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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1958

Editorial Book Review

Attacking Democracy's Black Plague

THE REPORTER'S TRADE. By Joseph & Stewart Alsop. Reynal & Co. 377 pp. $5.

JOSEPH and Stewart Alsop, whose brotherly tandem made a significant reporting team during ten post-war years, have written this delightfully impertinent epitaph to the partnership.

To say that their work is "delightfully impertinent" is to single out its tone — perhaps its most fetching hallmark.

The Alsops entered reporting, which they compare to the "trade" of undertaking, with a haughty resolve that no one would patronize them. Not the lordliest government functionary, not the brassiest general or admiral, would dent the restless patrician poise of an Alsop. There is the clear feeling that the brothers Alsop consider themselves — by birth, intellect, lineage, and what they call "tribal" connections — superior by goodly notches to the feebler breeds who crowd offices in a democratic era. No doubt they are justified. There is also a feeling, again a matter of tone, that they see things through just the slightest haze of ennui; and one is reminded of T. S. Eliot describing himself at 24 as "an aged eagle."

Explaining their entry into the "trade" (it reminds you of the old Brahmin contempt for wealth or position derived from "trade") they write: "We had an uncle, a most agreeable man, who drank rather more than was good for him . . . As each of us went off to college, where the uncle had chosen the primrose path, all our vast tribe would fix its powerful collective eye upon the new-fledged freshman, to see whether he too would choose the primrose path." It was when Joe, in their book "the senior" or "the elder," seemed close to taking that path in "the notoriously bibulous Harvard neighborhood" that tribal overtures were made to the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE. Joe found himself a reporter, then a columnist, later to be joined by Yaleman Stewart after the War.

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WELL, — they both made it, much to the advantage of the "trade," and much to the discomfiture of their wide public who sat down with their afterdinner coffee to such thunderous jeremiads as they offered.

Once there, the Alsops lowered the lance against a mounting public somnolence lulled by cultish official "secrecy." Their concern soon rose to the proportions of a monomania, and they became the defense Paul Reveres of their time, galloping on horseback through the pages of their syndicated column, and flashing their verbal lantern in all directions. It was the Alsops (as they gladly acknowledge) who first revealed publicly that the Russians had exploded a hydrogen bomb; it was again the Alsops who forecast the inauguration of the missile age, correctly predicting that the Russians would show us the way. There are other, lesser, "firsts" to which the Alsops lay claim as they scan back over the record. But it would be most unfair to suggest that this reminiscence is a horn-tooting or an ecstasy of self-gratulation; it clearly is not.

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ACCURATELY, it is a ringing, indignantly rude blast at government officials whose self-esteem, complacence, official vanity, and overweening penchant for "respectability" led them to ruinous folly. The Alsops are out after the kind of intellectual lese-majesty which pares down the brutal facts of our position to tell the public what it wishes to hear — which is, after all, the black plague of a democracy. At present there are some signs of an awakening from the long slumber, but the Alsops recall, with their patrician impudence, the years when the government was overtaken by "the increasing hankering for respectability . . . progressive embourgoisement" when "The big, basic issues are far more difficult to report and ventilate," when debate is muffled and the governmental rule is a prim pretense of happy unanimity."

As the letters fell around reporters all the more as the Eisenhower "team" or "corporation" scheme fixed its mark on American government, "journalistic curiosity which went beyond the press releases was even thought to be a mark of subversive tendencies; for the team also held the view that the country 'only needed to have faith in Eisenhower,' presumably because it was well known that he walked on the water-hole at the Burning Tree golf course." If such a remark seems impertinent caustic, readers should taste the Alsopian opinions of functionaries more minor than Humphrey (labeled with delicate irony "the former president of the M. A. Hanna Co.") or Ike. In the Defense Dept., for instance, they found "fat-faced and obscure subordinates."

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THE urbanity, the wit, the wealth of contact which colored the Alsopian odyssey make this a readable book considered as anecdote alone. But indirectly it broaches several broad questions to which neither the Alsops nor any reviewer would claim a final answer.

The great idea, the taproot assumption, of their outcry is that information —almost by definition — *has* to flow freely in a democracy. Sometimes, however, it seems to take on the nature of a panacea for all democracy's ills in their eyes — which is quite another story. The Alsops seem to base their plea for greater light on the deeper assumption that somehow, someway, it will lay a miraculous poltice on the sores made by public greed, grab and *mauvaise* and by bad taste, ignorance, political reluctance and a passion for bourgeois respectability in high places.

No one will wish to challenge their assertion that the curtain of excessive (in their recherche vocabulary "inspissated") secrecy is a danger. But can one accept the simple Jeffersonian faith that if everybody is informed, then as if by a touch of some magic wand all the debilities of democratic government will be dispelled? Can one simply brush away the questions raised several years ago by Walter Lippmann in THE PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY about the unbridled play of public opinion? Or do we, as Mr. Lippmann suggested, need a fundamental reevaluation of the role of public information, and of the pressures it creates?

And surely there is a kind of naivete in their assertion: "In the last three centuries or so, since the great nations began to divide themselves into free and un-free societies, the free have always won in the end, in their contest with the un-free." Assuming agreement about "free" and "un-free" societies, what would the Alsops say of the fall of France in 1940, itself only restored by the total armed might of the U. S.?

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PERHAPS the answer of total military might, the remedy in which the Alsops set their stern faith, is the right answer. But in raising indirectly the issues of public information and opinion, and of competence in officialdom, the authors have challenged only to skirt and avoid a full battle.

Part of the trouble is, no doubt, the equally strong assumption of the Alsops (here that what they call "the rule of the foot" is the supreme answer to political folly, as it is to reporting. That is to say, that by seeing, hearing, smelling, talking, breaking bread with hundreds of people in many climes we can find the golden choices of democratic success and drain it. As between the long view (Walter Lippmann, whom they admire, can write sanely "from a semivacation in Maine") and "the worm's eye view" they choose the latter.

Their diligent application of "the rule of the foot" has made them great reporters, but when they turn to prescriptions, when they begin to talk about what to do about something, their lack forces itself on us. Maybe it is beyond hope that reporters shall be philosophers, as it is beyond hope that many politicians will bother themselves with the long vistas of contemplation. But it is quiet and rational contemplation of events, for which the Alsops disavow both taste and ability, which is sorely lacking in daily journals.

Probably it is because we are all too busy to think. Without a market, who wants to make a product?

Knoxville News-Sentinel

THE WORLD DO MOVE

IN Hollywood, Jayne Mansfield threatens to sue a lingerie maker for using her picture to advertise padded undergarments. Says her padding is natural, doesn't need undergarments.

Which shows—one way to get publicity is to object to it.

In New York, a man gets drunk, steals a plane and lands it safely in a street, after dark. He had done the same thing two years ago.

Which shows—the law of averages isn't what it's cracked up to be.

In Los Angeles, a self-educated inventor who has a device to prevent plane collisions finally is found in a hobo camp where he had fled because he couldn't sell his idea. Now the government will spend $5,000,000 developing the invention.

Which shows—patience always pays, even if you don't have it.

In Secaucus, N. J., health officials are evicting the pig farms, famous since the Civil War as consumers of New York hotel garbage. "Socially and industrially unacceptable," says the mayor.

Which shows—time is no defense against ostracism.

In California, a lady swims 21 miles round trip from Catalina Island to find out whether it could be done. Nobody ever had.

Which shows—it can be done.

At Coney Island, after two years of diagnosis, officials discover that Olaf, the walrus, had red eyes because walruses always have red eyes.

Which shows you can't trust a walrus. What's new with you?

Force Of Example, Not Secret Plot, Challenges The West

By WALTER LIPPMAN

WASHINGTON

IN ALMOST all the talks I had in Moscow, not only with Mr. K but with other officials and with Soviet editors, I was asked what could be done to bring about better relations between our two countries.

The question is a hard one to answer. For the basic issue between us arises from the fact that the Soviet Union, and now alongside it Red China, are well on their way to achieving the leadership of Asia and of Africa. At the root of the profound and abiding suspicion which each of us has for the other lies this bid for leadership and its challenge to the Western position and to Western influence.

NO TALKING AWAY

There is no reason to think that the suspicion which divides us, and makes even modest and partial solutions difficult, can easily be talked out of existence. Although I am one of those who hopes earnestly that the rivalry can be kept below the boiling point, I am, nevertheless, convinced that even this will require a lot more than mutual expressions of good will.

The cause of the bad relations is the suspicion, felt on each side of the Iron Curtain, that the other side intends to commit aggression. The suspicion arises from a belief that in the long run neither side can tolerate the other. The Soviet Union is now entering upon the climactic years—the next seven or ten years—in which it means to surpass the United States, not in the material comforts of ordinary life but in productivity per capita. The communist leaders are certain that as they achieve this goal, the great mass of the poor and undeveloped peoples will rally to them. No doubt, wherever they can, they will promote this rally by propaganda and by infiltration and by subversion.

But we delude ourselves if we do not realize that the main power of the communist states lies not in their clandestine activity but in the force of their example, in the visible demonstration of what the Soviet Union has achieved in 40 years, of what Red China has achieved in about 10 years.

The inner moving force of Soviet suspicion is the belief that the United States and the governments of the non-communist countries will, unless compelled to do so, never allow Russia and China to consummate the revolution which they are leading in Asia and in Africa. In Moscow, and no doubt also in Peiping, they do not believe us when we insist that the rearming of Germany and of Turkey and the maintenance of a ring of air bases are defensive measures against military aggression on their part.

ROAD TO PRIMACY

For they are certain, in their own minds that they will win the primacy of Asia and of Africa not by going to war but by avoiding a war that would ruin their economic achievements. They are, like most men, self-centered and they cannot believe that we really think they will commit military aggression when they themselves are so sure that they must avoid a war. So when we talk about defensive armaments they think we are deceiving them, that our military policy is to surround them in preparation for an attack on them in order to halt their revolutionary rise to world leadership.

ACCORDING TO THE PROPHET

I am reasonably sure that this is the way they see the military issue between us. Moreover, this is what the prophet Lenin prophesied, and in the Soviet Union the authority of Lenin, as currently interpreted by the powers that be, is treated as infallible and more than human. Our policy of military containment with its forward positions on their own borders is in their minds conclusive proof that Lenin was right. They suspect us profoundly, and that is why they are stubbornly reluctant to negotiate any concession which would give us even a slight tactical, much less a strategic, advantage in case of war.

In this resistance to agreement with us they are helped by many provocative and bellicose things that have been said at one time or another by the talkative brass in the Pentagon. They are hardened also in their convictions, it must be said, by the propensity of Mr. Dulles, and in lesser degree of the President himself, to treat the conflict, not as one of empires and great states but as a religious war in which the contending positions are absolute. For this confirms their view that we are bracing ourselves for an ideological or religious war, that this war will take place unless they make themselves so powerful that it cannot take place.

WELL-FOUNDED SUSPICION

The corresponding suspicion on our side arises, as we know, from the belief that insofar as the Soviet Union and Red China gain in military power, they are certainly bound to use it as an instrument of policy in order to complete their domination of Asia and of Africa. This suspicion is, I have no doubt, well founded and it is a conclusive reason for making sure that we do not lose the race of armaments.

Our problem here is not whether we can afford to keep up the race. It is absurd to say that we cannot afford it. Nor does the problem arise from any irreparable technological inferiority on our part. For us, the crucial problem of armaments is political and psychological: how to keep the American and the West European democracies ready and willing to support armaments without their becoming so obsessed with weapons that they have neither the means nor the understanding nor the will to meet the real Soviet challenge in Asia.

SCARE CAMPAIGNS

The Soviet oligarchy can spend on armaments what it wants, and no questions asked. With us, the necessary appropriations cannot be had, or so our political leaders think, without a great scare campaign. But this scare campaign offends and alienates the pacifists and the neutralists who are the overwhelming majority in the rest of the world.

No one can doubt that the Soviet challenge is very formidable indeed. Even to a casual visitor it is evident that the only safe assumption is that the Russians have mastered the modern technology and that their bureaucracy, directed by a powerful government and working on an obedient population, is capable of achieving what they have set themselves to do.

Theirs is a grim and purposeful society, in which one who is used to the American air finds it hard to breathe. No doubt the vast machine does not work perfectly and there is private discontent and some cheating and much fixing and blackmarketing. Nor is the tenure in office of all the individuals who are now at the top of the government fixed and settled for the rest of their lives. None the less, the Soviet system is a going concern, and it would be rash to underestimate its power or to count upon any radical change of direction, much less on a counter-revolution.

THE ISSUE

I have come home convinced that the issue is the Russian and Chinese challenge for the leadership of Asia and of Africa. If we are to meet it with reasonable success, we must, I am sure, abandon the notion that the Russian and Chinese revolutions can be reversed or that the spread of communism in the surrounding countries can be contained by giving armaments to the local military commanders and by establishing our own bases.

What we need is an agonizing reappraisal of our own habits and notions. We must learn to keep ourselves armed without working ourselves up into a frenzy of threats and of fear. This is not easy for a democracy to do, but it is necessary and, once the reason for it is understood by the leaders of American opinion, it can be done.

FRIENDS, NOT ALLIES

We must learn also to win friends without asking them to be our military allies. This can be done only by encouraging them to follow the neutral course which their instinct tells them to take. The policy of military pacts to contain and push back the communist revolution is not only incapable of working successfully. Its effect is to antagonize the masses of the people and so to assist the expansion of communism.

We must, I have been convinced, reappraise and review the policy of foreign aid. As it is now practiced, it is fair to describe it as a program of subsidies to governments which are threatened with the rise of communism among their people. Without meaning to say that all or even that some of these subsidies should be discontinued, I submit that we shall not meet the Soviet challenge unless we stop looking at the underdeveloped nations as military bulwarks and bastions and adopt a new and different objective in the uncommitted world.

The communists are expanding in Asia because they are demonstrating a way, at present the only obviously effective way, of raising quickly the power and the standard of living of a backward people. The only convincing answer to that must be a demonstration by the non-communist nations that there is another and more humane way of overcoming the instmemorial poverty and weakness of the Asian peoples.

This demonstration can best be made in India, and there is little doubt in my mind that if we and our western partners could underwrite and assure the success of Indian development, it would make a world of difference. It might be decisive in turning the tide. It would put an end to the enervating feeling of fatality and of inevitability, in the sense that communism is the only wave of the future, that there is only one way of internal salvation, and that the West is impotent and too lazy to do anything but let the future go by default.

There are a number of reasons why I think India is the key country. It is, for one thing, a very big country known to all of Asia as a land of deep poverty. To make a showplace of a small island like Formosa or for that matter of Puerto Rico is a good thing to do. But it is not convincing. For the communists are proving their case in big countries like Russia and China. We shall have to prove our case, that materials progress can be had with civil liberty, in a big country.

THE NECESSARY STRUCTURE

For another thing, India has the necessary structure, including a civil service with a good tradition — something which does not exist in equal measure elsewhere in Asia, except in Japan.

But in my mind the clinching reason for making the demonstration in India is that the spiritual heritage of which Gandhi was the great teacher, is of all the ideologies of the world the most radically different from that of Leninism. Yet, though it is different, it is, like Communism, addressed to the suffering masses of the people.

I know there is a notion among many Americans that the Indians are more than halfway along the road to being communists. That notion is based in part on the fact that the Indians mean to become a social democratic state. In the main the notion that they are half-communist is based on the fact that on many issues of foreign policy the Indian government differs from ours and makes great efforts to keep on good terms with the Soviet Union and with its powerful and dangerous neighbor, Red China.

Nevertheless, the Indians who are indoctrinated in the Gandhi tradition are acutely conscious of the gulf between the Soviet system and themselves. They are not totalitarians. They are not materialistic determinists. That is more than can be said with the same confidence about quite a number of the other peoples who are not yet within the communist orbit.

NO OTHER WAY

If there is any other way of meeting the communist challenge in Asia, I have not heard of it. The tide is running in favor of communism almost, one might say, by default. Russia and China are making a demonstration to which the West is offering no alternative. I do not know where else a non-communist alternative can now be demonstrated, given the fact that only in India, outside of the communist orbit, could a successful demonstration carry conviction to the great masses of the people who are looking for a better way of life.

(To Be Concluded Monday)

The Pivot Where The Battle Turns

'Come! Come! It's High Time To Hand Berlin Over To This Gentleman'

Quote, Unquote

"Mostly, we authors must repeat ourselves—that's the truth. We have two or three great moving experiences in our lives — experiences so great and moving that it doesn't seem at the time that anyone else has been caught up and pounded and dazzled and astonished and beaten and broken and rescued and illuminated and rewarded and humbled in just that way ever before." — **F. Scott Fitzgerald.**

"Tennis looks genteel, but it's the meanest, most vicious game I know. You don't play the person, you just play the (score) board as if you were a machine." —**Sydney Llewellyn, a New York professional.**

"Life is a foreign language; All men mispronounce it." — **Christopher Morley.**

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

The Blasters Knew The Ways Of Dynamite

WASHINGTON

THIS writer has visited the chief cities where schools and places of worship have been dynamited recently and has come to the conclusion these bombings are the work of skilled dynamiters hired by a central ring of hate-mongers.

The bombings follow a pattern. The three major bombings have occurred on Sunday at Clinton, Tenn., Atlanta, and Osage, W. Va. The buildings were blown up by people who knew how to handle dynamite, not by crackpots or rabble-rousers. A rabble-rouser like John Kasper knows nothing about dynamite and would probably blow himself up if he tried to handle it.

Three Heavy Charges

At Clinton, three heavy charges of dynamite were placed in three key parts of the high school so the explosion would destroy the entire building. It did.

At Atlanta, the dynamite was placed outside the side door of the synagogue. It was a very heavy concentration of dynamite, and would have blown up most of the building had it been placed inside.

Car Started Afterward

The school at Osage, W. Va., was blown up by two heavy concentrations of dynamite obviously placed by an expert. He ran a wire to a car in a parking lot outside the school and used a hand generator to touch off the explosion. The car was heard to start right afterward.

Almost any coal miner in West Virginia can handle dynamite. But no dynamite was found stolen or purchased in that area. Besides the coal miners had been working side by side with Negro coal miners for years. They were good friends, enjoyed the finest of community relations and the school had been integrated for four years.

FBI Lags In Trackdown

The FBI has been extremely efficient in planting agents inside the Communist party and for a long time also had agents inside the Ku Klux Klan. J. Edgar Hoover has known almost every move made by the communists in the U.S. However, he has been slow about tracking down either the current dynamiters or penetrating the secret ring which probably is financing them.

Long Time Loath

—To fact the FBI and the federal government were for a long time loath to step into these bombings at all.

When the Jewish Community Center was bombed in Nashville about a year ago, Rabbi William Silverman got a phone call.

"You have two children," said an unidentified voice, "you send them to school. Better take them out of school. You wouldn't want to see them hurt, would you?"

Only By Beeper

Dr. Silverman told me that he tried to get the FBI at that time to listen in on his telephone in order to trace other calls threatening his life. But the FBI said it could only tap his phone if they put a beeper on the wire which of course would immediately reveal that the phone was tapped. To tap a phone, FBI agents explained, was illegal.

This is true. But the FBI has tapped various telephones in Washington.