

That is the image we're left with of Cynthia Helms's Iran: a place where they know about Alexander the Great, and how to pronounce Shahbanu, and why the Shah can't eat caviar. The only thing missing is the real world.

—Joseph Nocera

**All You Need To Know About the IRS: A Taxpayer's Guide, 1981 Edition.** Paul N. Strassets, Robert Wood. Random House, \$11.95.

**America's Energy.** Robert Engler, ed. Pantheon, \$17.95. Reading this anthology—a collection of energy articles from *The Nation*, dating back to 1919—you're struck by one thing: how often they were wrong. Some of the articles are brilliantly prescient, but others are way off base on matters where the facts now seem obvious. So you wonder—how much of the magazine's current crop of articles can be believed?

Not all. *The Nation* has a weakness for cast-of-thousands conspiracy theories and miracle 30-second energy solutions, like burning kelp in your fireplace. Yet on one vital point, *The Nation's* writers—especially Fred J. Cook and Robert Sherrill—have been lonely voices of reason. Namely, they've been saying all along that the “energy crisis” is the corporate scam of the century. When the next *Nation* anthology comes out in another 100 years, people will look back and know how right they were about that.

—Gregg Easterbrook

**America Through the Eye of My Needle.** Josephine Alexander. Dial, \$9.95.

**The Atom Bomb Besieged: Extraparliamentary Dis-sent in France and Germany.** Dorothy Nelkin and Michael Pollak. MIT, \$17.50.

**Black Representation and Urban Policy.** Albert K. Karnig, Susan Welch. Univ. of Chicago, \$20.

**Best Evidence: Disguise and Deception in the Assassination of John F. Kennedy.** David S. Lifton. Macmillan, \$15.95.

**The Cambodia File.** Jack Anderson, Bill Pronzini. Doubleday, \$13.95. Syndicated columnist Jack Anderson was not satisfied that his May, 1978 columns recapitulating the mass murder and physical destruction of the Cambodian nation by the communist Khmer Rouge had conveyed the enormity of the tragedy, or the degree of blame to be placed on the American government. So he had a novel written about it.

The fictionalization manages to trivialize the horror of the situation to the level of an ordinary mystery. Stereotype characters—the boozing Hemingway-esque journalist, the CIA-State Department operative who ends up questioning his country's role, his beautiful and mysterious Cambodian mistress, and the dedicated Jewish social worker—are suitable for a serialized soap opera.

The attribution of malice and neglect to the U.S. government is overly simplistic; Sihanouk and Pol Pot were neither invented by Nixon and Kissinger, nor as susceptible to manipulation as the book implies.

The story does get told, however, and raises (without answering) the larger question of why men slaughter each other. Hitler wanted to purify the white race; Pol Pot wanted to purify the Khmer nation. Both went to grotesque lengths to gain political power; so far, only one has gotten his just reward.

—Pat Martin

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**The Company That Bought the Boardwalk: A Reporter's Story of How Resorts International Came to Atlantic City.** Gigi Mahon. Random House, \$10.95. Is Resorts International, the gambling consortium, really an underworld operation? *Barron's* reporter Gigi Mahon tries to prove it. The book starts slowly, and you may be tempted to junk it in favor of a *Kojak* rerun. (The first 50 pages are soap-opera stuff in which Mahon congratulates herself for her “sleuthing,” which seems to have consisted mainly of checking the clip file and calling for an appointment with Resorts' CEO.) But don't give up, because it gets good. In the end, you are convinced that Resorts is so sleazy, Ozzie Myers should be its PR director.

Mahon deserves credit, but just how much is hard to tell. Many reporters have written extensively on Resorts, and Mahon makes no attempt to differentiate between what she uncovered, and what she cribbed from others. The troubling thing is that even though you believe her (since the subject is gambling, you know in your heart Resorts must be guilty of something) the stone-cold, courtroom-class evidence isn't there. Mahon shows Resorts' officials to be creepy, its methods shoddy, and its expense account a guaranteed-employment plan for hookers. These days, though, that could apply to anybody but the Missouri Synod.

Mahon wants to nail them so badly that she lowers herself to: "A librarian from Atlantic City said there were an awful lot of charges that Resorts International was too close to the legislators writing the casino laws." So at first, you're tempted to conclude that the flaws in the book demonstrate the limits of investigative reporting. They don't. Given what Mahon can all-but-legally prove, they demonstrate how easy it is for crooks to stay respectable.

—G.E.

**Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research, Vol. 2.** *Norval Morris, Michael Tonrig, eds. Univ. of Chicago, \$19.50.*

**Economic Liberties and the Constitution.** *Bernard H. Siegan. Univ. of Chicago, \$19.95.*

**"Gizelle, Save the Children."** *Gizelle Hersh, Peggy Mann. Everest, \$12.95.*

**How to Register a Copyright and Protect Your Creative Work.** *Robert B. Chickering, Susan Hartman. Scribner's, \$12.95.*

**Ike's Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment.** *Stephen A. Ambrose, with Richard H. Immerman. Doubleday, \$14.95.* It's not hard to imagine what the folks at Doubleday were hoping when Ambrose proposed this book. Scandal! Assassinations! Fatherly former president seen with mysterious blonde in Algiers cafe! What they got is a little more prosaic, but a good book nonetheless. Ambrose shows that Ike was workmanlike and perceptive in gathering intelligence and passing "disinformation" to the enemy. Ambrose is right in giving Ike credit where deserved, but wrong in sanitizing his failures. The CIA's overthrow of Arbenz in Guatemala comes out sounding like a heroic blow for democracy. In fact it was a clumsy attempt to protect the assets of the United Fruit Company, and it hurt our image in Latin America deeply.

**John Marshall, Defender of the Constitution.** *Francis N. Stites. Little, Brown, \$11.95.*

**Louis D. Brandeis and the Progressive Tradition.** *Melvin D. Urofsky. Little, Brown, \$11.95.*

**Memorandum for the President: A Strategic Approach to Domestic Affairs in the 1980s.** *Ben W. Heineman, Jr., Curt Hessler. Random House, \$17.95.* If you've never taken one of those how-to-be-successful self-help courses, I will now save you the tuition by revealing the entire contents of every one of them: 1) Have a Positive Mental Attitude; 2) Set Goals.

This is a self-help book for presidents, with roughly the same message, particularly the part about Goals. The "strategic presidency" that Heineman and Hessler propose would involve dividing domestic issues into the five or ten on which the president would personally concentrate, a couple dozen more on which he would work in conjunction with Cabinet members, and the rest, which can be left to the assistant secretaries. Clearly we have left the decade of the Imperial Presidency far behind; this is an attempt to preserve some scrap of influence and authority for the poor guy.

The authors were hot young domestic policy professionals in the Carter administration, impeccably credentialed and impressively knowledgeable about all aspects of domestic policy. As a *tour d'horizon* of government, their book is quite valuable. It's even pretty readable, although the authors, alas, would never stoop to the you-were-there school of government-service reminiscence. (You begin to long for a sentence like "Joe Califano slammed his fist on the

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