

criminals. Bernstein and Woodward were fortunate to have their primitive instincts as police reporters still very alive and alert. It remains astonishing to me that the Pulitzer Prize jurors managed to rationalize themselves out of giving them the prize for national reporting. The *Washington Post* as a newspaper received a prize for its Watergate coverage, which was all right, but Bernstein and Woodward should have shared the individual prize as well.

Did this brilliant reporting really make a difference? If James McCord, the ex-CIA man, had not decided to tell the truth to Judge John J. Sirica at the end of his trial, the truth might never have been confirmed. If President Nixon had not submitted L. Patrick Gray for confirmation as permanent director of the FBI, the pressure on John W. Dean might not have mounted to critical intensity. Without the televised confessions of McCord, Dean and Jeb Stuart Magruder, the Senate Watergate Committee hearings would have had far less impact.

In short, it took a confluence of several different personalities and events to bring a just resolution of the Watergate drama. An outspoken judge, a good Senate committee, and several guilt-ridden participants in the conspiracy all played their parts. The press was important—as it usually is—not for forcing a particular event to occur or for unearthing a specific fact but for creating the climate of opinion, the social context, in which events took place. If all of the newspapers had been apathetic in their news coverage and slavishly pro-Nixon in their editorial comment, the judges, prosecutors, senators and guilty insiders might have acted differently. Many local and state scandals, after all, go uninvestigated and torpid; status quo-minded local newspapers allow that to happen.

But in an open society most public officials are willing to do their duty and most private citizens are willing to testify if the prevailing climate of opinion encourages them to do so. When the *Washington*

*Post*, the most powerful newspaper in the nation's capital, and—less consistently—the *New York Times*, the most powerful newspaper in the nation's communications capital, kept publishing revelations and editorializing pointedly on them, the Watergate story could not die. Mr.

Nixon was right to fear and hate the press. In retrospect the Agnewesque antipress campaign of the first four Nixon years looks less like a diversionary political and ideological tactic and more like a necessary measure of self-protection by wrongdoers.

## They Could Not Trust the King photographs by Stanley Tretick; text by William V. Shannon; foreword by Barbara Tuchman

(Collier Books; 199 pp.; \$4.95 [paper])

### James Finn

When Watergate is finally laid to rest, its vast, cancerous, putrescent body consigned to history, the epitaph should read: *It was no accident.*

"The Watergate burglary was like a loose thread. When pulled, it unravelled a whole pattern of illegality within the Nixon Administration." Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein were the two reporters who tugged hard on that loose thread, and *All the President's Men* is a good swift narrative account of *how* they did it. In *They Could Not Trust the King* William V. Shannon, whom I have just quoted, concentrates on the "whole pattern of illegality" and tells less *how* than *why* it came to be. Until Watergate is resolved, all accounts will be truncated, treating only part of the action. Stanley Tretick, the photographer, and Shannon have here focused on the hearings of the Senate Watergate Committee. Those who watched the hearings on television last summer will see here the familiar faces of the principal participants, caught in characteristic but revealing gestures and expressions. It would take someone with the literary gifts of Norman Mailer or Murray Kempton—and with their readiness to draw unwarranted profound inferences

from superficial appearances—to convert these fine pictures into moral commentary. My own temptation to indulge in physiognomy is reduced to nullity by Shannon's excellent commentary.

"Watergate is a unique scandal," Shannon asserts. It differs from other political scandals because it is an insider's attempt, not principally to gain wealth but to crush political opposition. It differs too, because for "the first time in history" an incumbent President has been accused of major crimes which, if proved in court, could result in a prison sentence. The Senate hearings concentrated first on those attitudes and policies of the Nixon Administration that led to the Watergate burglary, and second on the cover-up intended to obscure the relation between the lowly burglars and the high officials whose creatures they were. The hearings proved that there had been, emanating from the White House, an organized campaign of espionage and sabotage, much of which was illegal. Some of the people involved have been tried and sentenced, others await trial, and the future of the chief executive is in doubt.

The details of how that conspiracy took place and the disclosures of

the main actors are, in turn, titillating, shocking, amusing and truly terrifying. It *did* happen here. But the most serious and difficult question remains why. Why did so many bright, industrious young men docilely incline their wills to the illegal and unethical bidding of their superiors? Why did older men, already successful in their professions, participate in this historically unique scandal? Why did men who are in charge of our intelligence gathering and law-enforcement agencies bend them criminally to partisan purposes?

To these questions Shannon gives sharp, clear responses. The cult of success underlies the entire Nixon effort. "The cult of success is a debased version of the Protestant ethic. It holds that salvation is wholly an individual matter, that material success is the fruit of virtue, and therefore that it is a proof of godliness. The serious flaw in this ethic is its defective sense of the community. A gospel so strongly oriented to individual effort and attainment is weak when it comes to setting moral limits in politics, a sphere where individual success—the victory of one candidate—is far less important than the welfare of all. As Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has observed, 'Politics is not a means of rewarding personal virtue. It is above all a means of meeting public necessities and fulfilling public hopes.' It seems paradoxical that Nixon, who leads a blameless personal life, who does not smoke or play cards or womanize, who drinks sparingly and is a devoted family man, is known to his opponents in politics as 'Tricky Dick.' Yet the disjuncture between private virtue and public amorality is inherent in this individualist ethic."

Nixon attracted to himself over the years aides who responded to this ethic. And they, largely ignorant of the history of the continuing American experiment, of political philosophy, of a public ethic, and careless if not contemptuous of constitutional safeguards, gathered under them ambitious bright young men who were eager to advance

their careers and share, even if at great remove, in the power of the White House. "It was no accident that there were so many willing accomplices on his staff before and after the crime of Watergate." Shannon's exposition of this critique is brief but compelling. And his observations are incisive. Some typical examples:

On Jeb Magruder: "If Magruder had been of ethnic background and had attended a more plebeian school, he would have been recognized immediately as that familiar urban type: the hustler."

On Maurice Stans: "To those who cherish it, money can bring a sense of invulnerability and provide its

own absolution. Maurice Stans is one of money's true believers."

On H.R. Haldeman: "As a witness before the Senate Watergate Committee, Haldeman used the talents of the advertising man in the service of the advance man. He had a simple message to sell; everything was John Dean's fault."

On Sam Ervin: "In a society that worships youth, he proved the soundness of Plato's view that nothing beats a wise old man."

There will be other fuller books on Watergate and this will one day be superseded. The reader of this book is entitled to hope that when that happens the author of at least one of those other books will be William V. Shannon.

## War and Politics by Bernard Brodie

(Macmillan; 514 + xii pp.; \$8.95)

### Bruce M. Russett

Bernard Brodie has been a student of war and politics for more than thirty years. He has watched generals and politicians take the United States through three major wars and use the threat of war almost continuously—sometimes wielded overtly as during the Cuban missile crisis, always held with latent force as with the nuclear deterrent. He has absorbed much and has added to it a comprehension of classical writings that few other American civilian strategists can match. From observation and scholarship Brodie has learned and can teach those who will hear.

Two themes are played throughout the book. Neither is original (how many of our ideas really are?), but the skill and intricacy with which they are developed is notable. The first and major theme, drawing heavily on Clausewitz, is that "war takes place within a political milieu from which it derives *all* its purposes . . . . The influence of the

purposes upon the means must be continuing and pervasive." The minor theme is that the people least able to appreciate Clausewitz's lesson are precisely the professional managers of violence, the military. As a result, "the civil hand must never relax, and it must without one hint of apology hold the control that has always belonged to it by right."

The major theme is important just because so many people, by no means only soldiers, forget it. One fights for a purpose, "a war must have a reasonable political objective with which the military operations must be reasonably consonant." Professor Brodie is dubious as to how often those who go to war really do have such an objective, or how effectively they are able to hold their sights on it once they become mired in the bogs of war. He can never be accused of harboring an affection for war. The American Civil War and World War II, with "the destruction of Hitler and his abomina-