

All the attention to Izzy Stone by the Wx Post after he died reminds me of the schoolboy line, seven cities claimed Homer dead through which the living Homer begged his bread.

It is additional commentary on our time when a man who lived and wrote by what when he and I were young was considered traditional American concepts is characterized by the Post as "left" and by CBS News as "radical."

There are a few minor errors in the obit. Izzy did not go to the NYPost in 1939. He was writing editorials for it in 1936, when I began sending him galley proofs of all of the hearings of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee and I always got an extra set for him. Of the first galleys, before any corrections, to get them to him faster. No xeroxes in those days and the typescripts were costly. We had no extras of them. I could let them be examined only in my office. As most reporters examined the galleys.

Izzy also did not go to PM after World War II. It was before that war.

As I now recall it, when he left the Post he filed a case against it and Stern, who'd been his friend.

In those days the NYPost was a major paper and it was quite something for a young man in his middle twenties to be writing editorials for it. He was only 27 when I was sending him those galleys.

He was one of the eastern liberals who could not consider the Warren Report or that it was flawed in any way. I'd given up when his late brother Mark, a publicist, working for Ramparts, tried (again) without success. Mark was taking Penn Jones around for Ramparts and was in Washington. The four of us were in Mark's hotel room. 1966.

Not that Ramparts' reprinting of Jones' hallucinations and concoctions was designed to be persuasive to anyone, least of all an Izzy.

Stern's Philadelphia Record and NY Post were pro-New Deal and liberal. I do not recall but believe his Camden Courier also was.

Izzy was related by marriage to Louis Boudin, the renowned appeals lawyer who also took other than appeals cases. I never knew him but we did know his somewhat odd sister, Laura, who had a pet coatamundi. Whenever she visited she had that animal with her but I do not recall that it ever did any damage.

Appreciation

6/19/89

The Fierce Independence Of I.F. Stone

Voice of the Left, Challenging the
Establishment for Six Decades

By Sidney Blumenthal
Washington Post Staff Writer

I.F. Stone never bothered to attend presidential news conferences. He wasn't sent on all-expense-paid tours by the U.S. Information Agency. He was never a guest at a White House state dinner. He didn't belong to the Gridiron Club. And he wasn't on television panels. But Isidor Feinstein Stone, who died yesterday at 81, was among the most influential Washington correspondents of the past half century.

His newsletter, I.F. Stone's Weekly, though only four pages long, was thick with information that one couldn't find anywhere else, unless one did what Stone did. And *nobody* else did what Stone did. His faithful included Albert Einstein and even Marilyn Monroe.

His innovation was to discover the public record as a repository of hidden scandal. For Stone, it was the ultimate purloined letter. He found secrets that no one else had the patience and the tolerance for tedium to find. He was like a prospector, panning through tons of dross—congressional hearings, government studies, Pentagon documents—in his search for gold. It often seemed that he collected more valuable information there than the entire Washington press corps was able to gather from

See APPRECIATION, B6, Col. 1

I.F. Stone

APPRECIATION, From B1

endless background briefings and off-the-record lunches with high officials.

Stone was a man of the left. At the same time, he was utterly, fiercely independent. He had an innate respect for the facts. Consequently, his views changed over time. But he never believed that facts spoke for themselves. He marshaled his facts on behalf of his principles. Stone was never neutral.

The ink started flowing when he was 14 years old, publishing a newspaper he called the *Progressive*. In the 1930s and 1940s, Stone found work on a variety of lively left-wing newspapers, a world of journalism that was almost completely forgotten. In New York City he wrote for three such daily papers—the *Compass*, the *Star* and *P.M.* For a time he served as the Washington correspondent for the *New York Post*, which was then in its liberal incarnation. He also wrote for the *Nation* magazine.

There is little doubt that until the mid-1950s he was sympathetic to the Soviet Union. In a 1947 article, for example, he referred to the "so-called 'Iron Curtain.'" In 1952 he wrote a tendentious book, "The Hidden History of the Korean War," arguing that the North Koreans had not initiated the conflict. Stone, however, always reached his views on his own, and he was always willing to debate his logic in public. After a 1956 visit there, he wrote of the Soviet Union, "This is not a good society and it is not led by honest men." That cost him 400 subscribers.

When Franklin D. Roosevelt died, Stone welcomed Harry S. Truman's ascension to the presidency. He even wrote that he preferred Truman to former vice president Henry Wallace, a hero of the left wing. With the onset of the Cold War, however, Stone turned his pen against Truman. He was particularly appalled by Truman's retreats on civil liberties before right-wing po-



BY HARRY NALTCHAYAN—THE WASHINGTON POST

Pioneering journalist I.F. Stone.

litical pressures. Stone, not surprisingly, became a critic of the techniques of McCarthyism before Sen. Joseph McCarthy appeared on the scene.

By the early 1950s, the newspapers that had provided Stone with a living had gone under; any sort of left-wing thought was generally held to be un-American. Stone was a remnant of a movement in tatters. But he refused to raise a white flag or to follow party lines. He saw himself as a nonconforming individualist, practicing a brand of journalism whose source ran back to Tom Paine.

When he was politically isolated and financially bust, his legend began. Stone compiled the subscription lists of the defunct newspapers he had worked for and sent out his first mailing. For \$5 a year, he offered a "radical" weekly newsletter, initially to 5,300 subscribers.

The cheap price of I.F. Stone's *Weekly* was directly inverse to its journalistic value. Each issue featured an insightful essay, broken up by small boxes containing nuggets Stone had unearthed. In them were absurd, hypocritical quotes from government pandrums and small statistics that illumined large truths.

Stone was a radical skeptic in the Washington before Watergate. He took nobody's word at face value. Stone was in Washington, but not of it. He was

uncompromised—professional or social—with newsmakers. He did not follow fashion—ideological or otherwise.

In a way, he was the father of what is now called desktop publishing. His life would have been infinitely simpler had the personal computer been invented earlier. His wife, Esther (they would have celebrated their 60th anniversary next month), was as devoted to the *Weekly* as he. They sat in their kitchen for long hours with Addressograph plates, preparing it for the mail.

The contents of the *Weekly* during the Vietnam War reads like a running *Pentagon Papers*. It was then that his fishing in the Niagara of Pentagon waters provided him with some of his greatest catches. The *Weekly* subscription list grew to more than 70,000.

But Stone, even as he was reaching his widest audience, could not keep up the pace. In the year of the Watergate break-in, he folded the *Weekly*; his eyesight and his heart were failing. But he still loved conversation. To the astonishment of his younger admirers, he loved discos. And, of course, he still loved journalism.

Stone took up what he believed was his greatest caper. He taught himself ancient Greek so he could better investigate the trial and execution of Socrates. Stone thought of himself as a private eye who would finally bust the case wide open. His 1987 book, "The Trial of Socrates," was a democratic passion play. He revealed Socrates as an authoritarian neoconservative who was trying to protect the elite.

In a recent edition of *Who's Who in America*, Stone wrote a credo: "To write the truth as I see it; to defend the weak against the strong; to fight for justice; and to seek, as best I can, to bring healing perspective to bear on the terrible hates and fears of mankind, in the hope of some day bringing about one world, in which men will enjoy the differences of the human garden instead of killing each other over them."

A.J. Liebling once wrote, "Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one." I.F. Stone was a wholly free man.

OBITUARIES

I.F. Stone Dies at 81 After Career As Investigative Journalist, Author

By Bart Barnes
Washington Post Staff Writer

I.F. Stone, 81, the crusading and iconoclastic journalist and author whose anti-establishment newsletter, I.F. Stone's Weekly, made him a folk hero to the New Left of the 1960s and 1970s, died June 18 at a hospital in Boston after a heart attack.

A longtime heart patient, he was in Boston for medical treatment when he was stricken. He lived in Washington.

Mr. Stone published his Washington-based newsletter of fact and opinion for 19 years before closing it because of failing health in 1972. When the publication folded, its circulation had reached more than 70,000 and its influence was felt, though not welcomed, at the highest levels of government. Former vice president Spiro T. Agnew once called it a "strident voice of illiberalism."

A dogged investigator and a concise and clever writer, Mr. Stone got most of his news by burrowing through the fine print of thick manuscripts, combing the public record for deceptions and contradictions by public officials, studying transcripts of debates in the Congressional Record and poring over records of obscure committee hearings and reports. Rarely did he get his information from news leaks or well-connected sources.

He was among the first to challenge the factual basis for the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that led to the escalation of U.S. participation in the war in Vietnam, and he was an early and vocal critic of American conduct in the Southeast Asian conflict.

Mr. Stone investigated the Atomic Energy Commission. He pilloried military spending, McCarthyism, pompous bureaucrats, big business and most high public officials, including presidents Eisenhower,

Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon.

He "managed to annoy some of the people all of the time and all of the people at one time or another," The Washington Post observed when Mr. Stone announced he was closing his newsletter.

In 1953, when he founded the Weekly on an investment of \$6,500, he was unemployed after having spent more than two decades as a reporter and editorial writer for a succession of liberal newspapers. There were initially 5,300 subscribers, culled from the subscription lists of two defunct liberal dailies. Albert Einstein, Bertrand Russell and Eleanor Roosevelt were among Mr. Stone's early readers.

This was the era of the Cold War and a time of intense anti-communist public sentiment in America, and Mr. Stone, as a Marxist, was ostracized by official Washington.

For the next 19 years, he would be the sole proprietor, publisher, editor and principal reporter for his paper, while his wife, Esther, was circulation manager and production assistant.

An editorial in The Post said when Mr. Stone retired that he "may well be the only Marxist ever to make good as a capitalist in the fiercely competitive jungle of American free enterprise journalism."

The editorial said: "There was nothing detached about I.F. Stone's reporting. He was essentially a muckraker, a crusader, a polemicist. But there were, at the same time, qualities of thoroughness, fairness and insightfulness that made his work . . . illuminating and a goad to all his competitors."

When he stepped down, times had changed and Mr. Stone was not only in vogue but also a journalistic legend and a model and professional inspiration for young journalists. He was in great demand as a speaker

and as a guest on such television programs as the "Dick Cavett Show." National Educational Television did a special program on his career, and the New York journalism review MORE gave him its A.J. Liebling Award for his "unrelenting investigation" of government power.

Mr. Stone told The Post in 1988, "What I said to my wife a long time ago is that if I lived long enough I'd graduate from a pariah to a character, and then if I lasted long enough, from character to public institution."

After closing the newsletter, Mr. Stone became a contributing editor of the New York Review of Books. He also had been a columnist and editor of the Nation magazine over the years.

He learned ancient Greek to do the research for a book, "The Trial of Socrates," which became a best-seller when published last winter. Characteristically, Mr. Stone took an unorthodox view of the case, portraying Socrates as a middle-class snob who preached a contemptuous cynicism, undermined the interests of ancient Athens and neglected his wife.

Mr. Stone once commented on the similarities in his mind between history and journalism. In an interview with The Post last year, he said: "A reporter is an investigator



I.F. STONE

and a scholar is an investigator. Either you are reprinting the press

releases or you come up with something new."

His book on ancient Greece became a surprise best-seller, something that could not have been said of his earlier works on American government and history. As his career seemingly wound down, interest in him and his work seemed to increase.

In 1973, filmmaker Jerry Bruck Jr. released a popular and critically acclaimed documentary on Mr. Stone's work, life and philosophy. The film helped make Mr. Stone a celebrity to yet another generation of students.

Pantheon published Andrew Patner's biography, "I.F. Stone: A Portrait," in early 1988. In the past two years, Little, Brown has reissued at least five of Mr. Stone's books in a series called "A Non-Conformist's History of Our Times."

As he aged, Mr. Stone's eyesight was failing badly, and he was able to write the book only with the aid of a word processor that could project letters in headline-size type.

Born Isadore Feinstein in Philadelphia, Mr. Stone grew up in Haddonfield, N.J., where his Russian-Jewish immigrant parents owned a dry goods store. He and family members later changed their name to Stone. Mr. Stone's first journalistic venture was the publication of a monthly newspaper called The Progressive, while he was a sophomore in high school. The first issue of that paper carried editorials attacking William Randolph Hearst, and supporting Mohandas Gandhi, Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations.

Later, Mr. Stone attended the University of Pennsylvania while working as a copy editor and rewrite man for the Philadelphia Inquirer. He left college after two years, was an editor and reporter for the Camden (N.J.) Courier-Post and joined the Socialist Party.

In 1939, he joined the staff of the New York Post where he remained until 1940, when he moved to Washington as Washington editor of the Nation. He wrote a book just before the U.S. entry into World War II that attacked waste and inefficiency in the national defense program.

After the war, Mr. Stone worked for a time for the short-lived New York daily PM. He went to Palestine for that paper and reported on the efforts of Jewish underground

dentist since 1983 who had served on the executive board of the local chapter of the Alpha Omega professional dental society, died June 17 at Georgetown University after surgery for cancer. She lived in Bethesda.

Since 1983, she had been a partner in the dental practice of Levin Cohen Goodman & Siegel, which has offices in Washington, Rockville and Chevy Chase. She also had taught at the Georgetown University dental school.

Dr. Siegel, an area resident since 1979, was a native of Miami. She received a bachelor's degree at Columbia University and was a 1978 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's dental school. She also graduated from the University of Maryland's endodontics training program.

She was a member of the Greater Washington Academy of Women Dentists, the D.C. Dental Society and the American Association of Endodontics.

Survivors include her husband, Dr. Neil L. Starr, and two sons, Samuel and Joshua, all of Bethesda; her mother, Connee Siegel of Hollywood, Fla.; a brother and a sister.

organizations to establish a homeland. In 1946, he traveled the route taken by Jewish survivors of Hitler's death camps from Eastern Europe to Palestine, spending eight days on a ship in the Mediterranean that ran the British blockade and delivered hundreds of Jewish refugees to Palestine.

That journey provided material for a book, "Underground to Palestine," that was later translated into Hebrew and used for troop indoctrination by the Israeli army. Mr. Stone returned to the Middle East in 1948 to report on the creation of the state of Israel and the Arab-Israeli war.

Mr. Stone's interests returned to the Middle East during his retirement. From something of a conventional friend of Israel, he became a critic. When "Underground to Palestine" was reissued in the late 1960s, it was with an additional essay called "The Other Zionism," in which Mr. Stone advocated a binational state.

He told The Post: "You cannot in the 20th century deny the Palestinian Arabs the right to self-determination. That's unjust. You

can't have peace without a modicum of justice. If there is a moral ground for a Jewish state in Palestine, there's an equal moral ground for an Arab state in Palestine if the Palestinian Arabs want it."

In addition to his wife of more than 60 years, who lives in Washington, Mr. Stone's survivors include two sons, Jeremy J., of Chevy Chase, and Christopher D., of Los Angeles; a daughter, Celia Gilbert of Cambridge, Mass.; a brother, Louis, of Glenside, Pa.; a sister, Judy Stone of San Francisco; and four grandchildren.

SHERRIL ANN SIEGEL

Area Dentist

Sherril Ann Siegel, 39, an area