

FEB 24 1972

China coverage update 2/23/72 Lil had to be at her office by 7 a.m. so I missed any

CBS or NBC special coverage on their regular shows that begin at 7 a.m. I glanced at the Post while awaiting the opening of the Post Office and note that Karnow, old China Watcher, has very little on the substances and much intended to give an understanding of the situation, much consistent with what I had earlier suggested the TV coverage suggests. There was no early a.m. TV coverage, for I checked before starting work at 5 a.m. and again at 6.

Last night CBS went to some pains to correct me on the impartiality of commentary save for a cheap expression by Cronkite at the outset. They aired a half-hour CBS Correspondents Report show, Collingwood, whose formulations have not changed, IN NYC, Cronkite, Rather, Severehead and Bernard Kalb (who must have felt very lonely) in Peking. All but Kalb were anti-everything, straining for the accepted negative cliches, but Kalb persisted in suggesting the positive and indicated he expected a bit more than had been forecast. Cronkite complained about the political and propaganda character of the ballet, deprecated it, for all the world as though he had never heard of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Tom Paine; or seen Gone With the Wind or Birth of a Nation or the typical propaganda works that achieve success outside China without the grace and beauty of the work that, were his criticism valid, was still presented as a model of artistic perfection.

The last half-hour of the Today show began with live telecasting of a badminton match and two ping-pong games from a sports area described with some disbelief as as large as Madison Square Gardens. Former baseball player Joe Garagiola, a Today regular, was audibly impressed with the speed in which the badminton equipment was removed and two separate areas were walled off the ping-pong, and indeed it was well organized and consisted of pre-made units each individually moved, by one pair of hands.

It is as though some of the TV people are getting the idea they have been too honest, which means they now have to be dishonest to satisfy themselves that they are honest.

A minor example was in the airing of pictures taken on a visit to a large commune. In views of the housing it was said that rental for the unit was a mere 80¢ per month. Later someone came back to what Barbara Walters had said yesterday in what was aired of her filming of a shopping trip, that a ping-pong paddle costs 30¢ only, cheap. So, today one of the NYers asked her what percentage that is of the usual wage. Because in dollars all wages there are low, this was made to seem like a disproportionately high %. It was then repeated, as I have heard it repeated often, that while good bicycles are readily available and plentiful, are the most common mode of transportation, they cost \$60.00, or three months wages. But that rental is more than ten times less than the percentage of an American's income going to rent is not spelled out.

This is called "objectivity".