

where its products are actually made. This is not surprising. Traditional allegiances to countries stand in the way of global manufacturing and marketing strategies. What the new corporate colossi wish to foster is, above all, loyalty to themselves.

Multinational corporate strategies to break down traditional allegiances include the use of cryptohistory. Employing the objects of everyday life, multinationals appropriate to themselves credit for significant technological accomplishments, deliberately divorcing them from the individuals, companies, and countries that, in fact, brought them into being. Cryptohistory is creating a new past to go along with the new future that multinationals are ushering in. Such cryptohistory is disseminated through ads, to be sure, but more insidiously by unwitting—and sometimes unthinking—third parties, particularly journalists. Indeed, the mass media are helping to make the world safe for the multinationals. No product illustrates this process better than the portable radio, especially the shirt-pocket portable.

On January 8, 1989, the popular CBS program "60 Minutes" did a piece entitled "Mr. SONY." Diane Sawyer interviewed Akio Morita on the ills of American business. In introducing Morita, Sawyer said that "SONY can . . . take credit for the first pocket radio." In a later voice-over, Sawyer repeated the blunder: "[SONY] took an American invention, the transistor, and added a stroke of practical genius to produce the pocket radio." Morita could have corrected Sawyer (some SONY publications do acknowledge the priority of the Regency TR-1), but there is no evidence that he did.

How could a respected television journalist make such a mistake? Perhaps Sawyer relied on Nick Lyons' book, *The Sony Vision*, published in 1976. In this gushy, wide-eyed history of SONY, Lyons claimed that the SONY TR-63, of 1957, was "the world's first pocket-size all-transistor radio." Another book that could have led Sawyer astray is John Heskett's *Industrial Design*, in which the SONY TR-63 was also said to be "the first 'shirt-pocket' radio." Similarly, in *CEO*, the authors recount the story of how IBM's Thomas J. Watson, Jr., used transistor radios to motivate the company's computer engineers. In their telling the Regency TR-1 became a *Japanese* transistor radio. Obviously, there is no lack of portable radio cryptohistory that could have influenced Sawyer.

When I talked to spokespersons for "60 Minutes," they insisted—rather defensively—that no errors had been made. I was not the first to correct them, however. One Mrs. R. L. Campbell took out a small display ad in the *Wall Street Journal*. Obviously exercised, she stated that the transistor pocket radio was actually her late husband's handiwork. He demonstrated it, the ad continued, at an engineering convention in 1953. There is no reason to doubt her contention, for electronics experimenters were building transistor apparatus as soon as they could get their hands on the tiny amplifiers (Chapter 12). The CBS officials I talked to denied knowledge of Mrs. Campbell or her *Wall Street* ad. Exasperated, I wrote to D. Hewitt, executive producer of "60 Minutes," pointing out that Americans had made the first shirt-pocket portables, in both their tube and transistor incarnations, and requested that "60 Minutes"

correct their mistake. Mr. Hewitt did not reply. The ethics and journalistic standards of CBS news apparently have slipped somewhat from the halcyon days of Edward R. Murrow.

CBS is not the only network that gives SONY free commercials and misrepresents the portable radio's history. On August 18, 1989, NBC's *Today* show did a lengthy piece on the tenth anniversary of SONY's Walkman. Akio Morita told the story of how he came up with the idea for this product, which differs from the version in his book, *Made in Japan*. In the newer story, he recalled noting how the boom boxes common in the late seventies were just too bulky to be used conveniently. The Walkman, then, was an attempt to make radio-cassette players more portable. To younger viewers, unfamiliar with earlier shirt-pocket radios and pocket cassette recorders, the story strongly implied that SONY alone invented small portable radios and cassette players.

The BBC in collaboration with the U.S. Arts and Entertainment Network produced a history of Japan entitled "Nippon." Shown in the United States in January 1991, it included an interview with SONY's other living ancestor, Masaru Ibuka. After describing how the transistor was invented by AT&T and licensed by SONY, the narrator reported that "before any American manufacturers, Dr. Ibuka had adapted the device and managed to make transistor radios." Examining a SONY TR-63, Ibuka himself added, "This is the first pocket transistor radio."

Even programs shown on educational television wallow in cryptohistory. In the series *Japan*, made for Chicago TV station WTTV, Narrator Jane Seymour in 1989 attributed to the Japanese "the world's first transistor radio." This product, the program stressed, resulted from the traditional concern in Japan with miniaturization.

In one medium after another, the portable radio's real history has been shaped to suit the purposes of SONY and other (mostly Japanese) multinationals. This use of cryptohistory, of course, is not new. We have seen that Philco and other U.S. companies in 1939 took credit for inventing the portable radio. More recently, I.D.E.A. ads claimed that the Regency TR-1 was the first pocket radio. We have become accustomed to corporations jockeying for market share with their refurbished pasts. It might be argued that if cryptohistory merely helps a company compete, then little harm has been done. After all, beyond antique radio collectors, who cares about the real history of the portable radio? Does it matter? I submit that, in fact, it matters a lot. Because ignorance of real product history is so widespread, cryptohistory has a way of insinuating itself into serious discussions of industrial and economic policy. Indeed, cryptohistory of the portable radio now contaminates debates about the causes of—and solutions to—America's apparent industrial decline. Far-reaching policy recommendations being considered by the U.S. government rest on a foundation of seemingly innocuous little white lies. Let us see how this came about.

It has taken a long time for people outside the industries shrunk by foreign competition to appreciate that America's manufacturing base has been eroding at a frightening rate. The U.S. government itself was unconcerned until the late seventies and eighties, when important national statistics—balance of payments, federal deficit, and so forth—turned