newspaper editorial Mr. Sisulu wrote that "it is time for a change and change cannot be stayed . . . only a truly democratic government can guarantee peace for our country."



walks of life, from all sections of the people. We have tried to ensure representation of all political tendencies and all sections of our population, black and white.

This is a truly historic conference in the tradition of earlier national meetings such as the Congress of the People of 1955 and the 1961 All-in Africa conference. It is an important lesson to the apartheid forces: The people stand united. Ten years after the 1976 rising we remain united in our demand for the ending of apartheid education and the establishment of a democratic, people's education.

We also remain convinced that this can only be achieved with the eradication of the apartheid system and the establishment of a democratic people's South Africa.

Ever since 1976 the people have recognised that apartheid education cannot be separated from apartheid in general. This conference once again asserts that the entire oppressed and democratic community is concerned with education, that we all see the necessity of ending gutter education and we all see that this is a political question affecting each and every one of us.

Let us now turn to the critical question which concerns us all. The December Conference gave the government until today to meet the demands of parents, students and teachers. Has the government met the demands? We want to answer this loudly and clearly so that there can be no mistaking what we are

saying: The answer is NO. They have not met our demands.

Demands have not been met

We are saying this for two reasons: firstly most of the demands which we made in December have not been met. Secondly any steps the government has taken have been sideways steps. They lifted the emergency because they were forced to do so, because they were afraid of the united mass action of the people which they know is coming after March 31. At the same time they said they were going to impose a *permanent emergency* by giving the South African Police (SAF) and South African Defence Force (SADF) powers throughout the country, whereas previously they have only had these in parts of the country.

In the meantime, the emergency in fact continues to exist throughout the country. There is little difference now from when the official state of emergency was in force. It was *after* the emergency was lifted that our children were shot in Kabokweni in the Eastern Transvaal and that other atrocities were perpetrated. The demands of the December Conference have not been met.

As we meet: The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) remains banned; students are still in detention; teachers continue to be dismissed and forcibly transferred; attempts are still being made to stop democratic Student Representative

Councils (SRCs) from functioning; school buildings are unrepaired; and troops are still in the townships. Boycotts have taken place throughout the country because of the intransigence of the authorities, their refusal to meet our just demands.

The Current Situation

We stand today at a crossroads in our struggle for national liberation. We hold the future in our hands. The decisions we take at this conference will be truly historic, in the sense that they will help determine whether we go forward to progress and peace, or whether the racists push us backwards and reverse some of the gains that we have made, towards barbarism and chaos.

I want to make it clear that these aren't empty slogans. When we say that we have reached a decisive historical moment, this is based on a careful assessment of our current reality. In any struggle it is extremely important to recognise the critical moment, the time when decisive action can propel that struggle into a new phase. It is also important to understand that this moment doesn't last forever, that if we fail to take action that moment will be lost.

This moment has a number of important features: the state has lost the initiative to the people. It is no longer in control of events; the masses themselves recognise that the moment is decisive, and are calling for action; the people are united around a set of fundamental demands, and are prepared to take action on these demands.

Having said this, I want to strike a note of caution. It is important that we don't misrecognise the moment, or understand it to be something which it is not. We are not poised for the immediate transfer of power to the people. The belief that this is so could lead to serious errors and defeats. We are, however, poised to enter a phase which can lead to transfer of power. What we are seeking to do is to decisively shift the

balance of forces in our favour. To do this we have to adopt the appropriate strategies and tactics, we have to understand our strengths and weaknesses, as well as that of the enemy, that is, the forces of apartheid reaction.

Having said this, let us describe some of the main features of the current situation. The government introduced the state of emergency because it was losing political control. It hoped that the emergency would achieve two objectives: firstly, to stop the advances of the democratic movement, and to destroy the people's organisations which were taking control in various parts of the country. Secondly it aimed to reinstitute the puppet bodies in the townships which had been destroyed since the Vaal uprising ten months previously. Through this two-pronged attack it hoped to regain control, regain the initiative, and impose its apartheid reforms on the people.

The state failed hopelessly in these objectives. Its brutal actions, and atrocities committed by the SADF and SAP, only angered the people more and mobilised them in evergrowing numbers. Puppet structures, instead of being restored, came under more widespread attack. In a number of areas people's organisations strengthened their structures and became more rooted in the masses. Struggle began to be waged in all corners of the country and new organisations sprang up daily. Where youth had previously waged the struggle alone, whole communities now involved themselves in united action against the regime.

Despite the heavy blows against our leaders and organisations, there was a real strengthening of the democratic forces, the people's camp; and a weakening of the forces of apartheid, the enemy camp. Let us first look at the situation in the enemy camp. When the regime declared the emergency, all sections of the white ruling bloc supported it, in the belief that the resistance of the people

would be crushed, paving the way for a Buthelesi-Muzorewa option.

Barely one month later this appearance of unity had crumbled. Mass resistance had spread and taken new forms. The regime stood more isolated than ever before at the international level; and the economic crisis reached new proportions with the loss of investor confidence in the stability of the South African regime.

This situation brought home to its allies that the regime was no longer able to rule in the old way. The people heightened contradictions within the ruling bloc by strategies such as the consumer boycott. The regime became increasingly divided and unable to act as greater pressure built up, locally and internationally, to meet the people's demands. The divisions reached right into the cabinet itself, as sections of the government differed with each other on the correct way to deal with the situation. The Soweto Parents' Crisis Committee (SPCC) initiative created public divisions between the SADF and SAP on the one hand, and the Department of Education and Training (DET) on the other; something which previously would have been unthinkable.

The initiative passed into the hands of the people. The African National Congress (ANC), in particular, became seen as the primary actor on the South African stage. Not only the people, but sections of the white ruling bloc, began to look to the ANC to provide an indication of future direction.

Doubts amongst whites in the ability of parliament to provide a solution to the country's problems reached a peak with the resignation of Van Zyl Slabbert. Politically, therefore, the regime had become totally isolated, both locally and internationally. Morally, it had been exposed as totally bankrupt and without any legitimate right to rule. Economically, it faced its worst crisis ever.

It was in this context that they

lifted the state of emergency. They did not do this from a position of strength. The people forced them to lift the emergency. They are trying to gain a breathing space before launching a new offensive against the people.

A number of pressures forced the regime to lift the emergency. But it was the deadline which was set at the December conference which was the decisive factor. They knew that the eyes of the whole country would be on the decisions of this conference, and they hoped that the lifting of the emergency would defuse a programme of united action. We know that they intend reimposing the emergency in another form. But we must not let this happen. We must frustrate this scheme.

Advances of the People

When the emergency was declared, a situation of ungovernability existed mainly in two areas, the Eastern Cape and the East Rand. By the beginning of this year the situation was very different. Ungovernability had not only extended to far more areas, the people had actually begun to govern themselves in a number of townships.

The period of the emergency saw very important advances made by the people. Confronted by the terror of the SADF and SAP, the people, under the leadership of their organisations, closed ranks. Structures were built which would survive the period of the emergency and beyond it. In a number of townships, the area was split up into zones, blocks and areas, each of which would have its own committee, and some townships developed street committees.

As a result, in many cases our organisations matured and grew under the guns of the SADF. Action taken against the leadership didn't result in the collapse of our organisations. Not only did our organisations grow in strength, they often took over the running of the townships. So we saw the emergence of zones of

People's Power in a number of townships.

Another feature of the emergency was the highly political character of the struggle we waged, and the *tendency for the struggles to develop in a national direction. The masses linked up local issues with the question of political power. A set of national demands emerged which transcended specific issues or regional differences. The transformation of SPCC from a locally based education initiative into a national body combining educational and political issues is an important instance of this development.*

Our struggle took on an increasingly national character in another sense too. From being youth-led, the struggle began to involve all sections of the population. Greater involvement of parents gave rise in turn to initiatives such as that of the SPCC. This development wasn't confined to education however. Parents and workers began to take a more active involvement in all issues concerning the community. There was a general recognition in the democratic movement that it was a major challenge to consolidate and accelerate this process.

There was also a recognition that serious obstacles existed which had to be tackled. Our youth organisations began to play an important role in trying to channel the militancy of unorganised youth into disciplined action, responsive and accountable to the whole community.

Complementing this was the development of a close relationship between the trade unions and the rest of the democratic movement. The formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was of particular importance in this regard, since it took a strong stand supporting trade union involvement in community and political issues.

In terms of developing the struggle nationally, we made our most significant advance in the last months of the emergency. For the first time in

decades, our people took up the struggle in the rural areas. People in a number of bantustan areas challenged the so-called tribal authorities, and in some instances even replaced these bantustan sellouts with people's village councils.

Areas which the enemy could previously rely on as zones of subservience and passivity were now being turned into zones of struggle. In the midst of the emergency our people waged campaigns against these puppets in seven of the nine bantustans. Of course, the majority of our people in the rural areas have yet to challenge their oppressors. But the significance of these developments should not be underestimated. Everyday this process is being furthered as more and more people in the rural areas take up the cudgels of freedom.

In summary, then, a new situation developed in the course of the emergency, with a number of special features. On the side of the regime, they found themselves totally isolated, divided and unable to act effectively. On the people's side, organisation often matured, sprung up in new areas, and resistance took on an increasingly national character. We have isolated these as the most significant features of this period, as the features which characterise the special situation, or decisive moment in which we find ourselves.

This doesn't mean that the regime has no strengths and we have no weaknesses. If we overplay the regime's weaknesses and ignore their strengths we shall be fooling ourselves. More importantly, if we only concentrate on our strengths and ignore our weaknesses we shall commit serious errors. I have pointed to positive tendencies which have to be encouraged.

But we must also be aware of the counter tendencies which threaten to reverse our struggle if we don't address them seriously. We need to consolidate, defend and advance the gains we have made in this period.

In this way we can deepen the breakthroughs we have achieved in the various parts, thereby ensuring that temporary gains are transformed into fundamental and long-lasting features of our struggle.

Defend, Consolidate and Advance

We have said that we must have no illusions about the type of regime we are dealing with. The increase in atrocities since the lifting of the state of emergency shows that we can expect no let-up. The regime may be losing control, but as it gets more desperate, so its actions get more criminal. The advances which the people have made mean that the old methods of state repression are no longer effective. Detaining our leaders no longer frightens off our people or breaks our organisations.

This is why the system is adopting new methods to try and destroy us. These methods are taking three main forms. What they all have in common is that they are illegal or semi-legal, and that they use secret terror or more open fascist methods. They all involve physical attacks or killing of our leaders and ordinary residents.

Our people are being attacked by apartheid vigilante squads in areas where apartheid authority has been challenged or destroyed. From Moutse to Welkom to Lamontville these agents are operating to try and prop up the rejected community councils and tribal authorities.

Apartheid death squads are operating to assassinate important leaders of the people. Since the killing of Matthew Goniwe a number of our leaders have fallen to these agents. Our people have foiled a number of other attempts on the lives of our leaders. Assassinations have happened in areas such as Leandra where our people are threatening to establish democratic control of their communities; or where the process of people's power has advanced such as in the Eastern Cape and Pretoria. It

is not possible to say exactly who is responsible for such murderous acts, since these cowards strike under the cover of darkness. But we just have to ask ourselves, who has the capacity to mount these actions, and who stands to benefit from them?

The SADF and SAP hooligans are being given powers to act as they please, to use emergency powers, whether there is an emergency or not, killing and maiming our people. The government has said that it intends to make this legal by giving them permanent emergency powers throughout the country. This is a formal declaration of war on the people of South Africa.

The aim of these three methods is to frighten our people and break their morale, thereby leading to the disintegration of their resistance. So far they have only had this effect where our people are not strongly organised. In areas where we have developed strong people's committees, these attacks have been resisted and sometimes frustrated. The people have seen the need to defend their leaders, defend their organisations in order to consolidate and advance.

Forward to People's Power

Why do we use the slogan "Forward to People's Power"? It indicates that our people are now seeing the day when the people of South Africa shall have the power, when the people shall govern all aspects of their lives, as an *achievable reality* which we are working towards.

It expresses the growing trend for our people to move towards realising people's power *now*, in the process of struggle, before actual liberation. By this we mean that people are beginning to exert control over their own lives in different ways. In some townships and schools people are beginning to govern themselves, despite being under racist rule.

When our people kicked out the puppets from the townships they made it impossible for the regime to

govern. They had to bring in the SADF as an army of occupation. All they could do was to harass and use force against our people. But they couldn't stop the people in some townships from taking power under their very noses, by starting to run those townships in different ways. In other words the struggles which the people has fought, and the resulting situations of ungovernability, created the possibilities for the exercise of people's power.

People exercised power by starting to take control in areas such as crime, the clearing of the townships and the creation of people's parks, the provision of first aid, and even in the schools.

I want to emphasise here that these advances were only possible because of the development of democratic organs, or committees, of people's power. Our people set up bodies which were controlled by, and accountable to, the masses of people in each area. In such areas, the distinction between the people and their organisations disappeared. All the people young and old participated in committees from street level upwards.

The development of people's power has caught the imagination of our people, even where struggles are breaking out for the first time. There is a growing tendency for ungovernability to be transformed into elementary forms of people's power, as people take the lead from the semi-liberated zones.

In the bantustans, for example, struggles against the tribal authorities have developed into struggles for democratic village councils. These councils are actually taking over in some areas, thereby adapting the forms of people's power developed in the townships to rural conditions.

We must stress that there is an important distinction between ungovernability and people's power. In a situation of ungovernability the *government* doesn't have control. But nor do the people. While they

have broken the shackles of direct government rule the people haven't yet managed to control and direct the situation. There is a power vacuum. In a situation of people's power the *people* are starting to exercise control.

An important difference between ungovernability and people's power is that no matter how ungovernable a township is, unless the people are organised, the gains made through ungovernability can be rolled back by state repression. Because there is no organised centre of people's power, the people are relatively defenceless and vulnerable. Removal of our leadership in such situations can enable the state to reimpose control.

We saw, for example, the setbacks experienced by our people in the Vaal and East Rand. Despite heroic struggles and sustained ungovernability, the state through its vicious action was able to reverse some of the gains made in these areas. Where, however, people's power has become advanced, not even the most vicious repression has been able to decisively reverse our people's advances. If anything, their repressive actions serve to deepen people's power in these zones and unite the people against the occupying forces. In the Eastern Cape people's power forced the SADF *out* of the townships, if only temporarily.

The reason that people's power strengthens us to this extent is that our organisation becomes one with the masses. It becomes much more difficult for the state to cripple us by removing our leadership, or attacking our organisations. Instead they confront the whole population and occupy our townships.

As our people make increasing gains through the exercise of people's power, experience the protection of our mass organisations, and frustrate the attacks of the regime, the masses tend to consolidate their position and advance. In other words, people's power tends to protect us and constantly opens

up new possibilities, thereby taking the struggle to a new level. This explains why people's power is both defensive and offensive at the same time.

Struggles over the past few months demonstrate that it is of absolute importance that we don't confuse coercion, the use of force *against* the community, with people's power, the collective strength of the community. For example, when bands of youth set up so-called "kangaroo courts" and give out punishments, under the control of no-one with no democratic mandate from the community, this is *not* people's power. This situation often arises in times of ungovernability. We know that this type of undisciplined individual action can have very negative consequences.

When disciplined, organised youth, together with other older people participate in the exercise of people's justice and the setting up of people's courts; when these structures are acting on a mandate from the community and are under the democratic control of the community, this is an example of people's power.

We have seen that people's power, unlike exercise of power by individuals, tends to be disciplined, democratic and an expression of the will of the people. It develops the confidence of our people to exercise control over their own lives and has the capacity to achieve practical improvements in our every day lives. A very important, almost astonishing, achievement of our people in this regard has been in the area of crime control.

Apartheid and crime make very good bedfellows. They thrive on each other. In fact, very often it is difficult to tell them apart! But people's power and crime cannot co-exist. I am not saying this lightly. Crime has thrived in all townships in the country. But in the areas where people are taking control, crime is being wiped out.

This shows that the people do have the power, if we stand united in ac-

tion. We can achieve things we would otherwise never imagine possible – if we are organised, if we use our collective strength. Where we have developed people's power we have shown that the tendency for one section of the community to lead, while the others remain passive, can be overcome. Therefore, those initiatives which overcome these divisions and bring our people together must be jealously guarded and developed to their full potential. The National Education Crisis Committee is one such initiative.

The National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) has opened the way for people's power to be developed in our struggle for a free, democratic, compulsory and non-racial education. The crisis committees have brought all sectors of the community together in the pursuit of this noble goal. Students, parents and teachers now have democratic organisations available through which we have begun to take some control over education. They provide the vehicles through which divisions between young and old, teachers and parents can be overcome. Not only this, but our democratic crisis committees can, and must be used to help tackle all the problems which we face, to develop and deepen people's power in the townships and in the schools. The education struggle is a political struggle in South Africa. We are fighting for the right to self-determination in the education sphere as in all other spheres.

People's Education For People's Power

The struggle for People's Education is no longer a struggle of the students alone. It has become a struggle of the whole community with the involvement of all sections of the community. This is not something which has happened in the school sphere alone; it reflects a new level of development in the

struggle as a whole.

It is no accident that the historic December Conference took place at a time when our people were taking the struggle for democracy to new heights. At a time when the struggle against apartheid was being transformed into a struggle for people's power. In line with this, students and parents were no longer only saying "Away with apartheid, gutter education!" We were now also saying "Forward with People's Education, Education for Liberation!"

The struggle for people's education can only finally be won when we have won the struggle for people's power. We are facing a vicious and desperate enemy, an enemy which wants at all costs to maintain a system of racist domination and exploitation that includes Bantu Education. Any gains which we make are only finally guaranteed when that enemy is finally defeated, once and for all.

We are also facing an enemy which is unwilling to reason, which is unmoved by the hunger of children, or cries of suffering. It only understands power and that there are two types of power. Its own power and the power which comes from the organised masses, people's power. Therefore gains we make in the education struggle depend on our organised strength, or the extent to which we establish organs of people's power.

In the few short months since the December conference, we have already seen some of the things People's Power can achieve in our education struggle. We have also seen that the state will do anything it can to reverse these gains and turn them into defeats. In hundreds of schools students have established democratic SRCs, but the state is doing everything it can to frustrate and crush them.

The state has conceded our demand for free text books, but tries to wriggle out of this by saying there aren't enough. Also, many detainees, student leaders, are being released,

but then excluded from schools. These are only a few examples which show the kind of enemy we face.

But it is also true that where we are strongest, where people's power is most advanced, we are able to frustrate the state in its objectives. For example, in the Eastern Cape, they fired one of our democratic teachers. Through being organised, the people in that area were able to simply send that teacher back to school. They employed him. In fact they raised the funds among themselves, and said this is the people's teacher. If the state can't pay him, they said, we will pay him ourselves, because this is how important people's education is to us.

Of course the people shouldn't have to pay that salary. They are getting slave wages and the taxes from the profits they make for the bosses are going to Botha's army. But since they do not yet control the budget for People's Education, this was one way they could enforce the people's will. That teacher is now teaching in their school.

Any gain like this, no matter how small, is crucial. It shows our ability in the face of all obstacles, to resolve our problems when we are united and organised. Each gain we make opens up new possibilities. This is so, as long as we know the enemy we are fighting, and we never lose sight of the fact that we are waging a struggle for national liberation, for a democratic people's South Africa.

Another area where we are demonstrating the possibilities of people's power is through the school committees. The December Conference took a resolution to replace statutory parents' committees with progressive parent, teacher, student structures. Although these government committees continue in name, they have been rendered unworkable in many parts of the country. Our democratic people's committees have been established and are preparing to take more and more control over the running of the schools. They

are the ones who are putting forward the pupils' demands and negotiating with the school principals. The government committees are now being ignored. In effect they are falling away. In some areas their members have abandoned them and joined the people's committees.

Even the Regional Directors of Education are meeting with the people's committees. And finally, of course, the central government has been forced to recognise the people's crisis committees by meeting the representatives of the NECC. Therefore the government-appointed bodies are being replaced at local, regional and national level by bodies of the people. This is a substantial achievement, since what the government has enforced for decades is now being replaced by the people in a period of three short months.

Of course we should mention here that teachers are also coming into the fold of the people. The decision by the traditionally conservative African Teachers Association of South Africa (ATASA) to withdraw from the structures of the DET reflects the beginning of this process. We now have to ensure that this process is accelerated, that teachers fully identify with the aspirations and struggles of the people. Gone are the days when teachers were forced to collaborate with apartheid structures.

The people have opened the way. It is up to the teachers and their organisations to ensure that they follow the path of the people, the path of democracy. Our teachers need to follow the lead given by progressive teachers organisations such as Neusa and Wectu.

We call upon those teachers following the path of collaboration to abandon that path. Some teachers have allowed themselves to be used as tools to victimise student leaders and progressive teachers. Others have even been used as vigilantes against the struggles of their communities. It is our duty, parents, students and teachers alike to ensure that all teachers understand and

are made part of the struggle for people's education. We cannot afford to allow any section of the community to be used against the struggles of our people. Let us use the heroic example of Matthew Goniwe as an inspiration to our teachers! Let us organise a fighting alliance between teachers, students and parents that will be unbreakable!

What do we mean when we say we want people's education? We are agreed that we don't want Bantu Education but we must be clear about *what* we want in its place. We must also be clear as to *how* we are going to achieve this.

We are no longer demanding the same education as whites, since this is education for domination. People's education means education at the service of the people as a whole, education that liberates, education that puts the people in command of their lives.

We are not prepared to accept any 'alternative' to Bantu Education which is imposed on the people from above. This includes American or other imperialist alternatives designed to safeguard their selfish interests in the country, by promoting elitist and divisive ideas and values which will ensure foreign monopoly exploitation continues.

Another type of 'alternative school' we reject is the one which gives students from a more wealthy background avenues to opt out of the struggle, such as commercially-run schools which are springing up.

To be acceptable, every initiative must come from the people themselves, must be accountable to the people and must advance the broad mass of students, not just a select few. In effect this means taking over the schools, transforming them from institutions of oppression into zones of progress and people's power. Of course this is a long-term process, a process of struggle, which can only ultimately be secured by total liberation. But we have already begun this process.

When we fight for and achieve

democratic SRCs, and parents committees, we are starting to realise our demands that the *People Shall Govern and that the Doors of Learning and Culture Shall Be Opened*. We have to take this further and make sure that our teachers are prepared and able to assist students in formulating education programmes which liberate not enslave our children. The campaign to draw up an Education Charter is an important part in this process of shaping People's Education, since it will articulate the type of education people want in a democratic South Africa.

The apartheid authorities are unable to accept the transformation that is taking place in the schools. That is why, unlike previously when the authorities were doing their utmost to get children back to school, they are now locking children out of schools. Lock outs have occurred in a number of places including parts of the Eastern and Western Cape and Soshanguve and Witbank in the Transvaal. The regional director in the Western Transvaal simply closed all schools in his area recently. The response of students and parents has been to demand that the doors of learning and culture be opened, and there has been a move towards occupying the schools.

People are claiming the schools as their property and demanding education as their right. In Port Elizabeth (P.E.) last week the DET locked the students out of the schools. Over two thousand parents took their children to the schools to demand that they be opened. I understand that they successfully occupied the schools. This is in line with action workers are taking in certain parts of the country, where they are occupying factories in defiance of the bosses' attempts to lock them out. These school occupations give students the opportunity to start implementing alternative programmes, people's education.

The demand for free, democratic people's education we have said is

part of, indeed inextricably tied to the struggle for a free, democratic, people's South Africa. The struggle against apartheid education is not a question for students and teachers alone. A conference like this demonstrates the concern of the entire community with the problem of gutter education.

Education — A Political Issue

Likewise the enemy views education as a crucial political issue. To ensure that our demands are not met, to maintain the existing educational system, SADF and SAP are deployed against our children, shooting and teargassing them — driving them into and out of schools, detaining and harrasing them in numerous other ways. It is for this reason that our demands at the December conference were against apartheid education and also the broader acts of war against our communities.

Now three months later, we have noted that our demands have not been met. What should our response be? It is not for me to preempt the decisions of this conference. What might be useful, however, is for me to outline some of the strategies and tactics that our people have adopted and are using at present in their struggles against the enemy. It is important that we assess these and understand how best they can further some of the gains that we have made and how they can increase the crisis and disarray in the ranks of the enemy.

What I am saying is that we do not choose tactics at random. Any tactic that serves to unite the entire community on as broad a basis as possible, involving as many sectors and areas as possible, must be encouraged.

Any tactic that is likely to be sustained and to help build our organisation, that consolidates our strength and our unity, must be encouraged. Any tactic that hampers this process must not be embarked on.

Against this background let us

look at recent campaigns: In many townships, community councillors have been forced to resign. We have noted that popular structures have often been erected to replace them. Through these democratic organs our people are starting to control their own lives. These organs are based on and simultaneously facilitate the development of organisation.

In many townships, especially in the Transvaal, successful rent boycotts have been instituted. Some of these have been sustained for more than two years. The value of rent boycotts is that they strike at the material basis of Black Local Authorities, while simultaneously relieving some of the economic pressures on the masses. Without drawing exorbitant rents from our people, the community council system cannot operate. It is reported, now, that every month that the boycotts continue, the system is losing R2 million.

Amongst our people, unemployment has reached a record figure and continues to increase. The General Sales Tax (GST) continues to impose a heavy burden. In this situation, the people, by refusing to pay rent, transfer part of the burden to the system.

In the rural areas, bantustan rule is under sustained attack. So-called tribal authorities are being forced to resign and are sometimes being replaced by village councils that enjoy confidence and ensure the participation of the community.

One of the key forms of struggle employed in recent years has been the consumer boycott. The weapon's potency lies in the fact that it requires the organisation of the entire community in order to be effective. To sustain it requires strong, deeply-rooted organisational structures. Its success in the Eastern Cape lay in the street committees which facilitated the effective participation of most residents. This proved very effective in the Eastern Cape in the people's campaign to get the troops

out of the townships.

Where organisation has been weaker the consumer boycott has not only been less successful, but its implementation has sometimes weakened rather than strengthened unity amongst the people. In such situations, young people, often well-meaning, have tended to apply force instead of political education to persuade the community to support the boycott. This has had the effect of alienating some people from the struggle.

Another dramatic and often-utilised weapon is the stayaway. Where it is based on strong organisation, it is powerful and builds unity not only within the community, but also between community and trade union organisations. Where such organisation is not present, where such stayaways are not adequately prepared, they tend to produce, as with consumer boycotts, intimidation instead of persuasion, disunity instead of growing unity of the people. The adequate preparation for such a tactic requires careful discussion amongst all sections of the community, including hostel dwellers, and especially between community and worker organisations. Only then is this weapon powerful and effective.

A crucial demand of the entire African people remains the abolition of the pass system. Sensing the continued popular anger and militancy, Comrade Barayi, president of Cosatu, made a call at the launch of the trade union federation, for the burning of the badges of slavery. Should such a call be implemented it is likely to capture popular imagination, to involve every section of the African community and enjoy the support of all democrats.

The Way Forward

The struggles which I have mentioned are the context within which, I think, we need to understand our education struggles. I do not want to in any way dictate or pre-empt the outcome of the discussions at the

conference. However, I believe that we need to plan our future struggle on the education front in the context of the broader struggle against apartheid and in line with the general tasks of the anti-apartheid forces at present.

During the emergency, the National Education Crisis Committee was both a shield and a spear. The question which we must now ask ourselves, is how do we advance our struggle on the education front and at the same time strengthen, consolidate, unite and deepen our organisations?

In answering these questions, we need to weigh up how we advance the gains of the Parents Crisis Committees over the last three months and at the same time overcome their weaknesses.

As an organisation aiming at co-ordinated national response to the education crisis, NECC was able to unite parents, teachers, and students nationally around a single set of demands. This achievement was historic in the level of coherence it achieved in our organisations nationally and in terms of the enormous pressure it placed on the regime.

When planning our future, we need to ask ourselves how do we deepen and broaden this national unity? In assessing different strategies, we need to ask ourselves whether they will reach out to communities not yet touched by our organisations, particularly those in the rural areas, bantustans and small towns.

We need to ask ourselves what actions, campaigns and strategies will overcome the uneven level of development of our organisations in different areas. In short, what action will pave the way for us to take even greater strides forward in all sections of the community, in all areas.

We also need to examine ways of making inroads into the white community. To break the stranglehold that apartheid education has on the

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Telling it Like it Is

Donald Trelford

Journalists must be made to feel that what they are doing really matters.

The role of the journalist in society has gone through many fashions and fluctuations over the years. It was a Frenchman, the poet Baudelaire, who said: 'I am unable to understand how a man of honour could take a newspaper in his hands without a shudder of disgust.' Yet another Frenchman, Stendhal, had a higher aspiration for us. In *Le Rouge et Le Noir* he asked the interesting question: 'Will the newspaper ever manage to take the place of the parish priest?' Rudyard Kipling, in the same vein, once described a good reporter as 'the noblest work of God' — a judgement in sharp contrast with that of Hildy Johnson, the hotshot reporter in Ben Hecht's *The Front Page*, for whom a newsman was 'a cross between a bootlegger and a whore.'

Sir Walter Scott would have agreed with Hildy Johnson. He once wrote to a nephew contemplating a career in journalism: 'Your connection with any newspaper would be a disgrace and a degradation. I would rather sell gin to the poor people and poison them that way.'

These same conflicting and contradictory currents exist in our own day, as I found to my cost on my last

visit to the United States. I emerged from a conference of editors — where we had expounded, as editors are wont to do, on the noble values of our distinguished calling — to play a round of golf. I was playing on my own and quickly teamed up with two Americans who were as friendly as Americans usually are to strangers.

Then came the obligatory first question in America: 'What's your name?' 'Donald.' 'Hi, Don!' The second question inevitably followed: 'What do you do for a living, Don?' 'I'm a journalist.'

Then my new friend shook me firmly by the hand, looked me straight in the eye, and said: 'You know, Don, I reckon we're in the same line of business: I'm a crap dealer!'

Well, what kind of business are we in? It is my belief that we are in one of the most valuable occupations in the world. But the world doesn't seem to see it that way. Now whose fault is that and what can we do about it? These are some of the questions I plan to address today.

In Britain at the moment there are two powerful artistic portraits of our profession. One is a play, *Pravda*, at the National Theatre which has won several top awards.

The play is a grotesque parody of the excesses of the British tabloid press. The proprietor in the play mocks his journalists about newspapers: 'Why go to the trouble of producing good ones,' he says, when 'bad are so much easier? And they sell better too.'

I was asked to debate *Pravda* with the authors on stage at the National

Theatre and listed the various vices of which the press is accused in the play: ambition, cruelty, cynicism, incompetence, complacency, defeatism, snobbery, bias, deception, plagiarism, triviality, sycophancy, cowardice, corruption, of being opinionated, arrogant and drunk, of lacking convictions, of having fantasies about our own power and influence, and no solidarity.

The other portrait, in contrast, is the David Puttnam film, *Defence of the Realm*, which will be shown in the States later this year. In this the hero is an investigative reporter who takes on the State security apparatus as the champion of justice and democracy, and finally gets killed for his pains. The State is seen as the villain and the only force capable of exposing its villainy is the media.

These two vivid images of the journalist — as heroic idealist and cynical anti-hero — co-exist in both our countries. And for a good reason, in that they both represent a part of the reality. But there are important differences between the perceived role of the press in our respective societies.

A key difference is the attitude towards the media of the law and the judges. As journalists, you recognise a common bond with lawyers. You both exist as a constitutional check on the executive. In the Watergate affair the American body politic was cleansed by the joint action of the law and the press. Judge Sirica and *The Washington Post* played equally vital roles. In that case the press and the law joined forces to beat the politicians. In Britain, all too often, the politicians and the lawyers gang

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up on the press.

It is hardly conceivable, for example, that a British lawyer could have said, as your Judge Brandeis once said, that 'sunlight is the best of disinfectants and electric light the most efficient policeman.' For official secrecy is at the root of the British disease and politicians and lawyers are both committed to keeping things dark. In contrast to the United States, freedom of access to public information is not seen by our Government or our courts as a necessary condition of our democracy. Rather the reverse: secrecy is seen as a vital privilege of government and those who seek out the truth are branded as thieves.

This problem goes very deep in human nature, for secrecy is at the core of power. To be a keeper of secrets confers status and identity. It was part of the divine right of kings. As Elias Canetti, the Nobel prize-winning writer, pointed out, 'it is the privilege of kings to keep their secrets from father, mother, brothers and friends.' In this primitive system of values, power must be impenetrable. To let the public know is a mark of weakness, a sharing or dissipation of power.

In Britain, where we have no written constitution and no First Amendment, there is still a presupposition in favour of secrecy where, in a fully democratic society, there should be a presupposition in favour of openness.

Trial at the Old Bailey

It is now virtually impossible for the media in Britain to expose official wrongdoing without technically breaking the law. When I return home it will be to face a trial at the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court, arising from the fact that after the Falklands War we exposed

massive waste and mismanagement within the Ministry of Defence. It is evidently irrelevant to the charges against us that our stories have been subsequently vindicated in official reports by the Auditor-General and the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence — reports which might never have been written if we hadn't led the way.

However, no one in the British media seriously doubts the relevance of the fact that the *Observer* has published a series of embarrassing stories for the Government in the past few years, some about Mrs. Thatcher's own son. Whatever the merits of the detailed case against us, the easy compliance of lawyers and politicians against the press has been an obvious feature of this entire prosecution, as the Government's own law officers have hardly troubled to disguise.

Our Official Secrets Acts were introduced 75 years ago in response to a national panic that German agents might be running loose around the country. They have since developed into a fundamental principle of British public administration, making it a criminal offence for any civil servant to tell the public virtually anything at all, even the number of cups of tea a Minister drinks in a working day, without specific authorisation.

All this may come as a surprise to those of you who were brought up to believe in British parliamentary democracy and its tradition of free speech. But these liberties grew out of a long political battle for the freedom to dissent and to express such dissent without penalty. This is quite different from the right to know what the Government is actually doing. The British rejoice in the freedom to express opinions but we have relatively little freedom to discover the facts on which to base those opinions.

As a result, we have less right to know what our governments are doing, to us or for us, in our name and with our money, than in many other

countries such as yours, where — despite all the news manipulation you undoubtedly suffer from too — public business is clearly seen as the public's business. The right to know is the missing link in our democracy. Ours is a subtly corrupting system that does not serve the needs of the public. Journalists have to build up cosy relations with politicians to find out what is going on. The news is parcelled out in small bits at times that suit the person giving it. To preserve their sources journalists have to be prudent in the way they present the politicians' case. The information thus reaches the public, more often than not, in the form that suits the supplier. If it doesn't, the supply tends to dry up pretty fast.

When a politician leaks it is, almost by definition, a disclosure in the public interest — even where, as in our recent Westland scandal, Ministers were leaking each other's letters to the media without permission. However, when a newspaper leaks it is, almost by definition, a crime — even where the newspaper is leaking the fact that the Government itself is leaking millions of pounds of taxpayers' money through a leaky bucket!

An important function of a free press is to tell its readers things the Government would prefer them not to know. But investigative journalism — or, as I prefer to call it, public interest journalism — is seriously hampered by the British law. The law does not prevent newspapers libelling poor people, making up interviews, invading privacy and engaging in general muckraking. But it makes life impossible for papers who want to investigate the rich and powerful, to probe the waste in government departments, and to find out about the financial connections of politicians or their families.

The power of the press — that is, the power of the citizen — needs to be extended if we are to do our job properly on the public's behalf. In-

stead of that, we are meeting increasing pressures to restrict our powers. We will not be given more power to expose the dark corners of our society unless the public can be persuaded that we will not abuse such power. But the general performance of the press is such that I fear the public will not be so persuaded unless we can put our own house in order first – by abandoning trivialisation, politically loaded news presentation and dishonest or intrusive methods of inquiry.

Many of our newspapers – and some of yours too – seem to have given up the time-honoured battle to find things out and have settled instead for a purely entertainment function, featuring competitions, nudes and fictional soap operas. Some have become soft-core comics for adults. Why, some people may ask, should this concern us if that is what people want to read? The answer is that it matters because the press matters.

Key to all our other freedoms

The press has a vital, dignified and responsible function to perform in any society that really claims to be free. No matter what is wrong with a society – whether it be corrupt politicians, corrupt businessmen or even corrupt judges – if the press is free the facts cannot be concealed forever. While that is true, everything else is somehow correctable. That is why press freedom, a branch of freedom of speech, is the key to all other freedoms.

That high claim for the press may seem hard to justify in the face of some of our trade's more extravagant confessions. As the British playwright Tom Stoppard once said, 'I'm

with you on the free press: It's the newspapers I can't stand.'

Which brings us back to where I came in. How can we do better? Solzhenitsyn in his Harvard address complained that 'hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the twentieth century, and more than anything else this disease is reflected in the press.' Hastiness we have to concede. It is our business and our social function to bring the news as fast as possible. Some errors are an unavoidable part of that process. If we waited for certainty, the readers would not be well served.

Most countries in the world use every means to keep their affairs secret, as do many parts of our own societies – and, as Walter Lippmann pointed out, 'all the reporters in the world working all the hours of the day could not witness all the happenings in the world. There are not a great many reporters.' So it is not surprising that newspapers which try to lift a corner of this secret blanket sometimes get things wrong.

Superficiality, Solzhenitsyn's other charge, we *can* do something about. Part of the answer, I think, is for newspapers to *prepare* their readers for change, to provide sufficient context in which the bewildering changes can be made to seem more comprehensible. If we don't, if we simply bombard our readers with random facts, especially political violence around the globe, if we impart knowledge without understanding, then we risk frightening people into thinking that all the problems of the world are insoluble. This can induce apathy in readers, who feel powerless in the face of such threatening complexities.

The really significant shifts in our rapidly shifting world are not on the surface. They are not physically there to be photographed or filmed. The printed word – the medium of our poets, novelists and philosophers – is still the best equipped to chart those hidden currents flowing beneath the surface of contemporary life.

John Maynard Keynes put it like this: 'The events of the coming year will not be shaped by the deliberate acts of statesmen but by the hidden currents flowing continually beneath the surface of political history, of which no one can predict the outcome. In one way only can we influence these hidden currents – by setting in motion those forces of instruction and imagination which change opinion. The assertion of truth, the unveiling of illusion, the dissipation of hate, the enlargement and instruction of men's hearts and minds.'

'The assertion of truth, the unveiling of illusion, the dissipation of hate, the enlargement and instruction of men's hearts and minds. . . ' that is a tall order for newspapers, which are of necessity mainly concerned with the rapid recording of current events before they pass into history. But it expresses, in an ideal form, what we should aspire to achieve if we are to justify our existence by meeting the needs of a new generation.

If there is a whiff of old-fashioned idealism about this, then I confess it. As an old editor once said, 'a newspaper needs a lot of young fools – foolish enthusiasm and foolish ideals.' I have no doubt that there are enough young people with the enthusiasm and ideals that we need. But I have greater doubts whether we, as publishers and editors, are doing enough to sustain and encourage these qualities.

These thoughts have been provoked by the major developments on the British newspaper scene in recent weeks. As you will know, Rupert Murdoch has gone a long way towards breaking the power of the traditional print unions. He sacked five thousand of them for going on strike, and then succeeded in publishing his four papers from behind barbed wire at a new plant at Wapping in London's dockland, with the help of journalists and non-print union labour. In a separate development Eddy Shah has launched a new

national paper with production techniques and manning levels way beyond the scope of the other publishers.

The introduction of new technology and more rational production costs are long overdue in Britain, and hold out the only hope for the survival of some of our most respected titles. And it doubtless required a tough operator like Murdoch to lead the breakthrough. But he had no grounds for treating his journalists with such open contempt.

As one of my colleagues, Neal Ascherson, wrote: 'Mr. Murdoch, when D-Day came, treated his "journalists" as just one more enemy. He stuck a gun in their back. Sign here, he said, or it's a bullet. You aren't worth negotiation, and I'm in a hurry.' Ascherson concluded rather dramatically: 'The self-respect and confidence of this journalistic generation are hanging on the old barbed wire down at Wapping — and bleeding to death.' I agree with that to this extent — that unless journalists can be made to feel that what they are doing really matters, then they won't do it very well.

Unlike Murdoch, Eddy Shah seems to like his journalists. The lesson from *his* venture is a different one. He seemed to assume that brilliant new technology, especially colour, would be enough by itself to attract new readers. Not only does the technology seem rather shaky — these are early days — but the content of the paper, the quality of writing and ideas, the words and pictures on the page, are simply not good enough yet.

It is a salutary reminder that whiz-kid gadgetry may be the answer to production costs in our trade, but it is no substitute for journalism. No matter whether it is set by hand, by a linotype machine or by a microchip, the big story is what it always was — about the mysteries of the human heart — and it needs a good reporter to write it.

In the end it all comes down to journalists, which is where Murdoch

Good newspapers are the product of good journalists

- for all his formidable power — is finally vulnerable. You can have the most marvellous technology in the world and the most aggressive marketing skills, but they're all wasted if the product is wrong. I have never really believed that magic formulas for newspapers can be dreamed up in boardrooms or advertising agencies. Generally speaking, good newspapers are the product of good journalists and indifferent newspapers are the product of indifferent journalists.

If you have your share of the generation's best journalists, and motivate them properly, and orchestrate their talents, and give them the right sort of leadership and commercial backing, then you will produce a good newspaper, because they will spark ideas off each other and produce something which is alive, exciting to work for, and alert to the changing needs of the reader. And if you have a paper that readers need and enjoy, the advertisers should follow. This may not be very subtle, but it is the simplest truth I know about the publishing business.

Likewise the most basic question about a newspaper, its editor and its reporters remains the same as it always was: how hard does it try to tell it like it is? The pressures on newspapers not to tell the truth are mounting all the time — from governments who taint the source of news or impose reporting restrictions, from the slow creep of bureaucratic regulations that go unchecked, from advertisers and other vested commercial interests, from proprietors with their own private axes to grind or contracts to win for their companies, from journalists who take short cuts or bend the

story forward or put a political finger in the pan, but mostly from ordinary human folly, weakness and error.

My concern about much of the American press is the shortage of foreign news and that what foreign news there is is presented so crudely in terms either of American national interests or cold war polarities. With a few honourable exceptions, US press coverage of the world fails to educate your citizens in their global responsibilities, with the result that major issues affecting millions of people around the world are settled by slogans invented in Washington and unchallenged outside. This led your nation into torment over Vietnam and could lead you into error again over Central America.

But we musn't be too gloomy. Even with all the faults, constraints and professional frustrations I have described, the United States and Britain still produce some outstandingly good newspapers — as well as some outstandingly bad ones. I think we could do better. We still have immense freedom of action. We are free to report the news of the day (if we can find it out). We are free to comment on the news (if we are prepared to court disapproval). We are free to probe into social and financial scandals (if we risk the perils of the law). We are free to run political and environmental campaigns (if we are robust enough not to worry about the effect on advertising). We are free to hold a mirror up to life — however unpleasant the image or however displeasing it may be to politicians.

If I am critical of the western press, it is because we have failed to

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Address Before The American Society of Newspaper Editors

Howard Simons

CIA rarely tells the Press what it wants to know – it only reluctantly tells Congress some of what it wants to know.

Howard Simons, curator of the Nieman Foundation, discussed the issues of national security and the press before the American Society of Newspaper Editors. These are his remarks:

What is it we are discussing here today?

It is not just national security. It is the nation and what constitutes security. It is not just the press. It is the freedom of the press. It is not just government secrets. It is secret government. We are talking about an issue that is at the core of our democratic experiment.

For three decades, as reporter and as editor in this secrecy-marinated city, I or my fellow reporters and editors were asked by presidents and secretaries of state and defense and by directors of the Central Intelligence Agency to withhold stories in the name of national security.

Some stories were held. And still are being held. Many more were published. Many more will be published.

A while back, Michael I. Burch, the defense department's chief spokesman had this to say:

"The fact remains that the Secretary of Defense and a few others in this Government are charged by law to maintain national security. They would be remiss if they didn't try to maintain it. The protection of information, by law, belongs on our side of the fence."

I have absolutely no quarrel with this. It is the Government's job to

keep secrets. And, as I see it, it is the job of reporters and editors to learn those secrets and to determine whether they should be uncloaked before the public or kept hidden in the dark closets of secrecy.

Now, this is the very kind of notion that gets editors into trouble. When I was a child and would get up-pity at home, my mother would ask: "Who died and left you boss?" This was her way of asking the same question that editors in the United States face constantly – who and what gives you the right to decide what is a national secret, no one elected you. We all invoke the First Amendment and the Founding Fathers and the Public's right to know and the courts which, over 200 plus years, have given this nation the world's freest press and not uncoincidentally its freest society.

If you live and work as a journalist in Washington long enough, several things about national security and the press become self-evident – and they are not always life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

The first thing that you learn is that is impossible, not just improbable, but impossible to do your daily job without bumping into a secret. By one estimate, 20 million Federal documents are classified each year – 20 million. Of these, 350,000 are stamped top secret, a designation that means if the information in the document were disclosed, it would cause quote exceptionally grave damage unquote to

the security of the nation. The Defense Department alone, according to a recent story, has 1.5 million Top Secret documents in its safes.

It is a constant wonder how any of the four million Americans who have access to classified information can remember what is secret and what is not secret.

In short, if you are to know anything about Government, you have to know secrets – there are so many of them.

Secrets are leaked

The second and related thing to note is that reporters and editors do not invent secrets. They are told secrets. Or, more jargonistically proper, secrets are leaked upon them.

Why would anyone, including perhaps even a director of the Central Intelligence Agency, tell a reporter a piece of classified information or breach national security? Well, the reasons are not very strange. Many secrecy labels are put on documents not to protect a true secret, but to avoid a true embarrassment or to cover up a cost overrun, or an abuse of power, or to stifle criticism, or to avoid public scrutiny, or out of habit.

Why are secrecy labels peeled off

– the so-called deliberate leak? Often to benefit the politician or the political party. Often, too, to cause the other guy embarrassment. Sometimes to send a message to the enemy. Most times it is to put an internal enemy at a disadvantage. And only rarely to benefit the public.

For an exquisite example, I offer the following:

The year was 1964. Lyndon Baines Johnson was about to conduct a national television news conference. He wanted to tell the American public something that would command headlines the next morning. He asked his advisers for that special something.

It was suggested that Mr. Johnson unveil one of the most closely held secrets in the military – the existence of a successor to the U-2 spy plane. Mr. Johnson was told that *Aviation Week* had the story and was going to break security and the story.

Mr. Johnson went on television and described publicly for the first time the existence of the predecessor to the SR-71 then known as the A-11. He got the headlines he wanted the next morning. What *Aviation Week* got were apologies from the Air Force and Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester. *Aviation Week* had had no intention of publishing what it knew about the A-11. Rather, acting in good faith, it was keeping the secret.

There is a wonderful footnote to this story. Willis Hawkins, now retired, who was Lockheed's vice-president for aircraft where both the U-2 and the A-11 were built, told the *Wall Street Journal* last September that LBJ revealed the SR-71 on television because "he decided he wanted credit for it."

In more recent months, reporters have been trying to obtain the test results of the performance of DIVAD, the Division Air Defense weapon on which the Pentagon lavished 1.8 billion dollars before cancelling it because its performance was compellingly poor. What could be secret about the results of a weapon we are

not going to build? Or, will the record show it should have been scrapped long before we threw away 1.8 billion dollars?

Or comes the Stealth bomber. It is in a competition with the B-1 for the hearts, minds and wallets of the Congress or is it the Deavers? But Pentagon leaders refuse to tell the press, the public, or even the Congress how much the Stealth program will cost. Estimates vary widely. All are in the billions of dollars. It seems clear to me that the public has a right to know the cost to the public. But maybe that's too simple.

One learns, too, in Washington, that many secrets stamped secret are in the public domain but the secret-keepers do not know that.

My friend and former colleague George Wilson tells the wonderful story of the day during the Pentagon Papers fight when he and several *Washington Post* lawyers arrived in Judge David Bazelon's chambers for an incamera meeting. Present, too, was a deputy sent to the court by Admiral Noel Gaylor, then head of the National Security Agency. He had with him a double-locked briefcase. The courier told Bazelon that the Government did not want to reveal what it was about to reveal. He said the Judge was to learn a secret which if the *Post* were allowed to publish, the publication would jeopardize American lives in Vietnam and be inimical to the interests of the United States.

The Judge looked up and said "Open it." The man undid the double locks and took out a large manila envelope. Bazelon opened that and took out a white envelope. He then opened that and took out an even smaller white envelope sealed with wax and with a red ribbon. The Judge broke the seal and ripped open the envelope. Inside was an intercept from a North Vietnamese radio transmitter on an island off the coast of Vietnam. It was a verbatim quote to their armed forces. The intercept was contained in the Pentagon Papers and the Admiral was making the

point that if published it would result in the elimination of a valuable source and method of gathering intelligence.

The *Post* lawyers looked at it and were impressed. They passed it to Wilson, the newspaper's esteemed Pentagon correspondent. Wilson thought the quote sounded familiar. It came to him at that moment that he had read it before in an open hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee looking into the origins of the Vietnam War. It was in the public record and, moreover, by wonderful happenstance Wilson had the hearing volume with him. He handed the page with the quote to the lawyers and then to Bazelon. That clinched that for the *Post*.

George had come to the meeting in a taxi. The chairman of the board of *The Washington Post* took him back to work in a limousine.

More recently, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger jumped on the neck and back of *The Washington Post* for revealing the fact that a secret shuttle flight would deploy a spy satellite. He all but accused the *Post* editors of treason. Less than a month later, the Air Force's director of public information said that there was little or nothing in the *Post* article that was not on the public record.

A senator outraged

Parenthetically, my favorite quote about leaks came at this time from Utah's Senator Jake Garn who was so outraged at the *Post* he sputtered "If there was such irresponsibility of leaks and of those who published the leaks, we would not have won World War II."

What Weinberger and Garn chose to ignore – or maybe they don't know it – is that the very best

secrets never appear in American publications. Rather, they walk out the front door when humans — several in the employ of the Defense Department and the Central Intelligence Agency — steal them and give them to an enemy usually for money or ideological reasons. That is what happened during World War II when Russian espionage agents penetrated the Manhattan atomic bomb project. This is what seems to happen with increasing frequency these days as the FBI announces arrest after arrest of persons selling or attempting to sell the nation's most sensitive secrets.

To the best of my knowledge, no American newspaper editor or newspaper reporter ever has been prosecuted for espionage.

And now we arrive at deception.

What is disturbing about deception — whether practiced at home or away from the homeland — is that it robs one of the ability ever to know what is truly true. It sucks the marrow out of the bone of believability. As a reporter friend told me "when you think you know something you have to ask is that what they want me to know."

Now I am well aware that President Reagan has signed an executive order prohibiting the Central Intelligence Agency from practicing deception on the American press and the American public. Nonetheless, my reportorial inculcation is rooted in the past when the Agency did not come clean and did deceive the press and the public.

I remember, for example, when the Soviets downed Gary Francis Powers and his U-2 spy plane. The CIA concocted a cover story and got poor Walt Bonney, the well-liked press officer of the fledgling National Aeronautics and Space Administration to mislead the American and Russian publics. Powers, you will recall, was shot down shortly before President Eisenhower was to meet with Nikita Khrushchev in a promising summit meeting. The CIA, using a reluctant NASA,

told the world the U-2 was a wayward NASA weather plane engaged in high altitude research. What the CIA, NASA and Mr. Eisenhower did not know was that Mr. Khrushchev had a live and talkative Gary Powers. The U.S. and its President were caught in a public lie. It was humiliating for President Eisenhower. We'll never know what might have been — the summit was cancelled.

I believe that deception, color it the U-2, or the Bay of Pigs or the secret bombing of Cambodia or Watergate, where among other things, the fabric of deception was stitched together with the hairs of a red wig, puts the United States at a disadvantage always. And what I don't know worries me. It worries me because I am discomfited to have a very well-financed, powerful and aggressive agency that is so very secret. Now, I know some good must come from our intelligence gathering and perhaps some from our covert intelligence operations. But I have no idea what or where or how to assess it all — it is secret and the CIA only talks about what it chooses to discuss.

In my experience, the Central Intelligence Agency rarely tells the press what it wants to know. It only reluctantly tells the Congress some of what it wants to know, what it really wants to know. The U.S. Senate, for example, still is smarting over the mining of Nicaraguan harbors because the Senate Intelligence Committee was not informed. And a CIA financed manual that suggests assassination in Nicaragua while there exists a Presidential order precluding CIA involvement in any such activity has also upset the Congress.

Sometimes, this looks like deception.

These practices are antithetical to many editors' notions of democracy and how it should behave. Moreover they engender a suspicion that instead of protecting our freedoms and our way of life, a supersecret and superpowerful agency that can suc-

cessfully flaunt oversight by Congress and the press ends up protecting itself.

Do I think editors ought to publish everything they learn? Of course not.

Do I think editors ought to ignore every argument by a responsible official to withhold information? Absolutely not.

Do I believe that every official has the public's best interests in mind? Of course not.

Do I believe everything the Government tells me. Absolutely not.

Especially not when most leaks in Washington, D.C., are deliberate by Government officials and support the Government's position and are the most common form of security breach.

That seems to me all the more reason why it behooves larger newspapers to be tough on secrecy. They have the money and the resources and the access to high-priced lawyers and the manpower to take on an overzealous and oversecretive bureaucracy. But every time the larger news organizations flinch or get lazy, the smaller, less affluent newspapers have that much tougher a job of taking on local government secrecy.

Sometimes newspapers are wrong in printing a story after being asked not to. But then, too, sometimes they are wrong in withholding stories.

Because if actions by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department cannot stand Congressional scrutiny in the first instance and public scrutiny in the final analysis, this nation ought not be undertaking them.

Enough homilies. I would hope that forever the press in this country will go cloakless and daggerless into the battle for information, and news and truth against those who would deny it information, hide news from it and distort the truth.

As Federal District Judge Murrey Gurfein stated during the Pentagon Papers case:

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The Media and Arms Control

Robert C. Toth

The threat of the bomb has, for forty years, probably prevented a great war.

My topic is media and arms control. I'll first talk about the media, then arms control, and then how well or poorly the media covers arms control by looking at public attitudes on the subject, including the Strategic Defense Initiative.

But first, by way of introduction, let me say I used to cover the annual AAAS meetings some years ago, when they were considerably smaller and scheduled between Christmas and New Years. We science writers were the first arms control reporters, covering the fall-out controversy and the sputnik and rocket developments as they led to the strategic arms agreements. Those were also periods of remarkable activism by scientists against major elements of U.S. weapons policy. In 1957, some 9,000 scientists from 43 nations signed a petition calling for a halt to nuclear tests, following which came the first of the test bans in 1963. In the late 1960's, we saw the determined opposition to anti-ballistic missiles defenses, through the Presi-

dent's Science Advisory Committee — PSAC, as it was called — after which came the ABM and SALT treaties.

We are now in the midst of a third surge of activism, against SDI, with the boycott movement among academic scientists and engineers. It may help kill the program, but such victories are often not without their costs. The successful opposition to an ABM system helped kill PSAC and ended an era of unprecedented political influence for scientists. In recalling the political fighting in and around PSAC, I'm reminded of von Karman's maxim that the optimum size of an effective committee is point six members.

Over these years, public attitudes toward the media and scientists have changed. My profession used to be perceived as hard nosed, hard drinking and generally hard assed. Now, following Vietnam and Watergate, we are stereotyped — certainly at the Pentagon — as rabid liberal wimps out to weaken national security.

We journalists are, in fact, much like your cosmologists: often wrong but never uncertain. We have a few other problems, too. We are too competitive. We focus too much on the politics of an issue rather than the issue itself. And beyond the politics, on the personalities who are fighting. Personalizing an issue is an effective way to dramatize a dry story. But sometimes the tail wags the dog. We also develop "clientitis" at times, adopting some of the views of those we cover, and even some of their idiosyncracies.

But having told you something of

our warts — later I'll tell you about more serious problems — let me quickly tell you our strengths. American reporters are better than any others in the world. Better educated, more professional and more conscientious. And we're better informed, particularly on arms control issues. This is in part because we enjoy far greater access to policy makers than do reporters in other countries.

I have had some experiences in the Soviet Union where information, however inane, is secret until officially released. This extends up to and including research on parapsychology, as I found out. I spent some uncomfortable hours in Le Fortovo prison trying to explain to the KGB that American journalists operate on a different basis than Soviet journalists. Soviet journalists not only never get scoops, they never look for scoops. They consider objectivism to be an epithet, literally. As Leninists, they are committed to promoting the cause and the advance of Communism.

Outside the Communist world, we American journalists are better on average than those of any other country. Having also been posted in London, I can even claim we're better than our English speaking cousins in reporting, although we're seldom as elegant with the King's English. Or as brash and sensational. It recalls the celebrated 1930 verse:

*You cannot hope to bribe or twist.
Thank God! The British Journalist.
But seeing what the man will do
Unbribed, there's no occasion to.*

It is axiomatic that in a democracy like ours, the duty of press — in ex-

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airs, and has served in the London and Moscow bureaus of The L.A. Times. He delivered this paper in May in Philadelphia at a meeting of The American Association for the Advancement of Science.

change for its freedom — is to provide knowledgeable and accurate information, and insightful analysis. Democracy functions best with an informed electorate. The founding fathers chose to give the press a major role in informing the electorate.

Our responsibility in this respect applies to all issues. But it is particularly acute on the emotional issues of nuclear arms and efforts to control them. Arms agreements have acquired a status greater than their intrinsic merit. In this part this is because they have been associated with summit meetings. But it is also because they deal with the terrifying possibilities of nuclear war, with its deadly, silent and insidious radiation, and the public's desire for a respite from the threat. Nuclear weapons have produced a high and enduring level of anxiety in the public. This demands that the media is clearer, more responsible, and less polemic about nuclear arms control than about most other foreign affairs issues we address.

Too many people expect too much of arms control today. Arms agreements may have become the cornerstone of U.S.-Soviet relations, but some see arms control as a way to end the threat of war. Such overexpectations are the fault of the press as well as politicians. We must guard against overselling arms control, like detente, to avoid disappointment and cynicism.

Drawing the line between responsible and irresponsible reporting is one of the major and chronic dilemmas of journalists. We have a right to be aggressive in searching for facts and writing critical analyses. We don't have the right — in my view — to publish details of building an atomic bomb or secret codes, or name CIA agents who may then be targets for terrorists, or describe in advance the operational plans of a Libyan bombing strike that might cost American lives.

Between those extremes, the decision to publish or not is harder. It's usually resolved on a case-to-case

basis during discussions between a reporter and his editors. As a first rule of thumb, most of us believe that when in doubt, we should publish. This philosophy, while it took shape over many decades, was profoundly reinforced by the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961. Much of the U.S. press knew that the U.S. government was training Cuban exiles in Guatemala for that invasion. But we were persuaded — sometimes by personal appeals of President Kennedy himself — to withhold the news in the national interest. After the tragedy, Kennedy said that if we had published, the operation might have been aborted and a humiliating and costly defeat avoided.

The arms control media has, in addition, a particular set of problems that I hoked up into the acronym of SLAC. It stands for Sources, Leaks, Advocacy and Conflict of Interest. These create problems for us which are serious because, unless the public understands these issues, they can reduce our credibility.

Taking sources first. We can't always give the names of individuals providing the information. Sometimes the official will only provide it anonymously because he fears for his job, often because he doesn't want to be identified with a position different from his agency's or from the White House's stand. When we can, we give readers some indication of the origin of the information, for example, by attributing it to a Pentagon official, or to an arms control supporter, as the case may be. Then the reader can better evaluate the information. When our stories contain no hint of the identity of a source, the reader must rely on the name of our publication or network, and our byline, as a guide to its reliability. If we are wrong too often, the theory is that the market place will wreak its vengeance.

Many find this unsatisfactory, even see conspiracies to mislead, in how individual reporters handle this problem. They would find instruc-

tive a survey by New York University's Center for War, Peace and the News Media, which examined the stories of 11 national security reporters who it then ranked according to how often they identified sources. It found that Fred Kaplan of *The Boston Globe* named names the most, over 70 percent of the time during the sampled period, October, 1985. But he covers Capitol Hill, as a commentary accompanying the survey itself noted. People up there like to talk on the record — in sometimes inverse correlation to what they know. Kaplan's colleague on the *Globe*, Bill Beecher, named names least, under 20 percent. Yet he is among the most knowledgeable and productive reporters in Washington. Johanna Neuman [NF '82] of *USA Today* was second to Kaplan in naming names. But again, as the NYU study mentioned, her stories — and I quote — “were usually recountings of public statements or on the record briefings. If October, 1985, was any guide,” it added, “she does little of the enterprising reporting undertaken by Kaplan, Leslie Gelb of *The New York Times*, Walter Pincus of *The Washington Post* and Robert Toth of *The Los Angeles Times*.” For the record Gelb and myself scored in the low forties, Pincus in the high twenties, in naming names.

This survey showed something that there is no automatic correlation between the quality of a story and how many sources are identified in it. We all — reporters and readers or viewers — feel more comfortable with information that is attributed as closely as possible. But just because the source is identified does not make the story more true, valuable or informative.

My second rule of thumb for covering national security issues is: just cause it's secret doesn't mean its true. Someone said its corollary is: Which liar do you believe? Anyway, this leads me to leaks.

The vast majority of exclusive stories are not the result of informa-

tion given you on a platter. They are the result of hard work — of turning a rumor or vague tip through digging into a coherent picture, writing a story, and then waiting anxiously the next day for your exclusive to be either picked up by the competition, or denied by the Administration. The worse that can happen is nothing. In an old journalistic nightmare, the editor asks two days later: "Why is your exclusive still exclusive?"

Deliberate leaks, which are the minority but often the most sensational, come in various shapes and sizes. Steve Hess of the Brookings Institution, in his book *The Government/Press Connection*, has taken the useful approach of categorizing these leaks by motives. Policy leaks are straightforward pitches for or against a policy. Trial balloon leaks attempt to see if a new idea will fly. Then there are ego leaks, goodwill leaks, animus leaks, and whistleblower leaks. Almost all of these leaks have a purpose, but serving the higher goal of truth is not always it.

A typical arms control leak occurred last September when Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze was coming to town with a new arms offer. The Administration had proposed a 33 percent cut in strategic missile warheads, and Moscow let the Administration know in advance that Shevardnadze would offer a 40 percent cut in strategic weapons. Presidential aides, to minimize this impact on the U.S. public, leaked Shevardnadze's anticipated offer. But when he came, Shevardnadze went one better, offering 50 percent.

This tells you something not only about leaks, but also about the theatrical nature of figures. On the other hand, both sides are now publicly signed onto the goal of a 50 percent cut in strategic arms, which will be a measure of how well they succeed in the end.

I will cite another arms control leak, because it concerned really harmful as well as secret data. In 1979, the Carter White House decided to tell the public how well the

United States could monitor the SALT II agreement which was then in trouble before Congress. A senior Presidential aide asked a military friend of mine to brief Richard Burt of *The New York Times* on U.S. capabilities. My friend insisted that the request be put in writing because the material was so sensitive he could go to jail for divulging it. Carter's aide refused, and he briefed Burt himself. The information he provided, which Burt printed, helped close off listening channels to the United States, and thereby did real damage to the national security. In his enthusiasm, the Carter aide who did the leaking had overstepped his authority to leak. He almost got fired.

Almost, I say, almost. No Presidential staffer to my knowledge has been fired for leaking. So when you hear outcries from this or any other Administration about leaks, take it with a grain of salt. They could stop leaks tomorrow if they threatened to polygraph White House staffers, irrespective of the effectiveness of the lie detector.

Don't mistake me. The media doesn't want to stop leaks. We take the ones that come on platters from Democratic and Republican Administrations without fear or favor, I hope, although we know there is no free lunch. We try to compensate for the spin that is put on the information as best we can.

I recognized that leaks can damage the national interest. Lots less than alleged, but some damage. As a journalist, however, short of a national emergency, I cannot be expected to withhold information. It is unnatural. It is not our role. We in the media should not be blamed for disclosing sensitive information, since it is not our responsibility to protect sensitive information. Our job is to tell what we know. But often we are blamed, and it diminishes our standing and hence our credibility with the public.

Besides sources and leaks, we in the media also have a problem with

advocacy. Advocacy should have absolutely no role in arms control journalism. Unfortunately, in my view, there are journalists who believe arms control is so good and the arms race is so bad that they wish to further the cause. It's risky, because some arms control agreements can be bad, and some arms races — qualitative ones, for example, rather than quantitative ones — may be good. I think I can often, too often, tell the politics of a reporter or his publication or network by the way a story is written or an eyebrow raised during delivery.

Politically it's risky, too. Advocates of arms control defend their bias by arguing that this Administration is basically militaristic and against arms control. They feel that some corrective slant is necessary to right the balance. They complain that the media as a whole has shifted its presentation to the right in recent years. Op-ed page arguments are set up between the right and the center, instead of the left and right. Soviet spokesmen are placed in the position of arguing the alternative to Reagan's policies, ignoring the domestic Democratic alternatives. There may be merit to these complaints. I won't attempt to explain, let alone justify, editorial page opinions and op-ed page contests.

But if we reporters become advocates to correct this Administration's alleged bias, we might have to do the reverse if we got another Carter Administration.

We might also be tempted to compensate for the U.S. disadvantage in the propaganda wars with the Soviets. This arises from the fact that there is really only one audience for both U.S. and Soviet propaganda: the Western public. The Soviets don't have to worry about public opinion in Tomsk or Pinsk, or even in Moscow. Moscow's aim is to put public pressure on the U.S. Administration and Congress to curtail weapons programs, and to drive wedges between Washington and its allies, with as little cost to them-

selves as possible.

Just this month, for example, in the Chernobyl nuclear power plant tragedy, we've seen that Moscow doesn't worry about its public opinion. The accident has spurred a new debate on the future of atomic energy plants — but only in the West. The Soviet people were last to know the scale of the catastrophe. Two of their chief spokesmen gave information to the Western media during the first week which was not ever reported in the Soviet press, illustrating how they target international rather than domestic audiences.

But most of us believe that just as we should not try to compensate for the perceived attitude by this or any other U.S. Administration toward arms control, we should not compensate for the Soviet advantage in this asymmetrical political world. It is one of the main frustrations of journalism to be always on the outside, watching rather than doing, but it is essential in order to fulfill our job. You should not expect, you should not want us to be advocates.

A final concern is the allegation of conflict of interest. Here I refer to reporters who were once government officials and who now cover the offices they once represented or lead. They set policy for those offices, knew their secrets, and hired people who still work there. There are at least three examples. Les Gelb was director of Political/Military Affairs at the State Department. Bill Beecher was public affairs chief at the Pentagon. Rick Inderfurth of ABC was a National Security Council staffer. Andrew Cockburn, one of the most acidic critics of this situation, considers it disgraceful that these men were hired after their government service by news media. He wants a wide chasm between reporters and government servants to avoid any symbiosis that might lead the press and the government in the same direction on policy issues. To him, the two should be forever antagonistic.

My view is that the expert knowledge these reporters bring to the subject more than compensates for the theoretical risk. The reader and viewer are better informed for their experience. In fact, the most bitter criticism I've heard of this revolving door syndrome comes from government officials who suspect that the reporters use information, either directly or indirectly, which they had learned while inside with security clearances. This means to me that, rather than being in bed with the government, these reporters are being embarrassingly effective in their critical coverage.

I'll leave the media problems on the upbeat. For all our faults, believe it or not, we aren't as badly regarded by the public as our enemies would like. The Times Mirror Co., which is the parent organization of my newspaper and several other media companies, recently had the Gallup Organization conduct a detailed survey of public attitudes toward the media.

It found that a majority complained we are too dependent on and influenced by the government, by special interests and by other institutions we cover, and by our need to attract mass audiences. We are also too liberally biased and too unwilling to admit error, the survey found. But we are considered highly professional, moral, and patriotic, and we protect democracy and enhance the national security. Obviously, this was not a survey of military officers. We are faulted a great deal for treading on individual rights, and libel suits are good to keep us honest. But we are seen as keeping political leaders from making wrong decisions. The main criticism of the public is that we aren't good enough watchdogs.

The Times Mirror survey also found that people don't talk about us newsmen very much. In fact they talk about journalists almost least among various groups — after political leaders, entertainers, doctors, athletes, lawyers, clergymen and

businessmen. The only group less talked about are you scientists.

How well the media reports on arms control may depend on how you define arms control. At one level, arms control is an aspect of national defense policy pursued through diplomacy. It is not disarmament, although when arms control efforts began seriously in the late 1950's, arms control and disarmament were often used interchangeably. Legislators who created the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency recognized the distinction between these two concepts, however. Today, lip service is still paid to general and complete disarmament, but arms control is a more realistic goal. Its aim is more modest — stability. Since stability might be enhanced by more as well as fewer weapons, the declared aim of U.S. arms control policy is nuclear stability at lower levels of arms.

Efforts to achieve that goal has become a sub-set of U.S.-Soviet relations. Such efforts do not occur in a vacuum, however. Arms control is linked to other aspects of the broader relationship, such as regional or Third World issues and human rights. This was dramatized most clearly when the Carter Administration withdrew the SALT II treaty from the ratification process in Congress after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Realistically, what can arms control accomplish? Thomas Schelling and others at Harvard name three things. It can reduce the likelihood of war. It can reduce consequences of war if it occurs. And it can reduce the costs of preparing for war. In attempting to quantify the potential of those goals, Schelling said arms control cannot reduce the chances of war by a factor of 10, but it can reduce the consequences of war by a factor of ten.

Today, arms control has become a continuing process rather than a finite set of negotiations. The process can be different things to different people.

One view is that it is theatre, all blue smoke and mirrors, propaganda aimed at grabbing the high ground of public opinion and little else. It argues that arms agreements are not in the U.S. interest, but that arms negotiations are necessary to get defense budgets passed and to pacify domestic and world opinion. It argues that the Soviet interest is simply to hobble or kill U.S. weapons programs and split us from our allies.

Arms control can also be seen as a politico-military process, rather than a specific set of negotiations, that can have both political and military utility. Politically, it can help manage the super power relationship. Arms agreements show that the political relationship is improving, and this does lubricate the Administration's relations with Congress and the allies. It also makes conflict less likely. Arms agreements can also have at least some military benefit — modest but useful, is the consensus phrase. Arms agreements won't cause restructuring of the strategic forces of the super powers, but they can result in marginally beneficial limitations and even reductions on their military forces.

Not surprisingly, you can find examples that justify all of these views. You can almost see arms control progressing from theatrical phase to political-military results. But several points here should be noted. One is that even the most conservative cynics find an excuse to continue arms talks; none see any benefit in just breaking off such talks. Second, realists accept that arms control cannot work miracles. Even if all nuclear weapons were destroyed, political animosities would remain. Third, there is an element of safety in the great number of nuclear weapons, a redundancy that both makes nuclear war unthinkable. It also makes even a 50 percent cut — down to a mere 6,000 warheads on each side — far less of a radical step than it might appear at first blush.

The press is most clearly a player in the arms control process during the theatrical stage. It is a megaphone for each side to explain and seek support for its positions.

The new Soviet leader Gorbachev seems more attracted to and adept at playing to the grandstand than his predecessors. His recent offer to sign an indefinite nuclear test moratorium after a quick meeting in Europe with Reagan to seal the deal was almost purely theatre, announced before it was presented to Washington. The same was true to a great extent of his Jan. 15 offer to rid the world of all nuclear and chemical weapons by the year 2000.

Reagan has played this game, too. His famed zero-zero offer for the intermediate range forces in Europe was unveiled at the National Press Club. His deep cut START offer was presented first to the Eureka College graduating class.

This is not to dismiss arms control speeches as meaningless. Issues such as SDI and nuclear testing should be addressed publicly by world leaders who set the framework for debate. Public diplomacy, as it's called by this Administration, is not only necessary to rebut Soviet propaganda efforts. It is part of the democratic process of creating a consensus, without which no foreign policy — including one in favor of arms control — can succeed.

Arms control negotiators claim that public diplomacy becomes counter productive when it turns into public negotiations, when offers are first made in public or leaked before their formal presentation. They want proposals to be made and detailed first in private, to permit give and take, flexibility and compromise, outside the public limelight where any concession would appear to be weakness and any trade look like compromise.

Maybe, but they go too far with this. When serious negotiations begin, they don't want leaks about what's going on behind closed doors. They don't want inaccurate stories,

but they don't want accurate ones either. They prefer a news blackout. Always have, always will.

In searching for an example of this, I came across my own name. John Newhouse in his book *Cold Dawn*, on the SALT I negotiations, wrote that both delegations were upset with one of my stories in 1970 which reported that each side had proposed allowing two ABM sites in each country. He said they were made angry not because the story was wrong but because it was right. But my story didn't stop the two sides from going on, and it did give information on what the discussions were about.

I'll concede that there is a valid argument about how much of this detail is necessary to report. Some say we accomplish little by reporting incremental changes that are meaningless to most people. I must say that even we newsmen disagree on what's worth a story. But we insist we decide what's important, not the government, if we learn about it.

So if you ask whether the media sometimes hinders arms control efforts, I'd say probably yes, on the margin, although I've never seen it proved that a press story aborted a negotiation or killed an agreement. And the press can more than compensate for whatever damage we do by explaining the costs and benefits of arms control proposals as they change, preparing the public for success or failure.

But do we do that? Unfortunately, not enough, and not well enough. I mentioned that we have different news judgements about whether a minor story merits any space. Television just ignores minor moves. They often ignore larger ones, too. Yet most Americans get most of their news from television.

The NYU Center did a study on arms control coverage on the nightly news programs from September 15 to January 7 last year. Each network program during this period had a total of 1800 minutes on the air, 300 hours. ABC gave arms control a

grand total of 24 minutes out of 300 hours. CBS spent 22 minutes of its 300 hours on arms control. Last was NBC with 18 minutes. That's between 1 and 1.5 percent of their prime time. You might argue that nothing was going on, but that period included the November summit. Television is, as Cronkite said, a headline service. Arms control requires more than the average one minute 20 second spot to explain. Maybe arms control is a bore, maybe the public prefers to put its head in the sand on the topic of nuclear war. If there was a market for arms control stories, you can bet the networks would air them.

Not surprising, in view of this, accurate knowledge about nuclear issues and policies is very thin among the general public. One of the most striking findings by opinion polls since World War II, according to Tom Graham of Harvard who has tracked such surveys, is the reversal in public attitudes toward nuclear weapons. In 1945, the public overwhelmingly felt the atomic bomb development was a good thing, 69 to 17 percent, and that it made war less likely, 64 to 12 percent. But by 1982, the public felt the reverse — 65 to 24 percent, that nuclear weapon development was a bad thing.

Few remember that the bomb probably saved millions of American casualties in Japan, and since then has probably prevented a great war for 40 years, the longest period since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The basis of NATO strategy for three decades has been that the United States will use nuclear weapons first, if necessary, to repel any Soviet invasion of Europe. But fully 81 percent in opinion polls believe the United States will not use nuclear weapons unless another country uses them first.

On the other hand, the public shows some relatively sophisticated, if inconsistent, attitudes toward arms control, which suggest the media is getting some message through. Recent polls show that the majority believes that Soviet

cheating on arms agreements has NOT given the Kremlin a military advantage yet, and should NOT cause the United States to break out of the arms agreements. And while they approve demands for stricter verification provisions, the majority seems prepared to settle for less than fool-proof policy measures. All this despite the fact that two-thirds of the public expect the Soviets NOT to keep their part of any arms bargain. This attitude of distrust goes back at least to 1978 during the Carter Administration, well before the Reagan emphasis on Soviet cheating.

This suggests that arms control issues have been democratized in the last decade or so, but that the public is confused. It is not alone in its confusion, however. I think this just reflects the contradiction within the Administration, which is both to build more arms even while negotiating to reduce them.

The public is even more confused about the Strategic Defense Initiative, and again I think it reflects the conflicting attitudes within the Administration.

Initial reporting on SDI was intensely hostile when it was announced three years ago, in part because the idea was sprung on everyone, including the experts, without preparation. It went against conventional wisdom, and the experts reacted by pointing at the technical flaws as well as the threat of overturning a deterrence regime that has worked for decades. The program has gotten a more balanced hearing as the Administration refined its goals, as the experts seriously examined the concept, and as information about the comparable Soviet effort became public.

Polls find that the attentive public remains relatively small, however. Over four-fifths of those surveyed say they have heard about the SDI program. One-fifth say they have heard a great deal about it. But about 75 percent believe that the United States already has a fairly effective defense against nuclear weapons and

are satisfied with it.

When asked if it favors Star Wars — a deliberately perjorative but catchy phrase devised by its opponents — the public responds negatively. But asked if it supports research on a defensive missile shield, the response is positive. When the question is asked in a neutral way, the answers are evenly divided for and against, in the forty percentiles, with the rest undecided.

In the last few months, there has been a slow, continuing drift toward approval of SDI. Pollsters like William Schneider of the American Enterprise Institute associated this with the increased confidence found more broadly in Reagan's handling of foreign policy due to recent events like the November summit and the raid on Libya, rather than on anything to do with SDI or arms control.

The public's ambivalence toward SDI reflects disagreement both within the Administration and in the nation's opinion-leading elite. There is no consensus among the elite that the press can pass down, as it did for so long in foreign policy issues. But even if there were, the public might not sign on to it. Nuclear arms issues are significantly different from other foreign issues, far more personalized, due to radiation, than whether to arm Afghan rebels, for example.

The polls also show that SDI is a highly partisan, Presidential issue. Republicans support it two to one, while Democrats oppose it two to one. Whether the respondent is for or against Reagan is more important than party affiliation, however. Attitudes toward SDI appear to be polarized around the President, much more than on any other arms control or foreign policy issue. The public take his word that SDI might work even when they don't believe him on Nicaragua, for example. This suggests that SDI as such will not survive a change of Administration, particularly if Reagan, before he retires, does not reinterpret the ABM

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South Africa and the News

Conference Report

The world is involved in the future of a country where the hurdles to find out what is happening there seem insurmountable.

The Media and Political Change in South Africa

Following opening remarks by representatives of the two co-sponsoring organizations — Howard Simons [NF '59], curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University, and Frank Ferrari, senior vice president of the African-American Institute — the conference began with an address on "The Media and Political Change in South Africa" by Anthony Sampson, author, former editor of *Drum* magazine in South Africa, and currently editor of the fortnightly, *The Sampson Letter*.

Mr. Sampson said an astonishing fact about South Africa is that people there tend not to talk to each other and are more likely to exchange views outside the country; this is a central problem for the media, because the truth is very hard to find inside, or outside, the country. The tragedy of any kind of pre-civil war situation, to put it

This conference took place March 11-12 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Participants included news representatives from many countries. But a non-journalist, the Reverend Buti Tlhagale, censured those news groups who single out the too few African churchmen as the "only spokespersons and interpreters of the political police brutalities. . . ." There are many black community leaders waiting to share their views with the media, said Father Tlhagale.

bluntly, is that both sides get trapped in their own rhetoric, and what they privately think, which is more reasonable and negotiable, cannot be communicated at all easily.

A difficult issue for the media is that the South Africa story is not only becoming more global, involving Washington and London as well as Pretoria, but also crossing over traditional disciplines of journalism and involving the commercial sector, the banking sector, in fact, the capitalist system itself. Historically, South Africa has been a sort of caricature of capitalist problems: the amazing conjunction of vast capital wealth during the Victorian boom era coupled with a black society and the beginnings of a powerful Afrikaner nationalism.

Now, ironically, the capitalist system itself is becoming potentially a most effective means of changing South Africa's society, primarily through outside pressure exerted by banks and investors, a phenomenon that was spurred by the mobilization of church, university and foundation interests in the U.S. How this process is negotiated and handled will be a tremendous test for the businessmen and politicians, and for the media, which will somehow have to understand it and explain it.

A crucial role for the media will be to find out what is going on at these private business meetings discussing the future of South Africa and compel the businessmen and bankers to speak publicly, to each

other and to the black South Africans on whom their own future will depend. Because the most significant question for any banker or businessman involved in South Africa must be how can they make the capitalist system attractive to black South Africans. The time for secret diplomacy is absolutely finished.

What Is News About South Africa?

Anthony Lewis [NF '57], columnist for the *New York Times*, chairing this panel, said South Africa is, leaving aside moral questions and fervor of any kind, the greatest news story on earth, the one he would choose if he were a foreign correspondent, because it plays out in concentrated form so much of the three occupations of humanity everywhere: power, race, and survival.

Harald Pakendorf [NF '69], editor of *Die Vaderland*, said that Reagan administration policy had made it easier for South African newspapers to operate more freely than in the Carter years, but in a very limited sense.

There was not much listening going on in Pretoria in the days of Carter. Now there is more listening when complaints are made by the ambassador, whether it is over passports or over free expression.

How to Report Inside South Africa: the Law, the Army and the Media

Richard Steyn [NF '86], editor of the *Natal Witness*, chaired the panel. He said there are so many regulations and restrictions on the craft of journalism in South Africa that if editors paid too much attention to the laws they would never get a paper out.

Anthony H. Heard, editor of the *Cape Times*, recalled the cliché that editing a newspaper in South Africa is like walking blindfolded through a mine field. Mr. Heard faces charges of violating the press restrictions by publishing an interview quoting Oliver Tambo, the banned president of the banned African National Congress.

Operating in the South African situation, Mr. Heard said, he tends to prefer to try to find creative responses and to run as much as possible, rather than the self-satisfying masochism about how awful it is. Time and again, an editor is faced with the decision as to whether something should be published.

There is a reasonable rule of thumb: put it in the paper and go home and don't worry too much about it and it will probably be okay.

The *Cape Times* has been very critical of the South African army, for instance, for destabilizing South Africa's neighbors instead of vaccinating their cattle. And generally, there has been quite a lot of lampooning of the country's rulers, who tend from time to time to demonstrate that their attempts at tyranny sometimes contain more humor than effectiveness.

Take, for example, the attempt on the eve of the opening of parliament when the local police commander banned all T-shirts and "other devices of a political nature." Everybody roared with laughter and the paper's cartoonist got stuck in it, and the ban was withdrawn the next day.

But there are all sorts of Catch-22s. There is a particularly worrying situation going on in Cape Town, with the ambushing of a panel van full of what the police assured everyone were so-called terrorists.

"I don't know what happened there," Mr. Heard said, "but I do know that it's the job of newspapers to ask questions. And we asked quite a few questions. In fact, I think we asked too many questions, because we are facing a situation where the police want the sources of our information because we interviewed two witnesses who said they saw two of these people shot in circumstances which one can only describe as summary. One was allegedly holding his hands up offering himself for surrender, and the other one was lying wounded on the ground when he was shot. Now, I don't know what the facts of the situation are, but I do know that it is our responsibility to report it."

All journalists can do is get the credible, available versions and give them to the public, and if that leads to serious inconvenience for the journalists, well, then they have to be prepared to take that.

Allister Sparks [NF '63], special correspondent for *The Washington Post* and the British weekly, the *Observer*, spoke about some of the difficulties facing the local and foreign media in South Africa. There is an element of physical risk, but not on the same scale as Beirut, where reporters have been killed.

The local newspapers are struggling in the economic recession, they are strapped for staff and do not have enough experienced reporters to get out and cover the unrest that has flared right across South Africa. Mostly, the local and foreign press focus on the unrest near the major urban centers; as a result, the press frequently relies on official police accounts. Unfortunately, the South African press is increasingly publishing these police statements as fact, not even quoting the police as a source.

As for the television news, the government-controlled South African Broadcasting Corporation fails to give any coverage at all. A foreigner who follows a major newspaper or watches TV coverage in his country is better informed about the unrest than the average white South African.

Once in a while, the local press exhibits an act of extraordinary courage, as Tony Heard displayed in publishing the remarks of a leader of the ANC. But fewer and fewer papers are prepared to take the kind of bold decision taken by the *Cape Times*, by the *Eastern Province Herald*, by Richard Steyn's paper, the *Natal Witness*, the only three papers worth a damn left in South Africa.

The foreign press is the target of a kind of campaign of destabilization: about two-thirds of the 200 foreign correspondents are operating in a state of limbo, without their credentials being in order. They live under the threat of expulsion. They also have difficulty in getting access to the news, in getting into the townships, and in dealing with eyewitnesses when the police can subpoena them to disclose the identity of informants.

Is the Media Doing Its Job?

The Reverend Buti Tlthagale, liaison officer of the Educational Opportunities Council in South Africa, gave a non-journalist's perspective. He criticized the foreign press and South Africa's "white liberal" press for establishing the "triumvirate" of Bishop Desmond Tuto, the Reverend Allan Boesak and the Reverend Beyers Naude as virtually the only spokespersons and interpreters of the political police brutalities and as perhaps visionaries of the future society of South Africa.

The United Democratic Front has many recognized community leaders who could be interviewed, but the

media would rather settle for its own leaders. In a sense, the media deprives some black leadership of the exposure they need, of the test of their leadership in public.

News from the black community, if it is news at all according to the media, is reaction to what government says and not what people actually dream of, about a future dispensation of power, about why the upheavals occur, about what they believe is the role of the people.

The press could be a galvanizing mechanism by simply spreading similar ideas among people who think alike. This has not been the case in the black communities, and in a sense the community remains fragmented.

Nobody expects the media to play the role of a revolutionary. Newspaper reporters are objective as far as they can be, but they too operate within a given set of values. Now, they have to take sides, they have to be either against the regime or for it. South Africa will eventually be governed by people who do not consider color a criterion of citizenship, and this vision needs to be brought closer to the people.

The media has the power to do so. If it is an acceptable premise that news people have a role to play in ending injustice and working for a new political and economic order, then it follows that they should become catalysts for promoting dialogue.

Can South Africa Reporting Be Neutral?

The first speaker on this panel, chaired by Michael Janeway, editor of the *Boston Globe*, was Ameen Akhalwaya [NF '82], founder-editor of a community newspaper in South Africa, the *Indicator*. Mr. Akhalwaya said he agreed with Father Tlhagale on the question of journalists taking sides: it was a simple

question of being either for the government or against the government, either for justice or for injustice.

With the re-emergence of black organizations in the last few years, black journalists are now being asked to take sides between the Azapo black consciousness grouping on one side, and the United Democratic Front on the other. So, black journalists are caught in a three-way struggle between the government and the black political groupings; most black journalists try to come to terms with that by playing a centrist role.

A sore point among black journalists is that the Western media appear to endorse the government's argument that one of the reasons it excludes blacks is because they are not capable enough. The American and British media exclude blacks from covering what is the biggest story in the world going on under their own noses in their own backyards. There are hardly any black journalists working for the overseas media; a few photographers, but no one in television, and hardly anyone in radio. It is a deliberate snubbing. Of the eight black South African Nieman fellows, is not one capable enough to write for American newspapers?

The Americans say the black journalists don't know how to write for an American audience; what the hell were the Nieman fellows here for, if not to study the American media? This is the type of arrogance that really makes black journalists angry. Black journalists will not, for the most part, talk to overseas correspondents any more because they decided a couple of years ago to have nothing to do with opening the way for them.

One more issue: if the roles were reversed in South Africa and a black elite took over and perpetrated injustice, would it be a big story? From a black journalist point of view, yes, because injustice is injustice: black journalists do not believe in country right or wrong, nor that majority rule

is always right. Black journalists are professionals, they are part of black society, conditioned by that, but they are conditioned more by injustice than just the fact of being black.

Charlayne Hunter-Gault, national correspondent for the "MacNeil/Lehrer Report," said she did not believe in advocacy journalism but in trying to get all sides involved in a conflict; for example, there is a tremendous storehouse of information on the white South African side which is as valid to pursue in trying to understand the complexities of the situation as there is on the black side.

White South Africans are amazingly ignorant of what was going on in the black townships, they had no sense of the anger and no understanding of the aspirations of the township people, nor of what was really fueling the anger of the black students.

The Western media in South Africa do not have much appetite for going beyond the breaking story, the violence following the funerals, for instance. But there is a much more fundamental story, not that the violence is not a valid story, about what is happening to children in the schools, to middle-class blacks with a desire for success who are not ranting revolutionaries but who are faced with innumerable barriers far worse than the Jim Crow era in the U.S.

Mark Whitaker, senior writer for *Newsweek*, said reporters have an obligation, regardless of their personal views, to try to be fair, that is, willing to give a fair hearing to everybody's point of view. Reporters have a role to play in analyzing, first, the internal contradiction of what different sides are doing and the differences between what they say and what they do; second, for U.S. audiences, analyzing how what happens squares with American interests and American values; and, third, the press must reflect or give voice to a variety of views.

An important role for the Western media is to try and maintain as much credibility as possible, even though

it is not all that great with the government or the blacks. The only way to achieve credibility is to be fair.

Is the Media Out to Get South Africa?

Howard Simons, the Nieman Foundation curator, chaired the last session. He said that when he was in South Africa, this was the question he was constantly asked by Afrikaners.

Karl Meyer, a *New York Times* editorial board member, said he had no problem with impartiality because he is an editorial writer and could state right out that the South African system is an abomination, that it is disfiguring and demeaning to the people who run it and to the people who are its victims.

The South African complaint that the Western media focuses on the negative aspects is a universal complaint, Mr. Meyer said. The same complaints would be aired by third world countries at a UNESCO meeting debating the "new world information order."

The reasons South Africa has become the focus of considerably more attention in the American press recently are several: 1., there was a slack news period and newspapers thrive on a good story; 2., South Africa struck a particular resonance in the U.S. because of the outward resemblance to the civil rights campaigns in the 1960s; 3., American blacks seized on the weaknesses of Reagan's constructive engagement policy toward Pretoria partly as a way of directing attention to race relations in America.

The South African argument that a double standard is applied to them does not hold up. The Afrikaners claim they adhere to Western values, so therefore it is not unfair for Americans to hold them to the standards they chose to define as their own. It is true that no one singly can be an objective journalist, but

a cumulative truth mounts up when a number of voices are saying the same thing.

Distortions occur when the press ignores the subject; such is the case in the stories of reprisals by blacks against suspected black informers in South Africa. To validate its role as a critic and observer of South African society, the press has to prove its evenhandedness by dealing with the injustices perpetrated by the victims as well as larger injustices perpetrated by the oppressors.

William Raspberry, columnist for the *Washington Post*, said that the question of objectivity for reporters has less to do with morality than with a set of journalistic conventions. These conventions include striving for fairness and balance, paying attention to government pronouncements, removing oneself from the story, and choosing who to talk to as spokesmen for the opposition.

Violating these conventions damages journalists covering the South African story, having a set of beliefs about what ought to be is not necessarily to be dishonest or unfair in describing what is.

One reason South Africa is a major story today is because journalists may feel a sense of privilege in looking at what will be the major news story for several decades, the demise of apartheid. If a journalist describes South Africa in a way that allows readers to grasp the awful implications of that system, then it does set the government up for opposition to

and contempt toward the collective journalistic outrage.

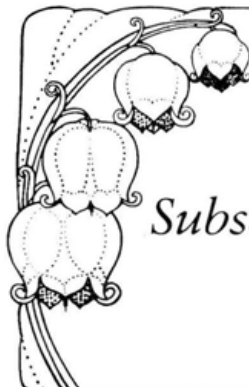
But the regime understands that it is not distortions that it complains about, it is simply the dissemination of knowledge about what is going on. If knowledge were not intrinsically dangerous to Botha, his government would not be spending so much time and energy in suppressing it. To the extent that journalists are trying to discover and impart that knowledge, then it could possibly be said that the media is out to get South Africa.

Suzanne Garment, editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, said that every subject a journalist decides to cover is lent a certain amount of importance by that decision; the issues become more important when journalists pay attention to them.

The South African government is in the business of minimizing the forces journalists want to emphasize, thus setting up an inevitable conflict. These journalistic features are not a sign of rabid partisanship, they are features of the trade which cannot be changed without destroying the beast. All a journalist can do is be conscious of these forces and try to be self-critical around the edges.

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Editor's note: Obed Kunene [NF '78] was among the news conferees. Mr. Kunene is editor of *Ilanga*, Durban, South Africa. □



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Education

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minds of white children. We must show their parents that apartheid education provides no future for their children, or any of South Africa's children.

A significant achievement of NECC was its ability to begin building alliances between different sections of our oppressed people – between parents and students, between students and teachers, between parents and teachers. This has laid the basis for undermining the divisions which the state tried to create between youth and older people, between urban and rural communities, between professionals and other members of the community. We have already given examples of the achievements of these alliances so far. But we know that the bonds between these different sections of the community could be strengthened still further.

There are still areas where students are fighting the education struggle without the support of their parents or teachers. There are still areas where the struggle is led by the youth and the students and older members of the community are left behind or alienated. There are still sections of the teaching profession who side with the apartheid government and promote its will.

The question we face is how to strengthen the alliance between parents, teachers, and students. We will not defeat apartheid while the youth alone carry on the struggle against Bantu Education or other aspects of racist rule. We will not win while our ranks are split by teachers who have not yet thrown in their lot with the democratic movement. We will not win while parents remain alienated from the demands of their children. These weaknesses and divisions will only delay our victory.

Our task is to deepen the alliance

between all sections of the community against Bantu Education and all aspects of apartheid rule. It is to look for strategies which continually strengthen and enlarge the ranks of the people and constantly weaken, divide and isolate the ranks of the enemy.

The December conference not only united different sections of the community, it also united all opponents of apartheid under a single banner against Bantu Education. The unity and hence the strength of the December conference shook the apartheid regime to its roots. Alone, isolated and disorganised it was unable to reassert Bantu Education in our schools. It lost the initiative and was only able to respond piecemeal to our demands. For this reason the government and all the forces of racism and exploitation in our country have a deep-seated desire to prevent the success of this conference.

They long to undermine us by disuniting us. Just as we need unity in order to advance, so we must understand that any act of disunity aids the enemy. To cast aside our unity at this time is to weaken our shield and blunt our spear. Our greatest weapon lies in our collective organised strength.

We must remember that the enemy is not sleeping while we plan our activities. We know that it openly attacks us. But it does not only operate outside our ranks. It also operates from within our ranks. From within, the enemy takes advantage of any sign of indiscipline, any disunity, every sign of weakness. It does this in order to confuse our people, to increase disunity, and sow chaos in our ranks.

When we look to the future we need to remember that our task is not only to broaden our unity, but also to deepen our organisation. It was the people's organisation which built democratically controlled schools committees, SRCs and parents Crisis Committees. This organisation has taken us from op-

posing Bantu Education to organising the people's alternative. The building of democratic organs of people's power is now our priority.

For those of you struggling on the education front, your task is to deepen people's control over education. This means strengthening democratic teachers organisations by recruiting all teachers into the ranks of these organisations, setting up SRCs in every school, and parent, teacher, student committees to control education in these schools. During the last months we have learnt that the state will not stand idly by and allow us to implement these actions. They will continue to harass us, to detain student leaders, to occupy our communities and to dismiss and transfer democratic teachers.

Our task is not only to build democratic organisations, but to build these in such a way that they can withstand the harassment of the apartheid government. We know that our greatest strength lies in the power of the people, in our mass based committees in the schools, streets and factories; in our co-ordinated strength in our national organisations, such as NECC.

Long live the struggle for democratic, people's education! Long live the united popular struggle against apartheid! Forward to a free, democratic people's South Africa! Amandla Ngawethu! Power to the People! □

ASNE Speech

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

To which I say Amen, amen, amen. □

THE BOOKSHELF

A Victim of Lies

Mating Birds

Lewis Nkosi. St. Martin's Press, 1986. \$13.95

by Murray Seeger

Two classes of Nieman Fellows had the pleasures and rewards of knowing Lewis Nkosi. Because the government of South Africa had delayed giving him an exit visa, Nkosi arrived at Harvard only in the spring of 1961 instead of the beginning of that school year to take up his fellowship.

Harvard and Louis Lyons, in typical wisdom and generosity, arranged for Lewis to spend the summer in the United States and to complete his academic year in the fall of 1961.

Our class, therefore, found Lewis literally as a man without a country. The Pretoria government had given him a one-way visa so that the price of taking his Nieman was permanent exile. Moscow also treats its talented sons and daughters in this fashion.

There was a special reward for our class in Lewis's predicament. The South African who took a normal year with us was Sebastian Kleu from the Afrikaans-language business newspaper, *Die Burger*. In addition, John Hughes, who had just completed an assignment as correspondent in South Africa for *The Christian Science Monitor*, was a member of our class.

Thus, the Class of 1961-62 had three distinct, well-defined points of view in the persons of three articulate, able journalists. Naturally, Lyons took advantage of the situation and had the three men perform at an afternoon seminar over beer, cheese and crackers at the Faculty Club.

In my memory, Nkosi clearly won the debate over Kleu, the nationalist, while Hughes defined the issues and filled in the missing link of the embattled liberal and English-speaking minority. We all remember that Mrs. Kleu attended none of the social functions that included Lewis Nkosi.

None of this seemed to bother Lewis — his sense of humor was so contagious and his mind so sound that boorishness did not faze him.

These memories came back with a rush as I started to read Nkosi's first novel, a short, passionate story about a young Zulu who might have been Lewis.

Mating Birds tells the story of Sibiya who has been tried and condemned to death for the rape of a young English woman. Interviewed in his cell by a visiting Swiss psychiatrist, Sibiya tells his life story and tries to explain how a casual observation of the white woman became irrational lust.

Raised in a small Zulu village by a strong, modern mother and a much older, tradition-bound father, Sibiya goes to a Protestant mission school. He studies for three years at the University of Natal until he is expelled for taking part in student protests against a racist professor.

"How I got involved as a key figure in all these battles is not clear even to me," Sibiya recalls. "At first I had done no more than speak at union meetings in support of various resolutions passed to put on record our increasing frustrations with the university senate. Later, though I made great effort to shun the lime-light, I found myself drawn more and more into the web of politics."

With time on his hands, Sibiya lounges on the beach when his mother thinks he is looking for work. There, one hot day, Sibiya

sees Veronica, also by herself on the sand. They are separated by only a few feet of distance and the demarcation sign, "for whites only."

Sibiya goes to the beach every day hoping to see the girl in her bikini, a short tantalizing distance away. He is soon obsessed with her and encounters her and a white male friend in a store.

As he recalls the events of the incident for which he has been arrested, Sibiya admits to his interviewer that his infatuation became an aberration. He is not really sure exactly what happened when he followed Veronica into her house and finally consummated his desire.

When his lawyer asks him in court if he had raped Veronica, Sibiya cannot respond.

"I tried to respond but could think of nothing to say. The tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth. Well, had I raped the girl or not?"

As he runs the scene across his memory, Sibiya asks himself, "how had I come to lose my senses so nearly completely that indifferent to the thought of neighbors or the ever-watchful police, I had lain hands on the body of a white woman with whom I had not exchanged more than a half a dozen words in the doorway of a tobacco shop."

Sibiya testifies that the girl received him voluntarily after provoking him on the beach; she claims rape and the white police confirm her story. The fact that she is a striptease dancer in a night club has no bearing.

The story, of course, is the vehicle for describing in most graphic terms the pain and degradation produced by the system of apartheid, enforced separation of the races.

"Yes, I am to die," Sibiya sums up. "I'll die a victim not of this white woman's lunatic lies and my own

worthless passion for what remained always a light beyond my reach, a light beyond the horizon; all that can be forgiven.

"Love, passion, simplicity, even ignorance can be forgiven. They aren't the things for which one is too ashamed to die. . .

"No, I'll die of a vaster, deeper, more cruel conspiracy by the rulers of my country who have made a certain knowledge between persons of different races not only impossible to achieve but positively dangerous even to attempt to acquire. They had made contact between the races a cause for profoundest alarm amongst white citizens."

When Nkosi left Harvard he went to London to work on *Drum*, a magazine edited there for distribution throughout Africa. He later taught at the University of California, Irvine, and is now professor of literature at the University of

Zambia.

The novelist Alan Ryan called Nkosi's book "very possibly the finest novel by a South African, black or white, about the terrible distortion of love in South Africa since Alan Paton's *Too Late the Phalarope*."

I am not sure about that but *Mating Birds* is a fine novel. Along with Nadine Gordimer's haunting novels and short stories, Nkosi's book describes better than all the current reporting from South Africa can, the buried rage that is beginning to surface and to tear that land apart.

I hope Lewis sells enough books so that he can fly first class to the states for the next Nieman reunion. □

Murray Seeger, Nieman Fellow '62, is Director of Information AFL-CIO in Washington, D.C.

Exciting Times? Interesting People?

The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work.

David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit. Indiana University Press, 1986. \$25

by Julius Duscha

About 50 years ago, when I was around 10 years old, I decided that I wanted to work for a newspaper. I was already an avid newspaper reader. I had a newspaper route in our neighborhood and started reading the paper as I did my daily delivery. Afterwards, in my little attic room, I used to copy characters from my favorite comics and make little papers complete with headlines.

By the time I was in junior high school I was working on a school paper, and in high school the weekly paper was everything, my whole

life. I started out as a reporter on the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* before I was 18 years old, after serving a brief apprenticeship as a copy boy, mainly watching spikes for copy that needed to be moved speedily from desk to desk.

Why did I decide to become a journalist? I have asked myself that question many times. My father had little or no education and was a salesman; my mother was a schoolteacher who certainly encouraged book-reading. I have since decided that what kept me in journalism, once I got inside a news room, was the sense of excitement that is such an important part of the business together with a reformer's streak that is part of me and that is, I suppose, largely a heritage of my growing up during the New Deal days of the Great Depression.

I have asked a lot of journalists

how they happened to get into the business, and have found that a large number caught the bug early, as I did, and usually in high school. Yet, as I think back to Central High School in St. Paul, I was the only one of the gang who put out the *Times* each week who stuck with journalism.

In reviewing applicants for journalism fellowships from time to time in recent years, I have also discovered that many of these top-flight journalists got interested in what became their careers very early in their lives, too. But I also know a lot of people who just drifted into journalism after ambling through college.

The book at hand, *The American Journalist*, is a dry statistical portrait of journalists today. Its authors are journalism professors at Indiana University. Their study is in the accepted mode of journalism research today, unfortunately, and given those parameters it is a workmanlike and at times interesting job. The interviews on which the report is based were conducted with about 1,000 journalists throughout the country.

The interviewing was done by telephone and each interview lasted about 20 to 40 minutes. Sounds okay, but how I wish the authors themselves had gone out and talked at length to some live journalists instead of spending their time designing a fancy survey, and turning it over to a company called Market Interviews which, in turn, turned it over to a bunch of telephone interviewers with no feel for the business. But, of course, you can't run notes or even tape recordings through a computer to make nice tidy statistical tables.

So what do we learn from all this busy work? Journalism is a growth occupation, lots more women are in the business, editors seem to be getting younger. "A large majority of journalists see their role in society as pluralistic" (how my first city editor, who died just a few months

ago, would have howled over that.) U.S. journalists are more concerned about questionable reporting practices than British journalists. American reporters and editors are more highly educated than ever before — but smarter? I'm not so sure — and are “much heavier users of other news media” — I trust that means readers — than Americans in general. There is still a good deal of autonomy given individual journalists.

Weaver and Wilhoit's research did not find journalists to be some sort of adversarial and materialistic elitists, as so often portrayed by critics on the right of American journalism. Most journalists interviewed placed themselves as being middle of the road politically. In religious background, journalists reflect the country as a whole almost exactly.

Some other interesting findings: Journalists appear to be more interested in the interpretive role of the press than the investigative role. Journalists also rate their organizations more on the way they are fulfilling what the authors called the disseminator role — in other words, are we covering the important news honestly and fairly?

The authors express concern about continuing low salaries in American journalism — don't we all? — and the movement of so many people out of the business when they reach their forties. That has never bothered me too much, except for the low salaries, of course. I think journalism is a young people's business, and that we are all better off for that.

A reporter new to a story or situation, which may in fact be almost a replay of something that happened 10 years before, often will do a better job than a reporter at 50 going off grumbling to cover another God-damn presidential race or whatever. I've seen too many aging reporters around Washington who have ended up just going through the motions or writing stories in terms of what seemed important 10 or 20 years ago.

The authors conclude by noting that they are both optimistic and pessimistic — optimistic about the qualifications of journalists entering the business, and pessimistic about whether the new recruits can be held in the business. As for me, I'm just a darn optimist. Period. I don't regret the years — or low salaries — of my journalistic career. It's been a lot of fun, and still is. I've seen a bit of history, known some of the players.

Have I changed anything? Probably

not. I think journalism will continue to attract bright young people, perhaps using some of them up too soon, for the same reasons it hooked me back in the dark days of the Depression. It's an exciting — and important — life. And you just might have a bit of an impact on the world. As Eddie Lahey used to say, it sure as hell beats selling insurance. □

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

Worker “Protection Bills” May Protect Corporations

Outrageous Misconduct

Paul Brodeur. Pantheon Books, 1985. \$19.95

At Any Cost

Morton Mintz. Pantheon Books, 1985. \$17.95

by Jan Jarboe

In August 1986, two and a half years after a chemical gas leak in Bhopal, India, killed 2,000 people and injured 200,000 others, Union Carbide officials issued a statement charging the massive gas leak may have been deliberately caused by a disgruntled employee.

Union Carbide officials were using a familiar scapegoating technique to put their company in the best possible light. By alleging an individual saboteur was responsible for the Bhopal tragedy, the company apparently hoped to minimize its own culpability.

As Paul Brodeur makes clear in *Outrageous Misconduct*, the story of the misdeeds of the asbestos industry, and Morton Mintz hammers home in *At Any Cost*, a report on the perilous failure of the Dalkon Shield IUDs, corporations can and do commit criminal acts.

Together, these two books raise

important questions about why businesses are held to less stringent moral and legal standards than individuals, and why otherwise decent individuals willingly sacrifice their personal integrity on the altar of corporate loyalty. If any students at the Harvard Business School are still reading *In Search of Excellence*, they also should read these two achievements in investigative reporting to balance their view of the corporate culture.

Mintz [NF '64], a reporter for the *Washington Post* since 1958, has made a career out of exposing corporations which put the public at risk. He was writing stories and books about dangerous products, deceitful corporations, and the inadequacy of government regulations long before such tedious reporting was considered glamorous. Mintz is a tough old master, who has earned the right not to be subtle.

So it is not surprising that the tone of *At Any Cost* is tragic, hard-nosed, and plenty angry. Writes Mintz in the preface: “The problem is not simply that corporations have no conscience, but that they are endowed by law with rights beyond those allowed to individuals. Corporations too often act without com-

passion and, no matter what damage they cause, without remorse. Even worse, they cannot be held accountable, as people can be. You cannot lock up a corporation, or sentence it to hard labor or the electric chair. And too often the law fails to look behind the corporate veil, to prosecute the individuals who make decisions and act in the name of the corporation."

Mintz did not fail to look behind the veil of the A.H. Robins Co., a Fortune 500 pharmaceutical company founded by a family in Richmond, Va., which deliberately deceived women and their doctors about the safety and effectiveness of the Dalkon Shield IUD. Robins claimed the pregnancy rate of Dalkon Shield users was 1.1 percent, when in fact the rate was nearly five times higher.

Robins claimed the Dalkon Shield was a "modern, superior, second generation, safe" IUD, when in fact thousands of women were seriously injured by the Shield. Eighteen American women who wore Dalkon Shields died from pelvic inflammatory disease; the death toll of foreign women is unknown.

Even after officials of A.H. Robins knew without a shadow of a doubt that the Dalkon Shield was a dangerous, defective product, they continued to allow women to wear what Miles W. Lord, chief United States District Judge for Minnesota, later described as a "deadly depth charge in their wombs, ready to explode at any time."

In a tirelessly thorough style, Mintz describes how Dr. Hugh Davis, a physician who helped design the Dalkon Shield, kept his financial stake in the IUD a secret in order to write glowing articles about the "number of happy brides" he'd seen with IUDs and peddle the Shield before a congressional committee. Mintz chronicles the 22 days in 1970 in which the A.H. Robins Co. decided to buy the Dalkon Shield without conducting a single independent test on the IUD's safety or effectiveness.

At that time the Food and Drug Administration did not require safety reports from companies which manufacture medical devices, so the A.H. Robins Co. was free to worry about the public relations problems associated with the IUD, not the medical ones. As a result of the catastrophic effects of the Dalkon Shield, Congress closed that particular loophole in 1976 with the passage of the Medical Device Amendments, which require safety testing for devices as well as drugs.

The most engaging passages in Mintz's book are the stories of the women themselves. Unfortunately, Mintz relied mostly on the paper trail left by the thousands of lawsuits filed against A.H. Robins Co. to document the Dalkon Shield story. My only problem with this book is that while Mintz had unearthed the complete technical story of the company's monumental crime, he did not give us a complete and vivid picture of the human tragedy from the point of view of the victims. The victims are presented as plaintiffs in lawsuits, not as women whose bodies were invaded. Mintz is unparalleled in his presentation of facts and theories, but not quite as deft in making the characters in his book come alive.

He introduces but does not develop women such as Peggy Mample, who became pregnant while wearing a Dalkon Shield. Despite the untested claims of the Robins Co. that the Dalkon Shield would not cause premature births or birth defects, Mample gave birth prematurely to a cerebral palsied child named Melissa.

Mample subsequently sued Robins Co. on Melissa's behalf, and a jury awarded her damages in a secret amount that Mintz reported was well over \$1.4 million. When Mintz interviewed Mample in 1985, she told him: "I just think it's absolutely incredible that a large corporation can do this to the American public, using us as guinea pigs. . . I just experienced so many emotions, the

anger, the shock, of knowing what large corporations — what this corporation — did to my child. . . it's absolutely incredible that the American public puts up with it, that they don't do something about it."

The emotions that Mample described — anger and shock — are precisely the ones that could have been conveyed more convincingly if Mintz had relied more heavily on the voices of the women-victims, instead of panning for gold in the court documents.

Still, *At Any Cost* is a complicated drama, filled with intrigue, suspense, and paradox. Using the court documents, Mintz exposed the company's tactics of interrogating women about their sex lives, suppressing and destroying documents, conditioning out-of-court lawsuits on the promise of attorneys to not accept other Dalkon Shield lawsuits, and a dizzying array of other dirty tricks. The paradoxical figure who presided over the marketing of the Dalkon Shield is a God-fearing Southerner named Claiborne Robins, chairman of his namesake company, who in Mintz's words is a "towering presence in American philanthropy."

In December 1983 *Town and Country* magazine named Robins as one of the top five "most generous Americans," eight full years after the Robins Co. was forced to pull the Dalkon Shield off the market and was still paying millions of dollars through its corporate nose to injured litigants.

In 1985, Judge Miles told Robins and other top company executives, "It is not enough to say, 'I did not know,' 'It was not me,' 'Look elsewhere.' Time and again, each of you has used this kind of argument in refusing to acknowledge your responsibility and in pretending to the world that the chief officers and directors of your gigantic multinational corporation have no responsibility for the company's acts and omissions."

If officials of the A.H. Robins were

guilty of failing to warn women of health hazards for at least a decade, officials of the Manville Corp. bore an even heavier burden of the guilt: the coverup of the adverse biological effects of asbestos lasted 50 years.

Like Mintz, Brodeur is a specialist in the field of public health issues and corporate shenanigans. He is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, which published four of his award-winning articles on the asbestos industry last year. Those articles became the basis for *Outrageous Misconduct*, a masterfully researched and beautifully written account of the David vs. Goliath battle between a small group of trial lawyers and the multinational manufacturers of asbestos and their insurers. Brodeur writes with such controlled detachment and grace it is a pleasure to keep turning pages.

The remarkable thing about Brodeur's book is that despite the sheer volume of medical and legal information he conveys, he never loses sight of the central point — the long, tortuous coverup of the damage of asbestos which costs thousands of workers their lives. The voices of dead asbestos workers scream off the pages of Brodeur's book.

Among others, we meet Claude Tomplait, an asbestos worker from a small town in Texas whose lawyer filed the first product-liability lawsuit against the Manville Corp. in 1966. When Tomplait testified during a product-liability case brought by one of his coworkers, he described on the witness stand how asbestosis affected him. Said Tomplait: "Well, the way it is with me, I am sitting here right now and I am just liable to go to coughing and want to black out right quick, and when I do it is like pins and needles going through my body. As a matter of fact, I can't use my hands. If you will notice, all of my fingers are all thick and clubbed. . . As I say, my life is ruined from it."

During the mid-1960s and early 1970s, lawyers for asbestos manu-

facturers were able to convince jurors that manufacturers had not known of the health hazards of asbestos before a landmark medical study of the high mortality rate among insulation workers was conducted in 1964. One by one, trial lawyers put together evidence which showed that asbestos manufacturers knew of the health risks associated with asbestos dust as early as 1930 and not only failed to warn workers, but since at least 1957, the Manville Corp. had a corporate policy of not informing sick workers of the nature of their disease for fear of asbestos-related lawsuits.

Unfortunately the triumphant work of trial lawyers on behalf of sick asbestos workers was threatened in 1982 when the Manville Corp. filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 11. Despite having assets of almost \$2 billion, Manville decided to go belly-up in order to stay 16,500 claims that had been brought against it. As Mintz pointed out in *At Any Cost*, the Robins Co. also sought protection from the battery of lawsuits by filing for bankruptcy under Chapter 11.

One of the lessons of both *Outrageous Misconduct* and *At Any Cost* is journalists and others need to closely watch for industrial bailout bills that are routinely introduced in Congress, often under the guise of worker protection bills. In the case of the asbestos industry, it was U.S. Sen. Gary Hart who introduced a bill in 1980 that would have established a fund financed by both government and industry to finance the victims of asbestos disease at much-reduced benefits in comparison to court-won claims. In the case of the Dalkon Shield, it was U.S. Sen. Paul Tribble who introduced an amendment that would have forced the manufacturer of a grossly negligent product to pay punitive damages only one time.

If Brodeur and Mintz have taught us any narrow, concrete lesson it is this: lawsuits such as the ones which rocked Manville Corp. and

Robins Co. are a reliable check-and-balance against corporate misconduct. Currently popular efforts to reform the tort system to limit the liability of manufacturers will only result in increased health risks to American workers and consumers.

However, these two books offer broad lessons as well about the ethics of private profit and corporate loyalty. They should be read and studied by labor, management, politicians, clergy, university professors, and above all, journalists. At a time when too many business sections of major American newspapers are filled with stories about the latest trends of the super-rich, breaking stories about current industrial hazards and coverups are crying to be written. *At Any Cost* and *Outrageous Misconduct* are scrupulous after-the-fact accounts of corporate disasters. May they serve as primers for the individuals and institutions in our society which would seek to hold corporations personally accountable for decisions and products which affect us all. □

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The Job is Now a Profession

News Reporting: Science, Medicine, and High Technology.

Warren Burkett. Iowa State University Press, 1986, \$15.95.

by Phil Hilts

What is news has not changed fundamentally from the time it cost six sous to hear the gossips recite it aloud in the Paris Tuileries.

What has changed, and this only recently and only in some places, is that formal rules have been added. Facts ought to be checked independently; the proper attitude is skepticism; sources of information should be identified. Add to these thin barriers the suits that reporters wear to make them seem more dignified.

And more than this, expectations have changed. Newspapers are expected "to educate" and "to inform" (which I suppose is the formal, deadly serious version of "to report").

So, for those who want to be reporters now, we need schools of journalism and texts to read in them. The job is a profession now, though it is no such thing in the usual sense of that term: It has no requirements to enter and no enforced exit for bad behavior.

We not only teach journalism in schools and in books, we teach specialties of it.

Thus, this slim volume by Warren Burkett of the University of Texas at Austin, does not cover the history or politics of the trade. It picks up where other courses and texts have presumably stopped, and takes the student directly into the history and practice of science and medical reporting as a sub-discipline.

It contains some interesting bits of history, such as the fact that the journal *Science* was started by a

journalist, not a scientist. It mentions early efforts in science reporting, such as the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, which got Henry Oldenberg shut up in the Tower of London for some science writing that sounded a bit too anti-government.

Burkett provides useful information for beginners on where to find science news, how to avoid some kinds of distortion in reporting, and quite a number of little items of fact which seem obvious after you have known them for years, but which really need explaining at some time.

For example, Burkett writes, "Federal tax money. . . fuels science in most industrialized countries. It was not always that way. Before the 1940s, and World War II, pure science was a small enterprise, paid for almost entirely by university budgets, private foundations, or donations from individuals. The aircraft industry financed its own new models. . ."

With the children in college, now too young to have memories of Vietnam or Watergate, it is a point worth making.

Burkett's assignments for his students are sometimes simple and precisely right: "Locate several science journals in your library and scan them for story ideas." Along with reading just about everything else as well to look for story ideas — they can be found in the weather report or a perfume ad — journal scanning should be a daily assignment for students.

Some assignments sound entertaining: "Can you find stories. . . in which there are clues that public relations people from government or industry helped get these stories into print?"

Burkett also conveys some sense that the news and science trades are in some way antithetical. The final product of both are written reports.

But the news trade, rooted in gossip, needs fast, brief, and boldly stated pieces. Science instead produces slow, heavily documented, carefully hedged little works.

(Reporters work on the scale of hours and days, scientists work on the scale of months and years. Because of this scientists complain that speed breeds error. But viewed from the next higher time scale, decades to centuries, scientists' efforts look as hasty and error-ridden as news reporting.)

Burkett's book, unfortunately, has some disturbing parts. They raise again the question whether academia, journalism school in particular, is the place to learn reporting.

In a book that seems, for the most part, grounded in real life, chapter three is a real surprise. Called "Choosing Science News," it attempts to answer the question, what makes news?

The question is an old canard which gives rise to humorous and zen-like replies such as news is what is in the newspaper, and news is man biting dog.

The truth is that the question is meaningless. News is a general term, stories are specific. Anything can make a story, including a dog biting man. It is silly to attempt to confine news inside categories; it is as broad as its medium — narrative language.

But academics insist. And here we have Burkett, who was himself a reporter in Houston, falling into the trap. "Traditional" factors in deciding what's news, Burkett writes, are timeliness, significance, potential impact, human interest, conflict, uniqueness, or being first, nearness to home, variety, and more, for starters.

Then he adds, "Psychologist Abraham Maslow expanded the proposition that people act to fulfill certain 'needs and gratifications.' The idea that some of this fulfillment can come through print and electronic media steers large portions of the science news process."

How's that again?

Burkett continues, saying that one newspaper printed "an abundance of stories about female sex organs and their disorders." These, Burkett says, are related to SURVIVAL NEEDS, and so are news. The needs proliferate to help explain the many species of story: there are CULTURAL NEEDS and KNOWLEDGE NEEDS as well. Who needs these needs?

Perhaps reporters now and for the future will learn their trade not in apprenticeship, but in J-school. This is unfortunate; their time would be better spent in history, biology, literature or another substantive course.

It is unfortunate partly because interesting and useful research on the news business might be done. Some few good studies have already been done, more researchers may begin to ask the right questions, and studying the trade may sometime be profitable in school.

In the meantime, students will continue to come out of journalism school complaining of its lack of substance. Also in the meantime, students will please read Burkett, skipping chapter three. □

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A trifle clichéd with the references to "ink-stained newspapermen and women" — (I challenge any one to produce any ink in a newsroom that doesn't flow from a ball-point pen), it also resonates on occasion with banalities — such as "The reporters do the legwork but it is the newspaper that must make the commitment of personnel and resources without which no serious in-depth project could be carried through."

You get a hint from this snippet that the authors tend unfortunately to ape not best newspaper writing, but the turgid.

Then why are we bothering with this book? Because it is valuable. It is valuable for its concept. It gives us something to latch onto, to discuss, to think about, to learn from. All this from our own work, in the original words, not prised through other minds and lenses, no matter how intelligent and talented.

It was especially comforting to read in this book about investigative reporting some sense about what it is. Carl Bernstein is here quoted — you all know who he is, but if you missed him you can catch him in the film *Heartburn* — as saying that all good reporting is investigative.

I've heard him say it myself, at a college lecture. It sounds at one and the same time so modest and so portentous. The trouble is that a lot of good reporting is not investigative, and Patterson and Russell have the good judgment to see through this bravado.

As the citations in this book amply show, it takes special effort, time, dedication to make an investigation pay off. It is not the only kind of good reporting, but it is in a class by itself.

Investigative reporting puts you at the cutting edge, where feelings are heightened, and one is both exhilarated and a bit scared at the same time.

All of this and more is recounted in the study as it looks at the *Philadelphia Inquirer's* expose of police brutality; the *Arizona Daily Star's*

ethical, what is our role? We do this immersed in putting out five, six or seven or more newspapers each week, absorbed in stuffing the perpetually yawning maw.

In the later sixties in Saigon, Peter Braestrup [NF '60], swiftly punching away at his typewriter, would exclaim "feed the goat, feed the goat."

In the process, it is our very soul that eludes us, because we spend so little time reflecting on what we do and why we do it.

This book is written by Margaret Jones Patterson and Robert H. Russell. She is Associate Professor of Journalism at Duquesne, he is Assistant Professor of Journalism at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

What they've done is to scrutinize six prize-winning examples of investigative reporting, reprint them virtually in full, interview the principal reporters and editors to discover how each came to be, and reach some conclusions about the form as an art.

The most valuable aspect of this enterprise is the doing of it. They have put before us a tangible study which despite flaws of execution, is useful.

Newspapers With Guts

Behind the Lines. Case Studies in Investigative Reporting

Margaret Jones Patterson and Roger H. Russell. Columbia University Press, 1986. \$28.50.

by Harry M. Rosenfeld

It is a curiosity for the journalism trade to ponder that the touchstones of our reputation among the public derive not so much from what has been published in the daily press as from the flicks that have been made about our work.

What among the tons of ink and paper churned out every day has the hold on the popular imagination that the film *All The President's Men* has had in our times? For that matter, that the play and film *The Front Page*, from the '30s, had then and more recently in a '70s remake?

It speaks more than volumes that the reflection projects the greater glory. Playwrights and filmmakers define us for our public, larger than life. Life size we wrestle with the definitions about ourselves — what is good, what is creditable, what is

revelations about shenanigans in the sports program of the State University; the Long Beach (Calif.) *Independent Press-Telegram's* scrutiny of a medical system that was pushing the poor around; the *Salt Lake City Deseret News's* laying out how our government hid the truth about dangerous nuclear fallout; the *Charlotte Observer's* comprehensive revelations about abuses in the textile industry, the state's largest, in the matter of brown lung disease; and the *Nashville Tennessean's* courageous infiltration to reveal how the Ku Klux Klan operates today.

Each one of these newspapers took on the establishment or the Klan in a way that could have placed them at risk. As such the book is about newspapers with guts.

These good examples are far too little emulated in our industry. Some years ago Michael O'Neill, then editor of the *New York Daily News*, berated his colleagues for being too reflexively hostile to government. The fact is, we are too passive.

A value of this book is to help instruct those who would like to know how to go about doing investigative reporting and the kinds of problems that will arise.

We need such instruction and encouragement. We are beginning to live in the age of the marketeer. With the polling skills now easily available, we are being relentlessly if gradually pushed into giving our public what we now can discover it really wants — in short, what is marketable.

That's open to abuse. As the stories selected for this study show, nowhere more clearly than in Arizona, what a newspaper needs to do is probe into and publish stories that its readers positively are hostile to. Likely a lot of readers would say that an expose about police brutality was not really uppermost in their concerns.

That these selections reveal less flattering aspects of our business is further reason why we need books of this kind. The selections illustrate

that often we are too cautious in saying succinctly and directly just what it is our investigation has found.

These samples show that newspaper writing is often betrayed by its own formulas. Terse, staccato paragraphs become tedious when read long after initial publication when the sense of immediacy is diminished.

The best written of the selection was Jerry Thompson's account of his 16 months undercover in the Klan. That has a narrative cohesion and literate simplicity that is missing from the others. As praiseworthy and prizeworthy as this series was, how downright courageous of the reporter, it was less satisfying than the others in its revelations.

It holds your attention because it is for the most part the story of how the reporter put himself in peril to pursue his story.

But the lead paragraph of the first article reads:

"The Ku Klux Klan today holds a

strange, disturbing attraction for frustrated, fearful middle-income men and women — and a dangerous potential for violence and terror."

A meaty beginning which is hardly explored and detailed. A pity.

I intend to share this book with my colleagues at our papers in the hope they will glean as much from it as I have. The execution of the authors could stand improvement. They need to find out more about how these projects were put together and they need to have more to say about the lessons to be derived.

But I hope they continue to publish other such books, because we, as an industry, need to know more about ourselves, need to understand more about what makes a newspaper good. *Behind the Lines*, whatever its flaws, does that. □

Harry M. Rosenfeld is editor of New York's Capital Newspapers — The Times Union and The Knickerbocker News.

Non-Right to Know it All

Good-bye to the Low Profile.

Herb Schmertz with William Novak. Little Brown and Co., 1986. \$16.45

Talking Back to the Media.

Peter Hannaford. Facts on File Publications, 1986. \$17.95

The Flacks of Washington.

David Morgan. Greenwood Press, 1986. \$29.95

by Ron Ostrow

Herb Schmertz, Mobil Oil Co.'s vice president for public affairs, and Peter Hannaford, a public relations man who served as Ronald Reagan's public affairs director in Sacramento and worked on two of Reagan's three Presidential campaigns, have written books that share a major theme: Reporters and the press are not surrogates for the public. There's nothing in the Constitution about such a role, so one can dismiss this "people's right to know"

argument as a prod by agents of profit-making enterprises doing their business.

If you follow that line of thought far enough, you might as well repeal the Freedom of Information Act (rather than rendering it toothless by sluggish enforcement as the Reagan Administration is doing).

David Morgan, a senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool comes to a different conclusion about the press' monitoring responsibility in his study of government public information officers.

"At any time in Washington, the most media-visible (and hence vulnerable) agencies and departments can be faced by the reporters of the elite press who, individually and collectively, constitute formidable public watchdogs," Morgan writes.

In the United States, Morgan notes, "corporations, labor unions,

political machines, politics, and government itself have had their activities publicized to an extent that they would have preferred to avoid. This publication, this opening up of hitherto private and supposedly public activity to public view, has been the essence of democratic evolution, and full of pain for most participants."

Schmertz and Hannaford cannot accept such a quasi-public role for the press probably because it sometimes proves effective in squeezing information out of their corporate clients, as well as government, labor and others with facts the public must know to exercise sound judgment.

Schmertz, who with the aid of writer William Novak has produced the most readable and provocative of the books, does more in extending the press' non-right to know argument than Hannaford. But in doing so, he brings back to life the slumbering old saw about the reporter who will do anything to build circulation.

"Circulation, then, is the bottom line — a fact that has a profound influence on how the news is presented," Schmertz says. "In other words, merely reporting the news is not enough. If a newspaper or TV station is to stay in business, the news has to sell. A reporter who is working on a story is rewarded if his article generates a large readership, which is then translated into a larger circulation, which is then translated into more advertising pages and higher advertising rates."

That is not the way it has worked in the nearly 25 years of experience I've had on *The Los Angeles Times* or four years on *The Wall Street Journal*. Conceding that there are no readership surveys to document the point, any reporter or editor for a serious newspaper can knock down the Schmertz thesis by citing example after example of meaningful, significant reporting that never promised to build circulation.

Editors want those stories because they deal with matters that the

public has a right and need to know, and because editors and reporters strive to serve as surrogates for the public.

Schmertz bounces from the shaky plank of his non-surrogate argument to asserting that press companies are just like any other corporation, and therefore those other corporations have no obligation to provide information to their business peers.

"As much as I like the press — and despite all my criticisms, I really do like the press — I don't believe that corporations have any special responsibility to Mr. Sulzberger of *The New York Times*, or Mrs. Graham of *The Washington Post*, or Mr. Chandler of *The Los Angeles Times*," Schmertz declares. "As far as I can tell, they're in business just like the rest of us."

That assertion provides the springboard for Schmertz' "stolen document" complaint — a line of reasoning recently embraced by CIA Director William Casey.

"To my mind, one of the most disturbing trends in the press is the widespread use of stolen documents," Schmertz says. "Journalists invariably describe such material as 'leaked,' but to me that's just a euphemism for the theft of private documents — material that will help the news agency in its ongoing profit-making business — doesn't that constitute a request to steal?"

At another point, Schmertz counsels the businessman who is approached by a reporter citing the public's right to know in his request for information: "You might also remind the reporter that it is not our practice to share confidential or proprietary information with representatives of another business — especially if that other business depends upon the selling of such information."

There's a Catch 22 element to Schmertz' point. A major problem for reporters in dealing with government and corporate whistleblowers is to ascertain that their claims of wrongdoing have solid factual basis.

More often than not, those facts are to be found in documents that Schmertz would argue are internal. If a reporter examining such records is dealing in stolen documents, he has no way of verifying the whistleblower's claim.

Despite these disagreements with Schmertz' thesis about a press consumed by the need to generate profits, his book is worth reading. After all, this is the man responsible for Mobil's advocacy advertising, one of the more provocative developments in corporate communications in recent years.

Schmertz quotes a business critic as noting: "Most corporate advertising is still only flatulent rhetoric. Most companies are just talking to each other to make their directors feel good. But I'm in favor of what Mobil is doing. They are more aggressive than most of the others and far more effective. They get under your skin, which is the way to start a real dialogue."

Schmertz also relates how his company undertook the National Town Meeting program, one of the better forums on contemporary issues, and its involvement in Masterpiece Theatre — a role that Schmertz says stems from an institutional obligation to support the arts. For the cynics among his readers, Schmertz also cites eight "more directly self-serving reasons" for corporations to be patrons of the arts.

The books also may cause some readers to rethink their views on some accepted rules, such as the Federal Communications Commission's "Fairness Doctrine." Schmertz argues the doctrine is fair only to the networks as he describes his giant corporation's largely unsuccessful efforts over the years to broadcast its point-of-view commercials over the networks.

He also makes some intriguing proposals, such as financing public television with required contributions from commercial television. The cutbacks now being undertaken

by some network news operations, however, may blunt the force of that proposal.

But Schmertz, whose book is subtitled *The Art of Creative Confrontation*, gets carried away with his advocacy. For example, when the *Wall Street Journal* labeled as "an hour-long editorial" a 1974 documentary on oil by ABC that Schmertz and Mobil found distressingly one-sided, he cites the newspaper with approval.

But 18 pages later, the author says of the *Journal's* stories critical of his company and its top executives that the newspaper "has obviously opted for a kind of 'journalism' whose main interest is to increase circulation. In recent years, the paper has shown itself to be more interested in the gossip of business than in the business of business."

The book also suffers from some factual errors. Arguing that reporters operate within a double standard when it comes to their colleagues, he quotes Jody Powell as stating that most of the respected reporters in Washington share Powell's highly critical appraisal of Jack Anderson's work. "And yet none of these eminent practitioners ever criticized the reporting of their errant colleague," Schmertz writes.

He overlooked a searing piece on Anderson by Schmertz' nemesis, the *Wall Street Journal*, to cite only one of several negative pieces on the columnist.

The Schmertz and Hannaford books, in addition to sharing a central theme, also seem to agree on the importance of truth in their operations.

While hampered by Schmertz' lack of an index — an inexcusable omission in a non-fiction work — it appears that he did not use the word "truth" directly in his advice to businessmen. He touches on it when he advises readers to put in a press release something they want to hide, but are required to disclose.

"The skeptical reporter won't even look at a press release, which is why

you might want to use that vehicle for material that you must reveal but don't want to call attention to," Schmertz writes.

Hannaford, while advising readers to give "truthful" — he actually uses the word — answers to reporters' questions, also tells them: "While being straightforward with the news media is the best policy most of the time, there are times when you must use caution."

Both books seem obsessed with what their authors perceive as The *Washington Post's* shortcomings. This might be expected from the chief spokesman for Mobil which has been involved in a protracted libel suit with the newspaper.

But Hannaford, attempting to support his claim that the nation is coming off its "media high," accepts uncritically Janet Cooke's explanation of why she concocted Jimmy, the eight-year-old heroin addict. "My whole mind-set was pretty much in *The Washington Post* mentality, which was that he (Jimmy) must be there and it's being covered up."

Hannaford's book is weak because he overreaches with his criticism, and the stretching tears apart his argument. For example, he contends that journalistic skepticism grew deeper because of the Vietnam War and Watergate, and this resulted in the public turning to journalists as heroes because its traditional heroes suffered from clay feet.

This in turn spawned politicians seeking to "create a risk-free world; and what followed was a barrage of laws and regulations that had the effect of hamstringing many of society's traditional institutions, such as business, the military and the criminal justice system."

Ignoring the mind-boggling notion of the budget-rich military being hamstrung, a reviewer has to note that Hannaford has his dates confused on the criminal justice system. Escobedo, Miranda and other Supreme Court rulings restricting police power all predated Vietnam and Watergate.

The chief value of Morgan's look at government "flacks," as he terms them, are the chapters diagnosing former President Jimmy Carter's plummet in popularity and the Reagan Administration's crushing of the strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Other than that, he provides statistical survey support for notions about government information efforts that most reporters in Washington would regard as conventional wisdom. □

Ron Ostrow, Nieman Fellow '65, is in the Washington Bureau of The Los Angeles Times. He covers the Justice Department, and is the co-author of two books: The FBI and the Berrigans, with Jack Nelson, and Taking Care of the Law, with former Atty. Gen. Griffin B. Bell.

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Standing on the Threshold

The Dictionary of Clichés

James Rogers. Facts on File Publications, 1985. \$18.95.

by Whitney Gould

P ick an occasion, any occasion: high school graduation, presidential speech, political convention, the Academy Awards, Liberty Weekend. These are the times that try English teachers' souls. At every turn of phrase, it seems, we are planted on the threshold of a new beginning (or alternately, a new tomorrow); exhorted to higher plateaus of achievement (or, as the late Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley liked to put it, "to higher and higher platitudes"); humbled by how far we've come (and how far we have to go); reminded of our mission as a beacon of hope and a land of opportunity.

There's more where that came from. Clichés — timeworn phrases, threadbare images — come from a bottomless pit. As soon as one recedes, another rears its ugly head.

The conventional wisdom (a cliché invented by John Kenneth Galbraith in his 1978 book, *The Affluent Society*) is that, while clichés may be excused in everyday conversation, they are devoutly to be shunned in formal speech. Clichés, it is said, are the enemies of precision, the marks of a lazy mind.

Why then do clichés endure? Perhaps because they're safe and unthreatening. Like the visual stereotypes of our culture — phony colonial architecture, for example — they offer refuge of the most comfortable, familiar sort. And, as Wilson Follett's *Modern American Usage* notes: "Despite the indiscriminate condemnation of clichés that has become fashionable in the last twenty-five years, a great many set phrases are indispensable both for easy conversation and for effective writing. Such phrases offer as

their main advantages brevity, clarity, and unobtrusiveness."

James Rogers makes a similar point in the introduction to *The Dictionary of Clichés*. Clichés, he writes, "can serve as the lubricant of the language: summing up a point or situation, easing a transition in thought, adding a seasoning of humor to a discourse." But Rogers goes one step further, conferring on more than 2,000 clichés not only respectability but also a rich, often quirky and sometimes distinguished history.

An editor at *Scientific American*, the author finds the roots of clichés in Greek legend, the Bible, Shakespeare, Chaucer, Dickens, children's books, space-age technology — and countless other sources.

Some of what he digs up is fairly well known — that the phrase "all things to all men" for example, probably first appeared in St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians ("I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.") But much of Rogers' compendium is fresh, surprising and leavened with wit.

Bet you didn't know that "smart as a whip" originally referred to the painful snap of a horse whip. Or that "head over heels" may be as old as Catullus (60 B.C.). Or that one theory on the origins of "kick the bucket" has it that someone bent on suicide would hang a rope around his neck and stand on a bucket, then literally kick the bucket as he expired.

Rogers himself is stumped on occasion. But when he isn't sure where a cliché came from, he makes intelligent guesses. "Get a handle on it," he surmises, may have started with a sportswriter or broadcaster who was describing a football, which is notoriously hard to hold.

And perhaps, he suggests, being "dressed to the nines" derived from

"eyne," an old plural for eye; or maybe it just referred to nine as the highest number before numerals start recycling. And "Has the cat got your tongue?" may have come from the cat-o'-nine-tails, a whip so fearsome that merely thinking about its sting could paralyze a victim into silence.

The author also dispels some common misconceptions — among them, that "Right on!" was born in the civil rights movement of the '60s. Rogers notes its use in black English as long ago as 1925. And "Tell it to the marines" was not, as I assumed, a vestige of World War I or II but a much older rejoinder dating from the days when sailors regarded the marines as of little use. "Tell that to the marines — the sailors won't believe it," wrote Sir Walter Scott in 1824.

A few cavils: I wish Rogers' book contained more clichés of recent vintage. For example, who started referring to gluttony as "pigging out"? And where did we get dreadful psychobabble terms like "getting in touch with one's feelings"? (California, I suspect.)

In addition, when Rogers does venture into newer clichés, he isn't always on the surest footing. He somewhat vaguely describes "at this point in time" as "an orotundity that gained wide currency in the early 1970s." Come on. Everyone knows this was one of the more infamous bits of Watergate jargon.

Moreover, I'm puzzled that Rogers traces the phrase "between the devil and the deep blue sea" (a k a between a rock and a hard place) only as far back as the 17th century. My old high school Latin teacher, a demon etymologist, taught me that the term probably came from Scylla and Charybdis of Greek mythology — Scylla, a six-headed monster, being the devil, and Charybdis, a whirlpool, being the deep blue sea.

On the whole, however, Rogers has compiled a fascinating, rewarding reference book that breathes life and literary meaning into hackneyed

phrases. The next time some pedant rebukes you for trafficking in clichés, tell him you don't give a tinker's dam. One can never have too much of a good thing. And if every Tom, Dick and Harry let a good cliché slip through his fingers,

ordinary conversation would be as dead as a doornail. That would be a fine kettle of fish. More or less. □

Whitney Gould, Nieman Fellow '74, is an editorial writer for the Milwaukee Journal.

Journalists, Historians, Experts — All Duped

Selling Hitler. The Extraordinary Story of the Con Job of the Century — The Faking of the Hitler "Diaries"

Robert Harris. Pantheon Books, A Division of Random House, 1986. \$18.95

by Joel Kaplan

Soon after a new intern at *The Tennessean* arrives, he receives a phone call from a funeral director about a spectacular death involving a foreign national with an exotic sounding name.

The intern excitedly informs the city editor about the obituary. The city editor, feigning interest, tells the neophyte that it sounds like a major page one story. Hours later after much perspiration, the intern finds out that just coincidentally, the name of the dead person is the same name as the intern's name spelled backwards.

And so a fledgling American reporter gets his first exposure to a journalistic hoax. The idea, of course, is to lend a healthy dose of skepticism to the young reporter's repertoire with the continuing hope that he will not be such an easy victim in the future.

Alas, too many of journalism's biggest scandals involve forgeries, fakes and hoaxes and if *Selling Hitler* says anything, it is that we do not learn from our mistakes. It certainly is not surprising that someone, somewhere would try to peddle fake diaries belonging to the world's greatest villain. It was tried with Howard Hughes and Benito Mussolini and it was only a matter of time

before someone "found" Hitler's secret diaries.

Those diaries were "discovered" in an area of East Germany, having miraculously survived the fiery plane crash of Hitler's bodyguard.

Nor is it surprising that there would be a book about how someone forged 58 volumes of diaries, fooled a journalist, made hundreds of thousands of dollars, was exposed as a fraud and went to jail.

What is surprising is how so many respected journalists, historians and experts were in fact duped and that is what makes this book so meaningful.

It is an important book because it details the seamy side of journalism — how hype, greed, and profiteering too often impact on news judgement.

In the last few years, media organizations have spent plenty of money commissioning credibility studies trying to figure out why the public doesn't love them. But if one wants to know what is wrong with journalism, why so many people say they don't believe what they read and why the public distrusts media institutions, this book goes a long way in explaining it.

Selling Hitler is the biggest single indictment of journalism that has been written in a long time and it is effective because its author, Robert Harris, a reporter with the British Broadcasting Co., is methodical and

dispassionate in detailing what went wrong and how.

Harris' book is the story of one reporter, Gerd Heidemann, a veteran of West Germany's *Stern* magazine, that country's equivalent to *Time* or *Newsweek*. It is easy to blame everything relating to the publishing of the diaries on Heidemann, blame he richly deserves and for which he was sentenced to four years and eight months in prison. But to focus on Heidemann ignores the value of this book, because it was the environment in which he worked that allowed him to make the mistakes he made.

The story of the Hitler diaries is this:

Heidemann was one of *Stern's* veteran reporters who in 28 years had done stories that included an investigation of organized crime in Sardinia and smuggling across the border from Holland. He had one quirk — a fascination for Nazi memorabilia and old Nazis in particular.

This fascination began in the early 1970s and soon became an obsession. By 1974 Heidemann had acquired *Carin II*, the yacht that had belonged to Hermann Goering. He spent hours on that boat, entertaining old Nazis and even traveled to South America searching for Josef Mengele and Martin Bormann and meeting Klaus Barbie.

But as Harris explains, this hobby proved costly: "By 1974 he was in a financial trap: he could only hope to sell the boat if he completed the repairs; he could only pay for the repairs by selling the boat. Meanwhile, interest rates on the money he had already borrowed and the cost of keeping the yacht in dock bit deep into his salary."

Luckily for Heidemann, he soon made contact with Konrad Kujau, aka Peter Fischer and several other aliases. Kujau was a pretty good, self-taught forger. The author said that in Kujau, Heidemann "had at last met his match: someone whose talent for inventing stories was

equal to his own capacity for believing them."

Convincing his editors at *Stern* that he had stumbled onto the find of the century wasn't easy. They had already warned him to stay away from stories involving the Third Reich and when he presented his scoop, they were none too pleased.

"Any journalist claiming to have stumbled upon such a scoop would have expected to face a certain amount of skepticism," writes Harris. "Heidemann was greeted by an almost universal incredulity, bordering on derision. This was, after all, the man who had had two SS generals officiating at his wedding, who had spent his honeymoon looking for war criminals, who claimed to have a recent photograph of Martin Bormann and who thought he could prove the existence of secret dealings between Churchill and Mussolini.

When Heidemann broke the news of the Hitler diary to Henri Nannen (founder and publisher of *Stern*) in the *Stern* canteen, the response was frankly insulting. According to Nannen: My word-for-word answer was: "Spare me all that Nazi shit. I don't want to hear about it and I don't want to read about it." Heidemann fared no better with Peter Koch, the magazine's aggressive deputy editor, who treated him as if he were mentally deranged. "Keep away from me," he shouted, "with your damned Nazi tic."

Nevertheless, Heidemann had learned well the age old journalist's trick — if at first you don't succeed, go around your editor's back. In this case, it was tough to go over the head of the magazine's publisher, but Heidemann found a way. He went to the corporate bosses at Gruner and Jahr, the company that owns *Stern*. And secrecy became the name of the game.

Before it was all over, Gruner and Jahr had authorized payments totaling more than \$4 million to Heidemann to pay to his "source." Editors weren't told and experts

weren't called in to authenticate the find until the last minute to protect the secrecy of the operation.

When the *Stern* editors were informed, a classic groupthink mindset began that seems implausible for journalists. The editors, though unhappy about being kept in the dark, believed that the diaries had to be authentic because so much money had been spent for them already and, as Harris says, "it was impossible to conceive of the shrewd, conservative, financially cautious managers of Gruner and Jahr investing in anything unless they were absolutely certain of its value."

It was a mindset that continued throughout the rest of the operation. When *Newsweek* and Rupert Murdoch bid on the diaries, their representatives — even their experts — believed they had to be authentic because of the reputation of *Stern*.

"If *Stern* had been properly skeptical, the magazine would have commissioned a thorough forensic examination of a complete diary volume," Harris writes. "Instead, they concentrated on securing the bare minimum of authentication felt necessary to satisfy the rest of the world. The process, consequently, was flawed from the start."

And so it was only after the diaries were printed — in *Stern*, and in Murdoch's *Sunday Times of London* — that the forensic experts were called.

There is a tendency to be smug about this hoax, since it was a Euro-

pean publication that was duped. But the fact remains that Murdoch was fooled — and Murdoch owns several newspapers in the United States. *Newsweek* also published excerpts that were lifted from the papers.

But it was Murdoch's behavior that bodes so badly for American journalists. Harris quotes Murdoch as making these three comments about the scandal:

"Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

"After all, we are in the entertainment business.

"Circulation went up and it stayed up. We didn't lose money or anything like that."

But even worse, Murdoch had been warned on the eve of publication by the man the paper sent to authenticate the diaries. Hugh Trevor-Roper, the Lord Dacre of Glanton, told the editors that he had changed his mind and thought the diaries were fake. Murdoch's reaction as reported by Harris:

"Fuck Dacre. Publish."

Newsweek behaved miserably as well. Harris aptly culls this quote from the magazine's article about the diaries: "Now the appearance of Hitler's diaries — genuine or not, it almost doesn't matter in the end, . . ."

So there it is. A major American magazine, having been snookered, tells its readers that it doesn't matter whether what it prints is real or fake.

The *New York Times* summed it up best in an editorial about the affair: "Almost doesn't matter? Almost doesn't matter what really drove the century's most diabolic tyranny? Almost doesn't matter whether Hitler is reincarnated, perhaps redefined, by fact or forgery?"

"Journalism should take no solace from the customary excuse that it must deal with history in a hurry." □

Joel Kaplan, Nieman Fellow '85, is on the staff of *The Chicago Tribune*.



Media and Arms

continued from page 24

treaty to permit the most permissive interpretation of its restraints on testing. While SDI may die, however, missile defense is an issue that is probably here to stay, in part because Americans have such great faith in the possibilities of technology, much more than Europeans who recognize the need for political solutions to issues like nuclear vulnerability and arms control.

My bottom line is that in the end, the media ideally is not, and should not be for or against SDI, for or against arms control. Neither red nor dead. We in the media are getting better at asking the right questions about both. Will it lead to a new agreement, or a new system? What kind of agreement, or system, will it lead to? And we are trying to explain more of the intricacies of arms control processes, much like science writers, while recognizing that this is a political rather than technological process. We don't do as well as we should, but we do better than our critics admit. We are aware of our failings. I hope I've also made you aware of our strengths.

By now I also hope I've convinced you that reporters are all intelligent, honest, serious men and women, and that the next time you meet one, you'll say what H.G. Wells said about Stalin: "Nobody can distrust this man."

But if you can't do that, maybe you can take back the words of one scientist who saw at least some merit in the media. An 18th century paleontologist, in order to justify going to the press with complaints about the ethics of a rival, said:

"When a wrong is to be righted, the press is the best and most Christian medium of doing it. It replaces the old time shot gun and bludgeon and is a great improvement."

It's not much of an endorsement, but we'll take what we can get. □

Telling It. . .

continued from page 15

make full use of that freedom — a freedom that most countries in the world can only envy. I know because I have seen some of them.

I remember being in Africa a couple of years ago, when I came across atrocities committed by undisciplined elements of the Zimbabwe army against the defiant province of Matabeleland. It wasn't finally the bayonet wounds of the victims that stayed in my memory, or the other marks of torture, but the survivors' traumatised awareness that at that time, in that place, there was no law to complain to, no reliable represen-

tative of order, sanity or basic human decency. Even though the atrocities were on a relatively small scale by global standards, that was a terrifying glimpse of the ultimate evil into which any society can descend. Nothing I am complaining about today compares remotely with that vision.

A newspaper photographer once said in a British play: 'I've been around a lot of places. People do awful things to each other. But it's worse in places where everybody is kept in the dark. It really is. Information is light. Information, in itself, about anything, is light. That's all there is to say, really.'

And of course he's right. That's all there is to say, really. □

LETTERS

The Long Struggle

In his review of J. Anthony Lukas's [NF '69] *Common Ground* in the Spring 1986 issue, Martin Linsky seems to have forgotten or confused the point of the long struggle to desegregate the Boston public schools. His problem stems from his apparent belief that the white upper and middle classes controlled and manipulated the entire situation. Both the white lower middle class and the black community in Boston seem in his mind to have played no active role in the conflict.

That skewed supposition allows him to assert that the desegregation order sprang primarily from a class struggle between affluent white suburbanites and poor whites in the city. In words dripping with condescension, he tells us that it was largely a matter of the white poor of Boston having desegregation forced upon them by hypocritical white liberals. He writes, "The people with money and clout pitted poor

whites against poor blacks in a struggle over an educational system not good enough to fight about."

This, he claims, was the "over-riding value" which explains why the "massive" busing program came about.

Linsky ought to know better, and he would if he had bothered to read the 1974 Federal Court decision, which, of course, made clear why the Boston public schools needed to be desegregated and why a massive busing program was the only hope of achieving it. Unquestionably, the class antagonisms among whites helped stoke the bitterness that shook Boston a decade ago. Unquestionably, the push for integration was hampered by the hypocrisy about racial integration that some white liberals showed once the situation exploded. But surely Linsky doesn't think it was a new discovery that many whites grow less tolerant the closer black people get to their neighborhood.

Although Linsky never mentions

it, the major point of the desegregation struggle among blacks and many of their white allies was to secure equal educational opportunity for black children and to improve the quality of education that the system offered. The two goals, which were and are inseparable, necessitated breaking the grip of the racist majority which ruled the Boston School Committee through the 1960s.

Has Linsky forgotten that this majority, whose cast members changed but whose anti-integration stance did not, was maintained in office through several elections when desegregation was the paramount electoral issue? Has he forgotten who constituted the electoral support for the Board majority?

Yes, it was the very same bloc of lower middle class whites he would now have us pity. The same bloc of whites in South Boston and other white neighborhoods who greeted the school buses carrying black children with bricks and bottles and lead pipes and spittle and howls of rage and racist profanities. The same bloc who had sneered at every overture the civil rights coalition had made to them in the 1960s to fashion an integration program that, because of Boston's then-small black community, would have involved a minimum of busing. Boston's white lower middle class was not a 'victim' of desegregation, having been a willing participant in the maintenance of the city's racist educational and governmental structure.

It is telling that Linsky ignores these facts, and more, that he describes the growth in separation between rich and poor in Boston as a "legacy" of desegregation rather than what it actually is — a further manifestation of the racist and class dynamics which made the desegregation campaign so necessary and so difficult.

Indeed, Linsky's peculiar analysis is as clear an example of an erstwhile white liberal's retreat from the cause of racial integration as one is

likely to see. But some of us who were there in the 1960s and early 1970s know that the full story of Boston's civil rights struggle won't be obscured by such revisionist prattle. The central problem in Boston then was what it had always been — the unwillingness of a majority of whites, of every class, to accord black Americans the rights of full citizenship: In a phrase, white racism.

Lee A. Daniels
Reporter, New York Times

A Reply

With the exception of the gratuitous and unkind comments about myself, I agree with the thrust of what Mr. Daniels has to say. Racism was certainly at the heart of the opposition among Boston whites to desegregation. And Boston blacks were motivated primarily by their desire for better education for their children. But throughout that struggle, the political, social and cultural elites who provided much of the support for desegregation were people who lived in the suburbs and favored "solutions" which would not affect them, solutions which would not change their own communities or even strain their bank accounts. They, we, self-righteously denied that we were part of the problem and therefore never considered being part of the solution. As a suburban state legislator, I filed a bill at the time to study the feasibility of a metropolitan-wide school system. I believed then as I do now that in a democratic system, better results usually come when the decision-makers have a stake in the outcome.

The uncomfortable truth is that the desegregation of the Boston schools has not fulfilled its promise, either in terms of the quality of education in Boston schools or in terms of the quality of race relations in the

city. I believe that the attitude and role of white suburbanites is part of the explanation. Daniels believes that the racial hatred of city whites is central. I think that we both are right, that there are other perspectives which would add more truth, and that Lucas' *Common Ground*, like any great piece of journalism and history, ought be the beginning of conversation not the end of it.

Martin Linsky
Lecturer in Public Policy
Harvard University, John F.
Kennedy School of Government
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A Worthy Office

Sam Zagoria's [NF '55] performance as newspaper ombudsman is all the evidence we need to prove the worth of that office. But Sam is wrong when he cites the credibility survey of the American Society of Newspaper Editors as showing that readers are more trusting if their newspapers have ombudsmen.

What the ASNE survey really found was that people who *believe* that their papers have ombudsmen were more trusting. Unfortunately, those beliefs were often wrong. Later analysis of the ASNE data (reported in the June 1985 *press-time*) revealed that readers of papers that actually had ombudsmen were neither more nor less trusting.

Perhaps the trust comes first. If you have it, you are more likely to believe that your newspaper has somebody looking out for you. There are plenty of good reasons to have ombudsmen, but providing a quick fix for the credibility problem is not demonstrably one of them.

Philip Meyer [NF '67]
William Rand Kenan Jr.
Professor, School of Journalism
University of North Carolina,
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

NIEMAN NOTES

In the matter of identity, presumably birds are without problems. As everyone knows, birds of a feather flock together.

The other morning, a crowd of nine chickadees flitted on and about the feeding tray at the porch railing. Suddenly, a delightful alien fluttered into their midst — a black-throated blue warbler. His presence didn't interfere with avian appetites but then, *Parus atricapillus* is the state bird of Massachusetts and that bestows an identity fixed enough to tolerate occasional intruders.

Birds of a feather? Who is to say?

— 1939 —

IRVING DILLIARD wrote in July: "In October, I will have been on the Board of Directors, the Collinsville [Illinois] Memorial Public Library for fifty years!" The library was founded in 1923 with 2,173 books and a circulation of 4,429. The latest figures show a total of 40,631 books and a circulation of 114,446.

Dilliard, emeritus professor, Princeton University, makes his home in Collinsville.

— 1942 —

A letter from Grace R. Cooper dated August 5 brought sad news of the death of her husband, SANFORD LEE COOPER:

This is to inform you that my husband, a Nieman Fellow, Class of 1942, died of a stroke, July 20, at Memorial Hospital, Cumberland, Maryland.

Sanford's reporting career stretched from the old *Detroit Daily* to the *Pittsburgh Press*, where he was city editor. After the completion of his year at Harvard, he returned to the *Pittsburgh Press* and then accepted a position with *Time* magazine. He was an editor in the New York Bureau, the first Canadian editor of *Time*, and then in the Washington, D.C., bureau.

In the late 1950's he formed the S.L. Cooper Materials Handling Equipment

Company in Washington, D.C., from which he retired in 1971 due to health problems. His home was in Holmes Beach, Florida, and he summered in West Virginia. During retirement, he had written a series of short stories about his grandfather, Sanford David Craft, who was a tinsmith in Grass Lake, Michigan, where Sanford and his twin brother had spent their summers when they were boys. The stories are being published by his wife.

He was born in Detroit, Michigan, and was a graduate of Albion College, Albion, Michigan. He leaves his wife, Grace Rogers Cooper, two sons, one daughter, two brothers, thirteen grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

P.S. Sanford was 'newspaper' to the end. We are out of the delivery area and picked the paper up in town, and with change in personnel, they would sometimes forget to hold a paper. This had happened the day of his stroke. His last words on the way home were, "Why — — can't they remember to hold a *Washington Post* for me!"

Editor's note: Grace Cooper's address is: Route 9, West; Great Cacapon, West Virginia 25422.

— 1952 —

LAWRENCE NAKATSUKA of Honolulu visited Lippmann House in July. He is now retired and studying at the University of Hawaii, after 15 years as assistant to U.S. Senator Hiram Fong. He had not been to Cambridge since his Nieman year and was enthusiastic about the changes in the area and grateful for the familiar landmarks.

— 1955 —

SAM ZAGORIA, former ombudsman of *The Washington Post*, has been awarded a Fulbright grant to teach for a semester next year at the Copenhagen, Denmark, School of Economics and Business Administration. He has just

completed a two-year study of ombudsmen in city, county, and state governments in the United States and abroad under a foundation grant administered by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. He also is an arbitrator on panels of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and the American Arbitration Association.

He wrote in July: "Highlights [of the trip] were reunions with three Nieman colleagues — IAN CROSS and his wife Tui in Rumat, New Zealand; FRED FLOWERS (now a widower) in Melbourne, Australia; and HENRY TANNER (now *International Herald Tribune*) in Paris. The first two I had not seen since the mid-1950's so it was an emotional and joyful togetherness. Ian is retired as head of New Zealand Television and writing a book on his experiences; Fred is retired, but serving on several boards; and Henry is doing editorials mostly."

— 1958 —

TOM WICKER, ('58), associate editor and columnist, *The New York Times*, and FRANK SUTHERLAND, ('78), managing editor of *The American* in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, were among the more than 50 journalists from around the country who got their start in the profession in Tennessee and who turned out for the Homecoming '86 celebration at Vanderbilt University in the spring.

— 1962 —

K.R. MALKANI wrote in July that he retired as chief editor for the *Organiser* weekly three years ago and has been working for the Deendayal Research Institute in New Delhi. In that capacity he is editing the quarterly *Manthan*. He added that in 1984 he had a book published, *The Sindh Story* (Allied Publishers, New Delhi), and that two earlier publications are: *The Midnight Knock* (Vikas, New Delhi, 1977) and *The RSS Story* (Impex India Ltd., New Delhi, 1980).

— 1963 —

SAUL FRIEDMAN in June transferred from the New York *Newsday* staff to join the Washington staff. He covered Washington politics for Knight-Ridder for many years and has been at *Newsday* for the past three years covering government.

ALLISTER SPARKS was presented with the first-ever International Press Service "International Journalism Award" last spring in a ceremony at the United Nations headquarters. At the presentation, made by IPS director general, Roberto Savio, he said that Sparks was chosen "because his journalistic work has made a significant contribution to increasing awareness, both inside and outside South Africa, of the injustice and suffering inherent in the reprehensible system of *apartheid*."

Mr. Sparks, a former editor of the now defunct *Rand Daily Mail*, is currently a correspondent for *The Washington Post* and the *London Observer*.

After more than 21 years, IPS decided to create the "International Journalism Award" to give recognition to outstanding journalism especially as it relates to transition in Third World societies, Savio said. The award also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the United Nations which not only has declared *apartheid* a "crime against humanity," but also adopted numerous other measures reflecting the international commitment to the elimination of *apartheid*.

— 1966 —

ROBERT C. MAYNARD, editor and publisher of the *Oakland* (California) *Tribune*, is one of three new members elected to the Pulitzer Prize board at Columbia University. The other two newspaper people are Meg Greenfield, editorial page editor of *The Washington Post*, and Burl Osborne, president and editor of *The Dallas Morning News*.

— 1969 —

JOHN ZAKARIAN, editorial page editor of *The Hartford* (Connecticut) *Courant*, last spring spent three weeks in South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, and Zimbabwe as a member of a delegation of

eleven journalists from the National Conference of Editorial Writers. In South Africa he met with fellow Fellows Harald Pakendorf ('69) and Andries van Heerden ('87), and visited the offices of the newspaper *The New Nation* where Zwelakhe Sisulu ('85) is editor.

— 1970 —

WILLIAM MONTALBANO wrote in July: "Good news. My daughter Andrea, whom last you saw when she was learning to walk, will be joining the Harvard Class of 1990 in September." Bill is Buenos Aires bureau chief for *The Los Angeles Times*.

JOE ZELNIK, editor of the *Cape May County Herald* and the *Lower Township Lantern*, weeklies in southern New Jersey, wrote in August that he received "a first place in the 'best column' category of the Atlantic City Press Club's Golden Quill Competition." The club, which covers the 2nd Congressional District, described Zelnik's writing as "first-person, human interest columns."

— 1974 —

NICHOLAS DANILOFF, Moscow correspondent for *U.S. News & World Report*, was detained by Soviet authorities on August 30 at a KGB facility in eastern Moscow after he was handed a package containing two maps marked "Top Secret" by a Russian acquaintance.

Accounts in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* describe the incident as an attempt to force Daniloff to say he is a spy. On September 1, the Soviet Foreign Ministry's chief spokesman said that Moscow intends to put Nicholas Daniloff on trial for espionage after an investigation is completed. Senior U.S. officials, who have called the charges against Daniloff contrived, said that the Reagan administration has not ruled out the possibility of an exchange of prisoners to win Daniloff's freedom.

An American of Russian ancestry, he has worked in Moscow for *U.S. News & World Report* since April 1981 and was being reassigned to Washington.

Almost every detail of Nicholas Daniloff's detention seemed to be a replay of a case involving ROBERT

TOTH ('61) in 1977 when Toth of *The Los Angeles Times* was detained by the KGB on charges of having received official state secrets and questioned for five days before he was allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

(There are no further developments as we go to press.)

— 1978 —

FRANK SUTHERLAND: see Class of 1958.

— 1979 —

According to an item from Reuters, a film will be based on DONALD WOODS' biography of Steve Biko, as well as Woods' autobiography, *Asking for Trouble*, which centers on his friendship with Biko. Shooting of the \$22 million film was scheduled to begin in Zimbabwe in mid-July. Sir Richard Attenborough, producer, said no one had yet been selected for the role of Biko, founder of the black consciousness movement, who died in South African police custody in September 1977. American actor Kevin Kline will play the role of former South African newspaper editor Donald Woods, who fled South Africa in 1977, when he was editor of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper in the southeastern port city of East London. Woods presently resides in suburban London, England.

— 1980 —

JAN STUCKER wrote in August:

I'm still the editor of *Business & Economic Review*, a quarterly business journal at the University of South Carolina. I also free-lance quite a bit for *The Economist* and other publications, and edit an arts newsletter locally, too. It's fun and keeps me busy. I attended the Stanford Publishing Course July 7-19 at Stanford University for magazine and book editors. It was quite fascinating. We were divided into groups and had to "invent" a magazine during the course. Our prototype was called *Elan*, and was a fashion magazine for women aged 50 plus. It won one of two prizes for the prototype, which was great. The Stanford campus was so lovely — I had always wanted to see it.

My children are well. Jennifer is now a 10th grader, and Sean (who was three months old at the beginning of my Nieman year) is 7 and about to start 2nd grade. Jennifer and I had a wonderful tour of Europe last summer.

— 1982 —

CHRISTOPHER BOGAN, formerly a reporter for *The Dallas Times Herald*, and his wife, Mary Jo Barnett, have moved to Massachusetts. Chris will be studying for the next two years at the Harvard Graduate School of Business.

Also, he has received the \$5,000 Donald E. Sommer/A.J. Viehman Jr. Industrial Relations Scholarship for 1986 from the Master Printers of America. MPA is the "open shop" industrial relations division of Printing Industries of America Inc.

— 1983 —

CHARLES SHERMAN was one of four journalists awarded a 1986-87 Fulbright Grant to Japan to study various aspects of contemporary Japanese society or U.S.-Japanese relations, it was announced in June by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars. Sherman is with the *International Herald Tribune* in Paris.

ANDRZEJ WROBLEWSKI and his wife Agnieszka of Warsaw, Poland, visited Cambridge in July. To bring us up-to-date on their doings, he wrote the following:

Other Fellows have more exciting things to confess: new babies, new grants, new countries. As to us, nothing thrilling.

As soon as we had landed in Warsaw after our Nieman year, I learned I was not the editor of *Organisation Review* any longer. The reason had nothing to do with journalist art and we split out with the publisher in mutual disgust.

Then there was another attempt: the newly created Federation of Consumers wanted me to run their magazine as the editor. But in a month it occurred clearly that the authorities would not permit the publication under my editorship.

So I had to forget any rank — and I joined *Management* (in Polish *Zarzadzanie*) monthly, where I have been the

head of reportage section ever since, trying to apply what I had learned at Harvard School of Business to our allegedly planned economy.

Agnieszka continues with her *Technical Review*, a weekly magazine, doing quite well.

We have undertaken writing a book together recently. The topic is the fate of the people who had had mixed German-Polish background and who have become victims of first German, and presently Polish nationalism; most of them have emigrated to West Germany. They used to live in an area of Northern Poland where there are almost as many lakes as in Minnesota. Before World War II it was East Prussia. The message of the book is a vow against any chauvinism.

Family life: since we have left the kids [Tomas and Johanna] behind (they are doing quite well and are not going to come back home), Agnieszka bought me a pointer dog to have me on the leash. His name is Trep and he is very friendly to all Nieman Fellows, even to their kids — which occurred during a brief visit of [classmate] Madame Dezheng Zou's son in Warsaw.

Editor's note: *The Wall Street Journal* of July 25 carried an article by Roger Thurow in the International Section featuring *Zarzadzanie* and editor Wroblewski.



— 1984 —

NINA BERNSTEIN, formerly a reporter with *The Milwaukee Journal*, has joined the staff of *Newsday* in Manhattan, New York. She will be working on a combination of longer pro-

jects and general assignments. Her spouse, Andreas Huysen, is with the German Department at Columbia University and will become its chairman in the spring. Their sons Daniel and David are enrolled at Trinity School. The family's new address is: 430 West 116th Street, #6E, New York, NY 10027.

DERRICK JACKSON and Michelle Holmes announced the adoption of Omar Langston Azande Holmes on July 1, 1986. Omar was born December 5, 1985. Derrick is Boston bureau chief for *Newsday*; his spouse Michelle has a primary care fellowship sponsored by Harvard Medical School and Beth Israel Hospital.

Also, Derrick Jackson, with Jonathan Mandell of *The New York Daily News*, won the 1986 Meyer Berger Award for their writing about New York City. The awards are given by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

— 1985 —

PHIL HILTS of *The Washington Post* was one of six chosen by open national competition among science writers for a summer study fellowship at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The program, which runs from June 15 to August 15, is funded by The Carnegie Foundation.

Phil studied one of the summer graduate courses — Neural Systems and Behavior — as well as observing and doing some lab work with Daniel Alkon on cellular mechanisms of memory.

The MBL gives the fellows summer cottages for their family, transportation, and fees. Donna Hiltz and the children accompanied Phil and had a "wonderful vacation."

ZWELAKHE SISULU: for an item about his detention, see page 4.

According to Carlos Fuentes, writing is "a struggle against silence." We hope readers will take this to heart and join the strife. News of Nieman Fellows and/or comments on the magazine keep our mail healthy. To nurture correspondence is a pleasant activity, and the daily delivery of a bulging mailbag brings with it a nice anticipation.

— T.B.K.L. —

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