

substantive content of these commitments. The task of the Free Press, in such circumstances, is to take the proceedings seriously and to describe them as a tribute to the soundness of our self-correcting institutions, which they carefully protect from public scrutiny.

More generally, the media and the educated classes must fulfill their "societal purpose," carrying out their necessary tasks in accord with the prevailing conception of democracy.

Containing the Enemy

In the first chapter, I mentioned three models of media organization: (1) corporate oligopoly; (2) state-controlled; (3) a democratic communications policy as advanced by the Brazilian bishops. The first model reduces democratic participation in the media to zero, just as other corporations are, in principle, exempt from popular control by work force or community. In the case of state-controlled media, democratic participation might vary, depending on how the political system functions; in practice, the state media are generally kept in line by the forces that have the power to dominate the state, and by an apparatus of cultural managers who cannot stray far from the bounds these forces set. The third model is largely untried in practice, just as a sociopolitical system with significant popular engagement remains a concern for the future: a hope or a fear, depending on one's evaluation of the right of the public to shape its own affairs.

The model of media as corporate oligopoly is the natural system for capitalist democracy. It has, accordingly, reached its highest form in the most advanced of these societies, particularly the United States, where media concentration is high, public radio and television are limited in scope, and elements of the radical democratic model exist only at the margins, in such phenomena as listener-supported community radio and the alternative or local press, often with a noteworthy effect on the social and political culture and the sense of empowerment in the communities that benefit from these options.¹ In this respect, the United States represents the form towards which capitalist democracy is tending; related tendencies include the progressive elimination of unions and other popular organizations that interfere with private power, an electoral system that is increasingly stage-managed as a public relations exercise, avoidance of welfare measures such as national health insurance that also impinge on the prerogatives of the privileged, and so on. From this perspective, it is reasonable for Cyrus Vance and Henry Kissinger to describe the United States as "a model democracy," democracy being understood

as a system of business control of political as well as other major institutions.

Other Western democracies are generally a few steps behind in these respects. Most have not yet achieved the U.S. system of one political party, with two factions controlled by shifting segments of the business community. They still retain parties based on working people and the poor which to some extent represent their interests. But these are declining, along with cultural institutions that sustain different values and concerns, and organizational forms that provide isolated individuals with the means to think and to act outside the framework imposed by private power.

This is the natural course of events under capitalist democracy, because of what Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers call "the resource constraint" and "the demand constraint."² The former is straightforward: control over resources is narrowly concentrated, with predictable effects for every aspect of social and political life. The demand constraint is a more subtle means of control, one whose effects are rarely observed directly in a properly functioning capitalist democracy such as the United States, though they are evident, for example, in Latin America, where the political system sometimes permits a broader range of policy options, including programs of social reform. The consequences are well known: capital flight, loss of business and investor confidence, and general social decline as those who "own the country" lose the capacity to govern it—or simply a military coup, typically backed by the hemispheric guardian of order and good form. The more benign response to reform programs illustrates the demand constraint—the requirement that the interests of those with effective power be satisfied if the society is to function.

In brief, it is necessary to ensure that those who own the country are happy, or else all will suffer, for they control investment and determine what is produced and distributed and what benefits will trickle down to those who rent themselves to the owners when they can. For the homeless in the streets, then, the highest priority must be to ensure that the dwellers in the mansions are reasonably content. Given the options available within the system and the cultural values it reinforces, maximization of short-term individual gain appears to be the rational course, along with submissiveness, obedience, and abandonment of the public arena. The bounds on political action are correspondingly limited. Once the forms of capitalist democracy are in place, they remain very stable, whatever suffering ensues—a fact that has long been understood by U.S. planners.

One consequence of the distribution of resources and decision-making power in the society at large is that the political class and the cultural managers typically associate themselves with the sectors that dominate the private economy; they are either drawn directly from those sectors or expect to join them. The radical democrats of the seventeenth-century English revolution held that "it will never be a good world while knights and gentlemen make us laws, that are chosen for fear and do but oppress us, and do not know the people's sores. It will never be well with us till we have Parliaments of countrymen like ourselves, that know our wants." But Parliament and the preachers had a different vision: "when we mention the people, we do not mean the confused promiscuous body of the people," they held. With the resounding defeat of the democrats, the remaining question, in the words of a Leveller pamphlet, was "whose slaves the poor shall be," the King's or Parliament's.³

The same controversy arose in the early days of the American Revolution. "Framers of the state constitutions," Edward Countryman observes, "had insisted that the representative assemblies should closely reflect the people of the state itself"; they objected to a "separate caste" of political leaders insulated from the people. But the Federal Constitution guaranteed that "representatives, senators, and the president all would know that exceptional was just what they were." Under the Confederation, artisans, farmers, and others of the common people had demanded that they be represented by "men of their own kind," having learned from the revolutionary experience that they were "as capable as anyone of deciding what was wrong in their lives and of organizing themselves so they could do something about it." This was not to be. "The last gasp of the original spirit of the Revolution, with all its belief in community and cooperation, came from the Massachusetts farmers" during Shay's rebellion in 1786. "The resolutions and addresses of their county committees in the year or two before the rebellion said exactly what all sorts of people had been saying in 1776." Their failure taught the painful lesson that "the old ways no longer worked," and "they found themselves forced to grovel and beg forgiveness from rulers who claimed to be the people's servants." So it has remained. With the rarest of exceptions, the representatives of the people do not come from or return to the workplace; rather, law offices catering to business interests, executive suites, and other places of privilege.⁴

As for the media, in England a lively labor-oriented press reaching a broad public existed into the 1960s, when it was finally

eliminated through the workings of the market. At the time of its demise in 1964, the *Daily Herald* had over five times as many readers as *The Times* and "almost double the readership of *The Times*, the *Financial Times* and the *Guardian* combined," James Curran observes, citing survey research showing that its readers "were also exceptionally devoted to their paper." But this journal, partially owned by the unions and reaching a largely working-class audience, "appealed to the wrong people," Curran continues. The same was true of other elements of the social democratic press that died at the same time, in large part because they were "deprived of the same level of subsidy" through advertising and private capital as sustained "the quality press," which "not only reflects the values and interests of its middle-class readers" but also "gives them force, clarity and coherence" and "plays an important ideological role in amplifying and renewing the dominant political consensus."⁵

The consequences are significant. For the media, Curran concludes, there is "a remarkable growth in advertising-related editorial features" and a "growing convergence between editorial and advertising content" reflecting "the increasing accommodation of national newspaper managements to the selective needs of advertisers" and the business community generally; the same is likely true of news coverage and interpretation. For society at large, Curran continues, "the loss of the only social democratic papers with a large readership which devoted serious attention to current affairs," including sectors of the working class that had remained "remarkably radical in their attitudes to a wide range of economic and political issues," contributed to "the progressive erosion in post-war Britain of a popular radical tradition" and to the disintegration of "the cultural base that has sustained active participation within the Labour movement," which "has ceased to exist as a mass movement in most parts of the country." The effects are readily apparent. With the elimination of the "selection and treatment of news" and "relatively detailed political commentary and analysis [that] helped daily to sustain a social democratic sub-culture within the working class," there is no longer an articulate alternative to the picture of "a world where the subordination of working people [is] accepted as natural and inevitable," and no continuing expression of the view that working people are "morally entitled to a greater share of the wealth they created and a greater say in its allocation." The same tendencies are evident elsewhere in the industrial capitalist societies.

There are, then, natural processes at work to facilitate the control of "enemy territory" at home. Similarly, the global planning undertaken by U.S. elites during and after World War II assumed that principles of liberal internationalism would generally serve to satisfy what had been described as the "requirement of the United States in a world in which it proposes to hold unquestioned power."⁶ The global policy goes under the name "containment." The manufacture of consent at home is its domestic counterpart. The two policies are, in fact, closely intertwined, since the domestic population must be mobilized to pay the costs of "containment," which may be severe—both material and moral costs.

The rhetoric of containment is designed to give a defensive cast to the project of global management, and it thus serves as part of the domestic system of thought control. It is remarkable that the terminology is so easily adopted, given the questions that it begs. Looking more closely, we find that the concept conceals a good deal.⁷

The underlying assumption is that there is a stable international order that the United States must defend. The general contours of this international order were developed by U.S. planners during and after World War II. Recognizing the extraordinary scale of U.S. power, they proposed to construct a global system that the United States would dominate and within which U.S. business interests would thrive. As much of the world as possible would constitute a Grand Area, as it was called, which would be subordinated to the needs of the U.S. economy. Within the Grand Area, other capitalist societies would be encouraged to develop, but without protective devices that would interfere with U.S. prerogatives.⁸ In particular, only the United States would be permitted to dominate regional systems. The United States moved to take effective control of world energy production and to organize a world system in which its various components would fulfill their functions as industrial centers, as markets and sources of raw materials, or as dependent states pursuing their "regional interests" within the "overall framework of order" managed by the United States (as Henry Kissinger was later to explain).

The Soviet Union has been considered the major threat to the planned international order, for good reason. In part this follows from its very existence as a great power controlling an imperial system that could not be incorporated within the Grand Area; in part from its occasional efforts to expand the domains of its power, as in Afghanistan, and the alleged threat of invasion of Western Europe, if not world conquest, a prospect regularly discounted by more serious

analysts in public and in internal documents. But it is necessary to understand how broadly the concept of "defense" is construed if we wish to evaluate the assessment of Soviet crimes. Thus the Soviet Union is a threat to world order if it supports people opposing U.S. designs, for example, the South Vietnamese engaging in "internal aggression" against their selfless American defenders (as explained by the Kennedy liberals), or Nicaraguans illegitimately combating the depredations of the U.S.-run "democratic resistance." Such actions prove that Soviet leaders are not serious about détente and cannot be trusted, statesmen and commentators soberly observe. Thus, "Nicaragua will be a prime place to test the sanguine forecast that [Gorbachev] is now turning down the heat in the Third World," the *Washington Post* editors explain, placing the onus for the U.S. attack against Nicaragua on the Russians while warning of the threat of this Soviet outpost to "overwhelm and terrorize" its neighbors.⁹ The United States will have "won the Cold War," from this point of view, when it is free to exercise its will in the rest of the world without Soviet interference.

Though "containing the Soviet Union" has been the dominant theme of U.S. foreign policy only since the United States became a truly global power after World War II, the Soviet Union had been considered an intolerable threat to order since the Bolshevik revolution. Accordingly, it has been the main enemy of the independent media.

In 1920 Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz produced a critical study of *New York Times* coverage of the Bolshevik revolution, describing it as "nothing short of a disaster ... from the point of view of professional journalism." Editorial policy, deeply hostile, "profoundly and crassly influenced their news columns." "For subjective reasons," the *Times* staff "accepted and believed most of what they were told" by the U.S. government and "the agents and adherents of the old regime." They dismissed Soviet peace offers as merely a tactic to enable the Bolsheviks to "concentrate their energies for a renewed drive toward world-wide revolution" and the imminent "Red invasion of Europe." The Bolsheviks, Lippmann and Merz wrote, were portrayed as "simultaneously ... both cadaver and world-wide menace," and the Red Peril "appeared at every turn to obstruct the restoration of peace in Eastern Europe and Asia and to frustrate the resumption of economic life." When President Wilson called for intervention, the *New York Times* responded by urging that we drive "the Bolsheviks out of Petrograd and Moscow."¹⁰

Change a few names and dates, and we have a rather fair appraisal of the treatment of Indochina yesterday and Central America today by the national media. Similar assumptions about the Soviet Union are reiterated by contemporary diplomatic historians who regard the development of an alternative social model as in itself an intolerable form of intervention in the affairs of others, against which the West has been fully entitled to defend itself by forceful action in retaliation, including the defense of the West by military intervention in the Soviet Union after the Bolshevik revolution.¹¹ Under these assumptions, widely held and respected, aggression easily becomes self-defense.

Returning to post-World War II policy and ideology, it is, of course, unnecessary to *contrive* reasons to oppose the brutality of the Soviet leaders in dominating their internal empire and their dependencies while cheerfully assisting such contemporary monsters as the Ethiopian military junta or the neo-Nazi generals in Argentina. But an honest review will show that the primary enemies have been the indigenous populations within the Grand Area, who fall prey to the wrong ideas. It then becomes necessary to overcome these deviations by economic, ideological, or military warfare, or by terror and subversion. The domestic population must be rallied to the cause, in defense against "Communism."

These are the basic elements of containment in practice abroad, and of its domestic counterpart within. With regard to the Soviet Union, the concept has had two variants over the years. The doves were reconciled to a form of containment in which the Soviet Union would dominate roughly the areas occupied by the Red Army in the war against Hitler. The hawks had much broader aspirations, as expressed in the "rollback strategy" outlined in NSC 68 of April 1950, shortly before the Korean war. This crucial document, made public in 1975, interpreted containment as intended to "foster the seeds of destruction within the Soviet system" and make it possible to "negotiate a settlement with the Soviet Union (or a successor state or states)." In the early postwar years, the United States supported armies established by Hitler in the Ukraine and Eastern Europe, with the assistance of such figures as Reinhard Gehlen, who headed Nazi military intelligence on the Eastern front and was placed in charge of the espionage service of West Germany under close CIA supervision, assigned the task of developing a "secret army" of thousands of SS men to assist the forces fighting within the Soviet Union. So remote are these facts from conventional understanding that a highly knowl-

edgeable foreign affairs specialist at the liberal *Boston Globe* could condemn tacit U.S. support for the Khmer Rouge by offering the following analogy, as the ultimate absurdity: "It is as if the United States had winked at the presence of a Nazi guerrilla movement to harass the Soviets in 1945"—exactly what the United States was doing into the early 1950s, and not just winking.¹²

It is also considered entirely natural that the Soviet Union should be surrounded by hostile powers, facing with equanimity major NATO bases with missiles on alert status as in Turkey, while if Nicaragua obtains jet planes to defend its airspace against regular U.S. penetration, this is considered by doves and hawks alike to warrant U.S. military action to protect ourselves from this grave threat to our security, in accordance with the doctrine of "containment."

Establishment of Grand Area principles abroad and necessary illusions at home does not simply await the hidden hand of the market. Liberal internationalism must be supplemented by the periodic resort to forceful intervention.¹³ At home, the state has often employed force to curb dissent, and there have been regular and quite self-conscious campaigns by business to control "the public mind" and suppress challenges to private power when implicit controls do not suffice. The ideology of "anti-Communism" has served this purpose since World War I, with intermittent exceptions. In earlier years, the United States was defending itself from other evil forces: the Huns, the British, the Spanish, the Mexicans, the Canadian Papists, and the "merciless Indian savages" of the Declaration of Independence. But since the Bolshevik revolution, and particularly in the era of bipolar world power that emerged from the ashes of World War II, a more credible enemy has been the "monolithic and ruthless conspiracy" that seeks to subvert our noble endeavors, in John F. Kennedy's phrase: Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire."

In the early Cold War years, Dean Acheson and Paul Nitze planned to "bludgeon the mass mind of 'top government'," as Acheson put it with reference to NSC 68. They presented "a frightening portrayal of the Communist threat, in order to overcome public, business, and congressional desires for peace, low taxes, and 'sound' fiscal policies" and to mobilize popular support for the full-scale rearmament that they felt was necessary "to overcome Communist ideology and Western economic vulnerability," William Borden observes in a study of postwar planning. The Korean War served these purposes admirably. The ambiguous and complex interactions that

led to the war were ignored in favor of the more useful image of a Kremlin campaign of world conquest. Dean Acheson, meanwhile, remarked that in the Korean hostilities "an excellent opportunity is here offered to disrupt the Soviet peace offensive, which ... is assuming serious proportions and having a certain effect on public opinion." The structure of much of the subsequent era was determined by these manipulations, which also provided a standard for later practice.¹⁴

In earlier years, Woodrow Wilson's Red Scare demolished unions and other dissident elements. A prominent feature was the suppression of independent politics and free speech, on the principle that the state is entitled to prevent improper thought and its expression. Wilson's Creel Commission, dedicated to creating war fever among the generally pacifist population, had demonstrated the efficacy of organized propaganda with the cooperation of the loyal media and the intellectuals, who devoted themselves to such tasks as "historical engineering," the term devised by historian Frederic Paxson, one of the founders of the National Board for Historical Service established by U.S. historians to serve the state by "explaining the issues of the war that we might the better win it." The lesson was learned by those in a position to employ it. Two lasting institutional consequences were the rise of the public relations industry, one of whose leading figures, Edward Bernays, had served on the wartime propaganda commission, and the establishment of the FBI as, in effect, a national political police. This is a primary function it has continued to serve as illustrated, for example, by its criminal acts to undermine the rising "crisis of democracy" in the 1960s and the surveillance and disruption of popular opposition to U.S. intervention in Central America twenty years later.¹⁵

The effectiveness of the state-corporate propaganda system is illustrated by the fate of May Day, a workers' holiday throughout the world that originated in response to the judicial murder of several anarchists after the Haymarket affair of May 1886, in a campaign of international solidarity with U.S. workers struggling for an eight-hour day. In the United States, all has been forgotten. May Day has become "Law Day," a jingoist celebration of our "200-year-old partnership between law and liberty" as Ronald Reagan declared while designating May 1 as Law Day 1984, adding that without law there can be only "chaos and disorder." The day before, he had announced that the United States would disregard the proceedings of the International Court of Justice that later condemned the U.S. government

for its "unlawful use of force" and violation of treaties in its attack against Nicaragua. "Law Day" also served as the occasion for Reagan's declaration of May 1, 1985, announcing an embargo against Nicaragua "in response to the emergency situation created by the Nicaraguan Government's aggressive activities in Central America," actually declaring a "national emergency," since renewed annually, because "the policies and actions of the Government of Nicaragua constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States"—all with the approbation of Congress, the media, and the intellectual community generally; or, in some circles, embarrassed silence.

The submissiveness of the society to business dominance, secured by Wilson's Red Scare, began to erode during the Great Depression. In 1938 the board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturers, adopting the Marxist rhetoric that is common in the internal records of business and government documents, described the "hazard facing industrialists" in "the newly realized political power of the masses"; "Unless their thinking is directed," it warned, "we are definitely headed for adversity." No less threatening was the rise of labor organization, in part with the support of industrialists who perceived it as a means to regularize labor markets. But too much is too much, and business soon rallied to overcome the threat by the device of "employer mobilization of the public" to crush strikes, as an academic study of the 1937 Johnstown steel strike observed. This "formula," the business community exulted, was one that "business has hoped for, dreamed of, and prayed for." Combined with strongarm methods, propaganda campaigns were used effectively to subdue the labor movement in subsequent years. These campaigns spent millions of dollars "to tell the public that nothing was wrong and that grave dangers lurked in the proposed remedies" of the unions, the La Follette Committee of the Senate observed in its study of business propaganda.¹⁶

In the postwar period the public relations campaign intensified, employing the media and other devices to identify so-called free enterprise—meaning state-subsidized private profit with no infringement on managerial prerogatives—as "the American way," threatened by dangerous subversives. In 1954, Daniel Bell, then an editor of *Fortune* magazine, wrote that

It has been industry's prime concern, in the post war years, to change the climate of opinion ushered in by ... the depression. This 'free enterprise' campaign has two essential aims: to rewin

the loyalty of the worker which now goes to the union and to halt creeping socialism,

that is, the mildly reformist capitalism of the New Deal. The scale of business public relations campaigns, Bell continued, was "staggering," through advertising in press and radio and other means.¹⁷ The effects were seen in legislation to constrain union activity, the attack on independent thought often mislabeled McCarthyism, and the elimination of any articulate challenge to business domination. The media and intellectual community cooperated with enthusiasm. The universities, in particular, were purged, and remained so until the "crisis of democracy" dawned and students and younger faculty began to ask the wrong kinds of questions. That elicited a renewed though less effective purge, while in a further resort to "necessary illusion," it was claimed, and still is, that the universities were virtually taken over by left-wing totalitarians—meaning that the grip of orthodoxy was somewhat relaxed.¹⁸

As early as 1947 a State Department public relations officer remarked that "smart public relations [has] paid off as it has before and will again." Public opinion "is not moving to the right, it has been moved—cleverly—to the right." "While the rest of the world has moved to the left, has admitted labor into government, has passed liberalized legislation, the United States has become anti-social change, anti-economic change, anti-labor."¹⁹

By that time, "the rest of the world" was being subjected to similar pressures, as the Truman administration, reflecting the concerns of the business community, acted vigorously to arrest such tendencies in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere, through means ranging from extreme violence to control of desperately needed food, diplomatic pressures, and a wide range of other devices.²⁰

All of this is much too little understood, but I cannot pursue it properly here. Throughout the modern period, measures to control "the public mind" have been employed to enhance the natural pressures of the "free market," the domestic counterpart to intervention in the global system.

It is worthy of note that with all the talk of liberal free trade policies, the two major sectors of the U.S. economy that remain competitive in world trade—high-technology industry and capital-intensive agriculture—both rely heavily on state subsidy and a state-guaranteed market.²¹ As in other industrial societies, the U.S. economy had developed in earlier years through protectionist mea-

tures. In the postwar period, the United States grandly proclaimed liberal principles on the assumption that U.S. investors would prevail in any competition, a plausible expectation in the light of the economic realities of the time, and one that was fulfilled for many years. For similar reasons, Great Britain had been a passionate advocate of free trade during the period of its hegemony, abandoning these doctrines and the lofty rhetoric that accompanied them in the interwar period, when it could not withstand competition from Japan. The United States is pursuing much the same course today in the face of similar challenges, which were quite unexpected forty years ago, indeed until the Vietnam War. Its unanticipated costs weakened the U.S. economy while strengthening its industrial rivals, who enriched themselves through their participation in the destruction of Indochina. South Korea owes its economic take-off to these opportunities, which also provided an important stimulus to the Japanese economy, just as the Korean War launched Japan's economic recovery and made a major contribution to Europe's. Another example is Canada, which became the world's largest per capita exporter of war materiel during the Vietnam years, while deploring the immorality of the U.S. war to which it was enthusiastically contributing.

Operations of domestic thought control are commonly undertaken in the wake of wars and other crises. Such turmoil tends to encourage the "crisis of democracy" that is the persistent fear of privileged elites, requiring measures to reverse the thrust of popular democracy that threatens established power. Wilson's Red Scare served the purpose after World War I, and the pattern was re-enacted when World War II ended. It was necessary not only to overcome the popular mobilization that took place during the Great Depression but also "to bring people up to [the] realization that the war isn't over by any means," as presidential adviser Clark Clifford observed when the Truman Doctrine was announced in 1947, "the opening gun in [this] campaign."

The Vietnam war and the popular movements of the 1960s elicited similar concerns. The inhabitants of "enemy territory" at home had to be controlled and suppressed, so as to restore the ability of U.S. corporations to compete in the more diverse world market by reducing real wages and welfare benefits and weakening working-class organization. Young people in particular had to be convinced that they must be concerned only for themselves, in a "culture of narcissism"; every person may know, in private, that the assumptions are not true for them, but at a time of life when one is insecure

about personal identity and social place, it is all too tempting to adapt to what the propaganda system asserts to be the norm. Other newly mobilized sectors of the "special interests" also had to be restrained or dissolved, tasks that sometimes required a degree of force, as in the programs of the FBI to undermine the ethnic movements and other elements of the rising dissident culture by instigating violence or its direct exercise, and by other means of intimidation and harassment. Another task was to overcome the dread "Vietnam syndrome," which impeded the resort to forceful means to control the dependencies; as explained by *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, the task was to overcome "the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force" that developed in revulsion against the Indochina wars,²² a problem that was resolved, he hoped, in the glorious conquest of Grenada, when 6,000 elite troops succeeded in overcoming the resistance of several dozen Cubans and some Grenadan militiamen, winning 8,000 medals of honor for their prowess.

To overcome the Vietnam syndrome, it was necessary to present the United States as the aggrieved party and the Vietnamese as the aggressors—a difficult task, it might be thought by those unfamiliar with the measures available for controlling the public mind, or at least those elements of it that count. By the late stages of the war, the general population was out of control, with a large majority regarding the war as "fundamentally wrong and immoral" and not "a mistake," as polls reveal up to the present. Educated elites, in contrast, posed no serious problem. Contrary to the retrospective necessary illusion fostered by those who now declare themselves "early opponents of the war," in reality there was only the most scattered opposition to the war among these circles, apart from concern over the prospects for success and the rising costs. Even the harshest critics of the war within the mainstream rarely went beyond agonizing over good intentions gone awry, reaching even that level of dissent well after corporate America had determined that the enterprise was proving too costly and should be liquidated, a fact that I have documented elsewhere.

The mechanisms by which a more satisfactory version of history was established have also been reviewed elsewhere,²³ but a few words are in order as to their remarkable success. By 1977 President Carter was able to explain in a news conference that Americans have no need "to apologize or to castigate ourselves or to assume the status of culpability" and do not "owe a debt," because our intentions were "to defend the freedom of the South Vietnamese" (by destroying their

country and massacring the population), and because "the destruction was mutual"—a pronouncement that, to my knowledge, passed without comment, apparently being considered quite reasonable.²⁴ Such balanced judgments are, incidentally, not limited to soulful advocates of human rights. They are produced regularly, evoking no comment. To take a recent case, after the U.S. warship *Vincennes* shot down an Iranian civilian airliner over Iranian territorial waters, the *Boston Globe* ran a column by political scientist Jerry Hough of Duke University and the Brookings Institute in which he explained:

If the disaster in the downing of the Iranian airliner leads this country to move away from its obsession with symbolic nuclear-arms control and to concentrate on the problems of war-fighting, command-and-control of the military and limitations on conventional weapons (certainly including the fleet), then 290 people will not have died in vain

—an assessment that differs slightly from the media barrage after the downing of KAL 007. A few months later, the *Vincennes* returned to its home port to "a boisterous flag-waving welcome ... complete with balloons and a Navy band playing upbeat songs" while the ship's "loudspeaker blared the theme from the movie 'Chariots of Fire' and nearby Navy ships saluted with gunfire." Navy officials did not want the ship "to sneak into port," a public affairs officer said.²⁵ So much for the 290 Iranians.

A *New York Times* editorial obliquely took exception to President Carter's interesting moral judgment. Under the heading "The Indochina Debt that Lingers," the editors observed that "no debate over who owes whom how much can be allowed to obscure the worst horrors [of] ... our involvement in Southeast Asia," referring to the "horrors experienced by many of those in flight" from the Communist monsters—at the time, a small fraction of the many hundreds of thousands fleeing their homes in Asia, including over 100,000 boat people from the Philippines in 1977 and thousands fleeing U.S.-backed terror in Timor, not to speak of tens of thousands more escaping the U.S.-backed terror states of Latin America, none of whom merited such concern or even more than cursory notice in the news columns, if that.²⁶ Other horrors in the wreckage of Indochina are unmentioned, and surely impose no lingering debt.

A few years later, concerns mounted that "The Debt to the Indochinese Is Becoming a Fiscal Drain," in the words of a *Times* headline, referring to the "moral debt" incurred through our "in-

volvement on the losing side in Indochina"; by the same logic, had the Russians won the war in Afghanistan, they would owe no debt at all. But now our debt is fully "paid," a State Department official explained. We had settled the moral account by taking in Vietnamese refugees fleeing the lands we ravaged, "one of the largest, most dramatic humanitarian efforts in history," according to Roger Winter, director of the U.S. Committee for Refugees. But "despite the pride," *Times* diplomatic correspondent Bernard Gwertzman continues, "some voices in the Reagan Administration and in Congress are once again asking whether the war debt has now been paid."²⁷

It is beyond imagining in responsible circles that we might have some culpability for mass slaughter and destruction, or owe some debt to the millions of maimed and orphaned, or to the peasants who still die from exploding ordnance left from the U.S. assault, while the Pentagon, when asked whether there is any way to remove the hundreds of thousands of anti-personnel bomblets that kill children today in such areas as the Plain of Jars in Laos, comments helpfully that "people should not live in those areas. They know the problem." The United States has refused even to give its mine maps of Indochina to civilian mine-deactivation teams. Ex-marines who visited Vietnam in 1989 to help remove mines they had laid report that many remain in areas where people try to farm and plant trees, and were informed that many people are still being injured and killed as of January 1989.²⁸ None of this merits comment or concern.

The situation is of course quite different when we turn to Afghanistan—where, incidentally, the Soviet-installed regime *has* released its mine maps. In this case, headlines read: "Soviets Leave Deadly Legacy for Afghans," "Mines Put Afghans in Peril on Return," "U.S. Rebukes Soviets on Afghan Mine Clearing," "U.S. to Help Train Refugees To Destroy Afghan Mines," "Mines Left by Departing Soviets Are Maiming Afghans," and so on. The difference is that these are Soviet mines, so it is only natural for the United States to call for "an international effort to provide the refugees with training and equipment to destroy or dismantle" them and to denounce the Russians for their lack of cooperation in this worthy endeavor. "The Soviets will not acknowledge the problem they have created or help solve it," Assistant Secretary of State Richard Williamson observed sadly; "We are disappointed." The press responds with the usual selective humanitarian zeal.²⁹

The media are not satisfied with "mutual destruction" that effaces all responsibility for major war crimes. Rather, the burden of

guilt must be shifted to the victims. Under the heading "Vietnam, Trying to be Nicer, Still has a Long Way to Go," *Times Asia* correspondent Barbara Crossette quotes Charles Printz of Human Rights Advocates International, who said that "It's about time the Vietnamese demonstrated some good will." Printz was referring to negotiations about the Amerasian children who constitute a tiny fraction of the victims of U.S. aggression in Indochina. Crossette adds that the Vietnamese have also not been sufficiently forthcoming on the matter of remains of American soldiers, though their behavior may be improving: "There has been progress, albeit slow, on the missing Americans." But the Vietnamese have not yet paid their debt to us, so humanitarian concerns left by the war remain unresolved.³⁰

Returning to the same matter, Crossette explains that the Vietnamese do not comprehend their "irrelevance" to Americans, apart from the moral issues that are still outstanding—specifically, Vietnamese recalcitrance "on the issue of American servicemen missing since the end of the war." Dismissing Vietnamese "laments" about U.S. unwillingness to improve relations, Crossette quotes an "Asian official" who said that "if Hanoi's leaders are serious about building their country, the Vietnamese will have to deal fairly with the United States." She also quotes a Pentagon statement expressing the hope that Hanoi will take action "to resolve this long-standing humanitarian issue" of the remains of U.S. servicemen shot down over North Vietnam by the evil Communists—the only humanitarian issue that comes to mind, apparently, when we consider the legacy of a war that left many millions of dead and wounded in Indochina and three countries in utter ruins. Another report deplors Vietnamese refusal to cooperate "in key humanitarian areas," quoting liberal congressmen on Hanoi's "horrible and cruel" behavior and Hanoi's responsibility for lack of progress on humanitarian issues, namely, the matter of U.S. servicemen "still missing from the Vietnam war." Hanoi's recalcitrance "brought back the bitter memories that Vietnam can still evoke" among the suffering Americans.³¹

The nature of the concern "to resolve this long-standing humanitarian issue" of the American servicemen missing in action (MIAs) is illuminated by some statistics cited by historian (and Vietnam veteran) Terry Anderson:

The French still have 20,000 MIAs from their war in Indochina, and the Vietnamese list over 200,000. Furthermore, the United States still has 80,000 MIAs from World War II and 8,000 from the Korean War, figures that represent 20 and 15 percent, respec-

tively, of the confirmed dead in those conflicts; the percentage is 4 percent for the Vietnam War.³²

The French have established diplomatic relations with Vietnam, as the Americans did with Germany and Japan, Anderson observes, adding: "We won in 1945, of course, so it seems that MIAs only are important when the United States loses the war. The real 'noble cause' for [the Reagan] administration is not the former war but its emotional and impossible crusade to retrieve 'all recoverable remains'." More precisely, the "noble cause" is to exploit personal tragedy for political ends: to overcome the Vietnam syndrome at home, and to "bleed Vietnam."

The influential House Democrat Lee Hamilton writes that "almost 15 years after the Vietnam war, Southeast Asia remains a region of major humanitarian, strategic, and economic concern to the United States." The humanitarian concern includes two cases: (1) "Nearly 2,400 American servicemen are unaccounted for in Indochina"; (2) "More than 1 million Cambodians died under Pol Pot's ruthless Khmer Rouge regime." The far greater numbers of Indochinese who died under Washington's ruthless attack, and who still do die, fall below the threshold. We should, Hamilton continues, "reassess our relations with Vietnam" and seek a "new relationship," though not abandoning our humanitarian concerns: "This may be an opportune time for policies that mix continued pressure with rewards for progress on missing US servicemen and diplomatic concessions in Cambodia." At the left-liberal end of the spectrum, in the journal of the Center for International Policy, a project of the Fund for Peace, a senior associate of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace calls for reconciliation with Vietnam, urging that we put aside "the agony of the Vietnam experience" and "the injuries of the past," and overcome the "hatred, anger, and frustration" caused us by the Vietnamese, though we must not forget "the humanitarian issues left over from the war": the MIAs, those qualified to emigrate to the United States, and the remaining inmates of reeducation camps. So profound are the humanitarian impulses that guide this deeply moral society that even the right-wing Senator John McCain is now calling for diplomatic relations with Vietnam. He says that he holds "no hatred" for the Vietnamese even though he is "a former Navy pilot who spent 5 1/2 years as an unwilling guest in the Hanoi Hilton," editor David Greenway of the *Boston Globe* comments, adding that "If McCain can put aside his bitterness, so can we all."³³ Greenway

knows Vietnam well, having compiled an outstanding record as a war correspondent there. But in the prevailing moral climate, the educated community he addresses would not find it odd to urge that we overcome our natural bitterness against the Vietnamese for what they did to us.

"In history," Francis Jennings observes, "the man in the ruffled shirt and gold-laced waistcoat somehow levitates above the blood he has ordered to be spilled by dirty-handed underlings."³⁴

These examples illustrate the power of the system that manufactures necessary illusions, at least among the educated elites who are the prime targets of propaganda, and its purveyors. It would be difficult to conjure up an achievement that might lie beyond the reach of mechanisms of indoctrination that can portray the United States as an innocent victim of Vietnam, while at the same time pondering the nation's excesses of self-flagellation.

Journalists not subject to the same influences and requirements see a somewhat different picture. In an Israeli mass-circulation daily, Amnon Kapeliouk published a series of thoughtful and sympathetic articles on a 1988 visit to Vietnam. One is headlined "Thousands of Vietnamese still die from the effects of American chemical warfare." He reports estimates of one-quarter of a million victims in South Vietnam in addition to the thousands killed by unexploded ordnance—3,700 since 1975 in the Danang area alone. Kapeliouk describes the "terrifying" scenes in hospitals in the south with children dying of cancer and hideous birth deformities; it was South Vietnam, of course, that was targeted for chemical warfare, not the North, where these consequences are not found, he reports. There is little hope for amelioration in the coming years, Vietnamese doctors fear, as the effects linger on in the devastated southern region of this "bereaved country," with its millions of dead and millions more widows and orphans, and where one hears "hair-raising stories that remind me of what we heard during the trials of Eichmann and Demjanjuk" from victims who, remarkably, "express no hatred against the American people." In this case, of course, the perpetrators are not tried, but are honored for their crimes in the civilized Western world.³⁵

Here too, some have been concerned over the effects of the chemical warfare that sprayed millions of gallons of Agent Orange and other poisonous chemicals over an area the size of Massachusetts in South Vietnam, more in Laos and Cambodia. Dr. Grace Ziem, a specialist on chemical exposure and disease who teaches at the

University of Maryland Medical School, addressed the topic after a two-week visit to Vietnam, where she had worked as a doctor in the 1960s. She too described visits to hospitals in the south, where she inspected the sealed transparent containers with hideously malformed babies and the many patients from heavily sprayed areas, women with extremely rare malignant tumors and children with deformities found far beyond the norm. But her account appeared far from the mainstream, where the story, when reported at all, has quite a different cast and focus. Thus, in an article on how the Japanese are attempting to conceal their World War II crimes, we read that one Japanese apologist referred to U.S. troops who scattered poisons by helicopter; "presumably," the reporter explains, he was referring to "Agent Orange, a defoliant suspected to have caused birth defects among Vietnamese and the children of American servicemen." No further reflections are suggested, in this context. And we can read about "the \$180 million in chemical companies' compensation to Agent Orange victims"—U.S. soldiers, that is, not the Vietnamese civilians whose suffering is vastly greater. And somehow, these matters scarcely arose as indignation swelled in 1988 over alleged plans by Libya to develop chemical weapons.³⁶

The right turn among elites took political shape during the latter years of the Carter administration and in the Reagan years, when the proposed policies were implemented and extended with a bipartisan consensus. But, as the Reaganite state managers discovered, the "Vietnam syndrome" proved to be a tough nut to crack; hence the vast increase in clandestine operations as the state was driven underground by the domestic enemy.

As it became necessary by the mid-1980s to face the costs of Reaganite military Keynesian policies, including the huge budget and trade deficits and foreign debt, it was predictable, and predicted, that the "Evil Empire" would become less threatening and the plague of international terrorism would subside, not so much because the world was all that different, but because of the new problems faced by the state management. Several years later, the results are apparent. Among the very ideologues who were ranting about the ineradicable evil of the Soviet barbarians and their minions, the statesmanlike approach is now mandatory, along with summitry and arms negotiations. But the basic long-term problems remain, and will have to be addressed.

Throughout this period of U.S. global hegemony, exalted rhetoric aside, there has been no hesitation to resort to force if the welfare

of U.S. elites is threatened by what secret documents describe as the threat of "nationalistic regimes" that are responsive to popular demands for "improvement in the low living standards of the masses" and production for domestic needs, and that seek to control their own resources. To counter such threats, high-level planning documents explain, the United States must encourage "a political and economic climate conducive to private investment of both foreign and domestic capital," including the "opportunity to earn and in the case of foreign capital to repatriate a reasonable return."³⁷ The means, it is frankly explained, must ultimately be force, since such policies somehow fail to gain much popular support and are constantly threatened by the subversive elements called "Communist."

In the Third World, we must ensure "the protection of our raw materials" (as George Kennan put it) and encourage export-oriented production, maintaining a framework of liberal internationalism—at least insofar as it serves the needs of U.S. investors. Internationally, as at home, the free market is an ideal to be lauded if its outcome accords with the perceived needs of domestic power and privilege; if not, the market must be guided by efficient use of state power.

If the media, and the respectable intellectual community generally, are to serve their "societal purpose," such matters as these must be kept beyond the pale, remote from public awareness, and the massive evidence provided by the documentary record and evolving history must be consigned to dusty archives or marginal publications. We may speak in retrospect of blunders, misinterpretation, exaggeration of the Communist threat, faulty assessments of national security, personal failings, even corruption and deceit on the part of leaders gone astray; but the study of institutions and how they function must be scrupulously ignored, apart from fringe elements or a relatively obscure scholarly literature. These results have been quite satisfactorily achieved.

In capitalist democracies of the Third World, the situation is often much the same. Costa Rica, for example, is rightly regarded as the model democracy of Latin America. The press is firmly in the hands of the ultra-right, so there need be no concern over freedom of the press in Costa Rica, and none is expressed. In this case, the result was achieved not by force but rather by the free market assisted by legal measures to control "Communists," and, it appears, by an influx of North American capital in the 1960s.

Where such means have not sufficed to enforce the approved version of democracy and freedom of the press, others are readily

available and are apparently considered right and proper, so long as they succeed. El Salvador in the past decade provides a dramatic illustration. In the 1970s there was a proliferation of "popular organizations," many sponsored by the Church, including peasant associations, self-help groups, unions, and so on. The reaction was a violent outburst of state terror, organized by the United States with bipartisan backing and general media support as well. Any residual qualms dissolved after "demonstration elections" had been conducted for the benefit of the home front,³⁸ while the Reagan administration ordered a reduction in the more visible atrocities when the population was judged to be sufficiently traumatized and it was feared that reports of torture, murder, mutilation, and disappearance might endanger funding and support for the lower levels of state terror still deemed necessary.

There had been an independent press in El Salvador: two small newspapers, *La Crónica del Pueblo* and *El Independiente*. Both were destroyed in 1980-81 by the security forces. After a series of bombings, an editor of *La Crónica* and a photographer were taken from a San Salvador coffee shop and hacked to pieces with machetes; the offices were raided, bombed, and burned down by death squads, and the publisher fled to the United States. The publisher of *El Independiente*, Jorge Pinto, fled to Mexico when his paper's premises were attacked and equipment smashed by troops. Concern over these matters was so high in the United States that there was not one word in the *New York Times* news columns and not one editorial comment on the destruction of the journals, and no word in the years since, though Pinto was permitted a statement on the opinion page, in which he condemned the "Duarte junta" for having "succeeded in extinguishing the expression of any dissident opinion" and expressed his belief that the so-called death squads are "nothing more nor less than the military itself"—a conclusion endorsed by the Church and international human rights monitors.

In the year before the final destruction of *El Independiente*, the offices were bombed twice, an office boy was killed when the plant was machine-gunned, Pinto's car was sprayed with machine-gun fire, there were two other attempts on his life, and army troops in tanks and armored trucks arrived at his offices to search for him two days before the paper was finally destroyed. These events received no mention. Shortly before it was finally destroyed, there had been four bombings of *La Crónica* in six months; one of these, the last, received forty words in the *New York Times*.³⁹

It is not that the U.S. media are unconcerned with freedom of the press in Central America. Contrasting sharply with the silence over the two Salvadoran newspapers is the case of the opposition journal *La Prensa* in Nicaragua. Media critic Francisco Goldman counted 263 references to its tribulations in the *New York Times* in four years.⁴⁰ The distinguishing criterion is not obscure: the Salvadoran newspapers were independent voices stifled by the murderous violence of U.S. clients; *La Prensa* is an agency of the U.S. campaign to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, therefore a "worthy victim," whose harassment calls forth anguish and outrage. We return to further evidence that this is indeed the operative criterion.

Several months before his paper was destroyed, Dr. Jorge Napoleón Gonzales, the publisher of *La Crónica*, visited New York to plead for international pressure to "deter terrorists from destroying his paper." He cited right-wing threats and "what [his paper] calls Government repression," the *Times* noted judiciously. He reported that he had received threats from a death squad "that undoubtedly enjoys the support of the military," that two bombs had been found in his house, that the paper's offices were machine-gunned and set afire and his home surrounded by soldiers. These problems began, he said, when his paper "began to demand reforms in landholdings," angering "the dominant classes." No international pressure developed, and the security forces completed their work.⁴¹

In the same years, the Church radio station in El Salvador was repeatedly bombed and troops occupied the Archdiocese building, destroying the radio station and ransacking the newspaper offices. Again, this elicited no media reaction.

These matters did not arise in the enthusiastic reporting of El Salvador's "free elections" in 1982 and 1984. Later we were regularly informed by *Times* Central America correspondent James LeMoyne that the country enjoyed greater freedom than enemy Nicaragua, where nothing remotely comparable to the Salvadoran atrocities had taken place, and opposition leaders and media that are funded by the U.S. government and openly support its attack against Nicaragua complain of harassment, but not terror and assassination. Nor would the *Times* Central America correspondents report that leading Church figures who fled from El Salvador (including a close associate of the assassinated Archbishop Romero), well-known Salvadoran writers, and others who are by no stretch of the imagination political activists, and who are well-known to *Times* correspondents, cannot return to the death squad democracy they praise and protect, for fear

of assassination. *Times* editors call upon the Reagan administration to use "its pressure on behalf of peace and pluralism in Nicaragua," where the government had a "dreadful record" of "harassing those who dare to exercise ... free speech," and where there had never been "a free, contested election."⁴² No such strictures apply to El Salvador.

In such ways, the Free Press labors to implant the illusions that are necessary to contain the domestic enemy.