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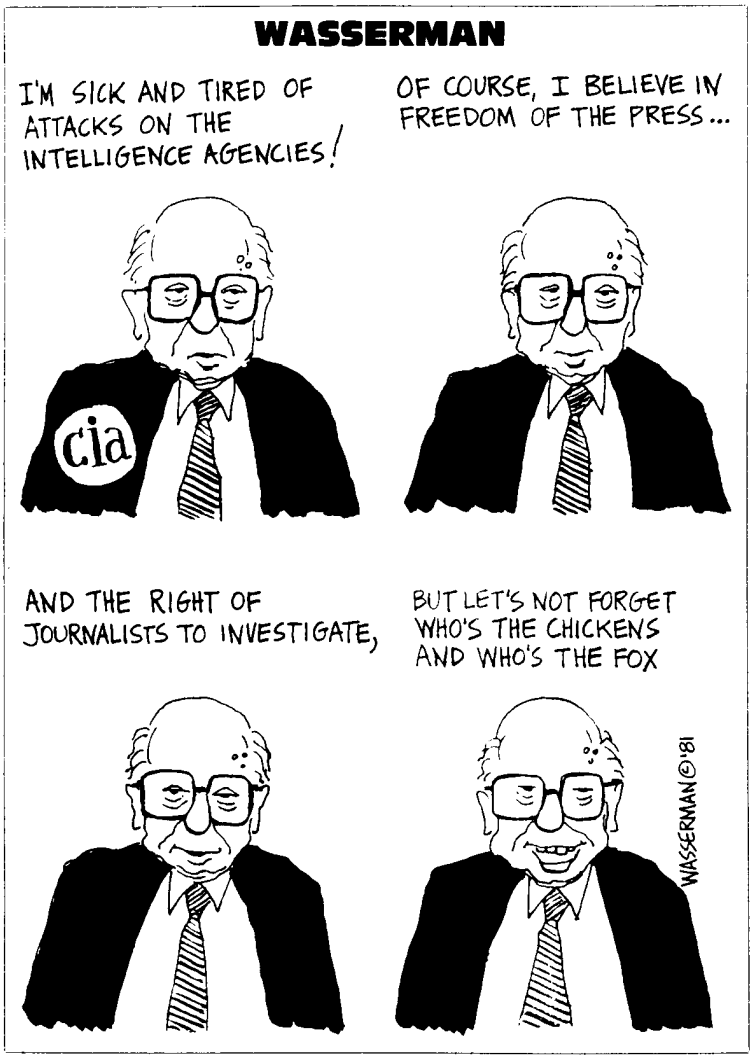
The Washington Book Review

Volume 1, Number 1 August/September 1981



Company Secrets: An Interview With Louis Wolf

Nelson Algren: Write on the Wild Side

Paul Fericano's A Stoogist Manifesto

Plus reviews of The Terror Network, Cry of the People, Trilateralism, Pornography and Silence,

and more...

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Between the Lines

Naming Names

The resurgent right wing, flushed with victory in its most recent budget battles, is intent not only on the dismemberment of cherished liberal social programs but also on a frontal attack against First Amendment rights. A partial list of the right wing agenda includes:

- A proposed Executive Order which would greatly expand the powers of the CIA and FBI to spy on citizens within the U.S.
- Amending the Freedom of Information Act to curtail public access to government records.
- Establishing a House Internal Security Committee.
- A proposed Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which, as worded, does little to protect the identities of CIA agents and officers, but which instead limits the rights of citizens to debate national security issues.

The above proposal is, perhaps, among the most dangerous. Because it is aimed primarily at Louis Wolf and others writing for such magazines as *Covert Action Information Bulletin,* which have been regularly publishing the names of CIA agents and officers and thereby allegedly endangering their lives, the mood on Capital Hill is to "get" Louis Wolf, never mind how such a law would affect the rights of other citizens.

The "Names of Agents" legislation is before congressional Intelligence and Judiciary subcommittees in several versions. Their basic features include: 1) a broad (and somewhat ambiguous) definition of a covert agent; and 2) the punishment of journalists as well as current or former CIA officers for revealing covert agents' names, even if obtained from already published sources.

Defining who a CIA covert agent is seems a relatively unimportant issue. However, because so many foreign political leaders (Savimbi in Angola, King Hussein in Jordan, for example) have had CIA ties, any linking of their names with the U.S. intelligence community in a story would be a violation of the proposed law. Moreover, a journalist who even unknowingly identifies a CIA covert agent in an intelligence related story would be liable for prosecution.

Needless to say, such a law would place stringent limits on journalists investigating national security issues. Although proponents of the bill insist that they only wish to punish "non-mainstream" writers such as Louis Wolf, the language of the proposed law in no way distinguishes between so-called mainstream and non-mainstream journalists. Nor is there a constitutional way to do so.

Perhaps the most dangerous provision of the Agents Identities Bill is Section 501(c), which prohibits publishing the names of CIA covert agents culled from unclassified sources.

It is difficult to understand how this would protect CIA covert agents, if, as is implied, many of their names can be gleaned from public sources with some educated guesswork (in fact, *The Biographic Register,* which lists foreign service officers, has become the main source by which those opposing the CIA can, through certain widely published techniques, learn the identities of covert agents under light diplomatic cover). But what is more disturbing is the section's language on criminal intent.

Previously, the government could only prosecute in espionage cases if there were proof of intent to injure the U.S. or to give advantage to a foreign power. Now intent is broadened to include *impeding or impairing the foreign intelligence activities of the U.S.*

Clearly, the above intent is not *criminal.* Anyone under the constitution has the right to oppose a law, program, or activity through legal means. The language in this section does not just chip away at the edges of the Bill of Rights, but strikes at its very heart.

Congress, in attempting to cast such a wide net to catch the writers for *Covert Action Information Bulletin* and other magazines, would, in the process, ensnare all national security critics. And even if a law is passed that is aimed solely at Louis Wolf and others who also "name names," such a law would be a bill of attainder (that is, establishes the guilt of a particular individual in advance of a trial) and is therefore also unconstitutional.

The national press is sending clear signals that such a law would be very bad for freedom of the press and of speech. *The Washington Post, The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune,* and scores of other newspapers have already voiced their opposition.

But despite the obvious danger of such a law, and the opposition it faces from journalists and civil libertarians, the mood in Congress and in the nation is for "something" to be done.

Unfortunately, that "something" could do irreparable damage to the Bill of Rights.

For more information concerning the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, contact the Center for National Security Studies, a project of the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation and the Fund for Peace, 122 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, D.C. 20002.

JOSEPH LERNER

Joseph Lerner is the editor of The Washington Book Review.

The Washington Book Review *believes that the responsibility of reviewers, who are writers first and reviewers second, extends beyond judging the literary merits of any particular book, and that any threats to freedom of the press and of speech should be matters of urgent concern. That is why we are initiating in this issue a column entitled* First Amendment Update, *which will note and comment on national trends that endanger the Bill of Rights.*

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Nelson Algren: Write on the Wild Side

Nelson Algren, the author of The Man With the Golden Arm, A Walk on the Wild Side *(for which he won the first National Book Award), and scores of reviews, essays, and short stories, died on May 9, 1981. Called "the poet of the Chicago slums," his stories are about whores, drunks, small-time thieves, the poor and the uneducated, society's rejects and outcasts. Because Nelson Algren was Contributing Editor in 1979-1980 for the first* Washington Book Review, *his death has had an added significance for us. Below is an adaptation of his introduction to his short story anthology* The Neon Wilderness, *which we believe aptly summarizes what Nelson Algren stood for throughout his writing career.*

The Editors

"I never look behind me," Satchel Paige once explained himself, "there might be something following." To put this present collection together, I made a U-turn in 1946 and ran down several memories I had been haunting, before they could start haunting me. I closed in before they knew something was following.

One was of standing reveille in the woods below Duesseldorf on old Germany's final morning. I saw our orderly-room wires suddenly divide the daybreak, making two skies for Germany: one rainbowed in light, the other troubled by night. As long as skies divided at day, I saw, peace would leave us one more war to be fought.

Just when everyone had had enough of the last one.

Behind the last bivouac, the last sea-bell and last bar, the ordinary Milwaukee Avenue moon of home shone like a memory for me of people whose peace had always been one more war to go.

When I returned to Chicago that ordinary moon was still working nights. Yet its light had strangely changed, burning both darker and more bright.

The last of Chicago's gaslamps had gone out. Fluorescent neon lit brands of beer never named before. Some of the drinkers had been to the war and some had sat it out; yet all seemed equally survivors.

"I will not have a single person slighted or turned away," Whitman had written, "I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also." Here among West Division Street drinkers I felt that, did I deny them, I denied myself.

This identification with those whom our civilization has bypassed, discarded, or accused had lent the American writer the special dignity of standing beside the accused. As the accused had gained dignity for having the writer's concern.

"I play not marches for accepted visitors only, I play marches for conquered and slain persons" had been the prevailing passion of American letters from Whitman through Crane to Steinbeck and Richard Wright. But by the mid-40s those writers who had depended upon this passion were either in flight or gone passionless.

New owners moved in.

They were (I ought to have told you before) young men, but burdened by a grouchiness caused by not having gone to any war. And their names were as strange as those brands of beer that had been put on the market while yet green in the vat.

Behind the last bivouac, the last sea-bell and last bar, the ordinary Milwaukee Avenue moon of home shone like a memory for me of people whose peace had always been one more war to go.

They arrived directly from their respective campuses armed with blueprints to which the novel and the short story would have to conform, were a passing grade to be awarded. For they were footnote fellows mostly, a species of public boy that talked like a head on a stick.

Prewar mottoes still hung on the walls, ancestral homilies offering obsolete mysteries: "No Man Is An Island." "I Have Always Depended Upon The Kindness Of Strangers." "While There Is A Soul In Prison I Am Not Free."—it was plain the old mottoes would have to come down.

For such signs irritated the new owners and made them wish Hemingway would move out. For he was not, it was plain, a head on a stick, and yet he wouldn't move out. And a saying like "no man is an island" made him uneasy because it implied responsibilities that might well keep a headstick kid from rising. And rising (I wish I had told you before) is what a headstick kid likes to do best of all.

"Hemingway has never written anything that could disturb an eight-year-old," one new owner wrote, and, as far as it went, that was true; but overlooked the fact that what he had written had disturbed two decades of adults deeply. And having his heels snapped at didn't make him pack up; he had been snapped at before.

Yet make no mistake—O, why didn't I tell you before?—the headstick heads knew where the levers were. They formed a loose federation, between the literary quarterlies, publishers' offices and book review columns, presenting a view of American letters untouched by the life of America: the view of the encapsulated man from a glasswalled life who was made personally insecure at mention of beetles and rain.

Consequently the most dreadful stench, like that of a butcher shop whose owner has died, began to rise from such journals as *Commentary* and *Partisan Review*.

"What I really object to," one explained, "is the writer who offers me the world's horrors without offering a solution." For the life of me I couldn't recall offering this fellow a choice of horrors or joys—yet the explanation was interesting in its assumption that the American novelist was now hard at work in hope of making a passing grade.

One could not escape the feeling that the New York literary

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bench had become peopled by those for whom all allowances are made, yet who make no allowances. And of New York as a place where our new affluence, failing to feel its own possibilities, was settling for the lowest possible returns: a place where the song, once felt in the heart, becomes a property to be recorded. Where the latest novel is discussed and the senior editor takes a little white pill because a junior editor has just come in looking well rested.

Whitman had written, "I am not the poet of goodness only, I do not decline to be the poet of wickedness also." Here among West Division Street drinkers I felt that, did I deny them, I denied myself.

A place where one whose life has been sheltered from rough weather from nursery to campus to the day his name is painted beside his dad's on a frost-glass office door, begins to feel an increasing contempt for men; while one who has had to take his own chances, blows on the head or blows on the ear, gains respect for the same identical race.

"There is no *true* compassion in these modern works," one new owner expressed it for all, "the degraded, the antisocial and the criminal are sentimentalized over, identified with...one has to be a pervert or a savage to elicit sympathy."

Until that moment I hadn't known that sympathy for perverts and savages had gone out of style, yet the point was clear: compassion was just too good for some people. Distributing it in bulk had been a mistake. Had I thought the kept woman and the thief were invited? Had I thought, "I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person"? That was *out.*

Blanche du Bois, trapped between degradation and the loony bin, was out. Willie Loman with his back to the wall, and Studs Lonigan dead before his true life began, were out. Seen in the fresh light cast by the headstick heads, one realized that when Scott Fitzgerald asked, at the end, "Why was I identified with the very objects of my horror and compassion?" he had brought his trouble upon himself. For writers who revealed horrors, yet offered no solutions, low marks were in readiness. What was needed now was writers with *solutions.*

Yet Whitman had taken his stand with the accused. Guilty or not guilty, he had pled the defense. As Stephen Crane had taken his place beside *Maggie.* As had Dreiser beside Clyde Griffiths. As had O'Neill beside Anna Christiansen and as Wright had beside Bigger Thomas. And it seemed to me then, when the new owners came in, and seems to me yet, the most honorable place an American writer can stand, good times or hard. It seems to me that in this—to draw upon the feelings of others, of the woman doing hard time in brothel or jail, of the youth forced to a choice of informing or going up himself—lies the distinction between the mere academician and the writer whose task is to reveal the ways things are with us; be it horrors or joys.

Thus the stories here presented were out of style with the new owners almost as soon as they were published, and it is a constant curiosity to me that, while available in translation, in the libraries of all the large cities of Europe, they are not available in the library of the city about which they were written. In those fourteen years, too, the street, lit by night-burning neon on Chicago's West Side, has extended to where the lights of the cocktail lounges glow. West Division Street now moves past tree-lined boulevards and up flights, by wall-to-wall carpeting where a hidden hi-fi is playing softly. And the big Milwaukee Avenue moon of home casts an equal light on neon wilderness and payola jungle.

Upon men and women forced to choices too hard to bear.

From the penthouse twenty-five glass-windowed stories up, to the night-blue bar below, in a time that is neither one of peace nor of war, where new wars start before old ones are done. Where all, all are survivors.

Where not one should be slighted. Blows on the head or blows on the ear, not one should be turned away.

Under any old moon at all. ■

From the book NEON WILDERNESS by Nelson Algren. Copyright © 1947. Published by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

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Company Secrets: An Interview with Louis Wolf

Joseph Lerner

Along with Philip Agee, Ellen Ray, William H. Schaap, Karl Van Meter, and Stewart Klepper, Louis Wolf is co-editor of the books *Dirty Work: The CIA In Western Europe* and *Dirty Work 2: The CIA in Africa,* as well as the magazine *CovertAction Information Bulletin.* In them he has named names of covert CIA agents. Moderates and those on the right label Wolf "extreme" and "intemperate," but he also is ostracized by some on the left who claim he jeopardizes the lives of the covert agents whose covers he has blown. Below, Louis Wolf tells why he names names and analyzes what the CIA does and why they are doing it.

TWBR: *Those opposed to CIA whistle-blowing have singled out the staff of* CovertAction Information Bulletin *in particular for attack. Why?*

WOLF: I think it is fair to say we have been singled out not because of any untruthfulness of what we have published or written or have said in public speeches, but because the CIA and its friends in Congress and in the media perceive us as a threat to their hold over the national security apparatus. I can't believe that four people in a small office in the National Press Building in Washington, D.C. could be such a tremendous threat to an organization with a multibillion dollar budget, 30,000 employees, and the unlimited resources of the government. It is obvious that the CIA wants to widen the wall of secrecy that has always surrounded it since its inception in 1947. Surely, the exposures that have been made about its illegal operations around the world as well as in the United States have caused a lot of embarrassment for the CIA and its friends. Anyone who meaningfully challenges that organization is bound to come in for attack. There are many others who have published articles in other journals who are also under attack.

TWBR: *Philp Agee toward the end of his book* Inside the Company: CIA Diary *wrote that the CIA had bugged his typewriter. How closely are you being watched?*

WOLF: You have this edition? *(Louis Wolf picks up from his desk a Penguin copy of Agee's book, which has on the cover a photograph of a typewriter whose battered, torn case reveals hidden electronic circuitry.)* That photograph is not a mock-up by Penguin Books. The typewriter is for real.

TWBR: *Do you think your phone is tapped?*

WOLF: We don't think, we know so. For instance on several occasions we've overheard on the phone people talking about our conversations or we've overheard recordings of conversations we have had either the day before or the same day. Were

A Voice is Heard

Cry of the People

Penny Lernoux
535 pp. Doubleday & Company. $12.95

As the Reagan Administration asks Americans to wake up to the alleged Cuban/Soviet buildup in Latin America, it ignores and/or denies the third force that finds itself wedged between fascist regimes and Marxist guerrillas. It is the cry of the people themselves who have found their voice within the Catholic Church.

With impressive breadth of detail Penny Lernoux's *Cry of the People* chronicles the evolution of that part of the Church which has embraced a grass-roots partnership with Latin America's poor.

Lernoux's careful documentation of techniques of torture and economic feudalism specific to Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Nicaragua, and El Salvador answers the question that U.S. foreign policy experts don't ask: Why would members of the Catholic Church embrace and foment insurgence?

What Catholic activists have discovered is that attempts to improve the living conditions of Latin America's poor conflict fundamentally and irresolvably with the needs of multinational corporations and with the small, wealthy Latin elite who share the spoils with them.

It is no wonder, then, that today "wherever farm laborers demand better wages and more equitable distribution of land, wherever attempts are made to establish cooperatives or unions, the government suddenly discovers a 'communist conspiracy' and sends troops into the countryside to destroy the cooperatives, burn the peasants' huts, rape the women, and kill or imprison the men."

For centuries, the Church hierarchies were willing to trade blessings with dictators in exchange for a measure of power. Why then, in the last decade, have they turned away from their traditional partnership with the privileged to attend to the peasants and slum dwellers? Why the change of heart by a Church that helped divide and conquer a continent?

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America's New Moral Crusade

The Terror Network: The Secret War of International Terrorism

Claire Sterling
357 pp. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $13.95

Terrorism is a problem that won't go away. It plagues the West like poverty plagues the Third World, and like poverty its effects ripple across the great separating oceans with relentless persistence. What began with sporadic skyjackings evolved into isolated violence and from there into bombings, kidnappings and murders too widespread to be dismissed as the other guy's problem.

With the world awash in kneecappings and assassinations, Claire Sterling's book, *The Terror Network,* has come along just as the war against terrorism has become America's latest moral crusade. And it brings the impact of terrorism's terrible swift sword home to the reader with an impact worthy of considerable praise. Through her wide-ranging (geographically at

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the CIA, the National Security Agency, and FBI not bugging our phone we would be wondering if we were doing a very good job. That's not to say we are happy about it or that we accept it.

"I can't believe that four people...could be such a tremendous threat to an organization with a multibillion dollar budget, 30,000 employees, and the unlimited resources of the government."

TWBR: *Then the reforms of the past few years haven't changed such practices?*

WOLF: They've admitted that there are still wiretaps and mail openings of a number of people and organizations. We've found again and again that whatever they've admitted to, you can multiply many times over. For those who talk now about wanting to "unleash the CIA," it's our view that while the CIA claims that they haven't been able to do all that they would have liked to have done in the past few years, to say that they've been "leashed" is ludicrous.

least) treatment of the subject, it is possible to catch a frightening glimpse of the harsh and heady, brutal and spectacular world of the international terrorist. With their weather map attack on democracy, it is easy to imagine a group of fiendish little men somewhere plotting our destruction. All too easy.

After tipping her hat to the left's nobler intentions, she tells us she doesn't plan to distinguish between terrorism of the right and terrorism of the left because, she explains, one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. "There are no good killers and bad killers," she says, "only killers." All terrorists are killers; after all, the purpose of terrorism is to terrorize, isn't it? But *The Terror Network* is a lurid account of left wing terrorism only and how Russia supposedly supports it through proxies in Eastern Europe, Cuba, and the Middle East.

Terrorism is such an oppressive fact of life, anyone writing a serious book about it ought to have some sort of device for separating freedom fighters from terrorists. Isn't there anyone

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Taking Care of Business

Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission & Elite Planning for World Management

Ed. Holly Sklar

600 pp. South End Press, P.O. Box 68, Astor Station, Boston, MA 02123. $20 cloth, $9 paper

People who have been to El Salvador say that, reading the government-issue newspapers there, you wouldn't know a war is going on.

Similarly, how revealing it is that the big publishing houses have brought out no serious critique of trilateralism.

Founded in 1973 by the unofficial chief of the world financial community, David Rockefeller, the Trilateral Commission has included the top executives in business, banking and government from the U.S., Europe, and Japan (hence, "trilateral"). "Trilateralism" is its political strategy and tactics.

With the election of Jimmy Carter, the Trilateral Commission gained wide name recognition, almost notoriety. The large number of cabinet members who were trilateralists—Carter himself was one—became a subject discussed even in the Sunday supplement.

But the corporate guardians of popular culture carefully published no serious book-length study of trilateralism, let alone expose. The great capitalist conglomerates currently consuming the publishing industry have really no reason to publicize the details of their political command structure.

Into this void comes *Trilateralism*—a massive collection of challenging essays carefully organized and introduced by Holly Sklar.

These essays make the reader work, but those who do will be rewarded with a deeper understanding of the underlying forces in American politics than they will get in a decade of reading *The Washington Post.*

As with most collections, some of these essays are insightful, others less so. But all are carefully argued, and the challenge is partly in figuring out what's good and why.

The best pieces are those that proceed from an understanding that

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TWBR: *Many persons who are critical of CIA covert action nonetheless oppose the practice of naming names. Why do you believe that such an activity is not counterproductive? Why do you persist in it?*

WOLF: It comes down to one thing: accountability. Employees of the CIA, in this case the covert operators, are accountable for what they do the same way as you or me or any private citizen are accountable for what they do. The difference, of course, is that they spend our money and are civil servants. They must be all the more accountable for what they do. Time and time again, it's been proven to be impossible to talk about the CIA's dirty work without talking about who is doing it. It's impossible to analyze one without the other. The people, particularly those in the CIA, who suggest that we are placing CIA officers in danger by identifying them are not telling the truth. First of all, not a single person among the several thousand we and other journalists have named, including stories in *The New York Times, The Washington Post,* and many other media—some two to three thousand people identifed—not one has been hurt or killed. I am including the cases of Richard Welch, who was assassinated in Athens in 1975, and N. Richard Kinsman in Jamaica. N. Richard Kinsman wasn't scratched, and his name was identified in our magazine nine months previous to the incident in which his window was shot up. Nothing happened in those nine months. The allegation also falls apart when you consider that if their lives were in danger, the CIA would remove them from their posts. We have found on repeated occasions that people who were identified in *CovertAction Information Bulletin* were still to be found in the same posts a year or two later. If they were in such great danger, why weren't they brought back to the United States? As for Richard Welch, he had been named four to six times since 1968 and in 1975 just before he was killed in Athens he was warned by the CIA not to stay in the house he chose to live in. They sent him a secret cable, as Morton Halperin pointed out in an article in *The Washington Post,* urging him not to live there because anyone living there would be identitied as the top CIA person in Athens. He cabled back that he liked the house and wasn't going to move. Two weeks later he was killed. The people who killed him had every intention of killing his predecessor. The primary reason he was killed was because of the close identification the Greek people had of the CIA with the junta, a very brutal regime whose main sponsor over many years was the CIA.

"Were the CIA...not bugging our phone we would be wondering if we were doing a good job."

TWBR: *Revelations about CIA covert activities have been going on since Victor Marchetti's and Agee's books in 1975 and the evidence of complicity in murder and torture in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere is chilling and overwhelming. Yet the net effect has been in Congress and the rest of the country not to curb such activities but to make the Agency more leakproof. Why don't people care?*

WOLF: I think the American people do care very much. The image that the United States has now in many countries, among millions of people around the world, is one of world policeman. This has not changed since Senator Fulbright discussed and condemned the world policeman role, and, in fact, it has been strengthened rather than weakened since that time. I think there has been a feeling among politicians in the White House and on Capitol Hill that the American defeat in Vietnam, the fall of Somoza in Nicaragua, the fall of the Shah of Iran and several other incidents where the United States imposed governments and regimes which have fallen have made some of these politicians wonder, "Are we still in charge?" I've seen quotations by some of these people, for example, where they talk of the Caribbean as an "American lake." Many Caribbean people find this specious, just as Americans and Canadians would find it specious for Fidel Castro to say the St. Lawrence seaway is Cuban territory. Down through the years and most particularly since these events have happened, there is a fantasy, of people in Congress and of some of their media friends, the so-called Moral Majority and the New Right, that the United States should reassert its power in the world. This means, among other things, "unleashing the CIA," strengthening the Rapid Deployment Force, chemical and biological warfare training, an expanded 222-billion dollar military budget, the MX missile, and so on and so on. But we must understand that the CIA has a very special place in this strategy. You cannot view these other developments and ignore the CIA's role, which is essential, because the CIA's role is now and always has been one of covert intervention in the affairs of other countries, including bribery, buying elections, recruiting foreign leaders, trade union officials, church people, professors, journalists, and so on, all the way to overthrowing governments to possibly assassinating a foreign leader. This is what CIA has done and what is looming in the very near future.

TWBR: *It is disengenuous for Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss, authors of* The Spike, *to suggest that progressive organizations such as The Institute for Policy Studies engage in disinformation for the Soviet Union, in light of the authors' own connections with the U.S. intelligence community, which routinely uses disinformation. Could you elaborate on that?*

WOLF: It is well documented that Robert Moss received a considerable sum of money—a commission from the Chilean government provided by the CIA—for the book *Chile's Marxist Experiment.* Although this book for some years has not been available in bookstores, if you go to the Chilean Embassy they hand it to you as part of their propaganda package. Moss and de Borchgrave also did not disclose that they were no longer working for their respective publications, Robert Moss for the London *Foreign Report* and Arnaud de Borchgrave for many years with *Newsweek.* Only last week de Borchgrave was speaking on the Larry King Show, and he was saying he *was* with *Newsweek* and that Robert Moss's last job *was* with the *Foreign Report.* This is the first time, to my knowledge, that de Borchgrave has been candid about it. De Borchgrave was fired because he had been compiling extensive dossiers on his colleagues at *Newsweek.* In his ultraparanoid mind he believes anyone who is not waving the flag, must be a KGB agent, and if not he is a dupe. On a number of occasions de Borchgrave has openly stated he has received extensive information from western intelligence services and that *The Spike* was allegedly based on interviews from defectors. It's not for me to say the book is disinformation—it speaks for itself. And for Moss and de Borchgrave to

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suggest that the KGB created the word disinformation is absolute idiocy. I have obtained documents through the Freedom of Information Act which show that the OSS, the forerunner of the CIA, in 1944-45 talked about disinformation campaigns.

TWBR: *Why have you limited your revelations to the CIA and not the KGB?*

WOLF: Quite simple. Our focus is primarily on the United States intelligence agencies and most of all the CIA and we do this because as American citizens, as persons concerned about what the government does with our tax money, in our names, using the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and all the most important principles on which the United States was founded, as a basis and using a pretext of "national security" for all its activities around the world. As Americans it is our right and duty to stand up and say this is wrong, particularly when it involves covert action around the globe. What other governments might do, whether China, the USSR, Vietnam, Cuba or any other government anywhere is their province. But we as Americans must deal with what our government does.

"Most knowledgeable people know that the CIA's main role is not collecting intelligence but covert action."

TWBR: *Do you intend to challenge the Intelligence Identities Protection Act if it becomes law?*

WOLF: Absolutely. As a number of Congressmen and many editorials around the country have noted, the bill is totally unconstitutional. It is unconstitutional because it would criminalize the use of information in the public domain which is easily obtained in many libraries, books, news articles, speeches by public officials, and even testimony from successive administrations. All of this information plainly in the public domain would be placed out of the public domain. Suddenly, it would be unlawful to analyze, research or even talk about it. If this bill becomes law, it would be impossible for the press to talk about something like Watergate. Likewise, many cases of illegal FBI or CIA or other intelligence agency activities would have been impossible for the media to find out about or if found even mentioned. Half of this town would be in jail if this bill became law, for Washington leaks like a sieve. It wouldn't be just journalists who would go to prison but other people, including many in government. If the Agents Identities legislation becomes law, *CovertAction Information Bulletin* intends to go straight into court within twenty-four hours. Not to go into court to challenge it would be dangerously wrong.

TWBR: *Despite your criticisms of the CIA, don't you think that the gathering of intelligence is a legitimate function of the government?*

WOLF: Any government, including ours, has the right to know what's going on in the world, which is a far cry from what the CIA's role has been in the last 33 years. If all they did was the collection and analysis of intelligence so they could provide information to the Executive branch in order to enable it to have a more rational foreign policy, we would support that. There are no less than 18 different government agencies that gather intelligence here and abroad. Without the CIA the United States would still have access to all the intelligence that the agency gathers. Most knowledgeable people in Washington and elsewhere know that the CIA's main role is not collecting intelligence but covert action

TWBR: *Philip Agee has been deported from a number of European countries, although he is now living in West Germany. What is his current status vis a vis the United States and the CIA?*

WOLF: He's somewhat in limbo, but for the first time since the publication of *Inside the Company: CIA Diary* his life has been relatively calm. He has his family with him and he no longer has to live out of suitcases. Nevertheless, the previous administration did revoke his passport, and the case is before the Supreme Court now. I think that to take someone's passport purely because of political reasons—he has not violated any law, because if he had they would have charged him—is another instance of unconstitutional harassment against Agee. The CIA has had him under surveillance, has hounded him out of four countries, and has prevented him from entering several others. He now hopes very much that this harassment will stop so that he may lead a life like the rest of us. The fact that he is a critic of the government and of the CIA should not mean that his life has to be like this. A number of CIA people have stated in interviews that they want to kill him, but Agee has never once said that he wants to kill any of them for what *they* did. I think this is a one way street they're driving on.

TWBR: *Is there anything in conclusion you wish to say?*

WOLF: I would just like to reiterate the very grave threat embodied in the thrust of the CIA today vis a vis these various pieces of legislation that I mentioned—the Intelligence Identities Protection Act, which would be a threat not to just us or to you as another journalist, not just to *The New York Times, The Washington Post* or *The Los Angeles Times,* or national television and radio networks, or to historians, but to every citizen in this country. It is an attempt to create an official secrets act. There's no room in a democratic society for such a law. If it's enacted and if its companion bills seeking to gut the Freedom of Information Act and the Clark Amendment (outlawing CIA involvement in Angola) become law, Americans will be faced with a very grave future. Moreover, I feel that even more serious is the effect that these developments will have on other countries and people around the world. The nub of the problem is that the American people always seem to be the last to learn what the CIA is doing around the world. And these proposed legislative initiatives, which were *initiated* and in fact the Intelligence Identities Protection Act was *written* by the CIA, not by Congress, will again reinforce the same syndrome in which we the American people won't know what our government is doing. Let us hope that it doesn't end in war. ■

Those who wish to contact the staff of CovertAction Information Bulletin *may write to: P.O. Box 50272, Washington, D.C. 20004.*

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In on a Wave

Riding on a Blue Note

Gary Giddins

313 pp. Oxford University Press. $16.95

As a college student twelve years ago, Gary Giddins was a rather peculiar fellow. He seemed obsessed with obtaining every jazz album and tape ever made and squirreling them away in his small dorm room—a pursuit particularly incongruous in the hick Iowa town of cornfields and dim Midwestern students. In retrospect, one realizes that it must have taken some guts to bring in avant garde composer and pianist Cecil Taylor for a gig. Taylor, scarcely a famous personality today, was far more obscure a decade ago when, dressed in black and shades, he assaulted a piano before a group of disbelieving students. The minority who fancied themselves as jazz buffs—that is, followers of Miles Davis, Getz, and Brubeck—were also startled. It did not require a seer to predict that Giddins, champion of the avant garde and a discographer's discographer, would probably become a jazz critic. Fortunately, he was able to find a context for his scholarship and musical interests in regular jazz columns for the *Village Voice,* which he has written since the early 70's. Thirty essays and reviews are collected in this volume.

Riding On A Blue Note is not intended to be a comprehensive narrative or history of modern American music, although most of its subjects are central figures in that history. It does cover a wide range of artists practicing many genres throughout the century, including rhythm 'n blues (for example Bobby Bland and Otis Blackwell), pop (Irving Berlin, Bing Crosby, Sinatra), and mostly, jazz (Ellington, Mingus, Coleman, and many others). The book suffers from some of the problems inherent in almost any compilation of reviews; namely, breaks in continuity and the inclusion of some material which is not important enough to merit reprinting. Also, the collection requires some familiarity with Afro-American music on the part of the reader. Access to a good record collection wouldn't hurt, either. Otherwise, one gets lost in certain passages, such as this description of a Charlie Parker recording:

> ...when he develops the six-note motif into a two-measure phrase (measures six and seven), imposing a triplet over an already lightning-fast melody, he runs out of breath. But never again. For the rest of the solo, his phrasing is so authoritative and relaxed and singing that when he winds down with a legato two-measure configuration (measures 27 and 28), only the listener is left breathless.

So this is a book for the somewhat initiated. After all, aren't *Voice* readers pretty hip?

But most of the book is accessible, especially given Giddins' preoccupation with innovators working in a music which has always been for insiders. The history of jazz is one of movements reaching familiarity, only to find iconoclasts on the scene ready to shake things up and challenge that which has become conventional. Human stories are presented alongside musical analysis, and some of the portraits, particularly those which employ first-hand reporting and interviews, as with Dizzie Gillespie and Cecil Taylor, are quite immediate.

The book also contains many good tips about underrated artists past and present, prompts a new appreciation of others with bigger reputations, and effectively captures the breadth, richness, and diversity of black contributions to twentieth century American music. Moreover, important problems are raised, such as the exploitation of jazz musicians by elements in the music industry. Wes Montgomery is cited as an example of an artist whose brief recording career, although not his talent, was drowned in the schlock of insensitive producers.

"The jazzman," writes Giddins, "may be the last American hero. He has to fight for his sound, his vision, his tradition. His victories are mostly private and frequently pyrrhic: most of the great innovators never reach fifty." Jazzman as hero—a knee-jerk liberal conceit? No, not at all! For the history of black American music is indeed one of heroics, and a touch of romanticism without racism is an excellent approach to bring to the subject. *Riding On A Blue Note* is an important and useful addition to the still insufficient literature about the heroes who have done so much to enrich our culture.

ERIC BAIZER

Eric Baizer is a Washington, D.C. writer and musician.

Oracle of Our Ancient Future

The Geography of the Imagination

Guy Davenport

400 pp. North Point Press, 850 Talbot Ave., Berkeley, CA 94708. $20 cloth, $10 paper

Ezra Pound comes alive and starts walking around in your head, making statements you never knew he made but that were right there all along. The past becomes very present, the future wrapped up in every archaeological find. The Greek myths jump from graves and books, more sensual and sensuous than ever in your abstracted mental life. Suddenly that silly poem you were taught to despise breaks out of its bad press and enters a context that makes you see its originality, its importance. You wait for a new surprise on the next page—and you get it!

Who is this guy, Guy Davenport? You may wonder if you haven't been reading him fairly regularly in places like *The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Hudson Review,* and even *Life Magazine,* or more literary places, scholarly journals and the like, or if you weren't at the Conference on Twentieth-Century Literature in 1974 at the University of Louisville, where Mr. Davenport read "The Symbol of the Archaic," or if you didn't hear "The House that Jack Built," the inaugural lecture to open the Yale Center for the Study of Ezra Pound and His Contemporaries, or "The Geography of the Imagination," the Distinguished Professor Lecture at the University of Kentucky for 1978, or "Joyce's Forest of Symbols," the Eberhardt Faber Lecture for 1973 at Princeton. And here I cut a long list short.

Who is this superstar professor, this academic box office hit? First, he is someone who does not fit the academic stereotype: he is a very non-academic resident of Academia; no anemia plagues his blood the way it does that of most. Perhaps that's why he's invited to speak before so many academic gatherings: he shows the scholars that there is a chance of human redemption, a possibility of passion among the books. He is an example of what intense, authentic, organic miracles can be created out of scholarship when it is mixed with enough pure creative force.

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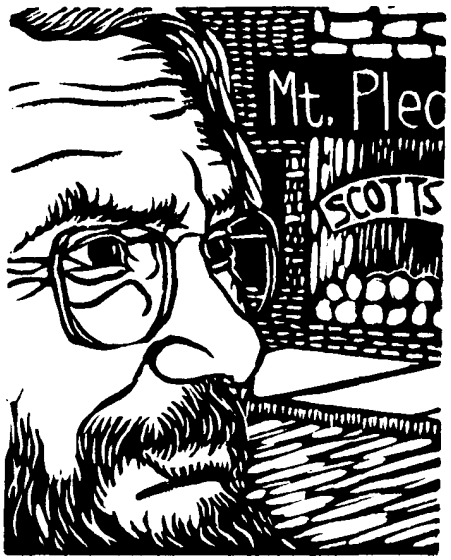
Passion is the key word. Mr. Davenport lets us see, touch, enjoy, laugh over, marvel at, get aroused by his ideas. He is not exclusively an essayist; he has a body of short fiction to his credit. But it is in his essays that he sings like a poet, perceives in multiple layers like a poet, and indeed *is* a poet. This collection of forty "essays" is really a collection of poems, many more than forty if you count individual lyrical paragraphs, or one 400-page epic if you would rather look at his vision as a unified continuum, which it is.

The intellect is not dead and dry when we enter these whirling waters of thought. But the unity is always there, emerging from a diversity, just as water comes in countless different forms and shapes but is always unified at the molecular level by two hydrogen atoms linked securely to an oxygen atom. I use a metaphor from science because Mr. Davenport has an affinity for all the categories of knowledge; for him science is not opposed to poetry, and parallels between the two are found everywhere. The first essay in the book gives its title and takes as its thesis the unity of the imagination underlying its great diversity, just as our planet has a great variety of terrains and climates in its geography all solidly married into a single sphere.

These essays entertain in several ways. First, they are written in a style that has grace, music, wit, and a wealth of telling details. Unexpected turns and convergences keep you alternately in suspenseful curiosity and suddenly satisfied. Second, you witness the coming together into a mysterious coherence the many separate, out-of-the-way discoveries of a man who must be a tireless searcher and at the same time possess a divining rod to lead him to just the right spots for digging up buried treasure. For example, in shedding new light on a rather neglected poem by Whitman, he travels into a book on palentology to find out about George Peabody, one of the first great "merchant philanthropists," also interested in scientific matters, and then in a footnote Davenport tosses in this: "You can also see in this book a photograph of Edgar Allen Poe inspecting the fossil skeleton of a prehistoric horse: a photograph still unknown to the Poe scholars."

But a powerful style and interesting revelations would be superficial by themselves. What makes it all worth more than the sum of its parts is the vision that is constantly being implied, gradually brought more and more into clear view. It is a vision that cannot be verbalized fully; otherwise it would not be a vision. A most rudimentary hint can be given, however. My attempt at a hint would go like this: today we are craving, without knowing it, the most primitive ways off seeing and relating to the universe, and the extent to which we are ignorant of these primitive ways or refuse to take them seriously, much less embrace them, determines the degree of empty activities we must mechanically act out to ward of the paralyzing fear of impending extinction from within and without.

The first half of my hint is pretty close to what Davenport actually says



in several places; the second half is my interpretation of his tone, his imagery, his exasperations. This is a book that mixes great hope and optimism with great despair and pessimism. If it did not, we would not recognize it as having anything to do with us and our deepest concerns. But the vision is important also because it can contain and intuitively explain so many different subjects, as a partial list will show: ancient art, literature, and philosophy woven deftly into the modern; poets like Pound, Whitman, Olson, Zukofsky, Marianne Moore, Stevens, Jonathan Williams, Ronald Johnson, and even Joyce Kilmer; scientists and artists and thinkers like Louis Agassiz and Tchelitchew and Wittgenstein.

At this point there is only one way to convey the flavor of this book, the way it swings from fun facts to penetrating insight and back again without an excuse needed or an awkward lapse. Quoting from a book this size in a review this size is a little like a child dipping his toy pail in the ocean, but it will have to do for now. But it doesn't have to be your last or only dose of Davenport, because you can—and should—get this book and read it, get seduced by it, even obsessed by it. It reminds you of how much there is that we need to know, how many important facts have been allowed to drop from our cultural pool, how startlingly related all human experience and art really are, how many obscure references wait to be deciphered so they can glow brightly in our awareness and heal the many splits we have imagined into existence. Our categories are symptoms of a blinding disease, and Davenport shows us ways of leaping across those crippling categories, freeing us from at least some of our mental paralysis.

In "Hobbitry" we find: "Even when I came to read *The Lord of the Rings* I had trouble, as I still do, realizing that it was written by the mumbling and pedantic Prof. J.R.R. Tolkien." And later in this brief, modest essay, we learn this:

> The closest I have ever gotten to the secret and inner Tolkien was in a casual conversation on a snowy day in Shelbyville, Kentucky. I forget how in the world we came to talk of Tolkien at all, but I began plying questions as soon as I knew that I was talking to a man who had been at Oxford as a classmate of Ronald Tolkien's.

Davenport gets an amazing response from this man:

> "You know, he [Tolkien] used to have the most extraordinary interest in the people here in Kentucky. He could never get enough of my tales of Kentucky folk. He used to make me repeat family names like Barefeet and Boffin and Baggins and good country names like that."

Then Davenport tells us, "Practically all the names of Tolkien's hobbits are listed in my Lexington phone book, and those that aren't can be found over in Shelbyville."

The essay on Tolkien is not typical of those in this book; perhaps it was included for a bit of relief from the long, intense, challenging pieces that you feel your mental scope being stretched by. But even here the central vision is being served: the connections of culture are profound, intricate, inescapable. Davenport writes in a breathless voice, always on the verge of unveiling a sur-

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prising turn of events that thickens the plot. His is an intellectual and artistic and cultural detective story of immense complexity. Here is a taste:

> The appeal of popular culture must lie precisely in its faithfulness to ancient traditions. The charming little children's book by Carlo Collodi, *Le Avventuri di Pinocchio,* can scarcely claim to be included in a history of Italian literature, and yet to a geographer of the imagination it is a more elegant paradigm of the narrative art of the Mediterranean than any other book since Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* rehearses all the central myths, and adds its own to the rich stock of tradition.
>
> It reaches back to a Gnostic theme known to both Shakespeare and Emily Dickinson: "Split the stick," said Jesus, "and I am there." It combines Pygmalion, Ovid, the book of Jonah, the Commedia dell'Arte, and Apuleius; and will continue to be a touchstone of the imagination.

And here is another:

> There was, however, a silent believer from the beginning of his career, who saw prehistoric art with eyes which would influence all other eyes in our time. When Breuil was copying the ceiling of bulls in the Spanish cave Altamira, a young man from Barcelona crawled in beside him and marvelled at the beauty of the painting, at the energy of the designs. He would in a few years teach himself to draw with a similar energy and primal clarity, and would incorporate one of these engimatic bulls into his largest painting, the *Guernica.* He was Pablo Picasso.

He then pulls out this idea:

> If we say, as we can, that the archaic is one of the great inventions of the twentieth century, we mean that as the first European renaissance looked back to Hellenistic Rome for a range of models and symbols, the twentieth century has looked back to a deeper past in which it has imagined it sees the very beginning of civilization....
>
> Behind all this passion for the archaic, which is far more pervasive in the arts of our time than can be suggested here, is a longing for something lost, for energies, values, and certainties unwisely abandoned in an industrial age. Things, Proust says, are gods, and one way our arts seem to regard our world is to question what gods have come to dwell among us in the internal combustion engine, the cash register, and the computer.

This is the point, far more devastating than we are likely to admit, where all of Davenport's thinking ultimately leads. What are we doing? Why are we living in this landscape that is the enemy of life? After all the penetrating insights into literature and art and science, Davenport's vision finally has a political thrust: what are we going to do with the world, and is there a chance of salvaging our human essence, our capacity for celebrating the matter and spirit out of which we come, matter and spirit we have insulated ourselves from and ignored much longer than is safe?

If *The Geography of the Imagination* were somehow brought into the consciousness of the people of this planet, especially its leaders, the dangers we now face would fade quickly, perhaps vanish. Davenport, if you listen to him attentively and devote the necessary time to understanding his ideas, instills you with a reverence for life that could protect us all.

BROWN MILLER

Brown Miller has written several books of poetry, including Hiroshima Flows Through Us, *Cherry Valley Editions. He is also the Poetry Review Editor for* The San Francisco Review of Books.

The Pornographic Mind

Pornography and Silence: Culture's Revenge Against Nature
Susan Griffin
277 pp. Harper and Row. $12.95

Co-option, the ability to neutralize perceived or actual dissent, or the threat of radical change by absorbing it into the socio-economic mainstream, is the greatest genius of the American system. It is often successful when overt oppression is either ineffective or unfeasible. In more cynical moments, I have worried that feminism has been recycled into TV programs about female reporters, slogans on tee shirts on sale at Korvette's, slick national magazines, and cathartic fantasies about secretaries triumphing over scuzzy bosses. Unquestionably, for many years there has been a bourgeois feminism which, while not necessarily in opposition to the more radical elements, does nothing to jeopardize the system which allows the continuing exploitation of women.

Susan Griffin's new book is a reminder that there are still formidable, troubling ideas and challenges in the movement not soon likely to be watered down for Nielsen's top ten.

The feminist attack on pornography is surrounded by a number of controversies, most specious; some tangential. Although these controversies usually have the effect of obscuring consideration of the essential feminist case against pornography, it is illuminating to discuss them in relation to Griffin's work:

- Censorship of pornography would be a dangerous erosion of our civil liberties, setting a precedent for the suppression of other materials and ideas.
- The new anti-pornography advocates are really feminist versions of the Moral Majority—a bunch of narrow-minded prudes.
- Pornography has been associated with human liberation. Even if some of it is distasteful, it is basically progressive.
- Pornography consists of mostly harmless escapist fantasies. It is an outlet, not a cause of crime or violence.

First, it is true that censorship of pornography could set a dangerous precedent. However, *Pornography and Silence* is not a brief on behalf of censorship. The censorship issue should not be allowed to replace a serious debate about pornography and its implications.

The characterization of anti-pornography feminists as counterparts of Jerry Falwell is nonsense. They are not prudes; rather than attempting to hide the female body, they are demanding an end to the imagery that separates the body from the soul. Pornography, it is argued, is rooted in a strain of Romanticism which one critic described as "loving men spiritually and women physically." Pornography is counter to eros, or at least Ms. Griffin's ideal of eros: rediscovering innocence and the primal unity of mind and body. Consequently, by robbing women of their identities and turning them into objects, pornography is "a delusional system" which is not compatible with human liberation.

Finally, as to the contention that pornography is harmless, Griffin wisely chooses to examine pornography within the context of the "pornographic mind", instead of viewing it as the principal cause of various evils. The pornographic mentality, she feels, is essentially the same one responsible for racism and anti-semitism. Thus, *Pornography and Silence* is ultimately

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not about dirty books and girlie magazines, what Lennie Bruce called "stroke books"; it is about a mind set. Turn on a TV or walk into any restaurant or office and you can find examples of our pornographic culture. Female clone-victims are required to approximate a stroke book standard of beauty and to be silent as paper—to be seen and not heard.

By viewing pornography as a manifestation of pornographic culture—one that degrades, abuses, and humiliates women—Griffin has made an important contribution to raising of the intellectual standards of the pornography debate.

Pornography and Silence is as complex as its subject. It is at once an original philosophical statement, a manifesto, and a poem for liberation. As a catalog of abuses against women, it will no doubt effectively stir up more anger among the angry. But it deserves a much wider audience. For if the spiritual and sexual exploitation of women is an aberration of culture rather than an inevitability, then the only solution is a massive, sustained consciousness-raising effort that reaches far beyond the convinced. Evidently, Griffin sees hope: "We know that culture need not be opposed to eros," she writes, "for not all culture is delusion, and culture itself can be dangerous to the ego. It can contain and reflect the natural world and lead us back into our deepest selves."

One hopes that *Pornography and Silence* will play a role in activating a far-reaching discussion about the mind set that sustains pornography. It is a disturbing book which may emerge as one of the most important humanitarian documents of the decade.

ERIC BAIZER

Something to do with Love

Nothing to do with Love
Joyce Reiser Kornblatt
208 pp. Viking Press. $11.95

Although most of the best short story markets no longer exist, good short stories continue to be published, even if for miniscule audiences and for little or no money. So when a major New York house like Viking Press publishes a short story collection by a new author, that is encouraging news indeed.

Joyce Reiser Kornblatt is a Washington, D.C. writer who teaches Creative Writing at the University of Maryland. Her stories have appeared in *The Atlantic, The Ohio Review,* and *The Transatlantic Review,* as well as in such D.C. small presses as *Sun & Moon, Sibyl-Child,* and *Calvert.*

This collection contains a novella and seven short stories. Kornblatt's style is very metaphorical and poetic, and while it sometimes is too literal and self-conscious, it succeeds often enough to justify the failures.

The novella, "Nothing to do with Love," is about a divorced woman who, while looking for her runaway daughter, analyzes their past for clues to why she left and where she might be. The mother is a geneticist, and her dissection of their relationship is cold, precise, and unsettling. But sometimes the reader is too much aware of the language as symbol and metaphor, and may have difficulty believing in the reality of the characters. For instance, in a section told from the daughter's viewpoint (she is at a house for runaways), the people she meets are stereotypical and cliched. She says to Gabriel, who helps run the house, "I feel you know me better than I know myself." He replies, "Never... Another person can *never* know you better than you know yourself."

"Red Camero" is also self-consciously metaphorical (a red Camero is the only thing a woman salvages from her marriage), and again the reader is too much aware of the car as a symbol rather than as part of a reality.

The remaining six stories are very good, among the best I've read anywhere. "Richard" is lyrical and poetic (and as surrealistic as Kornblatt gets in this collection), a very short story that succeeds perfectly in articulating a small boy's fantasies. "Balancing Act" is about the fine line marriages often walk, and is itself a delicately balanced work. "Memoirs of a Cold Child" concerns the sibling rivalry between a young girl and her baby sister, and has a very unexpected (and funny) resolution.

"Thanksgiving" is divided into two sections, each told from the separate viewpoints of a husband and wife, and are about their secret (to each other) extramarital affairs. The sections are really two different stories, and the effect on the reader is of a severe distancing and severing of the two characters' lives. "Relics" is about a man's attempt at auctioning off his past through a garage sale, and a woman who, while rummaging through it, hopes to find something salvageable for them both, but doesn't. In "Ordinary Mysteries" an elderly stroke victim, although helpless and near death, lucidly reminisces over a past which seems incomplete and disconnective.

These stories cover a wide range of characters and subjects, but all are about the inability of people to connect and to shed their defensive armor.

Joyce Reiser Kornblatt is currently working on a novel. But I hope that, unlike many writers who seldom return to the short story because novels are so much more lucrative, she will continue writing in a form for which she has so much felicity.

MICHAEL LERNER

Michael Lerner is a Washington, D.C. writer who has written for, among other magazines, The San Francisco Review of Books.

Lyrical Tales of Horror

Fireworks: Nine Stories In Various Disguises
Angela Carter
208 pp. Harper & Row. $11.95

In *Fireworks: Nine Stories in Various Disguises* Angela Carter proves her understanding of the vital importance of atmosphere in fantasy/horror storytelling. Using her command of lyrical and sensual language, Carter writes nine stories that pulsate with terror. We envision fantasies of architectural nightmares...a museum of diseases, windowless dwellings, a wet airless mountain.

In the gothic tradition of Poe and Hoffman, Carter's use of unearthly music helps darken the atmosphere of her stories. Even the instruments are exotic, such as the guitar-like samisen, or, inherently horrifying, the flute played by Lady Purple of "The Loves of Lady Purple" which was made from

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the thighbone of a former lover whom she had murdered. In "The Executioner's Beautiful Daughter," handmade stringed instruments produce "an almost-music" which echoes a funeral march, and is played by mountain dwellers who enthusiastically practice incest in a country where incest is a capital crime.

Like her method with music, Carter weaves color into her nine tales to add still another dimension to the weird darkness of her narrative. Black, rust, blood red, and (Carter's favorite) purple are mentioned repeatedly in nearly all the stories. Carter's fascination with purple is particularly remarkable in "The Loves of Lady Purple." The Lady Purple, "the famous prostitute and wonder of the East!", is a life-sized puppet who is covered with a skin of supple white leather, wears broken mirrors in her hair, and is dressed in "the vibrating purple with which she was synonymous, a purple the color of blood in a love suicide." This purple foreshadows the puppet's entry into reality which she facilitates by sucking the blood from the throat of her loving puppeteer.

Carter's lyrical and sensual language is fundamental to what she calls her moral function—that of provoking unease. So too is her obsession with three themes: incest, cannibalism, and reality versus fantasy.

Curiously, those tales about incest and cannibalism are not as unsettling as those about reality versus fantasy. For example, "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest," a re-telling of the legend of the Fall in which a brother and sister make love in an eerie forest, is far less disturbing than "Elegy for a Freelance," a story of a woman who grows up amidst so much wealth that her world is unreal; she thinks the terrorist philosophy of her lover is an interesting subject for tea conversation. Then suddenly everything becomes all too real when her lover murders a blind old man for practice. This story, the last and best of *Fireworks,* generates freezer burns.

Perhaps Carter's themes of cannibalism and incest do not cause as much discomfort as that of fantasy versus reality because the former practices are removed from the mainstream of today's culture whereas fantasy is a part of daily life. Surely, we are all guilty of shuttling from reality into our own personal fantasy world. I'm not so sure we're all preoccupied with incest and cannibalism. Maybe Carter would argue otherwise. It's food for thought.

JUDY ZINS

Judy Zins is Associate Editor of The Washington Book Review.

Beyond Minimalism

Letargo
Frank Samperi
Station Hill Press (Barrytown, NY). No price listed

Let her go. Largo. *Letargo.* Minimalist poets try both to eschew words and be profound, to infuse the prosaic universe of sticks and stones and broken bones with an old Chinese philosopher's chin-whisker, haiku-esque insights. The old oriental farts often succeeded in achieving both ideals because much of their work was written at high mountain altitudes; the altitude thinned their word and brush strokes, as it thinned their blood and chin hairs. American poets, alas, seem to compose mainly at sea-level. Their minimalist efforts are contrived rather than created by any euphoria-inducing altitudes of either mind or landscape. The result is apt to be a phony, mud-spattered, pretentious effort. These poets seem to say: "Look at me, folks. I can write poems with one hand clapping"; or, "Watch while I perch flamingo-fashion in a stream of words and, again, flamingo-fashion spear nouns and verbs as my beak chooses." The alphabet soup of the poem-stream!

Like the dedicated minimalist, Frank Samperi in *Letargo* dwells a lot in nature. He is fond of the sprats and orts one comes to expect in these briefs (poems) as they slip along legless and armless, greased by the poet's good intentions and his apparent feelings that the vernal wood/stream is still where it's at. So, we find suns, moons, branches, hawks, eagles, other "faraway birds," pigeons, snow, rain, trees, and windows. Combine these gentle-esques (Nature poems that neither turn you on nor turn you off) with painterly effects of the still-life picture (tree branches framed in a window viewed from within a room; motionless cats in sunlight by an iron gate) and you have a sense of Samperi's interests. Some of the motifs seem sentimental—the visionary poet in his tower at night, a "cloud of glory" riding in the sky. The poet is a kind of Adam:

> There was odor
> there was garden
> seraph dwelt in him
> he responded in grace
> he branch
> finally light
> in itself

He almost saves this stanza (the last of the book) by the Hiawatha or Tarzan-like touch "he branch"; but *light* strikes me as cliched. Here is another example of Hiawatha-writing, a poem so minimalist it merely hints at possible vicious hawk plummetings:

> faraway bird
> light my
> heart
> defeat
>
> hawk school
> not eagle
> my
> thy
> eye

In this one, Samperi juxtaposes sketchy landscape details with some word-fun, a kind of delicious showing off:

> bright water sky
> conjoint dissolver
> of the dispositive

A common device of the minimalists is to suggest *momentosity* (a poem of great moment) by leaving a lot of white space around a single repeated word. One can defend the practice, I suppose, by saying that this is what painters have always done—isolate small strokes of the same hue as a signature for the whole picture. Here is one of Samperi's poems:

> see full moon
> from roof line
> to cloud band
> and then imperceptibly
>
> higher
>
> higher

Higher doesn't have much to work up/or down. The furniture of the poem is trite (moon, roof, cloud). Samperi seeks a cryptic quality by leaving out words (his one-liners resemble

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koans), hoping to generate more meanings than pallid landscapes deserve. Also, he suggests meditation-meanings. Gurus and meditators are notoriously fond of banal concepts. There are still boring sermons poets love to find in babbling brooks and stones. The method rarely works for me. In this set of lines, for example, Samperi's framing of windows and boxing us in suggests one of Paul Klee's drawings. *Groveling* provides interest; but the closing line undercuts the effect via its weak adverbs:

> window within window,
> the negation,
> the primary groveling,
> certainly simply space.

I may be unfair in raising these issues over so slight a book as *Letargo*. I do feel, however, that it is time critics protested the abuses wrought by minimalist poets who seem to seek the arcane via the trivial. In defense, such poets say that universals are everywhere, especially in the mundane, if we could only see them. I insist, though, that brush strokes of an Oriental master, or the clean arrangements of a Klee or a Matisse, have little to do with minimalist poems. I've never been much moved by the idea of Tarzan or Hiawatha as poets.

ROBERT PETERS

Robert Peters's best known book is A Gift to be Simple: A Garland for Anne Lee, *Norton. He currently teaches English at the University of California, Irvine.*

A Brazilian Kafka

Kafka Na Cama
Jair Ferreira Dos Santos
Civilizacao Brasileira, Rua Muniz Barreto, 91/93, Rio de Janeiro, RJ. $3.00

You find out all about the technique tricks, cutting the narrative into scraps and then interspersing (spacing) the scraps with other "elements" (narrative or otherwise), neologisming, free-flowing, surrealisming, withholding key elements, a name, a face, not identifying the Who or the Where, you work in nonsense, myth, throw in unrelated-related "elements," and if you don't watch out, when you're all through you've got an Avant-Garde Wiseass Old-Hat *stew*.

Which is one of Jair Ferreira Dos Santos' dangers.

Take a story like "Joel Sad ou weekend, mais ou menos a Saroyan," (Joel Sad or Weekend, more or less a la Saroyan) with its "motto" from Anais Nin's *The Novel of the Future* (in English):

> The new swift novel could match our modern life in speed, rhythms, condensation, abstraction, miniaturization, X rays of our secrets, a subjective gauge of external events...

Kind of a re-run of Marinetti's Futurist Manifesto *non e vero?* Well, the story's full of "good touches," like the comparison of a men's room at the airport to a chapel:

> The polygon mosaic of the clean tiles, the clarity coming in through the stained glass windows and being absorbed by the silence that inexorably suggested the serenity of a chapel....

Touches like "the fecal monism of things," and a sometimes-surreal flow that I love so much in Durrell's *Black Book,* most of Henry Miller and Plymell's *The Last of the Mocassins:*

> Stupid heart. Your Foolish Heart (in English in original). A thousand Leaves (Mil-folhas). Cabbage (Repolho). The valves of luck.

It's a little better in the original, puns on *folhas* and *repolho,* etc., but it's not bad in English either: Mind-Flow. And let me half reverse myself (paragraph 1) and suggest that avant-garde virtuosity when done *perfectly,* like any other kind of magic, leave you breathlessly excited, confounded, exhilerated.

Only...Dos Santos mixes traditional narrative with this virtuosity so that you get the effect of magic going soft/sloppy and unable to pick up its pace again.

There's one story here that is the most touching, moving, at the same time objective/adroit writing I've read since Clarice Lispector, another Brazilian who's fast on the road to becoming (via Paris) an American literary byword. Title of the story: "Sextuor: O Pai." Topic: the author's family.

I keep thinking about Plymell's poem about his father, the one recorded by Rod McKuen. I played it to a roomful of students down here and the room *stopped.* In "Sextuor: O Pai" the portrait of the mother, the sister, the brother, are all very "accurate"/sympathetic, but the father is a masterpiece, this old mulatto, lady's man, great swimmer, played violin, owned a bakery, was a fancy dresser, liked good (women's) cologne... and then he gets Chagas, this disease that "wastes" the heart of the victim. And he's lying dying as his son records this "letter" to him:

> Now it's dark. Points of light on the other side of the city. Ariel late. He's dying, he's killing himself, I know and that still isn't it. It's so "cloudy" in his life that he shouldn't die. People have one life but they die various times inside us. It's not that I disdain his death, but I don't think about it, it's an emptiness, an extreme, an immense reminder that I'm here/on this side.
>
> The childish belief in words: stay around, dad. But why isn't there any force in my words? He's my Lazarus, and I'm his Jesus without faith. I feel outside this death and even though a messenger from him has stationed himself inside me, he lights me up without any heat/flame...for him I try to believe, but this space between this belief and me is so huge, this flat, ownerless hope invented inside me to keep me from knowing what I know.
>
> My eyes burn. My ears close. If I could at least stop understanding and lift my hand and tear away this flight of my heart to my heart. And now, why cry, completely exposed like a lifeless wound, and why wipe the mascara getting messed up by this abstract crying that I don't really believe me?

It's a bitch to translate this because it's so subtle/nuance-filled, such an intimate personalized fabric of words. But I'll tell you one thing, this story comes out of the vast heart of what makes Brazilian art-music-literature the greatest when it's great, the heart of the Mystic, the Long-Suffering, the Vision of Desolation tempered with a distance, coldness, aloofness that keeps just this side of the whirlpool of self-dissolution, or, to put it another way, sentimentality.

HUGH FOX

Hugh Fox teaches English at Michigan State University. His latest book, The Guernica Cycle, *will be out soon from Cherry Valley Editions.*

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Best of the Small Press

Editor's Choice: Literature & Graphics from the U.S. Small Press

Eds. Morty Sklar & Jim Mulac

501 pp. The Spirit That Moves Us Press. P.O. Box 1585, Iowa City, IA 52244. $14.50 cloth, $9.50 paper

Editor's Choice is clearly a labor of love. Editors Sklar and Mulac wanted to gather the best work from the independent, non-commercial presses and magazines of the so-called "small press revolution." The task was monumental; it is not difficult to imagine them up to their elbows in brown envelopes after invitations went out in late 1977. After three years of fighting through the pile they have selected a collection of poetry, graphics, fiction and essays which represents writers from all walks of life. A book this size couldn't possibly collect everything of value printed during that period, but the editors are to be commended for their effort to capture the diversity of experience and spirit of community that exist in independent publishing today.

Strong graphics have been the backbone of many fine magazines and what separates this anthology from the annual *Pushcart Prize* collection (1976 to present), and George Plimpton's *American Literary Anthology* (1968-69), is the inclusion of 21 art works. Baltimore-Washington artist Tom Chalkley is represented, as well as works from magazines such as *The Fault, Zone, Second Coming, Aura, Gallimaufry, Painted Bride Quarterly, Trace,* and others.

The essay section is the strongest in the book. Robert Bly's "Leaping into Poetry," reprinted from his magazine *The Seventies,* deals with how words and imaginative concepts relate to brain structure. The late Paul Goodman is represented by "The Politics of Being Queer" from *Unmuzzled Ox,* wherein he compares the civil rights and gay rights movements. Merrit Clifton's oft-reprinted fingernail sketch of the history of independent publishing, "On Small Press As Class Struggle," is also included, as well as local writer-editor E. Ethelbert Miller's interview with South African poet and activist Dennis Brutus.

William Stafford, Charles Bukowski, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Amiri Baraka, and William Wantling are some of the big name poets who made it into these pages, but small press legends like Charles Potts, Lyn Lifshin, Ronald Koertge, and James Magorian are also represented, along with names familiar to Baltimore-Washington audiences—Michael Lally, Anselm Hollo, and David Hilton.

The best in the fiction section includes Ruskin Bond's story of a writer's life in India and Tony Cohan's similar study set in Morocco. Jean Thompson's "Birds in the Air" contains the most inventive writing, in what would normally be a fairly conventional story. Robert Creely's excerpt from "Mabel: A Story" is the token experimental piece. However, as strong as some of these stories are, the editors seem to have overlooked many good works. It's possible they chose not to duplicate already anthologized stories, but one can only conjecture.

Any project that attempts as much as this one is bound to disappoint somebody. As Mulac states in his introduction, "You can't be objective about real art because it forgets all the rules and is totally personal." Yet there's something in here to please any intelligent reader. And many of the people included have never before received such wide exposure. That's the joy of anthologies like this one—making people aware of good writing from sources other than the big slicks or New York publishing firms. Alternatives to *Pushcart*-like anthologies are needed because nobody has cornered the market or should be left in a position of power from which to try. The editors admit they received enough good material for five or six more anthologies. If this book proves successful, Volume II might not be a bad idea.

RICHARD PEABODY, JR.

Richard Peabody, Jr., is the editor of the Washington, D.C. based Gargoyle *magazine.*

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CRY OF THE PEOPLE

(Continued from page 6)

Certainly the Cuban revolution helped to shake up the Church when 70 percent of Cuba's clergy fled the island. But equally alarming was the Latin Church's own decline. Churches were growing emptier by the year and the tradition among privileged families of promising a son to the priesthood was so much on the wane that more and more clergy had to be imported from Ireland and Spain.

Meanwhile, proclamations from Rome encouraged a reexamination of the Church's place in the lives of its communicants. Pope John XXIII's encyclicals, *Mater et Magistra* (1961) and *Pacem in Terris* (1963) emphasized the right to a decent standard of living, education, and political participation, and Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* encouraged the Latin American bishops to hold a hemispheric conference to examine the conclusions of Vatican II in the context of Latin American problems.

The conference that followed in Medellín, Colombia (1963), gave birth to what Lernoux calls a "Magna Carta" that shattered the old alliance between the Church and the rich and that hailed the advent of a "Church of the Poor."

Among the Medellín documents were educational and organizational plans with, what turned out to be, far reaching consequences. Brazil's educational philosopher Paulo Friere influenced the structure of these plans intended to advance self-reliance and self-esteem in small, tightly-knit Christian communities among Latin America's poor.

Since the Medellín conference, thousands of these Christian grass-root communities (communidades de base) have grown up in Latin America. In Brazil alone there are 80,000.

The activist clergy who organizes these communities selects peasants to run catechism classes and bible readings. Gradually the base of activities broadens to include efforts by the peasants to improve their communities' education, health, and land allocations.

Except for a handful, however, most of the bishops at Medellín did not recognize their proclamations of human rights and equality as having revolutionary implications. Gradually, throughout the 1960s, the more radical elements within the Church were denounced and more conservative bishops regained influence.

At first, the Church went to work much like the U.S., Lernoux says. "The primary goal of reform was seen as the defeat of left-wing political movements and guerrilla groups."

But by the end of the 1960s, religious vocations were still declining and the social and economic conditions of the people were even worse than at the beginning of the decade. "Reform was a means, not an end, and therefore it failed."

More than encyclicals from Rome, it was the political and economic events of the 1960s and early 70s that moved the Church farther left. Where, in the early 60s there was hope of developing a bridge between the poor and the rich, the activist clergy realized by the end of the decade that to expect Latin America's small elite to give up centuries of privilege was naive.

There was growing disenchantment with capitalism, too. Panama's Archbishop Marcos McGrath has noted the "great doubt" that "has been cast on the possibility of achieving the necessary reforms for the...development of our people within the capitalist structure of the international, and particularly, the interAmerican economy.

"In Brazil, during the 'seven-year economic miracle,' which collapsed in 1976, the richest one percent of the population increased its share of the nation's wealth from 11.7 to 17.8 percent. Almost half the country's 38 million workers now earn less than the minimum monthly wage of $70, according to the government's own statistics."

Lernoux indicates that "development" has become a dirty word. A series of foreign, mostly U.S. loans, have "so burdened the Latin American countries that many are now spending an average 25 percent of their foreign earnings just to service the debt." As for foreign investment, "far from creating the millions of new jobs promised...nearly half of this money went to take over existing Latin American industries. By the end of the 60s, 99 percent of the loans made by AID to Latin American countries was being spent in the United States for products costing 30 to 40 percent more than the going world price."

Even so, the activist clergy remained on the outs with the rest of the Church until the early 1970s. What caused the more conservative elements of the Church to affirm the doctrines that came out of Medellín was the "reign of terror" unleashed by Latin America's military regimes. By attacking the political center of the Church, these regimes forced the moderates back into the ranks of the progressives. "Even the most conservative hierarchies like Argentina's have come to protest the reign of terror that has converted South America into a giant concentration camp."

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However, despite the Church's pull to the left, Lernoux claims that statistically few members of the Catholic clergy have accepted Marxism as an alternative to fascism. Besides, the Christian rural communities themselves are "far more subversive of the established order," says Lernoux, "than the literature of any communist organization because the former instill in the poor a sense of class solidarity not at the urging of a university-educated guerrilla, but from within themselves."

Venezuelan guerrillas have privately admitted as much, explaining that they were defeated in 1962 and 1963 because they could not elicit the support of "suspicious, conservative peasants who had not the slightest idea of what the guerrillas were talking about."

In contrast, once the Catholic clergy reached out to the poor whom they had always treated as an afterthought, the clergy found an immediate response. Lernoux explains that this responsiveness is a result of the Latin American poor having always clung to a deep sense of religion because it is often their only means of expression.

The Church as a whole is experiencing a "renaissance" in Latin America that is "directly related to its commitment to social justice," Lernoux says. But the price has been high. Since 1968, "over 850 priests, nuns, and bishops have been arrested, tortured, murdered, or expelled, and thousands of the Catholic laity have been jailed and killed."

Despite the persecution, the activist arm of the Church is growing. In 1978, 40 percent of Latin America's priests and nuns were working with Latin America's poor compared to 21 percent a decade earlier.

Lernoux's book is especialy valuable at a time when the U.S. is demonstrating more candidly than ever that it believes military dictatorships are a safer hedge against perceived Soviet/Cuban expansionism than fragile democracies. What is left unsaid, of course, is that these military regimes are also willing to sell their own people to multinational business interests as long as they get a share of the proceeds.

Lernoux details massacres, torture, and other acts of repression throughout Latin American countries in straightforward accounts that are far more compelling than facts and figures, although these lend credibility to her broad survey.

It is enough to hear about the "dragon chair" invented by the Rio de Janiero police to dismiss with anger talk of "moderate repression." The prisoner who sits in the dragon chair receives "electric shocks while a dentist's drill shatters his or her teeth; after which, if the prisoner is a man, he is held upside down while his testicles are crushed."

The most insidious misconception that the Reagan administration is trying to put over is that there are but two choices in Latin America—fascism or Marxism. As Jeanne Kirkpatrick has written: "I share...repugnance for regimes like those of Somoza, but I lack...*faith* that they will necessarily be replaced by something better."

It is the Catholic activists who have not lost faith and who, like Brazilian Archbishop Helder Camara, have refused to "understand why it is necessary to combat communism with fascism."

The remarkable message of Lernoux's book is that, although the Church activists have rejected this either/or proposition, they are succeeding despite persecution to improve the lot of the poor. If the Church and its peasant allies are pulled into the Soviet orbit, it will be largely because U.S. policymakers will have abandoned them to that fate.

MARIE GIBLIN

Marie Giblin is a Washington, D.C. writer.

THE TERROR NETWORK

(Continued from page 6)

besides Alexander Haig willing to make a moral judgment about terrorism? Granted there may be some amount of gray (there always is) but at least she could have tried. It would have sharpened the focus of the book considerably. It seems as though the rationale behind the Baader-Meinhof Gang's campaign to destroy West Germany's consumer society was somewhat less worthy of our consideration that the goals of the IRA, who have legitimate grievances whether Claire Sterling likes it or not. She treads on perilous ground calling the Provisional IRA left wing terrorists in the first place. Most of its money comes from Americans, who, she would have us believe, have been duped into supporting terrorists who are in league with the PLO, who are in league with Muammar Qaddafi, who is in league with the Russians. In any case, there is no attempt to judge these various groups by their goals, only their methods.

The Palestinians are at the core of the problem it appears. Their objectives are real and attainable, if utterly unacceptable. But is every Palestinian who fights for his homeland with or through the PLO a terrorist? After all, Menachem Begin used terrorist techniques at one time, and the same can be said of Robert Mugabe, once labeled by the British as a renegade terrorist, now hailed as a head of state. Are they terrorists or not? Even if the PLO is anathema, and it is, there should be some distinction between them and say Italy's demented Red Brigades or the criminal German Red Army Faction. Their rhetoric differs so vastly it borders on intellectual dishonesty to crowd all these men and women into the same category. The rhetoric of the Red Brigades is so wild it almost becomes self-parody.

The main thrust of this book is that there is not only a tremendous amount of interplay, exchange, and cooperation among terrorists, but they're all part of a massive scheme by the Soviets to subvert the West as well. The acts described in *The Terror Network* are so horrible you want to believe she's right. But if the Russians are trying to get at us through these people, they could have hardly picked a weirder bunch of murdering psychotics than had Leonid Brezhnev telephoned Central Casting. What do the Russians

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care, they'll use anybody, you might respond. True. As Claire Sterling portrays them, however, these terrorists return from their training as money hungry, homicidal maniacs, most of whom are as inept as The Three Stooges and about as doctrinaire as Pac Man in their voracious appetite for violence. Such is not the stuff of revolution. It is, however, the stuff of death and destruction. Crowding all these terrorist bands beneath the heading of Russian intrigue conveniently frees us from further examination of their origins. It also allows America to shift its foreign policy focus from human rights to terrorism without acknowledging that they are opposite sides of the same coin. It is witchhunting on an international scale and misleading as hell.

Unfortunately, the Russians *do* benefit from Qaddafi's bankrolling of some of these loonies (many others must rob banks to get money to kidnap a diplomat or seize an embassy). The problem remains that these disparate groups as described here are so difficult to control and coordinate that even the Russians must see the threat to their own cause these groups pose. The result of left wing terrorism thus far has been right wing backlash, not instability and revolution. To view it through such a jaundiced eye ignores the basic social and economic reasons for much of this misanthropy. And if the Russians are able to turn terrorism to their own advantage, what does that say about our own foreign policy? What does it say about our image in the Third World? Blaming it on the Russians is hardly the way to make the problem go away. International terrorism is worse a problem than depicted in *The Terror Network* because it *is* largely uncontrolled, undirected, random, and marginally rational. It is such a plague that even a book as far off the mark as this one should be read. Every little bit helps, even if the author can't tell the difference between a revolutionary and a deluded maniac.

HOWARD SMEAD

Howard Smead's new book, Look Away, Dixieland, *an account of the lynching of Max Charles Parker in 1959, is due out soon by Louisiana State University Press. He teaches Afro-American Studies at the University of Maryland.*

TRILATERALISM

(Continued from page 7)

underlying economic movements are not caused by political strategies or economic policies, but that they cause them instead.

"The Trilateral Commission is not a cabal or a conspiracy.... it is the international forum for discussion and decision making of imperialist finance in an unstable age."

These pieces assume that there is an underlying dynamic to capitalism, a life cycle if you will, that will see itself through from birth to death no matter how brilliant the tinkering of policymakers.

But other authors apparently see no underlying dynamic, and they write as if policy genuinely *directs* the movement of economic movements—which may be why their view of history comes off mechanical and unconvincing.

One of these is Fred Block, whose "Trilateralism and Intercapitalist Conflict" is one of the least satisfying in the collection.

Block conjures up an either/or debate on trilateralism in which one antagonist argues that the international integration of capitalism has become the basis for a stable world order, while the other maintains that crises within capitalism create continual conflict.

But having created these two straw men, neither of whom adequately explains trilateralism, Block poses instead a confrontation between "dominant accumulators" (trilateralists) and "state managers" (politicians and government bureaucrats) In their confrontation "pressures for conflict and cooperation coexist with sufficient force to generate an indefinite stalemate."

Despite this unnatural state of stasis, Block appears genuinely surprised that the policies of neither the "dominant accumulators" nor the "state managers" seems likely to benefit capitalism in the long run. The thought that, given a dialectic above and beyond their capacity for tinkering, the world capitalist economy may ultimately be beyond saving appears not to have hit him.

Block's simple mechanics aside, the truth is, of course that nothing is constant but change itself. World-class capitalists clearly have both nationalist and internationalist (trilateralist) tendencies. They rise or fall depending on the world economic situation, but never operate in anything nearly so static as the "indefinite stalemate" Block talks about.

And Block's "state managers" can be forgiven if their various policies reflect the changes of time and tide without much affecting capitalism's glacial-like drift.

One of the essays that best places trilateralist politics within the economic conditions that define them is Jeff Frieden's "The Trilateral Commission: Economics and Politics in the 1970s."

Frieden outlines the "massive internationalization of capital" after World War II in which "the most mobile, far-seeing, and important sectors of U.S., Western European, and Japanese imperialism were increasingly intertwined and even more international."

Following the "Nixon shocks"—his going off the gold standard and slapping a tariff on most imports, essentially "a unilateral attempt to reassert U.S. economic dominance over Japan and Western Europe"—Rockefeller & Co. established the Trilateral Commission to help put the pieces back together.

"The Trilateral Commission is not a cabal or a conspiracy, as some would have it," Frieden cautions. "It is the international forum for discussion and decision making of imperialist finance in an unstable age."

But, he explains, "the triumph of trilateralists—truly transnational imperialist relations—is possible only in a period of general expansion.

"As the economy moves inexorably toward a general collapse, the plans for a transnational world economy will become less and less feasible.

"The trilateral house of cards will fall—not because it is poorly built, but because its architects assumed the impossible: that capitalism will forever expand."

T.W. HERT

T.W. Hert is a Washington, D.C. writer.

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Letter from San Francisco

A Stoogist Manifesto

Paul Fericano

Poetry is dead in the modern world. This statement is in direct line with the approaching maturity of the Stoogist movement. Stoogism does not participate in any kind of circuitous approach. We were the first to deal with the facade intelligently and effectively, and we were the first to admit that Stoogism was one of the survivors. The fact is inevitable. Let those who profess to hold some higher meaning to our declaration continue to nod their bookish head. But without reason, knowledge alone of poetry's death is not only insignificant and insufficient, it is also very boring.

As yet, it is still unclear where the movement's greatest impact will be felt the most. But regardless of any final outcome, Stoogism will continue to play an immediate role in the reformation of our cultural values—both here and in other areas of the troubled world. There is a fresh fire in the ashes, and the movement is not overawed by the challenge.

Of course, some might very well question our grandiose claim, even our certainty of triumph. Suspicious, they might ask, "what is Stoogism?" And our reply would always be the same: Stoogism is what. The demonstration clearly speaks for itself. However, we do realize that if any real education is to be forthcoming, such skepticism—though of little concern to us, must first be addressed more fully in order to put all fear and doubt to rest.

We are not literary terrorists. We are not iconoclasts of the old order. We have purged all masturbators, metaphysicians, and MFA candidates. In fact, there are those who might even be surprised by our decency and inimitable social concern. Psychoneurosis does not make up any of our parts. Neither does paranoia. Thus, when we speak of the death of poetry—the same tired beliefs, the art transformed into business-as-usual. We stress the actual rather than the symbolic. We are not fools. Mediocrity is a lot stronger than any of us dared imagine. But Stoogism has been preparing itself within the new poetry. Not only is a distinction now possible, but it is absolutely essential for the survival of expression.

Stoogism is the element of the culture; it is dearest friend as well as its worst enemy, and its goals are never very clear until they are achieved. But it is not the fringe. No matter how unreasonable the act or misguided the cause, ours is of the movement of man; we are involved with the motion of humanity. We embrace the event, the circumstance, the design on any scale that carelessly enhances the opposite of its aim, however unintentional, thereby exposing its self-importance by means of its own unimportance. When an absolute regression is accomplished, this alone is what ultimately constitutes its sole importance. This is the seriousness of the crime, as well as the cause.

By way of example, we can illustrate the concept somewhat by equating certain acts with what can be called *political* Stoogisms. For one, Richard Nixon's resignation was not a political Stoogism. However, his televised, farewell explanation—reiterating his position—was. Even more immediate in the same realm are the current political circumstances. Ronald Reagan's election is not a political Stoogism. Far from it. But his inauguration is. This is unmistakable. And if advancing trends in this climate continue to manifest themselves here, President Reagan's reelection in 1984 can already be foreseen as some form of socioeconomic Stoogism. Some have even asserted that should the President's untimely death occur while in office, this would be tantamount to a moral Stoogism. They are wrong. In this case, a moral Stoogism would only be possible if President Reagan does *not* die while in office.

Naturally, such comparisons can be applied to other areas and can produce varying results. But the point is the same. Therefore, it is painfully obvious, after such an understanding of the movement, that when one poses the question: what is Stoogism?, one is actually committing a rhetorical Stoogism.

This then is the basis of our voice; the meat of our contention that poetry has capitulated. Its constant refusal to answer to its own name has fulfilled its death wish. Even the most casual of observers is well aware that the universities and "centers of culture" are totally immersed in the formaldehyde of misfeasance. And although small cellular enclaves may still entertain the hope that the cultural organism is only sleeping, rigor mortis has long since set in. An occaisional muscle spasm might rattle the coffin lid and desperately open it from time to time, but the lid soon reacts like a powerful trapdoor, slamming itself shut once again. The abysmal static of death is inexorable.

"Why is poetry dead?" one might ask. Because it died, we answer. Necessary suicide is the autopsy. But we are not angels, nor do we perform any miracles. Stoogism is the mortician at the funeral. Poetry must now rest in peace so that new champions more historically appropriate, more lusty with inspiration, might proliferate and meet the task. This is the message. As we sweep clear all allusions with due respect, Stoogism claims itself to be the first new heir—the true contemporary poetry.

Stoogism does not acknowledge semantical sophistry, but certain things must be made clear. Though definitions abound, we can all probably agree that art, in one way or another, is compelled to express the real as we perceive it. The moment a genre substitutes the misery of its genesis for commitment of the real is the moment of that genre's fatality. That is to say, the moment art wallows in self-indulgence is the moment art annihilates itself.

It is the Stoogist contention that post-modern poetry has become self-indulgent as a natural response to certain historic factors. And this argument is reinforced by the overwhelming evidence that points to our past.

In the second half if its nineteenth century European poetry sided with the philosophies of materialism. This poetic evolution, initiated by the symbolists, found its logical conclusion in surrealism. The surrealists, however, were terribly confused. And understandably so. Having accepted the materialism of revolutionary ideaology, but having all been socialized as members of the middle classes under the pervading bourgeois idealism, the surrealists embraced the expression of subconscious thought and feeling. Needless to say, they entered a profound contradiction. With no visible recourse, they proclaimed the death of rationalism, the

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the primacy of the absurd, and the search for mystical union with matter—however incongruous to the conscious mind.

American poetry, on the other hand, never lost its attachment to bourgeois idealism. There was a brief flirtation with materialism during the existential Thirties and Forties, but this deteriorated rapidly into esoteric forms until the advent of Zen poetry—a nonverbal poetry of the image which sought to graft man and woman onto the pulsating cosmos; to disaggregate their humanity by an infusion of spiritual consciousness. We are urged to believe that this form of cosmism defines us all.

In our approach, we find that the surrealistic tend to pamper themselves with all things preposterous. Affecting great fanfare, they pronounce any explanation of principle dead-on-arrival and then, like heroic ascetics, they reject the pleasures of spiritualism. They say the universe is mad and that this recognition is self-sufficient: thus we need go no further. What they mean to say is that a notion of the absurd mitigates the anguish of their insubstantial being, hooked like a carcass between two Weltanschauungs.

With American poets, the tendency is to indulge in extraterrestrial fantasy. True, we do hear the occasional existential despair emanating from an intellectual poet running for philosophic cover, or more typically, a poet whose furtive adherence to traditional values ends tragically in a writing grant or teaching position. In general, though, the American poet says that although the world is completely mad, there must be some interstellar refuge, some contemporary bliss beyond our earthly abode. What they mean to say is that they are not able to face the brute force of existence, the urinating grime of life; that they are not willing to seek real and positive growth without a blindfold: in short, that they are literary cowards.

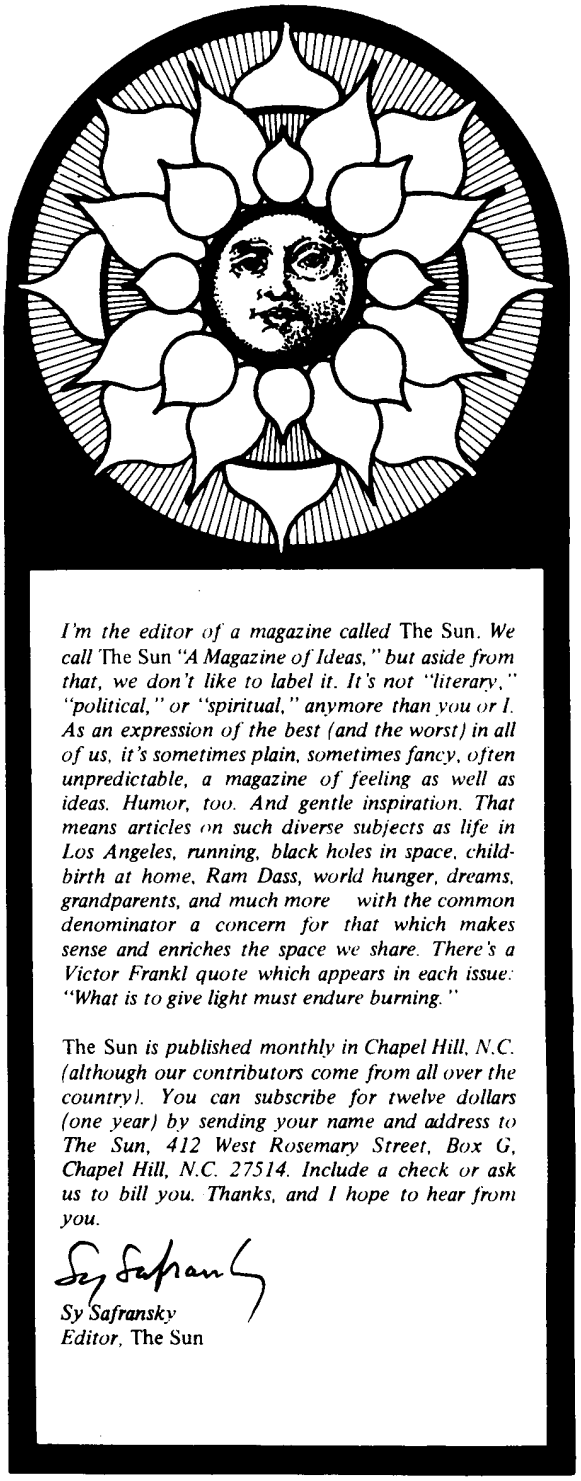
This is the confirmation, and it is clearly undeniable. To continue making note of the pitiful arrogance that has clung to our art, sucking its own life until it has paled beyond recognition, would merely find us guilty of pedantic Stoogism—trying to make more sense of nonsense while making less sense. Deceit truly lives in a corner.

Stoogism is a kind of video machine. It plays itself back exactly, but not precisely. It wisely proclaims that the universe is a method of its own madness and that there is a real madness to this method. In fact, Stoogism is both the method and the madness made meaningful. We do not intend to distract our work with immortality or the nihilist catechism. If the choice is between eating the pie of destiny and throwing it, Stoogism will choose the latter every time. This is the art of our moment. We simplify nothing that man hasn't already complicated as he hurls himself closer to the brick of oblivion.

We are not surprised by the politicians who now tell us that the Eighties is a dangerous world to live in. This is proof enough that we are living in a jester's paradise. The literature of Stoogism is emerging to address the alienated of our humanities; to correctly pinpoint the inhumanity of reactionary ideas. We are not going to wait for the dead to convince us again, gathering money and momentum to keep its corpse alive. The stench is no longer tolerable. We build for ourselves no clear escape route with our words, no easy way out of this fabricated foolishness. But we are not fearful. We are not intimidated. And we are not about to crawl off and hide with any one comfortable notion. Stoogism is not that.

Poetry is alive *now*. It is moving. It is relating. It is the spirit and the energy that calls upon poets to pay attention to the voice and to instigate its direction accordingly. ■

Paul Fericano is a San Francisco writer whose most recent book is Loading the Revolver With Real Bullets, *published by Second Coming Press.*



I'm the editor of a magazine called The Sun. *We call* The Sun *"A Magazine of Ideas," but aside from that, we don't like to label it. It's not "literary," "political," or "spiritual," anymore than you or I. As an expression of the best (and the worst) in all of us, it's sometimes plain, sometimes fancy, often unpredictable, a magazine of feeling as well as ideas. Humor, too. And gentle inspiration. That means articles on such diverse subjects as life in Los Angeles, running, black holes in space, childbirth at home, Ram Dass, world hunger, dreams, grandparents, and much more with the common denominator a concern for that which makes sense and enriches the space we share. There's a Victor Frankl quote which appears in each issue: "What is to give light must endure burning."*

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Sy Safransky

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Editor, The Sun

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First Amendment Update

Institute for Policy Studies hammers back at *The Spike*...

At first, those at the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) were unconcerned with the publication of *The Spike,* which they considered a cheap, sleazy hardback thriller. But when reviews began appearing noting similarities between *The Spike*'s "Institute for Policy Reform" which engages in disinformation and propaganda for the USSR, and their own left-of-center Washington, D.C. thinktank, concern grew over where fiction overlapped with libel in *The Spike.*

After an exchange of legal correspondence between The Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and Avon Books, the paperback publishers of *The Spike,* an agreement was reached to make extensive textual changes in the book to remove any resemblance between IPS and the fictional institute.

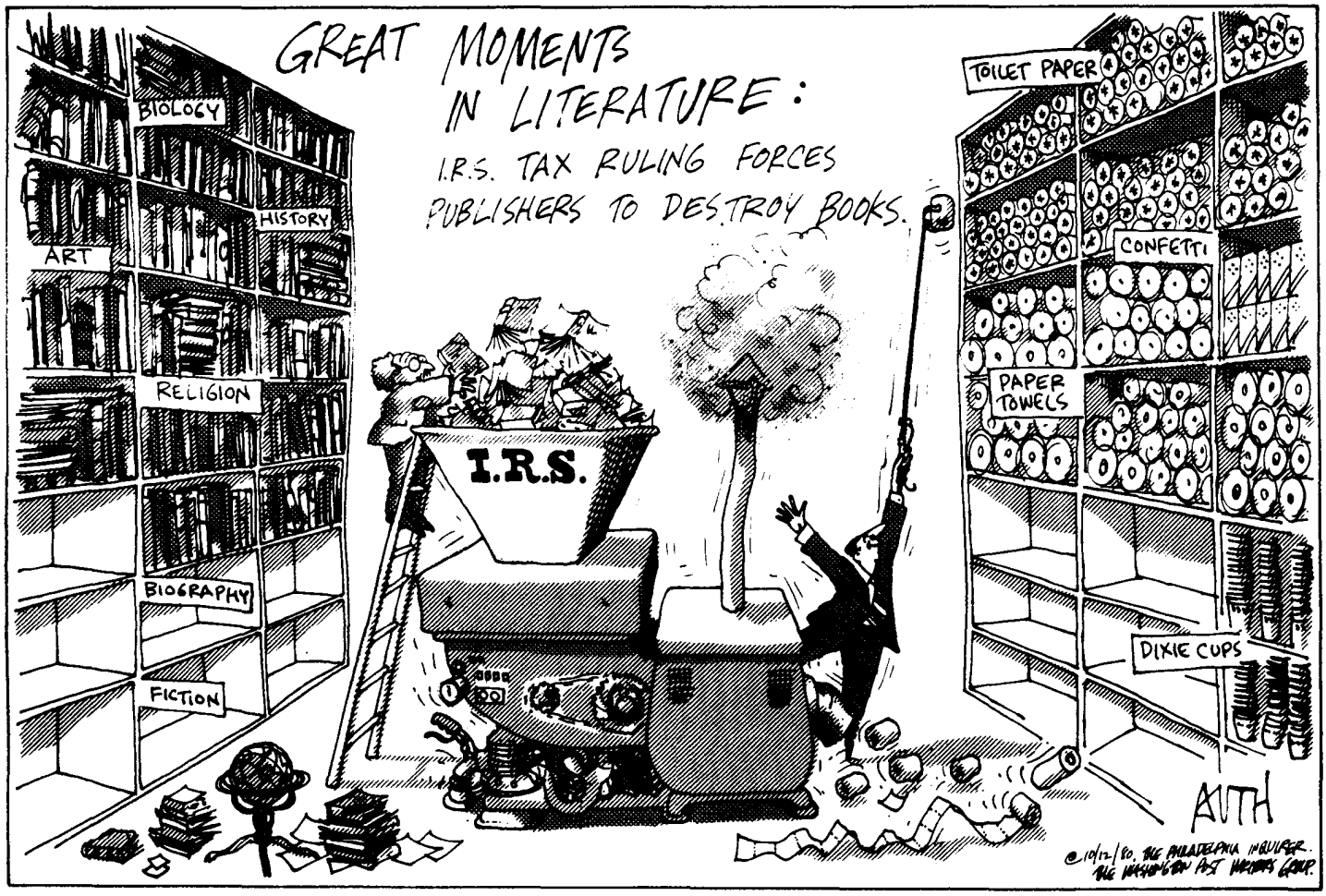
Ironically, in the letter the Hearst Corporation (which owns Avon Books) sent to IPS agreeing to change the name of the "Institute for Progressive Reform" to the "Foundation for Progressive Reform," "Institute for Policy Studies" was used in place of "Institute for Progressive Reform." A Freudian slip?

The Spike's authors, Robert Moss and Arnaud de Borchgrave, have repeatedly characterized the progressive movements both here and abroad as mouthpieces for Soviet "disinformation." Such a charge is disingenuous, considering the authors' own connections with the U.S. intelligence community, which routinely uses disinformation.

...while *Thor*'s hammer strikes at the publishing industry

The Internal Revenue Service, backed by the Supreme Court decision on *Thor Power Co. v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue,* has a weapon with which to bludgeon freedom of expression. *Thor* provides the IRS with the legal means to prevent publishers, as well as those in other industries, from "writing down" the cost of over-stocked inventory. Thus, many publishers are forced to turn to the IRS's two alternatives—to sell overstocked books at "remainder" (discount) prices or to pulp them.

The *Thor* decision also forces publishers to sign even more contracts with best-selling authors and to shy away from risky, slow-selling, but more literary authors. Other ramifications include increased book prices, more books out of print,



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and royalty losses to authors of books that are remaindered or pulped.

Several bills have been introduced in Congress to soften Thor's hammer blow. The Association of American Publishers (AAP) and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich have drafted two bills which, according to Townsend Hoopes, president of AAP, "will provide relief to publishers and will at the same time find acceptance in Congress and with the IRS." Another bill introduced by Senator Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) will allow a publishing company to "write down" its overstocked titles for five years, while in the House Representative Bill Green (D-NY) introduced legislation that would totally exempt the publishing industry from the Thor ruling.

FBI and CIA disruption of underground press revealed

In an article in the March/April issue of *Columbia Journalism Review*, Angus Mackenzie reports on the extent of FBI and CIA infiltration and disruption of the underground press movement in the sixties and early seventies. Using material obtained for the first time from the Freedom of Information Act, Mackenzie details how the FBI pressured record companies who provided the bulk of advertising revenue for many "countercultural" papers to stop doing business with the underground press (now you know why the *Berkeley Barb* began running sex ads!), as well as posing as underground journalists for purposes of surveillance and penetration. Ostensibly, the aims for the CIA's Operation CHAOS and the FBI's COINTELPRO were to discover links between dissident groups and the Soviet Union. No such connections were ever discovered.

Just as such revelations of abuse of power and outright illegality comes to the fore, we also have the story of the Reagan pardon of FBI agents Mark Felt and Edward S. Miller on April 15. The *Washington Star* editorialized: "As the president points out, the nation has been generous to draft evaders and others who broke laws because of convictions about the war. It can afford to be equally generous by similar moral zeal on the other side of the Vietnam issue."

We suppose, however, that such generosity does not extend to Abbie Hoffman, who has received a three-year sentence for cocaine dealing, despite his surrendering voluntarily and leading an exemplary life while in hiding, or to the continuing failure of the U.S. government to upgrade the status of thousands of veterans who received bad paper, or the proposed dismantling of programs aimed at helping veterans still suffering from the last war.

It should also be kept in mind that former FBI agents Felt and Miller did not face any time in jail, but only fines of $5,000 and $3,500 respectively, which were being appealed.

New proposed Executive Order on domestic intelligence

In response to abuses and illegal acts of the U.S. intelligence community revealed by former CIA officers and by journalists using the Freedom of Information Act, Congress passed several laws restricting the role of the CIA and FBI, especially in regard to domestic surveillance of citizens engaged in legal activities. However, the Reagan administration is mounting a strong campaign to roll back these reforms.

According to the proposed Executive Order on domestic intelligence, "black bag" searches and break-ins no longer need approval by the President or Attorney General; that responsibility can now be delegated to any intelligency agency head. Other broadened powers include physical searches, mail surveillance, physical surveillance, infiltration of groups engaged in legal activities, and the gathering of confidential information from banks, corporations, and government agencies.

The language of the 1947 National Security Act said that the newly formed CIA "shall have no police, subpoena, law enforcement powers or internal security functions." Both liberals and conservatives hoped to restrict the CIA's covert operations to outside the U.S.

Now, it seems, the chickens are coming home to roost. ■

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