

## WASTE OF MONEY

### In Pulitzer Prize's Tradition

J. C. Louis and Harvey Z. Yazijian: *The Cola Wars*; Everest House Publishers: New York.

by Gavin D. Arbuckle

Journalists are different from other professional writers in that no one really expects them to know what they are talking about. Newspapers remain infested, year after year, by economic journalists who think high interest rates are inflationary, by business journalists who have difficulty understanding basic accounting principles, and by legal journalists who think that accused criminals can plead "innocent."

In a time when complete fabrications can be awarded a Pulitzer Prize, it is difficult to condemn a book by two free-lance writers which generally manages to avoid gross and obvious distortions and overpowering bias. As long as Louis and Yazijian content themselves with recounting, in enormous and often tedious detail, the histories of the Coca-Cola Company and Pepsico, Inc., *The Cola Wars* provides few grounds for either argument or excitement.

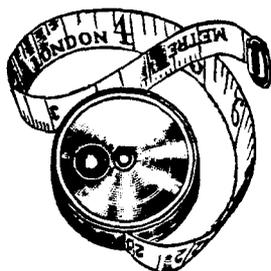
The authors' fascination with the manipulative power of advertising will hardly be shared by those of us who, as they delicately put it, "play heavily on the freedom of choice angle." Nevertheless, purveyors of Galbraithian buncombe have at least as much claim to be satisfying consumer

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demands as do manufacturers of "nonessential brown liquid."

In keeping with the traditions of modern journalism, the authors avoid discussing ideas, merely pausing occasionally to note that détente with the Soviets is a "good thing," and that multinational firms "exploit" Latin American workers, before returning to their descriptions of old advertising campaigns and the personalities of company executives. Unfortunately the same hit-and-run approach is applied to historical facts, which are often drawn from a small number of sources of quite remarkable obscurity. If journalists, to copy Hayek, are second-hand dealers in facts, then Louis and Yazijian are fencing some extremely dubious political research under the cover of their dull and respectable corporate history.

What sort of writer can imply that President Kennedy was murdered by Lyndon Johnson and the Pepsi-Cola Company, and that Richard Nixon was intimately associated with organized crime, seemingly without being aware that these arguments are, well, somewhat controversial? What sort of writer makes unref-



erenced statements that the United States assisted in the murder of Dominican dictator Trujillo and overthrew Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia as if they were established facts, which they most certainly are not? If one approached the question like Louis and Yazijian, who find a conspiracy under every inter-

locking directorship, one would conclude that such writers must be leftist subversives. Actually they are only modern journalists, searching indiscriminately for any shred of scurrilous gossip and rumored impropriety which might enhance the marketability of a dreadfully dull book. □

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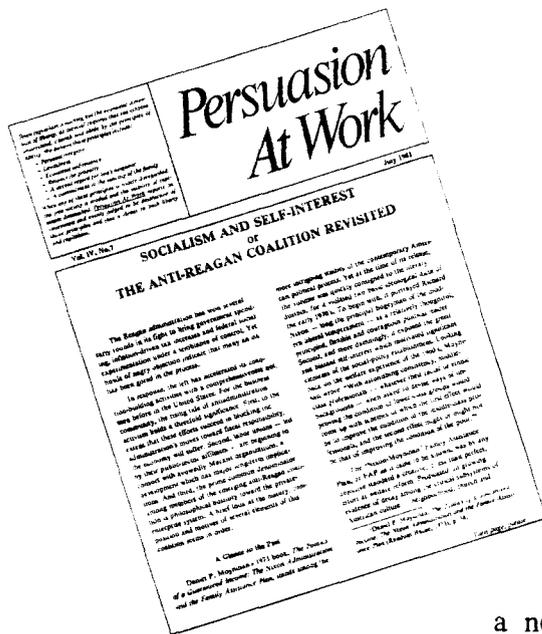
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## Let's Hope for More Indiana Joneses

*Raiders of the Lost Ark*; Written by Lawrence Kasdan; Directed by Steven Spielberg; Produced by George Lucas; Paramount Pictures.

*Mel Brooks' History of the World*; Written and directed by Mel Brooks; 20th Century-Fox.

by Eric Shapearo

Unwittingly (or perhaps not) *Raiders*, the current ultimate in pulp entertainment and suspense, makes a statement about modern history which would be refreshing and amusing if it were not laden with ironic melancholy. We can go even further and grope for an historical explanation of a convoluted, if not metaphysical, magnitude. What emerges from *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is the supposition that Hitler lost the war because he couldn't acquire the sacrosanct Jewish symbol of God's assistance necessary to win a war—all wars, in fact. It assumes that, regardless of Hitler's fundamental convictions, he feverishly searched for Yahweh's (the Jewish Almighty's) support before he started his worldwide conflagration. But—thanks to the intrepidity, daring and physical exploits of one Indiana Jones, professor of archaeology and quintessential American as exemplified by the American ideals of the 1930's—the ancient Hebrew Ark of the Covenant was rescued from the nazis' clutches and secured for the Allied cause just in time, sometime around 1936. The story details how Indy Jones accomplished such a feat by his astute handling of his fists, legs, muscles, whip and a .38 Colt as well as his archaeological erudition. The Chandleresque reflexes and smart pseudoscience make for superb, lighthearted, inoffensive entertainment—a resurrected, wonderfully American tradition of cliffhangers, serials and "Perils of Pauline," of the innocent culture in which the image of good always wins and social morality



thrives. And Yahweh alone knows how much we need it right now.

Edifying escapism has often proved to be a cultural remedy for the bestial consequences of misguided utopianism. We live in an era of social horrors provided by a militant culture of a redress ideology, a culture which presents a sub-human punk-rock entertainer as an exemplar of naturalistic humanness. If Yahweh can again provide us with some Indiana Joneses as role models for our youth, we may be on the way out of our sociomoral holocaust.

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Nothing can be said about Mr. Brooks's personal view of world history that adjectives like "stupid," "vulgar," "gross," "ignorant," "moronic," "disgusting" and "boring" do not exhaust. Only the addition of the adverb "utterly" could enhance this opinion with more expressiveness. Mr. Brooks seems not to have the slightest idea of what he intends to (or does) talk about, which, of course, is not in itself a reason to refrain from making a movie. His is a scatological genre in which urination

is the universal, all-encompassing key to the knowledge of man and his purpose on this earth. Naturally his "art" elicits cackle rather than laughter. Unawareness may be cheerful, but a concentrated dose of cretinism, a playfulness illustrated by vomiting on a dinner table, does not qualify for any evaluation and frees us from having to devote even one more sentence to Mr. Brooks's picture.

History has never been an easy subject to portray in the movies. With few exceptions, historical pictures have always been infected with theatricality, an insidious ingredient which by nature is antithetical to movie-making as an autonomous art. Even less adaptable to cinematic treatment is philosophy of history, that is, an intellectual method of interpreting history according to some philosophical assumption, synthesizing historical knowledge for the sake of an ideological statement. Griffith's *Intolerance* was perhaps the best-known attempt to establish the genre, and he was not unsuccessful. In the 1930's a French film-maker Sacha Guitry produced a few movies which were imbued with caustic irony about some fragments of French history as seen through a camera. Mr. Brooks, of course, does not qualify to be mentioned with Griffith or Guitry. Yet he succeeds as a catalyst. There's little doubt that the recent breakdown of the American movie culture is due mostly to the amorality of the contemporary liberal movie critic, utterly corrupted by his or her own disintegration of criteria in keeping with the licentiousness of the liberal cultural bazaar. Accordingly, Ms. Pauline Kael, the highly regarded movie critic of *The New Yorker*, generally considered the "dean" of liberal film criticism, closed her exceedingly favorable review of Mr. Brooks's *oeuvre* with a benign absolute: "He's a cutie." We are left with a pile of manure sanctified by liberal fiat according to a modish gospel. □