

PRESS & TELEVISION

*When Newsmen
Look at Newsmen*

"Media, Rate Thyselves" by Michael J. Robinson, in *Washington Journalism Review* (Dec. 1983), 2233 Wisconsin Ave. N.W., Suite 442, Washington, D.C. 20007.

U.S. journalists are often criticized for being too "negative" about the people and institutions they describe. They may be, says Robinson, director of the Media Analysis Project at George Washington University, but at least they are consistent: These days, journalists are also hard on one another.

Robinson surveyed network TV news broadcasts and six major newspapers and newsmagazines during the first quarter of 1983 to see what the Fourth Estate said about itself. The search yielded 93 editorial commentaries and hard news stories. Thirty pieces were neutral in tone. Among the remainder, negative items outnumbered the positive by 3 to 1.

The major news media-related story during the survey period concerned a Jacksonville, Alabama, TV crew that filmed an attempted self-immolation without intervening to stop it—clearly "bad press" for journalism. On other matters, commentators offered explicit criticism, ranging from Milton Friedman's outburst of annoyance, in *Newsweek*, over the media's "liberal bias," to Bill Moyers's critique of "shallowness" in TV news, aired on the CBS Evening News.

Many of the jabs were self-serving, notes Robinson. Print journalists needed their counterparts on the network news shows, who in turn chided local broadcasters. (Later in the summer, the networks gloated over the case of Chris Craft, a Kansas City TV anchorwoman who sued her employer, Metromedia, charging sex discrimination.) The *Wall Street Journal* ran a long article about the networks' troubles with lawsuits for defamation and libel. Robinson found one consistent exception to the snipe-at-thy-neighbor pattern: the *Washington Post's* ombudsman Robert McCloskey, who six times discussed criticism leveled at the *Post* and sided with the critics five times.

It is fortunate that newsmen enjoy harping on the weaknesses of their rivals, Robinson concludes. Otherwise, who would police the press?

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Anti-Zionist Jews

"The State of World Jewry" by Norman Podhoretz, in *Commentary* (Dec. 1983), 165 East 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

The repercussions of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, designed to eliminate the Palestine Liberation Organization's strongholds, are still being felt among Jews around the world, but only a few have turned their backs on the Jewish state.