

ABE WEISBURD
195 Adams St., Apt. 14G
Brooklyn, NY 11201

X:PC

March 11, 1974

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Dear Jack,

This will confirm my resignation from the Guardian, which I made to you by phone on March 3.

As a charter subscriber to the Guardian and a long-time staff writer, I am not tendering my resignation lightly.

Since I phoned you about my resignation, I have given serious consideration to retracting it, because I still believe that the Guardian does serve the anti-imperialist cause, albeit the Guardian has been drifting and shifting since Irwin Silber's resignation as Executive Editor last October.

Before I go into the substance of my resignation, I wish to state that I was wrong in raising my voice to you on the phone yesterday, when I called to say that I would only meet with you to discuss my possible return to the staff on two conditions.

The conditions were that the Guardian publish the full text of Wilfred's February 12 resignation from the Guardian and a statement by the former Guardian clubs on their view of how their separation from the Guardian came to pass.

However, in thinking through my resignation, I was always faced with the series of reasons that led to it.

One of those was your deliberate distortion of Wilfred's resignation.

That distortion was a coverup of your role in what Wilfred in his resignation wrote was "suppressing numerous background and on-the-spot reports, based on my month-long visit to Vietnam last December, concealing from the Guardian readers that I had visited the frontier areas of both Kampuchea and China."

It is my considered opinion that you deliberately withheld those reports and distorted others, which Wilfred details in his February 11 letter to you that accompanied his resignation, for a political purpose. That purpose was to tone down any positive reports Wilfred wrote about the Vietnamese, because as you said on many occasions, you tilted toward the Pol rot regime in its border clashes with the Vietnamese.

It is also my considered opinion that your ^{PROTESTATIONS} ~~protestations~~ in your February 28 viewpoint of profound friendship for the Vietnamese are a sham.

As Wilfred notes in his five-page letter, you could have picked up the phone and called him or Dick Ward, both Guardian staffers who had recently been in Vietnam, to check on the accuracy of the wild charges in the January Radical Forum that "100,000 Viet-

names of party members have been removed from the party" and that "Madame Binh ... is in jail or under arrest."

As Wilfred notes in his letter: "You gave him a member of the China-oriented Revolutionary Workers Headquarters/ three-quarters of a page of space -- without any reference to his qualification in writing about Vietnam -- for the most horrendous undocumented charges and unjustified implications without checking with your own well-qualified staff correspondents... You cannot dodge editorial or moral responsibility by glib proviso that the paper has 'serious reservations about the tone and substance of the Forum's overall view of Vietnam.'"

You were roundly taken to task at the Guardian staff meeting by me and others for what you called giving people the right to say what they wished because readers could judge whether they were right or wrong. It was pointed out to you that there was no attribution for any of the charges that you let go by.

That nonsense on your part was merely a cover for deliberately leaving those lies in the article because they would tend to cast doubt on the Vietnamese.

Another viewpoint you wrote gave China an out for its attack on Vietnam, saying that the tension between them was "an inevitable consequence of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea." Why don't you stop professing friendship for Vietnam and tell the readers which side you are really on?

Further proof of the sham of your friendship is the way you handled two large demonstrations and an indoor rally calling for China to get out of Vietnam. The first demo, two days after China's attack on Vietnam, some 1000 people demonstrated in New York City's worst snowstorm of the year. You reported it in a sentence along with other demos in other countries. The second demo, of 2000 people one week later, was given two paragraphs.

An indoor mass meeting at which a representative of the Vietnam UN Mission spoke and answered questions, on March 10 in New York City, wasn't covered by the Guardian. The Guardian didn't even ask its official photographer, George Cohen, who attended the rally, to get a picture of the event.

These violations of the Guardian's general practices are not accidents. They, in my opinion, are due to your deliberate policy of playing down anything favorable to the Vietnamese.

I could of course also mention the big build-up you gave to the statement by North Korea attacking Vietnam for "invading Kampuchea." I haven't seen any criticism by the Guardian of the North Koreans for not saying anything about the Chinese attack on Vietnam.

One of the other incidents that contributed to my resignation was your refusal to publish the minority position on Indochina, which was followed by the leadership's attempt to even stop staff members from signing a cover letter supporting a statement on the issue.

I received a phone call at home on March 2 from Donna, who tried to pump me about who, on and off the staff, were going to sign a cover letter to an analysis by Irwin Silber that differs from the Guardian position on Southeast Asia. I learned that Irwin was also called about this matter, which was none of the Guardian's business. It seems that the Guardian now feels that it owns its staff body and soul.

A major reason for my resignation grows out of a series of incidents in connection with your sabotage of the party-building movement by your refusal to deal honestly with the five Guardian clubs, which are now independent.

The issue of party-building has been of great concern to me. Since I resigned from the Communist Party in 1950 because it became reformist, I have been looking forward to the building of a non-reformist, nondogmatist new vanguard party, that could lead the working class and its allies in the overthrow of capitalism.

I believe that you, whom I don't consider to be a Marxist, pulled the wool over the eyes of the staff by pretending for months that you were seriously dealing with the five clubs to find a solution to the political and organizational questions concerning party-building.

But that was all a coverup for your preconceived idea that the Guardian should use the clubs as it wished, and break them up if they didn't do the bidding of the Guardian politically and organizationally, without their even having a say in the matter.

You tipped your hand in a secret memo, Aug. 20, 1978, to the Guardian Clubs Committee, when you said "Assuming we decide to go ahead on breaking up a club, we are proceeding and deepening Guardian clubs. We may have to be tough. It is entirely possible that we will lose some people but, on the other hand, clubs may disband if that's the price for progress. It is our duty to pay it."

You published the Guardian's anti-Marxist political and organizational proposals in the Guardian for the clubs to carry out, before the clubs even had a chance to discuss them.

In a principled and courageous act, Irwin then resigned as Executive Editor because he wouldn't be a hypocrite and support your proposals. Then you refused to publish in the Guardian his political and organizational proposals.

On your proposals, which weren't being accepted by any party-building forces, you had "Letters to the Editor" written by Guardian staff writers to shore up your position.

But the five clubs, after considerable discussion, rejected your proposals and accepted, in great measure, Irwin's position, which he had made available to them.

You stonewalled, refusing to even permit discussions of the Marxist-Leninist papers presented by the clubs to the Guardian, and writing a campaign that the clubs didn't exist or were

Fortunately, because of their correct political and organizational orientation, the clubs were able to consolidate their forces and grow as Marxists during their discussions of your anti-Marxist position, Erwin's Marxist position and the club interchange of documents.

Although there was an agreed-upon separation from the Guardian, the clubs did not dissolve as you predicted (and I believe, hoped). They are now active Marxist-Leninist clubs, doing well and preparing for their National Leadership Conference. I am proud to be a member of the New York Club. Unfortunately, you are still stalling about publishing the clubs' views on the reasons for the separation.

One other incident that I just can't forget was the brass racist handling by the Guardian leadership of the out-and-out racist incident of Dan's secret opening of Fran's personal letter and secretly making a xerox copy of an enclosed invitation to a PSP conference.

Your distortion of Wilfred's resignation, which I mentioned earlier, was also intended to impugn the integrity of one of the world's most respected, courageous, honest people's journalists. He gave the Guardian 22 years of dedicated service; in fact, kept the paper alive for many years. Now you repay him with stories.

On February 6, when you asked me to intercede and have Wilfred hold up his resignation until he received a letter from you, you told me you feared his resignation would seriously affect the fund drive.

I phoned him. He reluctantly agreed, saying he didn't trust you. I relayed this information to you.

Then you saw fit to write a notice distorting his reasons for resigning. Wilfred called me on February 23, two days before he left for Kampuchea, and registered his anger about the distortion.

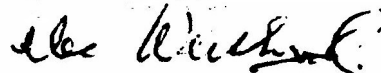
Now history will treat this unfortunate incident as open to question. While I hold no brief for his writing for the Guardian, he certainly deserved to have his resignation published as a matter of course.

I believe it is in the best interests of the Guardian, its staff, its readers and sustainers, to publish Wilfred's resignation, even at this late date. I also believe it is in the best interests of all concerned for the Guardian to publish the former Guardian clubs' version of their reasons for their separation from the Guardian, a statement long overdue.

I resigned from the Guardian because I could no longer stay on in view of all the incidents I have cited. To have done so would have been a betrayal of my lifetime of revolutionary activity and an act of hypocrisy.

I resign with sadness for the loss of contact with the many wonderful, hard-working, dedicated and conscientious people with whom I worked on the Guardian staff for many years.

Regretfully,



Abe Weisburd

WILFRED BURCHETT

JOURNALISTE - ÉCRIVAIN

MEUDON, LE February 11, 1979

Jack Smith,
Managing Editor,
The Guardian,
33 West 17th Street,
New York, NY 10011.

Dear Jack,

I never dreamed I would have to write you a letter such as this. I received yours of Feb. 6 and I'd better say at the outset that what you write only confirms the correctness of my decision to resign. I had considered doing so several times over the past years - when factually incorrect insertions were made in my articles on Portugal for instance - and the corrections I asked for were not made. I let it pass because I thought that the Guardian was doing a good job in other areas. Also I felt that I would be letting down thousands of fine people who supported and sustained the paper. I have now taken the irrevocable step - after 22 years - only because I am convinced that it is the Guardian which over the past months, has been letting its readers down and I can not permit my name to be associated with this.

In the name of "even-handedness" how can you possibly put Socialist Vietnam, with its immense contributions to the revolutionary cause in the same scale with Pol Pot's Kampuchea and pretend there is a balance. Can half a century of exemplary revolutionary activity - admired by progressives and revolutionaries all over the world, and taken as a model wherever people take to arms for national liberation - be equated by almost four years of the primitive fascist dictatorship of Pol Pot. Can you really equate a Pol Pot with a Ho Chi Minh or a Phan Van Dong? "Time will tell" is a pretext for refusing to accept reality. To have suppressed my background articles to the Vietnam-Kampuchea-China dispute, and later my articles from the spot in Vietnam, has to be seen within this context. You kept the real facts of the situation from Guardian readers. They deserve better of you than that.

You writes: "We respect your independence - even when we don't happen to agree with its outcome. Frankly I think you should respect ours a little more." The crux of the matter is that I have kept mine by resigning; you have compromised your's by your handling of the Vietnam-Kampuchea-China situation. You have let down your readers precisely on the question on which you had built your main and most solid support. You seem to consider it a concession that you "published a helluva lot of Burchett...." including my "article on Kampuchea based on the interview with premier Phan Van Dong." In fact it was your handling of that interview, the elimination of my introductory paragraph, the provocative article and photo above it, which was the final straw in my decision to quit.

The title was misleading: "Vietnam links internal, external difficulties" and the substitute for my opening paragraph was even more so. Readers can appreciate the difference. My lead was as follows:

Following a month-long visit to Vietnam during which I visited the frontier areas with Cambodia in the Mekong Delta and Tay Ninh province in the South, and the frontier with China in the extreme North and had extensive discussions with many of the country's leaders, I had a second meeting with prime minister Pham Van Dong. Four days earlier there had been a division-sized attack by Pol Pot's forces into Tay Ninh province and two days earlier I had been witness to the extremely tense situation building up in the Lagason Pass area - the traditional Chinese invasion route from the North. The Vietnamese People's Army had been withdrawn from important construction projects all over the country and a large part of it was digging into defensive positions along the extensive northern frontier. My main question to Pham Van Dong was whether Vietnam could handle its problems with Kampuchea, defend its frontiers with China and maintain its rhythm of socialist reconstruction.

"This is an absolutely capital question," he replied.

The version as published in the Guardian in its issue of January 31, was as follows:

During a recent month-long visit to Vietnam, I had the opportunity to talk with Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. Our Dec. 27 conversation came in the midst of Vietnam's escalating conflict with both China and Kampuchea. Just two weeks later, Kampuchea's Pol Pot regime would be forced out of Phnom Penh.

The point of departure for the interview was the effect of the external problems on Vietnam's internal reconstruction. From there we discussed many questions.

My main question(continues as above).

My fourth paragraph opened as follows:

I reminded the prime minister that on the last occasion we had met (in late April 1977) he had suggested that I come back in eighteen months or so and gather material for a new book written within the concept of VIETNAM - FROM WAR TO PEACE! Fresh from my experience of Cambodian artillery fire in Dong Thap and Tay Ninh provinces, and border clashes with China, I said: "But I find that you are again at war." His face clouded. "The idea of war still haunts me...."

The Guardian version, omits this paragraph and substitutes:

Prime Minister Pham then turned to the question of the clashes with China and Kampuchea. "The idea of war still haunts me...."

There were other large cuts, but I have cited enough to refute the impression that you give that the 7 or 8 articles of mine on the Vietnam-Kampuchea question were adequately covered in your version of my interview with prime minister Pham Van Dong. Incidentally, it is not my habit to refer to the Vietnamese prime minister as "Premier Pham."

ig (and),
That you preferred to front-page from New York your version of what was going on, culled from the Establishment press, to reports and analysis from your own correspondent was a betrayal of the most solid section of your readership. I have letters from Guardian readers - one of which I sent you - from the USA, Denmark, Sweden and Australia - as well as numerous telephone calls from the USA, demanding to know why I was not explaining things. And this from readers who did not even know that I was one of the few journalists in the world on the spot when the key events were taking place. I could get published in The New York Times, but not in the Guardian. In Le Matin and Afrigue-Asie in Paris. The BBC twice interviewed me, the ABC (Australia) and Swedish, Danish newspapers and radio. Afrigue-Asie used the reports which you already had in your hands under the cover story CAMBODIA; THE SECOND LIBERATION. Four pages of my reports with an insert by editor Simon Malley: "Yes, It's a Liberation". That issue was the journal added prestige in Africa - as I know from reactions at the Napote Conference. Several African countries decided to recognize the new Phnom Penh government solely on the basis of that article. But the Guardian, my paper remained silent in the name of "even-handedness"!

I resigned primarily on the basis of your handling of my Pham Van Dong interview, but I would have resigned also had I first seen what you published on page 22, of the same Jan. 31 issue, written by a certain Gary Hansjergen, described as a member of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters. There was a demonstrable lie in every paragraph, but nobody bothered to pick up the phone and check with Richard Ward, who had been in Vietnam in May-June 1978, or myself who had been there during the whole month of December. You gave him three quarters of a page of space, without any reference to his qualifications in writing about Vietnam, for the most horrendous undocumented charges and unjustified implications without checking with your own well-qualified staff correspondents. This is an unpardonable violation of professional ethics. You cannot dodge editorial or moral responsibility by the glib proviso that the paper has "serious reservations about the tone and substance of the R (Radical) Spin Forum's overall view of Vietnam."

I will not waste space here with a point-by-point denial of everything that Hansjergen says - except that there were serious floods in Vietnam last year which devastated about 25 percent of the rice crops. I will content myself with dealing with one of the three specific charges that "many leading figures have either been removed from leadership (of the Vietnamese Communist party) or sharply demoted, including Truong Chinh; the leadership of the NLF is practically absent from leading positions, either in the party or the government and Madame Nguyen Thi Binh is reported to be in jail or under house arrest." Allowing for the fact that the Guardian is post-dated by a few days, I had been back from Vietnam for over three weeks when that story was set up. But you did not bother to check.

In fact I had three meetings with Madame Nguyen Thi Binh (including one dinner together). At the time the Guardian came out she was heading the delegation of Socialist Vietnam at the Napote Conference of Non-Aligned countries. I listened to Truong Chinh (still member of the Communist party's Politburo and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly) deliver a two-hour key report to the opening session of the National Assembly

on December 22, last. At that meeting, incidentally, I met all the key figures - except "Uncle" Ho - that I had known for a quarter of a century. Just by meeting them, it struck me once again that nowhere in the world is there a Party or a Government with such a record of continuity and cohesion of leadership. Let the Guardian ask Hansjergen name one member of the Vietnamese Communist Party or the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam who has been "purged", or one member of the MLF leadership who is "absent from leading positions". Before publishing, check with Richard Ward or myself. By the time you published the Hansjergen absurdity, you had in your hands my interview with former head of the MLF, Nguyen Huu Tho, now vice-president of the Socialist Republic, refuting the absurd lies and slanders which you published in the name of "diversity".

I must also touch on a deliberate falsification (also in favour of Pol Pot) in the handling of my first report on the Maputo Conference. Obviously I have my original telexed text and the telex exchange with Karen. Karen's story on page 1 of the Feb. 7, issues reports that "the states represented first resolved to send delegates from both the Pol Pot and KHUFNS forces as non-voting observers" and that it was eventually decided to "send the envoys of the Pol Pot government as non-voting observers" (See insert to my story on p.24.) This gives the impression that the Pol Pot delegates were given the same status as other "observers". This was not the case, as is clear from my text. All observers in such conferences are "non-voting", but the Pol Pot delegation was not permitted to speak. This, as Karen must have known, was crucially important in view of the Pol Pot and Peking threats that they would get Vietnam expelled from the Non-Aligned Movement. Karen tried to get me to confirm - in the telex exchange - that KHUFNS would have been in the same position as the Pol Pot delegation had they turned up. In fact Maputo was the last appearance of Pol Pot delegates at a Non-Aligned Conference. They were not even invited to the opening reception given by Samora Machel and when the conference ended Penn Nouth asked to remain in Mozambique for a "long rest".

To return to a few other points in your letter. Of course you gained nothing by "taking an independent position on Kampuchea". How can you take an "independent" position between revolution and counter-revolution, between a socialist and a fascist régime. You put on blinkers and refused to face up to reality. I cannot believe that you took this line in the interests of what was "politically beneficial" for the readers. In any case are you - and I mean the coordinating bureau or editorial board - qualified to decide what is "politically beneficial"? If I am resigning and making a total break, it is because I could not look many of those readers and sustainers whom I personally know in the face if I let my name continue to be associated with the Guardian. Nor could I look my Vietnamese comrades in the face. I can look any of my valued Cambodian comrades in the face - if any of them survived - because they will understand that, just as I supported their first liberation from Lon Nol, so I supported their second liberation from Pol Pot.

It is with great sorrow that I write all this. But some of the things which you have done are simply incomprehensible. You let Vietnam down in one of the moments of her greatest need, but at the same time urged me to try to arrange Guardian tours there.

You have succeeded in arranging some tours to Cuba, but you deleted from my report on the Maputo Conference, the friendly comments by Samora Machel about Cuba and the satisfaction that the next Non-Aligned Summit will be held in Havana. This reference was of particular significance, in view of the efforts by some rightwing African states and others (a) to have Cuba expelled from the Non-Aligned Movement (b) to prevent the next summit from taking place in Havana. What are you trying to do? "Run with the hare and hunt with the hounds?"

You may publish this letter or not, as you think best, but at least I think it should be read to the Coordinating Committee. I enclose another short letter of formal resignation and I regard all material that you are holding unpublished at the last issue of February as being at my disposition for publication elsewhere.

With deep regrets,

Yours sincerely,

W.G. Burchett

March 10, 1979

To the Guardian staff:

On March 7 I resigned from the Guardian staff.

This letter is a statement of why, in some half-dozen abrupt words, I have ended a relationship of which I have been enormously proud for several years. Of course, the decision was not at all abrupt.

The reasons are based on the Guardian handling of the Burehett resignation. I am in torment at the thought of being associated with it.

For one thing, it was cruel. In the distortion of his reasons, the Guardian announcement struck at those very characteristics that journalist Burehett was -- justly -- most proud of.

Another factor is that the distortion debases the Guardian. If the reasons Wilfred stated in his letter of resignation have no validity, they should be refuted. If they have little validity, they should be explained. If they are valid, that should be acknowledged. Acknowledgment of fault is usually difficult -- less so for Marxists -- but productive and honorable.

Wilfred was with the Guardian a long time: he says 22 years. For much of that time, it would have been impossible to think of the Guardian without him. And so, to treat his resignation apparently casually is a disservice, not only to him, but also to Guardian readers.

Wilfred Burehett was not merely a correspondent for a rather small, although influential, anti-imperialist weekly and a writer of a multitude of mostly non-best-selling books. He is a world figure, respected by numerous government officials, eminent journalists, movement leaders, revolutionaries, as well as thousands of "lesser folks." Many of them ^{even} have decided disagreements with his views.

Because of that respect, to which in many cases love is added, the truth about Wilfred's resignation will become known. The Guardian's action will have reduced the Guardian's credibility. An important weapon -- for the Guardian is one such -- of the anti-imperialist movement will thereby have been blunted.

In sorrow,

Debbie

Deborah Weisburd

An open letter to Guardian staff members

This letter is prompted by some staff members' asking me why I resigned from the staff and Jack Smith's refusal to even note in the pages of the Guardian that Debbie and I resigned.

It is prompted also by Debbie's and my warm feelings toward most of the staff members. In addition I believe that it's important to place the reasons for my resignation in the context of what I believe to be a deterioration of the politics of the Guardian.

The Guardian's role as the most important anti-imperialist newspaper in the U.S. is important to me as a communist because it objectively contributes toward socialist consciousness. It is unfortunate that the Guardian, which was on the road to becoming a consciously Marxist-Leninist newspaper which could have helped immeasurably in building a new Marxist-Leninist party in the U.S., saw fit to break with the clubs and abandon the conscious role it could have played in party-building.

Jack apparently did not see the dynamic between building a new Marxist-Leninist party and building the Guardian. Because of that, he sought to control the clubs rather than to move with them toward party-building while at the same time building the Guardian.

That accounts for Jack's taking an opportunistic position toward the clubs, as noted in his Aug. 20, 1978, memo to the Guardian Clubs Committee saying, "Assuming we decide to go ahead on making 1979 a 'year broadening and deepening Guardian clubs,' we may have to be tough....It's entirely possible that half our people may drop out....Likewise, entire clubs may dissolve. If that's the price we have to pay for progress we should pay it."

Progress toward what? Not party-building. Not building the Guardian.

Unfortunately a majority of the staff went along with Jack's proposals. I am convinced that had Jack supported Irwin's proposals a majority of the staff would also have done so. Discussing the situation later, a staff member indicated to me that many of those who supported Jack's proposals did so out of loyalty to him rather than loyalty to principle.

So now we have the Guardian out of the orbit of party-building, to which it had dedicated itself. Barbara, unfortunately, tried to place the blame for the clubs' rejection of Jack's proposals on Irwin, as when she said to Barry Alterman: "Irwin is trying to take over the Guardian."

History will honor Irwin for his principled resignation as Executive Editor. Had he not resigned, he would have been a hypocrite, because he would then have been forced to put forward proposals which he didn't believe in. Moreover, that would have isolated him from the clubs.

Instead, Irwin took a principled position and was able to help give the clubs the kind of leadership that resulted in the historic conference that recently set up the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs. The NNM-L Clubs have as their objective working with other party-building forces for the rectification of the general line of the

U.S. communist movement and the reestablishment of its communist party. I am proud to be a part of that effort.

It's very unfortunate that Barbara, reflecting the position of the Guardian leadership, asked Barry Alterman at the March 23 meeting of the New York Club on Indochina, "Why are you fucking around with this club shit?" Is that the way the Guardian is cooperating with the clubs?

This is really sad. Many of the dedicated staff members who are in a sense new to the communist movement have had their political potential blunted by following Jack's opportunistic leadership.

This resulted in a hostile attitude toward those who disagreed with Jack's proposals, which resulted in the almost unbelievable secret opening and copying of Fran's letter by Dan. People to whom I've spoken since I resigned just can't believe that that racist incident, nor that the leadership tried to downplay it; nor that Ben said to me when I wanted to bring charges against Dan before the CC, "Why don't you let Fran fight her own battles? Why are you making this a big thing?" It's hard to believe that anyone who considers him/herself a communist would say I was "making a big thing" of one of the most crass incidents of racism I have witnessed within the movement in more than 50 years.

While my resignation was prompted by several incidents that took place since Jack started to stonewall on answering the clubs' rejection of his anti-Marxist so-called party-building proposals, the two that pushed it over the brink were the distortion of Burchett's resignation followed by a call to my home from Donna. She phoned me -- and I later found out, Irwin -- to pump me about who on and off the Guardian staff were going to sign a covering letter for Irwin's pamphlet on Indochina.

To me this was an inquisitorial attempt to get me to finger people. Moreover, to invade my privacy to ask questions meant to interfere with my right, and that of others, to take actions on our own about our position on Indochina -- after the Guardian refused to publish it -- was tantamount to the leadership's saying, "We own you body and soul."

As to Burchett's resignation: Jack lied when he said that Burchett resigned just over differences with the Guardian on Indochina. Burchett's resignation and his accompanying 5-page letter clearly show that he resigned because the Guardian distorted his position, suppressed numerous articles on Vietnam-China-Kampuchea and actually changed the meaning of what he wrote.

Jack called Burchett a hypocrite for agreeing to write for ITT, which took a position against Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea, after he resigned from the Guardian for similar reasons. But as I've detailed above, that is not a true statement of Burchett's reasons. He agreed to write for ITT after being given assurances that his articles would not be tampered with. I hold no brief for his writing for ITT.

Jack's brainstorm to take the offensive against Burchett and attempt to impugn his reputation resulted in his distortion of Burchett's resignation. And then he tried to hide even the distorted story by burying it at the bottom of p. 22, not having Burchett's name in the headline. Obviously, Jack wanted to cover up Burchett's

charges against him and to keep Burchett's resignation from hurting the fund drive.

But I believe that, with this opportunistic scheme, Jack betrayed the Guardian, its readers and its staff.

I asked in my resignation that Jack publish Burchett's resignation and a statement by the clubs of their view of their separation from the Guardian. He hasn't. He has also treated Debbie and me as non-people by not even noting that we resigned, let alone publishing our resignations or a digest of the reasons we gave.

Jack did this for the same reason he distorted Burchett's resignation: to hide the truth from Guardian readers. Debbie and I are not non-people. We are proud of lifetimes of revolutionary activity. We each resigned from the Communist Party many years ago for principled reasons. We also resigned from the Guardian for principled reasons. Since Jack refused to even notify the readers that we resigned, we have started to circulate our resignations to as many people in the movement as possible, along with Burchett's resignation and five-page letter to Jack.

The Guardian has fallen victim to a "hide everything that might hurt the Guardian" disease. That's opportunistic. That also accounts for Dennis' asking staff members not to vote for Fran for the CC because she "threatened" to take the issue outside of the Guardian. Fran had said that unless the issue was satisfactorily settled, she would ask the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, whose letter to her was the letter of the secret opening and copying, and other such organizations not to send mail to her at the Guardian.

Does the Guardian have the right to publish articles attacking racism when it refuses to publicly discuss charges that the opening of the letter was a racist act and that the leadership's role in the incident was racist -- and threatens staff members who want it discussed publicly?

One of the many reasons for my resignation is that I couldn't live with the racist manner in which the letter-opening was handled. Some weeks before I resigned I met with Donna; after a long discussion, I suggested that she arrange a meeting with any non-staff movement person in whom she had confidence, to present the issue of the letter in her own way, with me present. I would accept the outside person's judgment as to whether the incident was a racist one.

Donna asked me if I had someone to suggest. I suggested Black author John Killens, a friend of the Guardian, as someone we both would have confidence in.

Donna didn't feel that way, it seemed. She didn't suggest anyone else; her answer stunned me: "I don't have to go to someone like Killens," she said. "I accept Jack and Karen's position on what racism is." I suspect that there would have been an attack on me by the leadership if I had reported to the staff that I considered her answer to be racist.

Unless the Guardian becomes honest about this incident, and apologizes to Fran publicly for its racist attack on her, I will, to the best of my ability, explain the issue honestly and in a principled manner to the movement. Whatever I may publish, the Guardian will

receive a copy, so that it can combat anything I say.

Why hasn't Jack given copies of Burchett's resignation and letter and Debbie's and my resignations to members of the staff, instead of telling the staff they are available if asked for? It's really a sad commentary on the state of affairs at the Guardian that a staff member asked me to send a copy of my resignation to his home instead of to the office.

Debbie and I urge all members of the staff to take a principled stand: to demand that Jack publish Wilfred's resignation, a digest of Debbie's and mine, and the truth about the issue of the opening of Fran's letter. I recognize the difficulties entailed; but you will, each, be judged accessories to Jack's opportunism if you do not find a way to take a principled position.

I trust that the staff, including the CC, will recognize the applicability of what Debbie says in her resignation.

With the warmest feelings and comradely best wishes to friends on the staff,

Yours for a Marxist-Leninist Guardian,



Abe

STATEMENT by ABE WEISBURD

Regarding Wilfred Burchett's and Abe and Deborah Weisburd's resignations from the Guardian

Dear friends:

Jack Smith, Managing Editor of the Guardian, not only distorted the resignation of Wilfred Burchett, but did not even note that my wife, Deborah Weisburd, and I also resigned from the staff following Burchett's resignation, let alone publish our resignation letters.

Smith, in so doing, treated Burchett as an outcast and Deborah and me as non-people.

To identify myself to those who do not know me: A charter subscriber to the Guardian in 1948, I served as a staff writer for some eight years, until I resigned on March 3.

Just over eight years ago, Wilfred Burchett, who had been with the Guardian some 14 years, was absolutely essential to the Guardian. But at that time he wrote a letter to the Guardian from France that he could no longer continue his career as a journalist, for he had to move to Bulgaria. The reason the move was necessary was financial. In France, he, his wife and their three children were resident aliens. The family had no social insurance; as an alien, his wife could not get work as a teacher; the bills were much higher than could be met with his \$80 a week from the Guardian plus some other small amounts. In Bulgaria, her native country, Vessa Burchett could find employment; he would write books. But with headquarters in Bulgaria, it would be impossible for him to function as a journalist.

The Guardian was in crisis. Was there a way, the Guardian asked me, to keep Burchett functioning as a journalist? In the process, the Guardian could be saved. I thought a solution imperative, not only because of the Guardian's need for Burchett, but also because of his unique contribution to the antiwar movement.

And so I took a leave of absence from my regular job, came into the Guardian full time and founded the Wilfred Burchett Fund. The Fund raised enough money to pay Burchett \$200 a week and pay up some of his accumulated debts. Asked to join the Guardian staff as a writer, I retired from my regular job and have been on the staff until now..

In 1977, I served as a co-coordinator of the Wilfred Burchett Support Committee, which sponsored Burchett's U.S. national tour.

Deborah, over the past eight years, has been a steady volunteer on proofreading, except when she was a part-time or full-time employe in the editorial department or on Guardian China tours.

The distortion of Burchett's resignation (Jack Smith would probably have hidden that resignation completely, but just couldn't) was aimed at hiding the reasons for the resignation and at impugning Burchett's reputation. In fact, Smith called Burchett a hypocrite because he agreed to write for In These Times. Smith's rationale for that evaluation was his (Smith's) own statement that Burchett resigned because of "differences" on the China-Kampuchea-Vietnam issue.

Smith lied when he made that statement. He had been told in no uncertain terms on the phone and in Burchett's resignation and in his accompanying letter (both enclosed) that Burchett was resigning because the Guardian cut and distorted his articles, and actually changed some by removing what Burchett wrote and inserting what was written in major press reports.

Burchett told me that he agreed to write for ITT after receiving assurances that his articles would not be altered without his permission. I hold no brief for his writing for ITT.

In my resignation, I asked Smith to publish Burchett's short resignation. (See other side) Smith has not seen fit to do so.

I believe that Smith has been taking the Guardian, the most important anti-imperialist newspaper in the country, down a blind alley since Irwin Silber's principled resignation as Executive Editor last October.

I appeal to all those interested in the Guardian's future to demand that Smith publish Burchett's resignation and digests of Deborah's and mine. And also to fulfill its promise to publish the statement by the former Guardian clubs, now the National Network of Marxist-Leninist Clubs, as to their view of what caused their separation from the Guardian.

WILFREL BURCHETT

JOURNALISTE - ÉCRIVAIN

His letter of resignation:

MEUDON/EE Feb. 12, 1979

The Editor,
The Guardian,
33 West 17th Street,
New York, NY 10011

FOR PUBLICATION

Because of irreconcilable policy differences, especially over the nature and background of the Vietnam-Kampuchea-China problems which led to the Guardian suppressing numerous background and on-the-spot reports, based on my month-long visit to Vietnam in last December, concealing from Guardian readers that I had visited the frontier areas with both Kampuchea and China, I am resigning from the Guardian as from February 28. I request that my name be removed from the masthead as from that date.

After 22 years of almost weekly cooperation, this was not an easy decision to make. I say goodbye to thousands of fine Guardian readers and sustainers with deep emotions, great reluctance. After deep searching of my heart and mind I had to come to the conclusion that I could no longer serve them as I had done in the past.

Yours faithfully,

W.G. Burchett

Message to our readers

Wilfred Burchett has resigned from the Guardian. The issue was Kampuchea. In a Viewpoint Jan. 17, the Guardian said it was "reserving judgment for the time being" about the Vietnam-Kampuchea situation, noting shortcomings and strengths in each side's position. The Guardian also ran important texts from both sides and Radical Forums from readers arguing for either Vietnam or Kampuchea.

In Burchett's view, Vietnam deserved full support and Kampuchea deserved none. He is of the opinion that the Pol Pot Phnom Penh government is counterrevolutionary and fascist and the Hanoi government is revolutionary and socialist. Within the context of putting its own views forward, the Guardian was not unwilling to publish Burchett's position at the appropriate time, as it has done in the past over such questions as Portugal, "Eurocommunism" and Ethiopia-Eritrea, where there were differences between the author and the Guardian.

Burchett felt so strongly about the Vietnam-Kampuchea issue, however, that he said he had no alternative but to resign. This was before our more developed position on the conflict, which appears in this issue. We have learned from other sources that Burchett has joined a social-democratic weekly which said editorially last month that "Vietnam is without justification in its invasion of Kampuchea."

How the Guardian distorted it:

In notifying its readers of the resignation of Burchett, the Guardian on February 28 printed a "Message to our readers" without using Burchett's name in the headline. Printed at the bottom of page 22, even this deliberate distortion was missed by a number of readers. Was that the intention? Note that the article doesn't mention a written resignation.

In a five-page letter to Managing Editor Jack Smith accompanying his formal resignation, Burchett wrote:

"In fact, it was your handling of that interview [with Vietnam's Premier Phan Van Dong], the elimination of my introductory paragraph, the provocative article and photo above it, which was the final straw in my decision to quit."

In the letter, Burchett cites many other deletions and distortions.

After learning of the Guardian's refusal to print his resignation, he authorized me to release the resignation and the letter. For copies: Abe Weisburd, 195 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201