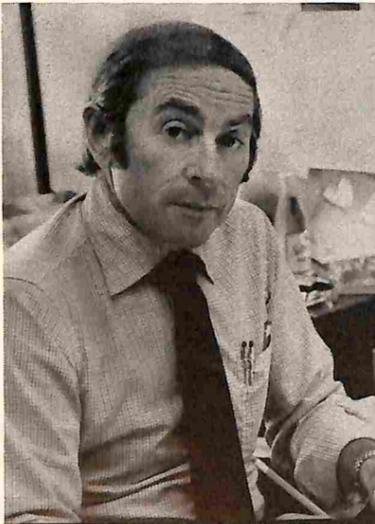


A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

While movies like *Towering Inferno*, *Tidal Wave* and *Earthquake* were mesmerizing audiences of disaster buffs over the past year, Senior Editor Leon Jaroff and Associate Editor Frederic Golden, who writes our Science section, were carefully following a series of little-noticed events and discoveries that are leading scientists closer to achieving a critical breakthrough: the ability to predict, and possibly even control, earthquakes. Golden, who wrote this week's cover package and Jaroff, who edited it, have both been keeping tab on seismological research for several years. "We'd covered each advance piecemeal," Jaroff says. "Finally," he adds, "it seemed that the right time had come to pull the research together and let our readers know that reliable earthquake forecasts are nearly at hand."

ANTONIO SUARES



EDITOR JAROFF

Jaroff is a longtime student of natural disasters. With degrees in mathematics and electrical engineering from the University of Michigan, he used his scientific training in one of his early assignments in journalism, covering Midwestern tornadoes—and trying to explain their cause—for LIFE. "I saw some terrible scenes," Jaroff says, "but at least people had a little warning and could duck into storm shelters. When an earthquake strikes, there is no place to hide." Golden drew on an expertise in geology that he began cultivating years ago as a student at the Bronx High School of Science. A denizen of New York City's high-rises, he finds the whole subject of earthquakes disconcerting as well as fascinating. But New York, he notes, has its advantages. "Manhattan has a lot of problems," Golden explains, "but very few faults." San Francisco Correspondent John Austin feels considerably queasier. Small wonder, considering that his talks with earthquake researchers and civic defense officials, and perusal of an Office of Emergency Preparedness study, form the basis of the story "The Day San Francisco Is Hit."

Reporter-Researcher Janice Castro, who along with F. Sydner Vanderson helped compile the research for the project, approached her assignment with a quake-wise Californian's cool. Born on a cattle ranch north of Oakland, she knew well the tale of how her great-grandparents' chimney toppled into the kitchen during the 1906 San Francisco disaster. Like many Californians, she has often felt the earth move. The last time was in June. While Castro sat reading a Virginia Woolf novel on a mountain in the Coast Range, the earth began to "boogie and shake." Suddenly she realized that she had chosen a vacation spot "right on top of the San Andreas Fault."

Ralph P. Davidson

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From Right to Left in Portugal

To the Editors:

Finally a cover story on the Portuguese situation [Aug. 11]. And what a cover it is. The gentleman on the right (Costa Gomes) could pass for Frankenstein's twin brother; the one in the center (Gonçaves) looks like he's ready to bite someone on the neck, and the one on the left (Carvalho) really looks like he's on the left.

Paul Hegeman
Eastport, N.Y.

Seeing the TIME cover on Portugal, I thought "My God, a TIME, lost in the bowels of the Post Office for 23 years, has finally arrived." It seems hard to be-



lieve, even in the most boring summer since Watergate, that TIME has stooped to the Red menace to attempt to lure readers.

Maybe things are not all we would like them to be in Portugal, but there are damned few places, including our own country, that are following the perfect path to human bliss.

Deirdre Murray Whiteside
New York City

Portugal and its kindly people would be far better off if the Salazar-Caetano administration had never been overthrown.

Charles V. Montague
Palma de Mallorca, Spain

You seem to feel that Portugal has already been taken over by the Communists. It sounds as if you are writing the obituary before the patient is dead.

Ellen Groff
Miami

How sickening it is to hear the words Red threat after 15 years. As far as I am concerned, TIME is as much responsible for Communist paranoia as Sen-

ator McCarthy, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. Your only saving grace is that you are factual.

Wayne Spitzer
Newtown Square, Pa.

Exciting Betty

The exciting aspect of Mrs. Ford's comments on abortion and "having affairs" [Aug. 25] is not so much the substance of them, as it is the freedom which she and her family feel to express their diversity of views on the topics. What a perfect model of the dynamics and purpose of freedom of speech in a democracy—to get controversial issues into the public dialogue where the various legitimate and not-so-legitimate points of view can be argued out.

How different from the repressive Nixon years!

Diane Chegwidden Jones
Fort Lee, N.J.

Mrs. Ford mentioned that her honesty relative to her recent operation for cancer may well save the lives of countless women. On the other side of the coin, her honesty on abortion, which she supports, could well affect the decision of other countless women to destroy the lives of their babies, human beings.

Mrs. Lucien M. Grant
Houston

Atoms-and-Coal Formula

The recent Harris poll showing that 63% of the American people accept civilian nuclear energy as clean, inexpensive and safe [Aug. 18], while only 19% oppose construction of more nuclear power plants, and a mere 5% believe them to be dangerous should help to reduce the emotional content of the often heated nuclear debate.

Our nation's need for energy, both liquid fuels and electricity, is crucial. The close relationship between energy reduction, jobs and a healthy economy is becoming every day more clear. Fac-

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tual information devoid of accusations and largely unsubstantiated charges and countercharges must form the basis for reasonable discussion and public decision. Conservation must be pursued. But realistic use of what we now have—coal and nuclear energy—is essential today and in the years immediately ahead. Those who want accurate information should read Schmidt & Bodansky's "The Energy Controversy: The Role of Nuclear Power."

Dixy Lee Ray
Fox Island, Wash.

Dixy Lee Ray was chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission 1973-75.

Nixon's Palace Guard

Exploiting and profiteering—that's what members of the guard [Aug. 11] are doing. Is it not tragic enough that they tried to steal the democratic system of government? Now they want to exploit their crime by selling books detailing their actions. To buy one of the guard's books is to line their pockets. Haven't we paid enough?

Barbara Lobley
Seabrook, Texas

Well you've done your worst to Richard Nixon, but he's still the most admired man on my list. I thank him for making the world a safer place.

Gilbert Hawkins
Chicago

The only tax funds that should be spent on Nixon are the \$140,000 or so that would pay for his well-deserved 20-year residence in a federal pen.

John R. Kennedy
Oklahoma City

Why is everyone still standing around waiting for Nixon to admit that he feels guilty about Watergate? Do we really expect Abbie Hoffman, Lucky Luciano and Charles Manson to admit that they feel guilty? Guilt is something that human beings tend to feel a little of as they can. And Presidents are no exceptions.

Gail White
New Orleans

Historic Moment

The Viking-Mars landers have, in addition to the biology packages described in TIME [Aug. 18], two other sets of instruments connected with the search for life. There is an organic chemistry laboratory that will search for the molecules of life among the Martian sand grains. There are also two television cameras on each lander to search for large animals or vegetables near the landing site. Unlike the microbiology in-

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