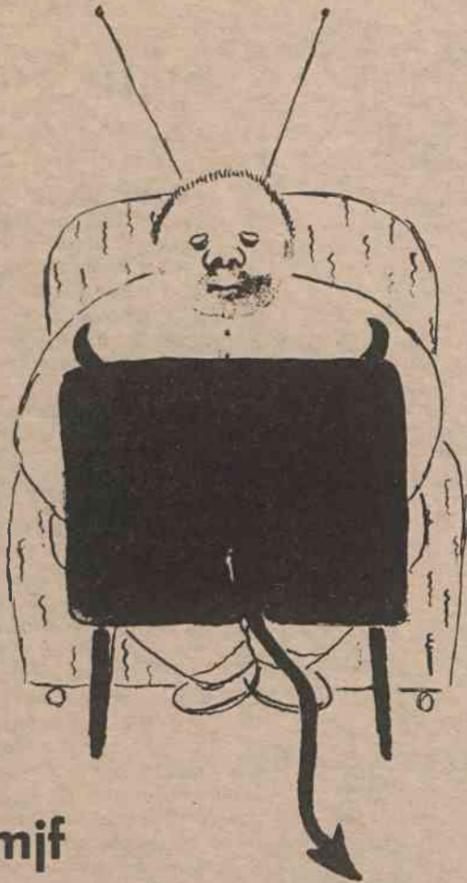


Outlook . . .



by mif

I've been reading a lot about television lately. Two books in particular have caught my attention: *How To Talk Back To Your Television Set* by FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson and *Seven Glorious Days, Seven Fun-Filled Nights* by Charles Sopkin. The former is pretty straight-laced, sound and formidable arguments about what is wrong with tv and intelligent suggestions about how to improve it, written by a man who should know. Sopkin's book is more bizarre, an account of the seven outrageous days and nights he spent bleary-eyed before six (working) tv sets and the cultural shock to which he was exposed. It's a funny, well written book with plenty of insight about the medium of television and programming (or lack of it).

In his conclusion, here's what Sopkin has to say about the state of American television:

"'Vast wasteland', Newton Minnow's contribution to Americana, does not really convey what commercial television in this country is all about. 'Gigantic garbage dump' is hardly more accurate. Well, what can one say? That the networks are trying? They obviously aren't. And I have serious doubts that, given all the proper circumstances, they would even know how to begin to schedule sensible programming.

What I felt after my week of television was, first, utter exhaustion, and then despair. No matter how you evaluate it, no matter how you study it, you come to the frightening conclusion that, in some basic way, television represents true America. If this is so - and I believe that it is - then all one can be is saddened at this reflection of the American people."

All of which backs up what I've been thinking for a long time: To be of any value at all, television must be improved. Why? You might as well ask. Because, according to Nick Johnson, "There are 60 million homes in the United States and over 95 percent of them are equipped with a television set. (More than 25 percent have two or more sets). In the average home the television is turned on some five hours forty-five minutes a day. The average male viewer, between his second and sixty-fifth year, will watch television for over 3000 entire days . . ."

Take a Look

Have you ever watched a whole day and night of tv? It really is a mind-blowing experience. The game quiz shows, the mawkish soaps, old films (30's vintage, never a decent one), afternoon re-runs of "big hits" from years ago, the inane evening line ups of banal variety shows, lousy movies, those appalling weekly series ("Mod Squad" is my fave rave), and those wonderful, enlightening, boring and generally stupid specials. The only salvation is the talk shows (Carson, Cavett, Griffin) and they are becoming increasingly stereotyped and sleep-inducing as well.

And the bitch of it is that television could be, should be such a creative, useful medium. But it probably won't be any time soon. Unless something is done.

The reason I'm saying all this is because it relates directly to us, perhaps more so than anyone else. We plan to someday be artists. But since ideals have a way of tarnishing and because there are those basic economic facts of life, we may one day have to work in this very wasteland (in any capacity, as actors, dancers, writers, musicians, etc.). We should be concerned because to do so will include, unfortunately, a great deal of artistic prostitution.

I'm not sure exactly what can be done, but for starters, I suggest that you get a copy of Nick Johnson's valuable little thesis (Bantam Books, \$.95, 245pp.) and also, for your own amusement and information, find Sopkin's gem (Ace Books, \$.75, 255 pp.). And spend some time watching the mindless pap that goes down on the nation's airwaves. Perhaps if enough people find it as blatantly stupid as I do, action on some levels might be initiated. At this point (now we have Henry Fonda playing a cop on a new weekly series), anything would be appreciated.

letter to the editor

Dear Mick,
A parable:

I have a friend who recently got into John Lennon's statement, "The dream is over." Now he hates almost all new music, denies all of his adventurous nature and has stifled most of his intimate friendships.

I should also have another friend who recently got into John Lennon's statement "The dream is over." Now he wants to make better music and realizes that the real work has just now begun.

I very simply place my vote with my second friend. How about you and your readers and friends?

Sincerely, Dee Moses

RAP from Israel by Karen Wilson

Israel: Hebrew-Arabic, Farmland-Industry, Culture-War, Joy-War, Peace-War.

The Camerata Singers toured Israel for nine days. "What in the world were we going to do in nine days?" But something said, "Wait." I waited-I found I was wrong.

We arrived at 5:00 P.M. Israeli time in Tel Aviv. Saying "Israeli Time" is funny-strange, because it sounds like the Israeli's time, as if time were theirs. But quietly, skillfully, they seem to have taken over that country's time and made it work into big things, noisy things.

Haifa is a big, beautiful port, with purportedly every kind of industry. But in the region of Galilee, on farms, in fields, there is the sound of plants growing.

We traveled all over Israel, absorbing at a rate of some 10 gallons a minute, Israel's rich Jewish-Moslem-Christian-Roman-Turk-Crusader history. Our guide was Josef Schmetshek. We were not allowed to use "Sir"-only Josef. He was somewhere in his fifties and wise enough for it. He came from Vienna to Israel when he was younger, fought during the Second World War. His wife and her family were in a concentration camp. She was the only one in the family that survived it. These things came out during our visit to the Ghetto Fighters Museum that holds pictures from the files of some of the concentration camp doctors and commandants. It serves as a very personal memorial, remembering also the resistance fighters in the ghettos.

- Proud Country -

This came out too: "6,000 years of culture got us nothing. Twenty-two years of a good army and we are one of the most respected countries in the world."

I do not know how the Arabs would handle the country if they had it. Did you ever dig on a white man trying to tell a black man the muck he is getting into, equalizing himself in this country? The black man might say, "Well, baby, if it'll keep you off my back...." What can you say about chemical plants and industries and munitions plants, but that's the way it goes.

The morale on both sides is marvelous and miraculous. Arabs are beautiful and so are the Israelis (though I've heard that they can be proud to the point of the obnoxious, concerning their achievements. We all agreed they had a right to be). The laugh of the Israeli has no shame and his look is direct. Men only get old there when here they are called very old. You don't really need a retirement plan. But the Arabs are proud too. I suppose that is what the fighting is all about.

- Sang in Jerusalem -

I should - no, I must tell you that the Camerata Singers sang well and did their school proud. Music students would ask where we were singing next so that they could hear us again.

We were part of a competitive festival for American colleges that had its growth stunted by poor communication. Not 16, not 9, but 3 choruses participated! So, instead of cut-throat competition, we ate in people's homes, visited a Kibbutz and the office of the Minister of Tourism. We never sang in Tel Aviv. I think I'm happy for that. It would have been nice to see city-lights again, but not that nice! Jerusalem is city enough.

We sang in an around Jerusalem: At Breur High School, a beautiful boarding high school in a very modern section of Jerusalem. At least it looked modern at that time of dark, foggy night. We sang twice at halls in the city- paid performances. One of these before an audience that hadn't expected us: high school, junior high and working people coming to relax after working hard - they were rowdy. There was no standing ovation, but relatively quiet listening. Something to be proud of. (We sang four quick songs.)

- Beautiful Children -

We sang at the Dr. Israel Goldstein Youth Center where Jewish kids from 29 countries grow up into men and women at the same time they are becoming Israeli. Being Israeli: I got some shocks! We were shown some rooms: boy's rooms. The beds were made, the floors looked spotless: beautiful enamel tiles set in the clay floors.

I asked the little boy who spoke beautiful English if the rooms always looked that way. He smiled beautifully and said, "Of course," or something like that. I asked a friend from Lebanon and he said, "Of course," as if there were nothing strange about a kid having a clean room. Upon discussion, he said, "Well, maybe American children are spoiled."

These are beautiful people. They waited Sabbath supper for us, they taught us their dances and their songs. They entertained us; we entertained them. They weave and sew beautifully and have the only course in watch repair in Israel (so we understand) and they carve the most striking and artistic olive wood carving that we saw during our stay. And the first bombs of the six day war fell in their parking lot. They fought and lived and learned outside and in the shelters. The kids are from 12 to 18 and they don't seem any older than they are. No one seemed to be what we would call worldly-wise - just very strong.

We sang in the traditional birthplace of Christ, between where he was born and where they laid him in a manger. Of all or any times that I have sung in my life- there is where it seemed most right: *Exultate Deo* and a Polish lullaby to Him and then we left. There happened to have been some American priests there so we were taped and had our pictures taken. But, believe me, it wasn't for that that we sang.

- Kibbutz Life "Together" -

The evening meal in the Kibbutz named Massanik has no meat. Meat is for lunch. There was potato salad and some other kind. There were pickles, olives, peppers and olives. There was yogurt that really cleaned your mouth out, pudding, cheese, bread, grapefruit and there were olives, hot potatoes and tea.

We went to see the home of a married couple in this Kibbutz, established more than 30 years ago. There was a bedroom and a living room, and a patio in front. There were modern colors, a modern sofa and a very nice bedspread - in fact, about as modern as a sensible hard-working couple married

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N.C. ESSAY Staff Quiz

Match the position with the people
Correct answers next week

Editor
Managing Editor
Copy Editor
Feature Editor
Sports Editor
Photographer
Arts (2)
Reporters (5)
Advisor
Business Manager
Hovering Guru
Publisher

- Ed Schloss
- Gavin
- N.C.S.A.
- Kathy Fitzgerald
- Michael J. Ferguson
- Fred Avery
- Mary Beth Zablony
- Jon Thompson
- Sam Barcelona
- Buzbee
- Mary Jane White
- Tom Kovaleski
- Alexander Marsh
- Corlind Jones
- Alan Zingale
- Donna Jean Dreyer
- Kevin Dreyer

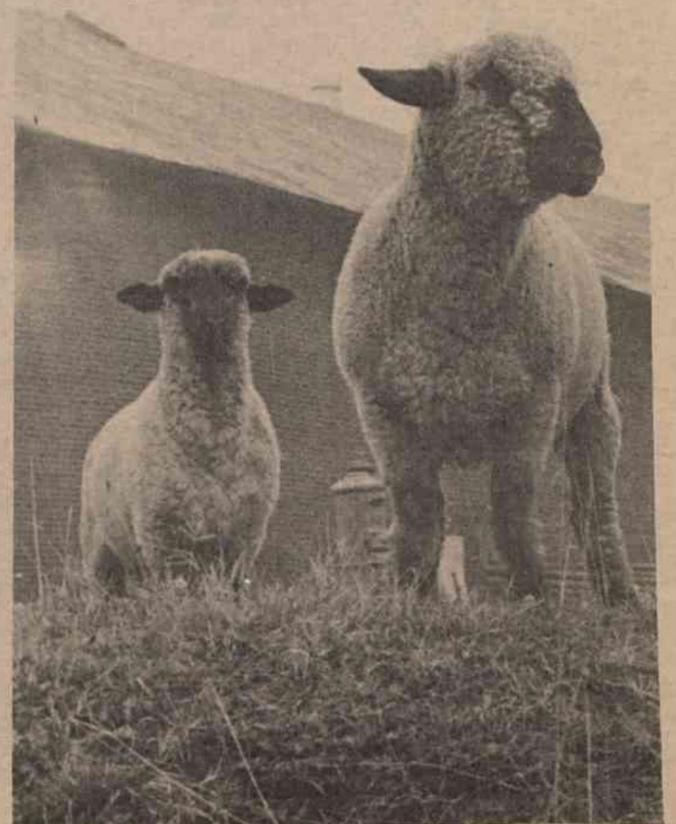


Photo by Barcelona