

# The Nation.

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## EDITORIAL

### A VOICE IS SILENCED

The announced termination of *Harper's* magazine last week shocked us, as it should everyone who cares about the state of journalism, the state of the culture and the state of the marketplace of ideas in this country. In *The Years with Ross*, James Thurber wrote that in its early struggling years *The New Yorker* was almost discontinued by its publisher, Raoul Fleischmann. Then the principals met after the wedding of columnist Franklin P. Adams and, in the benign afterglow, someone remarked that if the magazine went under, "a voice would be stilled."

Now a voice *has* been stilled, a voice that, under the magazine's last in a distinguished lineage of editors, Louis H. Lapham, was eclectic, quirky, exasperating, occasionally brilliant, much like the Easy Chair columns Lapham contributed. To the end, *Harper's* clung to the honorable role of general magazine. In an age when magazines on dieting, weddings, gun-collecting and hairdos are designed by computers, the general magazine of ideas, opinion and the arts is regarded as something of a dodo along Mad Ave. *Harper's*, the business types concluded, couldn't attract sufficient advertising. Or was it that they were paying too much to gain new subscribers? Either way, its \$1.5 million loss this year was regarded as too much. And so its conglomerate owner, the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, did what conglomerates reflexively do: (1) try to sell it, then (2) honor thy bottom line.

We can't help wondering if the Star and Tribune Company's life were at stake, there would have been such haste to close the doors, or whether with a vast investment of business imagination, commitment, love, *Harper's* might not have been saved. There is no free lunch, but does that mean our cultural diet must be limited to profitable junk food?

**C.O. 'CAMPS'**  
Ken Lawrence

**PARK'S CLONE**  
Donald L.  
Ranard

**ENVIRONMENTAL VICTIMS**  
Ronald  
Brownstein

**BRAZIL'S  
MONETARIST  
REPRESSION**  
Penny Lernoux

**'PINEAPPLE  
FIELD'**  
W. S. Merwin

**PROXIMITY'S  
'FLEECING'**  
James R.  
McDonald

## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

### ANOTHER TRILATERAL ELECTION?

THOMAS FERGUSON  
and JOEL ROGERS

In his race to the Republican Presidential nomination, Ronald Reagan violated an elemental taboo of American politics. He named names. He made the Trilateral Commission a political issue.

This spring, Reagan's repeated attacks on his leading rivals' ties to David Rockefeller and other Trilateral financiers catapulted the once obscure organization into national prominence. For the first time in its seven-year history, the commission gained wide notice from the nation's press.

But the flurry of clippings produced little of substance. Eastern liberal papers like *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* and major business magazines like *Business Week* and *Forbes* sharply downplayed the organization's importance. Some even suggested that popular interest in its workings reflected an incipient social pathology. More conservative journals clearly appreciated the commission's power. But by dwelling on the unrivaled personal authority of Mr. Rockefeller, their coverage often left the impression that the organization operates in a political vacuum, free to bend the universe at will.

Nowhere did the major media identify the commission for what it is—a vehicle for highly mobilized transnational business elites profiting from the world economy's rapid integration. Nor did the press explore the mounting resistance this integration has inspired, the strain it puts on traditional structures of international relations, or the havoc it has wreaked on domestic political alignments.

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recent Supreme Court case gives a rare glimpse at what actually lies beneath this proposal, which the lawyers usually obfuscate in the jargon of tax theory.

The case concerned the Mobil Oil Corporation and the state of Vermont. Vermont thought that Mobil should pay the relatively modest sum of \$76,000 on sales of \$27 million for the three years 1970 to 1972—not an outrageous tax bill. Mobil's lawyers weren't satisfied, however. They wanted to reduce the company's bill to the grand total of \$1,871.90 on the ground that Vermont was taxing "foreign income." The Supreme Court told Mobil, in effect, "Nothing doing."

Under the Mathias-Conable-Jones bill, however, Mobil would win. It would have paid to Vermont three years' taxes totaling about \$2,000—one-eighth of the current price of a single full-page advertisement in *The Washington Post*. Or, looking at it another way, two-tenths of 1 percent of the \$1-million-plus annual salary of Mobil's president William Tavoulareas.

The bill also would strip the states of their most promising tool for distinguishing a company's "foreign" income, which they cannot tax, from its U.S. income, which they can. As commerce becomes increasingly multinational, this is emerging as the frontier problem in tax administration. It is devilishly complex, and the multinationals want to keep it that way. [See Rowe, "Tax Dodging at the State Level," *The Nation*, April 15, 1978.] A company like Mobil is set up as a lawyer's maze of more than 200 separate subsidiaries, located hither and yon. Trying to tell how much of the income of this corporate organism is attributable to Oregon or Canada or Massachusetts or the Netherlands Antilles is akin to trying to tell how much of the hop on Nolan Ryan's fast ball is attributable to the pitcher's legs, back, shoulders, or arm.

Several states, moving beyond the more sluggish Feds, have developed a simple formula approach, called the unitary method. This method cuts through the intricate accounting arrangements by which a multinational corporation can divert its income to the books of subsidiaries in tax havens such as the Bahamas and the Netherland Antilles. The Supreme Court has consistently upheld it as a reasonable way for a government to distinguish between U.S. and foreign income. And so the companies turned to Congress to get it banned.

Their aim is for the states—and the Federal Government—to treat them like Mom-and-Pop stores. They want tax auditors to have to work their way through the tangle of transactions among a Mobil corporation's 200-plus subsidiaries, invoice by invoice. This would require them to second-guess what the prices of these transactions would have been if the subsidiaries were independent businesses. The paperwork and bureaucracy are enormous. And with tax-haven countries like the Bahamas tightening up their bank secrecy laws, untangling the mess may become well-nigh impossible.

Banning the unitary method would cost California alone more than \$500 million. Half of that amount would go to multinational oil companies, which just received a tax bonanza from California's Proposition 13—a total cut of \$42 million in Los Angeles County alone—not to mention

**AVERAGE STATE/LOCAL  
INCOME TAX RATE—1977/78**

*Individuals 1977*

Income	Tax Rate
\$32,000	2.9%
\$16,000	1.8%

*Oil Companies 1978*

Phillips	1.6%	Exxon	0.7%
Shell	1.6%	Standard Indiana	0.6%
Texaco	1.5%	Continental	0.3%
Mobil	1.5%		

Source: A.C.R., Tax Notes

oil price decontrol.

Worse, the Mathias-Conable-Jones bill would amount to a new preference for companies that invest abroad instead of adding to plant and productivity in the United States. The corporate bleeding of the U.S. economy is becoming a hemorrhage. Figures recently released by the Commerce Department show that U.S. companies are stepping up their capital investment in foreign countries by 26 percent, while their investment here will grow by only 11 percent. The Mathias, et al. bill would give aid and comfort to this America-last trend.

Furthermore, the bill would subtract hundreds of millions of dollars from state revenues at a time when many states are in fiscal straits. It would deprive oil-consuming states in particular of their rightful share of the oil-profit bounty for which their citizens are paying.

The basic problem is that Congress has been listening too much to the legal theorizing of corporate lawyers and to selected, self-serving corporate anecdotes. Instead, it should get the facts. It should subpoena the state tax returns of a sample of large companies to put their complaints of over-taxation to the test. "I will bet you," North Dakota's combative Tax Commissioner, Byron Dorgan, told the House Ways and Means Committee, "that you will find, in nine cases out of ten, substantial amounts of unreported income." Mobil might prefer not to advertise the results of such an audit in *The Washington Post*. □

# Trilateral

(Continued From Front Cover)

Only in such a context can the real Trilateral story be told: why the commission emerged under Nixon, came to power with Carter, and now must contend with the rise of Ronald Reagan.

In August 1971, Richard Nixon shattered the foreign economic policy consensus that had guided the United States for more than a generation. Despite constant opposition and mounting costs at home, U.S. policy since the close of World War II had promoted the liberalization of the world

economy. Free trade, the integration of once restrictive economic blocs and global U.S. military authority were the Holy Trinity of the postwar system. As its chief architect, America was also the system's chief beneficiary. The United States' overwhelming postwar economic power assured that it would benefit from the free flow of goods and capital, as did American dominance of the international monetary institutions and arrangements that eased the growth and flow of trade.

But with the revival of the world economy, strains in the system began to appear. The aggressive export policies of Western Europe and Japan wounded American domestic enterprise. The export of capital to these more profitable regions by international banks and multinational corporations drained investment from the home economy. And the fabulous costs of maintaining the U.S. military empire seriously strained the American balance of payments and ultimately the entire international monetary system. Imports flooded U.S. markets. In 1971 the first absolute trade deficit in recent U.S. history appeared.

**N**ixon responded with his controversial New Economic Policy (N.E.P.). He unilaterally devalued the dollar and suspended its convertibility to gold. He heated up the trade wars by imposing a 10 percent surcharge on virtually all U.S. imports. He made blunt requests to Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan that they slow the tide of textiles surging into the United States and pressured Japan and Western Europe to relax accumulated trade barriers, thus permitting greater U.S. access to their domestic markets.

For harassed domestic producers, the N.E.P. was welcome relief and prudent policy. But for multinationalists who had continued to profit from the liberal system, it represented the crudest sort of nativist regress. Such prominent free traders as C. Fred Bergsten, Philip Trezise and J. Robert Schaezel deserted the Administration for posts at the Brookings Institution and the Council on Foreign Relations, and Nixon was denounced by virtually all of the "responsible" press. Writing in the council journal *Foreign Affairs* a few months after the inauguration of the N.E.P., Bergsten made clear the depth of multinational reaction:

In the summer of 1971, President Nixon and Secretary Connally revolutionized U.S. foreign economic policy. In so doing, they promoted a protectionist trend which raises questions about the future of the U.S. economy at least as fundamental as those raised by the abrupt adoption of wage-price controls. In so doing, they have also encouraged a disastrous trend which raises questions about the future of U.S. foreign policy. . . . Both the U.S. economy and U.S. foreign policy for the relevant future hang in the balance.

[Nixon] violated the letter and the spirit of the reigning international law in both monetary and trade fields. . . . The new economic policy went much too far. It set impossible objectives, both quantitatively and qualitatively. . . . It is wrong for the American economy. . . . It courts disaster for U.S. global interests.

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Ever alert to the subjective moment in history, David Rockefeller sprang into action. Early in 1972 he began circulating ideas for a new association of transnational elites with a stake in continued world economic integration. Drawing its membership from the United States, Western Europe and Japan, the triad of great capitalist powers, the association would promote intercapitalist cooperation in the face of mounting protectionist challenge. A commission document later summarized Rockefeller's concern:

[T]he overriding goal is to make the world safe for interdependence, by protecting the benefits which it provides for each country against the external and internal threats which will constantly emerge from those willing to pay a price for more national autonomy. This may sometimes require slowing the pace at which interdependence proceeds, and checking some aspects of it. More frequently, however, it will call for checking the intrusion of national governments into the international exchange of both economic and non-economic goods.

Broaching the idea at a meeting of the Bilderberg Commission (a largely Western European business group that still awaits its first *Washington Post* feature article), Rockefeller received encouragement from Bendix chairman Michael Blumenthal and others. By July, he was presiding over a meeting at his Pocantico estate of core participants in the new project. Among the Americans present were George Franklin, a longtime official of the Council on Foreign Relations; Brookings Foreign Policy Studies director Henry Owen; Brookings senior fellow Bergsten; Ford Foundation president McGeorge Bundy; Council on Foreign Relations chairman Bayless Manning, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Among those prominent Europeans and Japanese attending were Karl Carstens, now President of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Kiichi Miyazawa, member of the Japanese Diet and former Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Within a year, the commission was officially launched. Initially funded by Rockefeller alone, the organization soon broadened its financial base. Support later came from a variety of other individuals (including David Packard of Hewlett-Packard and George Franklin), corporations (General Motors, Caterpillar Tractor, Deere, Exxon, Honeywell, Cargill, Cummins Engine, Kaiser Resources, Bechtel, Weyerhaeuser, Texas Instruments, Coca-Cola, Time Inc., CBS, Wells Fargo Bank) and foundations (Kettering, Ford, Volkswagenwerk, Lilly Endowment, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, German Marshall Fund, Sumitomo).

Although Canadians now play a larger role, and changing conflicts in the world economy have driven some corporations away, the basic institutional structure of the commission has changed little since its inception. Structure reflects strategy: to shape public policy not through overt mass mobilization but through pressure on select arenas of world power and appeals to a small, attentive public of elite world decision makers.

At the commission's core is a vast array of international bankers drawn from firms like Chase, Bank of America, Lloyds of London, Bank of Tokyo, Barclays and Compagnie Financière Holding. (Notably absent has been the

U.S.-based Citibank.) Around them are grouped smaller investment banks like Lehman Brothers Kuhn Loeb, Baring Bros., and Brown Bros., Harriman; multinational corporations like Boeing, Coca-Cola, Deere, Caterpillar Tractor, Cargill, Cummins Engine, Sony, Toyota, Fiat, Dunlop, Rolls-Royce and Thyssen and the major corporate law firms which serve them all.

Next come the links to the public sphere. Never before has a business organization attained such global access to the major institutions of elite opinion formation. Commission membership has included directors and high-level officials of such leading media as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, Kyodo News Service, *Japan Times*, *La Stampa*, *Die Zeit*, *Financial Times*, CBS and *The Economist*. Strong ties to the commission's natural allies among internationally oriented research centers, foundations and think tanks are also evident. In the United States, an especially dense network links the Trilateral Commission to the Council on Foreign Relations, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, American Assembly, Brookings Institution, Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government and several business schools. Last but not least, the commission has recruited leading politicians from America and abroad.

In the United States, the high degree of overlapping membership between the Trilateral Commission and the top-level personnel of the current Administration has become a bad joke. Besides Carter himself, more than two dozen Trilateralists have served on it, including Walter Mondale, Michael Blumenthal, Cyrus Vance, Harold Brown, Andrew Young, Paul Volcker, John Sawhill and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Membership was also extended to such "moderate" Republicans as George Bush, Elliot Richardson and John Anderson. (It may be worth noting that of the roughly dozen elected politicians invited to membership, two are self-described born-again Christians whose policy views depart sharply from most fundamentalists.) Foreign notables have included Raymond Barre, Prime Minister of France; Otto Lambsdorff, recent Minister of Economics for the Federal Republic of Germany, and former Japanese Ambassador to the United States and adviser to the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Ryuji Takeuchi.

Adopting a flexible working structure, the commission soon broke up into a series of task forces that issued a steady stream of policy recommendations and reports (known collectively as *The Triangle Papers*). Included were discussions of international trade and commodity exchange, energy, domestic and international monetary reform, North-South conflict, labor management and the famous "crisis of democracy" afflicting advanced industrial states. Together these comprised a general program for achieving a liberal integrated world economic system, secure from protectionist disruption and domestic upheaval.

Only parts of this program have been implemented. Aside from its service as an executive recruitment agency for the current Administration, the commission's greatest American success has been the maintenance of a relatively liberal

foreign economic policy. In the face of protectionist pressures that probably would have wrecked earlier free trade coalitions, the Carter Administration has given little ground. While occasionally retreating behind orderly marketing agreements, Carter has resisted steel industry demands for aggressive anti-dumping enforcement. He has offered only modest relief to beleaguered domestic auto producers and even succeeded in pushing a major trade liberalization package (the Multilateral Trade Negotiations Agreement) through Congress.

Elsewhere, implementation of the Trilateral Commission's proposal for periodic economic summits between the chief executives of major industrialized countries has helped achieve some coordination of national macro-economic policies (although the much-heralded "Three Locomotives" strategy for joint reflation of several years ago was almost immediately derailed). And the commission's strategy of integrating Third and Fourth World elites into the international economic system has been furthered by the liberalization of American foreign policy, notably in Africa and the Caribbean, although rising oil deficits in most of these countries are likely to bring a renewed U.S. emphasis on preserving "order" at the expense of "human rights." But even these limited successes are now threatened by forces well beyond the commission's control.

Every day brings bad news about the state of the international economy, thus darkening prospects for preserving crucial liberal domestic economic coalitions like that between big banks and big oil. While international bank recycling of petrodollars has usually generated profits large enough to keep them in alliance with international oil companies, oil price rises now send the dollar down, driving a wedge between the oil companies and the banks, who watch



their holdings hemorrhage into stronger currencies. Further price rises, and the resultant difficulties in recycling petrodollars, can only exacerbate this tension. (It is probably significant that although Exxon helped fund the commission in the beginning, oil companies have not since been prominent on it.)

Détente's demise, which has been more rapid and complete than most Trilateralists desired, also poses a major problem. The commission has had a complicated and changing attitude toward East-West relations, but has never shared the complete animosity toward the Russians manifested by such groups as the Committee on the Present Danger.

Relations with Japan are another source of concern. With Japanese imports now threatening to do to the U.S. auto industry what they have already done to the TV, textile and steel industries in this country, the ability of the commission to defuse potentially explosive conflicts between the United States and Japan is being severely tested. Several Trilateralists, including independent Presidential candidate Anderson, have been active in the Japan-United States Friendship Commission, and the Trilateral Commission itself has promoted numerous unofficial contacts. When leading electronics firms organized the Semiconductor Industry Association to lobby against their Japanese competitors, Texas Instruments, whose chairman, Mark Shepherd, is a longtime commission member, refused to join. But it is unlikely that such gestures can check domestic opposition to the Rising Sun.

Commission proposals for the "reform" of American political institutions have also enjoyed only limited success. In 1976, after some internal debate, it published Samuel Huntington's famous report on the U.S. *Crisis of Democracy*. But the increased centralization of the Presidency and insulation of American Government from popular pressure that Huntington called for have been strongly resisted.

Carter has begun to restore the autonomy of the Central Intelligence Agency and to reaffirm a variety of Presidential prerogatives. Key court decisions in the *Snepp*, *Stanford Daily*, *Progressive* and other cases have given the Government new powers over the press and individual freedom of expression. And only a few weeks ago a Congressional coalition led by, among others, Trilateralist John Brademas overcame a century of objections and reaffirmed new procedures for limiting Federal spending that strongly concentrate power in the budget committees.

But Congress has resisted entering into international agreements that would otherwise tie its hands and remains generally hostile to all attempts to share U.S. power with other states in organizations like the International Monetary Fund, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development or the International Energy Agency. Fearing Congressional opposition, the Administration recently deserted international negotiations over a proposed substitution account at the I.M.F., which would have institutionalized the now informal pressures applied by foreign governments

to protect the value of their dollar holdings.

Beyond all these problems, two great question marks hang over the commission's future influence in the United States. One concerns its relation to American labor, the other its ability to dominate, if not control, U.S. Presidential politics.

As a coalition top-heavy with international banks and predominantly high-technology multinationals, the commission is a forum for the cooption of labor unions, rather than their outright destruction. From the start, it recruited to its ranks a select number of high-level labor leaders, including current A.F.L.-C.I.O. president Lane Kirkland. And along with an array of institutions like the German Marshall Fund (whose chairman, William M. Roth, is a longtime executive committee member), the commission has promoted "quality of working life" programs, often with minor labor participation. (In the same vein, we might note that the Brookings Institution, which has strong ties to the commission at all levels, now has senior staff personnel working on projects of the United Auto Workers' Progressive Alliance.)

But the most important developments between the commission and organized labor are probably implicit in the recent behavior of the Carter Administration. In a radical departure from past Government practice during severe economic downturns, the Administration is formally consulting major union officials as it systematically deflates the incomes of the majority of American workers and the poor. As part of his widely heralded National Accord with labor, Carter has instituted a labor-management Pay Board and committees for long- and short-range planning. If this effort to transform the A.F.L.-C.I.O. of the 1980s into the A.F.L. of the 1930s succeeds, it would mark a profound shift in American politics. Whether it can succeed in the face of rising imports, offshore relocation of industrial plants and shrinking social budgets at all levels of government, is, perhaps, dubious.

Meanwhile, in national politics, the coalition the commission forged around Jimmy Carter in 1976 is rapidly dissolving. Only a few months ago, the prospects for a repetition of its earlier success in controlling the Presidency were bright. Though Carter was threatened, he continued to recruit unprecedented numbers of major appointees from the commission's comparatively tiny ranks. (In addition to Paul Volcker, recent Trilateralist appointees include Presidential advisers Hedley Donovan and Lloyd Cutler, while Trilateralist Anthony Solomon was promoted to Volcker's old position at the New York Fed.) And if Carter stumbled, Edward Kennedy was waiting in the wings of the Democratic Party. Advised by such mainstream multinationalists as Robert McNamara, Trilateralist Felix Rohatyn and Walter Heller, Kennedy at that time was resolutely championing the cause of free trade. (His public shift to supporting curbs on steel imports—and later autos—came only after several defeats by Carter, and in time for the Pennsylvania primary.)

In the Republican Party, with Trilateralist William Brock as national chairman, and John Anderson and George Bush (David Rockefeller's personal choice) receiving excellent notices from the Eastern press, the commission's position

also appeared strong, especially after the Iowa primary.

But subsequent events have changed all that. The decline of Carter, Reagan's nomination triumph and the Kennedy candidacy's limited utility as a vehicle of the protest vote all present the commission with its most serious domestic challenge to date.

In response, many Trilateralists are already regrouping around Anderson's independent candidacy. Trilateralist George Ball has endorsed Anderson, and negotiations are now underway to bring senior figures from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Foreign Policy Association into the campaign. And in striking contrast to the scant attention paid to Citizens Party nominee Barry Commoner, extensive elite media coverage of Anderson's independent bid continues.

At the same time, a delicate attempt to come to terms with Reagan has begun. For the commission, the question is whether Reagan can be induced to compromise on foreign policy and the most vital parts of the domestic program, or whether he is a fully committed nationalist and protectionist ideologue. In short, is Reagan the Richard Nixon of 1968 or the Nixon of the early 1970s?

In 1968, the candidate of the Republican right, after defeating Nelson Rockefeller, performed a famous volte-face and accepted Rockefeller aide Henry Kissinger as his national security adviser. He also banished such prominent conservative campaign advisers as Richard Allen, William Casey and Martin Anderson to the outer darkness of his Administration. Allen, in particular, lost several bitter fights with Kissinger.

Now Casey, Anderson and Allen are back as senior advisers to Reagan, and so far they seem to be in control. Although columnists for *The New York Times* and other Eastern papers have repeatedly urged Reagan to "reach out" to the rest of the Republican Party and involve more "moderates" in his campaign, the candidate has offered them little. He has recruited most of his defense and foreign policy advisers from the extreme right, as yet declined to guarantee Brock's tenure as head of the Republican National Committee (though Casey has indicated some willingness to compromise) and refused to give Kissinger a major role in the campaign. And a massive campaign led by conservative stalwarts Jesse Helms and Richard Viguerie has

built pressure for a conservative as running mate.

None of this, however, forestalls highly stylized signaling between Reagan and the commission. Last year, after Carter appointed Council on Foreign Relations directors Hedley Donovan, Lloyd Cutler and Paul Volcker to their current positions in his Administration, the council sought replacements. Two of their choices were unsurprising. Volcker's position went to outgoing Treasury Secretary and former Trilateralist Michael Blumenthal. James Hoge of *The Chicago Sun-Times*, also a commission member, was selected to replace Donovan. But the third appointment was less predictable. To serve out Cutler's term, early this year the council chose former Nixon Treasury Secretary and current Bechtel president George Shultz. This spring it renominated Shultz for a full term of his own. He has recently emerged as a prominent Reagan campaign adviser. Shultz's close friend and Bechtel associate, Trilateralist Caspar Weinberger, has also been brought in as one of the campaign's domestic advisers. As *Business Week* noted, quoting a prominent campaign source, "the battle for the heart and mind of Ronald Reagan is on."

More than a century ago, another ardent nationalist, Henry Clay, claimed that he would "rather be right than be President." Ronald Reagan may not have to make the choice. If he secures the Presidency without making major concessions to the Trilateral establishment, he can sharply blunt its power in American politics. But even if concessions are extracted, it is difficult to believe they would be any more enduring than those once made by Richard Nixon. An election-year coalition between Reagan and the Trilateralists would be desperately unstable, torn between the Republican Party's predominantly protectionist base and the convulsions of the global economy.

Even assuming the commission can resurrect Carter or help the improbable Anderson candidacy to success, its prospects for dominance of American domestic politics grow increasingly dim. In the end, faced with widespread domestic mobilization of the nationalist, protectionist and militarist elites to whom Reagan has given voice, the Trilateral Commission may be the next victim of the competitive world economy it was organized to preserve. □

## LETTERS.

(Continued From Page 770)

on our mistakes for the next twenty years." Again, his misreading is revealing. Our consistent point is that the Indochina wars were not "mistakes." He writes that journalists could not be sure whether the war was "necessary" at the outset ("who, in the beginning, knew how the Vietnam War would end?"). "The professors," with the benefit of hindsight, can make judgments that the poor working journalist could not make

at the time. But we did not criticize the U.S. war because it was "unnecessary" or "ended badly." Rather, we applied the same criteria we apply in the case of Russian invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Afghanistan. U.S. aggression, at the time when Langguth was Saigon bureau chief for *The Times* and before, was wrong, however it turned out. Langguth simply cannot comprehend how such a perspective can be applied to his own state; its hidden and

open terrors, no matter how extensive, are always either necessary or random errors.

Langguth's defense of the press is inadequate for other reasons too. In several of the cases we discussed, extensive efforts were made *at the time* to convince the media to print the facts. For example, our analysis of Timor appeared while the media were concealing the facts about the massacres and U.S. responsibility. It and many other more