

joan herman

Concerned optimist

Just as Anthony Lewis was about to sit down for a campus press conference, he playfully remarks, "There should be an actual Wayne Morse chair — and it would have lots of burrs in it, just like the original one."

Lewis is in top form as he banters casually in front of television cameras, microphones and about a dozen pairs of staring eyes.

"I don't write editorials," Lewis remarks rather tongue-in-cheekishly, to a reporter's question. "They are the voice of the newspaper and I don't want anyone to think I'm that."

"I'm my own voice."

With a slight New Yorkish accent and a tendency to speak with his hands, Lewis seems more like Woody Allen than the stereotypical aloof intellectual.

After graduating from Harvard in 1948, Lewis began writing for the New York Times. Since then, numerous wars, recessions, presidents and even one impeachment have come and gone.

The affable human being sitting several feet away contrasts with the worried, conscientious citizen Lewis portrays in his columns. Until he is questioned on human rights violations.

"If I think about what's happened to the world since 1948, if I think about all the people killed in Cambodia and Vietnam — for what reason?"

In one year of reporting Lewis probably witnesses more than most people do in a life time. And many would deny the existence of much of what he sees.

Often placed near ultra-conservative James Kilpatrick in the newspaper, the liberal Lewis seems undaunted in exposing a sometimes "hypocritical" U.S. government.

In a recent column he describes an eyewitness' account of the U.S. government-supported Guatemalan army brutalizing children:

"They pick them up by the feet and smash their heads against a wall. Or they tie ropes around their necks and pull them until they are strangled. We heard of children being thrown into the air and bayoneted," according

to one account.

Lewis admits 1983 isn't a time "of tremendous good cheer, at least for him."

"I just look at problems and don't see answers."

"Everybody who lived through the Vietnam era is much less optimistic about the U.S. government, about opportunities for peace and progress."

"I care a lot about the Middle East," he explains. "I used to think there was a compelling logic in mutual peace in the Middle East. I believed it had to happen."

"I guess I no longer think it's going to happen because human emotions are so illogical. One has to come to accept that. International relations don't always work out for the best."

In a debate about guerilla activities in Nicaragua, Lewis overheard U.N. Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick in essence say, "Yah, they're (Nicaraguan troops) trained by the U.S. It's a hard world. Why shouldn't we do that?"

"But I remember when it was considered we didn't do things like that," Lewis says.

If he could tell students one thing, what would it be? Lewis leans his head into his hands and is quiet for half a minute.

"I hope in this economic struggle, students will retain a certain idealism about the country, because we rely on them for that. I think it's quite possible idealism can persist even in times of economic difficulty, but I can't blame students for having to concern themselves with their own economic livelihood."

Thirty-five years and thousands of stories since Lewis' first day at the New York Times, he tells the attentive group of journalists today's world makes it "harder to be an optimist." Perhaps he is less naive.

"I'm going to go on because I'm an optimist by nature. I don't think I could write columns if I were a congenital pessimist, because you have to believe things can get better or that you can glancingly nudge them in some direction."

"But I'm less wishful than I used to be."

ORIGINAL BY CARLISLE

JOAN HERMAN



JUSTICE IN EL SALVADOR

letters

Propaganda

In his letter of March 31, 1983, Douglas Green expresses his concern over "humanitarians...who panic when we aid an anti-communist country...yet are 'quiet when we give assistance to the communists.' He also kindly provides us with a choice of reasons as to why this might be so.

I would like to submit that, as far as humanitarians go, his third choice is the correct one: They are not well-informed as to "what's going on in the world."

But what might be the reasons behind this ignorance? Could it be due to the fact that citizens of the United States are one of the most propagandized societies in the world — propagandized by their own government?

For many years the administrations of this country have loudly proclaimed the aid given to right-wing governments as necessary to halt the advancing "tide of communist aggression." This "noble" cause having enjoined instances of atrocities supported by this aid are minimized or not mentioned at all.

In the case of communist governments exactly the reverse has been true.

So much time has been spent dwelling upon or inventing the atrocities perpetrated by these regimes, that when

they are provided with aid by this country (usually for strategic reasons) the administration takes special care not to mention this fact too loudly, if at all.

This is not to say that oppression doesn't occur under communist governments, nor that there are no persons who blindly support these governments despite this oppression, just as there are those who blindly support fascism. The true humanitarians despise all forms of oppression whatever labels oppression may try to hide behind.

Do not make the mistake, Mr. Douglas, of confusing uninformed humanitarians with communists, as our current right-wing and less-than-humanitarian administration would have you do.

Hiawatha
graduate, music
and philosophy

Pornography

I appreciate the Emerald's coverage of Wednesday's workshop on pornography in the April 7 edition ("Women and pornography"). I would like to clarify some of the statistics and quotations that were inaccurately reported.

Specifically, the Supreme Court's 1973 ruling does not allow individual states to "write their own pornography laws," but rather, allows local communities to adopt their own standards of defining pornography based on a threefold test handed down by the Supreme Court. Furthermore, it was not the "Court's" but the 1970 President's Commission on Pornography and Obscenity that supported the "Cartharsis Theory," not the "Caustic Theory," as reported in the Emerald.

Statistics about the in-

crease in pornography were also reported inaccurately. I was quoted as saying that "in 1973 there were no porno magazines, but by 1981 there were 265."

In actuality, I was citing a study which found that the number of pornographic magazines available at newsstands has grown from zero in 1953 to 40 in 1976. Later, I referred to another study which counted 265 different pornographic magazines in 1981, many of which cannot be obtained at public newsstands.

The article also claimed I drew a correlation between rape and pornography and used a "recent" nationwide poll of police chiefs who claimed pornography contributed to violent crime against women. The study was conducted by the Commission on Pornography and Obscenity in the late 1960s, and was cited as an example of data ignored by the Commission in their Majority Report.

Furthermore, I, nor the study, drew a correlation between pornography and rape; rather, the study revealed a majority of police chiefs believe pornography contributes to violence against women.

Another Emerald statement claimed that a study found "soft core" pornography readers to be less compassionate toward rape victims. The study concerned pornographic films, and certainly does not include all views, or "readers," as the Emerald coverage implied. It was also reported that I said pornography can serve educational purpose in art, science, etc. In actuality, sexually explicit material, not pornography, has its value in education, art, science, and literature.

Finally, total elimination of all pornographic material, in the context as printed by the Emerald, ignores the definition of pornography as discussed in the workshop. I did not, nor do I advocate total censorship; rather, I argued that the weight of the evidence I presented warrants legal and social concern and control.

The issue of pornography is controversial enough without confusing the data, I urge the Emerald to strive for more accurate coverage.

Rebecca Taylor
graduate, rhetoric
and communication
Monday, April 11, 1983

letters

Stolen

Of the 12,000 plus students enrolled at this university, 99 percent are here for serious study, with the remaining 1 percent consigned eternally as "yic yacks."

To the latter category I would nominate the "genius" who stole a worthless broken zippered case and a plastic bag containing computer runs for a master's thesis from a the student Health Center waiting station.

The research involved represents over a month's work in compilation, and is useless to anyone but the owner. Since there was neither money nor pot in the case, the motive for the theft is difficult to fathom.

Hopefully, somewhere in that disordered mind there may be yet the shred of decency left to induce the offender to turn in the purloined material to the EMU Lost and

Found. The case may be kept as a token of my esteem for "honesty" in the modern interpretation of this value.

Thomas Johnston
Eugene

oregon daily emerald

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