close scrutiny. For example, Soviet defector Vladimir Sakharov, whose much-used description of Andropov's apartment appeared in John Barron's 1974 book, provided a strangely similar description of his own apartment in his 1980 autobiography. (Sakharov also claimed to have seen *Valley of the Dolls* during his 1964 visit to the Andropov abode; the book was published in 1966.) Accounts of Andropov's appearance and manner came from Russian émigré Boris Vinokur, who, it turns out, once saw the Soviet leader only from afar. A Soviet dissident (now in Israel) said by the *Post* to have been entertained by Andropov denies the story.

The early mistakes of the press, Epstein concludes, stemmed not from sinister Soviet "disinformation" but from its own uncritical thirst for "color," obligingly provided by self-appointed "Andropov experts." The newspapermen should simply have admitted their ignorance. "He [Andropov] stands at the head of Russia," says Epstein, "but we don't even know how tall."

TV News Exposure And the Polls

"Television News Coverage of Presidential Primaries" by C. Richard Hofstetter and David W. Moore, in *Journalism Quarterly* (Winter 1982), Univ. of South Carolina, College of Journalism, Columbia, S.C. 29208.

The contenders for next year's Democratic presidential nomination are already jockeying for position. But if they are betting that gaining wide network TV news coverage by winning big victories in the early 1984 primaries is the key to building a national following, they had better think again.

So argue Hofstetter and Moore, political scientists at the Universities of Houston and New Hampshire, respectively, citing the experiences of Democrats George McGovern and Jimmy Carter.

In 1976, an early win in the January Iowa caucuses and a surge in media attention left unchanged Carter's standing in national Gallup polls of Democrats. His February 25 New Hampshire victory did boost his support from seven to 17 percent. Yet, despite a decline in network coverage, Carter's victory over George Wallace in Florida two weeks later pushed his rating up another nine points. One month later, during the New York and Wisconsin primaries, he garnered some 80 minutes of network TV coverage, nearly double the amount given him in New Hampshire. Yet it had no effect on his popularity. After beating the favorite, Senator Henry Jackson (D.-Wash.), in Pennsylvania in late April, Carter recorded an 11 percentage point gain in national polls, reaching 40 percent support among Democrats.

George McGovern's 1972 campaign followed a similar pattern. TV commentators named the South Dakotan the de facto victor in New Hampshire after Senator Edmund Muskie (D.-Maine), the front-runner, fell short of his own predicted victory margin. Yet, despite this "media

victory," McGovern's national support among Democrats remained at about five percent until one month later, when he won his first actual primary victory in Wisconsin.

The importance of early "media victories" is overrated, conclude Hofstetter and Moore. To build a national following, candidates must show that they can win consistently at the polls in truly significant contests, not just excite TV newsmen.

The View from The Fringe

"The View from the Fringe" by Fred Barnes, in *Washington Journalism Review* (Jan.-Feb. 1983), 2233 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.

Spokesmen for the New Right and their left-wing opponents seldom agree on anything, but on one matter they see eye to eye: The nation's major news organizations treat them unfairly, albeit in different ways.

One complaint is more common on the Right, writes Barnes, a Baltimore *Sun* reporter: Reporters tend to label its spokesmen as extremists. Right-wing activists are tagged, pejoratively, as "ultraconservatives," while their Left counterparts are described not as ultraliberals but as "progressives."

Ideologues on both sides agree that Washington newsmen judge success or failure by parochial standards. Nannette Falkenberg of the National Abortion Rights Action League notes that while her group has been working to elect "pro-choice" state legislators, reporters focus only on the group's influence in Congress. "If the political class isn't talking about something," adds Jeffrey Bell of the conservative American Enterprise Institute, "reporters don't know about it."

The media's habit of "blowing hot and cold" on subjects also fuels charges of poor coverage, says Barnes. Newspapers and TV spotlighted the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) when George McGovern and several other prominent liberal Senators were defeated in the 1980 elections but dismissed NCPAC after its apparent failure to score again in 1982. Yet NCPAC attracted many more donors during the latter campaign. Its true influence, Barnes suggests, has never been accurately gauged.

To the Left, the chief problem is "institutional" distortion: Partly due to sloth, journalists rely almost exclusively on government and "establishment" sources for news and comment. Conservatives, on the other hand, see a liberal bias in the press corps itself. Moral Majority spokesman Cal Thomas contends that newsmen practice "subtle censorship," barring, for example, pictures of aborted fetuses as "too emotional" while film footage of slain Palestinians is standard TV fare.

Barnes concedes that the critics are often correct. Yet he notes that events can change journalists' perceptions. After the 1979 Three Mile Island accident, the confusion of government and industry sources cost them credibility among newsmen; antinuclear activists gained. American fringe groups, he suggests, should "take heart."