

the president's voice turned to ice-coated steel—"I said, 'What did you say?'"

"The fellow looked at Kroocheff, mumbled something, Kroocheff mumbled back—fellow couldn't look me in the face this time—but he said: 'The Chairman's words, sir, which he insists I translate directly, are: 'Ike, you should watch your language.'"

The President resumed his agitated walk behind the table, his mind obviously reverting to the alternatives he had faced shortly before midnight the night before.

"I couldn't kick out the interpreter. That would have left me alone with that grinning son of a bitch with no way to talk to him. Oh, I thought of a few alternatives. The one that appealed to me most was to walk right up to him, eye to eye, then kneel him one right in the crotch, then sit back and tell the interpreter to tell 'Nicky' to watch his language."

All four of the Blackford Oakes novels possess the ingredients for successful movies—intrigue, violence, adventure, sex, exotic locales—and it seems to me inevitable that in due course Oakes will make it to the screen as an American James Bond.

Thematically, the book addresses itself to two large and serious matters, one general and one particular: the means-end relationship and the role of agencies such as the CIA.

On means-ends it takes what seems to me to be a common-sensical and obviously correct position. *Sayeth the Liberal*: The CIA does dirty tricks; the KGB does dirty tricks. What's the difference? The Soviets intervene in Poland and Afghanistan. We intervene in Chile and El Salvador. It's all the same. This book assumes, correctly, that no, there's an obvious difference: Our ends differ from theirs—relative freedom and political decency versus tyranny.

"The ends don't justify the means" is a very tricky cliché, slithering around on the various meanings of that word "justify." It is a cliché of

utopian bearing, assuming a world in which all means must be and can be pure. In the real world, a considered decision has always to be made about means and ends: Are they in proportion? But if you will the end, you must also will the means—or else you are a dangerous fool (*viz.*, the Kennedy-Johnson policy in Vietnam).

Marco Polo, If You Can is also a kind of Valentine card to the CIA. Rufus's scheme is brilliant, it works like a good watch, and Blackford carries it out with great éclat. And, certainly, we need an effective organization of this kind. Without a covert capability, we are left with few options between passivity and sending in the 82nd Airborne Division.

But, is the CIA in fact this effective? Could be. I don't know.

Perhaps we hear mostly about its fiascos. The Kennedy-CIA plots against Castro were not very impressive. They involved poisoned cigars, lethal wet-suits, exploding sea shells, and a beard depilatory, as well as some broken-down Mafiosi. When Eisenhower ordered Lumumba off the political stage, the CIA failed and the problem had to be solved by Mobutu's toughs. When an attempt was made to kill Sukarno of Indonesia, the late Wilmoore Kendall remarked that "the plot had all the earmarks of a CIA operation: Everyone died except Sukarno."

Still, the CIA did have successes in Guatemala and Iran and no doubt elsewhere. I myself would be happy if the Agency were always as successful as it is in this novel. □

of us first take up the trowel, he tells us to forget the idea that if we just do it right, we'll have a garden that looks like the seed catalog. By the time he is through debunking that one, it seems a contemptibly vulgar ambition anyway.

No. There has never been a year in which everything did well. "Any garden," he says, "if you see it at just the right moment, can be confused with paradise." But don't be fooled. Despair is readying an ambush. The natural state of any garden is disaster. "Magnificent gardens mean magnificent heartbreaks."

In his most eloquent passage, Mitchell asserts that it is not a green thumb but a spirit of defiance that separates the gardeners from the soulless tennis players and indoorsmen. What gardeners have to look forward to is not static success but the stern existential joy of "pitting hope against destiny again and again" so the unknowing can say, "You have favorable conditions here. Everything grows for you."

"Everything grows for everybody," Mitchell assures us, adding, "Everything dies for everybody, too."

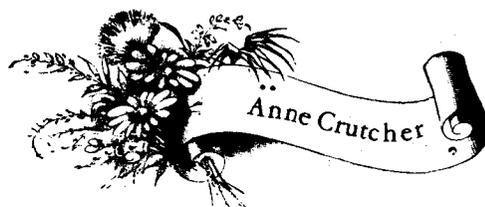
Astringent though his wisdom may be, it is never sour. Warning his readers not to expect the impossible, Mitchell invites them to luxuriate in the magical. He is a matchless guide to small, subtle appreciations. He speaks of the "high delight" of examining a wild tulip bulb, or savoring shades of garnet and black-green in winter azalea leaves. For him, obviously, the texture of crape myrtle bark makes up for many a camellia bud bitten off by frost.

The refinement of his own perceptions can make him a little impatient with people more attuned to the obvious. The Peace rose, for example, he dismisses as designed to please "anybody who has longed to grow the largest turnip in the world." His aesthetic is too *recherché* for masses of red geraniums against white walls.

But a man capable of the Mitchell prose may be allowed his crotchets. Who else would describe opium poppy seed pods as "beautiful and ingenious little architectural follies"? From what other vocabulary would the blooming of portulaca emerge as "taffeta explosions"?

Besides, the *Essential Earthman* is indeed concerned with essences. Beyond the immediacies of beauty and disappointment in a gardener's relationship with nature, he guides us to contemplate the nature of things. □

THE ESSENTIAL EARTHMAN
Henry Mitchell / Indiana University Press / \$12.50



It's as true amid the pink and green ardors of spring as among the blight and borers of less clement seasons: Henry Mitchell writes about gardening rather the way Herman Melville wrote about whales. He knows the concrete and technical lore of horticulture. And he is given to linking the homely details with intimations of the eternal.

There's nothing solemn or grandiose about it. He's never Tennyson brooding over the flower in the crannied wall. It's just that, while he is discussing mulch or aphids or the best climbing rose, suddenly, the reader's mind is on God and the waltzing stars.

This book is a collection of columns Mitchell has written as the *Washington Post's* Earthman since he came to Washington from Memphis 12 years ago. They reflect his experience in the 40- by 100-foot suburban garden where he is both Le Notre and stoop labor. They shine as down-to-earth advice, as revelations of a rich, finely tuned sensibility, and as examples of how an artist can use the English language. They are the more appealing for Robert Borja's woodcuts of trees

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and flowers, stones and garden tools.

To start with the mundane, some of us need to be told primal truths about gardening. We need to be warned that too many trees will make everything else impossible, deflecting sunlight, using up the moisture in the soil, and crowding out hyacinths with their bulky roots.

Mitchell, a man who admits to having four forest-scale trees on his lot, is particularly vehement against ill-advised maples and hemlocks. He keeps going on about how, one of these days, he will cut down an early mistake and grow roses on the stump.

Such endearing self-deprecations make him the more effective as a practical counselor. It helps to know that he too is tempted to overcrowd limited territory with favorite irises when he knows perfectly well that space is to a garden what punctuations of silence are to music. It is comforting to realize that, like the rest of us, Henry Mitchell is so in love with May that he is forever in danger of neglecting the potentialities of other seasons.

SStill, his greatest contribution to the well-being of lesser gardeners is philosophical and cosmic. Attacking the utopian illusion with which many

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EDITORIAL

(continued from page 5)

alleged gunman, John Hinckley Jr., insists that he too is innocent. Presumably, were he a United States senator he would still have his seat. He has not even been convicted and sentenced. In fact, he has not even been tried!

In earlier times, of course, Senator Williams would have resigned like a gentleman. Simple respect for the authority of the United States Senate would have induced a man convicted and sentenced for felonious acts to depart. Today, however, there remains not much respect for authority, nor much authority.

Our institutions have been successfully drained of legitimacy by sophists and of efficacy by those judges who dream of perfect justice even as they free the most ferocious thugs. Why, really, should Senator Williams resign? He knows what every petty scamp and every arrant scoundrel knows, namely: If a convicted felon insists on his innocence stubbornly enough a growing number of softheads will come to believe and even admire him. In time enough new leaks might spring in the nation's system of justice to overturn the conviction leaving him scot-free and surrounded by those literary agents who merchant fat removal manuals and other such best-selling works of art. Then there might be appearances on talk shows and a profitable place on the campus lecture circuit. This steady accumulation of leaks is called judicial reform.

Why, indeed, would anyone in America today admit guilt for anything? The more overwhelming the evidence against the accused the more plausible his pleas of innocence will be to the multitudes of softheads who inhabit the elite provinces of our society. All that the accused must do is lie long and hard. "We hesitate to impute guilt to anyone," says Professor Walter Berns, author of *For Capital Punishment*, "because we are so uncertain of our right to do so."

What keeps Senator Williams's colleagues from expelling him? His presence obviously brings further disrepute to the Senate. It further delegitimizes an important American institution. The explanation for the senators' hesitancy is provided by a wise Norwegian judge who viewed the present state of criminal procedure in the West and observed, "our grandfathers punished, and they did so with a clear conscience [and] we punish too, but we do it with a bad conscience." □

CAPITOL IDEAS

(continued from page 6)

As far as I know, this feature of the 1981 Tax Act—that it was not a real rate reduction at all but little more than an indexing of the rates (the formal indexing of the tax brackets does not begin until 1985)—has not yet been reported either by the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post*. Certainly I have seen no mention of the Philadelphia Fed articles in either paper. Instead both papers seem eager to continue creating the impression that an unconscionably large "tax cut" was enacted, threatening to drain the Treasury and expose us to massive deficits. (Notice that the misleading phrase "tax cuts" blurs the distinction between tax rates and revenues and in fact makes intelligent discussion of the whole topic of taxation almost impossible.)

I see in today's *Washington Post*, for example, a typically misleading story about the remarkable "federal income surtax" proposed by Sen. Howard Baker, new darling of the Washington war-dance set and the subject, in last week's *Washington Post*, of a "Strange New Respect" profile by Helen Dewar. ("The Charmer From Tennessee," reads the page-one headline.)

Today's story, again by Dewar, has the following: "Although Baker did not go into details, other sources said a temporary surtax of 5 percent or 10 percent is being 'discussed' among Senate Republicans. . . . The surtax would virtually wipe out the 10 percent tax cut that Congress has approved for this year, although technically it would leave the Reagan tax program in place."

You see what I mean? The lady doesn't understand that the "10 percent tax cut," as she calls it, is already being wiped out this year thanks to inflation. Thus the Baker surtax would be a tax rate increase, presumably raising the top rate to 55 percent. (It goes without saying that if such a surtax were to pass and remain unvetoes, Reagan's whole program would certainly be doomed. For Baker to propose it shows that over the past 18 months he has learned nothing about taxation, incentives, and marginal effects.)

Well, now you know something about fiscal policy. Really, it's quite simple. First of all think of your wallet, which may have a few dollars in it. Then think of people like Senator Baker, who spend their waking lives trying to think of innovative but legal ways of tweaking some of those dollars out of your

wallet. Then imagine this money being "Doled" out to constituents (Dole's another one, you should know), who will vote for him on reelection day. Then think of reporters like Helen Dewar who will rush forth with page-one stories about the hitherto unsuspected compassion and (don't forget) "pragmatism" that animates such lawmakers, stories that are glowing and laudatory to the

precise degree that such statesmen attempt to divert a larger proportion of the GNP into the headwaters of the Potomac, thence to the nation's capital.

Now I know I had meant to say something about monetary policy, which is good fun and games because it is so little understood and so controversial, but that will have to wait until class reconvenes. . . . □

"A blueprint for peaceful revolution."*

The 1980 elections demonstrated the growing power of the New Right: this ground breaking book spells out exactly what the movement intends to do with that power. William A. Rusher, Richard Viguerie, and Paul M. Weyrich are among the prominent conservatives who examine the New Right's development, strategies, and long-term goals for America.

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"Don't mistake this book for another self-serving media event. In fact, this is a blueprint for a peaceful revolution, nothing less than a rebuilding of the American Republic."

—*Senator John East (North Carolina)



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STUDENT JOURNALISM CONFERENCE

Fifteen years ago a college student with conservative inclinations had few spokesmen: the Intercollegiate Studies Institute, College Republicans, and a handful of other organizations. Instead of gentlemen and gentle ladies, the universities were breeding Mark Rudds and Bernardine Dohrns. They also bred Dr. Timothy Learys and Dr. Charles Reichs, and they actually paid such morons. As an observant college president noted, the most violent students were those in the liberal arts departments—and they were grabbing all the media attention.

Times have changed. If the phenomenal growth of conservative college publications is any clue, campus activists are turning increasingly conservative and finding new ways to publicize their efforts.

In tribute to this new breed of

campus troublemaker, on January 16 the Institute for Educational Affairs and *The American Spectator* co-sponsored a day-long conference in New York City attended by over 40 student journalists representing some fifteen campus newspapers. These students are the editors, writers, and managers of such publications as the University of Chicago's *Counterpoint*, Harvard's *Salient*, the *Yale Political Monthly*, the *Claremont Review*, Holy Cross College's *Hogan Foreign Review*, and, of course, the *Dartmouth Review*. Two years ago most of these papers did not even exist.

At the morning session students listened to presentations by the staff of *The American Spectator* on the problems of running a paper. Publisher Ronald Burr talked about financing these ventures, assistant

publisher Susan France discussed advertising, and New York editor Whit Stillman spoke on public relations and distribution. Managing editor Wladyslaw Pleszczynski outlined editorial objectives and responsibilities, Cambridge editor Andy Stark discussed the journalistic "think" piece, and assistant managing editor William McGurn offered some hints about line editing and proofreading. Finally, production manager Jan Sharkey made suggestions about layout and design, and New York artist Elliott Banfield illuminated the role of art in a magazine.

The luncheon program was highlighted by an address delivered by editor-in-chief R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr., who reminisced about the early years of *The American Spectator* after its founding at Indiana University in 1967 when student agitation

was coming to a boil. Touching on the more puckish side of the conservative youth movement, Tyrrell warned the students "not to forget to have a little fun at some fraud's expense." The Fourth Estate also came in for some abuse. "Those of you who are refugees from your various departments of journalism are especially fortunate to be here," he said, "because we are teaching you here in one day what it takes them four years to do, and they do it badly."

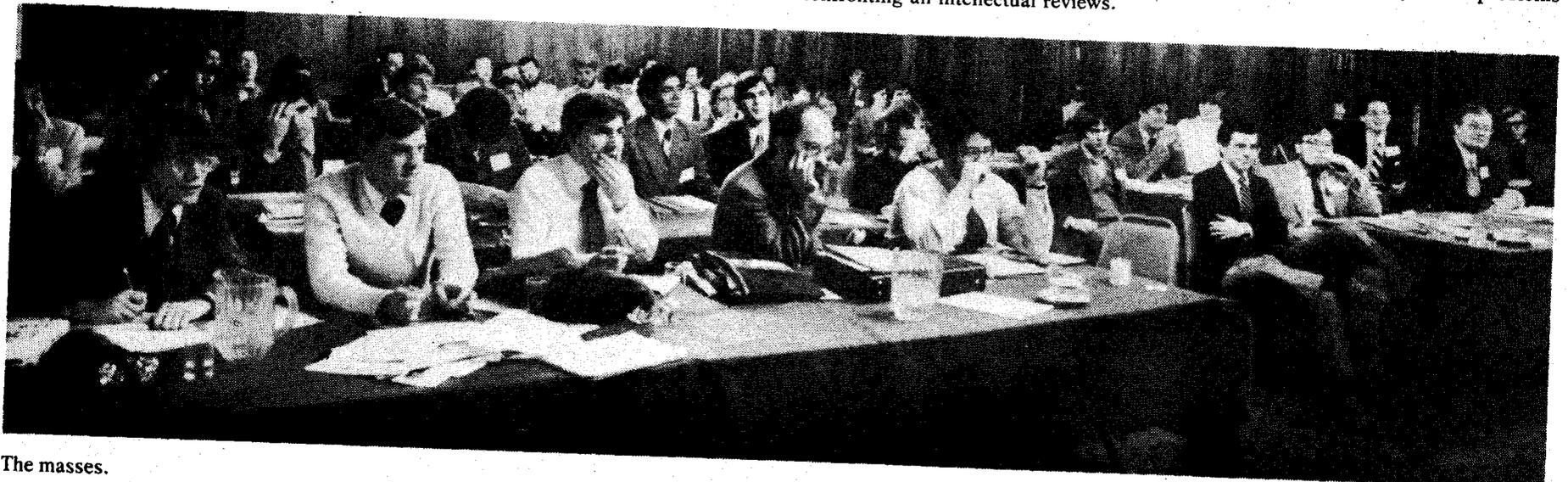
The afternoon session featured writers, editors, and officers from major publications and institutions who covered career opportunities in journalism and journalistic writing, and fielded questions from the audience. The speakers included Adam Meyerson, editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, and Erich Eichman, associate editor at *Harper's*



Bethell's junta. From left to right: Phil Marcus, Roger Kaplan, Erich Eichman, Tom Bethell, Adam Meyerson, Bill Kristol, Les Lenkowsky.



Eric Goldstein of *Penthouse* consults Ronald Burr and Les Lenkowsky on the problems confronting all intellectual reviews.



The masses.