
CURRENT WISDOM

Washington Post

Funeral services performed once again on a favorite corpse by Pastor Lou Cannon of Washington's Church of Good Scriveners:

When President Reagan rededicated the Statue of Liberty in a blaze of light and celebratory fireworks last July 3, he seemed to personify the American nation, which he described that night in Lincoln's words as "hope for the world, future for all time."

In a week of tall ships and remembrances of patriots past, Reagan captured the imagination of a nation accustomed to his heroic turn of phrase and reassuring ways. A romanticized portrait of Reagan appeared on the cover of Time magazine the following week accompanied by a caption that asked, "Why is this man so popular?" The cover story described Reagan as "a Prospero of American memories, a magician who carries a bright, ideal America like a holograph in his mind and projects its image in the air."

All the glitter is gone now, all the magic lost.

[December 21, 1986]

The Nation

Whilst on another of her strenuous fact-finding missions to foreign parts, the *Nation's* shapely Washington correspondent, Christabel Hitchens, is again diverted:

Cut now to Silom Road. This Bangkok thoroughfare is full of cliches, such as limbless beggars sprawled outside gleaming banks. Just off the main drag, in a street market above a video store, is the headquarters of Empower, Bangkok's only feminist union. The women at Empower have set themselves the immense task of improving the condition of the "bar girls."

[November 29, 1986]

Village Voice

Choice droppings from one of the incomparable *Voice's* resident social dissectors:

On the sitcom, in fact, one is obliged to undercut oneself along with everybody else. And this subversive process betrays the self-destructive tendency of the social Darwinist ideal—that jungle ethic which has always given aid and comfort to the well-fixed champions of *laissez-faire*, and which is now respectable again. The aggression that motivates or undercuts each sitcom character in turn reflects the real aggression that pervades the corporate state, wherein every man and woman must "look out for Number One." And yet these apparent struggles for preeminence do not create heroic individuals, or permit any individuality at all. On the sitcom, what seems like a relentless effort on the part of each to triumph over all the rest is an effort not at self-definition or self-promotion, but at self-cancellation. The aim of each is merely to survive as yet another particle of the watchful and ironic mass.

[December 7, 1986]

Chicago Tribune

The venerable *Tribune* prints two bulls by two dispensers of bull paddies:

Remove God?

Chicago—In the United States of America we should swear by our Constitution and discard religious impositions.

We are not one nation under "God"; those two words were added by religious zealots, imposing their theories on the rest of us, and obscure the fact that other nations also see themselves as being under "God."

—Miguel Garcia

'No truth in it'

Des Plaines—There is not an iota of truth in the letter about the vicious circle of Hindu killing innocent Muslims and Christians.

I am a Christian and have been living in Hindu India for the last 35 years and have never been persecuted for my religious or political beliefs and still take my vacation and go back to that Hindu India and enjoy my freedom as in the United States. Of course, there is religious factional fighting but not more than happens anywhere in this country between blacks and whites, fundamental Christians and liberals or abortionists and anti-abortionists.

—George Francis

[November 4, 1986]

New Republic

In his little sailor suit with his patent leather shoes sparkling in the sunshine, young Michael Kinsley proffers a knock-knock joke to mommy and daddy:

The only irritating aspect of the otherwise delightful collapse of the Reagan administration is the widespread insistence that we must all be poker-faced about it. The *Washington Post*, second-to-none in moral dudgeon over the Reaganites' misdeeds, nevertheless declares that anyone who enjoys or is entertained by the spectacle is "reprehensible," no less. The approved attitude is to don the mask of tragedy: oh, woe is us, another failed administration, policy-making in disarray, etc. . . . Dry those tears and repeat after me: Ha. Ha. Ha.

[December 22, 1986]

The Progressive

Dr. Alan Wolfe of Queens College in New York enlightens perplexed readers of the illustrious *Progressive* as to why the conservative intelligentsia are now rampant on campus and in the media: Conservative ideas are popular today because intellectuals, like the rest of us, are faddish. We have not thought through the failure of "liberalism" and replaced it by a new "conservative" consensus. Instead, mouthing certain ideas now, as it was twenty years ago, is the way to foundation grants, let alone power. I only wish that ideas came first and power after, but nothing I have seen in the rise of the Right convinces me that such is the case.

[November 1986]

Seattle Times

In the howl section of an illustrious Seattle gazette, a local turkey speaks out on behalf of her less articulate brothers and sisters:

Our history books tell us that the colonists made peace with the Native Americans, and together celebrated the first Thanksgiving in 1621. There is some doubt as to whether this event actually took place, but Native Americans had a long-standing tradition of holding large feasts in thanks to the Great Spirits who sent them a good harvest. The settlers may have picked up the idea of "Thanksgiving" after being invited to one of these feasts.

What is well-documented, however, is what Thanksgiving became to the settlers. Apparently, a "thanksgiving" was celebrated after massacres of Native Americans. One Thanksgiving was proclaimed by Governor Kieft in February 1644 after one such massacre.

Today, Thanksgiving remains linked with bloodshed. Each year, tens of millions of turkeys are slaughtered in an unintentional echo of past massacres. Their lives prior to slaughter are the mere shadow of a frustrated existence, short in duration and severely restricted by modern "factory farming" conditions. . . .

[November 17, 1986]

New York Times Book Review

Dr. Stanley Hoffmann offers another reading from *Progressive Scripture*:

The Cuban revolution has a remarkable record in such fields as health and education, both at home and abroad where a huge Cuban assistance program in these domains operates throughout much of the third world.

[November 30, 1986]

Washington Post

Another intellectual tour de force with the learned Professor Colman McCarthy, who apparently has found a willing female economist somewhere, somehow:

In the context of honoring excellence—the yearly mission of the Nobel Prize givers—the Swedish selection committee again leaves the world wondering: What excellence? The committee has a record of boners, from bestowing the peace prize on Henry Kissinger to ignoring such economists as Barbara Ward, E. F. Schumacher, Robert Heilbroner, John Kenneth Galbraith and Gar Alperovitz. The economics prize, established in 1969, has been won or shared by 24 people. All have been white males and all but one—a Russian—have been Westerners from capitalist nations.

Apparently the Swedes who hand out these awards to honor the memory of the inventor of dynamite have not troubled themselves to read female or Third World economists. It is women and the poor who suffer disproportionately from economic violence created and perpetuated by Western powers.

[October 25, 1986]

The Progressive

Still more *hilaritas*, and from a comic who sees nothing amusing about a girl's dream of competing on the boys' Graeco-Roman wrestling team:

I know some of you humorless old lefties think we shouldn't gloat publicly over Reagan's difficulties. Listen, my momma may have raised a mean child, but she raised no hypocrites. I love this. I can't wait to read the papers every morning. I'm entitled to this satisfaction. It has not been easy to be anti-Reagan in Texas for the last six years. Damn right, I'm gloating.

[January 1987]

Christian Century

On the pages of a great atheistic sheet, hopeful tidings of an analytical nature from a gal with her hands full:

A similar challenge came from Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, who raised the question of what rules we would make for a just society if we had no idea what place we personally would occupy in such a society. She urged participants to move beyond the wrongs suffered by individual women and to see the systemic interrelatedness of all patriarchal oppression, including sexism, racism, classism, compulsory heterosexism, enforced motherhood and militarism. She suggested that one should go forward with the Bible in one hand and serious systemic analyses in the other.

[September 10-17, 1986]

Commonweal

Three years and ten months into America's longest period of economic recovery in the postwar era and a leading advocate of the Catholic bishops' economic letter takes note:

Not everyone is doing poorly in today's economy.

[September 26, 1986]

Nashville Banner

Proof that not even 10,000 Baptist ministers, well-armed and dug-in, can prevent invasion from liberals of the New Age:

In trying to find their own place in today's world, some women are looking back beyond the time of the Jewish and Christian male God to the goddess concept of early mythology, a Nashville feminist theologian said.

"Many scholars now are interested in going back and studying the change in the views about the goddess," said Margaret Meggs, who has developed and taught courses in feminist theology. She prefers to use the Greek feminine term "theology." . . .

Raised in the United Methodist Church, she now attends the Unitarian Universalist Church . . .

[October 7, 1986]

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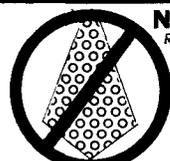
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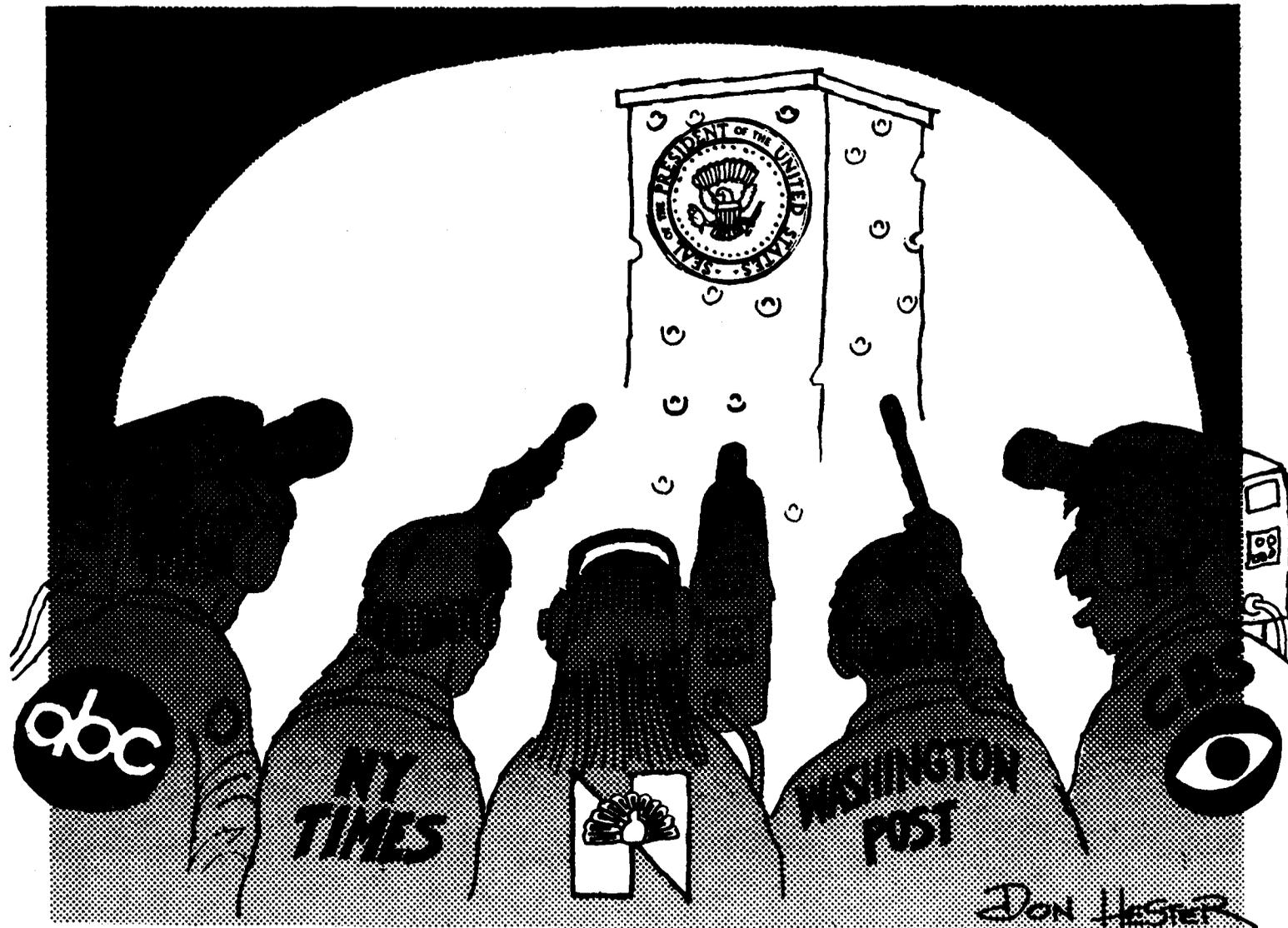
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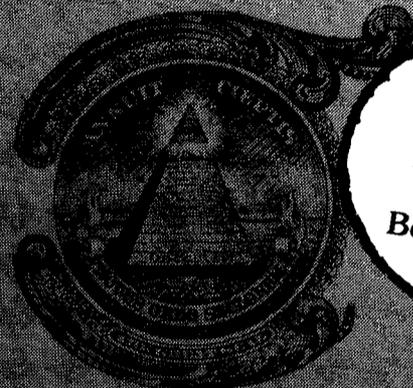
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