



PROPAGANDA REVIEW

Number 4

Spring 1989

\$5

The Media and Government Deception
David Pearson

Renegades, Terrorists and Revolutionaries
Ward Churchill

Hitler's Last Laugh
Martin A. Lee

Economic Data — Moral Equivalent of Fast Food
Loretta Graziano

A Nazi in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush
Chip Berlet

The Wages of Cynicism
Michael Miley

Against From Within — Godard and TV
David Levi Strauss

Dialogue and Commentary
Stephen Ducat, Marina Hirsch,
David Kubrin and Hannah Silver

1 Editorial:

by Sheila O'Donnell

Propaganda Review flourishes with our fourth issue in spite of rumors to the contrary. Propaganda and Postmodernism will be the theme of our conference slated for August in San Francisco.

3 Letters**4 Propaganda Watch**

Smith & Wesson's kinder, gentler weapon; US shoots down two Libyan MiG's; United Airlines shows women how to be both on the mommy track and the executive track; USIA defines propaganda; Urban guerrillas create news

Features**6 The Media and Government Deception**

by David Pearson

Deception takes its toll upon the individuals and organizations that practice it.

12 Renegades, Terrorists and Revolutionaries

by Ward Churchill

Propaganda was integral to the government's strategy of repression against the American Indian Movement.

17 Hitler's last laugh

by Martin A. Lee

An in-depth analysis of a recent book, Blowback, which documents the "ghoulish tryst" between the CIA and ex-Nazis which was largely responsible for the rabid nature of the Cold War.

22 Economic Data - Moral Equivalent of Fast Food

by Loretta Graziano

Inflation and unemployment rates have become powerful propaganda tools; as long as the figures are low the electorate looks no further.

26 A Nazi in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush

by Chip Berlet

Bush utilizes the Big Lie technique to sidestep charges in the Bellant Report that the campaign's Coalition of American Nationalities was infiltrated by Nazi collaborators, racists, and fascists.

31 The Wages of Cynicism

by Michael Miley

Inspired by a reading of Peter Sioterdijk's book Critique of Cynical Reason, Michael Miley puts a magnifying glass to the dominant mood of our culture and suggests that it is an essential aspect of today's propaganda.

34 Against From Within - Godard, Mieville and TV

by David Levi Strauss

When Jean-Luc Godard abandoned film for TV, he turned the medium against itself and discovered new possibilities for real communication.

Departments**40 Dialogue: The Perils of Polling**

by David Kubrin

Is polling a valid way to assess public opinion? Kubrin thinks not.

43 Dialogue: Taken In - Two Divergent Perspectives

by Stephen Ducat and Hannah Silver

The Case for Psychoanalytically-Informed Politics: Stephen Ducat responds to Hannah Silver's review of his book and she replies.

45 Dazibao

by Simon Loekle

Holy Cow, it's Dazibao! Chinese "large-character posters" are alive and well in the "Yuoer West Side."

46 Ad Watch

by Marina Hirsch

Juggling Act - Two women in the public eye: Muriel Hemingway and Rosanne Barr provide contrasting role models.

48 Resources

We are not alone - you'll want to know about: Peace By Peace; National Abortion Rights Action League; Political Research Associates.

49 No Comment

"What's wrong with this picture?" Graphic examples of propaganda from the advertising world which really don't require any comment.

Who & Why We Are

By Sheila O'Donnell

"Rumors of my death are greatly exaggerated"

Mark Twain

PROPAGANDA REVIEW is alive and well despite any rumors to the contrary which you may have heard. We are happy to report that we are quite healthy with a growing subscriber base and an ever increasing author roster. With issue #4, we have created the post of issue editor in an effort to actually be quarterly instead of sporadic; this sporadic condition no doubt contributed to the suspicions that we had gone wherever defunct magazines go. We will continue as an editorial board but one member will accept the role of editor for each consecutive issue.

We have added two new features to our publication. In the spirit of encouraging debate among our readers, we have started *DIALOGUE* with David Kubrin's comments on Nina Eliasoph's article on polling (PR#2) and Stephen Ducat responds to Hannah Silver's review of his book (PR#3). We look forward to many lively *DIALOGUES* in the future. *NO COMMENT* begins with a collection of graphic visuals from the advertising world.

In this issue David Pearson presents his analysis of the Machiavellian use of the press corps by the government while Ward Churchill demonstrates our government's use of propaganda as the precursor to repression. Martin Lee's essay uses information culled from Christopher Simpson's book *Blowback* to refute the Reagan Justice Department's assertion that Klaus Barbie was the only Nazi war criminal recruited by US intelligence agencies. Chip Berlet documents the response of the Bush Presidential Campaign and the Republican Party to the controversy

created by the release of the Bellant Report revealing the involvement of ethnic fascist and Nazi collaborators in the presidential campaign. Loretta Graziano discusses the contradictions between what we are told about US economic health and the facts showing how inflation and unemployment rates are used as foils by the economists and statisticians. Michael Miley uses Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* as the basis for his essay on cynicism and its importance in our culture and its propaganda. David Levi Strauss reviews the Son image series created by Jean-Luc Godard with his colleague Anne-Marie Mieville; the series questions social and perceptual assumptions about the medium. Marina Hirsch presents us with two American female role models as they are fed to us through the media.

We are delighted to present the illustrations of Dan Hubig, an artist who has provided us with graphics since our inception as well as the work of several artists who are new to *PROPAGANDA REVIEW*. We are grateful to San Francisco artist Lisa Ryan for her pen and ink sketch which illustrates our new *DIALOGUE* section. Tom Yeates, a progressive comic book illustrator, is the artist responsible for the work which accompanies Ward Churchill's article. Salim Yaqub graciously agreed to allow us to use one of his *Iran-Contra Scandal Trading Cards* which appears in Chip Berlet's article. *DAZIBAO*, created by Simon Loekle takes an irreverent look at the Salman Rushdie affair.

We thank all our authors and artists for making this magazine a success.

- Sheila O'Donnell

Propaganda Review Conference Update

Everybody complains about propaganda but nobody does anything about it; we have created this magazine to study, analyze, expose and do something about propaganda. This summer we are sponsoring a conference to further that purpose. We will be gathering at Fort Mason by the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge to spend two and one-half days in a conference entitled "Propaganda and Postmodernism" meeting our readers, writers, artists, activists and experts as we come to know each other over lively discussion, debate and cultural activities. We expect that from this meeting ideas will be born, alliances will be made, and the community will be strengthened and broadened.

The conference will open with a presentation on propaganda and postmodernism. The following two days we will have a multi-media program of papers, panels, and workshops on such topics as Propaganda and Advertising, Film, Television and the Media, Theory and Definitions of Propaganda, Propaganda History, Government Deception, Propaganda in Foreign Policy, and more. We expect to have stimulating intellectual discussion and fun with new friends and old; there will be time to walk in the sun on the Marina green and visit San Francisco's hot spots. Come to beautiful Northern California in August, meet new exciting people and do something about propaganda.

- Claude Steiner

[Correction. PR#3: on page 33 the cartoon which accompanied Claude Steiner's article should have been titled "FARLEY" by Phil Frank.]

PROPAGANDA REVIEW

First Annual Conference

Propaganda

and

Postmodernism

The social and political landscape has been dramatically altered by a new breed of propaganda. How does "Postmodern" propaganda differ from "Modern" propaganda? Join us for

a weekend of multi-media presentations exploring the subtleties of the "propaganda environment" and propaganda operations that affect us all.

Call for Papers:

Send us, by May 1, 1989 —

- 250-500 word abstracts of 20 minute presentations
- Proposals for workshops and panels

Fees:

- \$90 for weekend
- \$75 before June 1, 1989, refundable by July 30, 1989

August 11-13, 1989

Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, California

For further information and to register, call or write —

Claude Steiner, Conference Coordinator
2901 Piedmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94705
(415) 843-9667

Make checks payable to *Propaganda Review*

Editor

Sheila O'Donnell

Associate Editors

Johan Carlisle
Loretta Graziano
Hanna Silver
Claude Steiner
Frederic Stout

Copy Editors

Bob Boye
Hannah Silver

Desktop Publisher

Johan Carlisle

Design and Layout

Johan Carlisle
Sheila O'Donnell

Illustrations

Dan Hubig
Lisa Ryan
Salim Yaqub
Tom Yeates

PROPAGANDA REVIEW is a publishing and organizing project of Media Alliance, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization of 2500 writers, journalists, and other media professionals. For more information about PROPAGANDA REVIEW or Media Alliance, contact Media Alliance at 415/441-2557.

Submissions of letters, manuscripts, drawings, and photographs are invited. All submissions will be acknowledged; they can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

US subscriptions to PROPAGANDA REVIEW are \$20 for four issues or \$100 for a sustaining subscription. Foreign subscriptions—\$28 Please help us continue this important work. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Mail to: PROPAGANDA REVIEW Media Alliance
Fort Mason Center, Building D San Francisco, CA 94123

Special Thanks

PROPAGANDA REVIEW wishes to thank the following individuals and organizations for their generous financial support: Jackson Browne, John Maher, Cheyney Ryan, W.H. and Carol Bernstein Ferry, the Tides Foundation, the Pohaku Fund, the Limantour Fund, and the National Community Funds (a project of The Funding Exchange). We also thank all those who have become sustaining subscribers. Special thanks to Matt Fenner and Kerstin Gotz.

Copyright © 1989 by Media Alliance. All rights reserved under the International Copyright Convention. Unauthorized republication is prohibited. Reprint requests must be approved both by PROPAGANDA REVIEW and by the individual author.

Views expressed in PROPAGANDA REVIEW are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the board of directors, staff or members of Media Alliance.

Letters-Pro and Con

Your proposed conference to consider propaganda in the light of postmodernism meets an urgent need that has developed lately, at least in my life; a perspective powerful enough to address the more amorphous and ambient types of propaganda in an otherwise "hallucinatory" electronic media.

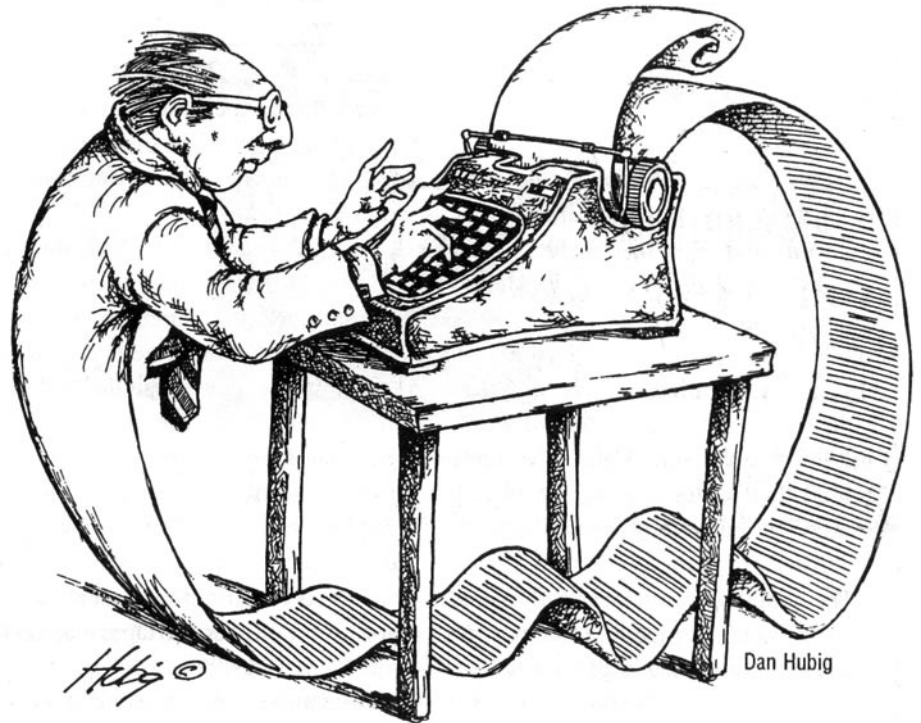
On another point, it seems consistent with your own articulated editorial approach that PR focus its analysis on all -- not just reactionary propaganda. Otherwise you risk giving your magazine a leftist spin that diminishes your credibility. After all, PR must itself stay open to an analysis of propaganda, which is as it should be.

I was startled at the inclusion of the Dazibao in issue #3. I found it well drawn and effectively formulated within what I can only call its own weirdly blindered perspective. My objection is that Dazibao are most attachable to the Cultural Revolution, which in the light of China's own censure of the human rights abuses during this period seems a little like saluting the use, say, of anti-Semitic cartoons and posters by the Soviets under Stalin. Dazibao in Mao's time, after all, have mainly been the instrument of slander. Thank you for your provocative magazine.

Ron LeVac
San Francisco, California

I applaud PR with enthusiasm!

David Hunter
Port Washington, New York



Your publication meets a long overdue need, however your #3 issue is falling into the pitfall of the conservative-liberal struggle, with overemphasis on the latter, when in fact mass deception techniques are used by a plethora of single issue groups, with no relation to the political spectrum.

Jerry Falwell, the Third Reich and Ronald Reagan are obvious targets for analysis, but it would be a mistake to rely on unbalanced models such as the one offered by Herman and Chomsky, who are special pleaders too.

Paul F. Gavaghan
Chevy Chase, Maryland

[We would gladly consider any articles submitted to us regarding propaganda on the Left. We will take up the issue of leftist

propaganda in future issues. -Ed.]

Propaganda is employed by the Left as well as the Right. In fact, I think leftist deceptions are worse because they mislead the people who are on "our" side. We need facts more than we need rhetoric.

My favorites are the just-the-facts please articles -- the pieces on the La Penca bombing and the Jackson-Arafat photo, for example.

Anyway, congratulations on a journal that is surely on the Official White House List of Evils in America Today. With Georgie and Danny representing the Dark Side of the Force (oops, there I go propagandizing again.) I'm sure you'll have no shortage of topics.

Paul Glassner
San Francisco, California

Molled

The *San Francisco Chronicle*, on February 27, 1989, reports that several prestigious women's magazines including *Ladies Home Journal* and *Working Mother* will be running ads for a product not usually associated with the having-it-all lifestyle—a .38 caliber revolver designed by that venerable manufacturer of weapons, Smith & Wesson. Called the “Lady Smith,” this genteel gat is specifically designed for purses and women's shoulder holsters.

The gun company kicks off its ad campaign with a picture of a woman awakened during the night captioned:

“Things that go bump in the night aren't always your imagination.” Smith & Wesson spokeswoman, Sherry Collins, further suggests that those in the market for a weapon will find the “Lady Smith” just right for them.

Just a little something to use around the house at the end of a hard day?

Hannah Silver

Burying the Truth

The Big Lie gets the Big Headlines; the retraction, politely termed “clarification,” gets the Back Page Treatment.

Case in point: the US Navy's shoot down of two Libyan MiGs over the Mediterranean last January. For a full week immediately following the incident, the newspaper headlines and TV news broadcasts were full of details about how the Libyans had initiated the hostilities and how the American pilots had attempted five times to avoid contact with the MiGs before firing missiles in self-defense. Government spokespersons repeatedly claimed that the incident had nothing to do with the hot story, at the time, about plans to attack the alleged Libyan chemical weapons plant.

Then, on January 10, 1989, the truth came out. A *Washington Post* report indicates that the first American missiles were fired while the pilots were in a “warning yellow” status “rather than the ‘red’ condition reserved for fire-at-will encounters.” Indeed, one of the American pilots was in the act of radioing his commander, Rear Admiral David Morris on the aircraft carrier Kennedy, when his back-seat radar intercept officer fired the first shot. The pilot's reaction heard on tapes made at the time: “Aw, Jesus!”

More importantly, it seems it was the Americans who were attacking, not the Libyans. According to retired Rear Admiral Eugene Carroll “who commanded a Mediterranean task force from 1975 to 1977 from aboard the Kennedy,” Secretary of Defense Carlucci “misled the American people (last week) by saying the F-14s were taking evasive maneuvers ... Those were the standard maneuvers for getting the advantage.”

Out here in the sticks in San Francisco, the morning *Chronicle* played this story on the back page of the news section and put the quote from Admiral Carroll in the very last paragraph. The afternoon *Examiner* placed the story on page eight and deleted the Carroll quote altogether.

Talk about burying the lead ... and the truth!

Frederic Stout

Supermom?

A new United Airlines commercial shows a dressed-for-success mother leaving her toddler at a daycare center, flying to New York City, giving a boardroom presentation, eating a power lunch, and arriving back at the daycare center to pick up her daughter while it's still daylight. In its zeal to trigger our power and maternal instincts at the

same time, has United Airlines stretched the physics of time and space too far?

If we fill in the missing information with reasonable assumptions, we can calculate the probability of this scenario actually occurring. Let's assume Mom is flying to New York from Boston or Washington; flight time is about an hour, plus a half hour for boarding and formalities. The probability of an on-time take-off and landing is 78%. We'll assume an hour for ground transportation to and from airports (including parking, cab lines, car rental), with a 66% chance of actually making it in that time during rush hour. All told, Mommy has a 34% probability of making the trip in 3 1/2 hours; giving her a 11.5% shot at making the round trip in 7 hours.

Now let's assume she's a top-notch consultant who'd make the trip for just a one-hour presentation, plus another hour for questions and answers. At her level, she can get through a five-star lunch in two hours (including transport to and from the restaurant) without appearing too anxious to get home to her family. Adding these four hours to the seven above, and assuming Daylight Savings Time, Mom has a clear statistical chance of getting back to the daycare center before dark if she left Sis off at 7.30 AM. Most daycare centers close at 6 PM, and charge \$1 per minute after closing time, but \$30 of deductible business expense is no big deal. And with a little help from the au pair in the morning, they could get out by 7. AM, thus avoiding late charges and getting home in time to put a roast in the oven before Dad arrives the way Alyse Keaton, Licensed Architect and mother offour, always does on “Family Ties.”

Loretta Graziano



Nicaragua--
Surviving 8 years of Reagan
--World, Page 5A

Bush's Dilemma--
Popular forces gain around globe--will he face reality?
--Comment, Page 12A

The Arizona Daily Star

Vol. 148 No. 1177

Final Edition, Tucson, Wednesday, January 11, 1989

FREE

Rebels Seize Initiative in El Salvador

By T.O. Thompson
SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador—In recent months the unified rebel organizations of El Salvador, the FMLN (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias), have seized the military-political initiative in this Central American country's eight-year civil war. Since last summer the FMLN has maintained an ever-increasing series of attacks, coordinated on a national level and affecting all 14 provinces of this tiny nation.

Foreign and local observers agree that the increase in FMLN activity signifies an important turn in the war. El Salvador's rural areas, unlike much of Central America, are highly populated, meaning that the actions are undertaken with the knowledge and support of the people in



U.S. at war in El Salvador-70,000 killed

By L.A. Merz-Verdad
The U.S. is fighting a full-scale war in El Salvador, though generally unknown to the U.S. public. For two decades, first, the Reagan administration and an unscrupulous U.S. media have consistently obscured the facts of the war. Secondly, there has not yet been heavy U.S. troop involvement with resulting casualties to our public interest.

at warfare. LJC utilizes political, economic, and psychological, as well as military means to "pacify" - meaning to force into submission - the civilian population.

Political means
On the political front, U.S. strategy has been to use electoral fraud to create the illusion of democracy in El

Urban Guerilla Tactics

On January 11, 1989, the city of Tucson received the *Arizona Daily Star* with a front page created by the "Wednesday Morning Coffee Club" of Tucson inserted, gratis, into vending machines. The front page headlines read "Rebels Seize Initiative in El Salvador" and "U. S. at War in El Salvador-70,000 Killed;" the stories follow with well-crafted and apparently carefully researched articles. The articles make one wish to read the rest of the newspaper.

3,000-5,000 copies of the counterfeit front page using a similar nameplate, page layout and typeface as the corporate newspaper were distributed. The managing editor of the *Arizona Daily Star*, called it "urban guerrilla tactics and... an infringement of the newspaper's copyright." Later, he was quoted as saying 'I'd be inclined to believe it was our promotion department, but I doubt they're bright enough.' The paper turned the matter over to the police and had its attorneys pursue a civil complaint based on copyright violations.

In a press release issued on January 11, 1989, the "Wednesday Morning Coffee Club" of Tucson took credit for the "corrective measure" stating that if the

Tucson media were doing their job, "our action would have been unnecessary" but the poor coverage of the facts "shows how the media has failed." The group pointed out that El Salvador's government and military would crumble without US tax money and that we are supporting a situation which we would never support at home. "Our work is not 'propaganda'. We challenge anyone to disprove what we wrote."

The group alleges itself to be comprised of women and men, workers and professionals of all colors who want the truth with their coffee.

Only a few days earlier, a group calling itself "New Yorkers for a Free El Salvador," published a *New York Times* front page on Thursday, January 5, 1989, which published "Some of the News The Times doesn't see fit to print." A similar front page hit the San Francisco Bay Area on March 13, 1989, with the production of the *San Francisco Chronicle* (aka *Chronicle*).

Urban guerrillas-perhaps if every city had a band, we'd all get information with our morning coffee. [Thanks to Kate LaBore for assistance.]

Sheila O' Donnell

Propaganda or Education?

On January 17, 1989, the US Court of Appeals in San Francisco declared unconstitutional the US Information Agency's (USIA) regulation restricting export of American documentary films by defining them as "propaganda". This is the second attempt by the agency to restrict distribution of films regarding the environment, uranium mining, the war in Nicaragua and the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. The US Supreme Court ruled the USIA's original regulations regarding the issue as unconstitutional; the agency promulgated a second set of regulations which were no more palatable to the courts.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that David Cole, attorney from the Center for Constitutional Rights in arguing the appeal before the justices, cited the USIA's misinterpretation of the 1948 Beirut Agreement. That treaty, signed by 72 nations, was designed to facilitate international circulation of films of education, scientific or cultural character. Films meeting the treaty criteria are charged reduced customs and import fees; commercial films, excluded from the treaty, are charged prohibitive fees for the six companies appealing the USIA ruling.

Cole argued that the USIA is intent on censoring films it deems detrimental to the image of the United States by labeling the films "propaganda" when certifying them for export.

Sheila O' Donnell

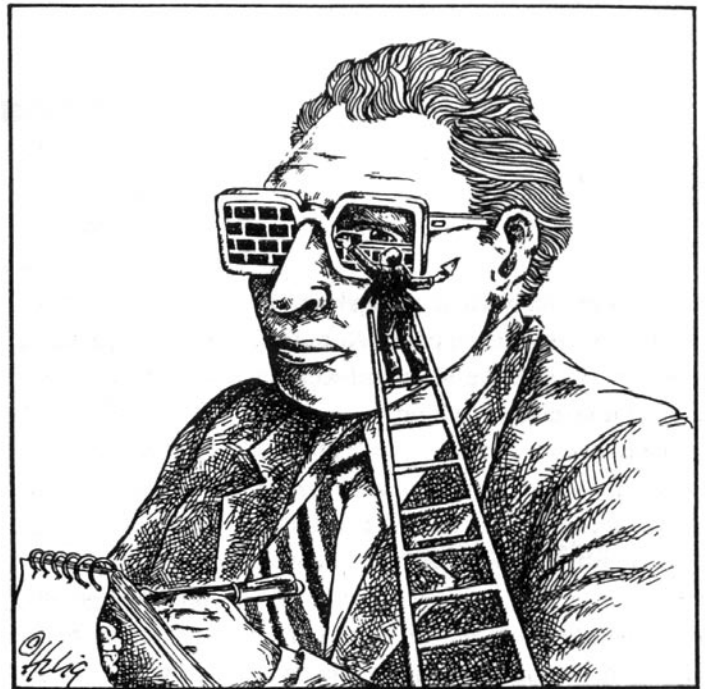
The Media and Government Deception

David Pearson

In 1532, Niccolo Machiavelli wrote that a prince should know how to be a great hypocrite and dissembler. "For men are so simple," he said, "and yield so much to immediate necessity, that the deceiver will never lack dupes." Machiavelli argued that it was the quality of appearances as much as the substance of action that determines a leader's popular support. "Everybody sees what you seem to be," he wrote, "but few really feel what you are, and those few dare not oppose the opinion of the many, who are protected by the majesty of the state."¹ In these few lines, Machiavelli raises four issues central to an understanding of deception by government.²

First, there is the notion of a relatively uninformed public. Next, there is the idea that a variety of tactics, including deception, can be used to build consensus within it. Third, there is the idea that consensus, once established, is useful in limiting criticism. Finally, there is the idea that these conditions permit the political leadership a broader scope of action than would otherwise be possible, which in fact is the purpose of deception in the first place.

Every formal organization, including government, attempts to mobilize human and technical resources as a means for achieving its ends. Often this involves certain forms of deception, from formal classification systems to ad hoc cover stories, lies, omissions and half-truths. Under some circumstances, of course, we agree: deception can be justified, even necessary.³ It can provide decision makers in industry and government with essential freedom of action. It can protect new discoveries, legitimate national security interests, and the identities of intelligence operatives. It can assure



Dan Hubig

the confidences of allies and clients.

But deception has another face. It can restrict the range of the public's political, social, and economic alternatives. It can limit debate, as topics are selectively removed from the public agenda or their consideration is slanted in undetected ways. It will, by definition, generate unregulated and unperceived power, increasingly concentrating that power as the penumbra of deception expands and the accountability for its use is diminished. Finally, deception can take its toll upon the individuals and organizations that practice it—in effect creating a culture of deception, a growing reliance upon unaccountable actions as customary instruments of policy. It is precisely when deception moves beyond sporadic and occasional use, when it becomes in fact a resource and a normal part of the behavioral repertoire, when organizational mechanisms are developed for its use and are brought into play, that a more serious condition obtains: deception becomes permanent,

**Deception can
take its toll upon
the individuals
and organizations
that practice it**

institutionalized. It is a condition we find, with some concern, in our government today.

Whether in Machiavelli's day or in the modern world, any discussion of deception needs to consider the way in which our princes or public officials, the deception's source, transmit their messages to the public, their target audience. Today this is done through the mass media. As Jacques Ellul observed in his classic study of propaganda, the media have the "remarkable effect of reaching the whole crowd at once, and yet reaching each one in that crowd,"⁴ and it is a crowd incomparably larger than was possible in the not-so-distant past. (See the discussion of Ellul's book *Propaganda* in this journal, # 2, pp. 29-33.) Fortunately for us, while the media may be a modern megaphone for amplifying what officials say, they are imperfectly controllable.⁵ As vehicles for deception, then, the media offer both opportunities and risks. If rate of occurrence is any indicator, however, in recent years the benefits to government of official deception appear to have overwhelmed those risks.

Selecting the News

Many journalists would have us believe that their professional news judgment is immune to outside influences. The stature of individual journalists such as Dan Rather, Ted Koppel, and Tom Brokaw appears to confirm this perception. Yet journalists work in organizations that define, constrain, and shape the newsmaking task. There are also environmental factors, forces external to the media organization, that make demands that can never wholly be ignored.⁶ Collectively these comprise the media's structural characteristics, which persist even as individual journalists come and go, a permanent foundation of influence working to ensure that there is little latitude for any particular individual.

Gaye Tuchman argues that stories are selected or rejected as newsworthy by an organizationally-constructed "web of facticity" that selects certain types of stories with greater frequency than others (regardless of the judgment of individual journalists). A major reason for this, she says, are finite resources. We are asked to consider the metaphor of a news "net" where important "big fish" are captured, while smaller, less important fish slip through the mesh and go unreported.⁷

A big fish orientation has obvious implications for what eventually winds up before the public as news. Although most news is about individuals, not just any individual will do. Those

who receive media attention tend to be of a certain type: those who are already well-known. And among the ranks of such "knowns," as Herbert Gans calls them, people most likely to receive attention are those in official positions, especially at the federal level.⁸ Equally important, resource constraints mean that the news net can only be cast in specific geographic locations at specific times. The locations tend to be socially legitimated institutions where newsworthy stories are considered most likely to found. The times tend to be the normal working hours of those institutions.⁹

"Knowns" receive coverage while serious, often insurmountable media barriers exclude powerless or disenfranchised individuals and groups.¹⁰ Official actions get covered while other events are deemed unnewsworthy, or not even perceived at all, simply because they took place at inconvenient (unofficial) locations or times.¹¹

To this we must add constraints on how thoroughly members of the media can cover the stories they do report. There is an understandable tendency to focus on the immediate since new information is constantly breaking; the news, like an irresistible force, moves on.¹² The media also reach a point of diminishing returns with long-running stories where new bits of information do not merit the repeated explanations, space, and expense that their proper presentation would require. Finally, complex stories requiring a great deal of digging, synthesis, and expense, which would tie up an investigative team for a lengthy period, are less likely to be pursued. Government deceptions are frequently of this type.

Objectivity

Even as the routines and processes of media organizations create opportunities that can be exploited by officials engaged in deception, other opportunities arise from a basic ideological tenet of professional journalism: objectivity. The emphasis on objective information--"only the facts"--emerged at the end of the nineteenth century in response to the sensationalism that characterized much of that century's news writing. Standing as an idealized counter to reporters' own subjectivity, the ideal of objectivity has persisted and become so dominant that it is now equated in the popular mind with unbiased, fair, dispassionate reporting.¹³

The focus on information rather than interpretation demanded more discipline of reporters and editors because every item now had to be attributed to some official or authority. Fact checking the

accuracy of news items also became routine. But for the public, the new emphasis had its pitfalls as well as its blessings. The safest way to report the news came to be seen as simply reproducing what officials said without clarifying commentary or analysis.¹⁴ If official utterances involved deception, as they occasionally did, fact-checking put the press in an unfortunate position: conflicting information could not be reported unless “known” officials would confirm it, and officials are notably reluctant to confirm embarrassing stories or information that contradicts official views.¹⁵ In these ways, Ben Bagdikian observes, the canon of objectivity “tended to leave unreported large areas of genuine relevance that authorities chose not to talk about.” The result was that the news focused increasingly on government, becoming ever more official and establishmentarian.¹⁶

The unfortunate consequences of this “only the facts” reportorial emphasis were cast into stark relief during the McCarthy era. McCarthy’s charges were sensational, to be certain: the entire government from the office of the President on down was infiltrated by Communists. McCarthy’s position as a United States Senator ipso facto meant that the charges came from a high government official. But by reporting his lies and innuendo as straight news, they were accorded a degree of visibility and credibility they surely did not merit. Many members of the press who understood the falsity of the charges failed to point it out because to do so would have been considered interpretation or editorialization rather than straight news; a reluctance to say the obvious resulted in serious harm to many of those the Senator falsely accused.

From the official perspective, another attraction of the canon of objectivity is the need for “balance.” This idea has its roots in the old Federal Radio Commission’s notion that the public interest demanded “ample play for the free and fair competition of opposing views.”¹⁷ The concept of balance subsequently found expression in the Fairness Doctrine, a set of Federal Communications Commission rules requiring that television and radio stations devote adequate time to controversial issues of public importance and provide reasonable opportunity for opposing viewpoints.¹⁸ While laudable in intent, the quest for balance opens a window of opportunity for officials engaging in deception. It ensures that they will always be able to respond to critics, often providing themselves the proverbial “last word” on issues of public importance.

Government as News Source

In the production of the news the coin of the realm is information, fresh and preferably exclusive, that provides a media organization with an edge over its competition. Much of today’s important news derives from government, meaning that the media require the stream of unique, if often similar statements and stories that only government officials can provide. The essence of the news process is to take that stream and convert it into news items on a regular basis.¹⁹ Hungry

for important new information, the exclusive story, the “scoop,” journalists cultivate sources who can satisfy their demands. Many of those who can do so, and on a regular basis, work in official capacities in government. Particularly for members of the national press corps, official sources can be considered the lifeblood of the profession.

In return for their pains, sources are offered the journalist’s ‘medium as a public forum for presenting their plans and proposals, and for expounding their agendas. There is an exchange, to be sure, a symbiosis, but it is far from symmetrical. The media need a resource, information, over which government officials often exercise an effective monopoly. Officials, however, confront no such monopoly in dealing with the press corps. The existence of multiple and competing print and electronic media ensures that officials will always have alternative outlets for how, when, and where their message is disseminated. Because of the inherent asymmetry in the relationship and the dependency it involves (the journalist needs the source’s information more than the source needs the journalist), the source can exert influence on the reporting of the news, emphasize or de-emphasize certain topics, and make demands with which the journalist must comply.

Consider the problems that could arise for a reporter who

The canon of objectivity “tended to leave unreported large areas of genuine relevance that authorities chose not to talk about.”

raises questions about a topic that his major sources have declared off-limits. Leaks of information would dry up, invitations would cease, interviews would be denied. Without ongoing access to new inside information, the journalist would promptly become less informed and hence less valuable to the employing news organization. Indeed, in the struggle for the exclusive story, the reporter would be correctly viewed as putting the news organization at a competitive disadvantage. This is not a condition that a ratings-conscious, profit-oriented media organization would long tolerate.

Since there is no way the media can manage their dependency by ignoring government-sourced news, the only remaining option is to establish a favorable relationship with government. And therein lies the peril. As soon as the media abdicate their role as critical, adversarial news hounds and become the lapdogs of government, the likelihood of official deception increases.

Political Realism

When pressures for conformity are coupled with journalists' own career interests, the result has been to produce in some a new brand of "political realism." Concerns such as responsible, accountable government and the public's right to know are believed by the new realists to be holdovers from an earlier, more naïve era that has vanished forever. In its place is a new set of values more consonant with the demands of the power structure. The jaded members of the press who play this game deride as unsophisticated and sentimental those who do not accept the new realities. It is a game where, by some alchemy, political realism and their own career interests come out equal.²⁰ These new realists pose few problems for those in government who choose to engage in deception.

Finally, and almost in a whisper, it is necessary to raise the issue of co-optation--the possibility that some members of the press knowingly use their positions to advance the official government agenda. Of course we know and accept, however uncomfortably, that efforts are made to advance US interests by influencing foreign press coverage. Given the stakes involved, how realistic is it to believe that our own media are somehow sacrosanct? U.S. News & World Report correspondent Nicholas Daniloff may not have been a spy for US intelligence, as the Russians claimed, but we can be confident that the relative freedom of journalists to poke about in countries such as the Soviet Union, camera in hand, has not been lost on our officials. We can be equally confident that

the enormous power of the media for shaping public perceptions here at home has not escaped their attention. Those who argue that direct attempts to coopt journalists for purposes of influencing press coverage "cannot happen here" are either being naïve or disingenuous.

National Security Jitters

While a measure of caution in a world containing tens of thousands of nuclear warheads is amply warranted, the record suggests that the invocation of "national security" has been abused on more than one occasion. The result has been the cooptation of journalists into dubious campaigns of official deception, sometimes with the best of motives. For instance, in early 1961, the New York Times imposed self-censorship on its preinvasion Bay of Pigs story. Publisher Orvil Dryfoos ordered the story toned down, moved to a less prominent place on the page, its headline minimized, and any reference to the imminence of the invasion eliminated. The Times also decided on its own initiative that it was in the national interest to withhold certain vital information from the American public, including the fact of CIA involvement. President Kennedy would later suggest that, had the Times printed all it knew, the invasion might have been cancelled and the bloody debacle avoided.²¹ During the Vietnam war, reporters' agreements to sign pledges not to disclose troop movements, precise casualty totals, and other specific types of information may have contributed to prolonging the era of public support for what in retrospect many consider an ill-conceived foreign policy.²² In recent years the press has become even more willing to slant, modify, or delay stories that the government claims will impact upon our national security. By one account, during a twelve-month period in 1984-85, the Reagan administration pressured the Washington Post to withhold or alter a news story six times on national security grounds^Y

Watchdog or Lapdog?

Many journalists denounce as petulant or worse those who point out the troubling history of complicity between the media and government, countering with a parallel history of the media Repeated, egregious "misstatements" by officials from the President himself on down have become the norm

locking horns with the power structure. Four of the more commonly mentioned examples of this are Edward R. Murrow's

repeated, egregious

"misstatements" by
officials from the
President himself on
down have become
the norm



challenged those with real power--the corporate elites and the United States Army--did it appear sufficiently safe for the network to air the program.²⁴ Similarly, in the case of media coverage of Indochina, it was only after powerful elites both inside and outside government began to turn away from their previous support for the war that a critical show in the mainstream media, such as CBS News' Cronkite Report on Vietnam, became possible. As for Watergate, we should recall with some dismay the extraordinary reticence of much of the press to get involved and take risks until support for the President by his previous political and economic supporters had already waned.²⁵ It was only then that the media jumped on the bandwagon and the movement to remove President Nixon from office became irresistible.²⁶ Such behavior does not appear to evince a genuinely autonomous, critical media. Rather, it appears to support the view that the media move in accordance with the interests and desires of powerful forces within both government and the power structure more broadly.

Finally, the revelations made during the Iran-contra affair have been regarded as a major press success. Yet many critics, including some journalists themselves, disagree with this interpretation. A number of high-ranking administration officials deliberately disseminated false information to a press corps they considered little more than "a tool to be used" in the drive to shape public opinion, and members of the press often uncritically accepted and reported what their sources said. Numerous accounts surfaced about the Iran-contra affair, of course, but these appeared primarily outside the "establishment" media. The result was that the media

show on Senator Joseph McCarthy, the press coverage of the Vietnam war, Watergate, and the Iran-contra scandal. Yet upon closer examination this evidence is less than compelling. Discussing Murrow's show on McCarthy, former New York Times reporter David Halberstam points out that fear, both by the network and Murrow himself, led to the program being repeatedly withheld from broadcast. It was only when McCarthy

were tardy in coming to the story. The investigation that followed was little better. When told by his boss to get out and "plow the fields" on this story, Post investigative editor Bob Woodward acknowledges he did not do so. Other journalists were quickly diverted by the search for the "smoking gun," abandoning further inquiry as soon as it became apparent that events would not lead to a presidential impeachment.²⁷ What results might have followed a more thorough investigation of the Iran-contra scandal can only be guessed. Owing to the potent effects of official pressure and media dereliction, the extent of other government deceptions that never saw the light of day can only be imagined.

Conclusion



It is clear who is the dominant partner in the media-government relationship. It is equally clear that this dominance gives government a hand in shaping the interpretation of the reality we see each day in the news.²⁸

By no means do all members of the media applaud this ominous drift. But when tight control of information is coupled with journalists' desires to advance their careers, to be "insiders," not to antagonize their official sources, their own organizations, or their sponsoring agencies, then the necessary adversarial element in the government-press relationship is lost.

Recent history bears witness to the consequences. To an unprecedented degree, efforts have been made to extend what Thorstein Veblen once lyrically described as the "night and cloud" of government secrecy to new areas of American life.²⁹ Official dishonesty has become pervasive. Repeated, egregious "misstatements" by officials from the President himself on down have become the norm. Selective truths are offered up, apparently to help explain reality but in fact with the opposite intention, and the press and public are left to draw obvious, and incorrect, conclusions from them. Other information is omitted entirely, perverting what information is provided by modifying its context and weakening our ability to effectively reason from the facts.³⁰ A deliberate policy of disinformation--putting knowingly false information into the public domain--has been undertaken regarding CIA programs such as support of the Nicaraguan contras and the Department of Defense's "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative.³¹ False reports disseminated via the media have set the stage for American military action in places such as Central America, Libya, and the Caribbean. The

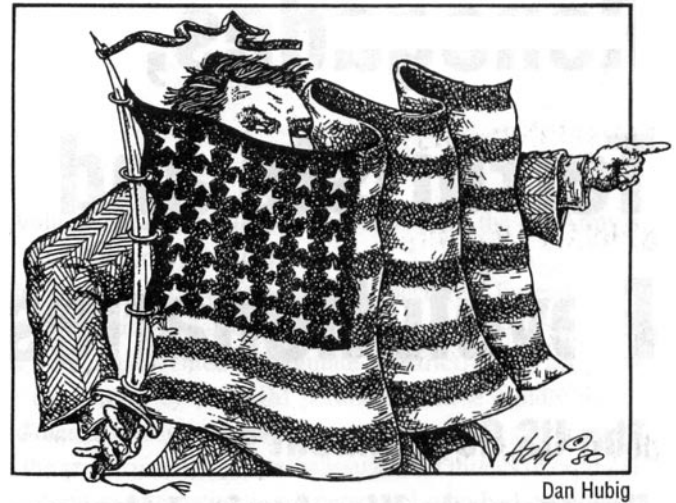
result, Machiavelli would have pointed out, is an increasingly uninformed citizenry, a malleable mass public wherein powerful “princes” can employ a variety of tactics, including deception, to build internal consensus and limit criticism. These conditions reduce official accountability and permit the political leadership a broader scope of action than would otherwise be possible, which in fact is the purpose of deception in the first place. It is a process in which our contemporary press corps, wittingly or not, appears to be thoroughly implicated. •

David Pearson is a Fellow in International Security Studies at the Mershon Center at Ohio State University. He is the author of *Kal 007--The Cover-up*.

Notes

- 1 Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 1963, Pocket Books, New York, NY, pp. 77-78.
- 2 Throughout this discussion I draw from my work *The Betrayal of Truth and Trust by Government: Deception as Process and Practice*, May 1988, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Yale University, New Haven, CT.
- 3 For examples of this, see Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: From the Crimea to Vietnam--The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth Maker*, 1975, Harvest Books, New York, NY.
- 4 Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, 1965, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY, p. 8.
- 5 Todd Gitlin, "Television's Screens: Hegemony in Transition," pp. 202-246 in Michael Apple (ed.), *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*, 1982, Routledge and Kegan Paul, Boston, MA, p. 205. 6 For a discussion see Herbert Gans, *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*, 1979, Vintage, New York, NY, p. 78.
- 7 Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1972, Vol. 77, No.4, pp. 660-670.
- 8 Gans, *Deciding What's News*, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
- 9 Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*, 1978, The Free Press, New York, NY, p. 21.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 11 Edward J. Epstein, *News From Nowhere: Television and the News*, 1973, Vintage, New York, NY, p. 16.
- 12 In this paragraph I draw from my book *KAL 007: The Cover-Up~ Why the True Story Has Never Been Told*, 1987, Summit Books, New York, NY.
- 13 Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*, 1978, Basic Books, pp. 90 and 155.
- 14 Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, 1983, Beacon Press, Boston, MA, pp. 181-182.

15



Dan Hubig

- Tom Gervasi, *The Myth of Soviet Military Supremacy*, 1986, Harper & Row, New York, NY, p. 26.
- 16 Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, op. cit., p. 182.
- 17 Quoted in Fred W. Friendly, *The Good Guys, The Bad Guys, and the First Amendment: Free Speech Vs. Fairness in Broadcasting*, 1975, Vintage, New York, NY, pp. 19-20.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 19 Paul DiMaggio, "Market Structure, the Creative Process, and Popular Culture," *I 977, Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. II, pp. 436-452.
- 20 Pearson, *KAL 007*, op. cit., pp. 260-261.
- 21 Gay Talese, *The Kingdom and the Power*, 1978, Anchor Books, Garden City, NY, p. 5.
- 22 Phil Gailey, "U.S. Bars Coverage of Grenada Action; News Groups Protest," *New York Times*, 27 October 1983, pp. A1-23.
- 23 Eleanor Randolph, "The Story The Press Didn't See: The News Media Blew the Coverage of the Iran-contra Scandal," *Washington POSI National Weekly Edition*, 30 November 1987, pp. 6-7.
- 24 David Halberstam, *The Powers That Be*, 1979, Knopf, New York, NY.
- 25 Robert Nisbet, *Twilight of Authority*, 1975, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, pp. 45-47.
- 26 Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days*, 1976, Avon Books, New York, NY.
- 27 Mark Hertsgaard, "How Ronald Reagan Turned News Hounds Into Lap Dogs," *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, August 29- September 4, 1988, pp. 25-26.
- 28 Gans, *Deciding What's News*, op. cit., p. 81.
- 29 Thorstein Veblen, *Absentee Ownership and Business Enterprise in Recent Times: The Case of America*, 1923, Beacon Press, Boston, MA, p.444.
- 30 See Donna A. Demac, *Keeping America Uninformed: Government Secrecy in the 1980s*, 1984, Pilgrim Press, New York, NY.
- 31 David M. North, "U.S. Using Disinformation Policy to Impede Technical Data Flow," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 17 March 1986, pp. 16-17.

Renegades, Terrorists and Revolutionaries

The US Government's Propaganda War Against the American Indian Movement

Ward Churchill

During the 1970s, the US government conducted what amounted to a counterinsurgency war against the American Indian Movement (AIM). The campaign was designed to “neutralize” that organization’s ability to pursue an agenda of Indian treaty rights, land recovery and national sovereignty in North America. While many of the federal tactics took a directly physical form—murder and fabrication of evidence in criminal cases were two of the more spectacular—a major propaganda effort was integral to the government’s strategy of repression. The federal government was able to do what it did at Wounded Knee because of a virtually continuous drumbeat in the press of “AIM violence;” for a three year period, there was almost no reference in the press to the American Indian Movement without the some form of word violence used as a predicate. The motives for this campaign lay not only in an official desire to deny AIM broad public support, but in a need to condition the citizenry to accept as justified the harsh and often extralegal nature of what authorities were doing to the group.

Opening Rounds

The first substantial anti-AIM propaganda operation began during the spectacular “Trail of Broken Treaties” occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) building in Washington, D.C., on the eve of the 1972 presidential election. The incumbent Nixon administration, eager to avoid the impression of a serious “Indian uprising” at such a critical moment, went far out of its way to prevent statements by the occupiers from surfacing in the media.



Tom Yeates

Simultaneously, it spent more than \$100,000 importing selected “representative Indian spokesmen” to discredit the AIM leadership. Webster Two Hawk, president of the federally-sponsored National Tribal Chairman’s Association, was a star performer; he repeated the government line that AIM was composed of “renegades” and “irresponsible self-styled revolutionaries” who held no real standing in “Indian Country.” Two Hawk’s well-subsidized views were carried verbatim on national TV and the front pages of the Washington Post and New York Times.

It is worth noting that Two Hawk, Nixon’s hand-picked “leader” of American Indians, barely had time to return home to

A major propaganda effort was integral to the government’s strategy of repression

the Rosebud Reservation in western South Dakota before being unseated as tribal chairman by AIM-supporter Robert Burnette. By then federal media manipulators were at work against “the militants” even in this remote region. Solid evidence of this came on February 5, 1973, as AIM was organizing a demonstration at the Custer (S.D.) County Courthouse to protest the levying of mere manslaughter charges against a non-Indian charged with the brutal murder of a young Indian, Wesley Bad Heart Bull. On that date, Rapid City Journal reporter, Lyn Gladstone reported that the action had been cancelled because someone, subsequently thought to be an FBI agent, had called and told the reporter that the demonstration was off. Consequently, when AIM members showed up as planned at the courthouse the next day, very few supporters joined them which meant few witnesses. When AIM was attacked by a specially-assembled force of riot police, “official spokesmen” were able to make it appear that AIM activists had attacked the police.

Wounded Knee

The ink was barely dry on the government’s disinformation concerning “AIM violence” in Custer when federal forces laid siege to a group of organization members and supporters at Wounded Knee, on the nearby Pine Ridge Reservation. Contrary to the official line, promulgated by the Justice Department and reported by the press, that AIM had occupied the isolated hamlet, the Indians had actually gone to Wounded Knee on the evening of February 27, 1973 in order to prepare for a press conference the following morning. Their press conference was to draw public attention to the corruption of local tribal chairman, Dick Wilson, and to the involvement of federal authorities in blocking attempts by reservation residents to obtain elementary due process in the matter. Wilson had been appointed by the BIA to preside over his own impeachment process; he had been given funds to create a de facto private army calling itself the “GOON (Guardians of the Oglala Nation) squad” with which to suppress his opposition; and, a 65-man SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) team of US marshals had been sent to further back him up.¹ Come the morning of February 28, 1973, the AIM group at Wounded Knee found itself completely surrounded by GOONs and marshals who were quickly reinforced by FBI, BIA police, non-Indian vigilante groups, and advisors from the US Army’s elite 82nd Airborne Division.²

The desired press conference never occurred. Instead, a 71- day confrontation began during which numerous federal procedures were implemented to “regulate” (restrict) media access to those trapped inside the AIM perimeter. These rapidly manifested themselves in an outright barring of mainstream reporters from the scene of activity, and the issuance of threats of criminal prosecution to alternative press personnel who had essentially moved into Wounded Knee for the duration. “Press briefings” conducted by authorities were then substituted for direct coverage of the action. With this mechanism in place, the government was in a position to deliberately misrepresent reality in a number of ways. For example, when FBI agent Curtis Fitzpatrick was wounded in the wrist by a spent rifle round on March 11, 1973, federal propagandists arranged an extravaganza for reporters to witness his arrival at a nearby Air Force base in a military “medevac” helicopter with his head swathed in bandages. Similarly, this eloquent (if utterly contrived) testament to “AIM violence” was still making the rounds nationally when federal “public relations officers” began announcing that individuals arrested for attempting to transport food and medical supplies into the AIM positions had actually been apprehended while smuggling “arms and ammunition.” At one point, it was even announced that AIM was firing state-of-the-art M-60 machineguns at federal personnel despite the fact that the FBI was later revealed to have been fully aware that the Indians possessed no armaments other than an array of hunting rifles and shotguns.

Barring the media from Wounded Knee allowed the government to cover up many of its own actions. For instance, the burning of several buildings inside the hamlet-widely attributed to AIM “vandalism”-was actually caused by the prolific use of heavy-calibre military tracer ammunition and the repeated firing of magnesium flares directly at the wooden structures. No mainstream reporter was in a position to observe exactly who initiated the massive firefights-federal forces fired more than 500,000 rounds into Wounded Knee during the siege-which frequently lit up the nights. When AIM member Buddy Lamont was killed at Wounded Knee on April 27, 1973, no mention was made of the fact that he had bled to death while FBI commander Joseph Trimbach delayed his being placed in an ambulance for 45 minutes. Perhaps most importantly, a steadily increasing intimacy between the FBI and the GOONs-with the former providing the latter with automatic weapons and stores of ammunition, military communications gear and other material support, as well as intelligence information and

virtual immunity from prosecution-was also obscured.

The Reign of Terror

During the three years following Wounded Knee, more than 300 AIM members and supporters were physically assaulted on Pine Ridge. Of these, at least 69 died, giving the reservation a political murder rate precisely comparable to that prevailing in Chile during the three years immediately following the 1971 Pinochet Coup.³ In virtually every instance, this “Third World” level of violence was plainly attributable to the GOONs, often on the basis of multiple eyewitness accounts. Yet the FBI-which held primary jurisdiction on the reservation, and which had thereon deployed the greatest concentration of agents to citizens in history--pleaded

Tom Coli, a propaganda

specialist, was dispatched

to “explain” why the FBI

was suddenly conducting

Vietnam-style search and

destroy operations on an

obscure South Dakota

Indian reservation

“lack of manpower” in solving or in most cases even investigating the homicides. Instead, despite the absence of casualties among the GOONs and police personnel, and the fact that the US Commission on Civil Rights⁴ had formally concluded that the FBI rather than AIM was fostering a “reign of terror” on Pine Ridge, five Bureau publicists maintained a national media drumbeat proclaiming it was AIM which was “violence-prone.” This aspect of the government’s disinformation campaign culminated during the spring of 1975 when Douglass Durham, an FBI infiltrator/provocateur who had worked himself into the position of AIM security chief, was

allowed to testify as the sole witness before the Senate Committee on Internal Security. His uncorroborated, unsubstantiated, and in most cases utterly false testimony was then used as the basis for a widely disseminated official report branding AIM as a “revolutionary organization” committed to “the violent overthrow of the federal government.”⁵

At this juncture, FBI strategists appear to have felt that the public had been sufficiently conditioned to accept a final stroke which would physically destroy AIM once and for all. Hence, on June 26, 1975, two FBI agents - Ron Williams and Jack Coler were sent to an AIM compound located on the Harry and Cecilia Jumping Bull property, near the reservation village of Oglala, ostensibly, to arrest a 15-year-old AIM member, Jimmy Eagle, who was charged with stealing a pair of used cowboy boots. Positioned as backup in the immediate area, 150 FBI and BIA SWAT team members waited for the agents to arrest the teenager. However, the agents precipitated a firefight and they were cut off from their intended support. Coler and Williams, along with AIM member Joe Stuntz Killwright, were shot and killed.

Bureau officials immediately rushed an additional 250 SWAT personnel to Pine Ridge. Also dispatched was Tom Coli, FBI public relations specialist, to “explain” why the FBI was suddenly conducting Vietnam-style search and destroy operations--complete with armored personnel carriers and attack helicopters--on an obscure South Dakota Indian reservation. The reason, according to Coli, was that the “terrorist American Indian Movement” had initiated “guerrilla warfare” on Pine Ridge. Agents Williams and Coler, he said, had been “lured into an ambush” where they were “attacked from a sophisticated bunker complex.” After being wounded, he continued, they had been “dragged from their cars,” “stripped,” and “riddled with 15- 20 bullets” apiece, the ammunition fired from “automatic weapons.” In one account, they had also been “scalped.” It had been “cold blooded murder,” said Coli, and agent Williams had been “executed” while lying on the ground “pleading with his killers to think of his wife and children.”

None of this was true, as Coli knew at the time he fed it to the media. Each agent had been shot three times, and from long rather than close range. The fabled “bunkers” were actually old root cellars and animal shelters--common to any rural area--which had not been used as AIM positions during the firefight. There was no evidence that AIM had utilized automatic weapons; neither agent had been stripped, scalped or otherwise mutilated. Far from being

“lured” to the firefight site, the agents had been sent there by their superiors. Still, it was nearly a week before FBI director Clarence Kelly openly admitted these facts but by then a wave of sensational headlines and TV “news” reports had firmly established a public sentiment which supported the Bureau in its massive campaign of kicking in the doors of reservation houses, conducting “air assaults” on the properties of known AIM supporters, and generally terrorizing the entire reservation population. Even a few of the GOONs are known to have protested what was going on at this point, but under such circumstances the FBI was able to continue its invasion of Pine Ridge for three solid months without appreciable public outcry.



Tom Yeates

End Game Moves

It would probably be fair to say that the capstone of the federal propaganda war on AIM came a year later, in June of 1976, during the trial of Bob Robideau and Dino Butler charged in the deaths of FBI agents Williams and Coler at Pine Ridge. In what appears to be a bald attempt to influence the jury (and the public at large) against the defendants, the FBI announced that it had evidence that a force of “2,000 AIM warriors” known as “Dog Soldiers” and “trained in the Northwest” were about to arrive in South Dakota. Once there, they planned to “kill a cop a day ... burn fanners ... snipe at tourists ... assassinate the governor...blow up the Bureau of Indian Affairs ... blow up turbines at the Ft. Randall Dam ... and destroy Mt. Rushmore National Monument,” among other things. The “Dog Soldier Teletypes,” as the FBI communiques quickly became known, also contended that this AIM activity was part of a multiracial venture in terrorism, planned jointly with a Denver-based Chicano group known as the Crusade for Justice, and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS; the long-defunct white radical organization). The information again produced splashy headlines nationally, a situation which lasted until FBI director Kelly was cross-examined under oath by Butler/Robideau defense attorney William Kunstler. When asked whether there was a “shred of evidence” to support the allegations trumpeted in his Bureau’s teletypes, Kelly responded: “I know of none.” The jury ultimately acquitted Butler and Robideau of the murder charges

brought against them on the basis that they had killed the two FBI agents in self-defense. Nonetheless, the misimpression of AIM as a bunch of renegades, terrorists and revolutionaries had once again been deliberately inculcated among the general public. Cumulatively, the combination of sustained physical hammering, judicial railroading, and persistent public misrepresentation had proven sufficient to enable the government to attain its objective of “neutralizing” most of AIM’s political effectiveness.

Conclusion

As Malcolm X once put it, “If you’re not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.” Certain particularities notwithstanding, the experience of the American Indian Movement as a domestic target of federal propaganda is hardly unique. As Malcolm knew, entirely comparable disinformation campaigns were being conducted during the early ‘60s, not only against the Nation of Islam, but also against groups such as the Student National Coordinating Committee, Socialist Workers Party, and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. By the latter part of the decade, the list had been expanded to include organizations such as the Revolutionary Action Movement, Black Panther Party, Young Lords Party, Student Mobilization and SDS. During the ‘70s, the Weather Underground, prison liberation movement, and Black Liberation Army were targeted. More recently, we see the



Tom Yeates

same tactics employed to varying degrees against organizations such as the Palestine Solidarity Committee, Silo Plowshares, CISPES and Puertorriqueño Independentista, formations such as los Macheteros and the FALN. The government's anti-AIM propaganda effort serves as a textbook illustration of a much wider technique of political repression.

Ward Churchill, *Creek/Cherokee Metis*, is co-director of Colorado AIM and coordinator of American Indian Studies with the Center for Studies of Ethnicity and Race in America at the University of Colorado/Boulder. A prolific writer on Indian affairs, his books include *Marxism and Native Americans* (1983), *Culture Versus Economism* (with Elisabeth R. Lloyd, 1984), *Agents of Repression* (with Jim Vander Wall, 1988) and *Critical issues in Native North America* (1989). He and Vander Wall are currently editing *The COINTELPRO Papers*, a documents collection forthcoming from South End Press.

Notes

1 The reasoning behind the degree of federal support extended to the venal Wilson regime was initially rather mysterious. It later became apparent that a deal had been made wherein Wilson would be maintained in power at virtually any cost in exchange for his agreement to sign over title to the northeastern eighth of Pine Ridge to the government. The latter had secretly discovered the acreage in question to be rich in uranium and molybdenum (see Gries, J.P., *Status of Mineral Resource Information on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation*, BIA Report No. 12, US Department

of Interior, Washington, D.C., 1976). Wilson consummated the illegal transaction which violates the consent provisions concerning Lakota land cessions contained in the stillbinding 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty-during the summer of 1975.

2 See "Gardenplot & SWAT: US Police as New Action Army." Winter, 1976 issue of *CounterSpy*, Vol. 2, Issue 4 for a discussion of the assaults on the reservation by the FBI et al during the early 1970s. [Reprints available from *The National Reporter*, P.O. Box 21279, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 328-0178.]

3 Looked at another way, according to the FBI's own *Uniform Crime Report* for 1976, the overall US violent death rate was 9.7 per 100,000 during that year. Detroit, reputedly the "murder capital of the United States," had a violent death rate of 20.2 per 100,000 in 1974. Pine Ridge, on the other hand, maintained a violent death rate of 170 per 100,000 during the entire three year period running from March 1, 1973 to March 1, 1976.

4 See US Commission on Civil Rights, *Report of an Investigation: Oglala Sioux Tribe, General Election, 1974*, Washington, D.C., 1974. Also see US Commission on Civil Rights, *Monitoring Events Relating to the Shooting of Two FBI Agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation*, Mountain States Regional Office, Denver, July 9, 1975.

5 See US Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Internal Security, *Revolutionary Organizations in the United States: The American Indian Movement*, US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975. It should be noted that Durham went directly from his Senate testimony to a lecture tour on the topic of "AIM terrorism" sponsored by the John Birch Society. The infiltrator had also been instrumental in orchestrating the publicity attending the sensational "Skyhorse/Mohawk Case" in California, beginning in 1974, in which two area AIM leaders were accused of perpetrating the "Mansonstyle" murder of Los Angeles cab driver George Aird. Paul "Skyhorse" Durant and Richard "Mohawk" Billings were eventually found innocent of the crime, but by then AIM had been graphically portrayed in the media as a bunch of mad dog killers for a sustained period.

Hitler's Last Laugh

Martin A. Lee

**The Reagan
administration covered
up one of the most
insidious foreign policy
ventures in US history**



“that’s the Enemy” This Italian version of the American Poster by Karl Kochler and Victor Ancona, won the first prize in the “nature of the Enemy” competition in the US “artists for Vivtory” competition in 1942.

When Klaus Barbie, the “Butcher of Lyon,” was apprehended in Bolivia several years ago, the US government began looking into charges that American intelligence agencies had protected Barbie and helped engineer his escape to South America after World War II. A 1983 Justice Department investigation confirmed this, but maintained that Barbie was the only Nazi war criminal who had been assisted by the US government in such a fashion.

Thus did the Reagan administration cover up one of the most insidious foreign policy ventures in US history--a policy whereby thousands of active Nazis, not just Barbie, were deliberately and systematically recruited by US intelligence to further American objectives in postwar Europe. This wasn’t a covert sideshow run out of the White House basement. It was official US policy, encoded in a series of National Security Council directives in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the discrete approval of George Kennan, Charles Thayer, the Dulles brothers, and other top US strategists who believed that a global rivalry with the Soviet Union was inevitable now that fascism had been defeated.



Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto rounded up for

Although well-known to many American officials, the Nazi recruitment effort was not something publicly discussed. The details of these programs would still be secret if not for the meticulous reportage of Christopher Simpson, author of *Blowback*, which provides the fullest account yet of America's postwar collaboration with Nazis and the profound repercussions this had on our nation's domestic and foreign policy.

Nazi Veterans Recruited

Bolstered by sixty-five pages of references to once-classified government documents, *Blowback* describes how the Allies' much-ballyhooed denazification policy was quietly scuttled as veterans of the SS, the SD (Nazi party security), the Gestapo and the Wehrmacht became linchpins in an American-led espionage campaign against the Soviet Union. Intelligence "assets" enlisted by the US included senior German officers who had served directly under Adolf Eichmann, the man responsible for running the central administrative apparatus of the Holocaust.

American spymasters knew that many of their new recruits had committed horrible crimes against humanity. But atrocities were sidestepped as attention shifted to the imagined Red Menace, within and without, and the exigencies of the Cold War acquired their own momentum: "It was a visceral business of using any bastard as long as he was anti-Communist," explained Harry Rositzke, former head of CIA operations inside the USSR. "The eagerness to enlist collaborators meant that you didn't look at their credentials too closely."

From the outset the Nazi recruitment operation had a

schizoid quality. US agencies ostensibly involved in tracking and capturing war criminals were actually employing some of the same people whose names topped the Nazi hunters' most wanted list. There were at least a half dozen largescale programs designed to tap the talents of German spies in the late 1940s. By far the biggest catch was General Reinhard

Gehlen, Hitler's chief military intelligence officer on the eastern front, whose subsequent relationship with the US government was arguably more important than the high-profile American embrace of Dr. Werner von Braun and other German rocket scientists.

The Nazi-Staffed Spy Apparatus

Gehlen--a pivotal character in *Blowback*--had carefully planned his surrender to the United States. As World War II drew to its inevitable conclusion, he microfilmed his vast espionage archive on the Soviet Union and buried the data in the Austrian Alps. When an American Counterintelligence Corps team grabbed him in May 1945, Gehlen was ready to deal. Not only did he know where the spy booty was hidden, Gehlen assured his captors, but if necessary he could activate an underground network of battle-hardened anti-communists who were well placed to make mischief throughout much of Eastern Europe and Russia.

The ink had barely dried on the Yalta agreements, which required the US to fork over to the Soviets any captured Axis officers who had been involved in "eastern area activities." Yet Gehlen was soon in Washington, wining and dining with high level US policy makers whose appetite for cold war gossip had fast become gluttonous. Gehlen played their psyches like piano keys, with a pitch so seductively anti-Soviet that competing factions in the intelligence community fought over who would get to control him.

By 1948, Gehlen and his Nazi-staffed spy apparatus (known as the "Org") were absorbed lock, stock and barrel into the fledgling CIA, which hitherto had lacked a well-developed intelligence capability geared toward the USSR. According to Simpson, the Gehlen Org functioned as the CIA's eyes and ears inside East Bloc

societies, providing the US with sensitive information on Soviet military forces and other subjects. Sometimes Gehlen's reports were simply retyped onto CIA stationery and integrated into President Truman's morning intelligence briefing.

Under Eisenhower, Gehlen became chief of West Germany's BND domestic spy unit, as well as the principal source of raw intelligence for NATO. For many years he passed false information to US officials in an effort to whip up fears about Soviet military intentions in Europe.

Despite Gehlen's dubious track record, the US continued to rely almost exclusively on his network for data on the Soviets. By consistently exaggerating the Soviet threat, Gehlen played a significant role in fomenting tensions between the superpowers and fueling right wing paranoia about a world communist conspiracy. "The agency loved Gehlen because he fed us what we wanted to hear," a former CIA officer told Simpson. "We used his stuff constantly, and we fed it to everybody else: the Pentagon, the

White House, the newspapers. They loved it, too. But it was hyped up Russian bogeyman junk, and it did a lot of damage to this country."

Herein lies the core issue of Blowback: the genesis and evolution of the Cold War must be reconsidered in light of Gehlen's covert conniving with the US government. But implicit in Simpson's analysis are tantalizing questions that the author never confronts head on. Was General Gehlen merely improvising as he fabricated dire reports about Red Army malfeasance? Or was this part of a conscious strategy pursued by Gehlen and other unrepentant Nazis who sought to bind US foreign policy to the Cold War for their own purposes? Given the deception he practiced, does it really make sense to speak of

Gehlen first and foremost as an American asset?

Although Simpson never quite comes out and says so, the preponderance of evidence suggests that Gehlen was a double agent beholden ultimately to his Nazi brethren whose ability to survive and prosper after the collapse of the Third Reich rested on a rudimentary equation--the colder the Cold War got, the more political space for Hitler's heirs to maneuver. SS General Karl Wolff, a postwar Gehlen operative, put it rather bluntly in a 1948 interview, which wasn't quoted in Blowback: "We'll get our Reich back again. The others will begin to fight amongst themselves eventually and then we'll be in the middle and can play one off against the other."

Although the basic rationale for recruiting Nazis hinged on the assumption that they would facilitate American interests, Simpson convincingly demonstrates that this ghoulish espionage tryst had the opposite impact. Hence the title "Blowback," which in spy parlance refers to the malfunction of an overseas mission that results in negative and unforeseen consequences at home. In a broader sense the term could apply to any cloak and dagger scheme aimed at a foreign target that works to the detriment of the US.

Case in point: more than thirty years ago the US organized a proxy army of Ukrainian nationalists who had defected to the West after collaborating with the Germans in World War II. Armed and financed by the CIA, these fascist commandos engaged in sabotage, assassination, and other terror tactics during ill-fated forays into their homeland. Instead of catalyzing a popular uprising, the secret warfare campaign boomeranged, leading to arrests, imprisonment and in some cases mass executions. Nevertheless, as Simpson points out, "the Ukrainian guerrilla option became the prototype for hundreds of CIA operations worldwide that have attempted to exploit indigenous discontent in order to make political gains for the United States."

The Ukrainian insurgents were among an array of East European "resistance movements," comprised largely of Nazi collaborators, that US intelligence sponsored during the Cold War. The CIA tried to unite the Latvians, Estonians, Croatians, Belorussians, Russian Solidarists and other fascist emigre groups under a single umbrella, but all the dirty money in the agency's numbered bank accounts couldn't have prevented the bitter internecine squabbling that culminated in the kidnapping and murder of several exile leaders. On various occasions paramilitary

The genesis and evolution of the Cold War must be reconsidered in light of Gehlen's covert conniving with the US government



Adolph Hitler salutes his troops October, 1931, Brunswick, Germany

Cold War Propaganda at Home

Back in the USA, the CIA set in motion the Crusade for Freedom, a multi-million dollar PR project which served as the domestic counterpart to the agency's global propaganda effort. Designed to mobilize public opinion in support of the cold war measures adopted by the American government, this exercise in mind management depended on the voluntary silence of big media personalities in the US. It was rather convenient that people like Henry Luce of TimeLife, C.D. Jackson of Fortune, and Eugene Lyons of Reader's Digest sat on the board of directors of the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), which functioned as a thinly-veiled "private sector" cover for channeling clandestine funds to emigre organizations. Other NCFE board

operations were conducted without approval of the CIA, which apparently had a tough time keeping its dogs of war on a short leash.

Although riven by factionalism, these would-be East European roll backers had much in common. Most were virulently anti-Semitic as well as anti-communist, with a proven penchant for bloodletting. They had ready access to CIA-funded broadcasting outlets such as Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberation from Bolshevism (later known as Radio Liberty). [See sidebar at end article.] Initiated in the early 1950s, these were among the largest and most expensive psychological warfare operations ever undertaken by the US government. They produced a steady flow of Nazi-like propaganda, at times lifting fraudulent material straight from Hitler's security services in a cynical ploy to rouse the Central and East European masses against the Soviets. (One propaganda piece--"Document on Terror"--accomplished the near-impossible, accusing Stalin of crimes he hadn't committed.) The fact that former Nazi collaborators and terrorists were the vehicle through which the US chose to spread its cherished ideals of freedom and democracy may have something to do with why the message didn't get across.

members included Allen Dulles of the CIA and former OSS chief William "Wild Bill" Donovan.

Small wonder that journalists rallied fervently to the cause, even though, as Simpson notes, several countries represented in the CIA-sponsored "captive nations" coalition were fictitious entities ("Cossackia," "Idel-Ural") that had been invented by the Nazi Propaganda Ministry during World War II. The US media repeated the Big Lie a la Goebbels, whitewashing the brutal, anti-Semitic nature of the CIA's East European clients with heroic accounts of anti-communist "freedom fighters" sustained by nickel-and-dime donations from ordinary American citizens. The same ruse was later invoked to explain how the Nicaraguan contras persisted when the Boland Amendment denied US military aid.

During the Cold War, the mainstream press never uttered a peep about the wholesale recruitment of war criminals, or Gehlen's 20-year shmooze with the CIA, or the legions of Nazi fugitives who made their way to the Americas, both North and South, via "ratlines" operated primarily by the Vatican and US intelligence. Using loopholes in immigration laws, the State Department, Army and CIA conspired to bring thousands of Nazi collaborators to

Eight GOP ethnic leaders

were forced to resign

from the Bush campaign

in September 1988 when

their fascist and anti-

Semitic affiliations were

disclosed

the US as a reward for their clandestine service. These men and women “did not arrive as isolated individuals,” says Simpson, “but as part of experienced, highly organized groups with distinct political agendas that differed little from the Fascist programs they had promoted in their homelands.”

Eerily and compellingly, Simpson traces how these militant exiles gained a political foothold in ethnic communities in the

US and succeeded in creating a genuine power base on the far right of the American political landscape. Boosted by generous CIA subsidies, they became dedicated foot soldiers in just about every right wing campaign undertaken in the 1950s and 1960s. Although its charter prohibits such activity, the CIA intervened in the domestic political debate by supporting various emigre groups while they lobbied Congress to stop any policy initiative that might slow down the arms race or improve East-West relations. With the US media at their beck and call, these groups had a platform for promoting their vision of the world to millions of people. Teaming

up with homespun American red-bashers, they gravitated toward the conservative wing of the Republican Party and assumed prominent roles in the GOP’s “ethnic outreach committees.” Eight GOP ethnic leaders were forced to resign from the Bush campaign in September 1988 when their fascist and anti-Semitic affiliations were disclosed. [See “A Nazi in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush,” p. 26, this issue.]

The clandestine operations that utilized Nazis and collaborators never yielded the results that the CIA had originally intended, but their corrosive effect has left a deep scar on the American psyche. The Cold War remains the central feature of our civic and cultural life. Fought largely in the trenches of the mind, it has produced a kind of rigor mortis of the body politic. Simpson looks back upon forty years of needless, debilitating conflict and offers a startling diagnosis. Whatever the Nazis did to the Soviet Union on our behalf must pale in comparison to what they did to us. •

Martin A. Lee is the author of *Acid Dreams: The CIA, LSD and the Sixties Rebellion*, and editor of *Extra!*, the publication of *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR)*.

Blowback: America’s Recruitment of Nazis and Its Effects on the Cold War by Christopher Simpson, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988, 398 pp., \$19.95.

Cold War Habits Die Hard

The publication of *Blowback* showed once again that Cold War habits die hard at certain media. Although it was generally well received by reviewers, *New York Times* correspondent Serge Schmemmann belittled the book in the “Times Sunday Book Review” section. Without contesting Simpson’s documentation, Schmemmann accused *Blowback* of “blurring the distinction between the means and the end” and “smearing anti-Communism with the taint of Nazism.”

Missing from Schmemmann’s review is a pertinent bit of biographical data. His father, Rev. Aleksandr Schmemmann, was deeply implicated in some of the CIA propaganda operations dissected and criticized at length by Simpson. An Orthodox Christian theologian and right wing extremist, Father Schmemmann gave weekly sermons on the CIA’s Radio Liberation for more than thirty years. [See p. 20]

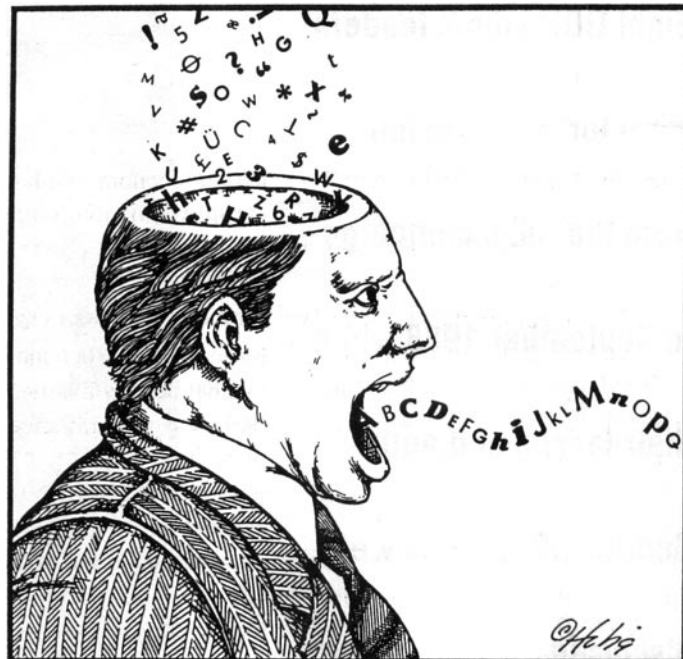
—Martin A. Lee

Economic Data

The Moral Equivalent of Fast Food

Loretta Graziano

The inflation and unemployment rates have become powerful propaganda tools. As long as inflation and unemployment are low, the electorate looks no further



Dan Hubig

Jimmy Carter was a businessman. Ronald Reagan was "business." Jimmy Carter was a military officer. Ronald Reagan was "pro-military." Carter was religious, while Reagan "pro-religion"; and Carter was a family man, while Reagan "pro-family." To the electorate, it seems, actions speak louder than words. The public relies on symbols without checking details behind them.

Interpreting the economy is even harder than interpreting a politician. It's not surprising that voters rely more on symbolic economic health than on facts. The inflation and unemployment rates have become the generally accepted symbols of economic health. Low inflation and unemployment are routinely equated with economic success--so routinely, in fact, that the gloomy aspects of Reaganomics were ignored in the 1988 preside race.

The inflation and unemployment rates have become powerful propaganda tools. As long as inflation and unemployment are low, the electorate looks no further. People are aware of the budget and trade deficits but don't take them seriously.

Nevertheless, it is entirely possible for an economy enjoying low inflation and unemployment to be on the skids. An administration can ruin an economy in its pursuit of low inflation and unemployment rates. Public indifference to the economy's other vital signs creates an incentive for an administration to run the

economy into the ground in order to deliver good news on the popular indicators.

This is precisely the legacy of Reaganomics. You asked for low inflation and unemployment, and you got it. These declines are real, too; they're no mere numbers game, despite assorted flaws in the measurements. But at what price have low inflation and unemployment been achieved?

Evidence suggests that the economic vigor of the '80s was a pact with the devil that will cost us our long-term economic soul. The orgy of borrowing by government, corporations, and consumers will eventually come due. Since the borrowed money was spent on current consumption rather than invested in future productivity, repayment will mean declining living standards. This price will be paid by everyone—not just the homeless, not just the children and pregnant women who lack medical care, but the mainstream working people who are better off now than they were eight years ago.

If the average hard-working voter had as much common sense as our founding fathers assumed, he would not knowingly enter such a pact. He would not have exchanged his economic future for a VCR and a BMW. The national consensus behind Reaganomics is predicated on the voter's lack of economic understanding. A hard-working citizen can't spend all day analyzing economic statistics, but he can keep his eye on the inflation and unemployment rate. Perhaps he assumes things can't be so bad if prices and joblessness are low. Perhaps he assumes these rates represent the big picture because economic bungling would trigger inflation or unemployment.

If these assumptions are true, then the voter can limit his economic awareness to the information gleaned from the radio while driving at 70 miles per hour. If these assumptions are not true—if the inflation and unemployment rates are not an early warning system for all economic woes, then the two numbers can lead voters astray. The inflation and unemployment rates can arouse support for policies that make incumbent leaders look good, but underline voters' long-term interests. Though such short-sighted policies leave tell-tale signs, the signs go unheeded when these two indicators are the only ones taken seriously.

The assumptions behind our rate-watching myopia may once have been true, but they are false today.

How To Be Your Own Best Economist

Governments have long known how to boost employment by charging the economy up with borrowed money. But in the good old days, a government could not borrow its way to prosperity because borrowing eventually triggered inflation.

In the brave new economy of the 1980s, this is no longer true. We are now part of one global market. Americans can spend more than they earn as long as the citizens of another country are willing to spend less than they earn. Goods from other countries fill US shelves, and the imported abundance keeps our prices down.

Borrowing is only possible when someone is willing to lend, and lending means someone is willing to save his money rather than spend it. The massive borrowing of the '80s was made possible by tapping the massive savings of foreign countries. If Americans had to borrow from their own meager savings, interest rates would soar, leaving inflation and unemployment in their wake.

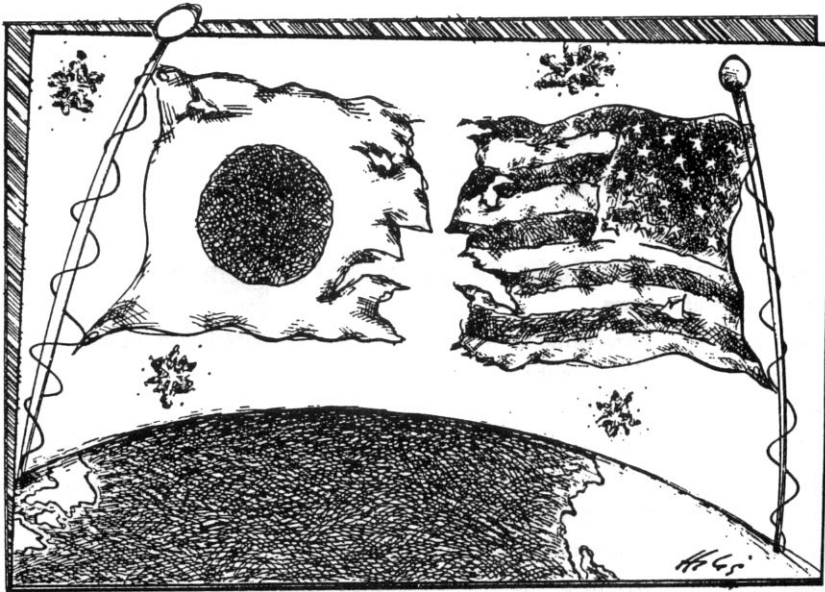
In the bad old days, imports wouldn't prevent inflation because you had to export something in exchange for your imports. But in the brave new economy, foreigners are willing to sell us their goods in exchange for interest-bearing IOUs instead of real goods. Now, more goods are flowing in than out, so Americans can consume more than they produce without bidding up prices.

This flood of imports would have triggered unemployment in the bad old days. But in the brave new economy, the money we spend on foreign goods comes right back to us as foreign investment. When foreigners buy our stocks, bonds, and factories, they prop up our employment rate.

In sum, the low inflation and unemployment of the 1980s were achieved by mortgaging the country to foreigners. In the words of C. Fred Bergsten, "Now I know what they meant by supply-side economics; foreigners supply the goods, and foreigners supply the capital."

The simple fact that they're foreigners is not what makes this economic strategy unhealthy. Indeed the record shows that foreigners often make better owners (they tend to hold on to assets for the long run, without the speculative "churning" common to US investors); and better managers (increasing both job satisfaction and productivity by giving workers more autonomy and more training).

Living high by selling off the country to foreigners is only a problem because it is *unsustainable*. It cannot go on forever. When the music stops, our standard of living will have to fall.



Dan Hubig

decode all of the information it encounters. The mind copes with this overload by substituting concise symbols for the chaos of raw detail. When a symbol is available to represent an amorphous mass of detail, the mind efficiently decodes the symbol and moves on, without processing the supporting detail. Since we do this automatically without conscious awareness, we can be unaware of inconsistencies between a symbol and the details it represents. This is why we can easily overlook contradictions between the symbols of our economic welfare and the underlying detail.

Once foreign investors accumulate large portfolios of US assets, they will inevitably begin to fear concentrating more risk in one place. Furthermore, the earnings on these investments will allow foreign investors to buy more US assets without bringing in more money. At some point, they'll earn even more than they'd like to invest here, which means foreigners will be sending more money out of the United States than they are bringing in.

If we fail to attract money from abroad, our choices are limited: we must borrow from ourselves, or stop borrowing. If we don't save, the only way we can borrow from ourselves is the financial equivalent of eating our seed corn. Instead of borrowing cash, we can borrow from the future by cutting back what we spend repairing, replacing and improving our productive capacity.

The process seems to have begun already. We're living off the roads, sewers, and airports paid for in leaner years without spending enough to ensure their future. We invest less in maintenance, plant and equipment, and research and development than our foreign competitors. Our human capital is eroding along with our physical capital, as we allow the education and health of our children to fall behind other countries (including some developing countries). And of course we're using up our natural resources faster than they can be replaced.

Information Overload Democracy

None of this information is secret. In the trade deficit, the budget deficit, the falling dollar, and the net investment figures, the weaknesses of our economic course are abundantly evident. But this evidence is widely discounted in favor of two simple factors: that inflation and unemployment rates have tremendous propaganda power and that there is more at work than Reagan's charm and persuasiveness.

The answer comes from the science of human information processing. Research shows that the human mind cannot possibly

Reagan and his advisers didn't need to hide the bad news about our economy. They only needed to understand which news we would perceive as "real," and which news we would systematically ignore. In an information overload democracy, leaders can expect the public to substitute one or two simple symbols for the full detail on complex national issues. They can expect public discourse to focus myopically on the familiar symbols and ignore other data, even when contradictions between the two are substantial and they can expect voters to lack insight into their own information processing behavior. Leaders with insight into human information processing can concentrate their policies on the symbols people watch, and thus appear to deliver astonishing successes. This strategy can work in virtually any sphere of public policy, since we rely on symbolic indicators to represent the complexities of military power, environmental pollution, health and education as well as the economy.

There is good news and bad news in this information processing perspective. The bad news is that underweighing raw detail is the standard operating procedure of the human mind. We aren't likely to overcome our preference for symbols because it helps us survive in a complex environment. When Thomas Jefferson proposed

**By building insight
into our innate
information
processing biases,
we can learn to
suspect symbols and
attend to details**

freedom of information as the cornerstone of democracy, he had Enlightenment faith in human rationality. Does the electorate use public information rationally? Or are we more like the drunk searching for his keys under the lamp post because the light is best there?

The good news is that the misconceptions are our own. If flawed policies are based on our own misconceptions, then we hold the power to transcend the misconceptions and reject the flawed policies. By building insight into our innate information processing biases, we can learn to suspect symbols and attend to details. That will make it harder for policy makers to misrepresent their achievements. And it will eliminate the incentive for governments to pursue bad policies that happen to look good on the short term indicators. Remember: only you can prevent propagandizing.

Of Course you can't change your neural mechanism. You can't pour over every statistic that's published, and you can't be

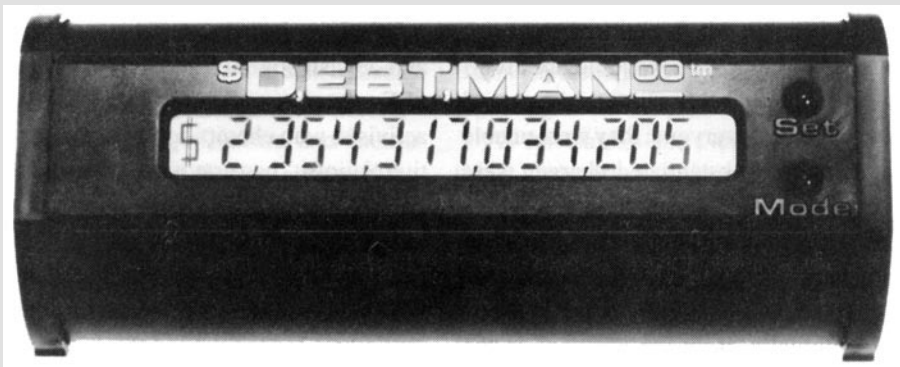
your Own economist, nuclear physicist, and biochemist at the same time. But you can accept and then challenge your innate human tendency to ignore the writing on the wall. Learning to heed details and challenge symbols is like learning to drive on the left: it will feel wrong when you're doing it right. You succeed by learning to override your first instinct.

By understanding the power of symbols, you diminish the power of symbol-crafters and symbol-manipulators. You make the propaganda environment less fertile. Thomas Jefferson understood the citizen's responsibility for his Own information processing skills. "In a democracy," he said, "the government you get is the government you deserve." •

Loretta Graziano is Associate Professor of International Business at California State University, Hayward, and is working on a book called Information Overload Democracy.

The National Debt at \$39.95

Masochists may sometimes feel left out at Christmas, but not this year. For just \$39.95 they can receive a handy miniature (5-in. length, 2-in. diameter) calculator that displays the time, the date and, at the push of a button,



an up-to-the-second tally of the national debt (programmed to rise by \$8,000 a second from a base of \$2.35 trillion on

Oct. 1, 1987). Says inventor Warren Dennis, a Pasadena, California, tinkerer and punster: "Maybe when people see the national debt like this right in front of them, they'll take an interest in the issue." He promises to donate \$1 from

each sale of the toy, named Debtman, to a fund to reduce the debt. (*Time*, 10/17/88)

A Nazi in the Hand is Worth Two in the Bush

**Chronology of 1988 Bush Campaign
Controversy over the presence of Fascists
& Nazi Collaborators in the Coalition of
American Nationalities**

Chip Berlet

George Bush apparently will deliver a kindler, gentler nation with the help of some former Nazi collaborators nested within the Republican Party. Contrary to most press reports, the Bush campaign never repudiated the ethnic fascists, racists, and antiSemites clustered inside his election committee. Instead with appropriate irony, the Bush Campaign utilized the Big Lie technique to sidestep the charges.

When the George Bush presidential campaign was charged in September 1988 press accounts as having recruited a tainted ethnic support coalition, it responded with a number of conflicting statements. At various points during the controversy spokespeople for the Bush campaign announced:

“They would investigate the charges; they would not investigate the charges; they were shocked by the charges; they could not be held responsible for screening everyone; they were unable to substantiate the charges; the unsubstantiated charges were reckless political attacks; no one would resign until the charges were substantiated; the persons resigning admitted no wrongdoing; the anti-Semites had resigned from the campaign; and, the issue was closed.”

Clearly there are some mutually exclusive positions in the above list.

The charges primarily came from three sources: a report by Detroit-based freelancer Russ Bellant, published by Political



Salim Yaqub, Iran-contra Scandal Trading Cards #32

Research Associates (PRA) in Cambridge; a series of articles by reporters Larry Cohler and Walter Ruby appearing in *Washington Jewish Week* and articles by David Lee Preston in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

The story focused on the Bush campaign’s recruitment of Eastern European nationalists who had emigrated (primarily from Latvia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and the Croation section of Yugoslavia) to the US after World War II. [See *Hitler’s Last Laugh*, p. 17 this issue.]

As the Bellant Report revealed, some of the post-WWII Eastern European emigres had fled their homelands because of their wartime allegiance to Nazi Germany, their support for political fascism and ultra-nationalism, or their participation in anti-Jewish pogroms and the Nazis’ genocidal “Final Solution” of Europe’s so-called “Jewish Question.” These emigre ethnic activists, who champion liberation for what they call the “Captive Nations,” had gravitated towards the Republican Party based upon a shared emphasis on rolling back communism and gaining independence for the nations near the Baltic coast and the Balkans which now are under Soviet domination. Those emigres who held fascist and anti-Semitic views generally kept these sentiments hidden while toiling on behalf of George Bush and the Republican Party.

The Bellant Report for PRA includes a photograph of Bush

at a July 1988 campaign rally in Michigan co-sponsored by the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations, a group frequently described in print as pro-fascist or pro-Nazi. There is also reproduction of a page from the official Republican Party 1984 "Guide to Nationality Observances" with text calling for a celebration of "Croatian Independence Day," which some history books refer to as the beginning of a brutal genocidal campaign to liquidate Jews and Serbians. During that campaign, hundreds of thousands were murdered under the direction of the newly-founded Croatian State fascist leaders.

Yet history can be a slippery item when the media fail to do their homework. A chronological look at the controversy shows how artfully the Bush campaign sidestepped the charges, and rewrote the history of WWII, while simultaneously placating both its Jewish and eastern European emigre constituencies.

The Charges

8/2/88—A Bush campaign news conference announces the formation of Coalition of American Nationalities to coordinate the campaign activities of various ethnic groups.

9/01/88—Political Research Associates mails galley copies of the report by Bellant to twenty reporters and news outlets. Press embargo is listed as A. M. 9/9/88.

9/08/88—The story officially surfaces in the press when *Washington Jewish Week* charges that several Bush ethnic advisory committee members are well-known anti-Semites and pro-fascists, including people who opposed the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and its probe into emigre Nazi collaborators in the US. The article focuses on Bush ethnic advisors Jerome Brentar and Ignatius Billinsky but also includes material on the Republican National Committee (RNC) Heritage Groups Council, Florian Galdau, Philip Guarino and Laszlo Pasztor using material from the Bellant Report although the report is not cited until the third article in the series.

Round One

Mark Goodin, spokesperson for the Bush campaign, announces "The Reagan-Bush Administration supports OSI and George Bush will support OSI as president," and pledges the campaign

will look into the allegations. "If there is anything to them, we'll take action."

James Baker, Bush campaign chairman, adds, "There is no place in this campaign for anti-Semitism, racism, bigotry or people who espouse those views. Any individuals who espouse those views will not be welcome in this campaign."

Response in the Jewish community is quick. Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, says the charges are a shocking revelation: "It suggests a high degree of either insensitivity or incompetence on the part of George Bush's staff. I'm sure George Bush is personally unaware of the sordid personal history of these people. But now that he has been made aware of them we have every right to expect him not only to remove these people but to repudiate what they stand for."

Albert Vorspan, senior vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations calls the composition of the Coalition of American Nationalities "outrageous and frightening. The inclusion of notorious extremists in a committee with such close ties to the vice president violates the principles that George Bush has publicly espoused."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, urges "an immediate investigation by the Bush campaign of the backgrounds of members of the Bush campaign ethnic coalition who are known anti-Semites and have been linked to Holocaust revisionist and anti-OSI activities." Foxman adds, "There is no place in any political campaign for anti-Semites. The League urges that these persons be summarily removed."

9/9/88—Mark Goodin announces that Jerome Brentar has resigned, saying Brentar's "association with [convicted Nazi war criminal] John Demjanjuk put him at odds with Vice President Bush." No mention is made of the more substantial charges regarding Brentar.

As for Galdau and Guarino, Goodin says, "We have absolutely no substantiation at this point of any of these charges."

Michael S. Miller, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, however, says his group has information supporting the *Washington Jewish Week* descriptions of Jerome Brentar, Florian Galdau, and Philip Guarino. "There's absolutely no doubt in my mind that these three individuals have expressed sympathies with Nazism, with fascism," Miller tells the *New York Times*. The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles is also cited by the Times as having corroborating background material.



President George Bush stands next to Bohdan Fedorak at Captive Nations banquet in Warren, Michigan.

9/10/88—The *Philadelphia Inquirer* runs an article by David Lee Preston which corroborates much of the material in Washington Jewish Week. Preston cites the forthcoming Bellant Report.

9/11/88—The first section of the Bellant Report is officially released to the press. The report describes how the Republican Party has been recruiting ethnic fascists, racists, and antiSemites for over 20 years, through its Heritage Groups Council.

9/11/88—The *Washington Post* carries a story on Bush advisor Fred Malek, who resigns from the Bush campaign almost immediately.

9/11/88—The *Boston Globe* carries a summary of the charges made in the Bellant Report concerning the Republican Heritage Groups Council.

9/12/88—The Bush campaign announces five more resignations: “We have been attacked unfairly by George Bush’s political opponents. These ... attacks are aimed at neutralizing the support George Bush has and will continue to have in the ethnic community.”

In addition to Brentar, who previously had resigned, the five new resignees include Florian Galdau and Philip Guarino as well as Ignatius Billinsky, Laszlo Pasztor, and Bohdan Fedorak.

Mark Goodin dismisses these charges as “little more than politically-inspired garbage ... the campaign looked into the allegations against these individuals and was unable to substantiate them.”

Bush responds to reporters questions by saying: “Nobody’s giving in. These people left of their own volition. We’re not accusing anybody of anything ... We’re getting into a very peculiar deal where some people are accusing people ... I don’t like it a bit.”

A few days later, Radi Slavoff, national co-chairman of

Bulgarians for Bush, becomes the seventh ethnic panel member to resign.

9/15/88—The entire Bellant Report is officially released. The report, as was mentioned above, includes a photo of George Bush on the campaign trail at a July 1988 event co-sponsored by a proNazi group, the Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations. Also reproduced is a 1984 Republican ethnic pride calendar which urges the celebration of “Croatian Independence Day.” The Croatian state was run by a Nazi-puppet government which oversaw the slaughter of over 500,000 Serbians and Jews.

The Counterattack

9/15/88—With the resignations out of the way, the Bush counterattack begins. Mark Goodin denounces Bush’s political enemies for disseminating “reckless allegations.” Although he claims the Bush campaign has not seen the Bellant Report, Goodin says “The campaign has been unable to substantiate any of the allegations ... They are some of the most reckless allegations leveled against anybody ... This has the unmistakable stink of Boston Harbor.” Bush campaign supporters begin to refer to the charges as “Sasso-like attacks,” (Dukakis campaign manager John Sasso) and tell reporters the Bellant report is part of a Dukakis dirty-tricks effort. In fact, Political Research Associates has no ties to the Dukakis campaign or any political entity, but the smear sticks. Most major media drop the story.

For those newspapers still covering the story, the Bush campaign’s statements start to unravel. *Washington Jewish Week* reports that Florian Galdau says he had never been asked to resign and had no intention of doing so. According to the newspaper, Galdau “said he had never signed a statement issued by the Bush campaign in his name and that of four v(hers whose resignations the campaign announced.” Says Galdau, “I did not resign. Why should I resign? I don’t want to resign. I was appointed [to the Bush committee] ... and I don’t think they have the right to ask me to resign.”

Galdau’s son says: “[The Bush campaign] called my father [September 12, 1988] and denied they had any information whatsoever on any of the allegations made [against] him. Neither [the caller] or anyone else in the Bush campaign asked my father to resign-and he did not resign...If they ask him to resign, he will tell them to go to hell.”

Meanwhile on a *Cable News Network* program Jerome Brentar insists he never resigned from the Bush ethnic panel; and he denies that the Nazis deliberately gassed Jews during the Holocaust.

Bush spokesperson David Sandor quickly responds: "This is obviously in conflict with what we have said. We stand by what we have said We didn't force them to resign George Bush is their friend. They will continue to support him. They stand by their statement."

9/16/88—Jerome A. Brentar tells the *Philadelphia Inquirer* he is "definitely still in the campaign, still in the coalition ... I was asked to step down. I told them that I'll step down if they send me a letter outlining why I have to step down, what I did wrong to earn this degradation Until I get such a letter, I feel I'm still part of the Coalition."

The Bush campaign finally takes its only stand relating to the actual issues involved, and issues the following statement:

"Jerome Brentar and this campaign disagreed We were at fundamental odds over some very important beliefs in this campaign toward racial and religious tolerance, and he was asked to step down as far as we're concerned he's no longer part of this campaign."

9/18/88—*Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter David Lee Preston reports that since 1969, several dozen alleged Nazis, fascists and anti-Semites have held leadership posts in the Heritage Groups Council. He quotes Allan A. Ryan, Jr. (now with the legal office of Harvard University but formerly director of the Justice Department's OSI war criminal probe) who found the Bellant Report to be "well documented and reliable."

Preston also reports that in 1972 a convicted Nazi war criminal Boleslavs Maikovskis of Minneola, N. Y. served on the advisory board of the Latvian-American section of the Republican's Heritage Council for the Re-Election of the President; this ties the first known war criminal to the Republican Party and documents the long-standing nature of the problem.

9/22/88—In *Washington Jewish Week* the Republican National Committee's (RNC) Kathryn Murray admits she has not read the evidence contained in the Bellant Report, but claims the report is "filled with ridiculous charges" and "insults all ethnic Americans." Murray says the RNC has no intention of examining evidence of the extremist background presented against anyone in the report. The paper, however, reports Anti-Defamation League of the B

'nai B'rith (ADL) has evidence backing charges against four of the persons resigning from Bush campaign.

The *Jewish Telegraphic Agency* quotes Albert Maruggi, RNC press secretary, saying there were no plans to investigate the backgrounds of any of the ethnic group members cited in the Bellant Report. Incredibly, four of the Hush ethnic panel members who resigned, Guarino, Siavoff, Galdau, and Pasztor, are still active in the RNC's Heritage Groups Council.

9/27/88—The *Boston Herald* carries a column by Alan Dershowitz in which he reveals he has independent knowledge of some of Bellant's charges: "I first heard about the presence of Nazis in the hierarchy of the Republican Party as far back as 1970." In the course of working on the New York governor's race, Dershowitz says he "learned that several members of a Republican 'Captive Nations Committee' were Nazi sympathizers who had been personally involved in the Holocaust in Europe, as well as with racist and neo-Nazi groups in America."

9/27/88—*New York Post* columnist Pete Hamill in a column titled "George Bush and his fascist fan club" quotes Menachem Rosensaft, president of the Labor Zionist Alliance and leader of the International Network of Children of the Holocaust:

"He accepted their resignations. And he said he was against anti-Semitism. But when they were gone, an aide said the charges against these men were 'unsubstantiated and politically motivated.' Clearly Bush wanted them out once they were exposed, but he still wants the votes of their constituency."

9/29/88—Ron Kauffman, Northeast political director for the Bush campaign tells the *Jewish Advocate* newspaper the Bellant Report is "totally outrageous." Mark Goodin denounces Bellant's report and says the people who voluntarily resigned from the campaign "vigorously defended" themselves against the charges. "We were not able to substantiate any of the allegations ... These individuals maintain fierce opposition to the charges. We certainly accept

**Since 1969, several
dozen alleged Nazis,
fascists and anti-
Semites have held
leadership posts in the
Heritage Groups Council**

Bush's Fascist Fan Club

Ignatius Billinsky, a long-time critic of the US Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI), is president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America which Bellant describes as "heavily influenced but not totally controlled by" anti-Semites, collaborators with Hitler, and apologists for Nazism.

Jerome Bientat has suggested the OSI search for Nazi war criminals is a communist plot, and worked with groups claiming the Holocaust is a Jewish hoax.

Bohdan Fedorak, also a leading critic of OSI, hosted the July 1988 campaign appearance by George Bush co-sponsored by the pro-Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations.

Florian Galdau is described by Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal as the leader of the Romanian pro-Nazi, Ultra-Semitic movement in New York City.

Philip Guarino is linked in published accounts to the fascist-oriented P-2 Masonic lodge in Italy, and has made racist statements about non-white ethnic minorities.

Fred Malek, according to the Washington Post, while serving as an aide to President Nixon, compiled lists of employees with "Jewish-sounding" names—names of persons Nixon suspected were part of a "Jewish Cabal" at the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Akselis Mangulis, a Latvian member of CAN (Coalition of American Nationalities), is accused of belonging to the Latvian Legion which during WWII was connected to the Nazi

SS.

Lazlo Pasztor, who recruited many of the ethnic leaders with questionable backgrounds for the Republican Heritage Groups Council, himself briefly served during World War II as an official in a Nazi-collaborationist Hungarian government controlled by an anti-Semitic Hungarian nationalist movement the Arrow Cross.

Radi Slavoff is charged with working in the pro-fascist Bulgarian National Front, and the National Confederation of American Ethnic Groups, a group with a history of leaders who championed anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi causes. Slavoff heads up the Heritage Groups Council which has become a safe harbor for anti-Semitic and pro-Nazis emigres.

that explanation." [At no time during the controversy did anyone identifying him or herself from the Bush campaign contact Political Research Associates or Russ Bellant].

11/1/88—Charles R. Allen Jr., an expert on the emigre Nazi network, questions the candor of Bush when he "professed ignorance of [the] pro-Nazi backgrounds" of the ethnic campaign supporters. In a *Village Voice* article, Allen produces a 1983 photograph of George Bush shaking hands with Yaroslav Stetsko, then leader of the pro-Nazi Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations. The photo, taken at a White House reception, was autographed: "To the Honorable Yaroslav Stetsko with best wishes—George Bush." Allen also produced a 1976 RNC memo in which Bush, as RNC Chair, is reported to have reviewed the past work of the Republican Heritage Groups Council and set goals for the coming year.

11/4/88—The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports charges concerning the background of Bush ethnic coalition leader Akselis Mangulis. Even before the story appears in print, the Bush campaign announces Mangulis has resigned, although the woman who answers the phone at the Mangulis residence tells reporters Mr. Mangulis was not asked to resign and would not resign.

The Press Response

The story of the ethnic fascists in the Republican Party and the Bush campaign was widely ignored after an initial flurry of charges and counter charges. Other than the Boston Globe and Philadelphia Inquirer, no major newspaper or electronic news organization covered the story in depth and examined the validity of the accusations.

Prior to the election, the substance of the charges in Bellant's report were not covered in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Associated Press*, or *United Press International*. Coverage was

extensive in the Jewish daily and weekly press, as well as alternative weeklies and monthlies, but for most of the country the story was never examined outside coverage of the initial resignations.

Following the election, on November 19, 1988, the *New York Times* ran an Op-Ed page column by Russ Bellant. As Bellant noted, Bush "owes Americans a complete explanation."

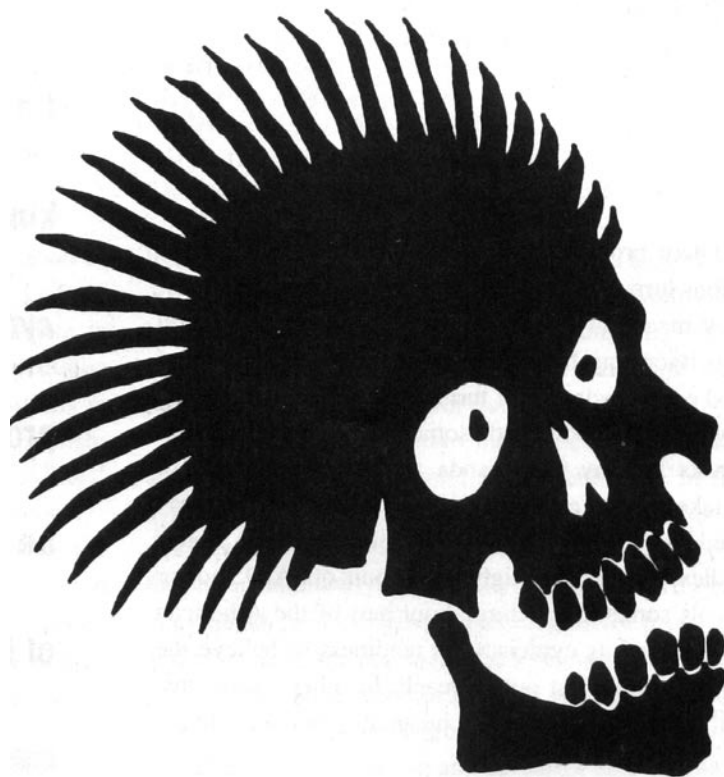
To be sure, the story was complex and involved aspects of eastern European history which were obscure to most Americans, but this should not be an excuse for how poorly the media handled serious allegations concerning a major political party and its presidential candidate. To this day, many of the individuals named by Bellant, *Washington Jewish Week*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Boston Globe* are still active with the Republican Party. It would appear that the "Big Lie" is still an effective technique for misdirecting the media. •

[This article was adapted from a longer article in the Boston Phoenix.]

Chip Berlet, a journalist and paralegal investigator, is an analyst at Political Research Associates (PRA) and secretary of the National Lawyers Guild Civil Liberties Committee. For a copy of the Bellant Report, send \$6.50 (includes postage) to PRA, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 205, Cambridge, MA 02139.

The Wages of Cynicism

Michael Miley



Consider this: AIDS as a form of biological warfare.

Paranoid fantasy or leftist cynicism? When the epidemic was first getting press, articles here and there speculated in just this vein. (They still crop up in the oddest places—see Issue #5 of Reality Hackers.) The line of reasoning goes something like this: If the US government was capable in the '60s and '70s of secret drug and viral experiments conducted upon unsuspecting citizens (see Acid Dreams, for example), why not in the '80s add AIDS to the list of microbes? Part of the neoconservative agenda is to roll back the sexual revolution, right? Well, if libertines want to have sex outside of marriage—and homosexuals want to have sex at all—then let them, the scum. They'll kill each other off.

In this cynical scenario, sex is an instrument of murder, murder the preferred noose for suicide.

The Critique of Cynicism

While the reasons for cynicism in our culture are numerous and obvious—the lies and genocide of the Vietnam war; the destruction of the Brazilian rain forests and the ozone layer; the callousness and arms trading of the Reagan-Bush administration—the effect on the American psyche is less clear. It's not enough to identify a mood. Political ennui, the waning of a socialist alternative, accommodation and yuppieism, living with the bomb while bearing children—all these psychic states are in need of analysis. We need to understand the uses of cynicism in a culture where propaganda is the dominant mode of discourse.

We need to understand the uses of cynicism in a culture where propaganda is the dominant mode of discourse

Indeed, where propaganda has been characterized as the public relations arm of a cynical, repressive, master ideology, conducted by means of lies, covert action, or subtle cultural manipulation, its critique has usually taken the form of an expose of crimes and conspiracies, or of turning the ruling ideology on its head. My example above adds something else to the list of necessary tasks for any propaganda analyst: the critique of cynicism. (I take my cue from a book published in West Germany in 1983 called the *Critique of Cynical Reason*¹, by Peter Sloterdijk.) Regardless of what you might think about our AIDS horror story, it reveals something telling about part of the American psyche: the depth of its cynicism, its readiness to believe the worst about an enemy just out of reach. In other words, just because you're not paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you.

I'd say cynicism is the dominant mood of our culture. A little analysis, however, reveals a cynicism that begins with that of political rulers and corporate moguls and only by degrees becomes a cynicism of the populace. I'd like to make the case that a certain kind of cynic, who I call the reflexive cynic, is the primary target for propaganda analysis simply because he or she is the prime, unhappy victim of the distortions of propaganda. The cynic I'm targeting includes people like me.

To spell out the case for the reflexive cynic: my story begins with a cynical suspicion, but the deeper assumption is that "the enemy" is far more cynical than we are. Our cynicism is merely a reflex. The cardinal cynicism is the master cynicism, or in Marxist terms, the cynicism of the ruling class. In our paranoid tale on AIDS, our cynicism is a mood of sickening suspicion; theirs is the execution of a political policy. Our cynicism is thrust upon us by their imagined behavior. Their behavior is a cynicism of means toward some end that is not ours, but that we must suffer. Our cynicism, therefore, is a state of divided, unhappy consciousness, a battle ground of cardinal cynicism and reflexive cynicism, in need of resolution. The hope here is that, while cynicism can lead one to political inaction, narcosis, parody, extremism-it can also lead to a mood of defiance bordering on subversion.

Take a walk down Haight Street in San Francisco. In a shop called "Villains," the buyer is presented with punk-black fashions that find their mythology in the garb of the SS; in the skull and crossbones of motorcycle gangs; in vampires, the tarot, black leather and chains; in a fetish of the Cross, and in necrophilia.

This is cultural resistance with a cynical vengeance, a sort of revenge of morbidity. The punk-rock magazine, *Propaganda*, spells it out for young nihilists: the rock band "Bauhaus" has been dead (figuratively speaking) for several years now, but being dead,

I'd like to make the case that a certain

kind of cynic, who I call the reflexive

cynic, is the primary target for

propaganda analysis simply because

he or she is the prime, unhappy victim

of the distortions of propaganda

they're worshipped as the great undead, ritual icons of kind of chic vampirism. What's this but parodying the cynicism of the master class in its most uninhibited form-as Nazis-and mirroring their image with cynical impudence (though punks that really are Nazis mingle with the satirists).

But while some punks turn cynicism into a vampire cult (after the bomb, we're all already dead), your average cynic is cynical simply as a matter of self-preservation: he or she won't be taken for a sucker. It's the "stance of people who realize that the times of naivete are gone." (Sloterdijk) In this milieu, self-preservation can take both cynical and non-cynical forms. As accommodation, it's an explanation of depression. As an undercurrent of defiance, it's the deeper stream into which we must step in our journey out of the cynical attitude.

Twilight of the Cynics

In Sloterdijk's book, the average cynic occupies a central place in the modern corporate world. Defining cynicism as "enlightened false consciousness," he characterizes the typical, reflexive cynic as someone who is well-off, though miserable at the same time.

“Psychologically, present-day cynics can be understood as borderline melancholics, who can keep their symptoms of depression under control and can remain more or less able to work-in spite of anything that might happen, and especially, after anything that might happen. The key social positions in boards, parliaments, commissions, executive councils, publishing companies. practices. faculties, and lawyers’ and editors’ offices have long since become part of this diffuse cynicism.”

The phrase “enlightened false consciousness” goes to the heart of the matter: by a process of education--an education in disillusionment--consciousness attains a higher order of falsity, where insight into the cynical workings of the world is gained, but the means to resist it are not. Instead, “the compulsion to survive and desire to assert itself have demoralized enlightened consciousness. It is afflicted with the compulsion to put up with preestablished relations that it finds dubious, to accommodate itself to them, and finally even to carry out their business.”

As Gottfried Benn says, “To be dumb and have a job, that’s happiness.” Obviously, this piece of cynicism was uttered by an unhappy man, but if it were simply a case of our unhappiness, a critique of the cynical attitude would only be a matter for therapists: relief would be finding a way to “go along with the game plan.” Sloterdijk pushes the factor of political urgency and spiritual resistance further by drawing out the connections between cynicism, self-preservation, and fascism. In his *Critique*, he finds the locus of German fascism in a witches brew of the “fear of disintegration, regressive self-assertion. and objective, cold rationality” combined with “a time-honored strain of military cynicism.” By implication, master cynicism attains its deadliest forms in the practice of genocide (the “final solution,” as practiced in Nazi Germany)-while its reflexive form takes root in the suspicion that some form of genocide, in fact, is a political goal of every government elect. As Sartre put it in his own *Critique*, every society numbers its dead and designates a group for extermination.

By now it should be obvious: cynicism is a complex mood, depending upon who’s being cynical and why. Sloterdijk identifies satire as one of the healthier moments of cynicism. where it becomes impudent, cheeky, rebellious in the face of the status quo. He calls this “kynicism.” He conjures up the ancient, laughing figure of Diogenes-the human dog, the good-for-nothing-pissing against the idealist wind of Plato and his Republic. Those who have ears to hear this laughter will recognize in it that strain of

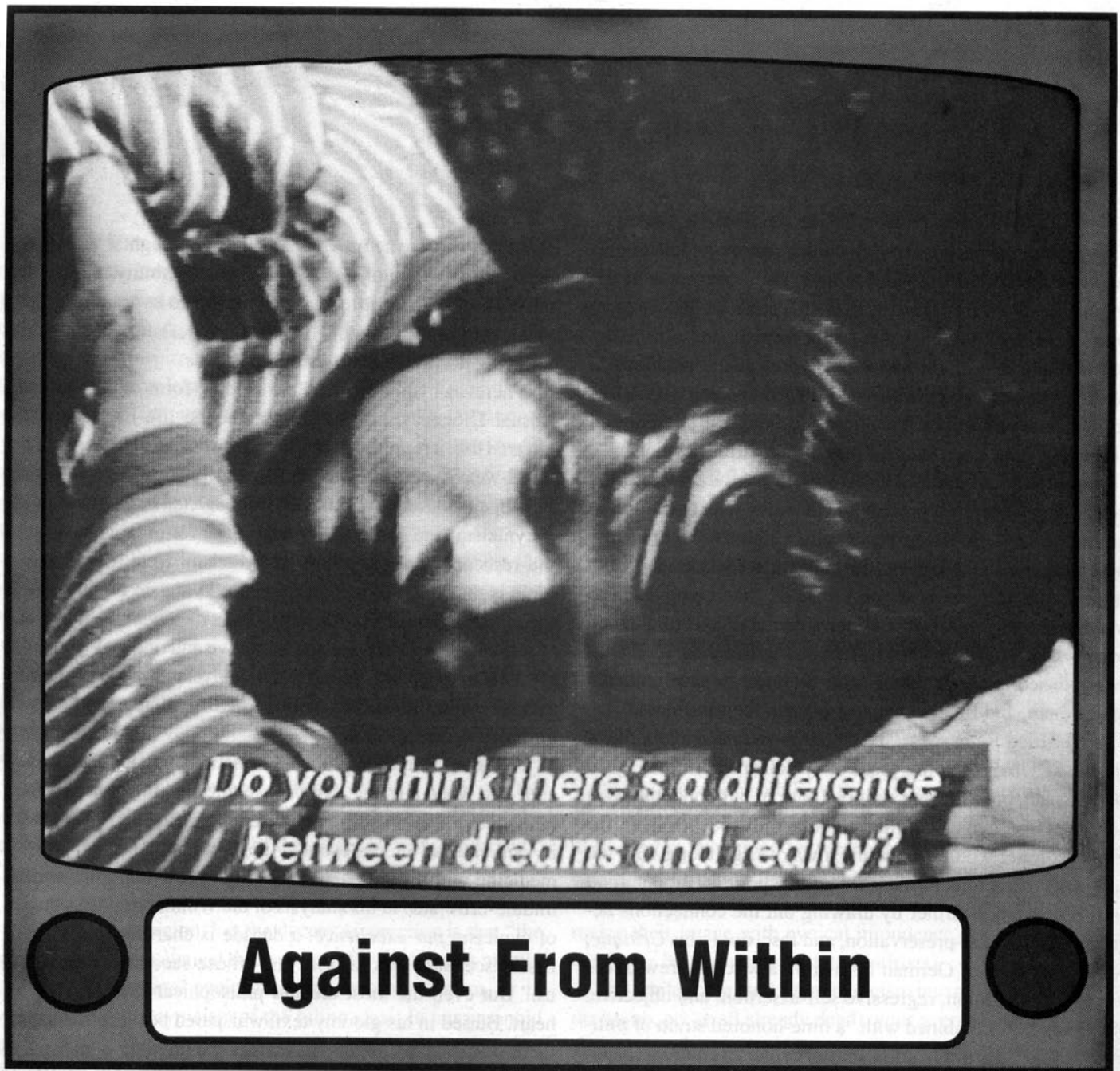
vitality and incorruptability that are the hallmarks of resistance to master cynicism, to its grandiose plans which postpone the good life to the indefinite future, while justifying horrible means for dubious ends.

Wherever cynicism takes the kynical form of the satirical, sensual Diogenes, affirming an authentic life in the teeth of deferred life, it represents a grain of truth buried in the belly of the world-weary, worldly-wise cynic--and a critical opportunity for the propaganda analyst. For while propaganda is the handmaiden of cynicism, and cynicism a prerequisite for propaganda, satire and resistance are the sisters of kynicism. Here, the reflexive cynic is the figure most susceptible to kynicism because one’s accommodation is the source for, one’s melancholy, one’s lack of self-esteem. Offer one an alternative and one may grab hold of it. In this context, propaganda analysis is a physic for the average cynic; the analysis of the forms of cynicism a critical task for any propaganda analyst.

That said, Sloterdijk proposes something beyond critique as a cure for what ails the cynic. It’s true, he offers a brilliant, imaginative critical portrayal of the cardinal cynicisms at work in our culture, in philosophy, government, religion, in sex, medicine and the military, in its high-brow literature and its middle-brow ads. In his analysis of the Weimar period as the era of cynicism par excellence, a decade is characterized “whose first descendant was fascism and whose second descendant is us.” But even the most diehard philosophical cynics may take heart. Buried in his gloomy text, whispered between the pages, there’s respite from the dialectical gauntlet of cynicism vs kynicism. He finds exit from that maze in the repudiation of deferred life and in a mystic affirmation of a sacred present. Those who have ears to hear will hear. •

Michael Miley, *Features Editor of MacUser magazine, straddles the cynical world between his true avocations, literature and philosophy, and his false profession-an accidental tourist in the world of computer journalism.*

1 *Critique of Cynical Reason*, by Peter Sloterdijk, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1987.



Marita Sturken/Courtesy EAI

**The Television Work of
Jean-Lue Godard
and Anne-Marie Mieville**

D a v i d L e v i S t r a u s s

**“If I’m making movies it’s only because
it’s impossible to make TV, because it’s
ruled by governments everywhere”**

In 1978 the Boston University School of Public Communication, under the direction of “visual literacy” activist Donis Dondis, decided to develop a curriculum to teach critical television viewing skills to post-secondary students. When the school received a development grant from the US Department of Education, Senator William Proxmire promptly gave the project his “Golden Fleece Award” for wasting public funds. “The idea of using taxpayers’ money to fund *Television Watching 101!*” he howled.

Senator Proxmire immediately recognized the absurdity, and the demagogic possibilities, of the Public Communication School proposition. After all, people don’t need to be taught how to watch television. They just need to do it ... and as much as possible. What good is TV if people start *questioning* it? Watching TV is, or should be, an entirely passive operation.

Against the grain of this senatorial wisdom, French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard had long wanted to work in television. In a piece published in *L’avant-scene du cinema* in 1967, he wrote, “Actually, if I have a secret ambition, it is to be put in charge of the French newsreel services. All my films have been reports on the state of the nation; they are newsreel documents, treated in a personal manner perhaps, but in terms of contemporary actuality.” And the following year, in an interview in *The Listener*. Godard said, “If I’m making movies it’s only because it’s impossible to make TV, because it’s ruled by governments everywhere.”

Godard’s confessions about his interest in television may have been cause for some surprise. By the late 1960s, after all, Godard was well established as a filmmaker and the leading spokesman for the *nouvelle vague* movement. Emerging from the pages of *Cahiers du cinema* and from a close association with Andre Bazin, Francois Truffaut, Jaques Rivette, Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol, Godard had directed *Breathless* in 1959 and gone on to produce such works as *Le Petit Soldat*, *A Woman Is a Woman*, *My Life To Live*, *Contempt*, *Alphaville*, *Masculine-Feminine* and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*. But *La Chinoise* in 1967 and *Week-End* in 1968 were to be Godard’s last two mass-market feature films for a number of years. His remarks about television coincide exactly with his abandonment of the bourgeois form of film (including his own earlier masterpieces) and his embrace of increasingly radical ideas and revolutionary forms of media work.

TV as a Cottage Industry

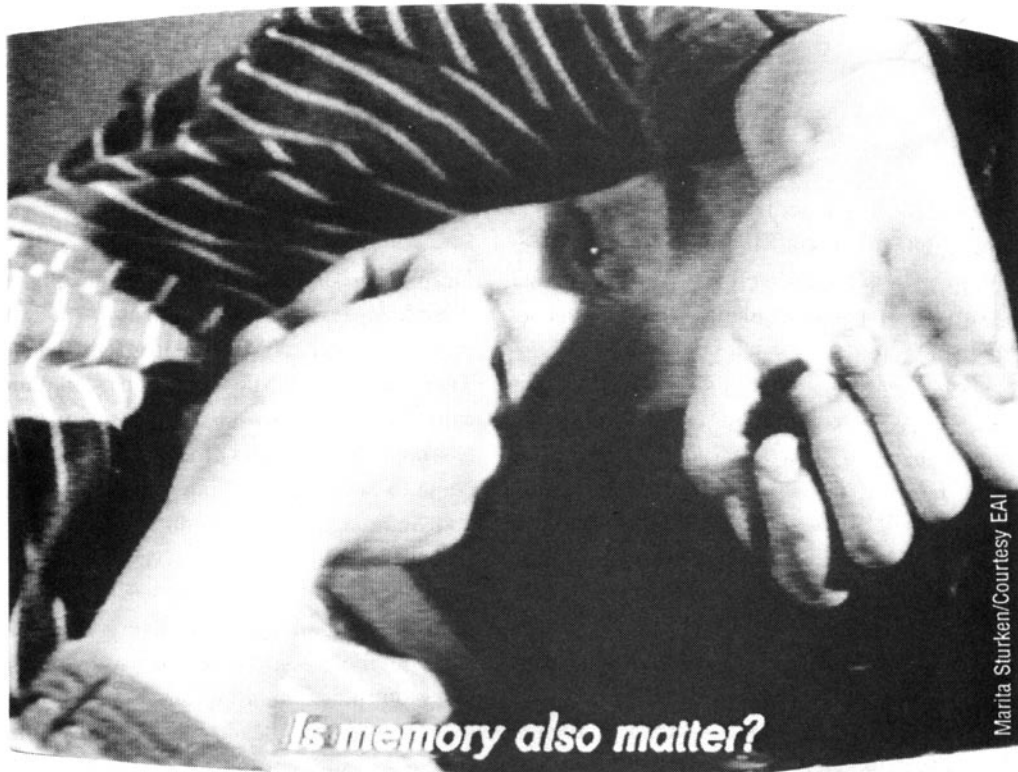
Despite his expressions of interest, Godard was not able to directly *attempt* television until after 1972 when he left Paris and joined Anne-Marie Mieville in Grenoble, in the south of France. There Godard and Mieville set up a “communications business” called Sonimage, a workshop for the making of TV. Sonimage was conceived as a sort of video cottage industry. People would come to Son image looking for images for particular purposes, and Sonimage would produce the images. In the beginning, Godard and Mieville’s vision was of a decentralized TV, a TV to meet local needs. Sonimage was to be a revolutionary postindustrial communications factory where the workers, Godard and Mieville, would collect sounds and images and then combine them to produce information.

In many ways, the motivating ideals behind Sonimage corresponded to some of the activist ideas of the early 1970s in the United States, where some saw the advent of cable TV as an opportunity to democratize television programming and to “make it possible for a maximum number of groups and individuals to present their views and their talents to their fellow citizens, and especially to engage in creative debate over vital issues of public importance.”

Unfortunately, Godard and Mieville’s plans for a TV cottage industry, with locally made and distributed products, met with no real success until then Minister of Finance and Economy Valerie Giscard d’Estaing broke up ORTF (the government agency that controlled French radio and television) into a number of smaller, more flexible units. One of these newly-formed units, the Institut National de l’ Audio- Visuale, agreed to co-produce two television series with Sonimage. As Godard remarked at the time, “the more we lowered the prices, the less we were offered. And then we turned to institutional television for finance. That was the start of our work for television”.

Sur et sous la communication-Six lois deux (On and Under Communication-Six Times Two) was made in Grenoble in 1976. It consists of six programs with each divided into two complementary 50-minute sections-”six times two”. *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* (France/Tour/Detour/Two/Children) was made in Paris and Rolle, Switzerland, in 1978 and consists of twelve half-hour programs.

This body of work is arguably the most radical and effective that Godard had as yet produced. As in Godard’s earlier film work,



Godard and Mieville use the television medium to interrogate social and perceptual assumptions while at the same time turning the medium back on itself questioningly. As the philosopher Gilles Deleuze said upon seeing the Sonimage productions, “It is as if we are seeing television for the first time”.

TV About People and For People

In the first part of each Six fois deux program (the daytime segment), Godard and Mieville use various techniques to question popular assumptions about labor (How do people think and feel about their work? About what they are paid to do?); about images and words (Who makes the photographs we see in the daily press? How do words and images function in magazines and on television news?); and about relationships between “twos” (How do two people communicate? How, from a relationship in which there are only two terms, is a third term with a life of its own produced?). In the second part (the niRhttime segment) of each program, these same questions and others are addressed to individuals (a dairy farmer, an amateur filmmaker, two mental patients, a well-known mathematician, several prostitutes, JeanLuc Godard himself and others).

One of the most immediately striking differences between these programs and what we see daily on broadcast television is that non-actors are actually allowed to speak their minds. In the first Six fois deux program, a farmer named Loison talks for nearly an hour about the economics of agriculture, the overwork (how this relates to unemployment in the city) and other subjects he is concerned about. Since he is articulate and eager, the interviewer (Godard, always off-camera) seldom interrupts with a question.

As Loison speaks, we the viewers cannot help but contrast what we are seeing with the over-determined interviews on commercial TV news programs where “the man on the street” (rarely in the fields) is asked formulaic questions designed to elicit pre-determined responses. There isn’t time to listen. Interviewees have all watched interviews on television, so they know the routine. They know how they are supposed to respond, and they also know that if they respond differently or take too long in responding, their words and their image will disappear, be erased.

The point is that individuals never appear on TV news, only types. There is the neighbor of the man who has just been arrested for abusing, killing and eating 37 young boys who always says, “He seemed like such a nice man”. There is the teary-eyed survivor of catastrophe (preferably female) in the rubble, recounting the

horror. There is the disgruntled commuter, the protester, the parent, the small businessman, the “expert”. Each character “reads” from standard, well-worn scripts. The vision that is told on mass-market television is of human experience reduced to cliché. No one is ever allowed.

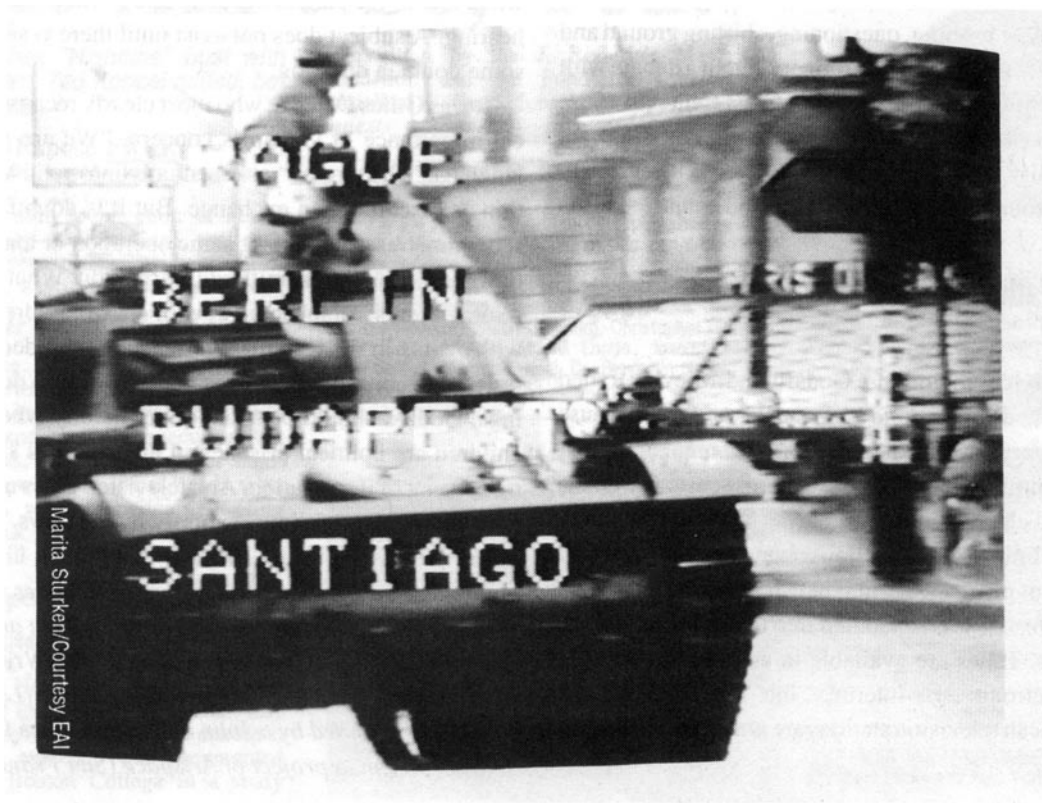
The surprise is that Godard and Mieville’s method, giving people time to speak, actually makes “good television”. It is interesting, for a change, to hear what people actually have to say. In economic terms, Godard and Mieville invest or pay attention, and this attention is then received and added to by the viewers themselves.

While they seldom interrupt their “subjects,” Godard and Mieville are continually interrupting themselves by means of self-critical statements in voice-overs and words placed on the screen to contradict or supplement what is being shown. In this and other ways, *Six fois deux* is the opposite of television, a mirror-image of TV. Each of the things that define television, that make TV “TV,” are turned upside down and backwards in order to make the crisis visible, to use television’s own reflection to upset assumptions

built up by television. The angles are all reversed. The power relations are switched. Things given the least time in television are accorded the most at Sonimage.

France/tour/detour/deux/enfants is another mirror held up to television. In this series the interviewees are two French schoolchildren named Camille and Arnaud (eleven and nine years old respectively). Godard and Mieville follow the children through their daily lives—getting up, going to school, playing, watching TV, eating, going to bed—while Godard asks a thousand questions.

Godard is the quotidian inquisitor, appearing to the children every time they turn around. He is always off-camera, in our place. His questions are sometimes academic but never rhetorical. When Camille and Arnaud sense that a certain answer is called for, they sometimes go to great lengths to give another answer, even a perversely outrageous answer, but then they must support those answers as the questions continue. Godard is relentless. The questions keep coming, one after another, more often decomposing already rigid assumptions (linguistic, perceptual, social) than building up to “make a point”. There is certainly a



pedagogical intent, but it is more accurate to say that Godard is enacting an inquiry. Though the children are not exactly young Socratics, neither are they blank slates. Godard does not control them. They respond to his questions with curiosity, confusion, laughter, boredom, occasionally embarrassment, very seldom surprise. But it is not their answers that drive the inquiry, it is the questions themselves.

Godard's career as a filmmaker and revolutionary activist has always been the site of a particularly generative struggle between the poet and the philosopher, between the intuitive and the analytic. Some of Godard's detractors have accused him of being too abstract, too theoretical, too quick to substitute the concept in place of the image. Others chastise him for his romantic excesses and illogical leaps. Politically, he is attacked by the Right for corrupting the youth and promoting moral decay and by the Left for working too much in the open (commercially) and for changing his mind.

Godard has also often been accused of being willfully obscure and of being perverse in his refusal to accept "common sense", particularly when he argues for the impossibility of communication. Godard's way of probing, questioning, shifting ground and changing the "subject" can indeed be unnerving. In a debate with Pauline Kael at California's Marin County Civic Center in 1981, the *New Yorker* critic threw up her hands several times at Godard's "perversity." But Godard replied, "No. Is it perversity to use image and sound to talk about image and sound? This is not perversity."

Success and Failure

Based on their original intentions, Godard and Mieville failed with *Sixfois deux* and *France/tour/detour/deux/enfants* because the series were never shown as intended, in the content of regular television programming. *Sixfois deux* was broadcast only on the "alternative" third channel in France during August, the month when everyone in France is on vacation somewhere else. *France/tour/detour* was not given the regular half-hour spot for which it was intended. Instead it was scheduled into the late Friday night "art cinema" spot. Tapes are available in an English subtitled version from Electronic Arts Intermix, Inc. in New York, but British and American television stations are not exactly lining up to show them.

Sonimage was

unable to get

its counter-TV into the

midst of mainstream

broadcast television

In cinema, Godard was able to seize the means of production and enter the larger political and cultural conversation with a tremendously subversive force. Sonimage, however, was unable to get its counter-TV into the midst of mainstream broadcast television. Since it is off to the side, marginalized, it is not as subversive as it could have been.

To Godard, there is no communication (in French we hear "l'information") without difficulty (the stutter). That is why TV is not communication. There is no communication until there is a disturbance. This is why Godard rejects a theoretical communications model that has a sender conveying a message along a channel to a receiver. For Godard, communication is what happens around this model ... or when the model is upset. It is when one of the parties does not know what he/she is saying or hearing. A subject does not exist until there is some resistance, some doubt, a question.

It was Gilles Deleuze who most clearly recognized the political importance of Godard's concern. "We are presented with language," he wrote, "as essentially informative and information as essentially an exchange. But it is doubtful whether the schoolmistress, explaining some operation or teaching children to write, is really transmitting information. What she is doing is issuing orders, establishing a set of cues. Children are provided with syntax in the way that workers are provided with tools, in order to produce utterances which conform to dominant meanings. Godard should be taken quite literally when he says that children are political prisoners. Language is a system of commands, not of information. And television gives us: 'Now a little entertainment ... followed shortly by the news.'" •

David Levi Strauss *is a photographer, poet, and critic. He regularly writes on film, photography, and art and is the editor and publisher of ACTS: A Journal of New Writing. A longer version of this article will appear in Artscribe (London: March/April 1989), funded by a John McCarron Prize for new writing in art criticism, a project of Artspace (San Francisco).*

Media Alliance

If you've ever tried to get your story in the news and failed, let the . . .

MEDIA "HOW-TO" NOTEBOOK

. . . walk you through the steps.

Media Alliance is a non-profit organization of 2500 writers, journalists, and other media professionals. We publish a bi-monthly newsletter with insider news about the media in San Francisco and around the country.

Call (415) 441-2557 for more information

This booklet includes detailed information on how to:

- Devise a comprehensive "free" media plan
- Approach media professionals professionally
- Write a news release
- Put together a news conference
- Get an Op-Ed piece accepted
- Put together creative printed matter
- Evaluate your successes and failures—
and more . . .

\$7.50

To order by mail, send check to: Media Alliance,
Fort Mason Center, Bldg. D, San Francisco, CA 94123

FAIR

Say It Ain't So, Ted!

Media probe catches "Nightline" host with editorial pants down; Ted Koppel miffed, but can't challenge facts.

16-Page Exposé FREE
To Readers of *Propaganda Review*

EXTRA!, the bi-monthly publication of FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting), will rush you its Nightline report free, as your introduction to *EXTRA!*, if you mail coupon below.

Will Anyone Ever Trust Koppel Again?

Don't get us wrong. Nightline is America's most influential news show -- with the best educated audience in TV history. Not only lawyers, educators and corporate executives but also congresspersons, senators and other high-ranking officials as well. So what "Ted" talks about tonight, is what America's leading citizens will think about tomorrow. The question is, *how* will they think about it?

Putting Koppel on the Hot Seat

When *EXTRA!* exposed Nightline's policy of political favoritism, racial bias and gender discrimination, The New York Times and other major media turned to Koppel for rebuttal. "Say it ain't so, Ted," they asked. But Ted couldn't. Because *EXTRA!*'s evidence was documented by sociologists at Boston College in a study

underwritten by the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation and the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Send for your copy promptly; requests honored in order received.

"The cutting edge of media criticism" -- **Noam Chomsky**

EXTRA! is the prize-winning bi-monthly published by FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting), the non-profit media watchdog dedicated to exposing media bias and corporate control of information. Advisors and supporters include: Ed Asner, Ben Bagdikian, Helen Caldicott, Noam Chomsky, Alexander Cockburn, Allen Ginsberg, Christopher Hitchens, Maggie Kuhn, Frances Moore Lappe, Jessica Mitford, George Seldes, Eleanor Smeal, Dr. Benjamin Spock, John Stockwell, Roger Wilkins and many more.



MAIL FOR FREE NIGHTLINE EXPOSE

YES, rush my free 16-page Nightline exposé (with illustrations) and start my subscription to *EXTRA!* at special *Propaganda Review* rate below.

1 yr ~~\$24~~ YOU PAY ONLY \$16

2 yr ~~\$48~~ YOU PAY ONLY \$29

NOTE: You may cancel *EXTRA!* at any time and receive a full refund. But the Nightline exposé is yours to keep regardless.

TOTAL OF \$ _____ ENCLOSED. (Tax-deductible; please make check payable to FAIR.)

Or Charge to my VISA MASTERCARD

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MAIL TO: FAIR, Dept 101
130 West 25 Street, New York, NY 10001

Dialogue

Editor's Note: With the publication of David Kubrin's "The Perils of Polling," PR begins a new department titled Dialogue. Because the study of propaganda is new and demands, as the current inhabitant of the White House would say, a thousand points of light, we encourage responses to our articles.

Dialogue opens with a commentary on Nina Eliasoph's "Measuring the American Mind" (PR #2). Polls, Eliasoph contends, are frequently presented as the last word on how people feel about topics as diverse as war and bathroom deodorizers. Such records of public opinion are flawed, she says when the social context of these opinions is ignored. Factors such as labor union membership are important in formulating personal opinions.

Eliasoph points out that respondents are greatly influenced by the makeup of the questionnaires themselves--whether a question is first or last; how it is phrased, etc. She also examines the tendency of those polled to give the answers they think pollsters want to hear. Although Eliasoph acknowledges that polls have their uses --predicting the outcome of elections, for example, the core of her argument is that polls are inadequate tools for ferreting out the subtle nuances of public and private concerns.

Dialogue continues with a reply by

Stephen Ducat to Hannah Silver's review of his book, Taken In (PR #3).

Nina Eliasoph's "Measuring the American Mind," (PR #2) on the perils of pollwatching as a reliable gauge to "public opinion," was an intelligent and lucid beginning of a discussion on a crucial and all-too-rarely considered topic. In most respects I agree with her points, but want to suggest ways in which her analysis should be pushed deeper.

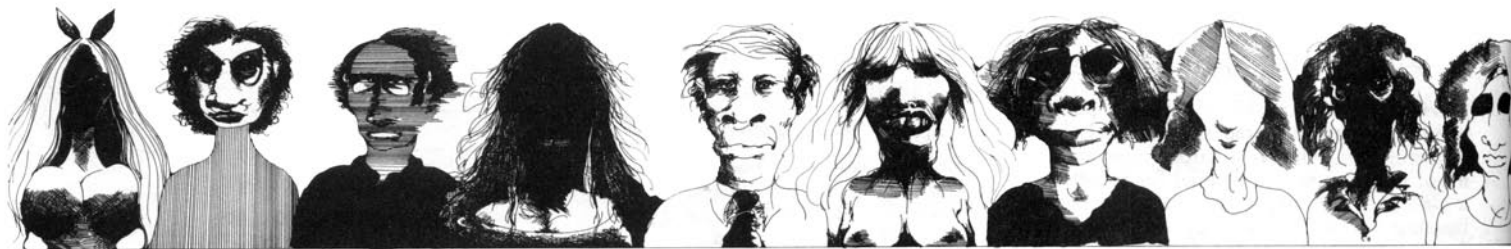
To begin with, a grave distortion takes place when pollsters layout all possible choices on a given matter along a linear scale. The clear implication is that opinion should be seen as a "variable" along one axis of some kind of Cartesian grid. Pollsters seem to harbor no doubts that on all matters, profound and simple, the range of responses should line up from a greatest to a least, along that single axis or dimension. Presumably no issue should be seen as being two, three, or multidimensional or perhaps even, of being non-dimensional, of occupying a differently-textured reality altogether.

Polls, additionally, serve to reinforce profoundly the intellectual atomism of western logic, that all issues and problems (or any aspect of reality, for that matter) can be both abstracted from everything else and dissected into smaller components; thus everything can be resolved in a

piecemeal way. In short, holistic problems or solutions simply do not exist. Related to this categorical atomism is the artificial grouping of responses into a set quantity of allowable choices, three, or five (or, rarely, sometimes even ten) boxes we may darken with our #2 pencil to express our opinion on a given matter as if such a handful of choices came anywhere near capturing the complexity of even less complicated matters.

Both of these axioms of the pollsters' canon are part of the more general reification of ideas that is central to our culture. This transformation of the abstract into the material has been the dominant component of official western thought since the scientific revolution of the 17th century--a time that corresponds, not coincidentally, with the first of what Marx called "bourgeois-democratic revolutions," in England.

This reification of opinion, ideas, and thought was tied to a strategy adopted by the propertied and powerful classes to maintain their power in the face of such upheavals as the 17th century English Civil War and revolution, and ones that followed in the 18th and 19th centuries throughout Europe, the Americas, and other parts of the world. Only in the 20th century, however, has the scientific and simplistic tool of social analysis, polling,



fully emerged-the result of the students of society grasping at straws in order to prove. by their possession of an alleged reliable “quantitative” methodology. that they too can claim to be “scientific”-and thus be taken seriously (and. above all. funded) by an increasingly hard-headed 20th century intelligentsia.

A closer look at the mystifications of thought and feelings that underlies this reification of “opinion” may be instructive. In the early sixties Andrew Hacker. one of the leading spokespersons for such a sociological, poll-based. approach to the study of society. was asked how polls could detect the level of intensity. whether impassioned or largely unconcerned. behind a polled individual’s opinions. Hacker had an easy answer: pollsters could ask a series of detailed questions to see how much information a person being polled knew about the subject at hand. When some students (I was one of them) pointed out the obvious flaw in his logic that in depth knowledge was frequently consistent with a lack of passion on a subject, just as a paucity of information could easily exist in someone holding quite impassioned views-Hacker was unable to understand the criticism. His confusion is symptomatic of the merging of “feeling” into facts and information that has developed, especially among

technocrats; it is as if to them emotion itself has no real existence, or at least none that they need take seriously. Witness in this regard the common admonition of political or business elites in the face of any disaster, that we all need “to study the facts,” not “to become emotional”-in the eyes of our leaders, one of the worst forms of irresponsibility an aroused public can indulge in. Those in power respond to any major crisis by appointing a “high-level” committee to draw up a report-hopefully, months or even years later when the heat is off-that will assess blame and suggest what to do to prevent any recurrence. In effect, opinion here has been so abstracted and so desiccated it acts as nothing more than a safety valve for public outrage.

Were we to construct a more comprehensive picture of what “opinion” consists of, one that avoids the traps of scientism and reification, we would have to begin, I think, by acknowledging how inherently shapeless and evanescent an entity opinion or ideas in general can often be. Even on subjects about which we feel intensely, we frequently go back and forth, occupying at times different sides of a question, as the expressions love/hate and bitter/sweet imply. Far from being a sign of wishy-washy indifference, flipflops are often a sign of intense engagement with an issue, and indication of an emotional

intensity that does not rest easy with the range of static solutions. We might picture opinion temporally. Spatially, we might imagine opinion as something akin to an onion, a person’s opinion at different levels of his or her consciousness perhaps reflecting feelings about the matter that are in direct contradiction with other layers. The reduction of this temporal and spatial complexity and process to a static, unchanging, hard, well-defined object is ridiculous, an insult both to our individual intelligence and to the incredible subtleties of human language and culture.

I do take exception to Eliasoph’s assumption that polling as a way of studying society represents an example of a technology or technique being misused and to her attempts to specify a few limited areas where polls are useful. I also doubt that polls are “based on the idea that the most realistic, most democratic way to find out what the public thinks is to determine each individual’s private opinion and then to add these up to get one big ‘public’ opinion,” if by based on she means predicated on. There is too much concrete evidence to suggest that a larger, somewhat hidden, agenda lies behind the origin and widespread utilization of polls, an agenda that serves to undermine any basis for real democratic participation in decisionmaking or control. As Eliasoph



Lisa Ryan

aptly observes, the epistemology of polls—not coincidentally—assumes that the whole of public opinion is merely the sum of its parts—that is, that groups or institutions are not important in either the formation or expression of opinion. Not only are groups such as social classes, racial or national minorities (or any others tied together by common histories or traits) no more than the sum of their isolated, individual members, but such groups' opinions are the sum of their members' opinions—no more and no less. In other words, only the individual and not any of his or her collectivities, really “-counts.” A more effective way of using methodological constraints to control social reality by

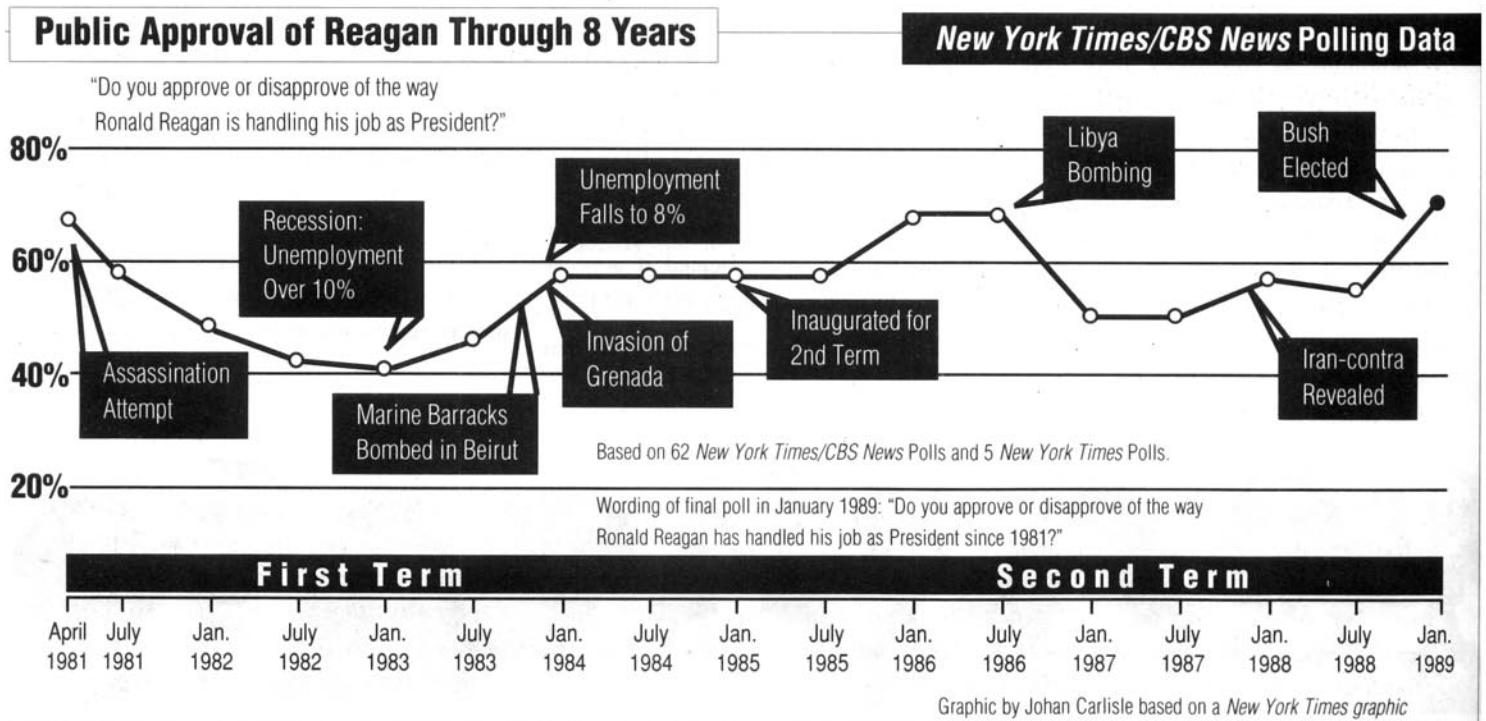
undermining any potential for a politics of mass participation is hard to imagine.

Polls, then, mystify, not just because there is no public participation in how questions are worded or the way they are asked, not merely because their very form “flatten [s] meaning,” nor because they are used “surreptitiously to set the agenda.”

All these are true, to be sure, but I think the mystification of polling goes deeper, and is based on the inherent stupidities upon which their every question and procedure is founded. In other words, it is more the premises, not the performance, that is at fault. Not only do polls skew things to the right, though that is bad enough, they also portray a false notion of

ideas, of opinion, and, ultimately, of the reality (social and natural both) in which we live. Their vast oversimplification of things that matter thus renders us all more prone to manipulation by the related contemporary deadening influence of advertising, TV, and statistics, all of which, clearly, are blood kin to polls themselves. •

David Kubrin is a San Francisco Bay Area writer and activist.



The Case for Psychoanalytically-Informed Politics

By Stephen Ducat

It has become a cliché of disgruntled authors that reviewers who fail to appreciate the luminous wisdom of their work must have either intentionally distorted or fundamentally misunderstood the book in question. While vanity and defensiveness frequently motivate such glib dismissals of critical reviews, it must also be recognized that sometimes clichés can be true. Such was clearly the case in Hannah Silver's review of my book, *Taken In: American Gullibility and the Reagan Mythos* (PR #3). Although it may be debatable whether or not there was luminous wisdom to overlook, I did not write the book Ms. Silver reviewed.

While she apparently does not like books of social theory based in psychological reductionism, it is equally apparent that she wishes I had written one. Otherwise, she would not have found it so easy to overlook the social and political analyses that permeate most of the chapters. Even though the aim of my thesis is to illuminate the psychology of the propagandized, all of chapter 5 is devoted to analyzing the linguistic structure of propaganda, especially as it appears in newspapers and television (contrary to Silver's claim that I ignore the media). Furthermore, page iv of the preface makes my position on the role of psychological causality quite clear: "The relationship between parenting and the development of critical thinking is a central focus of this work. Nevertheless, the reader must not forget that it is only one factor among many. Others include education, mass culture, and economic constraints." Given these facts about the book I actually wrote, it is not surprising that Ms. Silver was unable to find a single quote, even out of context, to support her criticism of psychological reductionism.

Silver's misreading of my theses and her need to erect the straw man of reductionism raises issues far more important than what my book did or did not say. It appears that Ms. Silver, like many on the Left, is extremely uneasy about acknowledging the role of the irrational in political behavior, a phenomenon only a psychoanalytically-informed politics can comprehend. Without understanding how ruling ideologies of societies become anchored in individuals, the propaganda environment will never be fully understood.

Theories of political economy cannot, by themselves, tell us why, in 1984, the majority of those who voted for Ronald Reagan opposed nearly all of his major political positions; especially since only a very small percentage of the electorate actually benefited from the president's supply-side necromancy.

Cabals of cunning media manipulators, while they certainly exist, cannot be the sole explanation for the fact that in 1987 Oliver North was declared by many to be a "national hero." The frenzy of adoration that befell him occurred amidst public revelations of his role in numerous criminal, immoral, and antidemocratic activities, from lying to Congress, to illegally channeling funds to mercenary terrorists in Central America, to formulating plans to cancel the US Constitution. In one poll, the vast majority of Americans thought he deserved a medal. Perhaps the most astonishing expression of "Olliemania" occurred within minutes after North began his initial testimony before Congress when an ordinarily composed female reporter breathlessly proclaimed, "I want to have his baby!"

Expressions of political irrationality have certainly not been limited to these

two rather recent examples. From the witchhuntholocaust of medieval Europe to the rise of Fascism on the same soil 400 years later, to the present neoconservative *d e v o l u t i o n*, "civilized" human beings have demonstrated the degree to which their actions can be guided by delusional thinking, unconscious rage, paranoid projection, displaced vengeance, misogyny, racism and truly astonishing credulity.

It is naive rationalism of the most dangerous kind to suppose that if only Americans had the facts about social and political reality that are kept from them by the media, they would no longer be racist, xenophobic or misogynist, or they would no longer defend the interests of those who exploit them. The question that must be asked is not just how certain facts are selected for non-appearance by self-censoring media, but why it is that the damning realities that are visible seem to make little difference. We know that toward the end of his reign many Americans came to realize that Emperor Reagan had no clothes. What remains a mystery to even his most astute critics is how so many people could have hallucinated his wardrobe in the first place. That some people can ignore incompetence, mendacity and untrammelled greed when it stares them in the face is something that requires an explanation grounded in an

**Ms. Silver, like
many on the Left,
is extremely
uneasy about
acknowledging
the role of the
irrational in
political behavior**

Mr. Ducat, all those

who voted for

Reagan can't be sick

in the head!



understanding of the irrational. To make sense of why it is that so many Americans sought the temporary and counterfeit experience of mastery that came from psychological fusion with the omnipotent image of Reagan, we need to know more than who had controlling shares of General Electric. We need to know, in part, why people develop the way they do. As a partial explanation for America's romance with Ronald Reagan, and for the eclipse of critical thinking in general, my book gives special attention to the historical shift in child-rearing practices that has had the effect of discouraging moral and intellectual autonomy in children. Parents of such individuals (fathers as well as mothers, contrary to Silver's attribution) are described as narcissistic, because they treat their children as extensions of themselves, denying the separateness of their children's thoughts and needs. As a result, these children can become adults who are unable to trust their own judgement, or worse, fail to distinguish their judgement from that of others.

It is in this developmental setting that Americans first learn to uncritically swallow (introject) the values, ideas, and perceptions of "the authorities." Furthermore, this kind of parenting makes children feel less capable of controlling their environment and leaves them with a sense of powerlessness that lingers well into adulthood. Once grown up, they attempt to compensate for their deep feelings of impotence by identifying with social and political authorities who seem omnipotent, such as Ronald Reagan.

As a metaphor for different kinds of swallowing, introjection refers both to the infant's toothless ingestion of nourishment (a developmentally appropriate mode of incorporation) and, in the context of the propaganda process, a regressive, uncritical

way that some adults psychologically take in the dominant social ideology.

It is more than a little interesting that Ms. Silver finds this concept "particularly distressing," since her review is saturated with gustatory metaphors that are intended to suggest the unpalatability of my ideas. Her own language undermines her dismissal of orality as a salient aspect of experience. My book is "a dinner with two highly delectable but illmatched courses." She refers to my "dessert of entertaining Reagan psycho-history." Then comes a discourse on my "prosaic stew," followed by lamentations about "the sorry pickle we are in." Next she uncritically resurrects the tiresome banality of right wing scarcity theory about how "the American pie is limited" (falsely attributed to Christopher Lasch). When, after this veritable smorgasbord of food metaphors, she says that the theory of introjection "lacks the power to satisfy," one can only reach for the Pepto Bismol.

It seems unlikely that most Propaganda Review readers will introject Hannah Silver's reductionist review of my book. I hope they will judge for themselves whether or not Taken In contributes to a fuller understanding of what makes some people particularly susceptible to the ploys of modern propagandists. •

Hannah Silver's Response



Despite Stephen Ducat's amplification, I'm still hungry. Defining one's position on the role of psychological causality on page iv of the preface (a section of most books that is often read only by behind-the-eight-ball undergraduates at exam time) is perhaps not the most visible place to do it.

The author's contention that I gave short shrift to his discussion of propaganda in Chapter 5 and to irrationality in

general is simply wrong. My discussion of Italian fascists hiding Jews during the Second World War is ample proof of my attentiveness to the irrational aspects of human behavior. In fact, like many late 20th century people, I am frequently in awe of them. Mr. Ducat and I do not differ in our views on the significance of irrationality. Paranoid projection and displaced vengeance exist in every culture. What is fascinating and difficult to understand is not that these behaviors exist, but how they manifest themselves in various milieus. To accomplish that task, one must examine politics and collective life.

Most troubling about Taken In is the implication that anyone who disagrees with the left-liberal vision of American life must be irrational and a candidate for psychotherapy. Mr. Ducat, all those who voted for Reagan can't be sick in the head! Anyway, even with national health insurance, we couldn't put them all on the couch. •

Dazibao

By Simon Loekle

THE SATANIC LIMERICKS



A dazibao is a Chinese large-character poster.

Today, dazibao lives on in the fevered brain of Simon Loekle, an itinerant teacher of Elizabethan literature and celebrated ranterraver on Pacifica outlet WBAI in New York. Mr. Loekle lives on the Upper West Side of Manhattan which, he remarks disgruntledly, used to be called the Upper Left Side but is nOW known as the Yupper West Side.

Juggling Act

By Marina Hirsch

It was winter, it was raining, and I was in the waiting room of a large downtown facility. Idly, I picked up a copy of a glossy upscale women's magazine from a fan of same on a coffee table in front of me. I leafed through its pages. I was enthralled. Mariel Hemingway is having a tough time getting acting roles. She's been through humiliating experiences before casting directors, she says. Much as you or I are routinely humiliated in our jobs. She pleads that, high voice notwithstanding, she's no longer a little girl. "I'm a wife, a mother, I own restaurants," she states firmly, proof-positive of adulthood. "Manhattan," her breakthrough role, resulted in type-casting as a gangly teen. She's not getting a fair break. Who does in this world?

The photo layout shows her with her husband. They're dressed for jogging. She's wearing a \$520 cashmere sweater, the copy tells us, and, over that, a second cashmere sweater, draped loosely over her shoulders as if it were a \$5.95 K-Mart sweatshirt, that retails for \$750. Her husband is strong, attentive, and muscular. There's also a photo of Hemingway with her new baby, both of them beaming, dark eyes shining. And there's a picture of Hemingway in one of her restaurants, in a tight black-and-white checked dress that showcases her buoyant breasts. I, personally, know about these breasts, because I've read about them, how she had them enlarged for "Star 80." And I've even seen them, in Playboy.

But this time it's not her skin on display, it's her soul. She's experienced exasperation, she admits, but she's not a quitter. She's going to keep trying for good roles. And just as she is, like us, faced with adversity and challenges, so we can bear



Reprinted from *Harper's Bazaar Nouvelle Wifetypes* Section: Mariel Hemingway

her—the kind of people who take a morning trot in more than \$1200 worth of jogging gear. Or, at the very least, now we'll care about her, and go see her next movie. Let's hope she gets one.

Turn the page: more soul-baring. An interview with Victoria Tennant, English actress, goddaughter of Sir Laurence Olivier, wife of comedian/actor Steve Martin as it says right there in the headline, and extremely private and protective of her celebrity marriage, just as you or I would be in her Bennis Edwards shoes. She's pictured resplendent in costly Kamali, posed with her husband, who—more famous, not needing to sell any product other than himself—is dressed in what the copy says are his own (nondescript) clothes.

It's an alluring fantasy, this trite ideal of juggling, of total, tri-ponged success: a career (preferably glamorous), marriage (preferably to someone also glamorous), and sooner or later a baby. It's also more than just bland reassurance that the twoincome family, far from being a desperate attempt

tor the middle class to stay above the waterline, is actually a feminist victory, deeply fulfilling to all concerned. It's bait. Go for the celebrity bait and you find the hook: buy their clothes, their make-up, their workouts, their movies, their books, their

**Go for the celebrity bait
and you find the hook: buy
their clothes, their make-
up ... their image,
wherever it appears**

image, wherever it appears. If you (try to) look like them, you can become them. Knowing their inner- most secrets, what the tags say at the back of their necks, you breathe the same rarified air, you possess them. And as your power increases, they're cut down to size-part of the transaction of celebrity.

In a men's magazine, they'd expose their bodies; in a women's magazine, they expose their humanity, and it's all product.

Roseanne Tells All

I was third in a line at Lucky's, low-fat cottage cheese and cat food in the cart, numb in the grip of a supermarket tabloid. Too unsubtle to set up a chain of purchase encouragement, the tabloid was aimed at a lower market; it just hawks itself, the lowdown, the dirt.

There's no pretense that readers could aspire to star equality—we're dealing with lower-rent stars, on TV rather than in movies, stars that are already at our level (albeit richer). The tabloid asked today's pressing questions: Can Rosanne Barr's husband's heart problems spell the end of her show? Can her fame and wealth spell the end of her marriage? Boat-sized, chest in front of her like a shelf, dressed in a tent, Barr isn't selling anything but resignation at the entire concept of juggling.

Chomping down Cheetos in her stage act, she's anti-celebrity; our lives have more glamour. In her TV show and comedy special, she's the flip side of Isabella Rossellini's ethereal serenity as posterfemme for Lancome, of Iman's glacial, bone-thin immobility in the "You've come a long way, baby" campaign, of all the gleaming, successful actresses/wives/ mothers on magazine covers sharing shape-up secrets from their

perfected private lives.

Rosanne Barr's character Rosanne hasn't come a long way at all; if anything, she's gone downhill. She has a job and it's boring, her kids are cranky and don't clean up their rooms, and only a cutting family jokiness keeps the new Depression from thoroughly depressing them all. The illusions of babyhood are long gone. "I don't care how dreamy your husband was when you married him", she sneers at her HBO audience. "Fifteen years later you're stuck with a BarcaLounger that burps." Not that Rosanne's going to do anything about it, she just slumps around the house set and bitches. Her weight itself is a sneer.

Riding the crest of the wave, the backlash against juggle, Barr is today's moderm female heroine. Except for maybe baggy sweats and low-calorie frozen dinners, there's no aftermarket. All Barr has Rosanne Barr's character Rosanne hasn't come a long way at all; if anything, she's gone downhill to push is rehashed

Jerry Brown: lowered expectations. And if romantic' love doesn't conquer all, maybe cozy familiarity will at least get you through. •



Reprinted from *Time Magazine*, Video Section: Roseanne Barr

Rosanne Barr's

character Rosanne

hasn't come a long

way at all; if

anything, she's gone

downhill

Resources

Peace By Peace

The peace community now has a beginning answer to mainstream syndicated columns such as those by George Will and the writers associated with the Heritage Foundation. It is a program called **Peace By Peace**, run by the Rocky Mountain Peace Center (RMPC) in Boulder, Colorado. **Peace By Peace** is a “newspaper commentary series” which “seeks to mobilize public opinion on behalf of constructive change for peace and justice.”

The organization solicits, edits, and then distributes opinion pieces from a variety of authors on a wide array of subjects. They have handled pieces on conversion of the military economy to a peaceful economy, the environmental impact of disposable diapers, the United States trade embargo against Nicaragua, tax resistance, applications of nonviolence, and the growing politicization of the homeless, among many other topics.

Peace by Peace has succeeded in getting published by the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, USA Today, the Chicago Tribune and some thirty other local and regional papers.

The organizers are looking to broaden the outreach by soliciting more editors at newspapers not yet using the service and they are hoping that other regions will adopt the project or join with the Rocky Mountain Peace Center as a regional contact. The project is also looking for authors and story ideas. Contact Paul Casey at the Rocky Mountain **Peace Center, P. O. Box 1156, Boulder, Colorado 80302. (303) 444-6981.**

National Abortion Rights Action

Kate Michelman, Executive Director of **The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)** reports that she was shocked as the rest of us when the US Supreme Court agreed to hear *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* putting the right to a legal abortion in jeopardy. **NARAL** has launched a campaign to gather millions of signatures from prochoice individuals indicating support for reproductive choice. Organizers are hoping to build an alert network of citizens who are willing to oppose the efforts to rescind women’s right to retain control over reproductive choice.

NARAL has also joined forces with the National Organization of Women’s (NOW) Legal Defense and Education Fund and filed an amicus brief in the US Supreme Court in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*; the focus is on the importance of safe, legal abortion to the lives of real people. **NARAL** notes that there are three more cases regarding reproductive rights which the US Supreme Court may elect to hear making this just the beginning.

Contact NARAL at 1101 14th Street, N. W., 5th Floor, Washington, D. C. 20005. (202) 371-0779.

Political Research Associates

Political Research Associates (PRA) is an independent research institute which collects and disseminates information on right-wing political groups and trends. Their library includes over one hundred right-wing publications, including newspapers, magazines, newsletters, direct mail appeals, and books. The group also

maintains files on groups, individuals, and topics of interest to those researching the right wing.

In addition to archival resources, **Political Research Associates** provides speakers and panelists to large or small groups, and to the media; prepares research reports on selected subjects pertaining to the political right wing; and, offers evening classes on the American right wing.

Contact Political Research Associates at Suite 205, 678 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139. (617) 661-9313.

ADDRESS UPDATES:

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (**FAIR**) has moved to 130 West 15th Street, New York, New York 10001 (212) 633-6700.

Association for Responsible Dissent (**ARDIS**) has reorganized and become the Association of National Security Alumni, P. O. Box 56743, Sherman Oaks, California 91403. (818) 906-2099.

This just in—Perestroika on Wall Street?

The New York Times, April 3, 1989, reports that even Wall Street can’t stomach the spiraling salaries of some of their comrades. The revelation that Michael R. Milken (recently indicted ‘junk bond pioneer’) made more than \$550 million in a single year stunned even jaded Wall Street professionals. David Rockefeller said, “Such an extraordinary income inevitably raises questions as to whether there isn’t something unbalanced in the structure of the way our financial system is working.”

No Comment

“What’s Wrong With This Picture?”

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



The Ultimate Overseas Career

For the extraordinary individual who wants more than a job—a way of life that will challenge your deepest resources of intelligence, self-reliance, and responsibility.

An overseas CIA career demands a special combination of capabilities: Honesty. Force of personality and a talent for dealing with people and situations anywhere in the world.

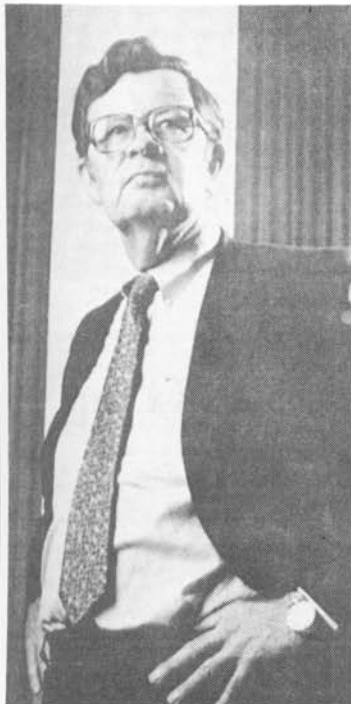
And the work is important. CIA supports decision making on foreign policy and national security at the highest levels.



The CIA is an Equal Opportunity Employer

San Francisco Chronicle, October 30, 1988

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PUBLIC



On March 24, in the early morning hours, a disastrous accident happened in the waters of Prince William Sound, Alaska. By now you all know that our tanker, the Exxon Valdez, hit a submerged reef and lost 240,000 barrels of oil into the waters of the Sound.

We believe that Exxon has moved swiftly and competently to minimize the effect this oil will have on the environment, fish and other wildlife. Further, I hope that you know we have already committed several hundred people to work on the cleanup. We also will meet our obligations to all those who have suffered damage from the spill.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to tell you how sorry I am that this accident took place. We at Exxon are especially sympathetic to the residents of Valdez and the people of the State of Alaska. We cannot, of course, undo what has been done. But I can assure you that since March 24, the accident has been receiving our full attention and will continue to do so.



L. G. Rawl
L. G. Rawl
Chairman

San Francisco Chronicle, April 3, 1989



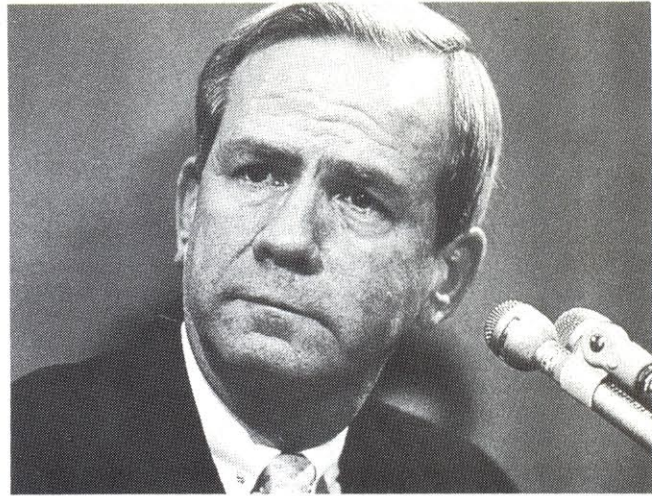
IMPORTED OIL STRENGTHENS OUR TIES TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

Nuclear energy means more energy independence.

U.S. COUNCIL FOR ENERGY AWARENESS

National Geographic, March, 1989

“We don’t lie. We put our own interpretation on what the truth is.” — Robert McFarlane



“The Truth comes from the People and goes back to the People.” — Joseph Goebbels

Send me *Propaganda Review!*

- \$20 — four issues
 \$100— sustaining subscription

Make checks payable to Propaganda Review. Mail to:
Media Alliance
Bldg. D, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123
(Media Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State, Zip _____
Phone _____



Media Alliance
Building D, Fort Mason
San Francisco, CA 94123



Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
San Francisco, CA
Permit #12525

William Bowles
P.O. Box 829
Brooklyn NY 11202-0018