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NATION JOINS FISA SUIT

The Bush Administration's disregard for constitutional principles was once again made glaringly apparent when, on July 10, 2008, President Bush signed the FISA Amendments Act, granting the federal government nearly unchecked authority to conduct surveillance of its citizens' communications with other countries—and of some entirely domestic communications as well. The amendment flagrantly disregards core constitutional values and needlessly expands the government's ability to spy on Americans, all in the specious name of protecting national security.

In keeping with *The Nation's* long tradition of defending the rights and freedoms that define this country, the magazine joined with numerous other rights organizations to file a lawsuit immediately following the passage

(Continued on page 8)

A COUNTERCULTURE ROAD MAP

A Living Picture of the Left, The Nation Guide to the Nation (Vintage Books, \$19.95) is a guidebook for and about the progressive community—its organizations, recreations, hangouts, diversions and modes of activism. Forthcoming in January 2009, the book is a collaborative reader, a collection of suggestions from our friends and readers, especially and particularly *Nation* Associates. Richard Lingeman, a senior editor at *The Nation*, is the editor of the radical and countercultural guide. He spoke with former intern Sousan Hammad about the experience of editing the book.

How did you get involved with this project?

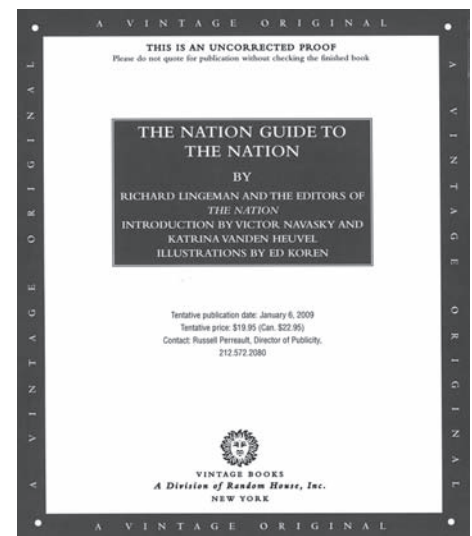
Victor [Navasky] first came up with the idea of a *Nation* Guide back around 1995. I drew up an outline at the time, but the project was shelved. Probably too many other pots on the stove. Then, in late 2006, he revived the idea, and I managed to excavate that original outline from the middens of my files. It was obsolete, so we started over with me drafting proposals and serving them up to Victor, who batted them back with ideas and suggestions. It went through many drafts and then we gave it to Chris Calhoun, former *Nation* advertising director but now a big-time literary agent. He found the perfect home for it at Vintage Books, and *The Nation's* bank account benefited.

What was the idea behind the project?

The idea was twofold: first, to provide a service to our readers and the left community by compiling goods and services and political tools; and second, to promote solidarity and community among us. Of course, we had many models, from the Zagat guides to the Sears Roebuck catalogue. I think my main model and inspiration was the countercultural best seller of the 1970s—the *Whole Earth Catalog*—only we intended *The Nation Guide* to be more political, in keeping with the magazine's tradition: a kind of *Whole Left Catalog*.

What was the research for this book like? Did you get a lot of help from *Nation* subscribers?

We proceeded pretty systematically. I outlined all the possible categories of entries



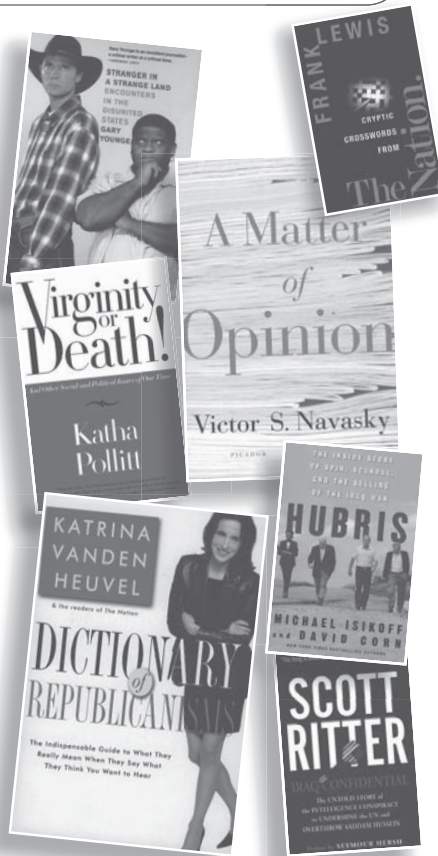
(a list that was revised as we went along and received suggestions or made serendipitous discoveries). Then, with the great help of two former *Nation* interns working full time on the book—Max Fraser and Thaddeus Kromelis—we cast our nets out broadly, using phone and Internet. At the end, with the deadline breathing down our necks, we drafted an entire new intern class to do a crash search to fill out some final categories, including “Sex...Romance...Love?” I think they liked that one the most. *Nation* readers were also a great help. We regularly polled *Nation* Associates for such things as bookstores, restaurants and reading clubs in their neck of the woods. Our wider readership also sent in ideas, as did editors

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and contributors. This help was invaluable, adding to the guide's geographical reach and authority. Our readers are our best source of information on the left in America.

How did you decide what to include?

We decided in part on the basis of our readers' suggestions—which is to say this is a selective guide, not a comprehensive one. It has the virtue of including the things suggested by readers or uncovered by our researchers, giving it a dominant *Nation* flavor, yet it also reflects the wider left community. I

also tapped our far-flung network of contributing editors, in particular our writers who specialize in reporting on various fields such as the environment. And then there were some great "finds"—Stuart Klawans coming up with notes on the 25 greatest political films of all time, editorial board member Phil Green (a retired Smith College political science professor) on left-leaning mysteries, and Eric Alterman and Danny Goldberg's list of "anthems of the left," which are great fun.

The book will be available for sale in January 2009 at www.thenationmart.com. ■



AN INTERN ANTHOLOGY

Here is an excerpt by Katrina vanden Heuvel from the introduction to a new collection of *Nation* intern writings—***Intern Nation: Writings From the First Thirty Years***.

When Amy Wilentz, Nick Goldberg, Julie Just and Alexander Stille arrived at *The Nation* in 1978 as the first "class" in *The Nation* Internship Program, little did they know that the next 30 years would see more than 700 interns following in their trailblazing footsteps.

The program has produced an extraordinary cohort of editors and writers, as is evident from the pieces in the first-ever *Nation* intern anthology. Out early next year, this anthology contains a sampling of the best work by writers who interned at *The Nation* during the program's first 30 years.

The program's success is a tribute to the vision of Victor Navasky, who initiated it, in partnership with The Nation Institute, when he was editor of *The Nation*.

In return for the vital role interns play in putting out the magazine, they receive training that helps them move on to careers in the media and related fields. Most writers and journalists will tell you that break-

ing in is the hardest thing to do. Victor made it a lot easier.

Robin Epstein, now a reporter for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, feels that her internship "ranked right up there with the Columbia Journalism School as excellent preparation for newspapering and freelance writing." Writer and *Guardian America* editor Michael Tomasky says, "At the risk of sentimentalizing matters, I'll say outright that I owe my current station—I'm not Arthur Kent, but I'm doing all right—to having worked at *The Nation*. More to the point, I learned a lot of things about journalism, politics and literature that I wouldn't know otherwise."

I know my internship changed my life. I learned how to think, question, write and edit. During my one-year internship (the program wasn't as well structured back in 1980!), I wrote a cover story, archived the papers of the great *Nation* editor Carey McWilliams and witnessed Amy Wilentz persuading Victor to publish a lead editorial

on the assassination of John Lennon. And my internship led to a “real” job a few years later—as assistant editor at *The Nation*.

Victor once observed that “the *Nation* Intern Alumni Association constitutes a guerrilla network in the establishment media—I’m not sure whether it’s a good or bad thing!” That network now includes more than 500 alumni who work for too many media outlets to count. Here’s a partial list: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Ms.*, *Vanity Fair*, *Details*, *The Atlantic*, *Rolling Stone*, *Premiere*, *The New York Observer*, *The Village Voice*, *El Diario*, *Washington Monthly*, *Legal Times*, *The Hartford Courant*, *World Policy Journal*, *Socialist Review*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS, KQED, Pacifica, Democracy Now!, NPR, BBC, Alternet, Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, Al-Jazeera and Al-Fajr.

At one time, the Washington editors for three of the major nonestablishment political magazines were former *Nation* interns: David Corn at *The Nation* (he recently left to head *Mother Jones’s* DC bureau), Ken Silverstein at *Harper’s* and Michael Tomasky at *The American Prospect* (now at *The Guardian America*).

Some of *The Nation’s* finest journalism is produced by former interns, including regular contributors Liza Featherstone, Don Guttenplan, Richard Kim, Maria Margaronis, Eyal Press, Scott Sherman, Bruce Shapiro and Amy Wilentz. Several of our bureaus are led by intern alumni: Mark Gevisser, a prominent South African journalist and author, reports from Johannesburg, and Margaronis and Guttenplan, our husband-and-wife team, head up the magazine’s London bureau.

In 2007, Jane Spencer became the former-*Nation*-intern cohort’s first (and, we predict, not the last) Pulitzer Prize winner for her contributions to *The Wall Street Journal’s* reporting on China. Two interns from the UK have risen to political prominence on their native heath: Edward Miliband, elected a member of Parliament in 2005, is minister for the cabinet office in the Labor government, and Nick Clegg, also a member of Parliament and leader of the rival Liberal Democrats, is the youngest party leader in Britain.

Before graduating to greater responsibilities and achievements, *Nation* interns receive rigorous on-the-job training. The mainstay of the program remains fact-checking—which is not all that different from reporting, only instead of digging to find facts for your story, you’re doing it to verify someone else’s.

Interns are trained to keep contributors honest and the magazine factually impeccable. They learn early on how the enemies of the left delight in seizing on a piddling error as proof of a vast left-wing conspiracy of mendacity. As Ilena Silverman, now a story editor at *The New York Times Magazine*, summed it up: “I was given responsibility and treated like a professional. In turn I took my work very seriously—coming to see myself as personally accountable for any fact below 14th Street.” (The “old” *Nation* offices were located at 13th Street and Fifth Avenue.) And while it’s not a writing internship, many interns leave with a “clip”—often a piece on the magazine’s website. In the words of former intern Richard Kim, who went on to direct the intern program and is now associate editor at *The Nation*: “I’m amazed at both the quantity and quality of intern clips. Interns have their ear to the ground, demonstrating an uncanny knack for finding the offbeat story, the sidebar that really explains it all, that tidbit of explosive information, the juicy quote from the woman on the street.”

The interns have front-row seats at the freewheeling seminars and events the magazine and The Nation Institute sponsor. I remember a few editors and a handful of interns sitting at a small conference table with the late Benazir Bhutto, who was then living in exile from Pakistan. Other guests who have contributed to the interns’ political and cultural education include Joan Didion, Jesse Jackson, Edward Said, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, Alger Hiss, Ian McEwan, Israeli writer David Grossman and longtime *Cosmopolitan* editor Helen Gurley Brown.

Then there were the lifelong friendships forged during late-night deadlines and after-hours drinks. Yes, as you were about to ask, there have been a fair number of intern affairs (not naming names), and a few (successful) intern marriages.

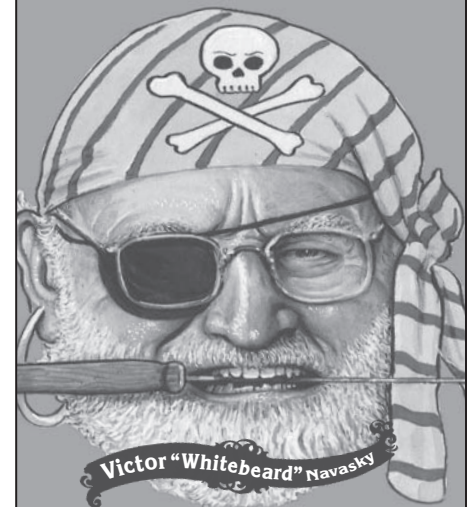
Editing this anthology was a tough assignment. Special thanks go out to *Nation* Institute Web Editor Jayati Vora and Intern Program Director Max Fraser for their help. The selections are weighted toward interns from the program’s earlier years. The older grads have been out in the world longer and had more time to polish their craft; their younger colleagues will undoubtedly fill another anthology 30 years from now.

Some notable interns are not represented in these pages because it was impossible to capture their unique talents and accomplishments in a collection limited to journalistic writing. One such person is Peter Meyer, who,

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“Black Kat” vanden Heuvel

as executive director of The Nation Institute in the 1990s, cared deeply about the program and used his many talents to help build it into what it is today. Others missing from this volume include editors (for example, Virginia Cannon of *The New Yorker*, Ilena Silverman of *The New York Times Magazine* and Julie Just of *The New York Times Book Review*), novelists (Susanna Sonnenberg, for one), scholars,

activist-entrepreneurs, foundation officers, filmmakers and political advisers whose work we must find another way to celebrate!

Let's hope that the intern program's flung network of journalists, writers, thinkers and activists continues to leave its mark on our country's—indeed, the world's—journalism, politics and culture. Visit www.thenation-mart.com to purchase a copy. ■



NATION ASSOCIATE EDITOR DOES DENVER!

Richard Kim recounts his efforts to find a story—any story!—at this year's Democratic National Convention.

I knew I had gone through the looking glass the minute I got to LaGuardia and saw Mark Green, the former New York City public advocate, hobbling around on crutches in the security line. As I was about to ask Mark what had happened, I crashed head first into two men in suits, one talking loudly about some group he had just joined. “On the board of AIPAC...” was all I could make out while apologizing profusely for spilling coffee on pinstripe. And then, as I turned around to see if Mark needed help, I spotted Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now, zipping by with crew in tow. We were all on the same plane—to Denver and the Democratic National Convention—but not the same trip. For starters, the suit from AIPAC flew first class.

I went to Denver determined not to follow the crowd of journalists, to chase down the oddball stories. In my carry-on was a copy of Norman Mailer's *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, his influential New Journalistic account of those fateful gatherings 40 years ago, along with the November 1968 issue

of *Esquire* magazine, which had had the perversely brilliant idea to assign the story to Jean Genet, Terry Southern and William S. Burroughs. I thought, maybe, like Mailer, I'd find myself practically alone at some goofy-but-emblematic event involving live animals and girls! girls! girls! In Mailer's case, it was a rendezvous with a baby elephant and the Nixonettes at the Miami airport that revealed everything you really needed to know about the Republican Party's cornball, sextinged populism. I pictured encounters with Democratic asses in my future. I wondered if I could recognize Obama Girl on sight.

Hah! How quickly those fantasies dissipated, replaced by an entirely different surreal scene. This was not going to be your father's convention! For starters, I was just one of 15,000 journalists to descend on Colorado that week. That's a journalist-to-delegate ratio of about 4:1, which meant that by the time I interviewed my first “source” on Sunday night, she was already a professional pundit. Smooth as ice, she ripped through the Democratic Party talking points: 1) unity,

2) OMG, so excited to be here!!!, 3) unity.

As the week progressed and I zoomed around from luncheon to rally to the Pepsi Center and back again, it seemed less and less like I was covering a political event and more and more like I was just following people around on their summer vacation. Denver teemed with tourists—delegates and volunteers corsaged with nine different kinds of Obama jewelry and bearing wide, relentless smiles. They had cameras, guidebooks and kids in tow. They wore Bermuda shorts, “athletic” sandals and floral print shirts. And they partook liberally of the nonstop public lectures and free drinks in return for which they played an easy audience, primed to laugh heartily at even the lamest of McCain jokes thrice told.

And just when I was about to throw my reporter's notebook into the trash, two things happened. First, while waiting on line to get into the convention hall, I met Shigenori Kanehira, a Japanese television journalist who was there to cover the DNC for TBS News. No, not Ted Turner! That's Tokyo Broadcasting System, the largest commercial network in Japan. Shigenori and I had a great conversation—about the death penalty, racism in America and Japan, Obama's chances, Patti Smith and Bruce Springsteen. It turned out that Shigenori is a huge fan of *The Nation*—“*The Nation* my most favorite magazine!”—and a longtime subscriber. This chance encounter added that extra measure of reward and surprise to my job, and I soldiered on to the next day and to Invesco Field, where Obama gave his storied speech.

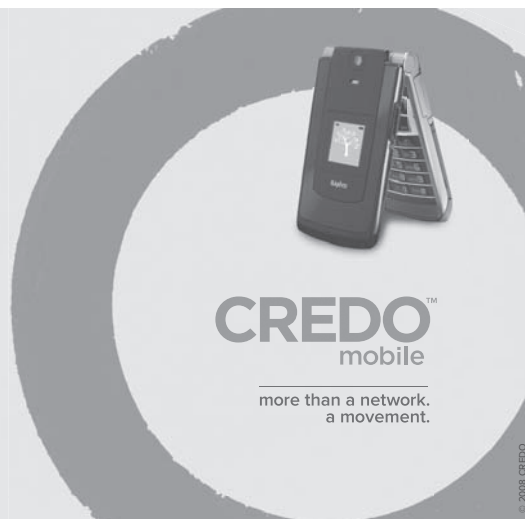
Folks can read my first impression of that evening at www.thenation.com/blogs/notion, but they should know that the entry was punched out in haste, on a laptop borrowed from an Al Jazeera correspondent, in the backroom of a Mexican rock-and-roll bar nestled in a ditch off the interstate. Washington editor Chris Hayes and I were in a race to see who could file first, and even though Chris was writing on his iPhone, he beat me to it. There was a lot of Corona involved, and some salsa too. Neither Al Jazeera nor Maria Angela, our excellent waitress, bear any responsibility for the content of my post. But they did make it possible—through their generosity, good cheer and comradeship under trying circumstances.

You see, in the end, I was just one of the crowd, one of the 15,000 journalists who were just trying to keep a cool head while meeting a hot deadline. And it was my fellow journalists—from Japanese and Arabic TV, no less (in addition, of course, to my *Nation* colleagues)—that made it a hoot. ■

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CREDO MOBILE AND *THE NATION*

This past February, The Nation's advertising department was invited to compete for a "winner take all" \$100,000 ad buy from Credo Mobile, Working Assets' cellular division. Working Assets is well known in progressive circles for its long-distance telephone service that donates 1 percent of customers' phone bills to progressive organizations. Credo was looking to introduce the progressive world to its wireless phone service while reiterating its continuing commitment to progressive causes.

While advertising revenues at *The Nation* have grown steadily over the past five years, big campaign opportunities like this are uncommon. The raison d'être of *The Nation's* advertising department is to help clients reach out to our highly educated and discerning audience. But this big a challenge we could not handle alone. We mobilized colleagues from all of our business departments (circulation, public relations, production, advertising and Nation Associates) as well as our web editor, Joan Connell, and held a brainstorming session to see what we could offer Credo Mobile.

In the session, we came up with a formal presentation that included both old- and new-media components: full-page advertising units and page-two strip ads in the print magazine; banner ads of varying sizes and placements on thenation.com; co-sponsorships of several upcoming progressive conferences and public events; an e-mail blast signed by our president, Teresa Stack; and the creation of a microsite on thenation.com. The pioneering microsite (www.thenation.com/credo) would not only introduce visitors to Credo Mobile but also encourage environmental good practices

and citizenship, and allow for the sharing of ideas among our growing community. In exchange for posting an idea on the microsite, one could enter five monthly drawings for a free Credo solar charger as well as the chance to win the grand prize—a trip for two on this year's *Nation* cruise to the Caribbean!

While we never found out what our friendly competitors presented, we were thrilled to learn that our proposal had been selected. After the high-fiving and back-slapping had subsided, we got to work fine-tuning the details with Credo Mobile's marketing team.

Starting in late February, a clever split-screen print ad campaign began appearing regularly, as did advertorial letters from the president of Credo Mobile, Michael Kieschnick. Banner ads debuted on our website the following month and ran through early September.

Shortly after the April redesign of thenation.com, the microsite launched. Our digital team created excellent content based on *The Ten Minute Activist*, which *Nation* Books published in late 2006. These regularly updated segments were soon supplemented by user-generated content from people like Andrea from Roswell, Georgia,

who had her toddler "playing recycling," separating out paper, cardboard, bottles and cans into bright, fun bins.

In June, *Nation* readers received an e-mailed letter from Teresa Stack, encouraging them to learn more about Credo and the company's support for progressive causes. In the letter, she cited Credo's efforts to speak up on independent media's behalf during last summer's postal crisis. Credo then sent out a direct-mail teaser to *Nation* subscribers and followed it up with more specific information and an appeal to become a Credo customer.

At the end of the five-month campaign, our vice president of advertising, Ellen Bollinger, flew to San Francisco for a day to meet with the client (and two other companies) and learned that Credo Mobile considered our campaign "the standard by which other media would be measured." In other words, it worked! It worked so well, in fact, that we have just been approved for another year of the campaign, which will expand on the ideas that worked best and include some new ways for Credo Mobile to get its message to you and your progressive friends. The new campaign will bring *The Nation* \$125,000—much-needed revenue that will help offset the rapidly rising costs of publishing and distributing the magazine and a \$500,000 increase in postage costs.

If you want to know what you can do to help your favorite progressive causes and *The Nation*, please consider switching your cell phone service to Credo Mobile. If you don't have a cell phone, you may want to consider signing up for an emergency-only mobile phone service. At \$29.99 a month, it's a small price to pay for the big comfort of being able to call for assistance from the road or from home if your power goes out.

Credo is the only phone company that has spoken out against the Bush administration's warrantless access to your calls. In fact, Credo has actively fought against telecom immunity, and many of the company's ads have denounced such practices and the federal evildoers behind them. The president of Working Assets/Credo even signed on to the ACLU lawsuit against the government on this issue.

In the face of a faltering economy, with magazines and newspapers confronting shrinking audiences and diminishing advertising revenues, *The Nation* has once again bucked the trend. We are on track to bring in well over a million dollars in ad revenue this year, and for this, we have our highly responsive and influential readers to thank. ■

NATION AWARD WINNERS

- Mohamad Bazzi won first place in the opinion-writing category of the American Academy of Religion's awards for in-depth reporting on religion. Currently an Edward R. Murrow press fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, Bazzi was recognized for his work on Shiite militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr (*The Nation*, 12/21/07).
- Freelance investigative journalist Joshua Kors received a National Magazine Award in the public interest category for his exposés about Iraq war veterans being denied medical and disability benefits. Both "How Specialist Town Lost His Benefits" (*The Nation*, 4/9/07) and "Specialist Town Takes His Case to Washington" (*The Nation*, 10/15/07) garnered George Polk and Investigative Reporter and Editors awards as well. Kors was also a finalist for the Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting and the winner of the 2008 Joseph Galloway Award given by Military Reporters and Editors, an association of military journalists.
- Jeremy Scahill, a Puffin Foundation writing fellow at The Nation Institute, won the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism for his coverage of Blackwater Worldwide.
- William Deresiewicz was recognized as a finalist for a National Magazine Award in the reviews and criticism category for three reviews from *The Nation's* Books & the Arts section.
- *Nation* Washington correspondent John Nichols received the National Farmers Union's Milt Hakel Award for excellence in agriculture communications.

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POSTAL CRISIS**THE LATEST**

Thanks to the remarkable support of our Nation Associates, *The Nation* continues to persevere in the face of the largest single postal increase in our publishing history—a whopping \$500,000 in additional postage each year on top of the exorbitant rates we were already paying. As you've undoubtedly heard, last year lobbyists from Time-Warner succeeded in convincing the Postal Regulatory Commission to adopt a postal rate plan that undemocratically shifted the burden of new postal increases onto smaller publications like *The Nation*.

To fight the increase, *The Nation* formed a bipartisan coalition with other small publications and nonprofit organizations, arguing that hitting vital sources of political news and opinion with unprecedented 20 to 30 percent postal increases presented a direct threat to our democracy. *Nation* publisher emeritus Victor Navasky and others from the coalition had the opportunity to testify before members of Congress to make their case.

"Congress has certainly shown itself to be much more responsive thanks to all the letters, e-mails and attention this issue has received," Teresa Stack, *The Nation's* president, said. Stack transformed herself into a one-woman army this past year, spending much of her time in Washington fighting corporate lobbyists.

A great deal of work remains to be done. *The Nation* continues to scramble to pay the additional \$500,000 each year, and, according to Stack, "Big publishers are still pushing. There are indications that we may see yet another inequitable increase."

Nation Associates have played a crucial role in funding this fight. "Donations not only help us pay the new postage bill but also provide the resources to work with organizations like Free Press," said Stack. "Activism, such as writing your congressional representatives, is very important. They really do pay attention to their constituents."

The Nation is hopeful that, with any luck, a new Democratic administration in Washington will be more sympathetic on the issue. We are already gearing up for another fight in 2009 against more huge postal rate increases. In the meantime, to support our efforts, please visit www.thenation.com/postal. ■

(Continued from page 1)
of the amendment. "The Nation [believes] that an essential element of patriotism is the unyielding defense of civil liberties," *Nation* editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel said, hours after Bush signed the act into law.

The Nation's portion of the suit is on behalf of the magazine, its staff and two of its writers: Chris Hedges and Naomi Klein. Both of these journalists regularly conduct international communications that are susceptible to untrammelled government monitoring under the new act. This compromises their ability to report effectively, since if a journalist cannot assure informants and sources that their correspondence is not being monitored, the sources are less likely to speak freely, especially on sensitive issues. The act endangers the existence of a free and independent press that can inform citizens about their government's actions.

Nation contributor Chris Hedges has reported on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and his work demands communication with sources in places such as Iran, Palestine, Sudan and Syria. Naomi Klein covers the on-the-ground consequences of free-market capitalism and of the US's post-9/11 imperial militarism. Her work requires engagement with other journalists, political activists and human rights advocates around the globe—often in regions, such as South America and the Middle East, where the US has complex interests and might well cast a wide net to monitor communications.

Other plaintiffs in the suit include Amnesty International USA, Human Rights Watch, Global Fund for Women, PEN American Center, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Service Employees International Union and several private attorneys. The defendants are Attorney General Michael Mukasey; John M. "Mike" McConnell, director of national intelligence; and Lt. Gen. Keith Alexander, director of the National Security Agency and chief of the Central Security Service.

In her Editor's Cut column of July 10, 2008, vanden Heuvel addressed the impact of the FISA Amendment Act on the work of *Nation* contributors and explained the magazine's challenge to the law:

Many of the people with whom The Nation's staff and contributors communicate will not share information if they believe that their identities cannot be kept confidential. Some of them fear retribution by their own governments; others fear retribution by

the US government; still others fear persecution at the hands of terrorist groups. The risk that their identities will be revealed will lead some sources who otherwise would have shared information to decline to do so.

As the country's oldest weekly journal of opinion, we know better than most the habit of the powerful to violate the rights of the people. Throughout its history, *The Nation*

has seen violations of civil liberties committed behind a veil of secrecy, under the guise of protecting national interests and without consideration for the threat these actions pose to our free and open society.

The Nation is proud to have joined this "warrantless wiretapping" lawsuit and will keep readers posted about the lawsuit's progress in our pages and on our Web site in the coming months. Stay tuned! ■



CARNAL KNOWLEDGE ON THE LEFT

Former Nation intern Rae Gomes recently sat down with Nation columnist Joann Wypijewski to talk about the launch of her revolutionary new Nation writing project, Carnal Knowledge.

“Look at the [divorce rate] figures,” says JoAnn Wypijewski. “Look at your own life, the people you know, the world you inhabit, the stories you hear every day, and you know there’s a lot of fucking going on!”

This past August, Wypijewski, former senior editor of *The Nation*, debuted a new column featuring her take on the world of sex. Titled *Carnal Knowledge* and scheduled to appear in *The Nation* eight times per year, the column grew out of discussions between Wypijewski and *Nation* publisher and editor Katrina vanden Heuvel this past spring. Just as Eliot Spitzer, the then governor of New York, was facing the public to admit to his liaison with a prostitute, Wypijewski and vanden Heuvel talked about the evergreen

relationship between sex and politics and how it needed more focused, consistent coverage.

“Her interest and mine coincided, and the timing was right,” says Wypijewski, who at the time was finishing up a regular gig at *Mother Jones*. (She continues to write for the California-based magazine, along with *Harper's*, *CounterPunch* and *AlterNet*.)

“I’ve been interested in the intersection of race and class and sex in one way or another,” she says, “and a lot of my writing has involved those issues coming together.” The angle she takes on a story is frequently at odds with mainstream coverage. When she wrote for *Harper's* in 1999 about the murder of Matthew Shepard, for example, her article focused more on the heterosexual culture of the killers in Wyoming

than on the victim's homosexuality. The piece suggested the possibility that "maybe Matthew Shepard didn't die because he was gay," she says, but rather "that maybe he died because Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson are straight."

Wypijewski continually endeavors to highlight the topics overlooked by pundits, 24-hour news channels and the various media outlets that seem to yell in unison. So when her first Carnal Knowledge column received mixed reviews from *Nation* readers—titled "The Shadow of His Smile," it dissected the relationship between Michelle and Barack Obama—she was not surprised. In fact, she had been hoping to shake things up: "I don't mind that there are people who are up in arms, as long as there are people who are delighted."

The outrage from some *Nation* readers didn't necessarily bother her, but the reasons behind the outrage did: Many felt that sex had no place in discussions of politics. That represents a change, she says: "There was all this talk about sex at one point," when the liberation movements of the 1960s were closely tied to efforts for political change. "Then, all of a sudden, the left abandoned the field."

As Wypijewski sees it, the left is justifiably more concerned with such pressing issues as the fact that most Americans don't have health care. But that doesn't explain why sex isn't even on most progressives' radar. "Now sex is the subject of the right, and it's the subject of pornography," she says, and the left is left playing catch-up. In the most recent sex scandals, she notes, the conversation has focused on whether the grief-stricken wife should appear at the husband's side. The complex dance of sex, politics and scandal plays out on a level no deeper than the stale rhetoric of unfaithful men and their cold, unloving wives.

When she took on the Obamas' "hot married love," many readers argued that this conversation only distracted from the candidate's more important stance on the issues. Wypijewski feels differently: "What about how allure works and how sexuality is always involved in political campaigns? This is America and political campaigns are about selling...They are about advertising."

For a September installment of Carnal Knowledge, "Beauty and the Beast," she cast her gaze toward the other party, writing of the Alaskan pit bull with lipstick: "It looks like Palin's party now, and whatever she does for his virility, she's not the

hockey mom, or the babe, or the third wife he can stomp on."

For Wypijewski, sex is far from simple. "I really do believe that sex is the screen against which this country projects a lot of its fantasies and a lot of its fears," she says. In a post-Monica Lewinsky era, sex has catapulted out of tabloids and subliminal advertising and into our political sphere, where it can decide our future. Like

race and gender, it is the elephant in the room that tramples any platform until we acknowledge its overbearing presence.

Wypijewski has the talent and the keen, unconventional perspective to make *Nation* readers think again. As for future topics, the writer promises that nothing is off-limits. Aiming to entertain, inform, infuriate and delight, she invites readers to keep paying attention. ■

NOBODY OWNS THE NATION

Nation readers are likely aware that the magazine was founded in 1865. Fewer know that it is the country's oldest weekly political journal of opinion, and fewer still know that its founders were abolitionists. Since its founding during Reconstruction, The Nation has traveled hand in hand with the nation itself, chronicling the ups and downs of a journey that has been full of momentous events.

The *Nation* boasts a long list of notable readers, writers and detractors, a veritable Who's Who of this country's most prominent 19th- and 20th-century figures. Its readers range from Martin Luther King, Jr.—who gave his first speech on the Vietnam War at a *Nation* Institute event in 1967—to J. Edgar Hoover, who had a "confidential subscription" and who whined that its articles were "vicious and unfair." Its equally impressive contributors include Henry James, who published over 200 pieces in the magazine, and Benazir Bhutto, the late prime minister of Pakistan, who contributed the piece "Why Strongmen Make Bad Allies" for the 120th anniversary issue in 1985.

For the past several years, *The Nation's* "Somebodies" advertising campaign has highlighted the magazine's celebrity readership (recall the shocked, slightly amused face of the late Paul Newman, and the furrowed brow of the Reverend Jesse Jackson). Recently it has turned to look back toward the "Somebodies" of *The Nation's* past.

To date, the campaign has featured Franklin Delano Roosevelt flashing a peace sign alongside his 1940 statement that "*The Nation*, as we all know, has often represented minority opinion and a mighty unpopular minority opinion at that," and a pensive Emma Goldman, who announced in 1935, "I want readers of *The Nation* to know that I have loathed Hearst and his papers since I can remember. Keep up the good fight to stem the tide of the black forces led on by Hearst and his clique." —Emma Goldman (1935)



While the quotations are verbatim, the images have been photoshopped to make it seem as though the subjects are casually reading a vintage issue of the magazine. We were looking forward to featuring "longtime *Nation* reader" Charlie Chaplin. Unfortunately, though, the magazine cannot use his image without contending with the actor's estate.

It is of course a shame to lose Charlie as a *Nation* spokesperson, but with 145 years' worth of "Somebodies," we have plenty of others to choose from. ■



LIVE FROM NEW YORK, IT'S THE NATION!

Have you ever wanted to get the inside scoop on how your favorite Nation writers view particular campaign tactics? Have you wished you could ask an editor's opinion on the future of independent media in an age of corporate consolidation? You could write a letter to us, of course, and many of you do. You could comment on our blogs, which you do in ever-increasing numbers. What you might not know, though, is that over the past year, the Nation Associates program has organized a series of members-only conference calls during which Nation Associates get to ask questions directly of the magazine's writers and editors.

Print magazines, by their nature, maintain a certain distance between writers and readers. *Nation* writer Chris Hayes refers to this phenomenon as a "strange, attenuated relation" that is modified only somewhat by blogs and other advances in online interactivity. As the Nation Associates program continues to grow, we wanted to make sure our supporters would have even more ways to connect with our staff and contributors. Since we don't currently have the resources to hold events in many places where Associates live, we started hosting conference calls to provide a similar forum for the kind of informed debate that *Nation* readers and writers love.

Since January 2008, The Nation Associates has hosted calls with Robert McChesney, John Nichols, Bob Moser, Jeremy Scahill, Laura Flanders, Chris Hayes and Katrina vanden Heuvel on pressing topics ranging from the postal rate hike and its effects on media and democracy to,

most recently, grassroots efforts around the country surrounding the election. On most of the calls, participants have submitted questions through a moderated online system, though the most recent one took more of a round table format.

According to associate publisher Peggy Randall, the decision to host conference calls with writers is part of a larger community-building effort at *The Nation*, and the results have been promising: Calls have attracted up to 300 Associates per call, and the feedback from participants and speakers has been overwhelmingly positive. Publisher and editor Katrina vanden Heuvel, who has moderated most of the calls and was the featured speaker on the most recent one, was struck by the fact that readers called from all over the US, Latin America, Canada and overseas.

Chris Hayes, *The Nation's* Washington editor, was the featured speaker on a conference call conducted early this year, at the height of the primary season. He called

the questions posed by Nation Associates "really astute and sophisticated," adding that they revealed a far greater level of attention to the electoral process and to this year's campaigns than he had expected. The average *Nation* reader, he realized, is "far more than a casual observer" when it comes to American electoral politics. He relished the opportunity to "collapse the distance between writer and reader" even more than he already does on his blog, and is looking forward to participating in future calls.

He's not the only one. Peggy Randall and Joliange Wright, Nation Associates membership manager, who coordinate the calls, are eagerly planning the schedule and speakers for the next ones. If you're interested in talking to a particular writer or engaging a specific topic, or if you just want more information, please contact Joliange at joliange@thenation.com. But do remember that to be invited on the calls, you must first be an **active Nation Associate** and **we must have your e-mail address**. For more information on the Nation Associates or to renew your membership, please visit www.thenation.com/associates. ■



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Victor "Whitebeard" Navasky



COVERING AND UNCOVERING THE NEWS

David Corn, Seymour Hersh, Amy Alexander and Mike Tomasky were among the writers who shared the tricks of the trade with budding journalists at The Nation's third annual Student Journalism Conference this past July in Washington, DC. Nation communications coordinator Habiba Alcindor shares her recollections of this year's conference here.

Much of the *Nation/Campus Progress Student Journalism Conference* focused on the many ways the roughly 200 participants could, in the words of *Nation* editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel, “cover the news and uncover the news.”

The Nation's Washington correspondent Ari Berman spoke of the “stage-managed era” of politics in which we are living. Berman, like *Guardian America* editor Mike Tomasky, who was also in attendance, has often reported from within the bubbles in which politicians encase themselves. The writers' message? Journalists who want to write articles that make a difference need to take the extra step and find alternative sources that can shed light on what's going on behind the scenes and around the corners of the official story.

David Corn, who was *The Nation's* Washington editor for many years and has extensive experience interviewing CIA operatives, went further to say that many experts with treasure troves of information are just waiting for someone to ask them the right questions. It's the mainstream media's laziness and tendency toward “pack” journalism that have created this

void for smart young reporters to fill. He advised young journalists not to forget the importance of “pre-Google reporting,” the crucial telephone call and in-person chat.

Author and former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Asra Nomani agreed that “nothing compares with face-to-face communication” with those in the know, including janitors, secretaries and other people who tend to be overlooked as sources of information. *Washington Post* reporter Jose Antonio Vargas cut to the heart of the issue when he said, “Journalism is supposed to be about people,” which can be easy to forget in the digital age.

Addressing some of the concerns and challenges of our new-media society, current *Nation* Washington editor Chris Hayes spoke about how today's 24-hour appetite for information and “gaffetastic” coverage has created a climate in which journalists find themselves forced to comment on trivial topics and even fabrications that seize the public's attention. As an example, *Nation* executive editor Betsy Reed cited Wesley Clark's attack on John McCain's military service, a false accusation that nevertheless sprouted legs and helped determine the shape of the campaign. It

falls to journalists to “shift the discourse” and “expand and deepen the conversation,” Reed added.

Nation Institute writing fellow Amy Alexander explained that she considered many people in positions of power in the news media to be “educated fools,” individuals with journalism degrees who apply narrow cultural experiences to a broad range of current events while never venturing into, say, Southeast DC to get a different perspective on a story.

Getting more than one perspective on any story is something that students and other young people can use to their advantage, according to the seasoned journalists at the conference. For example, in an age of increasing technological sophistication, privacy is an issue that especially affects young people. According to Tara Kutz from Purchase College, 250 cameras were recently installed on her campus to monitor a student body of 4,000. Tytianna Wells, a University of Kentucky student whose passion for child advocacy led her to work for the Children's Defense Fund, lamented the media's habitual disregard for how policy decisions affect children. Dylan Matthews, a Harvard freshman who's been blogging on politics since the age of 14 and interned with *The American Prospect* over the summer, put it this way: “There's nothing that says Maureen Dowd knows more about politics than any other person.” Gone are the days when young people had to “sit back and watch. Now... you can call Obama on things.”

Despite staff cuts, budgetary shortfalls and general unease about a radical restructuring of how news is funded and delivered, organizations that recognize the importance of this trend are investing in these present and future journalists. Campus Progress has started pushback.org, a blog network that seeks both to organize new-media journalists into a cohesive force and to provide them with a broad platform and the credibility that comes from belonging to a legitimate media organ. StudentNation's (www.thenation.com/student) own Extra Credit blog offers news gleaned from mainstream media, campus papers and the Internet and includes first-person reports from student activists and journalists, giving readers an up-close and personal look at what's taking place on their campus.

Adam Peck, a student who sported a button that read “Open the Freezer,” explained that he was a member of the

101st class in a program instituted by the Knight Foundation whose goal is to teach journalism to 10,000 students. His button referred to a basic premise of journalism: Verify every fact before printing a story. (Reporters in New Orleans who were told of dead bodies stacked in freezers at the Superdome infamously failed to follow this fundamental guideline.)

Keynote speaker Seymour Hersh had no intention of ending the conference on a complacent note. He termed Bush's presidency the "radical and ineducable Step 13 in his 12-step recovery plan," with which the "out-of-control government" hasn't been able to come to terms. He also told the crowd that the reason Congress won't impeach Bush is "because they are chickenshit." This old-school investigative journalist brought the themes of the confer-

ence full circle by stressing that regardless of the means used to report or the money afforded to those in the business, journalists can and should perform the important function of holding those in power to high standards.

Sadly, we were forced to turn students away from this conference as its popularity has surged, but we're looking to host next summer's DC conference at a larger venue than the Campus Progress headquarters. We also plan to stage conferences in Chicago and California in the next year.

Thanks to all of our Nation Associates whose donations make our student programs possible. **To see what else is happening, please visit www.thenation.com/students for information on these conferences and other Nation student projects and programs.** ■

THIS BRAVE NATION

We are living in a time when our nation's history is being homogenized in textbooks, civic history courses are being cut, and many more people are keeping up on celebrity justice than social justice. It is also, of course, a video age, in which more young people get their news and opinion from YouTube videos than they do from reading or watching television.

So was born *This Brave Nation*—a unique video collaboration between *The Nation* and the production company Brave New Films—which seeks to highlight an alternative history of this country's authentic heroes and social movements through a series of intergenerational video conversations. What emerges is a kind of living-history project consisting of videotaped encounters in which the most intelligent, passionate and creative voices of one generation of activists, journalists, artists and thinkers engage in conversation with their next-generation counterparts. Perhaps most interesting is that at a time when there is much talk about change, the participants in the series drew deeply on their ideas and experiences of organizing to discuss how social change is actually achieved.

The initial series consists of six video dialogues between well-known figures, featuring charged conversations about lives, loves, politics and history. Each discussion

was edited into a 22-minute minidocumentary and is available for free on the Internet at bravenation.com; the series can also be purchased as a DVD boxed set.

This set of wide-ranging and engaging conversations includes historic figures like Dolores Huerta and Bonnie Raitt, Pete Seeger and Majora Carter, Van Jones and Carl Pope, Anthony Romero and Ava Lowery, and Tom Hayden and Naomi Klein, who share their ideas, lessons and experiences in order to inform, enlighten and inspire a new generation to seize the moment.

In recognition of that new generation, we also sponsored a contest in which more than 500 local heroes under the age of 30 were nominated for making a difference in communities coast to coast. We then selected an amazing short list of seven, and the victor was chosen by our readers in an online poll. The winner: a remarkable young woman named Cristina Lara of Fairlawn, New Jersey, who boasts an astonishing set of accomplishments, including the founding of a feminist organization, the Society of Young Leading Women.

We're now working hard to get these videos seen as widely as possible, particularly on college campuses nationwide. **Check out bravenation.com to watch the videos, and please help spread the word to any young people you know.** ■



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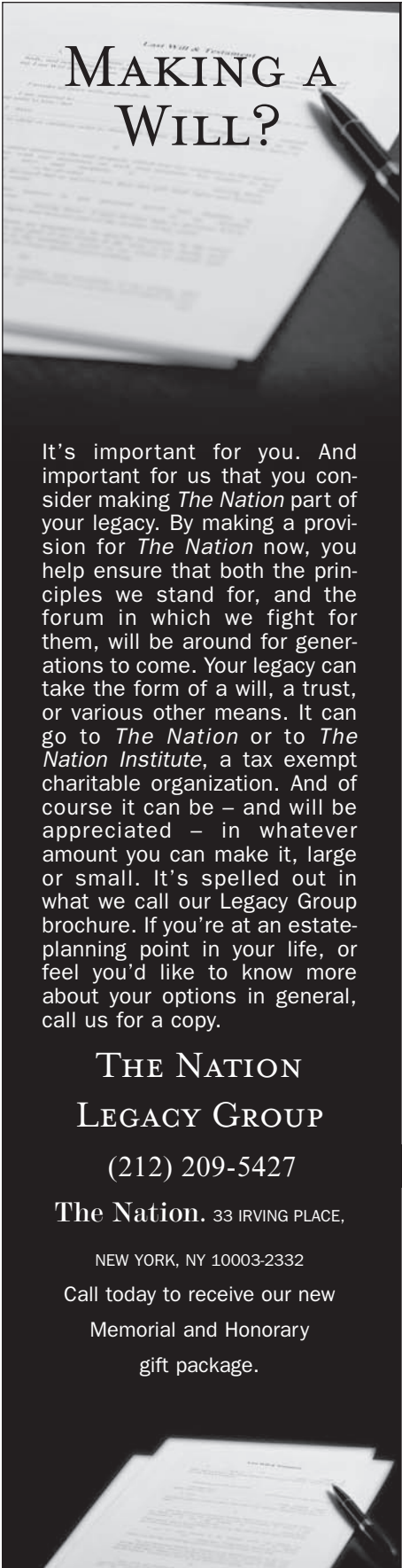
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NEW RELEASES


 **Collateral Damage: America's War Against Iraqi Civilians** by Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian. Nation Books. Retail \$22.95 (cloth); **Associates \$15**. Pulitzer Prize winner and best-selling author Hedges and journalist Al-Arian spent several months interviewing 50 Iraqi war veterans about the effects of the occupation on Iraqi civilians. The result is a disturbing firsthand view of the atrocities that American forces have committed against innocent Iraqis.


 **Blue Dixie: Awakening the South's Democratic Majority** by Bob Moser. Times Books. Retail \$25 (cloth); **Associates \$17**. Moser, a *Nation* contributing writer who grew up in North Carolina, debunks the entrenched belief that the American South is unshakably committed to the Republican Party. Through an examination of voting trends and polls, he also challenges the notion that the people of the South are overwhelmingly fundamentalist, conservative and racist.

 **Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy** by Michael T. Klare. Metropolitan Books. Retail \$26 (cloth); **Associates \$18**. From the author of the now-classic *Resource Wars* and *Nation* defense correspondent comes this survey of the energy-driven dynamic that is fast reconfiguring the international landscape. Now that world leaders are finally facing the finite nature of vital resources necessary to modern industrial society, a "new international energy order" is being created. Klare documents how Russia has begun to gain major geopolitical influence by selling oil and natural gas to Europe and Asia, and how China and India ("Chindia") are following suit with quickly developing economies.

 **Voices of the Chicago Eight: A Generation on Trial** by Tom Hayden, Frank Condon and Ron Sossi. City Lights.

Retail \$15.95 (paper); **Associates \$11**. The protests, riots and arrests outside this year's Republican and Democratic conventions have their roots in the explosive uprising at the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago. The conspiracy trial that ensued was a potent symbol of the era's tumultuous politics. Anti-establishment icons such as Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Allen Ginsberg and Bobby Seale hit the national spotlight during the five-month-long court proceedings whose story is told here.

 **The Genius of Impeachment: The Founders' Cure for Royalism**. By John Nichols. New Press. Retail \$15.95 (paper); **Associates \$12**. This surprising and irreverent book by *The Nation's* Washington correspondent makes the case that impeachment is much more than a legal and congressional process—it is an essential instrument of America's democratic system. Articles of impeachment have been brought to Congress 62 times in American history. Thomas Jefferson himself forwarded the evidence for impeachment of the first federal official to be removed under the process—John Pickering in 1803. Impeachment is as American as apple pie.

 **Learning to Drive: And Other Life Stories**. By Katha Pollitt. Random House. Retail \$22.95 (cloth); **Associates \$15**. Katha Pollitt is well known for her wit and her keen sense of both the ridiculous and the sublime. Her award-winning Subject to Debate column has been called "the best place to go for original thinking on the left." Now Pollitt has penned a collection of reflections ranging in subject from her philandering boyfriend to a general late-midlife sense of loss. Pollitt recently explained in *The Nation*, "It's a collection of personal essays, only two of which have been previously published (in *The New Yorker*), about love, sex, betrayal, motherhood, divorce, proofreading pornography and

the decline and fall of practically everything, including myself."

HOLIDAY CLEARANCE SALE:

Letters from Young Activists: Today's Rebels Speak Out. By Dan Berger, Chesa Boudin & Kenyon Farrow, \$5.95

American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer. By Kai Bird & Martin J. Sherwin, \$10.95

Cinema Nation: The Best Writing on Film from *The Nation*, 1912-2000. Carl Bromley (Editor), \$4.95

Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia. By Stephen F. Cohen, \$7.95

Guerrilla Radio: Rock'n'Roll Radio and Serbia's Underground Resistance. By Matthew Collin, \$4.95

Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart. By Liza Featherstone, \$7.95

Blue Grit: True Democrats Take Back Politics from the Politicians. By Laura Flanders, \$18.95

After the New Economy: The Binge and the Hangover That Won't Go Away. By Doug Henwood, \$9.95

Who Let the Dogs In: Incredible Political Animals I Have Known. By Molly Ivins, \$12.95

I'd Hate Myself in the Morning: A Memoir. By Ring Lardner Jr., \$7.95

These United States. John Leonard (Editor), \$12.95

Cryptic Crosswords from *The Nation*. By Frank Lewis, \$10.95

Double Lives: American Writers' Friendships. By Richard Lingeman, \$10.95

Don't You Know There's a War On? The American Home Front, 1941-1945. By Richard Lingeman, \$9.95

Brushes with History: Writing on Art from *The Nation*: 1865-2001. Peter G. Meyer (Editor), \$9.95

A Matter of Opinion. By Victor S. Navasky, \$15.95

Naming Names. By Victor Navasky, \$9.95

The Full Rudy. By Jack Newfield, \$6.95

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