

## A Letter from the Publisher

**"C**hildren of War," the extraordinary chronicle that is our cover story this week, is a unique enterprise for TIME and perhaps for journalism. Never before have the thoughts and feelings of children growing up on the world's battlegrounds been the subject of such encompassing and penetrating exploration. Involved in the initial arrangements were TIME correspondents at bureaus in Great Britain, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. What their efforts made possible was a five-week, 25,000-mile odyssey by Senior Writer Roger Rosenblatt to regions of the world long tormented by war. What he returned with was an intensely personal account of how children view life when it might explode before their eyes at any moment.

The project began when Rosenblatt saw a TV clip of a crying baby in a gutted, rubble-strewn street in the Middle East. "It occurred to me that in many parts of the world there are children growing up who have known nothing but war," says Rosenblatt, the father of two boys, 15 and 3, and a girl, 12. "I wanted to find out what is on the minds of these children—what they

believe in, what they respect, what games they play, whether they have any politics, and what the future might be in their hands."

The list of war zones was narrowed to five: Northern Ireland; Israel, including the occupied West Bank; Lebanon; Thai-



Rosenblatt with Cambodian refugee children in Thailand

land, where survivors of Cambodia's years of terror have fled; and Hong Kong, refuge of thousands of boat people from Viet Nam. Rosenblatt spent a week in each area, meeting with scores of children. They talked. He listened. Sometimes tears came with the words, sometimes the worst of horrors were related with cold dispatch. Indeed, the names of six of the children have been changed in this cover story—with good reason.

"When I set out, I had no idea what I would find," Rosenblatt recalls. What he found was at once simple and confounding: "That children persist and, miraculously, are still kids." Sums up Rosenblatt: "I

feel more like a messenger than a writer." TIME's readers will be grateful, however, that he has brought a writer's eye to a story that so truly measures the strength of the human spirit.

*John A. Meyers*

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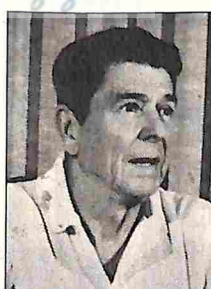
Cover: Photograph by Bill Pierce



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JANUARY 11, 1987

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