

Some Pulitzer Awards Went To the Strangest Recipients

THE PULITZER JURY muffed it: the prizes, if any, should not have gone to the New York Times or to columnist Jack Anderson for their "scoops" on the classified documents.

Obviously, the enterprise involved in the surfacing of the Pentagon Papers and the disclosure of the genesis of the Nixon policy vis-a-vis the Pakistan-India war belonged to Daniel Ellsberg and to the unnamed kibitzer who happened to be listening in when Henry Kissinger began talking about "tilting" toward Pakistan.

THEY WERE the active agents in the disclosures which the Pulitzer jurists consider such a meritorious service to the commonweal.

We have come to a pretty feminized (oops!, my apologies to Women's Lib) state of affairs when the passive element in journalistic revelation is honored above the men who had the boldness to risk jail in order to discredit what they conceived to be criminal secrecy on the part of a duly elected government.

If the Times and Jack Anderson have any humility, they will pass their prizes along to the men who laid their careers on the line to inform the American public of the terrible fact that a nation faced with military and diplomatic choices must hash over the alternatives before coming to strategic decisions.

We live, of course, in a cart-before-the-horse era. Black is white, up is down, it's all right for private citizens to steal classified documents, and aggression consists in defending one's country or one's allies against foreign invasion.

It's permissible for the Soviets to send those tanks to North Vietnam, but it's horrible when the U.S. uses its bombers and gunships as the logical counter to armored thrusts across a demilitarized border. So pervasive and blatant is the up-is-down mentality of the age that one feels like Sisyphus rolling that rock up the hill even to call attention to it. To people of common sense I apologize for being so obvious.

PRESIDENT NIXON, according to the new morality, is a bum for having informed the North Vietnamese that they aren't

going to get away with their naked invasion. But even the believers in the new morality don't quite have the nerve to say openly that they think the North Vietnamese deserve to win.

One lives in hope that Nixon really has something up his sleeve with which to back up the strong words he used the other day in Texas about circumventing the little Prussians of Hanoi.

No Dan Ellsberg has decided to favor me with the text of the White House deliberations that recently sent Henry Kissinger to Moscow, but I'll bet he carried some pregnant words from Nixon. Maybe he was charged with conveying to Brezhnev a statement that if Soviet-made tanks kept pouring across the Haiphong docks on their way toward driving women and children out of the northern provinces of South Vietnam the U.S. would have to blockade the port, thus risking a direct confrontation with Soviet ships.

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY took a chance on direct confrontation to keep Soviet ships from landing offensive weapons in Cuba. And before that, President Eisenhower risked a nuclear showdown with the Red Chinese in order to bring an end to the Korean war. The last thing Nixon wants to do is to exercise brinkmanship in his pursuit of peace. But he knows that if the Soviets get away with arming the North Vietnamese to overrun South Vietnam, they will surely be tempted to repeat their triumph in the Middle East.

Since the successful B52 raids on Haiphong and Hanoi have proved that electronic counter measures can negate the Soviet anti-aircraft defenses, Brezhnev has not been in a sweat to call off the Nixon visit to Moscow. His Egyptian clients might not be able to defend Suez in case the war jumps to the Middle East.

SO, DESPITE the fact that I have had no Ellsberg to help me out, I think I know the substance of what Henry Kissinger said to the Soviets on that secret mission. In a nice way he must have conveyed to Brezhnev that he could have peace if he wants it, but not at the expense of people who trust America to live up to its word.