

T2263

#M0054271NC

NC 0018398 9



THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

FACULTY OF FINE ART

DEPARTMENT OF PRINT-MAKING

"SPOILING THE PICTURE"

by

MONICA-JEAN FAIRGRIEVE KERRANE, B.A., Dip. App. Psych.

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND

DESIGN

AND

COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

IN

CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF FINE ART

1999

## Acknowledgements

(In Alphabetical Order)

J.G.O.

James Curran (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin)

Helen R. Kerrane, librarian, D.C.U.,

Garry McCarthy, Glin, Co. Limerick.

Edward Murphy, Head Librarian, Gemma Bradley, Assistant Librarian, and the Library Staff of the National College of Art and Design, Dublin.

The Librarians of Iveagh Hall Library, Trinity College, Dublin  
and the "Per" Staff

The Library Staff of The Santry Depository, Trinity College, Dublin.

Mr. & Mrs. John O'Loughlin Kennedy (Africa Concern)

Niamh O'Sullivan

Sally O'Sullivan

Gerry Walker, M.A., (Tutor)

"X"



## Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	page	i
<i>Illustrations</i>		iii
<b>Introduction</b>		1
<b>Chapter One</b>		
In Focus		4
<b>Chapter Two</b>		
Dark subject		8
Distorted Subject		11
<b>Chapter Three</b>		
Subject not too Sharp		22
Blurred Pictures		26
<b>Chapter Four</b>		
Photographs with Cluttered Background		
a) Introduction		28
b) "Vietnam War" 1965 - 1975.		30
c) Biafran War 1967 - 1970.		36
d) Falklands Conflict 1982		42
e) Persian Gulf War 1990 - 1991		51
<b>Conclusion</b>		60
<b>Bibliography</b>		65



## Illustrations

### *The Vietnam War*

Eddie Adams (1Feb 1968)

Execution of Vietcong Suspect. p. 32

Huynh Cong "Nick" Ut (1972)

Napalmed Child. p. 33

Larry Burrows (1971)

"Brotherhood" p. 36

### *The Biafran War*

Don McCullin

24 year-old Mother her child sucking her empty

Breast. p. 41





## Illustrations (Continued)

An English Doctor Cradling Dying Children. p. 41

Albino Boy Clutching his Empty French Corned  
Beef Tin. p. 42

Patience, a sixteen year old girl p. 42

### *The Falklands Conflict*

Photographer Unknown *The Observer* (23 May 1982)

Royal Commandos Plant the Union Jack at Port  
Saint Carlos. p.46

Tom Smith (*The Observer* 23 May 1982)

The Cuppa That Says It All . . . p. 46

Photographer Uncredited

The Sinking of the *General Belgrano* 2 May 1982. p. 47



## Illustrations (Continued)

### *The Persian Gulf War (1990 - 1991)*

#### Photographer Unknown (13 February 1991)

Grief for lost relatives.

Bombing of the Al Amiriya Bunker. p. 56

#### Dilip Ganguly

Rescue workers... Al Amiriya Bunker p. 56

#### French Television (RTF)

A boy wounded in the bunker raid. p. 56

#### Photographer Unknown (26 February 1991)

The Road To Basra, Mutlah Ridge. p. 57

#### Kenneth Jarecke

An Iraqi soldier burnt to death in the cab of

his jeep. p. 58



## Introduction

When wars were illustrated in the past, prominence was given to the depiction of the armed forces. The plight of civilians caught up in war was and is frequently overlooked. Geneva Conventions (1949) and Protocols I and II (1977) have formulated international humanitarian laws to regulate hostilities and include the protection of civilians. Wars continue. They have been transmuted to "conflicts" as few countries would be fool-hardy enough to declare outright war in view of the possible use of nuclear arms. Civilians still suffer.

Photographs are said to influence the course of wars by arousing public opinion. One asks the question whether photographic evidence of civilians caught up in war would have any bearing on changing the attitude of the public and making governments desist from using war or conflict as a means of settling a political or ideological argument.

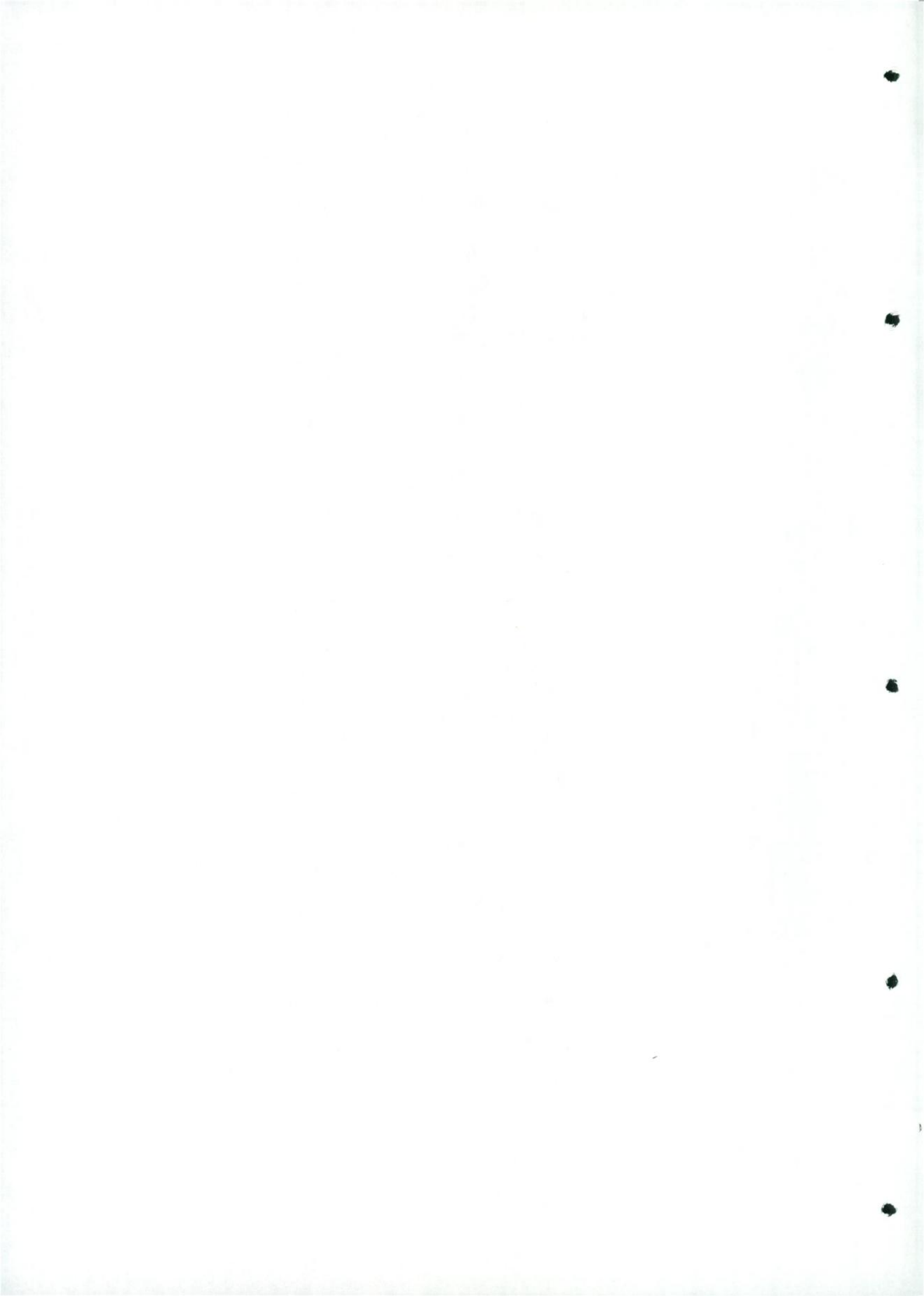
War-photographers go off to photograph wars for various reasons and their works are used by the media as "information" and/or "witness" to particular conflicts. For the most part the works of British photographers were studied with the intention of using their photographic evidence of civilian sufferings to illustrate the text. Some of the "iconic" photographs of the wars were not produced by them and exceptions were made. Finding enough photographic matter was quite difficult, and this narrowed the field of choice.



The methodology used to study the subject of photography, war and the civilian took direction from *The Library of Congress Subject Headings* researching the following sections : - "History of War", "Ethics and Morality of War", "Foreign Correspondents" and "Photojournalists - British". From these sections, came "Media and War", "Censorship and War", "Photojournalism", and "Propaganda" for other sources of information. The Humanitarian aspect was investigated under the headings of "Civilian populations in War", "Investigations into War Crimes" and "War Crimes" themselves. Next photographic evidence of war was looked at with references to "Images of War", "War Photographers", "War Reporters" and "War Reports". All the above headings were applied to the study of each war in question on a year by year basis for the duration of the conflict with particular reference to those wars in which British photographers were present, and/or in which Britain was involved : The "Vietnam War" (1965-1975), The Biafran War (1967-1970), The Falklands Conflict (1982), and The Persian Gulf War (1990-1991).

Extensive use was made of *The British Humanities Index* to locate newspaper and periodical articles dealing with the four wars. The Library of Trinity College, Dublin, provided most of these references. Where the relevant newspapers were missing, use was made of the Newspaper Library, part of the The British Library, London - an expensive venture.

Some television documentaries were viewed. Several memoirs of





war correspondents were also read to see how they coped with the war situation and to see whose side they were on : military or civilian.

Governments always like to present a good face to its electorate when pursuing questionable political business. Inopportune photographs have a way of "Spoiling the Picture".

Photographic terms have been used allegorically to help define the subject :

*In Focus* : Introducing the photographer and his "studio", the war zone. There is a brief mention of the four wars which form its background.

*Dark Subject* refers to war and some of the reasons for waging it.

*Distorted Subject* treats of the four conflicts in which Big Powers have interfered.

*Subject not too Sharp* considers the rôle of propaganda and ideology and how photographs are used or can be used to spoil the picture that governments wish to present.

*Blurred Pictures* a brief incursion into how governments, the military and the media would like to control photographic evidence.

*Photographs with Cluttered Backgrounds* examines some war-related photographs to see if there is a shift in public opinion and its said threat to governmental stability.

*Odd perspective* can only be a conclusion.



# SPOILING THE PICTURE

## Chapter One

### "In Focus"

Every photographer hopes to produce a compelling image from an undamaged film, unspoilt by the subject being too dark, blurred, or distorted; a picture without unwanted reflections, odd perspectives or a cluttered background. In short, a photograph that will change the perception of the viewer. Consequently, photographers use lenses suitable to their vision of the world.

Depending on the type of lens, (wide-angled, tele-photo., or ordinary 50mm.) the photographer controls the perspective of his image by exaggerating the distance between objects, or compressing foreground and background to remove the distance or leaving the perspective corresponding to the human eye. A clear print is obtained when the lens is correctly focused both at the point of taking the photograph, and when it is being developed. The lens is the "eye".

It is in the quality of eye-witness, more or less in the legal sense,



that a war-photographer or journalist is generally regarded by the public as an independent, truth-seeking, visual testifier of war-fare, "photographs furnish evidence. . . the camera record incriminates. . . (and) justifies", according to Susan Sontag (1977). "A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort ; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture." This qualification of eye-witness account is based on the *assumption* that the evidence is not vitiated, that the eye or camera has not lied, or been made to lie.

An independent, free-lance, war-photographer, foreign correspondent or journalist, non-ideologically attached, and free to explore any angle of a situation, is regarded as suspect or "maverick" by governments, because he/she is unharnessed to the party media machine, and so is not obliged to follow a particular political line in the interpretation of events. The war-photographer, or journalist as eye-witness, can bring to light evidence which governments would prefer to leave with a publicly blurred focus, fearing an exposure of duplicity or mendacity, thereby losing public opinion, or, an election. In other words, the photographer or journalist can "spoil the picture" painted and presented to the electorate by governments in pursuance of legitimacy for their actions. It follows then, that when a war is declared and waged, the governments concerned would much prefer to close the aperture down to its smallest *f*-stop (opening) for war-photographers and journalists, thereby



depriving them of light - information and photographic opportunity - without, of course, admitting outright to imposed censorship . . .

The four wars under consideration are : the Vietnam War, or the Second Indo-China War (1965-1975) ; the Biafran War, commonly known as the Nigerian War of 1967-1970 ; the Falklands War (1982); and the Persian Gulf War (1990-1991).

Britain did not participate in the Vietnam War. There was an understanding with the United States that she would not become involved. The same reciprocity occurred in the Biafran War when Britain sided with Nigeria, (Suzanne Cronje 1972. ch. 7) The United States kept out of direct action in the British Falklands war ; however, both countries waged the Persian Gulf War.

The wars were not chosen as "the photographic studios" or *loci* of action in which some British photographers and journalists focused and practised their art. This is not an examination of the lives or art of particular war-photographers and journalists. The focus is on the subject matter of their images and accounts with the intention of investigating the assumption that images can *ipso facto* challenge the *status quo* and so stop wars.





What the war-photographers and journalists found when they reached the scene of action, although exciting and exhilarating, was not always to their liking. To capture the horror of war re-focused these "voyeurs" of man's inhumanity to his fellow-beings. Their picture content changed from military exploits to the effects of their exploitation upon the civilians. As Don McCullin said in his autobiography *Unreasonable Behaviour* (1992. p. 162) :

I wasn't about to find serious fault with my own work but I could see there was an emphasis on soldiers at war rather than civilians in war, though when the casualty numbers were finally added up it was often the civilians who suffered the most. In future I wanted to reflect more of what happened to the women and children caught up in war. . .



## Chapter Two

### "Subject too Dark"

"Subject too dark" : a photographic term used to describe the under-exposed parts of an image. The film has been insufficiently exposed to the light to show the details in the shadows, or that the main subject of the picture is in shadow because the the camera has only registered the brightest areas in the shot.

The dark subject of war and the reasons for going to war are shadowy, the truth about its waging is hidden (under-exposed) or disguised (over-exposed). The background to a war can be illuminated to such an extent that the foreground and main subject, that of battle and the loss of human life is glossed over, obscure, or obscured *pro patria*. Or, again the background can be lost in shadow, for example, the repercussions of war on a civilian population, the emphasis being bracketed upon the fighting army. It is a question of exposure in photography, or in the case of war, the focus of media attention.

Despite their self-considered superiority with regard to other races,



white, Western world civilisations have always enjoyed war-mongering. Disputes were settled through violence. In the past, one talked of a "just war" to legitimise it. This "disguised" the ulterior motives of the belligerent state. To-day, the idea of "just" war has declined. The effacing of humanity by the atom bomb has acted as a deterrent for the nuclear-endowed Big Powers. The dark threat of a retaliatory, total nuclear war has overshadowed Western society for the last fifty years. This has obliged states to consider other ways of settling disputes : conciliation, not confrontation. The use of force has been scaled down to threats, limited conflicts or "pocket wars", rather than one state declaring out-right war upon another. Humanitarian principles concerning the rights of man, and the right to life now form the basis of international law concerning warfare. (Hilaire McCoubrey. 1990. and *UNESCO : International Dimensions of Humanitarian War*. 1988.) It is within the ambit of these rights that civilized, industrial societies expect war to be waged.

During the last forty years of this century, four particular conflicts were waged by one Big Power in two instances, and a former Big Power in another two. Both overtly or covertly sought to influence the course of events in another state. The powers in question were not threatened territorially with invasion of their own boundaries, nor did they act in self-defence as *per* the Geneva Conventions. They participated uninvited in wars in other lands. In three of the wars investigated, there was no formal declaration of war by the intervening power. In the fourth, the



United Nations' Security Council, - a body set up to uphold peace, authorized on 29 November 1990, the "use of force" to bring a wayward co-signatory to heel, but did not declare war upon that bellicose country.

The reasons for going to war, at least at the time of participating in a conflict are not necessarily those of revenge for the killing of a few personnel, the "police action" against a troublesome region, the invasion of a desolate island or a neighbouring state. These are merely pretexts to gain *entrée*, and bring influence to bear upon the scene of action. The intervening power invariably wants something else, and in the present industrial society of the West that means an economic advantage. The disguising of the true interests which motivates a power to intervene in a war situation obliges it to justify its intervention to its electorate. It is in the reading, or mis-reading of public opinion that governments judge just how much information will be fed to the electorate, keeping a wary eye, all the while, upon the media which is both a conduit of information and a voice of discontent if communication is obstructed, obscured, or distorted.

In the Vietnam War, the United States of America first "assisted" South Vietnam against the infiltration of pro-Communist North Vietnam. She became militarily involved when some of her "assistants" were killed by North Vietnamese fighters in various incidents in the early months of 1965. There was no declaration of war on North Vietnam which was essentially





fighting for its independence. The United States had another agenda.

Britain covertly supplied Nigeria with military supplies on the pretext that it was a former colony which needed help in a "police action" against one of its regions, the Eastern Region, which had legally declared its secession from Nigeria proper. The new state was called the Republic of Biafra. No formal declaration of war was ever made against Biafra either by Nigeria or Britain. Britain had her own agenda.

When the south American Republic of Argentina invaded the British dependencies of the Falkland Islands in the southern hemisphere, Britain sent down a Task Force to re-assert her territorial sovereignty and to protect her own citizens living there. Argentina was not issued with a declaration of war; however, Britain had other reasons for wanting to maintain a presence in the south Atlantic.

In the Persian Gulf War, the United States of America together with the support of other Powers, in a minor key, took up the challenge of war against Iraq on 15 January 1991, overtly because of the invasion of Kuwait, and not so covertly for other reasons.

#### "Distorted Subject"

A subject is said to be distorted in photography when the wrong



lens is used, certain parts of the image becoming disproportionately twisted or over-enlarged. In war, the entrance of a third party into the conflict, brings its own agenda (lens) which may not have any bearing on the issue concerning the original conflicting parties. The third party's lens of ideology and/or economic rapacity distorts the subject.

In 1965 the United states of America appeared to have every economic advantage and did not need to enter any conflict to assure her position in the world. Yet she felt threatened by possible communist domination of the world by Russia who was already waging an ideological Cold War in the West. In the Vietnamese conflict, the U.S.A. entered a "mind" war on the side of South Vietnam whom she had been covertly helping since the withdrawal of the French from that region, and consequently pursued the war mindlessly, "without real strategy" according to Brian Becket (1985) and Garry S. Summers (1985). The United States neither knew nor appreciated the Vietnamese reasons for their struggle, nor had they studied the terrain : *erreur majeure* in Clausewitz's book.

North Vietnam through its leader Ho Chi Minh had espoused communism and was sending his adherents to infiltrate the "democratic" South. The United States did not realised that North Vietnam was seeking independence, and was using communism as a tool to gain its ends. Despite the name "Indo-China", Ho Chi Minh had no desire to become a



satellite of Chinese communism, let alone be ruled by China. He wanted the whole of Vietnam to be free from all foreign involvement. Having got rid of the French in 1954, he was prepared to get rid of the Americans and take-over south Vietnam in 1965. When the Americans accelerated their involvement in South Vietnam they did not fully comprehend the situation, so, war was not formally declared upon the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). For all the American rhetoric, the United States invaded Vietnam. They entered a war situation on All Fools' Day 1965. The conflict of American military involvement lasted ten years.

Strictly speaking the Biafran War (1967-1970) was a Nigerian racial war. Formerly a British colony, it gained its independence in 1960. Nigeria was not a national entity and seemingly had no aspiration to a nationalism which would unite the diverse tribes comprising the state of Nigeria. The tribal differences, and a corrupt wielding of political power, had a divisive effect.

Briefly, in May, July and September of 1966, many Ibos were massacred in the other regions of Nigeria. Under the seeming threat of genocide, the rest fled to their tribal heartland in the Eastern Region. In the other Regions, many Ibo officers and men in the Nigerian Army were also killed. The country was in turmoil after a series of coups. Ultimately Colonel Gowon, a Northerner, took control of the army at the end of July



1966, and thereby, the government of Nigeria by military rule. He was not officially recognised by Britain until 20 December 1966.

Colonel Ojukwu, an Ibo, a serving officer, contemporary to Gowan, was governor of the Eastern Region. As several Ibo officers in the Nigerian Army had been killed, Ojukwu was understandably reluctant to leave his region, which now contained a huge influx of Ibo refugees. No firm guarantee for the safety of the Ibo outside their heartland could be given. In March 1967, he withheld the federal revenues of the region. Gowan imposed a postal blockade in retaliation. On 26 May 1967, Ojukwu consulted his regional assembly which was in favour of secession. Whereupon, Gowan, not only declared a state of emergency, he also announced that the country was to be divided into twelve states, three of which would be in the East. "Biafra" came into being as "an independent sovereign state" following Ojukwu's declaration on 30 May 1967. A total blockade of the sea ports and seaboard was imposed. Britain provided the ships.

Britain did not really want to get involved. It seemed to be just another Nigerian inter-racial dispute. Ojukwu's overt declaration of independence was not taken seriously. Gowan played down the racial aspect of the situation referring to it as a "rebellion" that could be put down with a "short, sharp police action" of limited duration, the which Britain ultimately believed to be the case. What had not been realised was that the





people of the new state of Biafra saw themselves as a nation, and that they were fully prepared to defend it. Britain's attitude changed when the Egyptians closed the Suez Canal during the Arab-Israeli Six Day War (6 June 1967). British oil stocks were threatened. Her attention now focused on Nigerian oil, its acquisition seemed to out-weigh all other considerations. British warships enforced the naval blockade. The conflict lasted for two and a half years.

For twelve months Harold Wilson's government mislead Parliament, Press and people as to the nature of British involvement : pretending mediation and neutrality while selling arms to Nigeria. In reality, the British government wanted to be sure of a future market for her goods and arms-trading, averred John Hatch (1971. ch. 11.) who then claimed that Britain lost out on all counts.

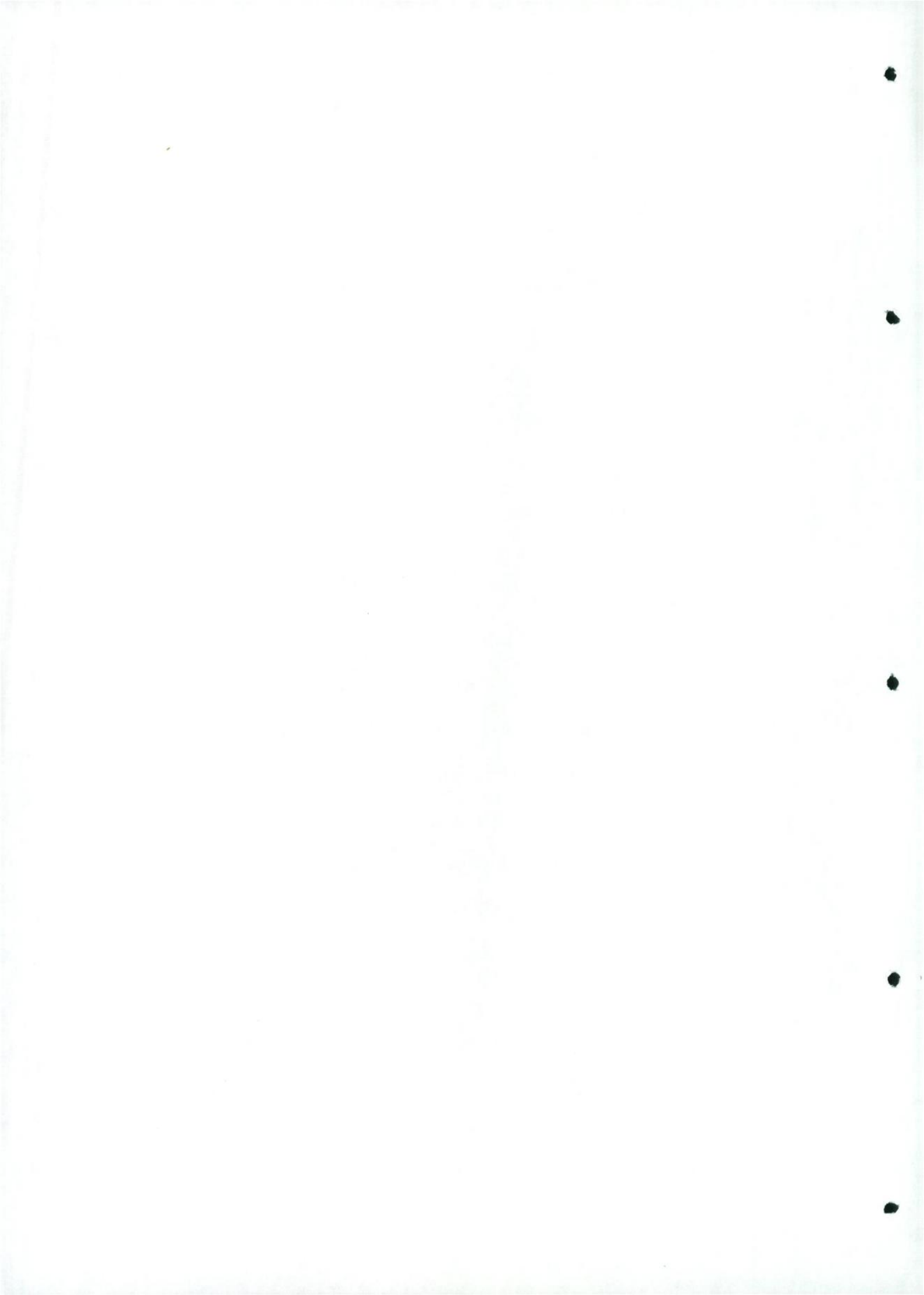
The Falklands War could be considered a crisis of sovereignty. The dispute over territorial rights of possession came to a head on Friday 2 April 1982 when the first Argentine contingent invaded the islands with a military force of 2,000 troops, landing in three different sectors around Port Stanley, the Falkland Islands' capital. The British garrison of Royal Marines fought, then surrendered by order of the governor. Argentina neither gave an ultimatum nor declared war. Technically speaking, the Argentines could be said to have conquered the islands by *force majeure*,



according to the gun-boat colonial acquisition policy of the nineteenth century when conqueror and conquered would have had to come to a *modus vivendi* among themselves.

Historically, Britain had been in possession of East and West Falkland Islands, plus a few smaller ones, situated a few hundred miles off the southernmost tip of the South American continent, since 1833 when a British gun-boat entered Puerto de la Soledad in order to enforce previous British sovereignty claims. Later, when Argentina became a republic in 1853, it neither set out to establish an Argentine colony by military conquest on the islands, nor make any direct claim to them. Consequently, Britain held undisputed possession for a hundred and forty-nine years. British sovereignty over the islands was not ratified by a treaty with Spain, the *assumed* previous possessor of same, according to Argentine arguments. Spain did not cede them to Argentina. Argentina always maintained that Britain had unlawfully taken the islands by force. Neither this assertion nor the Argentine claim were taken to the international court of the Hague. Following an irredentist type policy, Argentina also laid claims to other islands within a large radius of the area none of which had ever been occupied by Argentines.

In 1965 Argentina had recourse to the United Nations concerning sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. Britain and Argentina were instructed to begin negotiations which lasted for seventeen years, Britain insisting that



the islanders, who held British citizenship, should determine their own future in accordance with Article 73 of the United Nations Charter, the which had been signed by Argentina. Britain was playing a stalling game.

In several instances Britain did not take the Argentine threat to invade the islands seriously. Argentina did not think that Britain was serious about maintaining its sovereignty over the Falklands as it had been pursuing a policy of de-colonisation : nearby Belize had just been given its independence. There was talk in 1980-81 of a "leaseback" in which sovereignty could be conceded to Argentina with guarantees of protection for the islanders' rights. Nothing came of this. The British Parliament denounced it. When Argentina granted maritime oil exploration licences near the Falkland Islands, there was a mere protest from the British Government which had not asserted a fashionable 200 mile limit around the islands. Furthermore, military and naval spending in Britain was to be cut, and, in particular, the Royal Navy Antarctic survey ship, *HMS Endurance* was to be re-called. No other form of military defence was sent to protect the Islands. To the Argentines, this amounted to a British loss of interest in the far-flung parts of her Empire: domestic and oil issues were more important.

Both Mrs. Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, and General Galtieri, the Argentine President used the situation like a "lens" over-enlarging the invasion issue to deflect undue interest in troublesome



domestic situations. The latter fulfilled a long held national desire to regain "lost" territory; while the former had no wish to be the leader who lost territory by default, especially through "bully-boy" tactics. The Falkland islanders became the symbolic icon of lone defenders against a repressive regime as well as being British and beleaguered.

Between the confirmation of the *fait accompli* of the invasion on 3 April and the complete British naval blockade of the islands by a Task Force sent to eject the occupiers on 30 April 1982, Britain had gained the support of the U.N. Security Council and European community and the quiescence of the United States. Isolated and surprised, the Argentine Government was faced with a potential war situation not only on the islands but also on home territory the which it had not bargained. Fighting on the Islands lasted three weeks. The Argentine forces on the Falkland Islands surrendered at Port Stanley on 14 June 1982 bringing to a close 73 days of Argentine occupation.

The fourth war the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91 was essentially about oil, the possession of oil fields, and the creation of a new power structure in the Middle East. When President Saddam Hussein of Iraq invaded the neighbouring state of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, he was looking for the means to pay off his war debts and carry out his plan to become leader of the pan-Arab world, and a super-power in the Persian Gulf.





Kuwait was an economic gamble. It would provide immediate occupation for his army, already supplied with arms by the Western powers and Soviet Russia; plunder would be in lieu of payment for the oil "stolen" by the Kuwaitis from the Rumeileh oilfield, already claimed by Iraq ; and he could control the flow and price of oil to assure his own revenues. He presumed that the political international powers would not mind the invasion, given the corrupt political situation in Kuwait, and, had his greed been confined to two islands near the Shat al-Arab waterway, and "not *all* of Kuwait" he might have succeeded. It would then have stayed within the realm of an Arab-Arab family problem to be negotiated into settlement between Arab states.

The Big Powers headed by the American Super-Power did mind the invasion, not because Saddam Hussein wanted to extirpate the state of Israel in the long term, but because they considered him to be a threat to Saudi Arabia and its oilfields, which meant that one state would control too much oil. This was not the ultimate reason : the world Super-power did not want a new, rival power in the Persian Gulf challenging its hegemony and the *status quo* , with possible reversal of balance of power, and endangerment to world peace. Secretly, the United States hoped to be a permanent presence in the Persian Gulf. According to John Pilger (1992 p.127-129) the United States lured Saddam Hussein into invading Kuwait, thereby setting him up to be brought down. The Cold War being over, it was decided and proposed by the National Security Council, senior advisory



body to the President in 1990 that Saddam Hussein should be, in so many words, the new focus to justify military spending.

The requested protection of Saudi Arabia and the re-taking of Kuwait brought together (without Russia) the United States of America, Britain and France (the military powers of the old dispensation) together with thirty-six other states to oust the invader by force, if necessary. The United Nations passed Resolution 660 on the day of the invasion requesting the unconditional and total withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The United States sent armed forces to Saudi Arabia on 7 August 1990.

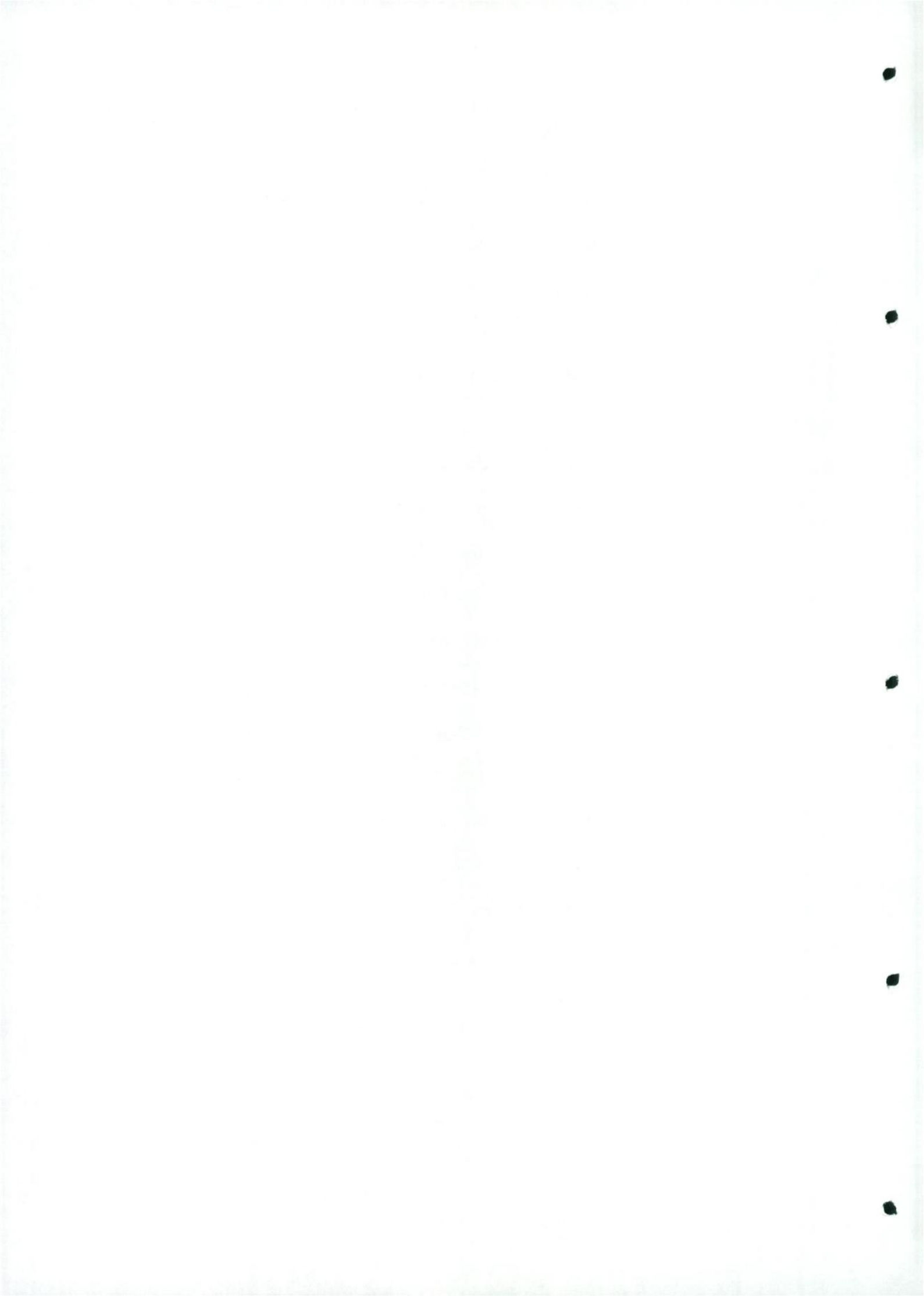
The authorisation, on 29 November 1991, by the United Nations Security Council for the use of force to compel Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait by 15 January 1991, "gave" the United States and its allies the legal "right" to deal with Iraq by force of arms. Not the rescue of Kuwait and the safe-guarding of Saudi oilfields, but the public humiliation of Saddam Hussein and the reduction of Iraqi military power in the region was the intent of the American intervention. President Bush meant business, he had always intend to wage war on Iraq, despite the unpreparedness of the allied forces.

Saddam Hussein was under the impression that he could haggle his way out of the situation in the time-honoured Arab fashion. He made



peace with Iran, but made no allowance for the fact that with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the balance between the Western Powers and the Soviet bloc had changed considerably in favour of the United States which now had a virtual free-hand to shape the Middle East to its liking which meant preventing Russia from getting a foot-hold in the Persian Gulf. Russia could still be a "friend" to Iraq but with the new détente could not be declared an ally to counter-balance the Americans.

15 January 1991 passed without the withdrawal of Iraqi forces. The Allies began their air offensive on 17 January 1991. It lasted for thirty-eight days. Russia continuously tried to broker a peace settlement. However, the United States was determined to humiliate Saddam Hussein before the Arab world, and imposed conditions with an impossible time-scale. The land assault began on 25 February 1991. On 26 February, Saddam Hussein accepted Resolution 660 and ordered his troops to withdraw from Kuwait. Before the cease-fire came into effect on 28 February, there was another day spent bombing the retreating Iraqi forces, mixed up, it appeared, with foreign workers trying to leave Kuwait. The United Nations' resolutions did not stipulate this.



## Chapter Three

### "Subject not Sharp"

A slight error of focus makes an enlarged photographic image lose sharpness. Images, also lose sharpness in dim conditions or where there is a lack of light.

The focus of propaganda is to make the electorate accept war as a "necessity" or a "natural" out-come of negotiations, and hoping to hide the double-dealing involved in creating war. The public more readily accepts the decision to go to war when told that an innocent, unprotected country is threatened with invasion, or, is *de facto*, invaded. The propaganda machine demonises the invading power (the Falklands and Kuwait), as if to emphasise the "rightness" of using force to evict the invaders. The same machine was strangely silent when the United States of America invaded Vietnam. Credibility is lost with the electorate when the evicting action goes beyond the remit of the U.N. resolutions calling for the withdrawal of occupying forces (focus enlarged), as, in the instances of the sinking of the *General Belgrano* outside the war zone or the shooting down the retreating Iraqi forces. The distinction between the "demonised" invaders and the attackers of the unprotected becomes blurred.





Propaganda dims the light on the arms-purveying section of the economy, a concealed central focus, often blurred in the public domain, and an underlying *raison d'être* when it comes to involvement as an intervening third party, as seen by British arms sales to Nigeria during the Biafran war. It was particularly noticeable in the Vietnam War where the United States not only tried out new weaponry, but also improved its capacity for devastation both to humans (napalm and bombs) and the environment (Agent Orange). The uses were "justified" on grounds that they were the most effective ways of dealing with the Vietcong - the North Vietnamese Communists.

The political world of the United States was obsessively anti-Communist fearing an ideological take-over of the world by Russian-influenced Communism. The United States was afraid of a "domino effect" when China became Communist and other Far-Eastern states were politically de-stabilised following de-colonisation after World War II.

The United States told its electorate that it was assisting the South Vietnamese against the incursions of Communism. In reality, it invaded Vietnam to keep a close eye on Communist-prone Korea. War-mongering with North Vietnam, assumed to be affected by Korean Communism, was a duplicitous pretext to "justify" the American presence in South Vietnam.



There was no error of focus. The focus lost its acuity, became "enlarged", when the war continued and the American electorate questioned its military presence there.

Still-photographs of the period, as well as television, did much to awaken the public to the nature of the war being fought on behalf of the "defence" of the United States. The government seemed to attribute a certain power to the media to turn away the "hearts and minds" of the people. Two American writers Daniel C. Hallin (1986) Brian Becket (1985) dispute this interpretation, pointing out in their works that the various Administrations did their own turning away by not taking the public fully into their confidence.

The British Government used lack of light (withholding information) and premeditatedly kept dimness (misinformation) to obfuscate Parliament and public concerning its arms' sales to Nigeria. When faced with its duplicity, the government did not stop its support for Nigeria, even when there was a public outcry against the supposed use of starvation to cow the Biafrans. (It should be noted that the Biafran leader was quite content to make use of foreign war-photographers and journalists as part of his propaganda machine, showing the world photographs of starving children and people in order to gain publicity and material aid for his cause.) Threatened "Balkanisation" of Africa was another shibboleth put forward by



the Government, who, had the Biafran succession been successful, would have traded with the new country on account of its oil reserves, even if it meant compromising its "friend", greater Nigeria.

The Falklands issue should have been settled "out of court". If the British Premier was prepared to bully the trade unions in England, she was not prepared to be bullied into losing the Falklands Islands, not because they were important to the economy of Britain, but because she risked losing the next election. There is nothing like a war to unite a country and hide a Prime Minister's political *angst*, she had not acted decisively on intelligence of Argentine restlessness in the southern hemisphere.

Like the Falklands War, the Persian Gulf War began with an invasion, made worse by the plundering and despoiling of resources. The states immediate to the invaded country did not send a military force to drive out the invader. It took a Western super-power who had neither ideological sympathy with nor proximity to the region, to lead a contingent to expel the ensconced troops. Helping an invaded state was laudable, the real object of the military exercise was to humiliate the leader of the invading country, a leader made powerful with war *matériel* supplied through various Western trading practices by the self-same powers now prosecuting a military solution.



## "Blurred Pictures"

If a camera is shifted or shaken when a photograph is taken, the result is a blurred picture .

The two causes which produce a blurred picture concern the subtle silent shift of focus by the government, it's "hood-winking" of the electorate, as mentioned previously, and the abrupt shake of public opinion when pictures sent back from the war zone shock the public, and call into question its own loyalties and the handling of the affair by the government.

The picture is blurred when various factions seek to interpret or suppress photographs portraying wars and their consequences. The images are accused of "spoiling" the government's efforts to legitimise its actions and to portray war as a justified, "natural" outcome. It is feared that the "spoiling" Press picture might be instrumental in terminating its term of office.(Don McCullin, 1992, p.63-4) President Johnson always maintained that he lost the war through media coverage. The public myth of the soldier is one of heroism, this image is "spoilt" by photographs of napalmed children. By suppressing "spoiling" photographic evidence the military establishment, with or without Government compliance, seeks to protect itself and some of the illicit methods of warfare banned by the Geneva Conventions and Protocols concerning prisoners, types of bombs, and the civilian population.





The newspapers' use of photographic images to help disseminate information, misinformation, dis-information, to record and mould public opinion, is seemingly employed to serve the public interest, and yet, is subversively used to assure the press barons' own economic interests, even to the point of becoming a government propaganda tool - a newspaper would rarely say it was duped into this rôle. Consequently, the government or administration, the military, and the media, each, for their own benefit and purpose seeks to exercise some form of control over the "truthful" evidence imparted by the photographs, selecting, and altering their context before they reach the public domain. The vulnerability of truth to manipulation and distortion is exploited by blurring.



## Chapter Four

### Photographs with "cluttered backgrounds"

A permanent visible image produced by the action of light on a chemically prepared surface.

#### *a) Introduction*

Previously, photographs dealing with wars were printed in black and white. The bloodiness of war was exposed by the invention of colour photography. The images of spilled blood and guts were considered too realistic. Journals which printed colour war pictures were accused of being sensationalist, Moeller. (1989. p. 390). Opinion was divided as to which was the best medium for portraying war : some claiming that colour distracts and others, like Larry Burrows sometimes preferring it because it gave "far more realism to the beauty and harshness" of war. Moeller (1989. p. 391) quotes Milt Orshesky's suggestion that black and white photography should be used for the human emotions, and colour for the spectacle of war. Books with war photographs are often printed in black and white, as if the sombre colours are more in keeping with the sacrifice



of life inherent in war.

The accuracy of a photograph is accorded through its mechanical process, this does not imply objectivity. The photograph is limited, firstly when its content is determined by the war photographer. For example, Philip Jones Griffiths was anti-war, his book *Vietnam Inc.* (1971) interprets his view of the war. Secondly, the pictures sent back from the war-zone are those which the photographer was able to take under battle conditions. Thirdly, the photograph does not encompass the whole battle and its danger, nor convey the tactile, aural, olfactory, gustatory and other visual sensations experienced both by the fighting soldiery and the photographer, not to mention fear and confusion as expressed by Nick Mills (1983. p. 91). Fourthly, "Photographs freeze time. . ." according to Caroline Brothers (1997. p. 15), "they can never be more than a *point de départ*" for a wealth of experience they may indicate but cannot contain". Despite its limited dimensionality and implied accuracy, the photographic war image is still "trusted" and considered important for conveying information, for making sense of a non-self-experienced event, and for fitting it into lived experience or expectations. According to Susan Sontag(1977), the fact of having seen several pictures of wars is sufficient experience. This, too, is a limitation. Photographs have impact when they resonate with the viewer's own experience. War is outside the immediate experience of most people, the industrial Western Powers not having not waged war on their own territories for fifty years. Times have changed, the images and values of



past wars are of little use with the new values of co-operation and humanitarian principles. According to David E. Morrison in his study *Journalists and the Social Construction of War* (Contemporary Record Vol. 8 1994. pp. 305-320) values conducive to peaceful behaviour have been developed which do not include violence. War is a negation of these values. Illustrative pictures of war are now scanned in the light of new values which are made compatible with a war situation through the legitimating process of patriotism.

b) "*The Vietnam War*" (1965-1975)

The rôle of the armed forces and the fate of the civilians are common to all wars. Photographs sent from the battle front, particularly those taken by military photographers and those civilian photographers sympathetic to the military, show the natural environment of war and give information about soldiers using fire-arms, heavy guns, static pictures of smoke and fire, rescue operations, the use of air power and bombs, soldiers conferring, wounded, dying and dead. They are the necessary, expected images of war and fulfill a public need concerning the professional rôle of its forces. They are tolerated. Public attitudes change in a protracted unsuccessful war especially if there is an increased loss of life among their own fighting soldiers as instanced by the 217 photographs of 242 American soldiers who died in one week - 28 May to 3 June 1969 were published in *Life* (27 June 1969). The human cost is weighed against political loyalties with resulting public disquiet. However, when the public starts to see



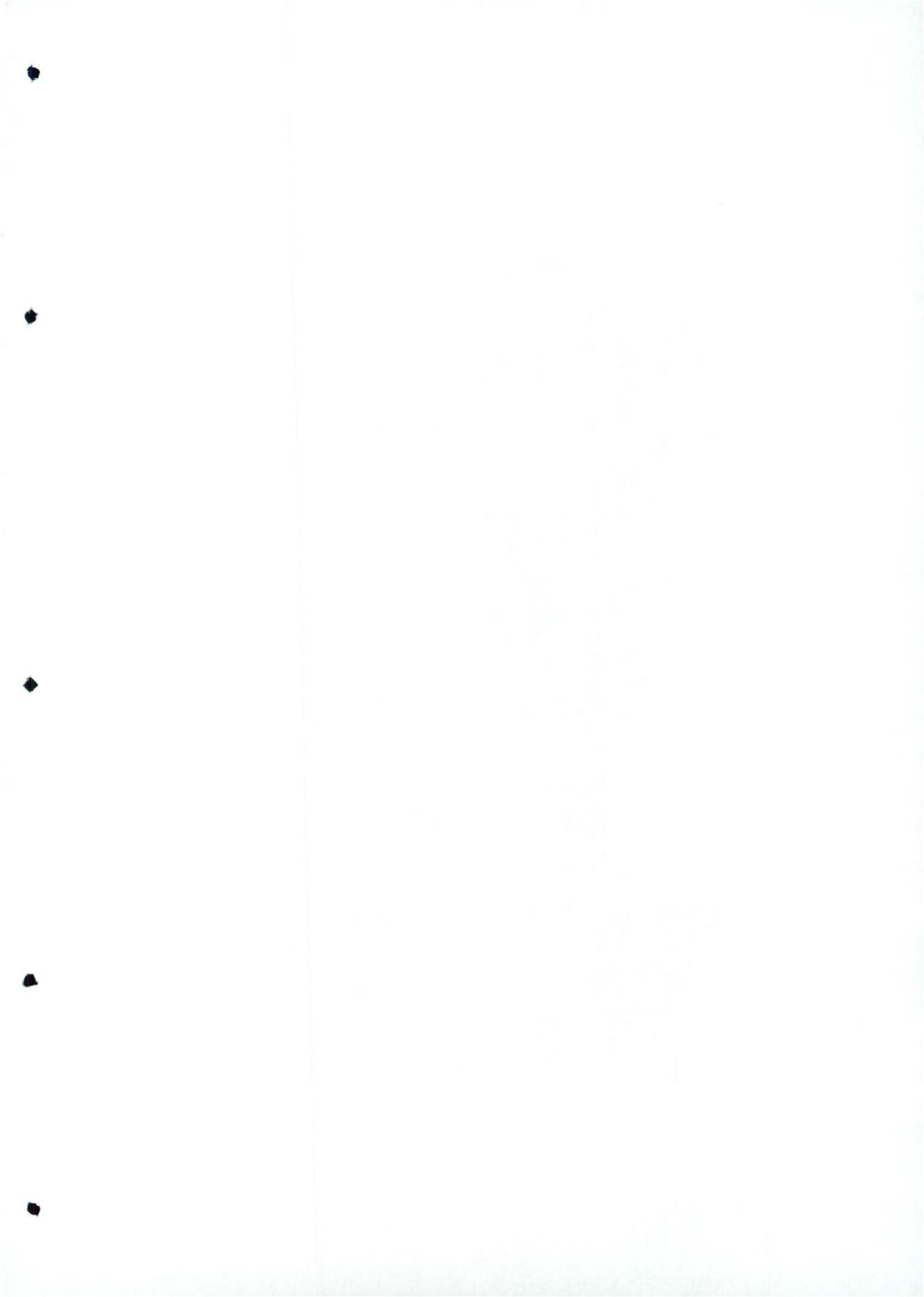


pictures of non-combatants, exposing the vulnerability of the young, old, and prisoners, there is an underlying assumption that the attitude to war will change, although not always in an expected direction

Of the four wars, the Vietnam War was the longest, lasting ten years. Official censorship could not operate because the war was not politically sanctioned by the American people, even though the Administration tried to make them believe that the United States was threatened. Peter Young and Peter Jesser (1997. p.87) maintain that there were at least one thousand journalists present in Vietnam. The lack of censorship allowed an influx of war correspondents, journalists and photographers to whom the military readily gave accreditation under the misguided impression that loyalty to country would also mean loyalty to the army as executive arm of the Administration. The expectation was that the media would do a military-enhancing P.R. job. Every facility was given to the accredited photographers and journalists on this account. They could report and photograph any battle-front : transport was provided. Neophytes to war like Michael Herr and Tim Page took every advantage.

During the years of American "military" involvement (1965-1972), most reports and photographs sent from the battle-front showed the Army doing its professional job. The nature of the photographic content changed when the war dragged on without reaching resolution. The endless fire-power pictures ceased to denote efficiency, and the photographers







Eddie Adams (U.S.A)

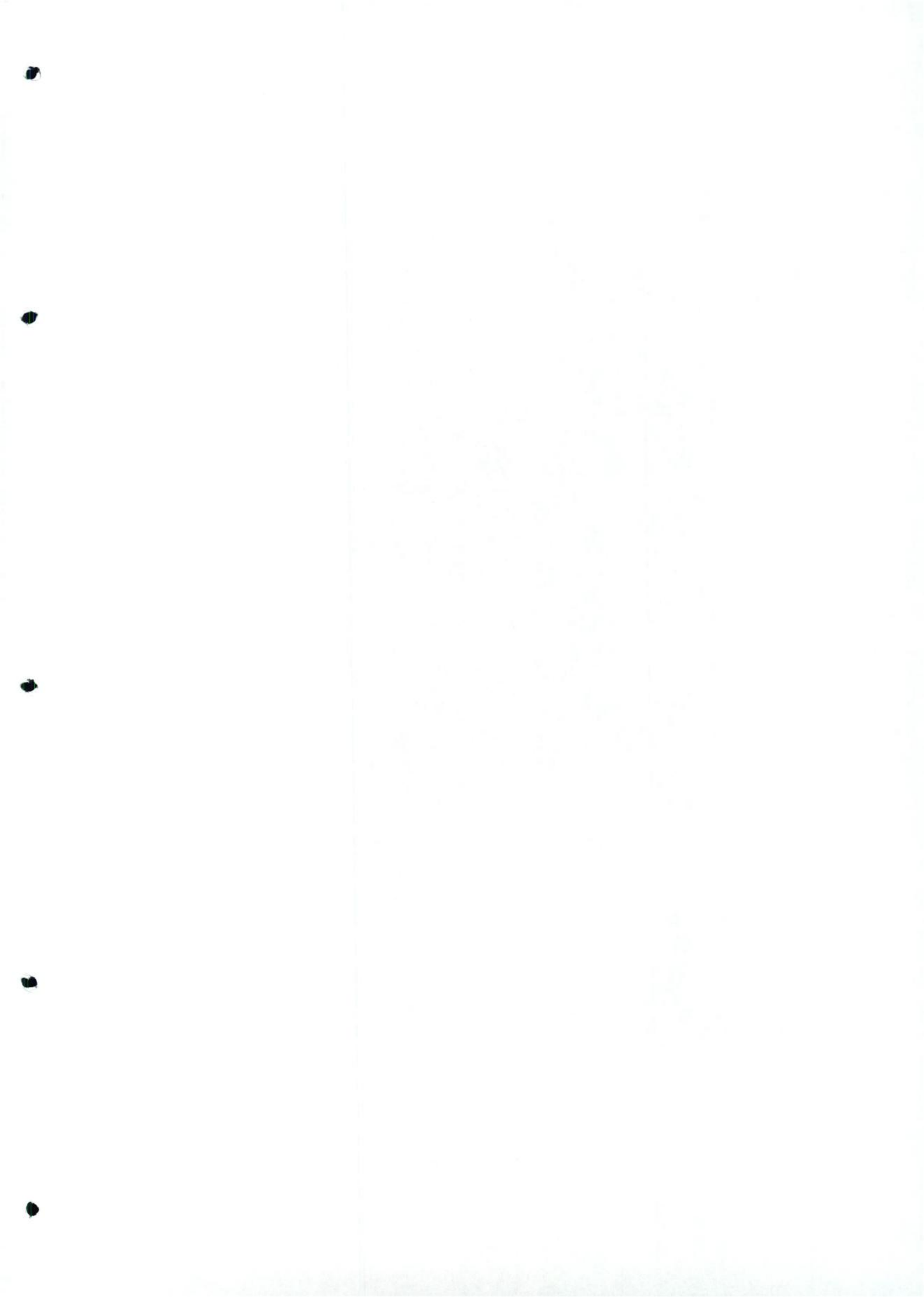
*Execution of a suspected Viet Cong in Saigon. Vietnam 1 February 1968.*

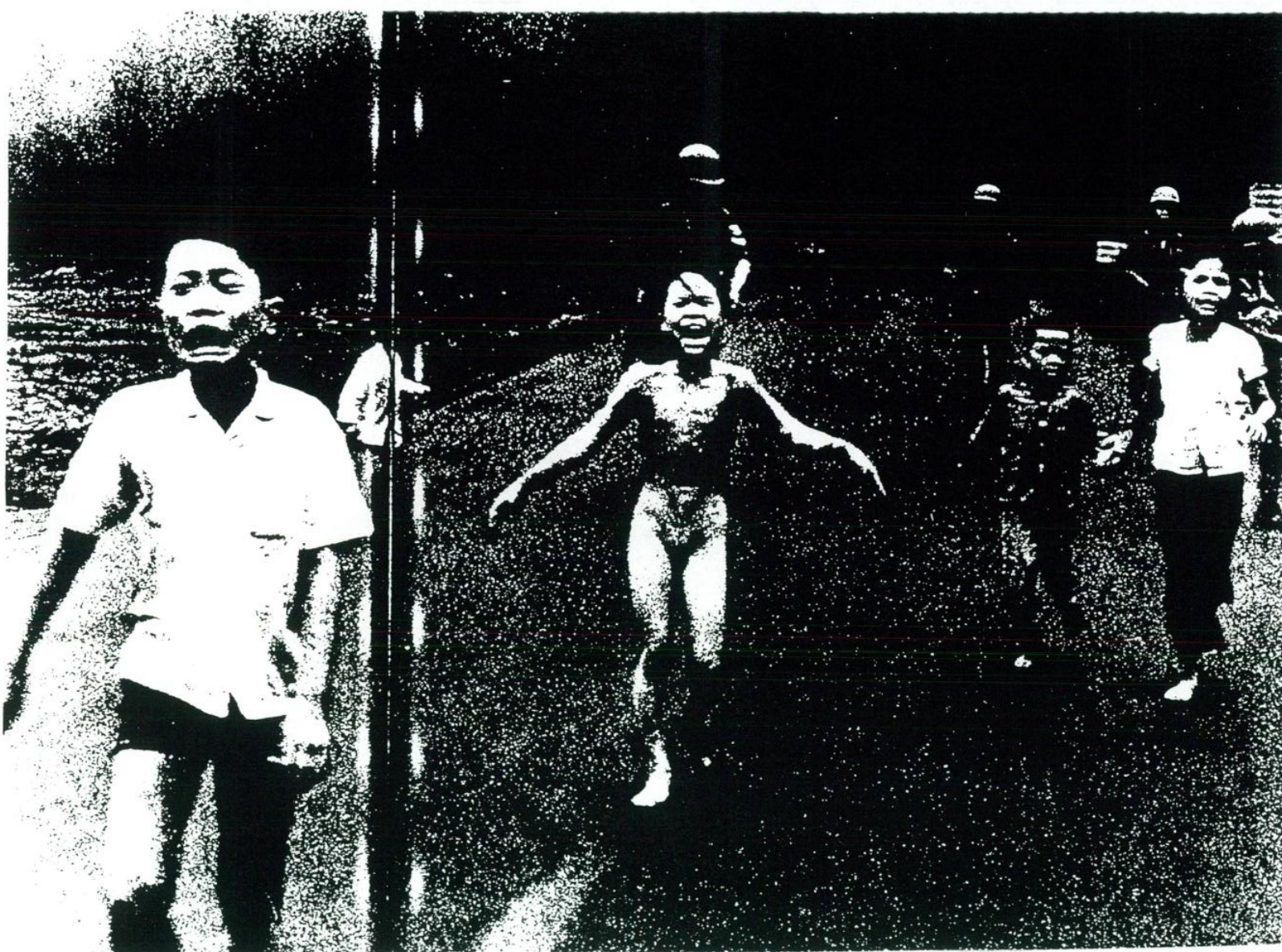
started to focus on its recipients : the devastation of the countryside by carpet bombing and the defoliant Agent Orange, the emptying and firing of villages, and, as always, the loss of lives. Pictures of violations of the Geneva Conventions, such as the treatment of prisoners or the poisoning of the land did not give rise to general public indignation. Even pictures of atrocities against the civilian population of My Lai, taken by an United States army photographer, Ronald Haeberle on 16 March 1969, did not cause as much *furore* in the United States as they did in Europe.

Two different photographs achieved notoriety : one concerned the execution of Vietcong suspect by a fellow national (Eddie Adams : 1 Feb. 1968) ; and the other, that of naked child screaming among a group of children running and crying. She had been caught in a napalm attack "called down" by fellow Vietnamese. The first photograph shocked because it showed the moment of death, a taboo subject, and was televised. It was then incased in differing preferred readings which high-lighted various ideological stances, translating as brutality or firmness. According to Jeffrey Walsh and James Aulich (1989. p.179) Robert Kennedy distanced America from the incident claiming it contravened the Geneva Conventions. Lorraine Monk (1989) reported that the American record was not without its own stains.

The second image taken by Huynh Cong (Nick) Ut in 1972, the event was also televised, moves the viewer to pity because of the







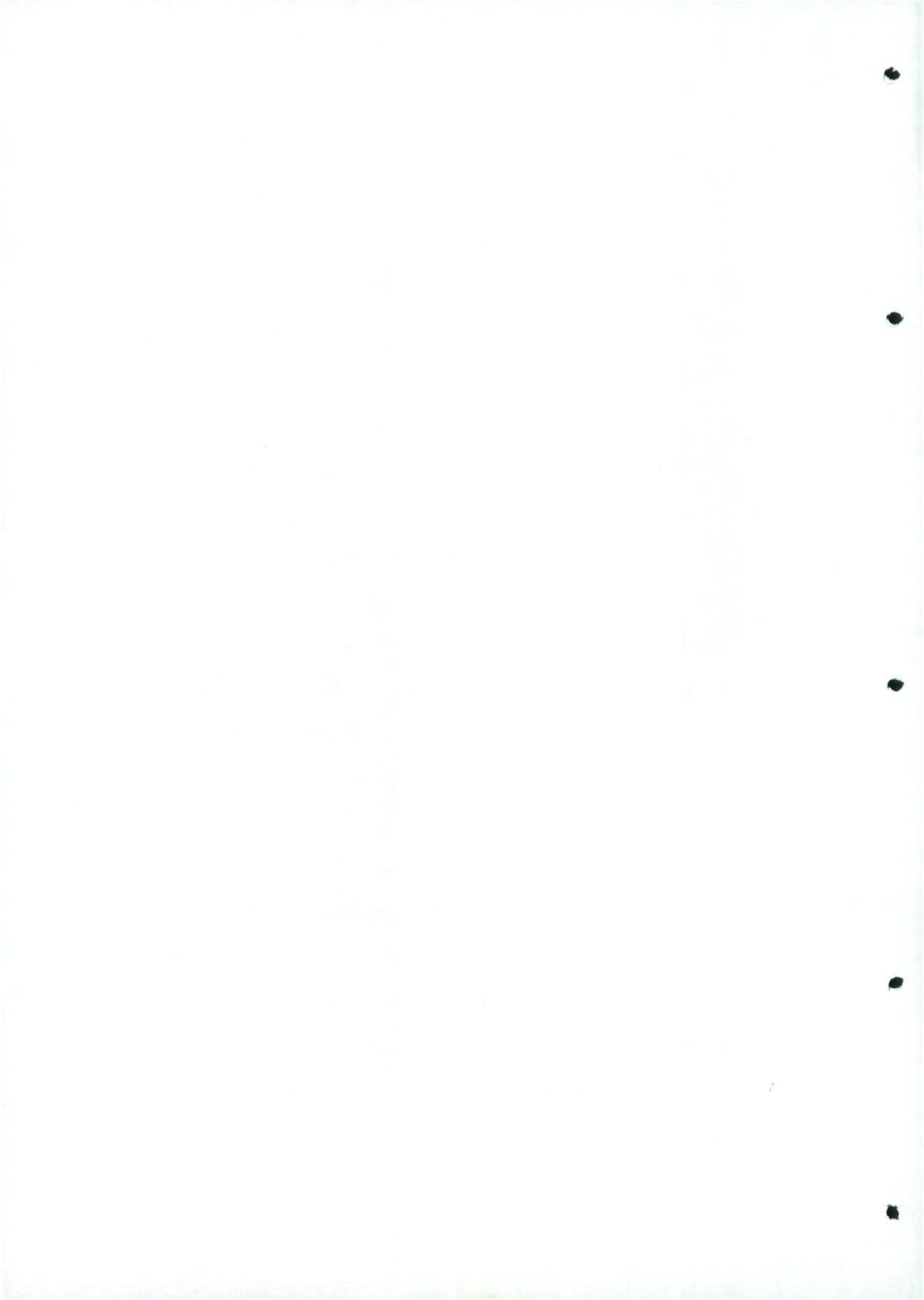
Huynh Cong "Nick" Ut

*1972. The Children had been hiding in a nearby pagoda when their village was raided by ARVN soldiers looking for Viet Cong. These South Vietnamese troops called in American planes who then dropped napalm. The children came out of the pagoda and were caught in the subsequent bombing.*



vulnerability of the child and its possible death from napalm burns : it did not stop the use of napalm. For Susan D. Moeller (1989 p.5) it "condensed into a single image the years of struggle for the "hearts and minds" of South East Asia." The photographic images have endured as icons of American involvement in the Vietnam War. The irony is that these two acts against humanity were not specifically instigated by the American forces *per se*.

Photographs taken by British and French photo-journalists and war-photographers contrasted the different ways of waging war : centuries old means of repulsing invasions by the Vietnamese, and the latest American gadgets in *matériel* of modern warfare. They pointed up the sufferings of the indigenous population. More angles were implied in the situation than the United States acknowledged. *Vietnam Inc.*(1971) and the photographs in the British Press showed that the "mind" war was not being won by the American forces. This provoked more desperate measures to "win". In 1967, the Bertrand Russell International War Crimes Tribunal sat and concluded, condemning the new forms of aggression used to prosecute the war. Photographs taken in evidence show both the injuries to humans, and the type of bomb manufactured and dropped to produce maximum incapacity in the civilian population, contravening the Geneva Conventions. (Ed. John Duffett. 1968. p.657-662). World opinion was not shaken by the findings, nor was pressure brought to bear on the United States to withdraw the weapons : they continued to use them until they left Vietnam in 1975.



According to Russell Miller (1997, p. 211-215.) the photographic record of *Vietnam Inc.* (1971) by Philip Jones Griffiths brought home to the American public the nature of their involvement in Vietnam. Whereas this may have been true in 1971 when the American public realised that they were in the wrong place and the wrong war. However, in 1966, Jones Griffiths had great difficulty trying to get his photographs published, even when syndicated through Magnum : they were too "harrowing". He was banned from re-entering Vietnam by the South Vietnamese Government. This would seem to imply that his depiction of the war opposed the image upheld by the government. Many of his photographs showed transgressions against the Geneva Conventions : the interrogation of prisoners by the ARVN under the surveillance of American "assistants". He captioned his own pictures to make sure of their import, this may have added salt to the wound.

American public opinion may have been affected but did not change on account of photographs depicting criminal actions, perpetrated in their name, against fellow-humans in a foreign land. They and the military had no understanding of the history, the culture or the country. The Vietnamese were regarded as "Other", not part of the human race as Americans perceived it. Christopher Coker (1994) makes the point that the Americans psychologically distanced themselves from the Vietnamese which made it easier for them to treat the Vietnamese as sub-humans. In

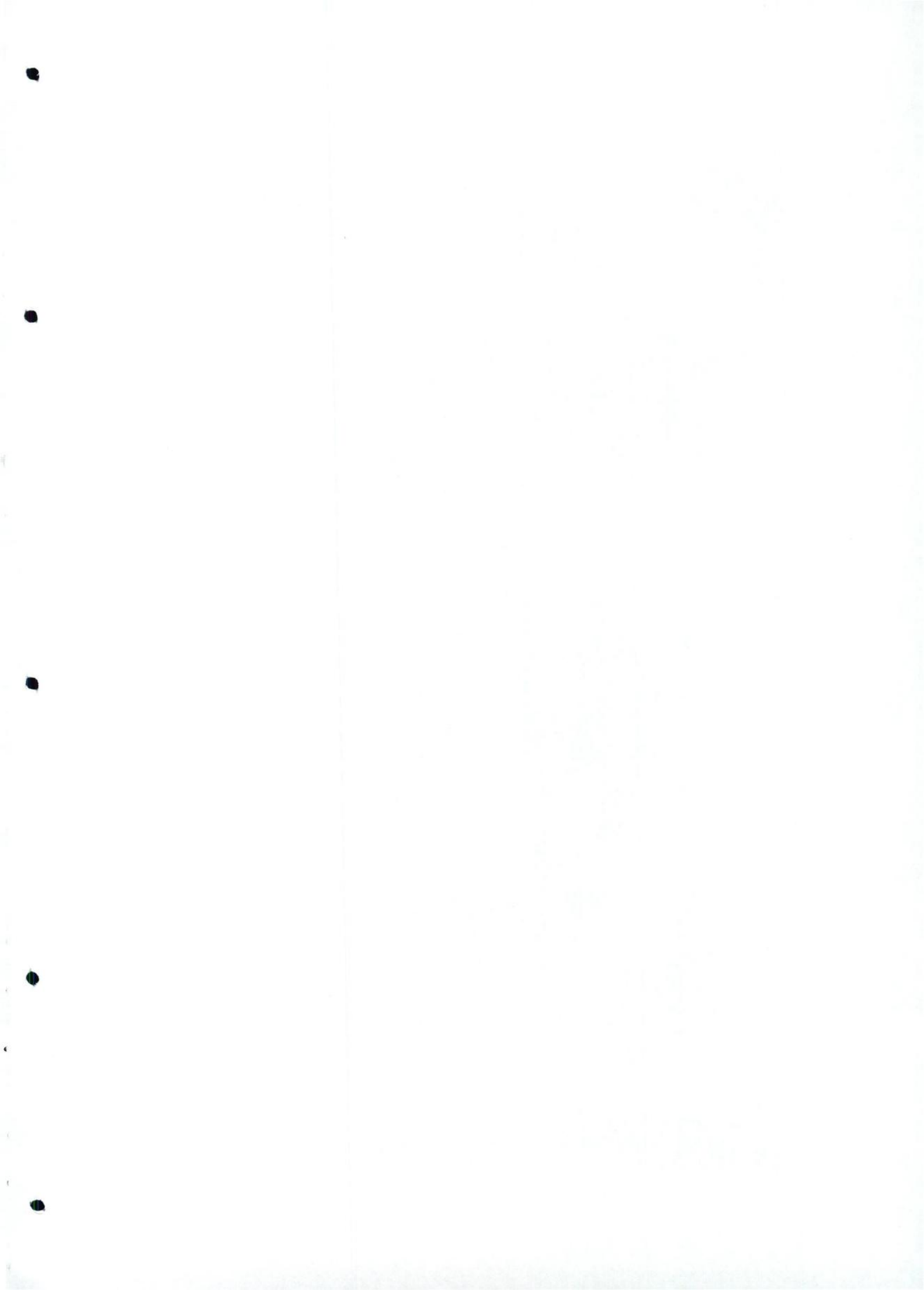


addition, was American confidence and pride in their technological advances which led them to be ruthless and regardless in pursuing "victory".

American public opinion changed because there was no outright victory, because they were asked to support a cause which had nothing to do with the defence of the nation, themselves or the soldiers drafted in to fight for it. ". . . A greater explicitness in the photography of combat prompted a greater sensitivity to American casualties, a greater reluctance to engage in certain kinds of exceptionally bloody warfare" was one reason given by Susan Moeller (1989. p.6) and linked this to the "increasingly graphic portrayal of dead Americans". (The change from black-and-white to colour photography would have emphasised the bloody character of warfare.) To the Americans, one of their soldiers out-classed all foreigners. His death was more marked than those of the nation they had gone to "assist". It had nothing to do with guilt at the destruction of another civilisation.. The destruction was justified : it "saved American lives". Moeller elaborates this with a further observation (p. 7) : "the American penchant for bloodthirsty images is sated by the extraordinary explicit photographs of the dead enemy that appeared in print - especially those of non-Caucasians : Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Vietnamese."

There is one noticeable absence in the photographs of the Vietnam War, and that is the absence of the Black Americans in heroic mode. It is always white Americans who dominate the picture. If Black and White







**Larry Burrows**

*1971. Larry Burrows thought it would be good idea to call this photograph "Brotherhood" (Propaganda). Jeremiah Purdie, a wounded US soldier, is led from a Vietnam battlefield.*



Americans appear, the picture is subverted to suit another discourse. A notable example is a photograph (1971), by Larry Burrows in which a wounded Black soldier is seen moving right, arms out-stretched. In the right hand, lower section of the image is a white soldier lying wounded and looking in a dazed fashion at the scene. Much has been made of this image as an example of emancipated American brotherhood demonstrating concern between Blacks and Whites. In this case, the Black soldier had merely insisted on walking to the evacuation helicopter. So much for editorial conceits.

c) *The Biafran War (1967-1970)*

The news of starvation and "genocide" of the Ibos in Biafra (formerly Eastern Region of Nigeria) did not reach the outside world until the beginning of January 1968. Its newsworthiness was virtually lost though the commencement of the Tet Offensive in the American-Vietnam War. According to John O'Loughlin Kennedy, founder member of Africa Concern, an Irish relief agency, only one telex machine was operating in Biafra. All the journalists and photographers, who had been flown into the country to cover the worsening conditions of malnutrition, decided to wait and telex the "scoop" when they reached Lisbon. The war was six months old. Colin Legum lamented : "It is difficult to get an objective picture of the war. There were no war correspondents on either side. Reports stem mainly from official propaganda and the committed local press", (*The Observer*, 21 Jan. 1968), and carried rumours of "genocide". "Nigeria



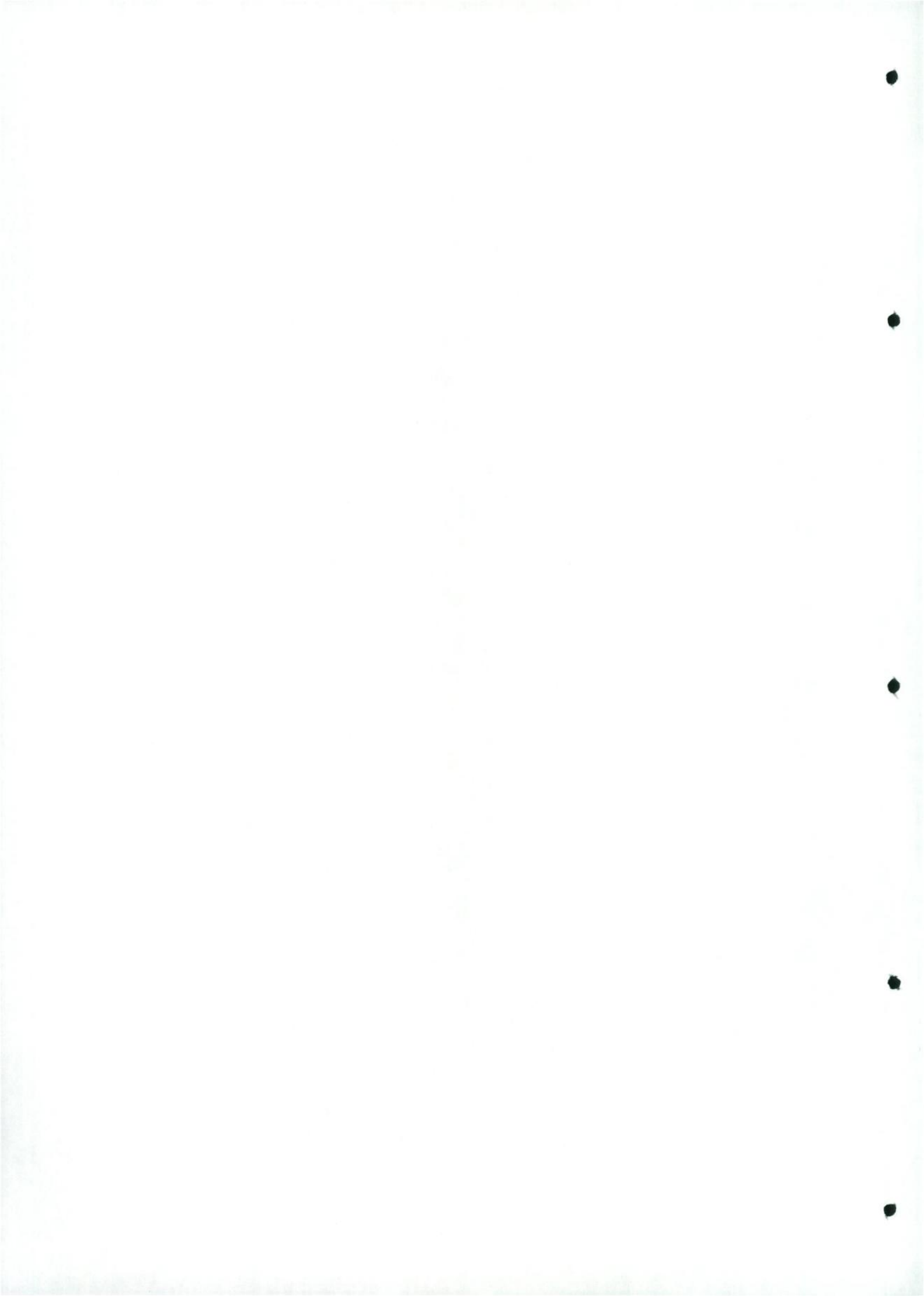
wanted to shut world out and localise the conflict; Biafra was determined to let the world in and internationalise it." (John de St. Jorre. 1972 p.235). There were also editorial reasons why the Biafran war was buried. Commissioned by *Life*, Don McCullin had already been to Biafra in 1966 and had shot some sixty rolls of colour film. They were sent for processing to the *Life* laboratories. They were never used as the "editors considered the war too small and insignificant and the coverage too tardy". (Jorge Lewinski. 1978. p.172).

Photographs used for relief fund appeals and televised pictures of children suffering from kwashiorkor and starvation in the Biafran war zone hit the headlines and the unsuspecting public in the early summer of 1968. Starvation as an outcome of the war was indelibly fixed in the public mind.

Malnutrition was not uncommon Sir Arthur Bryant noted in *The London Illustrated News* (24 January 1970) when enumerating the health problems in Nigeria in the 1950s. Starvation occurred in the lean months of the year, and it was asserted by Dr. Robert Collis (1971. p.117) that "up to 50 per cent of the children die before they grow up, and in no case was the mortality rate below 29 per cent." Also,

"Nigerians on both sides, accustomed to multiple child deaths and to the difficult period between harvests when villages could starve in peace time, found this sudden concern among white people hard to comprehend and to them, the actual issues at stake in the war were much more important."

John P. Mackintosh in John Oyinbo (1972. p. 211)



Approximately 1,500,000 Ibos had fled to the Ibo homeland of Biafra following successive massacres of the tribes people in other parts of Nigeria in 1966 (John de St. Jorre. 1972. p. 237). Federal Nigeria isolated the Region through postal and naval blockades which were "a softening up process to lower Eastern morale". (John de St. Jorre. p. 142.) With the influx of refugees and the loss of protein food-stuffs and salt brought in by sea, the young Biafrans were showing signs of deprivation (kwashiorkor - protein deficiency disease, and marasmus - skeletal effects of starvation). At the end of 1967 a crisis point was reached to the concern of the International Red Cross and the Churches working in the region. Earlier that year "all tinned food in the region was bought and stored" (Brig. H.M.Njoku. 1987. p.133) by the Biafran military which may have contributed to food scarcity. In 1968, the loss of Port Harcourt and its airport and other territory to the advancing, encircling Nigerian Army, the siege conditions, plus the interruptions to planting and harvesting further aggravated the situation. In April 1969, the administrative capital of Umuahia, in the rice growing area, was lost. The enclave contracted further. Uli, a make-shift airport through which came all the relief aid and some arms cargoes was the only operational means of communication with the outside world.

Through the visual plight of starving children and the perceived threat of genocide, Colonel Ojukwu hoped to gain political recognition for Biafra. The humanitarian interest suited Biafran propaganda purposes. But



. . . the emphasis on suffering and the relief of it damaged Biafra's chances of gaining international recognition. The problem came to be regarded as humanitarian rather than a political dilemma; it was easier to donate money for milk than to answer Biafra's international challenge.

Suzanne Cronje. (1972. p.211)

British public opinion, once aroused, was outraged when it realised that the British government had been surreptitiously supplying arms, ammunition and armoured cars, not heavy guns or airplanes (so it said) to the former Nigerian colony since 1967, without the consent of Parliament. The government said (untruthfully) in Parliament it was *only* supplying "15 per cent" of Nigeria's armament needs (see Suzanne Cronje. 1972. Ch. 3. p.38 *et passim*). The public was indignant at being made an "accomplice in genocide", as an editorial in *The Spectator* (31 May 1968) put it, rubbishing the government's argument that if it did not supply arms Russia would (and did), and denouncing the arms trade. Others felt that the United Nations should intervene (Letters to *The Spectator*, 19 July 1968). Relief agencies voiced their findings and fears. There were calls for the government to intervene and stop the fighting and selling of arms, and to get relief supplies into Biafra. In 1969 it was suggested by Leonard Cheshire that the RAF fly in relief after the July shooting down of an ICRC plane. (*The Economist* 22 November 1969).

Propaganda flourished employing parliamentary spokespersons (British Government), public relations - Galitzine Chant Russell and

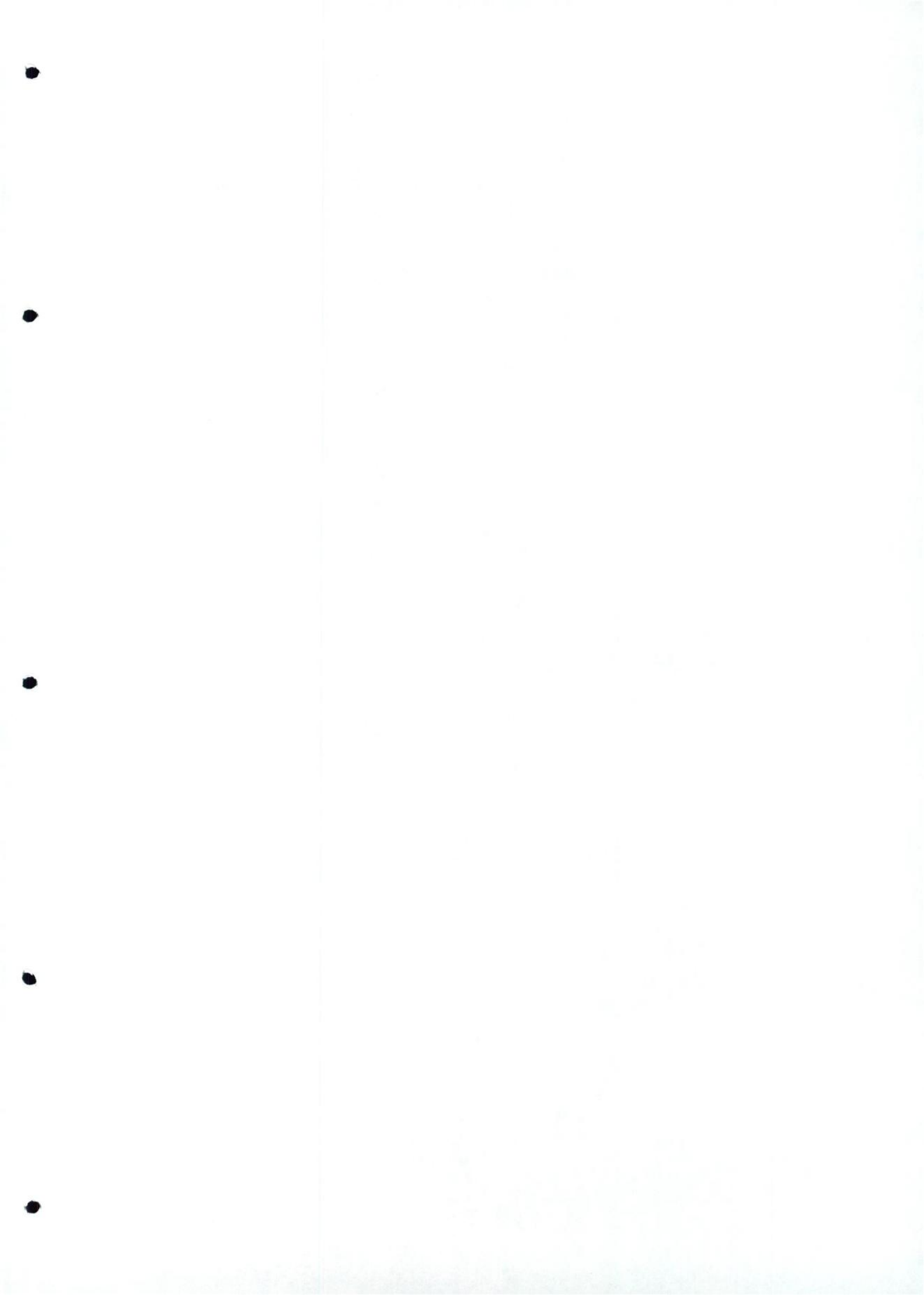




Partners (Nigeria), and Geneva-based Markpress (Biafra). Assumptions and assertions were pronounced to discourage agencies and individual support from sending airlifted aid into landlocked Biafra, by adroitly letting it be known that such agencies were prolonging the war by illegally sending in supplies. Word was even sent to editors to dissuade them from using journalists who were "known to have been hopelessly swayed by Biafran propaganda . . . or in their pay". (Suzanne Cronje. 1972. p.214). Pro-Nigerians were accused of genocide through starvation. The government sent Lord Hunt to investigate starvation and Observers to monitor the Nigerians accused of bombing hospitals and schools. Relief supplies were sharply curbed when Lord Hunt recommended that all aid be sent (with permission from Nigeria) through the International Committee of the Red Cross. This last was unacceptable to Colonel Ojukwu. Ojukwu was then blamed : he was the author of the starvation of his people. . . Plenty of aid would be forthcoming only if it came through Nigeria, acceptance of this was to surrender. Under these circumstances, despite governmental denials on the part of Britain and Nigeria, starvation was a weapon of war and the British Government was cognisant of the fact. Britain continued to escalate its arms sales to the beseiging Nigerians. (Suzanne Cronje. 1972, Appendix 2.)

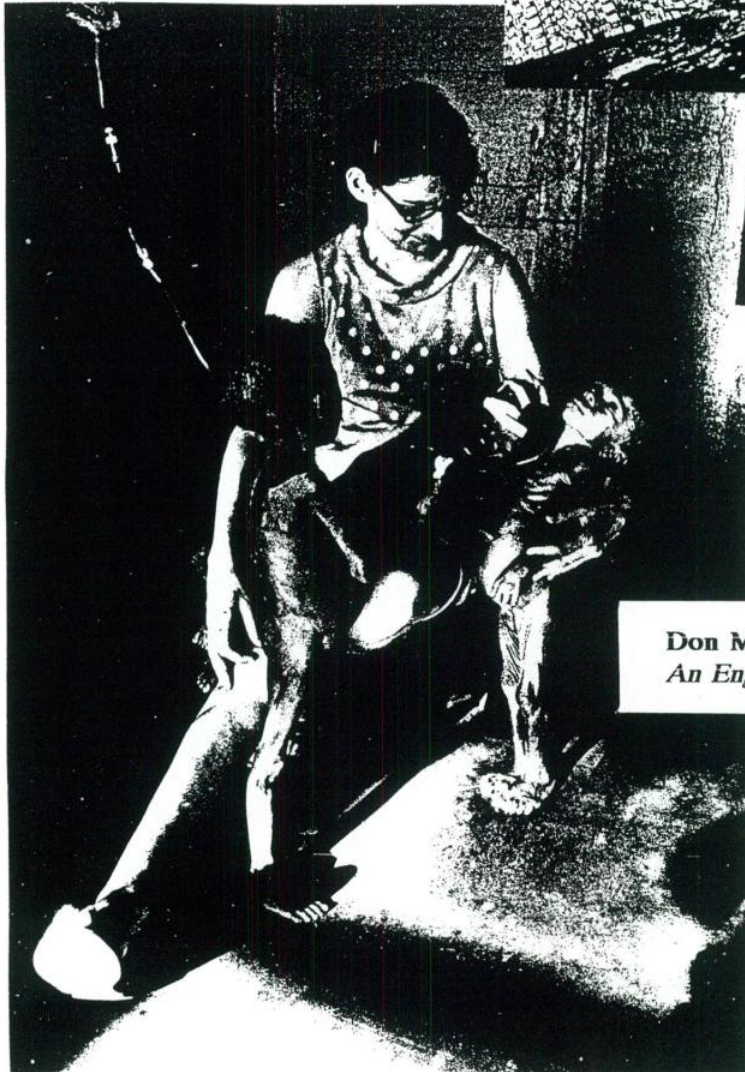
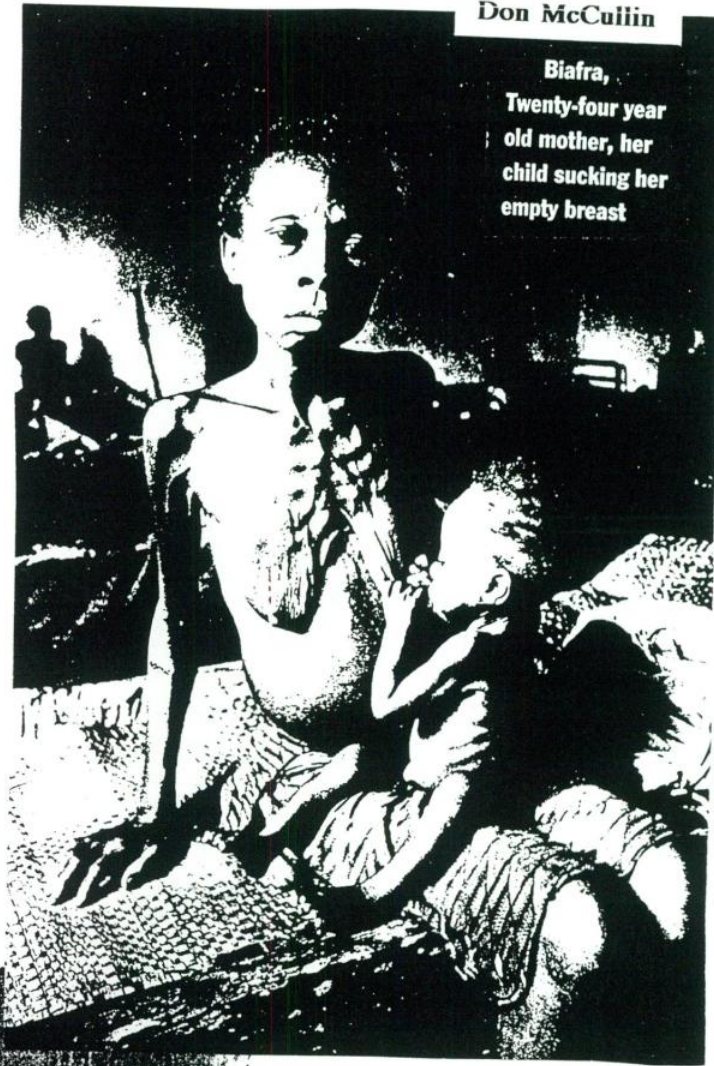
Throughout two of the war years, all the newspapers and periodicals kept starvation and the Biafran war in the public domain. *The Economist*,(30 August 1969) which admitted to being pro-Nigerian, began





**Don McCullin**

**Biafra,  
Twenty-four year  
old mother, her  
child sucking her  
empty breast**



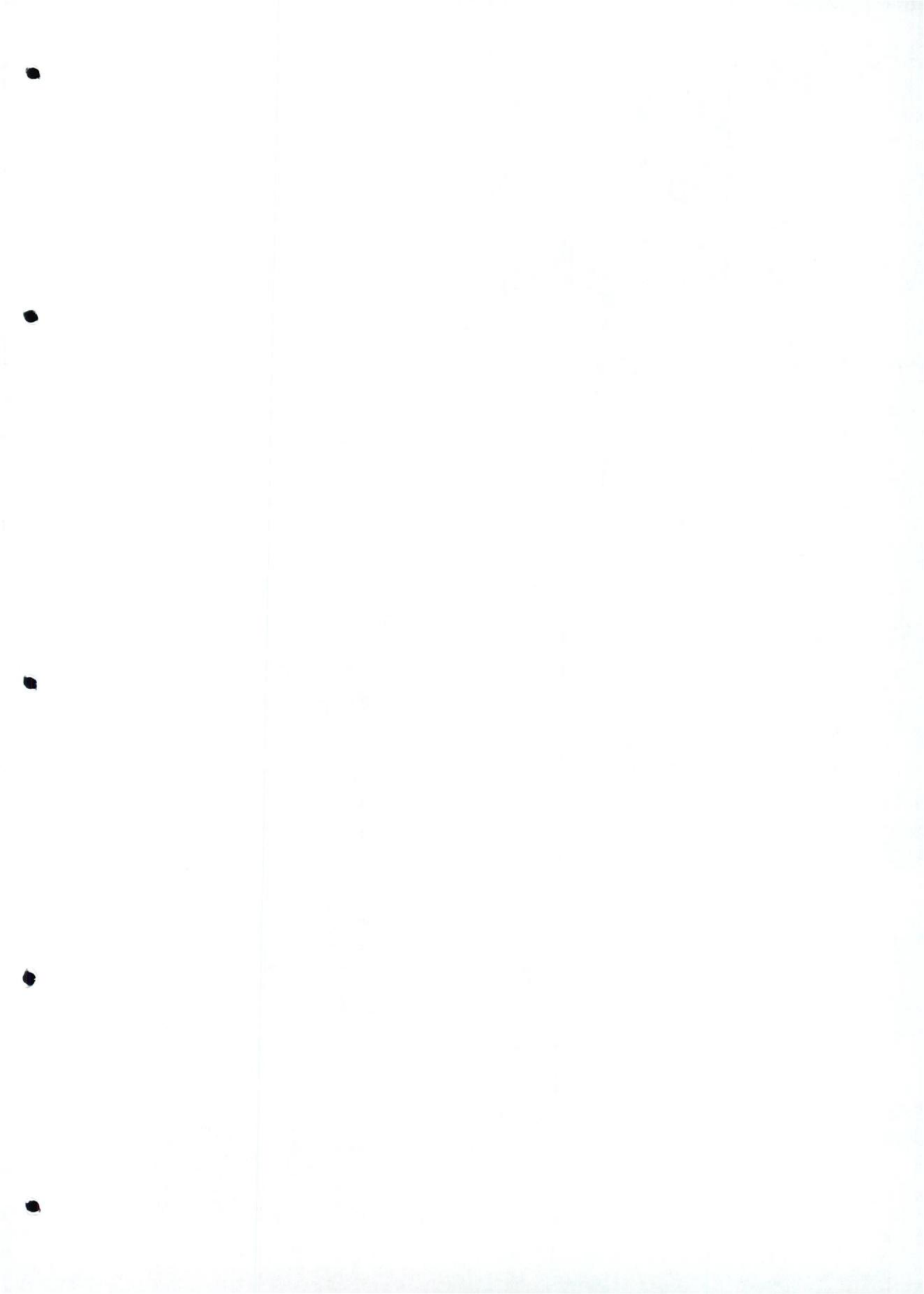
**Don McCullin**

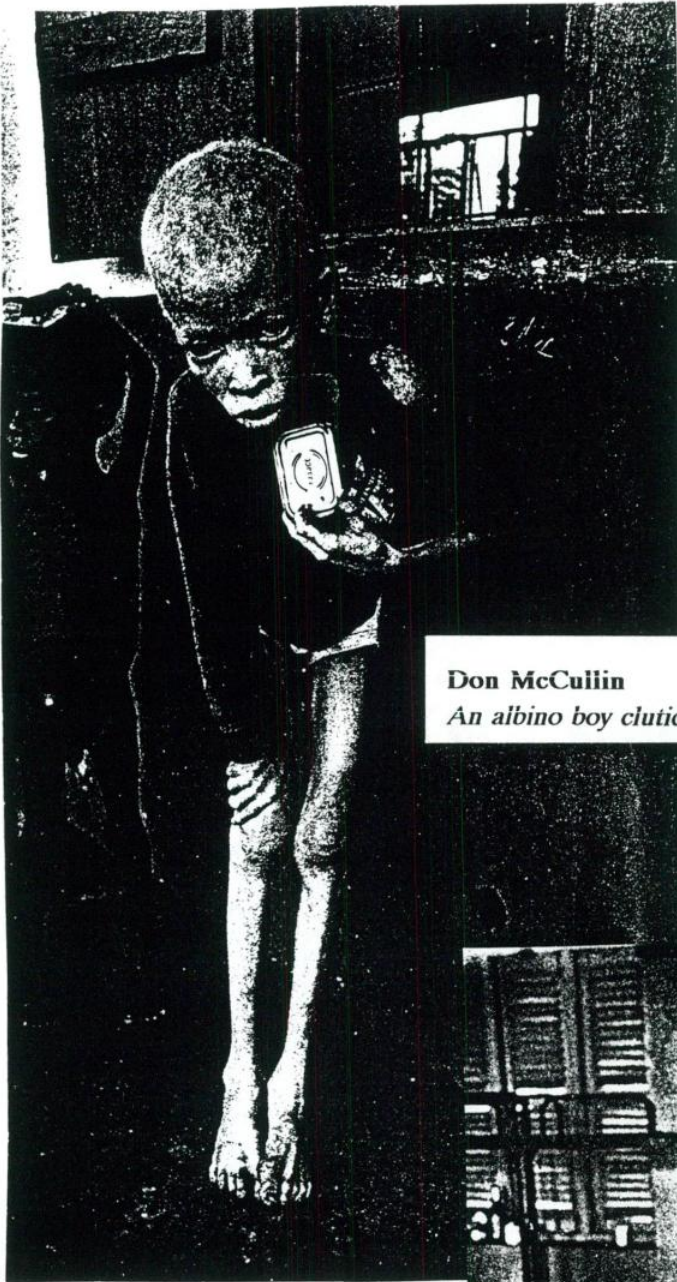
*An English doctor cradling dying children.*

to re-examine the fruits of British policy. The British government could not be unaware of the feelings of its electorate. Don McCullin made a poster out of his photograph of a starving "twenty-four year old mother, her child sucking her empty breast" and put up copies in the area where the British premier lived. (Don McCullin. 1992. p.125) Another image showed a British doctor with dying children. It would seem that by turning the spotlight onto the "illegality" of flying in aid to the starving refugees and blame onto Colonel Ojukwu, the government gained a certain "cover" for continuing its supply of arms. The excuses for oil, Nigerian unity, Russian guns for Nigeria, French interference in Biafra, and British "influence" were considered dirisory especially the last in face of the evident suffering of the children. *The Spectator* in an editorial on 13 December 1969 inveighed against the Conservative parliamentary party in opposition for failing to do its part in challenging the assertions "that the Biafrans were to blame for their own starvation". Its silence brooked consent. The Wilson government went out of office before it could be called to account.

Some of the memorable photographs of the last stages of the war were taken by Don McCullin who considered his photography to be "about raising people's awareness, being their representative at the sight of conflict and reporting back what is happening", (Pam Roberts. 1993. p. 7). Although he recorded scenes at the battle front in 1968, and 1969 (Don McCullin 1992. Ch. 18 *et passim* ), it is his pictures of children and young people ravaged by disease and starvation at the war's end that made the most

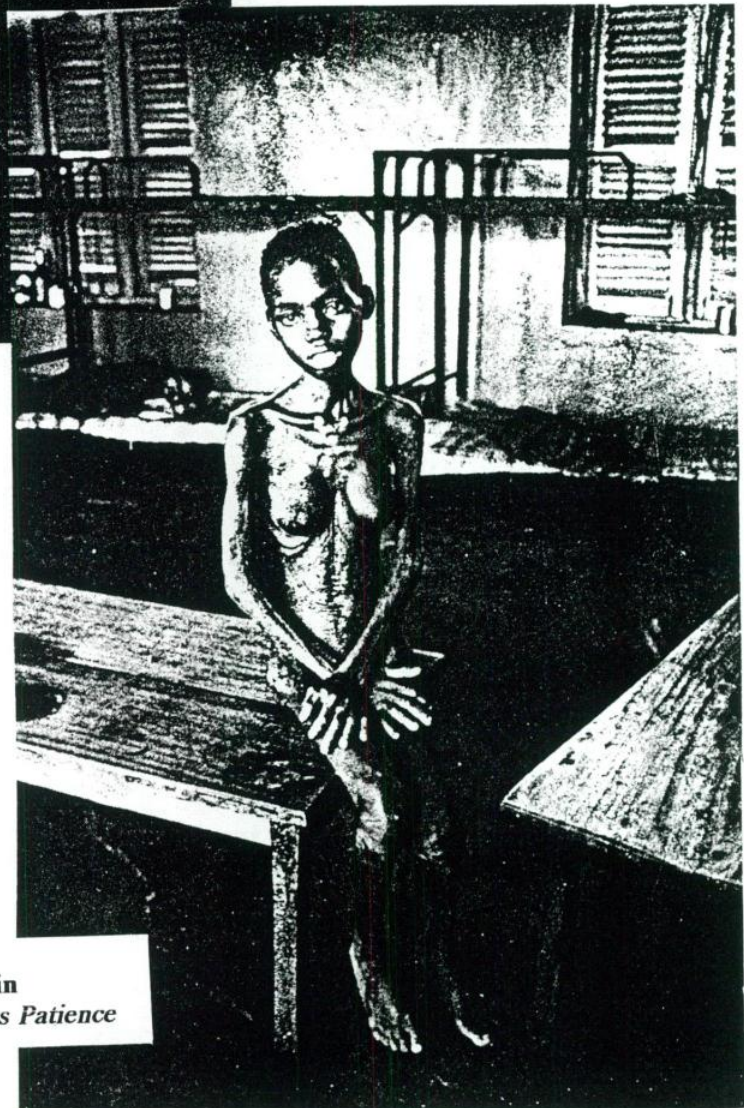






**Don McCullin**

*An albino boy clutching his empty French corned beef tin.*



**Don McCullin**  
*Her name was Patience*

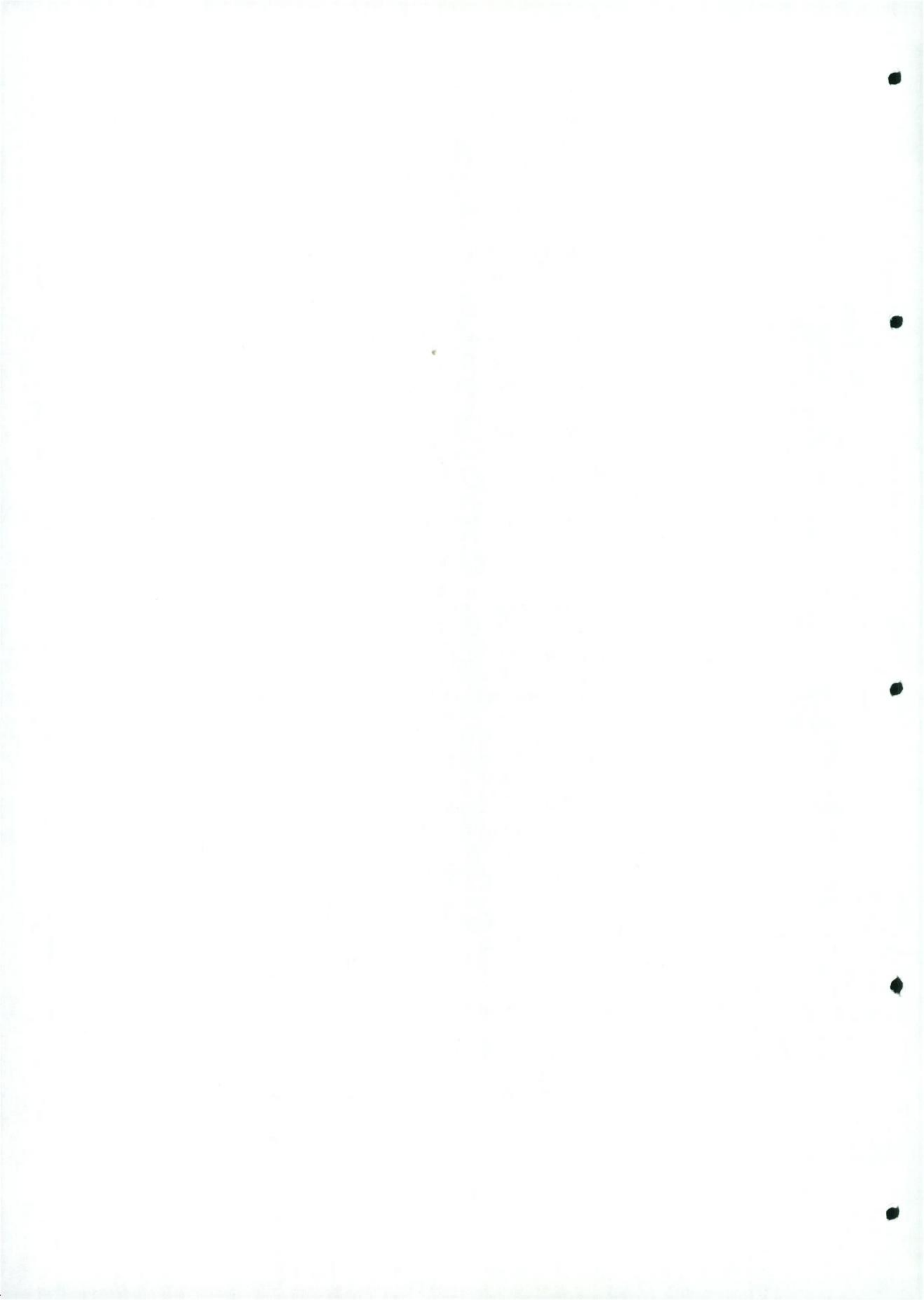


impact : the marginalized albino Biafran boy (1968), Patience, a 16 year-old girl, and "A camp of misery : 800 children "dying of hunger and disease, awaiting their turn for death". (Pam Roberts, 1993). His photographs emphasised the losers in the war : Biafra's children.

Photographs of the Biafran war stirred consciences in the British public : Nigeria was a former British colony ; Britain had trained its army and supplied it with weapons ; Britain now appeared to be perpetrating gross acts of inhumanity upon the most vulnerable, using starvation as a weapon of war. This had not resonance with "fair play". The public voice, strong though it was, was not heard to great effect in Parliament. The Opposition, which should have lead public opinion, did not act as *opposition* to the "blinding error of logic and truth" adhered to by the Wilson Government. Instead, that "silent, aurally impaired" Opposition came to power.

*d) The Falklands Conflict (1982)*

The public had very little in the way of photographic and televised images of the Falklands conflict in 1982. There was a strict limit of 29 journalists including TV crews and one woman war-artist. No foreign journalist or war-photographer of repute was included. Following the "over-exposure" of the Vietnam war by the media, the British government aided and abetted by the Navy, to some degree by the Army, chose to leave this conflict under-reported. According to Alan Protheroe, (*The Listener*,



3 June 1982 p.2) "Vietnam demonstrated that the public expects, requires, indeed demands, information and pictures, and that such material needs to be distributed through out the world". The absence of foreign reporters lessened the credibility of British reports likening them to a "propaganda exercise". MoD "indifference" to the foreign press also gave rise to the "negative image which the Falklands conflict elicited in some foreign newspapers. . . ." (Quoted by Robert Harris. 1983. p.23.) There were other restrictions. Lack of space on board ship : Don McCullin was disgusted to find that "Mars Bars" took precedence over him (Letter to *The Times*, 17 June 1982.) ; radio silence for the security of the fleet during the 8,000 mile journey south prevented journalists *et alii* contacting their editors ; the secrecy of military operations and the withholding of information helpful to the enemy, all were cogent reasons for minimising outside contact. A 200-mile total exclusion zone was set up around the islands with a warning to all ships and aircraft that any trespassers in same would be shot on sight, thus discouraging the media from getting to the scene by independent means. Before the invasion : "the BBC and several newspapers had teams down in the South Atlantic, trying to get into Port Stanley before it was too late". Ascension Island was off limits for fear of implicating the Americans who professed neutrality in the conflict, yet, at the same time, were allowing use of its military facilities. (Derrick Mercer 1987).

The media had a very lean time. All the personnel on board the ships had been forbidden to speak to the press. The same personnel



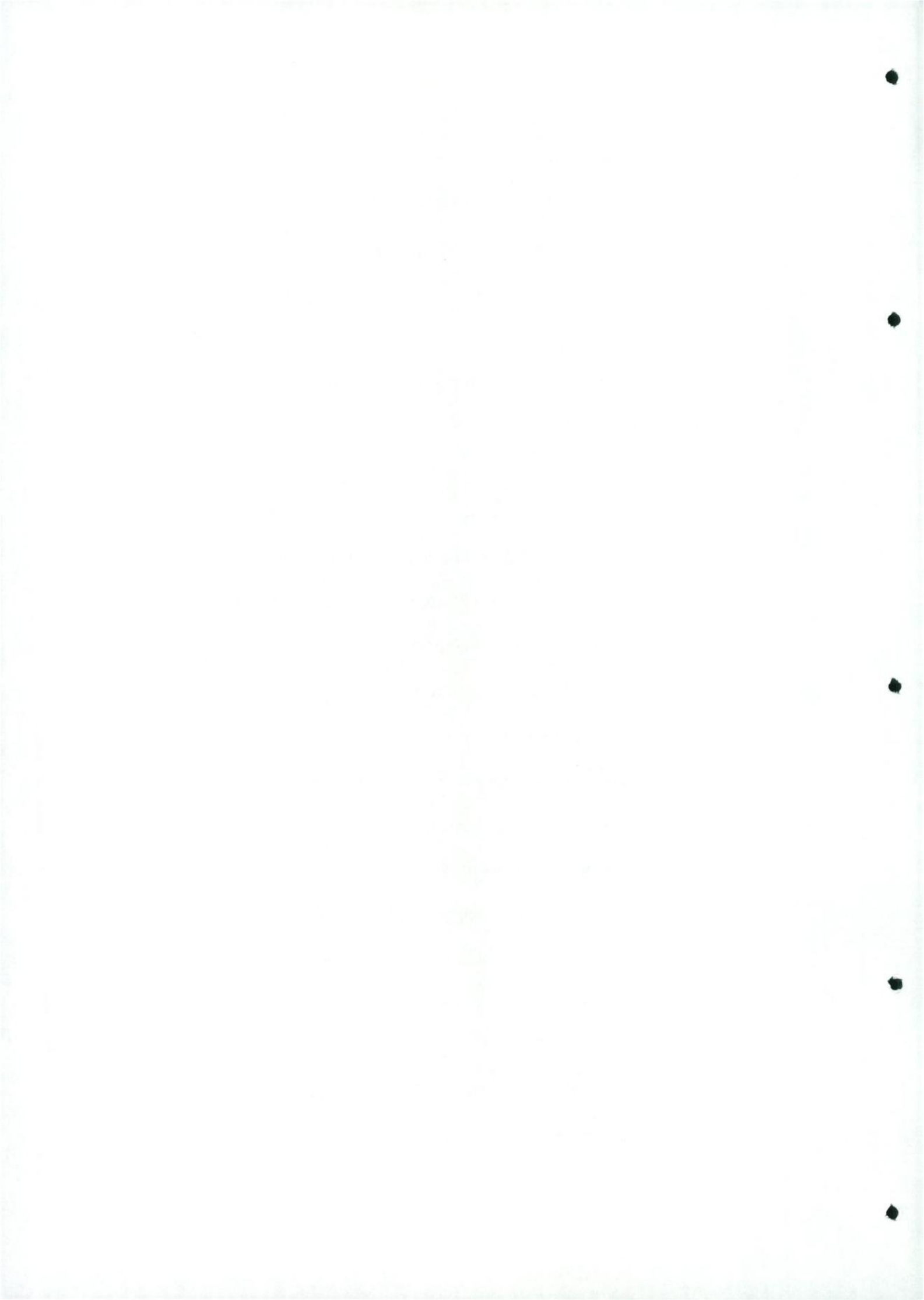
recorded the conflict in diaries without censorship and had photographic access with few restrictions. (Private conversation with X, participant in the Falklands and Persian Gulf War). The Navy regarded the media with particular disfavour and suspicion having no appreciation of the importance of newspaper deadlines for copy, or pictures needed to keep up morale at home, and as "witness" to the armed forces doing their professional job. The media people never having experienced military conditions, had little understanding of the tasks of a military expeditionary force, or the priority given to military signals. The hasty departure of the Task Force and the scramble for accreditation meant that such necessities as wire machines for the transmission of photographs were in short supply or separated from their photographers - all two of them. (Derrick Mercer 1987.) This meant frustration and delays in sending photographs back to Britain. The "Ministry of Defence failed to anticipate how photographs were to be transmitted from the war zone" causing further delays. This was excused by the Prime Minister ". . . we hadn't perhaps made provision for getting the photographs home, we thought the most important thing was to win battles to repossess." (Michael Cockereil. *The Listener* 21 October 1982.) Through careful linking via commercial Marisat (maritime satellite) terminals, some 202 photographs were eventually transmitted : too few, and too late for many daily newspaper editions.

Apart from the delayed mechanical/electronic transmission of photographs, there were hindrances caused by the controls imposed by

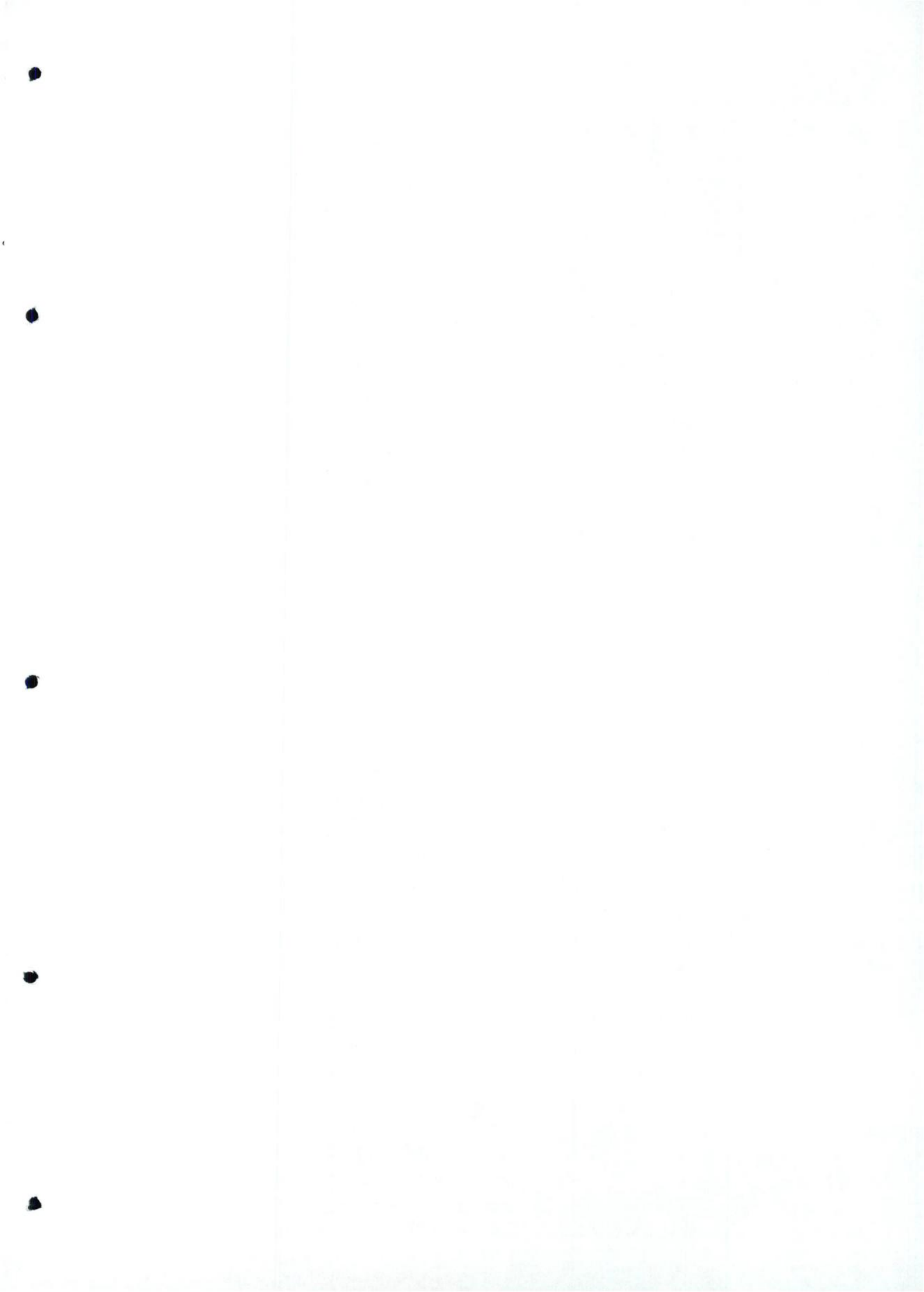


military and naval operations which severely curtailed the movements of journalists, photographers and television crews, reducing places in helicopters once battle was engaged; or night-time fighting which limited the amount of televised and photographic material, or being ordered to stay on board ship after the landings. The biggest cause of delay, read "obstruction" was the "vetting" in the Falklands by military personnel, and the censoring of all reports and images by the MoD in London. The government needed a good press, yet seemed prepared to jeopardise its own credibility by trying to exercise total control of communications, starving the media and electorate of unbiased information. This "starvation" led to the use of enemy-Argentine reportage (sold for gain, according to Caroline Brothers. (1997. p.207) to fill the information gaps the which, although outraging some Parliamentarians, did nothing to rectify the deficits experienced by the British media personnel at the scene of conflict. Ironically, the foreign media, excluded from the Task Force, were now providing information, circumventing the news restrictions imposed on the home front, (see Michael Cockerell, *The Listener*, 21 October 1982) and flatly contradicting statements made by the government and MoD reported in the British press. The "hungry" press had allowed itself to become a weapon of war swallowing indiscriminately misinformation and disinformation put about to confuse the Argentines.

Michael Nicholson (ITN) is quoted as saying that there was an expectation to report a "good news war". Certain sections of the British









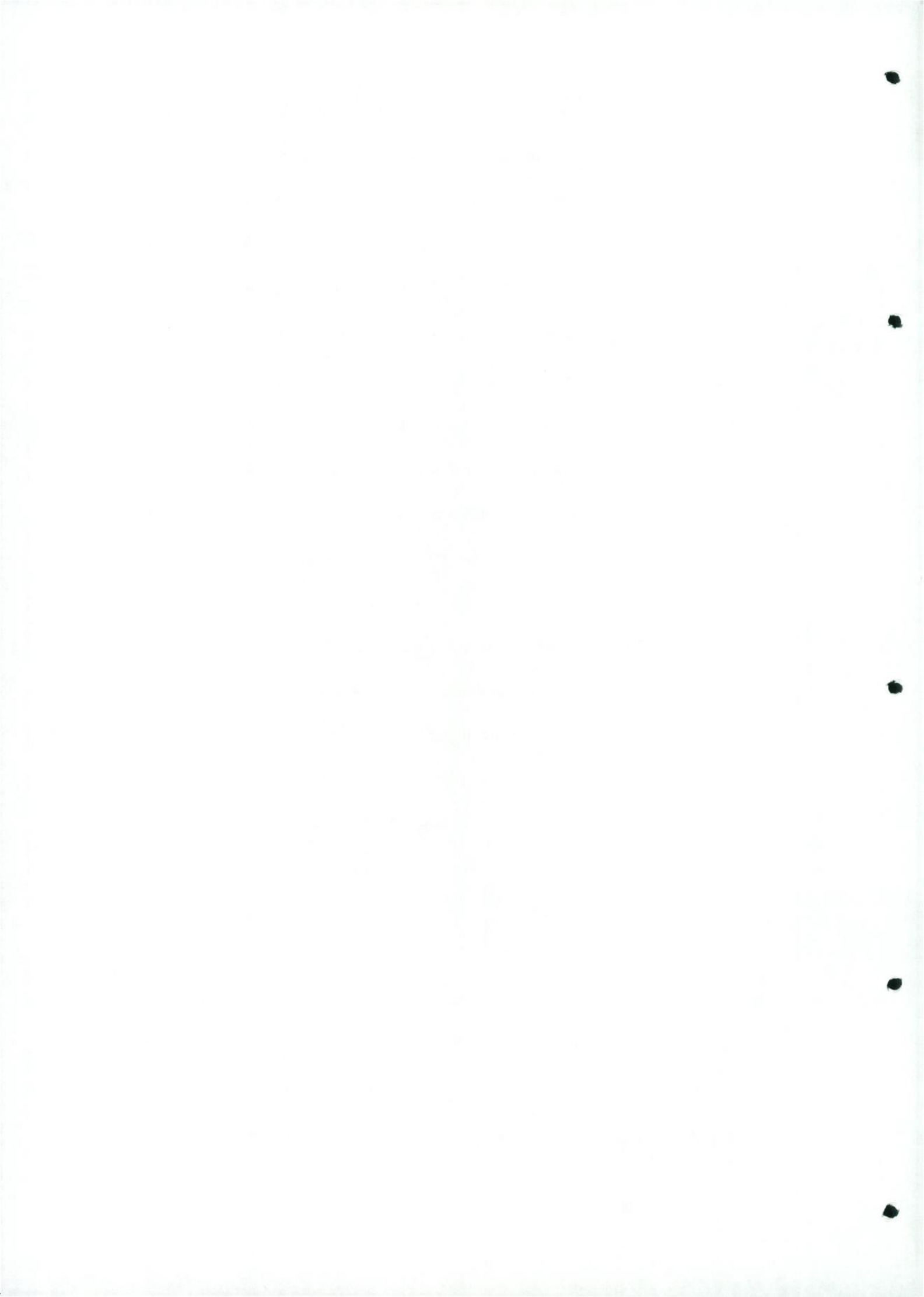
THE  
CUPPA  
THAT  
SAYS  
IT  
ALL...

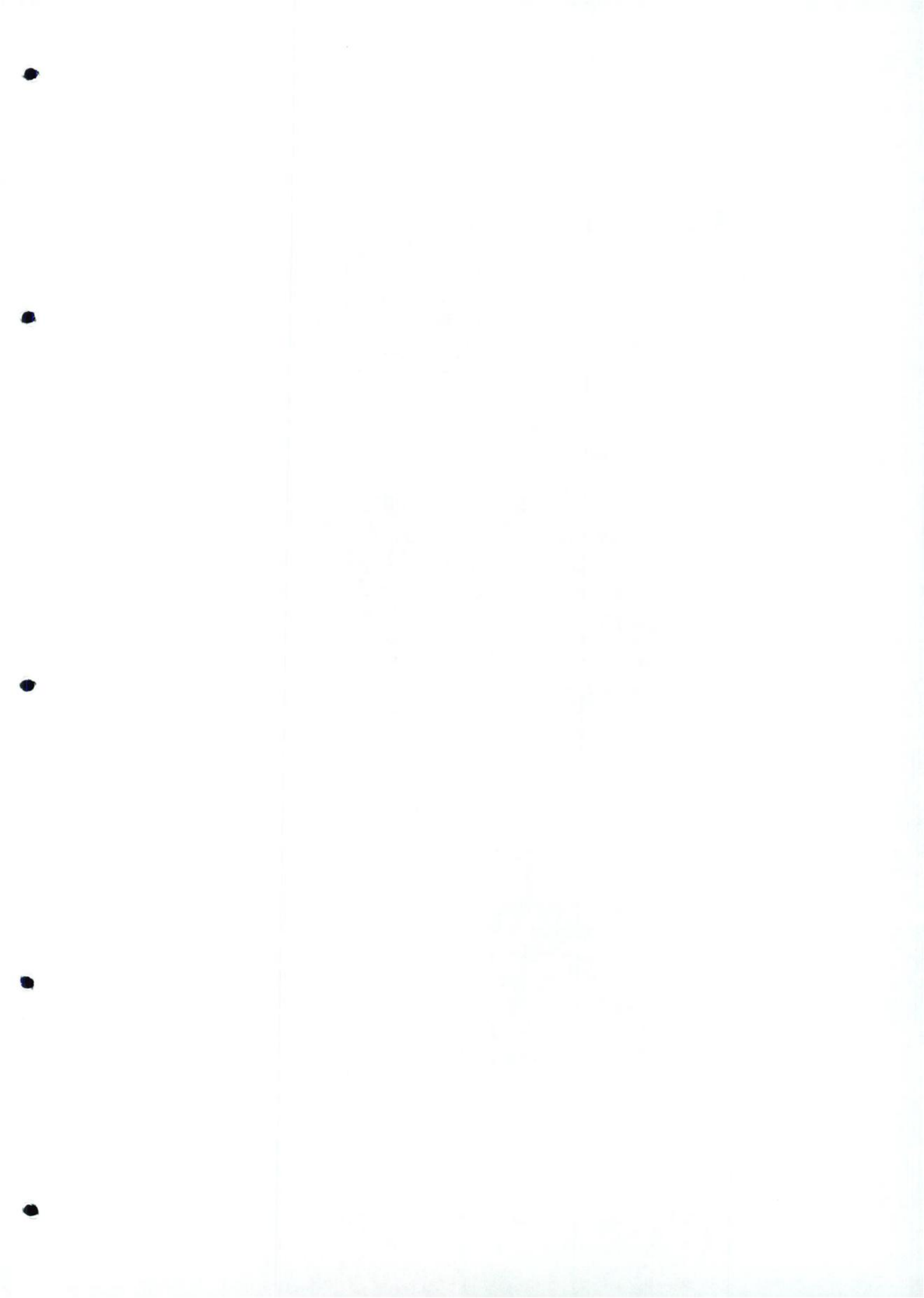


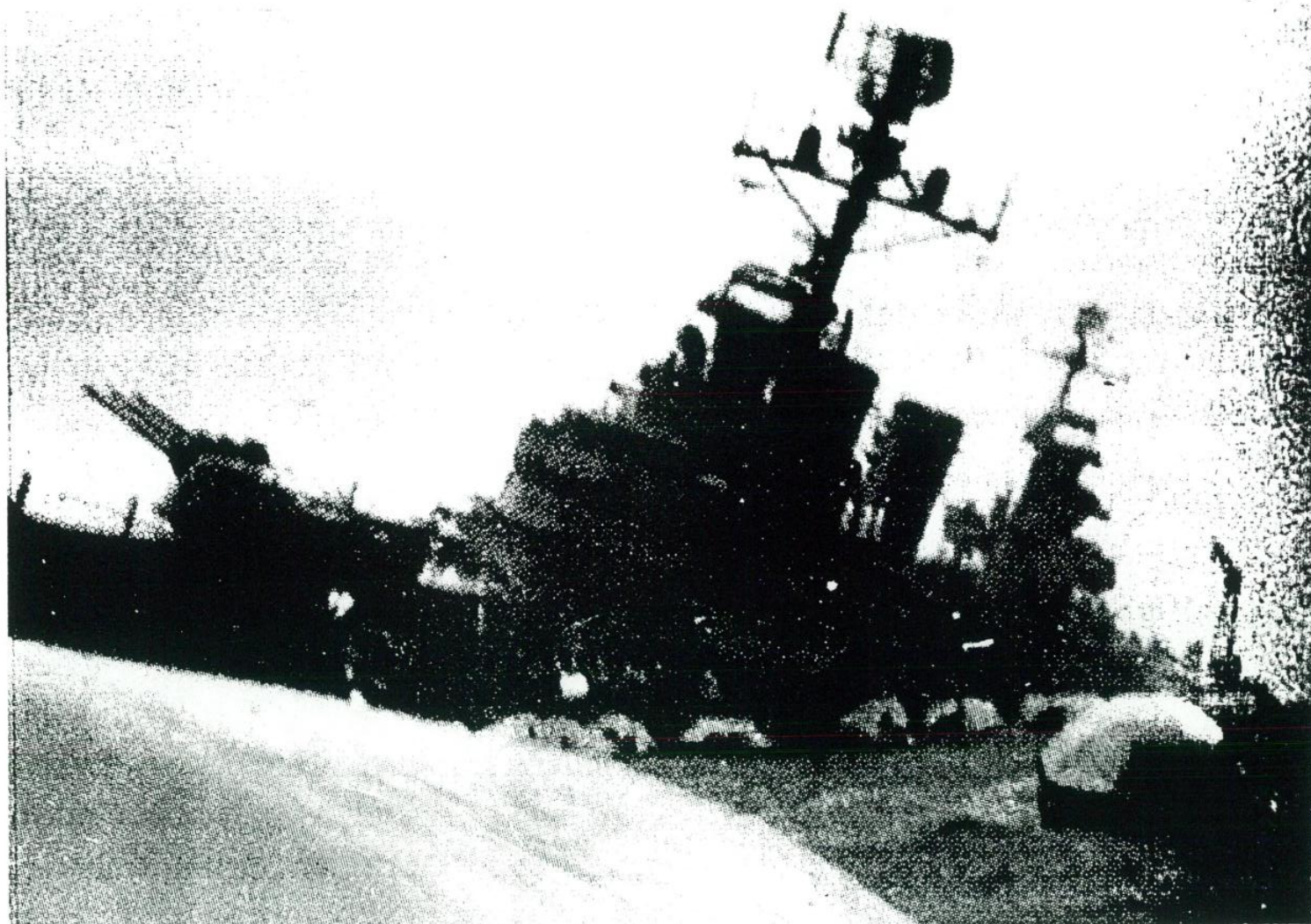
Falklanders, including children, look on as Royal Marine Commandos plant the Union Jack after their bridgehead landing at Port San Carlos.

press set out to demonstrate this with jingoism of questionable taste. The perceived "Vietnam syndrome" of a public deterred by the sight of its own dead and affecting the running of the war was one reason given for the delay of colour television pictures. This was not applicable for black and white still-photographs. The still-photograph, while having a resonance of "recognition and surprise", has an in-built reading of past historic which is not the same as "moving pictures" with an appearance of the here-and-now. The choice of "good news" photographs bolsters public morale, but more importantly is a propaganda tool for legitimising governmental decisions, hence the swiftness of the appearance of the paratrooper receiving a cup of tea, read "landed and back to normal" (*The Observer* 23 May 1982 p.3), or the flag being raised over South Georgia "mission being accomplished". (*The Observer* 23 May 1982 p.9). However, the clincher to the whole exercise, the signing of surrender, went unrecorded by photograph or television, breaking a tradition of "presumed" historical evidence backing up direct eye-witnesses account. The photographic absence to convey good news was replaced by line drawings and graphics in the newspapers, informative, but not exactly having the "been-there" immediacy. Television had only voice-alone reports. (See Robert Harris, 1983 p. 56).

By only focussing on "good news" photographs, the public is vulnerable when disasters occur. The loss of the Argentine cruiser *General Belgrano* (2 May 1982) "thought" to be "closing on elements of our Task Force" (John Nott) was cause for rejoicing at the misfortune of the







**Photographer Uncredited**

*The Sinking of the **General Belgrano** 2 May 1982. Torpedoed by the British Navy. Falklands.*

demonised Argentines : "Gotcha!" said *The Sun* (7 May 1982). The British press had to do a *volte-face* when it was subsequently learnt that the Argentine cruiser had been hit steaming away from the exclusion zone. *The Economist* (3 May 1982, p.29) quoted Argentine sources who maintained that the cruiser was 35 miles outside the zone. "Incredibly, the escorting destroyers had fled". This is disputed. The two destroyer escorts apparently gave chase to the fleeing nuclear-powered submarine *HMS Conqueror* whose captain had ordered the firing of two torpedoes at the cruiser. It was an unprovoked attack, no warning or challenge were given. The submarine did not take part in any rescue operations. 321 (amended to 368) men lost their lives, (Michael Nicholson. 1991. p.221-222.) *The Sun* may have rejoiced, Nicholson called it "the most brutal action of the entire war". Hilaire McCoubrey (1990 p.64-6) comments that "belligerent warships do not have protected status even when engaged in rescue work", yet "there is a requirement to search for casualties after maritime engagements", "without delay".

The other unanswered questions are why Britain did not announce earlier that it would not interfere with rescue operations, and why the task force itself did not try to aid the survivors, as it is clearly required to do by the 1949 Geneva Conventions. There is no doubt that the task force realised the *General Bellgrano's* two escorts had abandoned it and that the Argentine rescue forces had not arrived when it sank."

*The Economist*(8 May 1982, p.30)

According to X, the log of *HMS Conqueror* is "missing". . .

The only photograph of the sinking ship is an "anonymous, grainy,





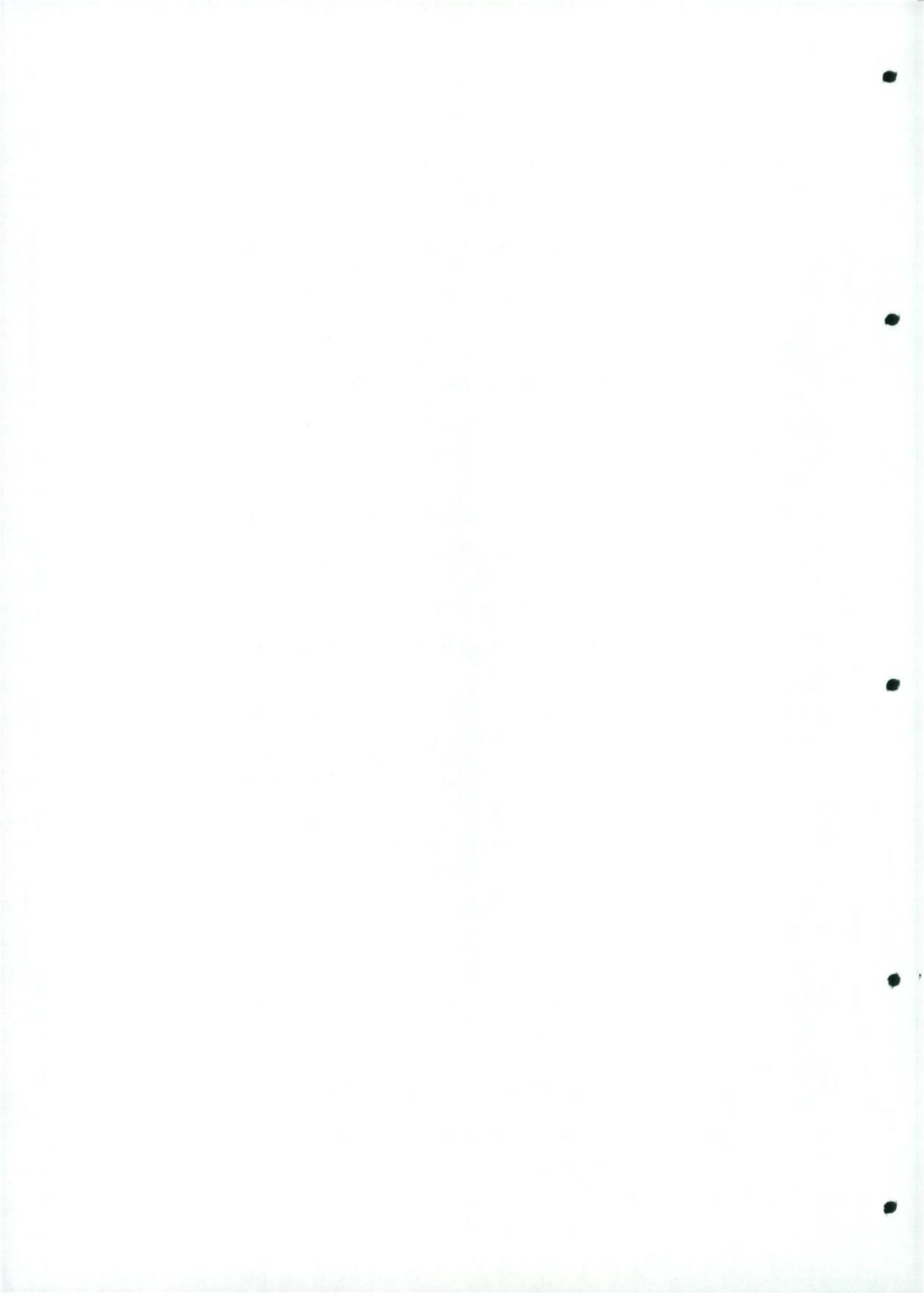
black and white image" and "was taken by an Argentine conscript with pocket camera". (An officer to whom it was handed on landing, "sold it internationally for a hefty profit".) (Caroline Brothers. 1997. p.208, 246.) This picture was in the international newspapers within days of the action. Mrs. Thatcher lost some international support. (See *The Economist*, 8 May 1982. p.30,34,35.) There was much equivocation and disinformation by government and MoD concerning the loss of the *General Belgrano*. As Cecil Parkinson baldly put it : " The mistakes were made not in the decision to sink the *Belgrano* but in how it was explained." (Derrick Mercer, 1985, p.205). The tarnishing of British maritime honour should have given the British public pause for thought. On 4 May 1982 the British ship *HMS Sheffield* was hit. The jingoistic fervour expressed in some British newspapers received a jolt as did the public and the Prime minister.

"Whitehall, lulled by a generation of peace had dispatched the Task Force without any expectation that it would lead to war. "There were few people in Whitehall prepared for a loss and people found it very difficult to grasp," said Ian McDonald about the sinking of the *Sheffield*".

Derrick Mercer. *The Fog of War* (1987. p.186.)

As Derrick Mercer said : "only the loss of the *Sheffield* diverted the attention from the justification for attacking the *Belgrano* outside the exclusion zone."

The shelling of *HMS Sheffield* by an Exocet missile two days after the sinking of the *General Belgrano* raised questions as to the sense of the



war and the cost to lives. *The Mirror* wanted the killing to stop, and *The Guardian* wondered whether the recovery of the islands was worth the price. There were no similar queries in the wake of the *General Belgrano*. The *Sheffield* "died" because doors had been left open spreading fire and smoke. There is always a *frisson* when a ship perishes at sea : the volume of water adds to the defencelessness of the sailors. The dismay in Parliament voiced itself in an attack on the BBC for showing Argentine reports. Alasdair Milne, BBC Director-General designate replied :

"that we were giving too much airtime to critics of Government policy some appearances of Tony Benn being particularly resented. . . There is the bizarre side of the whole issue. This is the first time the BBC has reported hostilities with relatively free access to the enemy. . . The oddity of the situation is further compounded by the extreme difficulty of getting much information about the fleet's activities and the almost total lack of pictures from it."

*The Listener* (20 May 1982)

Besides the *Sheffield*, *HMS Argonaut*, *Ardent*, *Antelope*, *Sir Galahad*, *Coventry* and *Glasgow* were lost, and *HMS Antrim*, *Brilliant*, *Broadsword* and *Sir Tristram* were damaged by unexploded bombs (UXB) in a short space of time. The containership *Atlantic Conveyor* with valuable and much needed helicopters on board also sank and her captain missing. There did not appear to have been as many reports about these vessels as those of the *Sheffield*. The attitude of *The Sun* "a grievous blow . . . YET THIS TRAGEDY, SHOCKING AS IT IS, CAN IN NO WAY AFFECT BRITAIN'S RESOLVE" (quoted by Robert Harris 1983



p.29) acknowledges the dismay, but taps into British bull-doggedness at the same time. The knowledge of the disaster and image of the stricken ship permitted for "mourning" and to give up would mean death in vain of one's countrymen. The demonising of the Argentines and Galtieri, enemies at a distance, were convenient targets for displaced anger. This protected the Premier from blame for undertaking a disastrous war. Again anger at the "spoilt picture" of legitimacy was centred on the doubters on the home front - an unseemly war of words and accusation was carried on in Parliament and the Press (Robert Harris. 1983 p.49-52) with the added accusations geared towards the makers of the Exocet (The French, "traditional "friends" of the British.)

The absence of photographs from various facets of war have the effect of effacing its unpleasantness. In the Falklands war there were few pictures of the dead, the burnt or wounded in action unlike the Vietnam War. The rare pictures of the wounded show them being tended. Pictures of honourable burial at sea were proscribed for good taste, or being bad for the families at home. In previous wars such burials were accepted as standard. Given the patriotic fervour in England at the time, pictures of dead soldiers would have been accepted *pro patria*, the jingoistic atmosphere in the popular press would have edited out anything that did not match the views held by the paper or the perceived mood of the people. The media, some newspapers had reservations, tended to mirror the popular mind which like its leader was bent on victory. There are

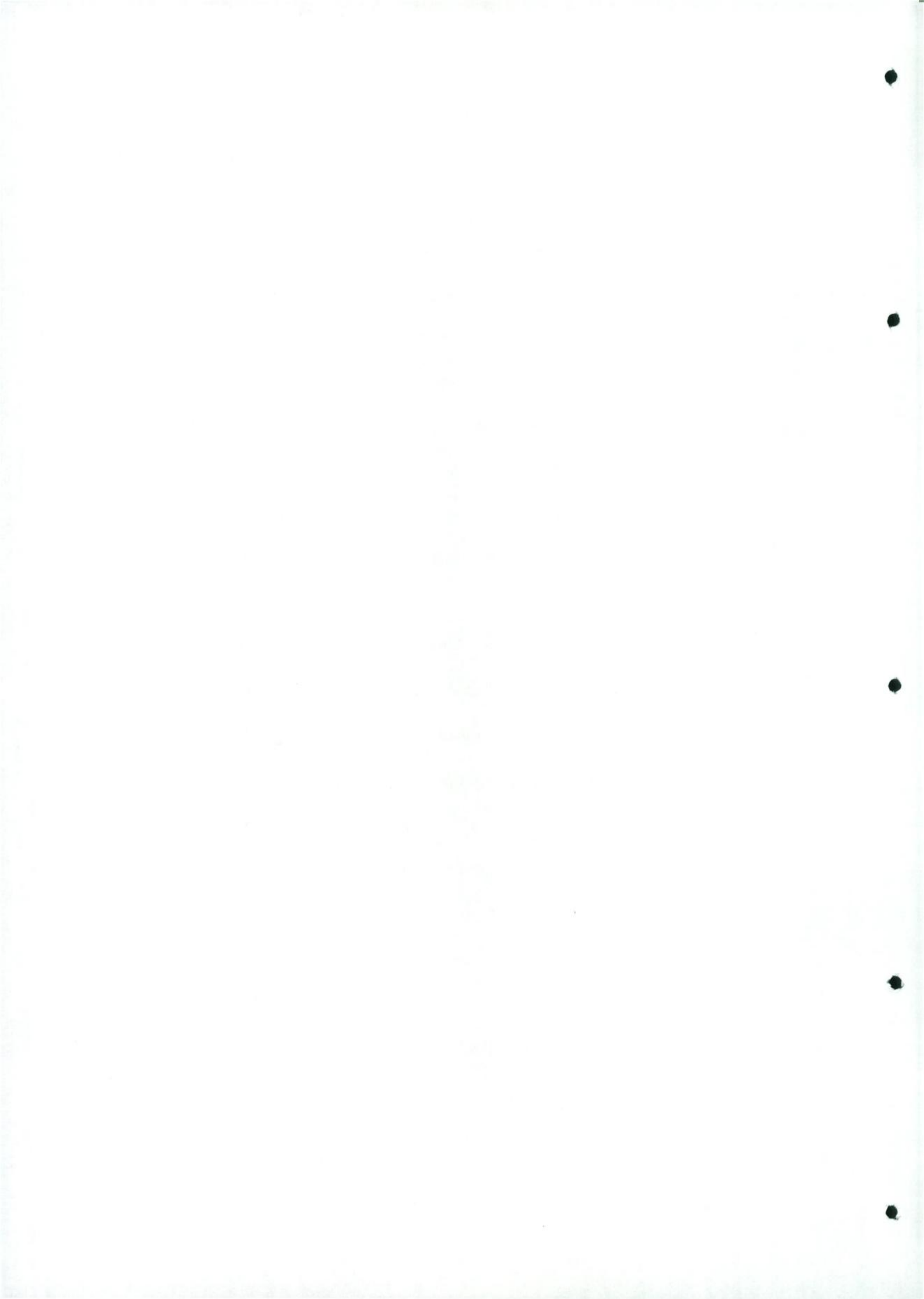


certain expectations that all who go to fight will not return : the fallen heroes. With the extreme distance of the war and the imposed difficulties of getting news back, it was then more feasible to concentrate on the home front : the wives and families waiting - a patriarchally designated rôle. The fallen heroes were family men, so grief for them extends to the grief of a nation. The return of survivors who escaped from death at sea merged with the stories of those lost. According to John Taylor (1991. p.99 *et passim*) ". . . the Falklands affair became an historical event that took its place alongside the other fabulous events of "our" past". . ."endowing private lives with significance and incorporating them into the grander scheme of public "life" that informs "our" national mythology".

The photographs taken of the families of the forces back in England, supplemented by accounts of deeds in far places, made it easier to create myths concerning unity of purpose (desired by propaganda, and hopefully fostered by censorship), eliminating anything undesirable to the purpose of waging war. The loss of men and the many ships found their historical place, but the fly in the ointment remains : the sinking of the *General Belgrano*. That has not quite been tidied into history.

e) *The Persian Gulf War (1990-1991)*

If the media in the Falklands conflict felt that they had been deprived of information seeking facilities, those of the Persian Gulf War





had really something about which to complain. It was American "pooling" or nothing. Several went "unilateral" as the American called those independent minds who took the risks of investigating the situation for themselves, risky, as they were threatened with being shot as enemies. As the Navy was unfettered in its control of media personnel during the Falklands war, confining them "for their own safety", (and the Navy's convenience), on board ship, so the U.S. military took a similar approach to the media in the Persian Gulf where the European and American coalition had assembled to expedite Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. The loss of photographic evidence was masked by the copious use of videos, in reality arms advertisements, but presented to the public as action pictures of the war. If the Falklands War became a "clean" war because it did not iconise any pictures of dying or dead British soldiers, the Persian Gulf War was to be a surgical affair with no "collateral damage" and *no body bags*, military or civilian. Therefore, no evidence. To obviate the necessary eye-witnesses on the ground, the war was to be fought from the perspective of weapons controlled from a distance, and strategies were employed to keep the independent eye-witness of the media at an even greater distance.

As with the Falklands War, the military coalition was an expeditionary force working in inhospitable environment (desert), extremes of climate (sand storms) without any support from the infrastructure, ideal conditions for corralling the media on grounds of operational secrecy and "their own safety". In an urgent competitive need to get copy back to their



editors, the media initially accepted these *raisons d'être* being dependent upon the military for transport. Had the media created its own unity of purpose by avoiding cut-throat competition, it might have had a cohesiveness to bring political pressure to bear upon the military to guarantee its independence of action. The criticism concerning the treatment of the media in the Falklands had led the MoD to draw up a few rules (Green Booklet) to sort out problems in future conflicts. Initially, the British media used this as basis for a *modus operandi* in the Persian Gulf Conflict.

In the meantime, there were problems with visas for Saudi Arabia (who was anti-journalists), and the American military came up with other pooling ideas : Forward Transmitting Units (FTU) for taking copy and tapes from the journalist "pools" in the front (MRT or Media Response Teams). The MoD accepted the modifications. The MRTs were accompanied by "minders" as *per usum*. The vetters or censors in yet another FTU would get to work and the results would be sent by satellite to London. Having set up the system and had it accepted, the Americans abandoned the idea. The MoD, except to control the final results, left it to the media to sort themselves out for possession of the "pools". The media experiences in the Falklands were repeated. The vetting was enforced with the usual excuses of not imperilling lives and giving useful information to enemy intelligence : censorship by another name. Between accepting Ground Rules (guidelines for censorship/taste) and wearing



uniforms with attendant honorary rank, the British media was absorbed into the military system and locked in - all for the sake of access to their editors. The British media had learnt *its* lesson from the Falklands. Writing about the difficulties of the media in the Persian Gulf campaign, Alex Thomson (1992) wondered if the British military had learnt theirs. On the other hand, according to Young and Yesser (1997. p.160) ". . . the United States military, along with the other participating forces, went into the conflict with the benefit of a well developed media policy designed to contain and minimise press scrutiny to the military's own advantage."

Before the war started there was a softening-up, legitimising process by the government and reflected in the media : a cause, driving out evil in the name of liberty (expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait), a demonised enemy with negative images (Saddam Hussein), a hero(?) Norman Scwharzkopf. The Iraqi regime did not demonise the West. Both parties to the conflict pursued their war objectives through the media by means of deception, exclusion and and misinformation which in the end allowed for much goal-post changing in the West when it came to defining the reasons for going to war (protection of Saudi Arabia = liberation of Kuwait = the overthrow of Saddam Hussein).

If the American military powers, remembering, its failures in the Vietnam War, wanted to de-humanise the war to save itself from close scrutiny, Saddam Hussein took every opportunity to re-inforce its human

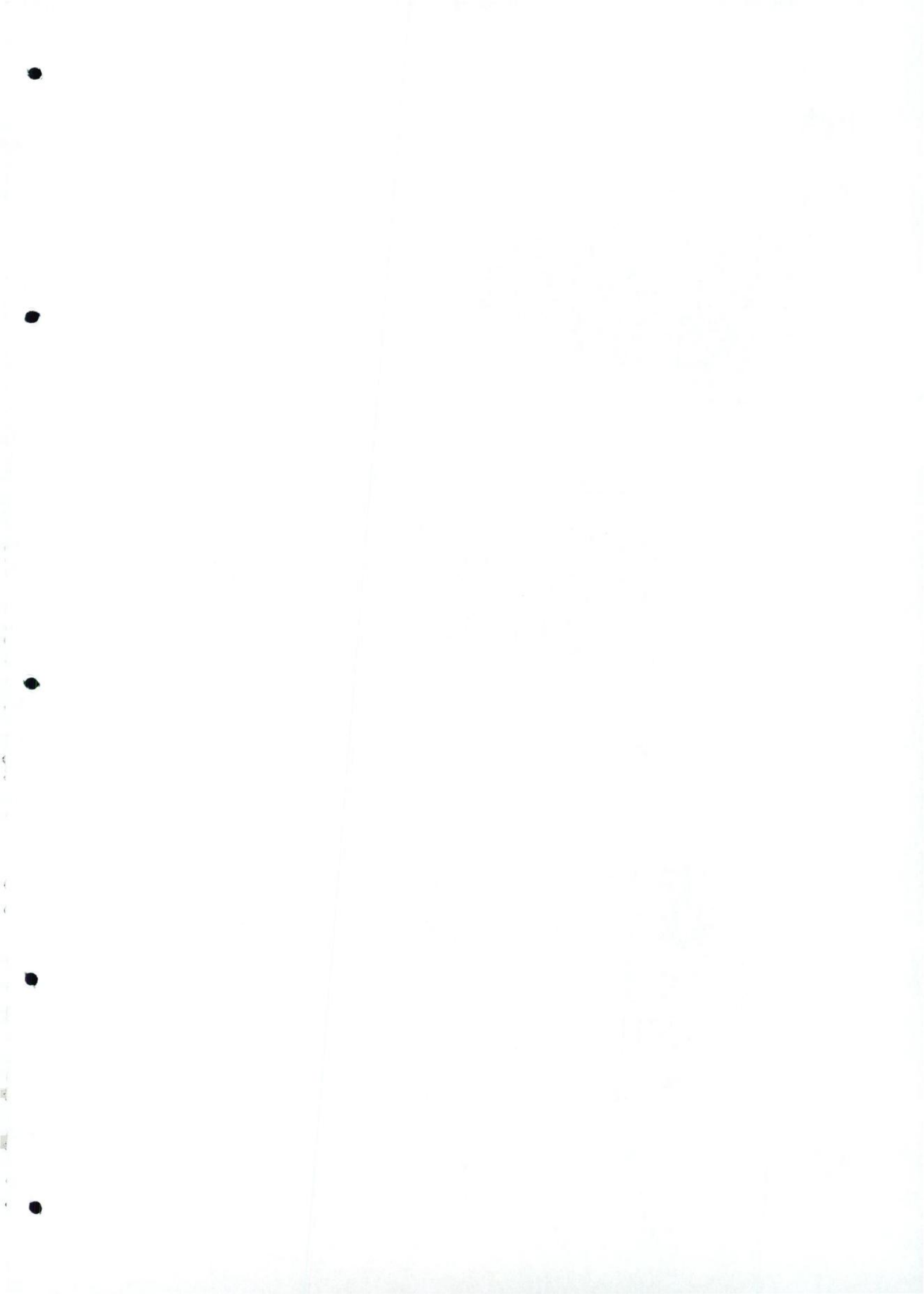


aspect, using television to flaunt his hostages and then showing the human casualties of Baghdad which belied the American presentation of non-collateral damage. Western media personnel staying in Baghdad confirmed the bombing of its innocent targets. In a *New Statesman and Society* article (10 January 1992 p.10 *et passim*) Alexander Cockburn makes the point that American journalists were re-called from Baghdad before the bombing began on 15 January 1991, quoting : "I really believe" Colvin (*Sunday Times*) says, "they didn't want anyone to report what was going to happen. They themselves (ie the Administration) didn't expect a low body count." Or avoiding political flak or responsibility for the reporters, as Robert Fisk accused Max Hastings, *The Daily Telegraph* editor who had been using the services of a Reuters agent behind the lines. The story was "too big" for British reporters to leave. Western media witnesses could then refute the bombing accuracy. Alexander Cockburn pointed out that the presence of the Western journalists may have prevented further Al Amiriya shelter-type bombings, and obliged the Pentagon to re-examine its targets.

Accusing those reporters and photographers remaining in Baghdad as propagandists of Saddam Hussein (who used them for *his* propaganda purposes anyway) so as to refute the American allegations of only targeting military establishments, did nothing to lessen the fact that bombs fell wide of the mark and indiscriminately on civilian populations. Replicating Mrs Thatcher and the use of Argentine material by the BBC, some

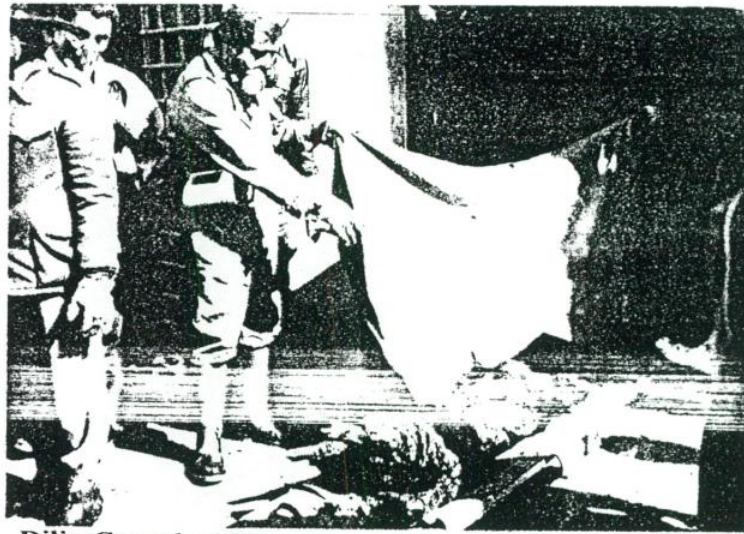








**Photographer Unknown**  
*Grief for lost relatives. Al Amiriya Bunker*  
*13 February 1991.*



**Dilip Ganguly / AP**  
*Rescue workers collect the charred*  
*remains from the shelter.*



**French Television (RTF)**  
*A boy wounded in the bunker raid.*

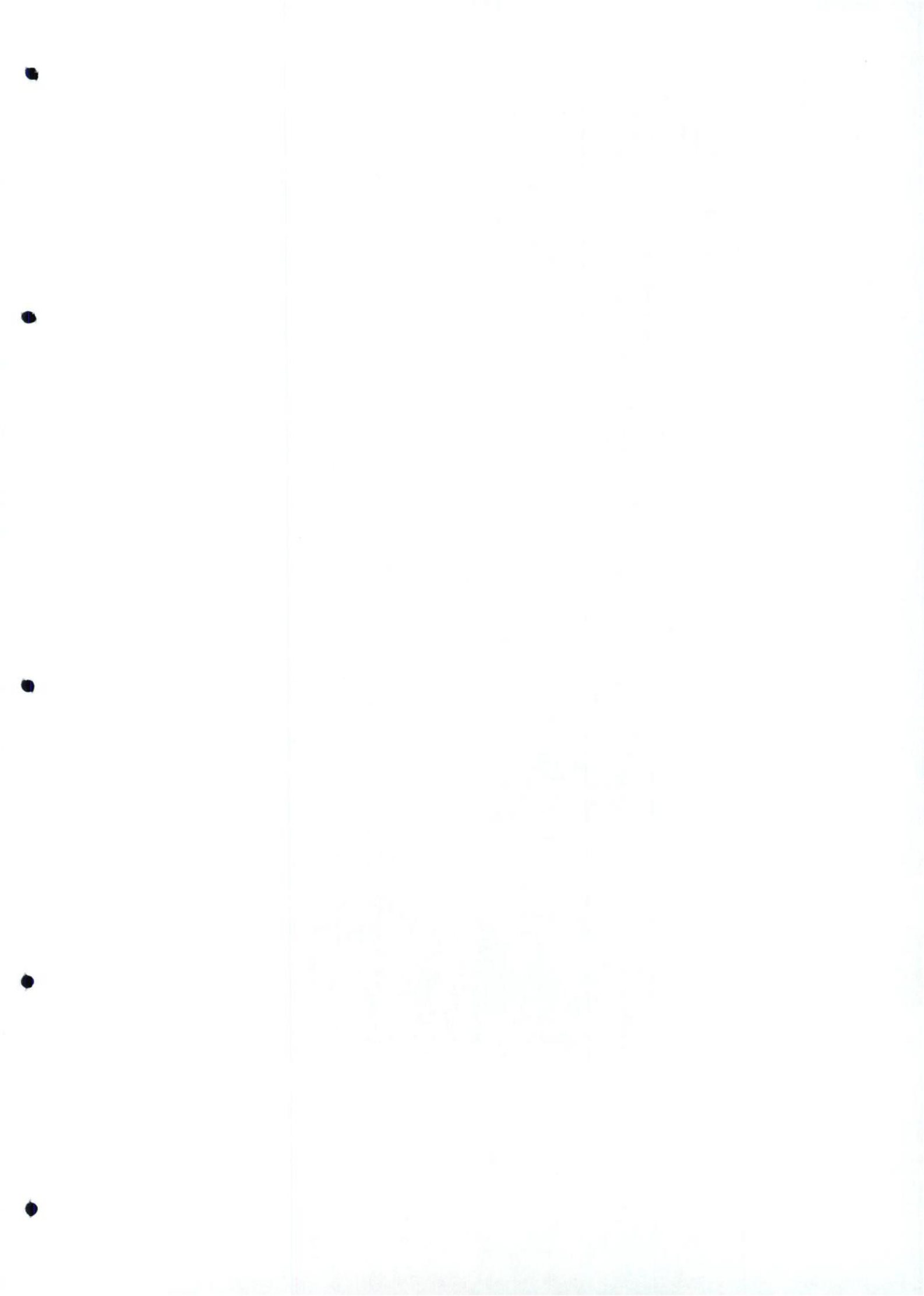
Parliamentarians tried this gambit again. However,

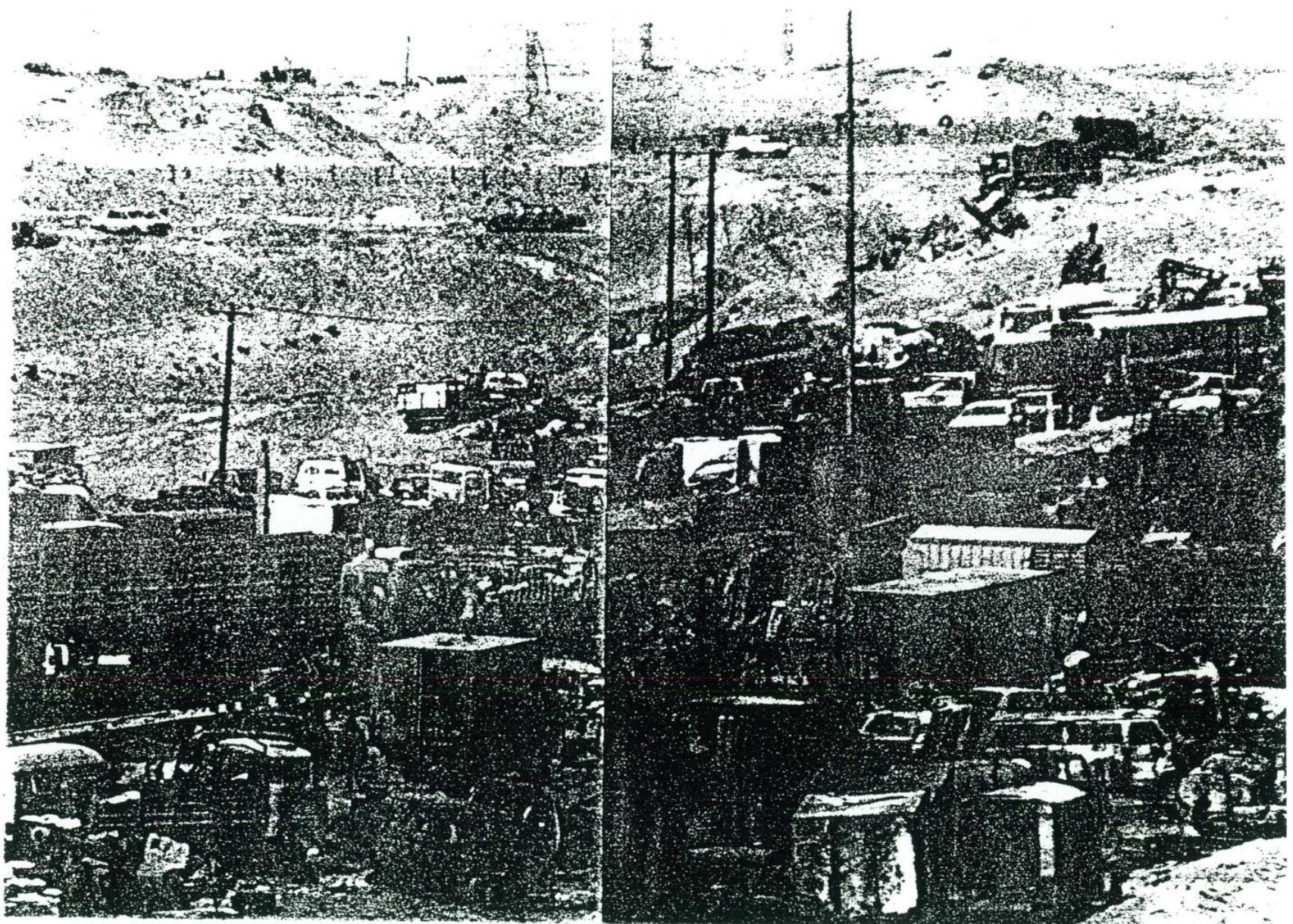
" It appeared that the more thoughtful attitude was winning the day, that there was actually more use having experienced correspondents able to put in context what the Iraqi minders were allowing them to see, than to have the Iraqis sending out video "atrocities" around the world with no on-location comment from independent observers.

Alex Thomson, *Smokescreen* (1992. p.216)

Whereas the leadership recognised the use of having correspondents in Baghdad, the public did not. Trying to give a truthful account, under censorship, did not reassure the public who equated being in enemy territory as siding with the enemy. Patriotism blinded the collective mind to the extent that it disbelieved the effects of the bombing, the demonising of Saddam Hussein having extended to the Iraqis. There were many complaints to the TV networks for showing the uncensored results of the bombing of the Al Amiriya bunker (13 February 1991). According to Alex Thomson (1992. p235) a Stealth Bomber fired a laser-guided missile into the shelter, burning hundreds of civilians to death. In a footnote, Caroline Brothers quotes that the Pentagon thought it sheltered families of the Iraqi *élite* and targeted it with "decapitation" laser-guided bombs. These images were uncensored. *The Economist* (16 February 1991 p.18) claimed two laser-guided missiles and that "from the ground, the corpses did not look like soldiers". It gave the bunker the accolade of becoming "one of the enduring images of the first part of the war". The connection between the "smart" bombs and the collateral damage was not lost in America; to some of the British public, it was a "blatant anti-British broadcasting". Caroline Brothers claims that until the bombing of the shelter there were no bodies







**Photographer Unknown**

*The Road to Basra, Mutlah Ridge. 26 February 1991.*

*The people fleeing from Kuwait (troops and civilians) were bombed for sixteen hours non-stop without a chance to surrender.*

on television or the press, "the conflict was reported from the point of view of the weapons".

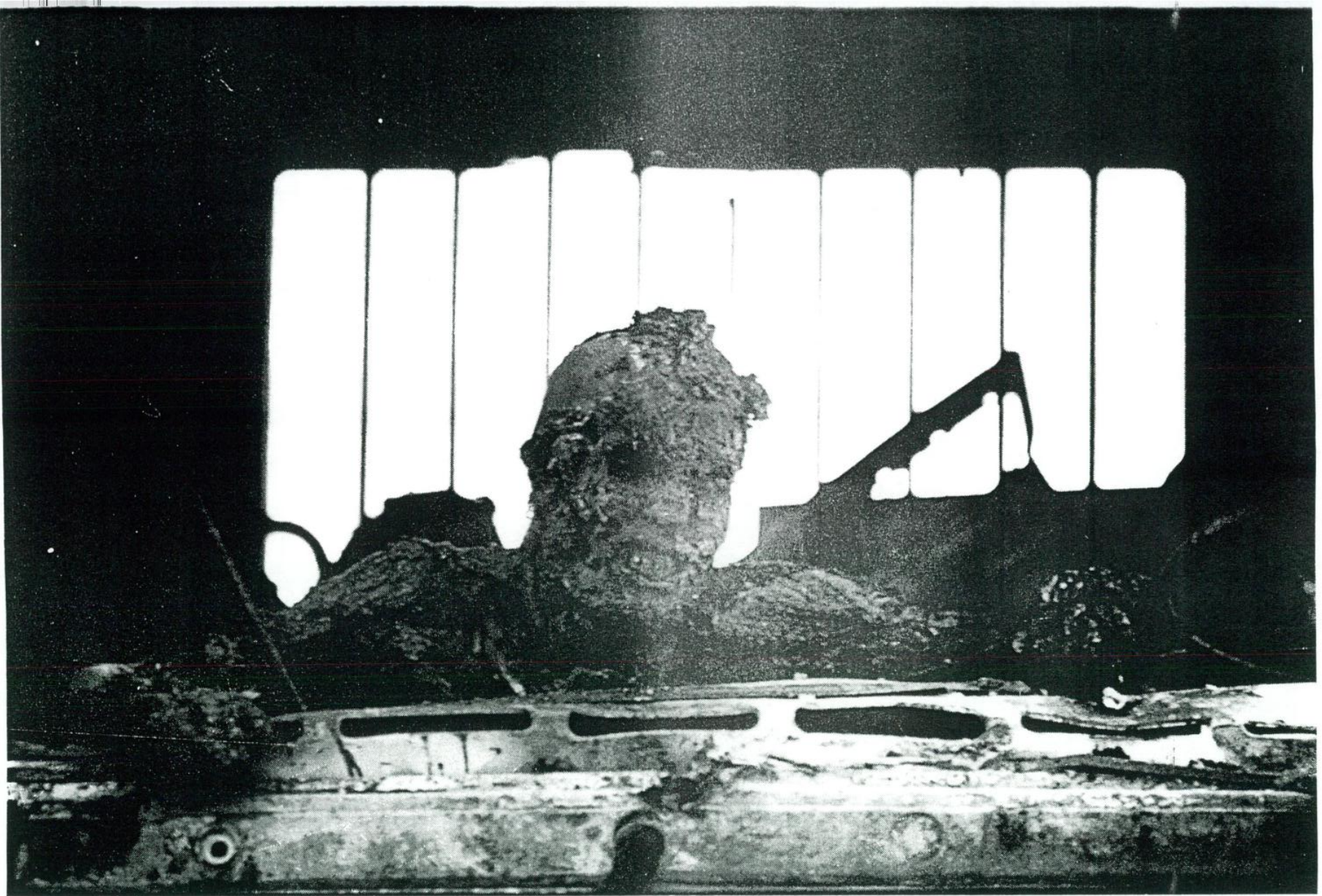
One enduring image of the Persian Gulf War was the road to Basra. *The Economist* (2 March 1991 p.25) described the lieu of entrapment of the people fleeing from Kuwait, there was nowhere for them to go : the bridges were down. The journal refrains from describing the carnage. Who comprised the fleeing column has never been established because of the extreme mutilation and charring of the bodies. John Witherow and Aidan Sullivan (1991 p.164) described them as ". . . some of the most distasteful Iraqis who had helped impose a reign of terror on Kuwait . . . they got what they deserved". John Pilger (1992. p.152-3) quotes the findings of Stephan Sacker: "the incinerated figures had been trying to get home. Among them were civilians including contact workers from the Indian sub-continent ; he saw the labels on their suitcases". The fleeing column was "hammered for 16 hours by air craft and tanks". According to Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh (1993 p.403) "they were given no opportunity to surrender. Instead, American aircraft queued in the skies to mount their attacks".

Another particular photographic image of the Persian Gulf War was that of an Iraqi soldier burnt alive in the cab of his jeep, his teeth bared in the rictus of death, taken by Kenneth Jarecke. It reached the public domain when it was no longer ideologically necessary to hide the evidence









The real face of war. Price of victory: The charred head of an Iraqi soldier leans through the windscreen of his burnt-out vehicle, attacked during the retreat from Kuwait. *Observer*, 3 March 1991. Kenneth Jarecke/Colorific

of collateral damage. The war was "won", the Allied military convincing themselves of the accuracy and efficacy of their weapons. There was no close hand to hand fighting, it was exceptional for an Allied soldier to see his foe. It was a war in which there was to be no blood and guts à la Vietnam, no denial of the use of arms as in the Biafran War, and fought at a distance with a corralled media as in the Falklands conflict.

In Britain public opinion was behind the war according to a survey done in Leeds and reported in *The Higher Educational Supplement* (10 January 1992). Using the media for censoring material and deceiving the enemy was acceptable provided "now the war has finished, the whole truth should come out". There was a certain wariness about believing everything said including on television or in the press (more suspicious). The reporters in Baghdad were not entirely believed suspecting adverse propaganda influence. On grounds of taste (perhaps) all those surveyed did not wish to see gruesome pictures of the bomb-blasted dead : "We have all got an imagination". This was considered sufficient, editing out was acceptable. There was a definite preference for neutrally spoken reportage even if accompanied by gruesome images. Bias in reporting whether military or enemy was recognised and acknowledged. As members of the public were giving their views a year after the event, hind-sight may have influenced the perspective of the events. However, nothing was said that showed an especially strong opinion against the waging of the war. The political softening-up leading up to its outbreak seems to have made the war a "common-sensical" option. There was no humanitarian outcry for



Iraqi civilians being bombed relentlessly for forty-one days, nor questioning of what had been done in the electorate's name. The demonising of Saddam Hussein and his deeds gave the public a legitimate means of displacing anger onto a distant object which "protected" the government from being called to account for the means it used to wage war.

The photographic images of the road to Basra and the burnt Iraqi soldier, could not influence the public because they were released at the end of the war. The burnt soldier stays longer in the mind because of the starkness of the black and white image, like the imagery in the mind's eye. It is simple and direct unlike the seeming endless detail of the Road to Basra images, there is no distraction and it is quite clear how he met his death.



## Conclusion

### "Odd Perspective"

Perspective refers to how one sees depth in a picture.

Following the media coverage of the war in Vietnam, various governments and Administrations have acted upon the assumption that photographic images have the power to change public opinion sufficiently to threaten the downfall of governments. This would seem to be an extreme way of perceiving the power of a piece of paper whose content is manipulated by the context in which it is placed. (John Tagg, quoted by Caroline Brothers, 1997, p.16) A positive or negative emotion is "imbedded" in the image by the viewer. Grievance heightens the emotive response and provokes a reaction.

Pictures of its own dead youth wasted stirred the American public to take political action against the war. The war aims of the Administration were initially backed by the American public, yet the President did not have confidence in the public to discuss American interests in Vietnam. The pictures sent back from Vietnam told a story which belied the promise of rapid victory by the administration. "Johnson went to war in small steps" (Brian Becket, 1985, p.73) hoping to bring the electorate with him. He





failed to do so. It was easy to blame the images coming out of Vietnam for his loss of office, they were a reminder of his impotence to resolve the war. The executed Vietcong suspect and the napalmed child shocked, there was no public outcry to try the police chief or to ban napalm. The inherent racism of the white American public whose coloured population outnumbered its white members sent to the Vietnam war (Brian Becket, 1985, p. 114-122). It was not going to worry about another coloured race.

The images of starving children in Biafra did not change the war situation which disrupted a society. Children and young people starved for political reasons on both sides of the conflict. Their situation was aggravated by Britain supplying arms to a non-legally, non-democratically elected Nigerian government. Britain wanted to assure her oil supplies. The photographs of the starving Biafran children stirred many humanitarian people and agencies in England to do something about their plight by sending in aid illegally. The voice of the humanitarians had no political strength to bring to bear any influence on government policy or political party. Starvation among the Biafran soldiery ended the war.

In the Falklands War patriotic fervour carried the day. The sinking of the Argentine *General Belgrano* was overshadowed by the loss of a British ship which had greater immediacy and resonance for the British public as it involved their own forces. The responsibility for the sinking of the Argentine ship has never been addressed : the log of *HMS Conqueror*



has gone "missing". The image of the ship going down did not awaken any sense of outrage for an act which went against the British ethos of "fair play" and the rescue of the ship-wrecked. The Government, the Navy and public distanced themselves on the pretext that there was no assurance that that the cruiser was not going to re-enter the exclusion zone and fight.

The image of the burnt Iraqi soldier changed nothing. The demonising of his leader justified his fate. It is a stark reminder that the war which was undertaken to wipe out his leader, failed in its objective. The image of a person dead *pro patria sua* was lost in the fascination of a video-image war which purported to follow the path of a laser-guided missile into the centre of collateral damage. The photographs of that damage (the Al Amiriya bunker in Baghdad) was potent enough to prove to Washington that the bombs were not so smart as to avoid causing the said damage. The bombing campaign was modified, but did not save the people fleeing along the Basra Road at Mutla Ridge.

Photographers have gone to war voluntarily. They are part of a machine which pursues and glorifies war. Their presence sometimes instigates brutality (executions on camera). Soldiers love and hate their presence, those directing war wish them further : the camera "seeing" more than it should, the same credit is given to the photographer. Some photographers go to war to show its horror in the hope of bringing about change. A photograph can never show how the photographer feels, and his



subject matter is very much at the mercy of those who view it or use it.(see Fred Ritchin, Carol Squiers, 1991 p.28-37) If photographs show war conditions at their worst, this can prove counter-productive : it needs a war to clear them up, this would seemingly lend justification to the waging of war.

With the advent of the computers which can radically change images, the credibility of the photograph as evidence is further diminished. The image as proof of "having-been-there" where the photograph was taken is now lost. Whereas before the editor could crop the image and surround it with different texts changing the perceptions of the photograph, it would still be the same photograph. With special electronic devices the image can be altered out of recognition. (Carol Squiers, 1991, p.12). Seeing and believing photographic "evidence" is no longer justified.

"Photographic truth is circumscribed truth . . . it is a truth infinitely vulnerable to qualification, distortion and manipulation by a third variable, the context in which photographs are used.

Caroline Brothers : *War & Photography*, 1997, p.18-19.

Some of the photographs mentioned in the text do not need electronic adjustment, they could be placed in any epoch of the twentieth century. Each, although specific to a given war, is also an icon of the results of any war : young men killed in action, or executed, a burnt child, fighting warships lost at sea, a starving child and a burnt soldier : *plus ça change, moins ça change*.



The textual photographs concerned people who died in war. Had governments had their way in preventing the media from bearing witness to the events which caused those deaths, there would have been no record of their existence, or of the injustices and violations perpetrated in wars supported by wealthy nations for their own ideological or economic gains.





## Interviews

May - December 1998 (Dublin) : John O'Loughlin Kennedy, Founder member of *Africa Concern*, an Irish relief agency for the starving in Biafra, founded in 1968.

May - December 1998 (Dublin) : X, present at the end of the Vietnam War(1975), the Falklands Conflict (1982), and the Persian Gulf War (1990-1). Name withheld.

## Bibliography

- AKPAN, Ntiyong Udo, The Struggle for Sesseion 1966-1970, London, Frank Cass, 1971.
- AREND, Anthony C. & BECK, Robert, International Law and the Use of Force. Beyond the U.N. Charter Paradigm. London, New York. Routledge. 1993.
- BECKET, Brian, The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War. Poole, Blanford Press. 1985
- BEHR, Edward, Anyone Here Been Raped or Speaks English ? London. Hamish Hamilton. 1981.
- BELL, Martin. In Harm's Way. Reflections of a War Zone Thug. London, Penguin, revised edition, 1996.
- BICKERS, Richard Townshend, Friendly Fire Accidents on the Battlefield from Ancient Greece to the Gulf War, London, Leo Cooper, 1994.
- BISHOP, Patrick, Famous Victory, the Gulf War, London, Sinclair-Stevenson, 1992.
- BLAINEY, Geoffrey, The Causes of War. Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988.
- BRITTAIN, Victoria (Ed.) The Gulf Between Us. The Gulf War and Beyond, London, Virgo Press Ltd., 1991.
- BROTHERS, Caroline, War and Photography. A Cultural History, London



- & New York, Routledge, 1997.
- BULLOCH, John, & MORRIS, Harvey, Saddam's War, London, Faber & Faber, 1991.
- BURKE, Bill, I Want to Take Pictures, Atlanta Georgia, Nexus Press, 1987.
- BYRNE, Tony, CSSP, Airlift to Biafra Breaching the Blockade. Dublin, Columba Press, 1997.
- CAIRNS, Ed., Children and Political Violence, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996.
- CAPA, Robert, Images of War. Text and Writings, London, Henly, 1964.
- CASSELL CAMERA WISE GUIDES, Problem Solver, London, Cassell, 1994.
- CLAUSEWITZ, Carl von, On War, HOWARD, Michael & PARET, Peter, (Eds. & Trans.) London, Everyman Library, 1993.
- COKER, Christopher, War and the Twentieth Century. A Study of War and Modern Conscience. London & Washington Brassey's. 1994
- COLLIS, Robert, (M.D.) Nigeria in Conflict. London Secker & Warburg Ltd., 1971
- CRONJE, Suzanne, The World & Nigeria, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972
- de SAINT JORRE, John, The Nigerian Civil War. London, Sydney, Auckland & Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1972
- DEWAR, Michael, The Gulf War, a Photographic History, - 1992.
- DOHENY, Kevin CSSP, No Hands But Yours, Dublin, Veritas Publications, 1997.
- DUFFETT, John. (Ed.) Against The Crime of Silence. Proceedings of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal (Stockholm - Copenhagen), Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, New York & London. O'Hare Books. 1968.
- ELWOOD-AKERS, Virginia, Women War Correspondents in the Vietnam War 1961-1975, Metuchen, New Jersey & London, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1988.
- EPSTEIN, Mitch, Vietnam, A Book of Changes, Centre for Documentary Studies, W.W. Norton & Co., 1997.



- EVANS, Harold, (Ed.) Pictures on a Page. Photo-journalism, Graphics and Picture Editing. The Sunday Times London. Book IV. London, Heinemann 1978.
- EVANS, Martin & LUM, Ken, War and Memory in the Twentieth Century. Oxford. Berg. 1997.
- FAAS, Horst, & PAGE, Tim, Requiem By the Photographers Who Died in Vietnam and Indo- China. London, Jonathan Cape, 1997.
- FRIEDRICH, Ernst, (Introduction : KELLNER, Douglas), War Against War, London, Journeyman, 1987.
- FELICE, William, Taking Suffering Seriously, The Importance of Collective Human Rights, 1996.
- FENTON, James, All the Wrong Places, London, Penguin, 1988.
- FORSYTH, Frederick, The Making of an African Legend : Biafra Story, London, Severn House Publishers Ltd., 1983. (First Published, 1969)
- FOX, Robert, Eye-Witness, Falklands, A Personal Account of the Falklands Campaign,(1982) London, Mandarin Paperbacks, 1992.  
Camera in Conflict : The Hulton Getty Picture Collection. Cöln, Germany, Köneman Verlagsgesellschaft mbh., 1996.
- FREEDMAN, Lawrence, & KARSH, Efraim, The Gulf Conflict 1990-1991, London, Faber & Faber, 1993.
- FULLER, Peter, The Naked Artists, "Art and Biology" and Other Essays, Writers and Readers Publishing Co-Operative Society Ltd., 1983
- GALL, Sandy, Don't Worry About the Money Now. London, Hamish Hamilton. 1983.
- GELLHORN, Martha, The Face of War. Revised edition. London Virago Press, 1996
- GRAHAM, Ron, & BOLTON, Virginia, Focus on Photography, London, Sydney, Auckland, Toronto, Hodder & Stoughton, 1990.
- HALLIN, Daniel C., The "Uncensored" War : The Media and Vietnam, New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986.
- HANRAHAN, Brian, & FOX, Robert, "I Counted Them All Out and I Counted Them Back", The Battle of the Falklands. London, BBC



- Publications, 1982.
- HARRIS, Robert, Eye Witness Falklands. A Personal Account of the Falklands Campaign, (Re-issue) London, Mandarin Paperbacks, 1992.
- Gotcha! The Media, The Government & The Falklands, London, Faber & Faber, 1983.
- HASTINGS, Max, & JENKINS, Simon, The Battle For The Falklands, London, Michael Joseph, 1992.
- HATCH, John, Nigeria, A History. London, Secker & Warburg, 1971.
- HERR, Michael, Dispatches (U.S.A. Alfred a Knopf, Inc. 1977) Great Britain, Picador. 1978.
- HINDE, Robert A., & WATSON, Helen, (Ed.) A Cruel Necessity. The Basis of Institutionalised Violence. London & New York. Tauris Academic Studies, 1995.
- HUME, Nick, Whose War Is It Anyway ? London, Informinc. 1997.
- JONES GRIFFITHS, Philip, Vietnam Inc., New York, The Macmillan Company, 1971.
- Dark Odessy, Aperture Foundation, 1996.
- KEEGAN, John, A Brief History of Warfare - Past, Present, Future, Southampton, The University of Southampton, 1994.
- The Face of Battle, London, Pimlico, (1976) 1991.
- KENNERLY, David Hume, Photo Op. A Pulitzer Prize-Winning Photographer Covers Events that Shaped Our Times. Austen, University Of Texas Press. 1995.
- KNIGHTLY, Philip, The First Casualty, London, Quartet Books Ltd., 1978.
- LANG, Daniel, Incident on Hill 192. London, Secker & Warburg, 1970.
- LEWINSKI, Jorge, The Camera at War. History of War Photography 1848 to The Present, London, W.H.Allen, 1978.
- MAYES, Stephan, This Critical Mirror, London, Thames & Hudson, 1995.
- McCOUBREY, Hilaire, International Humanitarian Law. The Regulation of Armed Conflict. Aldershot, (Hants.) Dartmouth Publishing Co. Ltd., 1990.





- McCULLIN, Don, The Destruction Business, London, Open Gate Books, 1971.
- Is Anyone Taking Any Notice ?, M.I.T. Press 1973.
- Perspectives, London, Harrap, 1987.
- Unreasonable Behaviour, London, Vintage, 1992.
- Sleeping With Ghosts, London, Jonathan Cape, 1994.
- MERCER, Derrik, (Ed.) Chronicle of the Twentieth Century. (Reprint) London, Longman, 1989
- MERCER, Derrik, MUNGHAN, Geoff, & WILLIAMS, Kevin, The Fog of War The Media and the Battlefield, London, Heineman, 1987.
- MIDDLE EAST WATCH, Needless Deaths in the Gulf War. Civilian Casualties in the Air Campaign and Violations of the Laws of War Middle East Watch Report. New York, Washington, Los Angeles & London, Human Rights Watch, 1991.
- MILLS, Nick, The Vietnam Experience. Combat Photographer, Boston, M.A., Boston Publishing Co., 1983.
- MOELLER, Susan D., Shooting War : Photography and the American Experience of Combat, New York, Basic Books Inc., 1989
- MONK, Lorraine, Photographs That Changed The World. New York, Doubleday, 1989.
- MRA'ZKOVA', Daniela, Masters of Photography, Athentic History, London, Hamlyn Books, 1987.
- MYDANS, Carl, Carl Mydans Photojournalist, New York, Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1985
- NACHTWEY, James, Deeds of War, London, Thames & Hudson, 1989.
- NICHOLSON, Michael, A Measure of Danger, Memoires of a War Correspondent. London, Harper Collins, 1991.
- NJUKO, Brig. Hilary M. (Rtd), A Tragedy Without Heroes. The Nigeria-Biafra War. Enugu Nigeria, Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd., 1987.
- NORMAN, Richard, Ethics Killing and War, Cambridge, University Press (1995)



- OLSON, James Stuart, & ROBERTS, Randy, My Lai. A Brief History with Documents. Boston & New York. Bedford Books. 1998
- OYINBO, John, Nigeria : Crisis and Beyond. London Chas. Knight & Co. Ltd. 1971
- PAGE, Tim, Derailed in Uncle Ho's Victory Garden. Return to Vietnam and Cambodia. London, New York, Sydney, Tokyo. Toronto & Singapore, Touchstone Books, 1996.
- Mid-Term Report. London, Thames and Hudson. 1995
- Tim Page's NAM, (Introduction William Shawcross) British Edition, London, Thames & Hudson, 1993.
- Tim Page's NAM, Vietnamese Conflict, American Vietnamese Conflict, (American Edition), 1983.
- Ten Years After Vietnam Now, London, Thames & Hudson, 1987.
- Page After Page Vietnamese Conflict 1961-1975, 1988.
- PARET, Peter, Imagined Battles, Chapel Hill & London, University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- PILGER, John, The Last Day. Vietnamese Conflict, London, Mirror Group Books, 1975.
- Heroes, London, Pan, 1989.
- Distant Voices, London, Vintage, 1994.
- PILGER, John, & COREN, Michael, The Outsiders, London, Quartet, 1985
- PROCHNAU, William, Once Upon a Distant War. Reporting From Vietnam. Edinburgh, Mainstream, 1996.
- RABINOVITZ, Paula, They Must be Represented. The Politics of Documentary, London & New York, Verso, 1994.
- ROYLE, Trevor, War Correspondent's View of Battle from the Crimea to the Falklands, Worcester, England, Mainstream Publishing, 1987.
- SHEEHAN, Neil, Two Cities : Hanoi & Saigon, London, Jonathan Cape, 1992.
- SONTAG, Susan, On Photography, London, Penguin, (1977), 1979.
- SQUIERS, Carol, The Critical Image, Essays on Contemporary



- Photography, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1991.
- SWAIN, Jon. River of Time, London, Heinemann, 1995.
- SUMMERS, Harry G. (jnr.) Vietnam Almanac. New York. Facts on File Publications, 1985.
- TAYLOR, John, Body Horror 1998  
War Photography Realism in the British Press, London & New York, Routledge, 1991  
Body Horror. Photojournalism Catastrophe and War, Manchester, Manchester University Press. 1998.
- TAYLOR, Dr. Philip M., Munitions of the Mind. Glasgow, Patrick Stephens Ltd., 1990
- TAYLOR, Telford, Nuremburg & Vietnam, An American Tragedy. Is the U.S. Guilty of War Crimes in Vietnam ?, New York & London, Bantam, 1971.
- THOMPSON, Leroy, The U.S. Army in Vietnam, A David & Charles Military Book. 1990.
- THOMSON, Alex, Smokescreen. The Media, the Censors, the Gulf, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, Laburnham & Spellint Ltd., 1992
- THORNBERRY, Patrick, International Law and the Rights of Minorities, Oxford & New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.
- TOWNSEND, Peter, The Smallest Pawns in the Game. London, Granada, 1980.
- UNESCO, Institut Henry Dunant, International Dimensions of Humanitarian Law, Paris, UNESCO-Geneva, H.D.I. 1988.
- UNITED NATIONS, Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949.
- UWECHUE, Raph, Reflections on the Nigerian Civil War, New York, African Publications Corp., 1971
- WALSH, Jeffrey, The Gulf War Did Not Happen, - 1995
- WALSH, Jeffrey, & AULICH, James, (Eds.) Vietnam Images of War and Representation, Basingstoke England, Macmillan Press, 1989.



WAUGH, Auberon, & CRONJE, Suzanne, Biafra Britain's Shame, London, Joseph, 1969.

WILLIAMS, Val, Women Photographers and Iconography of War, London, Virago Press, 1994.

WITHER0W, John, & SULLIVAN, Aidan, The Sunday Times War in the Gulf. A Pictorial History, London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1991.

YOUNG, Peter, & JESSER, Peter, The Media and the Military, From the Crimea to Desert Strike, Basingstoke (Hants), Macmillan Press Ltd., 1997.

### **Catalogues**

Library of Congress, Subject Headings 12 th. Edition, Washington D.C., Cataloging Distribution Service Library of Congress, 1989.

DUFFINS, Lyn, & KING, Betty M.(Eds.) British Humanities Index, London, The Library Association, 1988.

FRALIN, Frances, The indelible Image, Photography of War 1846 to the Present, New York, Harry Abrams Inc. Publishers, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1985.

ROBERTS, Pam, Don McCullin : A Retrospective. London, The British Council, 1993.

### **Newspapers and Periodicals**

The British Journal of Photography

Contemporary Records

Contemporary Review

Encounter

Historical Studies

International Affairs

Index on Censorship





Life  
New Society  
New Statesman  
New Statesman & Society  
Newsweek  
Nova  
Spectator  
The Daily Telegraph  
The Economist  
Granta - The Magazine of New Writing  
The Guardian (Manchester)  
The Illustrated London News  
The Independent (English Edition)  
The Independent on Sunday (English Edition)  
The Listener  
The London Review of Books  
The Observer  
The Observer Colour Supplement  
The Sunday Telegraph  
The Sunday Times  
The Sunday Times Magazine  
The Times  
The Times Higher Educational Supplement  
TheTimes Literary Supplement  
Time

