



• May . . . the month passed with no nuclear war reported! Oh glory! Oh grandeur! Oh blessed relief! The little birds twirp twirp in the trees above. The worried Profs. of romance languages and their assorted allies wave placards and petitions below. The Spaceship Earth has slipped through another month. Does this happy pass irk Ronald Reagan? Will he redouble his efforts on behalf of nuclear holocaust and the destruction of wildlife next month? It is a possibility that your average peace demonstrator cannot rule out. He would be much relieved if someone else were in the White House, someone with the eyes of a baby seal, someone you could believe in.

• Early in the month the fiend Reagan announced a two-stage plan in which the United States and the Soviet Union might reduce their nuclear arsenals by a third. Unrest broke out anew in Poland. And Mr. Claus von Bülow was sentenced to 30 years in the hoosegow for trying to murder his wife twice. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* continued its fanatical campaign against jogging by reporting that middle-aged men are seven times more likely to drop dead while jogging than while sitting in a chair. Speaking at the National Conference on Sexual Victimization of Children, poet and singer Mr. Rod McKuen stated that he had been sexually abused in his early years by an aunt and uncle team. About precise details Mr. McKuen remained coy, but he believes that "the only means of prevention . . . is everybody who cares about anyone must get involved." Kids could be headed for difficult times.

• The anti-nuke poetry is fevering Japan where crowds of Admiral Yamamoto's descendants held an enormous "die-in" to demonstrate one of the more obvious points of the anti-nuke credenda. In London, the Duke of Edinburgh notified a somewhat downbeat meeting of the Council for Environmental Conservation that the British task force in the Falklands would probably be killing a sizable number of whales, due to naval sonar's inability to discern significant differences between cetaceans and hostile submarines—though hostile submarines consume considerably less sea life, discharge much less

solid waste, and in all probability are less of a threat to the world's oceans.

• In related matters, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to animals publicly deplored a London pest control firm's plan to exterminate wild cats inhabiting subways near North Middlesex Hospital where they have disturbed the chaste thoughts of many local ladies by surreptitiously rubbing their furry sides against the ladies' legs. Rhode Island's Supreme Court upheld a lower court conviction of Mr. James F. Tweedie who finished off a stray cat by cooking it in a microwave oven. And the anti-vivisection movement in Britain and America continues to gain adepts: In London stalwarts of the Animal Liberation Front—all from the species *Homo sapiens*—freed a large number of rabbits from the death row of a laboratory; and the actress Miss Julie Christie has completed work on the British-American production of *The Animal Film*, castigating the "deadness of the mind that can commit these atrocities [medical experiments on animals] without blinking, every day, exactly in the same way they are being committed, for example, in El Salvador today."

• Meanwhile in Madison, Wisconsin two aborted fetuses greatly embarrassed the medical corps at Madison General Hospital by refusing to go quietly into their medically prescribed garbage bag. Actually, one, a 26-week-old girl, lived for 27½ hours; the other, a 24-week-old girl, lived 9½ hours. In Michigan, Truesdale Chapels, Inc., an esteemed mortuary accused of mistakenly cremating the corpse of Daniel P. Sullivan, reached a \$75,000 court settlement with Mr. Sullivan's heirs and assigns. Mr. Jeffrey G. Janor of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, was fined \$50 for publicly bastinadoing his automobile with a tire iron. And those 17,000 fetuses and embryos discovered earlier this year in a repossessed shipping container in California will be commemorated in a religious service endorsed late in the month by President Reagan.

• In church news, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, oracle and chief executive officer of the Unification Church, Inc., with branches in most major American cities and all plush sub-

urbs, was found guilty in Manhattan of conspiring to defraud the government and of filing false income-tax returns. On May 12, the Rev. Billy Graham brought his trip to the USSR to a sublime culmination by speaking in tongues, to wit: the mysterious tongues of the Soviet Politburo. Surrounded by agape newsmen, the Hayseed Pope declared that he had seen no evidence of religious repression in the Marxist-Leninist dream-come-true state and that the churches he had visited were at least as full as those in his hometown—though surely back home the Rev. Graham's flock is not so heavily armed or so well-equipped with pocket transmitters. The Roman Pope, John Paul II, visited the Portuguese shrine of Fatima despite a zealot's attempt to impale him on a large knife, and late in the month the Pontiff visited England in a blue and yellow helicopter. Meanwhile in Salamanca, Spain, hundreds of villagers nearly lynched a self-proclaimed anti-pope, the Rev. Pope Clement, after roughing up eight of his "bishops." Finally, woebegone liberals were given a brief little pick-me-up when a bolt of lightning killed Sinbad, a horse ridden by our President in the TV series "Death Valley Days."

• By uncovering irrefragable evidence that Miss Ann Landers has been recycling columns from the mid-1960s, investigative reporter Mrs. Barbara Sancken of the *Daily Leader* of Pontiac, Illinois has made a powerful bid for a Pulitzer prize. The news slammed many of Miss Landers's 70 million readers into the mulligrubs, but conservatives were quick to observe that the enduring interest of the columns is proof of the existence of those eternal verities about which Dr. Russell Kirk has written so rhapsodically and repeatedly. Mr. Jack "Treetop" Strauss has won the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas, and Iranian Revolutionary Guards beat hell out of a Teheran dentist when they caught the rascal furtively stuffing women's colored underwear into the trunk of his American-made automobile.

• Evidence that Soviet fashion-designers are really serious about toppling Paris as the world's fashion capital was provided in prodigious abundance at an exhibit in elegant

Smolensk. There a display of folk costumes featured a woman's dress made wholly from the air bladder of a giant fish. In Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, most of those 15 million insect larvae taken hostage by disgruntled students perished when the dunderheads failed to maintain the proper temperature. A former St. Louis member of the Guardian Angels youth patrol was convicted of lewd and lascivious behavior, though he still denies that he ever lowered his pants and exposed his private parts except to attend to exigent bodily functions and then only in privacy—"I got better taste than to do something like that," declared Mr. Burnie M. Hill, 24.

• On the education front, deputy Pennsylvania education secretary Mr. Ronald H. Lewis, who was recently nominated to become New Jersey's education commissioner is denying charges that his "doctoral study" was a bouillabaisse of plagiarisms. Acknowledging that his "study" contained long passages from other books without proper citation or even quotation marks, the rising educator explained that his study at Fairleigh Dickinson University had been a "flexible" and "experimental" doctoral program. According to the *Newark Star Ledger*, 66 of the 121 pages of Mr. Lewis's experimental and flexible study contained material copied verbatim and without citation. Warfare continues in the Chicano Studies Department of California State University, Los Angeles where faculty in-fighting over jobs and tenure has been accompanied by sabotaged automobiles, burnt-out garages, and other violent acts. At the center of the storm is a faculty-member Bert Corona, 63, a Marxist-Leninist militant with no college degree but the majority of the Chicano dons behind him. Finally, laxness continues to spread throughout academe as can be seen by the decision of Professor Barry Singer of California State University at Long Beach. Professor Singer has decided to delete from his popular course, "Psychology of Sex," homework options of engaging in homosexual, group, or extramarital sex—though the Prof. still believes such lucubrations "can be a very powerful growth and learning experience."

—RET



Peter W. Rodman

## NORMAN PODHORETZ AND THE VIETNAM WAR

Morality had everything to do with it.

The Vietnam war, in retrospect, can be judged on three levels: the strategic, the practical, and the moral.

The strategic rationale for American involvement in Indochina was, at bottom, containment of what was seen as a new form of Communist military challenge. In an era of American nuclear superiority, the new danger was limited wars and revolutionary insurgencies. Vietnam was considered a test case of Communist—particularly Chinese Communist—theories of revolutionary guerrilla warfare which had global implications and had to be blocked if aggression was not to be encouraged.

This strategic case for the war, hindsight suggests, was seriously wrong. Soon after President Johnson's major escalation of American involvement in 1965, China found itself convulsed for nearly a decade in the internal chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Even Lin Biao's manifesto of September 1965 on "people's war," with its menacing pronouncements on global guerrilla warfare, told the North Vietnamese essentially that China would give them moral but not significant material support. Within a few years, moreover, heavy-handed Soviet military pressures against China forced China to call off its revolutionary militance and turn, in some desperation, to the West. The North Vietnamese assault on the South turns out, in retrospect, to have been mainly the reflection of Hanoi's 30-year drive for regional hegemony, not a Soviet or Chinese global campaign. Whether this was a geopolitical menace justifying a massive military intervention by the United States must be seriously doubted.

On the practical level, the Vietnam war was also found wanting. This in my view was its undoing in the American domestic context. After three years of exertion,

inconclusive in result, all optimistic visions of how well we were doing were shattered by the 1968 Tet offensive. The Johnson Administration was absolutely correct that the offensive was a military disaster for the Viet Cong. Nevertheless, it was a shock to Americans and deeply disillusioning; if such an assault could be mounted after



three years of American sacrifice, we did not seem to be close to succeeding in our objectives. The judgment was not wrong.

The great irony of Vietnam is that the one level on which the doomed effort seems vindicated by events is the moral one—the very level on which the war was so virulently attacked by the intellectuals, journalists, and political leaders of the antiwar movement. One of the more seductive arguments of the war's critics, particularly in the last few years before the final debacle, was that to cease support for the non-Communist governments and let the war end was the most humane thing we could possibly do for the peoples of Indochina. This turned out to be totally, disastrously, sickeningly wrong.

The "re-education" camps of the Indochinese Gulag, the boat people, the Khmer Rouge genocide, the lethal chemical warfare against Lao tribesmen and Cambodian villagers—they leave no room for ambiguity on this score. The moral results of defeat were not "inconclusive." Every American President who justified our commitment to Indochina, indeed our whole foreign policy, in terms of the brutality of the Communist system was proved, in the end, correct.

The irony that the war is perhaps most defensible on precisely the flank most viciously attacked is the main theme of Norman Podhoretz's new book, *Why We Were in Vietnam*.<sup>\*</sup> We were trying to save the peoples of Indochina from a tyranny which they rightly abhorred and which we had every right to help them resist. Podhoretz indeed criticizes most of the American administrations that conducted the war for not making the moral case forcefully enough; they relied instead, he feels, on strategic or geopolitical arguments which were less compelling to the

<sup>\*</sup>Simon and Schuster, \$13.50.

Peter W. Rodman served on the National Security Council staff in the Nixon and Ford Administrations.