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The South African Press: Hope in an Unhappy Land

By Tertius Myburg

Also in this issue:

BERNARD KILGORE

EUGENE C. PULLIAM

HARRY S. ASHMORE

JOHN F. DAY

Book Reviews by David E. Corbett, Ralph Hancox and John M. Harrison

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Custodians of The City

By Harry S. Ashmore

I was in Greenville when the age of electronic journalism first came creeping in, and I have always thought that a kind of monument was erected there on the old *Piedmont* by my first managing editor, the late A. T. McCain. He was an appropriate man to do it, too—for he was one of that old breed that started out as Morse operators. He claimed to have been deafened by the telegraph key, but it was a wonderfully selective deafness. He could detect the sound of a cork popping at a hundred yards, but he couldn't hear anybody from the business office, and could make out the composing room foreman only when he said "yes."

Mr. Mac's great moment came when the *Piedmont* got into the radio business and erected a three-hundred foot tower out on Hogback Mountain. Word came down that a picture of this marvel had to go on the front page. The cut came back from the engravers one column wide and 19 inches deep, and Mr. Mac headed for the saw. He put the top three inches on page one, and jumped the rest to the truss ads. His response to the outraged cries from the front office always seemed to me a model of elementary logic.

"The damned thing looked the same all the way up and down."

Well, broadcasting still looks pretty much the same all the way up and down. But it has certainly grown sideways, and shoved a good many newspapers over the edge in the process.

When the broadcasters had their spring bust here in Washington a few weeks ago, Chairman Henry of the FCC could tell them, as a simple statement of uncontested fact, that TV and radio now dominate mass communications in the United States. That, however, was one of the few things the chairman said that his audience wanted to hear. Mr. Henry carries on the tradition of his predecessor, Newton Minow, who opened his tenure by describing television as a "vast wasteland," and closed it by telling the ABA: "I'll admit there have been a few changes—now you are only half vast."

But, as we all have occasion to know, it is the accountants who write up the triumphs, and the epitaphs, in our trade. Robert Kintner, the president of NBC, made some significant current entries in the ledger when he noted that in 1936—about the time Old Man Mac was erecting the monument in the *Piedmont*—the *total* revenue of the then two NBC radio networks was only $38,000,000. Last year, by way of contrast, Mr. Kintner noted that NBC *spent* $53,000,000 on its news operation alone—with the total outlay for news by the three networks estimated at $125,000,000.

Well, these are impressive figures, intended to create a warm glow of public service. But a little of the edge was lost for me, somehow, when I discovered that Dave Brinkley brings back $27,000,000, or more than half of NBC's news budget, by selling deodorants for a half hour a day, five days a week. It's not, you understand, that I think Dave is overpaid. After all, he has to split that $21,000 a minute income with Chet Huntley, and besides they get $63,000 a minute over at *Bonanza,* where the action is.

But this is a flagellation session for newspapers, and I would not have you think that I have failed in my obligation by limiting my castigation to your competitors. You are, after all, only following standard American practice when you open your convention by inviting a group of tame critics to stretch you on the analyst's couch. This

(continued on page 25)

The South African Press:

Hope in an Unhappy Land

by Tertius Myburgh

Visitors to South Africa are invariably astonished to find that through the smudgy windows of the country's Fourth Estate the searchlights of inquiry and criticism are still able to shine, only slightly filtered, and to concentrate on those dark areas where an authoritarian regime is most sensitive.

People with preconceptions of a land completely and irrevocably plunged over the brink into the twilight of totalitarianism are perhaps understandably surprised to discover English-language newspapers which are not only open and forthright in their criticism of the excesses of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd's government, but which in quality and tone are equal to the best of their overseas contemporaries.

The function of this press, which finds itself in opposition to the regime on virtually all major issues—especially where it concerns the curtailment of civil liberties and the implementation of a race policy which it finds not only immoral but impracticable—has become increasingly important as fear stampedes more and more whites into Dr. Verwoerd's laager and other voices of dissent become weaker either through voluntary surrender or official restriction.

In many Western countries the role of the press has increased in importance with a decline in the authority of the legislature and an increase in the power of the executive. In South Africa, however, many a visiting observer has noted that the English-language newspapers have become the only effective and meaningful opposition voice as other resistance to Dr. Verwoerd's policies weakens to the point of virtual ineffectualness.

There have lately been ominous indications, however, that the government may be planning stricter controls over the press. The question—one kept constantly alive by the perennial clamour of Dr. Verwoerd's most passionate supporters for action to "curb the undermining liberal English Press"—has been revived by a series of trials which were well reported in United States newspapers and involving Johannesburg's morning Rand Daily Mail.

The Mail's editor, Laurence Gandar, winner of the first gold medal of the British Institute of Journalists in recognition of his "outstanding services to journalism and the fundamental freedom of the press," published a series of articles on alleged brutality in the country's prisons. They gave rise to criminal prosecution of the Mail's informants under the Prisons Act, a statute which makes it an offense to publish false information about prison conditions.

As the court cases arising out of the paper's exposé of prison conditions are heard—a number of informants have already been sentenced to prison terms for making false statements under oath, giving false information about prison conditions, and perjury—so its position becomes gloomier.

It remains to be seen whether the State will prosecute the newspaper, Mr. Gandar and a reporter for violating the Prisons Act. Their passports have already been seized, often an indication that legal action is imminent.

Warnings of impending action against the English newspapers in South Africa have been current ever since the Nationalist Party came into power in 1948.

To some extent restrictions have already been imposed.

Mr. Horace Flather, distinguished former editor of the Johannesburg Star, has said that the maze of inhibiting laws passed by the Nationalist regime has made editing a newspaper in South Africa "like walking blindfolded through a minefield."

For example, although there is no pre-censorship, newspapers are forbidden to print any statements by persons "banned" under the Suppression of Communism Act—a long list which includes all known Black nationalists and many liberals. In addition the authorities have prohibited reporters from entering certain areas, particularly African reserves. And then there is the Prisons Act.

The Government has also used devices provided in the maze of security laws to put two small sheets representing the views of extremist African nationalist movements, Fighting Talk and New Age, out of business.

Contact, the small organ of the tiny Liberal Party, has also been subjected to considerable harassment, its activities disrupted by police searchers and prosecution of members of its staff under the security laws.

Generally the staff of the major English newspapers have not been subjected to direct harassment, but lately leading journalists—such as Anthony Delius, of the Cape Times, Ronnie Gill, editor of the Pretoria News, and John Sutherland, editor of the Port Elizabeth Evening Post—have had their homes and offices raided by security police. No prosecutions followed, seeming to indicate that this may be the beginning of more militant intimidation.

Above all things, the Verwoerd regime is currently most sensitive about its international image.

While the majority of foreign correspondents can and do enter the country freely (although, once there, they have to work under the same difficulties as South African newsmen, for example in writing about the underground resistance and banned people), severe and distasteful action has been taken against some foreign newsmen.

No visas, for instance, are granted to Time or Life representatives and although a New York Times staffer is currently operating in South Africa, the government refused to renew the visa of one of his predecessors, Robert Conley, now N.B.C.'s man in Africa.

Stringing has also become an occupation which is constantly under fire from government spokesmen. While a few mercenaries have indulged in unsavory practices in reporting a situation which offers opportunity aplenty for that sort of thing, the majority believe that it is not necessary to exaggerate anything which happens in the country—usually the plain, unembroidered facts are bad enough.

But to a regime so concerned with what the outside world thinks of it, the mere fact that its imperfections are reported abroad provokes the most violent reaction and there are indications that stringers will be the first to feel the bite of restrictions if the government decides to act.

Fifteen years ago the Nationalist government appointed a commission of inquiry into the press, hopefully to provide evidence of all manner of skulduggery which could provide the basis of some kind of action.

But the commission flopped. It was dissolved after 13 years in 1964 after completing only two-thirds of its work in the form of an outdated, 4,000-page report on the activities of stringers and foreign correspondents. The absurdity of its slow progress became the brunt of jokes even among government supporters as the commission did not even have enough evidence to deal with the most vital part of its terms of reference—the character, conduct and ethical practies of the South African newspapers themselves.

Another important aspect of the press in troubled South Africa is the cleavage—in attitudes as well as in circulation success—which exists between the English and Afrikaans-language newspapers.

All newspapermen will concede that there is no room for dogmatism in establishing where truth lies. Even the four greatest reporters the world has ever known, whose words are read by millions of people every day, could not agree when describing the identical contemporary scene. I refer to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

But the Afrikaans-language newspapers have not only committed their editorial columns wholeheartedly to Dr. Verwoerd and his Nationalist Party; they also frankly acknowledge themselves to be the official organs of the party and allow their partisanship to seep through their newspapers as a whole until the news itself is moulded to a certain political image. They slavishly believe in "my government right or wrong."

One exception should be recorded: Die Burger of Cape Town. While broadly committed to the policies of the Nationalist Party, it is often refreshingly independent and deviationist, not always an easy posture for an organ within the tight fold of a party which imposes iron discipline on its supporters.

An anachronism is the fact that without exception the Afrikaans-language newspapers have the lowest circulations despite their adulating support of a government backed by the vast majority of whites. For example, in Johannesburg the afternoon Star (about 170,000), sells almost twice the combined circulations of the two Afrikaans-language newspapers, the morning Transvaler and the afternoon Vaderland. This is doubly irritating to the government because Dr. Verwoerd himself is chairman of the group which publishes both these newspapers.

The Star, although it opposes the regime, has a large percentage of Afrikaans readers despite a constant barrage of criticism against the English press by government spokesmen—proving, one supposes, that most people prefer straight news to propaganda.

In an effort to counter the influence of the English press

the government has turned the State monopoly radio (South African Broadcasting Corporation) into its main propaganda arm.

The S.A.B.C. (while it is doubtful that it had any effect on the eventual outcome of the election, Senator Barry Goldwater had no more fervent supporter in 1964) broadcasts news bulletins glorifying the words and deeds of Dr. Verwoerd and his Cabinet and denigrating newspapers which oppose the government.

At peak hours on a nightly program called "Current Affairs" an anonymous voice directly attacks English newspapers which have been in the vanguard of opposition to the regime.

Recently the S.A.B.C. directed a particularly strong barrage against The Star and other newspapers belonging to the Argus Company which, through a subsidiary, owns the major newspapers in Rhodesia.

In defending Mr. Ian Smith's imposition of censorship in Rhodesia, the S.A.B.C. contended that what The Star printed in South Africa illustrates "the kind of thing censorship is probably aimed at."

Rejecting the S.A.B.C.'s "arrogance and impudence" in demanding that it defend its patriotism, The Star replied that in time of crisis it would be "unequivocally on the side of South Africa and all its people, as well as on the side of right and justice."

To its credit the English press is not only conscious of its power to provide for a closed society a window on the outside world and what it believes is light on the path of sanity, it is also deeply aware that it functions in a country where the encouragement of extremism by either race could lead to a disaster of historic magnitude.

Baldwin's celebrated epigram: "Power without responsibility, the prerogative of the harlot through the ages" comes to mind, even if the press, like the harlot, can command not power but influence.

This leads to a policy by the majority of English newspapers of what they like to believe is moderation and responsibility, critical of excesses by either white or black or overseas opinion. Such an attitude does not always meet with the approval of radicals who would believe that simple, hasty and orthodox solutions are possible in South Africa, but the majority of newspapermen believe it is the only sane one in a potentially explosive situation.

Responsible editors believe that their most important task is not only to act as leading critics of what they believe is an unjust government, but also to provide a means of communication between two hostile groups.

For political dialogue, such as it is, is breaking down in South Africa. The polarization of opinion since the country's politics ceased to be a cultural squabble between two white groups and took on the character of a power struggle between white and black, has brought into being two poles of fully developed and articulated opinion—with the gap in between so wide that they are now virtually out of communication.

While the actions of the government is everyone's main concern, most English papers have a sort of love-hate relationship with the opposition United Party, an unattractive organization which is against most of the things it should be against, but has trouble defining what it is for. Generally these newspapers support the U.P. on the theory that it is a poor thing but it is all they have.

To maintain professional standards South Africa's English publishers have considerably increased salaries in an effort to compete for university graduates and the Argus Company invests much in its own school for journalists. This enables about 20 young men and women, usually after their first year in the newsroom of one of the group papers, to spend a year on full pay in Cape Town where they receive instruction in such things as law, court procedure, local, provincial and national government, writing, Afrikaans, shorthand and typing.

Senior staffers are also encouraged to make regular trips abroad, perhaps as much to get some relief from the constricting pressures of working in a society which in so many ways seems to be losing its head as to keep ahead in international affairs.

In addition the Argus group, to name only one, has about 16 men on full-time foreign assignment in London, New York and various capitals in Africa. There is also a network of stringers in all major world news centers and extensive use is made of such sources as the New York Times, London Times, Guardian and assorted other news services to back up the usual news agencies.

An African press with a racy style reflecting the bright new rhythms of a new urban way of life has developed in reent years into a large and profitable mass-circulation industry.

While grumbling at the lowly status of its readers, this press has not resolved itself into a truly political one, a militant cry. Partly this has been due to white ownership, to the banning of African political parties and their leaders and to a general appreciation of the power of the white government.

Meanwhile the African journals are content to present some of the raciest, razzamatazz, hotrod journalism anywhere on earth according to the rule of all popular press: Education and noble aims can come later, but get 'em to read first.

Despite the serious limitations on complete press freedom imposed in South Africa and ominous indications that worse may be on the way, the situation remains hopeful when compared with developments on the rest of the continent.

"The lights of press freedom in Africa are going out,"

said a recent continent-wide survey by the London Daily Mail.

"If censorship continues to be imposed, newspapers suppressed and journalists expelled or arrested at the present rate, the continent will soon become a graveyard for the principle of free expression."

Looking at "The Tragedy of Africa's Press," the Daily Mail said that in Ghana and the Portuguese territories (it could well have listed a few more countries) official press control and censorship was already total. In Kenya and Tanzania the trend was to stricter measures. Then it added:

"The fiercest struggle is in South Africa, a police state with a free press.

"In part, credit for this must go to the government—despite clamouring from within its ranks for curbing the press, although it is feared that action against the press is not far off.

"Credit in most part must go to the press itself for the tenacity with which it fights to maintain its freedom.

"Ideological conflict sharpens the intellect and South African journalism has benefited. But ideological conflict weighted on one side by authoritarian rule requires courage of the opposition.

"South Africa is fortunate in its distinguished editors and outstanding reporters who wage a relentless attack on apartheid policies in the face of extreme threats."

Indeed, the fact that the government has not yet acted to completely hobble the opposition press, that some newspapers are able to ensure that discussion of a crisis is not a dialogue of the deaf, is perhaps the most hopeful sign that sanity may yet be able to prevail in this unhappy land.

Mr. Myburgh, political correspondent for The Star, Johannesburg, is a member of this year's class of Nieman Fellows.

Newspapers Must Be Centers of Learning

By Bernard Kilgore
President, Wall Street Journal

These remarks were made to the National Sigma Delta Chi Convention in Los Angeles. **Mr. Kilgore** served as Honorary President in 1965.

As one who is rather grandly described as your keynote speaker, I feel quite justified in appropriating the general theme of this Sigma Delta Chi convention—challenges to journalism. But I propose to limit my remarks to only one specific sort of journalism—the daily newspaper. It seems to me the challenge in the future of the daily newspaper is more complex and more important than the challenges which are in evidence elsewhere.

I must admit, of course, that I speak to you as a newspaperman. I have had little concern at any time with what we in the newspaper business often—and perhaps mistakenly—describe as the fringes of journalism. Yet I think there is a general consensus even among the practitioners of, say, electronic journalism, that the printed word is still basic to the current events business, and that of all forms of the printed word, the daily newspaper carries the heaviest load not only in sheer volume but also in responsibility.

Of what then does this challenge to the daily newspaper of tomorrow really consist?

Is it, for example, coping with new methods of production? Perhaps so, in part. But I doubt this is basic. We will surely see the continued development of new methods—new ways to gather and transmit news, new ways to put words into type, and new plates and presses. Some of the developments of today probably should have come about much sooner. They are especially helpful to small newspapers.

But our print shops, no matter how modern in appearance and performance, are really only a packaging machine. The fish market wraps fish in paper. We wrap news in paper. The content is what counts, not the wrapper. I doubt we will be able to mechanize or computerize the reporter, the copy reader and the managing editor.

Furthermore, new methods do not necessarily mean better newspapers or even good newspapers. Our history proves this, alas, beyond all reasonable doubt. Part of the old and tarnished image of newspapers is a left-over from what might have been the golden age of journalism—soon after newspaper editors got the telegraph, the telephone, the high speed press, the Linotype and many other new things put at their disposal in the latter half of the 19th century. It did not turn out to be a golden age. It turned out to be yellow journalism—and some of our critics have never let us forget it.

The real challenge that daily newspapers in America face in the future is what has been described, in quite another context, as the revolution of higher expectations. The better newspaper package may help meet this expectation; but the fundamental requirement is quality of content.

You've heard this before, of course: Everybody agrees we need better newspapers. But I want to suggest that the degree of improvement that must come about is of an order of magnitude—as the scientists are wont to say—that goes far, far beyond the usual after-dinner talk or panel discussion.

I want to suggest that the newspaper of the future must become an instrument of intellectual leadership, an institution of intellectual development—a center of learning. One of its main functions will be to continue the education of an educated community.

In short, and to translate this into terms more familiar perhaps to newspapermen of today—the newspaper of tomorrow will go highbrow. The newspaper editor of tomorrow will be an egghead. I really mean it.

There was a time, you know, in the early days of our Republic—in fact during the colonial days that preceded the Revolution—when newspaper editors of the New World, mostly calling themselves just printers, were in fact among the intellectual and political leaders of the time. They were certainly among the movers and the shakers of the colonial period. They weren't above publishing a bit

of light poetry from time to time or a few jokes—but their main interest was not entertainment, it was the serious business of building a new nation.

So when I suggest that newspaper editors could and should rank with, say, true statesmen or college presidents or bishops, as responsible men in positions of intellectual leadership it is not an entirely new idea.

Just how this is to come about, I cannot predict in any detail of course. I just feel sure it will happen because it must happen—because the opportunity is open and the newspapermen of tomorrow will seize upon it.

Certain things I could suggest here however might help sharpen our perception of what this challenge of the future can mean and how we might go about meeting it.

The most important single statement I can make in this regard is simply this: To fulfill its destiny, the newspaper of the future must face up to the fact that newspaper journalism is a unique opportunity. It is not part of a great ball of wax called communications. The newspaper and the men and women devoted to it must draw lines between what they are doing or trying to do and what others are doing or trying to do in a vast area that is sometimes described as journalism.

To a certain extent, then, the newspaper of the future needs more protection from its friends than from its enemies. Now, who are some of these friends who might lead us astray?

Well, I think maybe our friends in television fall into this class. Why? Because they may lead us to regard entertainment as our main objective and get us to thinking only news when it makes a good flash headline or a good show. Then there are our friends in the labor movement who profess sincere interest in future progress and yet manage in some important instances to prevent it. Next, there are our rich friends—our friends in business and finance—who are so interested in the future of newspapers that they are willing to buy up every one in sight and string them on a chain like beads. Finally, there are our greatly respected friends in education and in the charitable foundations who see real faults in today's newspapers and send well-meaning amateurs to the rescue of managing editors who should—and in fact must—solve their own problems.

From here on I suppose I should refer to these people—these mostly nice people—as former friends. For this is the way to make enemies—turn aside well-intentioned alliances. It's a formula for instant enemies.

But what about the broader relationships between television and newspapers? I think this subject has been overdone both as to competition and cooperation. For these are two entirely different fields, fundamentally, and the big thing they have in common is the sale of advertising.

Newspapers tomorrow will do better if they avoid the sort of thinking which involves the great ball of wax communications theory. Newspaper publishers and television station operators are not, in fact, just journalists together—not even if the publisher and the station operator happen to be the same fellow. Newspapers are different—I insist they are—and if we forget this, I think we begin to lose our way.

Now about our friends in the labor unions. The times have been tough for some of the oldest and most respected labor unions in America. The craft of printing is changing—and particularly so in the area of newspaper manufacture. I am sure that most of the union leaders are sincere in their desires to fit into the picture of newspaper production. In smaller towns and cities they have actually been able to go quite a ways in this direction.

As for the editorial side of newspapers in the future—I cannot see how a labor union alliance between professional journalists—the writers and the editors of years to come—and all the rest of the newspaper workers can do anything except prevent the flexibility and training that is required.

Now another touchy area—the collectors. Newspapers have been assembled into new groups and chains even as some of the other groups and chains have dropped links here and there. I have met some of these men and they are nice people. They like to buy newspapers and they know how to buy them and they seem to know how to run them, too. In a couple of outstanding instances, they have been quoted as saying that they have little concern with editorial policy—that this is the responsibility of local editorial chieftains.

Well, I just can't quite believe this is the road to better newspapers. I don't know exactly why I don't believe it. Like so many things you come to believe or disbelieve in the newspaper business it seems to be only a hunch. Maybe what I really think is that every community ought somehow to be able to own and support and staff its own newspaper and should not have to depend on some distant management to put up the capital and take the ultimate responsibility.

Now what about our friends the educators and the foundation folk? Newspapers have had an alliance—somewhat uneasy, perhaps, at times—with higher education ever since the first school of journalism was started. In general, I think newspapers have cause to be grateful to the journalism schools and the departments of journalism.

But here of late I wonder if maybe the educators in journalism haven't gotten too fascinated with the far-out aspects of journalism when they begin to talk of themselves as schools and departments of communication. I find it difficult to relate newspaper journalism with some of the things that are coming in under the big tent labeled communications.

Let's not downgrade the arts and crafts involved in taking photographs, in writing a radio script, in directing a television show, or making a movie. Let's not belittle the

skills that go to make up an advertising salesman or an art director or a typographer.

Let's just say these are not the essence of newspaper journalism and let's say that newspaper journalism—the writing kind of journalism—is fundamental to the future of good newspapers.

Nor do I think the educators are following the right track in seeking to train highly specialized types of journalists. Here I can speak from some experience in specialized fields—business, economics and finance, politics, foreign affairs, even science and religion. We do not need help in training specialists. We need talent and we benefit from basic training and general experience. But beyond that, we must conduct our own staff development programs.

This brings me to a final observation designed to lose a few more friends. Here of late the foundations—the charitable foundations—both large and small have come into the area of journalism with quite a rush of money.

Their intentions are excellent. They are quite right when they observe that much improvement is needed in today's newspapers. But I suspect, except in very limited and specially qualified circumstances, the remedies they propose are unworkable and the money they intend to spend will be wasted.

This seems a cruel thing to say. But the plain fact of the matter is that newspaper editors and publishers are going to have to plan and pay for the training and higher education of their staff if newspaper journalism in the future is going to keep on the right track. The best universities in the world are, I suspect, ill equipped to sharpen the wits and the working knowledge of the sort of reporters and editors that will attain highest rank in the newspapers of tomorrow.

Maybe some future and practicable alliance can be worked out between the amateurs and the professionals in the training of journalists, but it cannot be done with money alone.

This brings me towards the conclusion of these remarks and I want to set myself a little straighter with the foundation people by quoting Shepard Stone, an official of the Ford Foundation, who spoke just the other day at the Inter-american Press Association meeting in San Diego.

Mr. Stone said that there was nothing wrong with newspapers today that publishers and editors themselves cannot cure. He also said—and I thought this was a very penetrating observation—that young talent would be attracted to newspaper journalism not only by better pay but by opportunity and by the institutional purpose of good newspapers.

This strengthens and supports the concept of the newspaper of the future as I tried to describe it a few moments ago. A newspaper does have to have a special institutional character. If this can be personified by a great editor or a great publisher, that's fine, but this seems not to be happening these days and it can be done in other ways.

We often say a newspaper has traditions. This is part of the institutional character to which I refer. A newspaper accumulates traditions and if they are the right traditions it attains a personality of its own. It becomes an institution with character and ideals that seem to belong—not to those in charge for the time being—but to the newspaper itself and to the community which it serves.

Let me conclude by saying nothing much can be accomplished in the newspaper business overnight, or over a week-end, or even in a year or so. It takes time. So the objectives we seek will not be attained in a few short months. But I should think, with the right people in charge, and the right objectives in mind and the opportunities clearly before us, that newspapers tomorrow may be able to acquire traditions of excellence. Newspapers with such traditions can create political, social, intellectual influence far beyond anything that newspapers these days seem to possess.

I don't mean to suggest that newspapers will "run" the towns or cities they serve any more than universities or libraries or symphony orchestras control trends in learning and taste. But the newspaper plainly has a role to play in what we might plainly call the intellectual development of our future civilization. This should make the newspaper, in turn, less and less a medium of pure entertainment and insignificant events—and more and more an institution of learning.

I don't mean newspapers must become dull. This challenge of the future is anything but dull. It is exciting. But it is exciting—as many things in our world today are exciting—on a new level. "Shooting for the moon"—a phrase that meant one thing at the beginning of this 20th century—means something entirely different as the 21st century begins to loom up ahead. And so it is with the future of our newspapers.

Our Natural Enemy, the Government

By Eugene C. Pulliam
Publisher, Phoenix Republic and Gazette

Mr. Pulliam was the recipient of the 12th John Peter Zenger Award for Distinguished Service in Freedom of the Press and the People's Right to Know.

I am honored and humbly grateful to receive the John Peter Zenger Award because of what that award represents. I especially cherish this award because it was voted to me by my own colleagues, and because this award was established to give continuing recognition to the efforts and determination of American newspapermen to keep as the basic right of the free press the inviolable right to tell the truth.

I should like, first of all, to say a word about John Peter Zenger and also about his very remarkable and courageous wife, Anna Zenger. It is surprising how many Americans have never heard of the Zengers. I have received many congratulations on this award, but at least one out of five of the people who congratulated me has said, "But who was Peter Zenger?"

Well, let me tell you who he was and let me tell you about his wife. Peter Zenger was a New York printer who in 1735 was faced with the same problems and the same dangers that American newspapermen face today. Peter Zenger was just a little printer in New York, but he believed in printing the truth. He was hounded by British authorities. He was harassed by the governor. He was finally accused of criminal libel and jailed. He stayed in jail for many, many months . . . all because he insisted on printing the truth. His lawyers were disbarred by the judge, who was a puppet of the British governor. He was left almost defenseless. Finally, Andrew Hamilton, a famous Philadelphia lawyer, came to New York to aid Zenger. Hamilton presented a brilliant and powerful argument that persuaded the jury to find Zenger not guilty by arguing that Zenger had printed the truth and that the truth is not libelous.

While being held for trial Zenger could communicate only with his wife, and she had to speak to him through the prisoner's keyhole. And it was Anna Zenger who kept their newspaper going, week after week after week. She missed only one edition. She kept the people of New York aroused. Her inspiration, her dedication, her brilliant mind, her unbelievable understanding of the importance of this trial made her the real hero of this dramatic story. The late Kent Cooper, the former great general manager of the Associated Press, called Anna Zenger "The Mother of American Liberty."

What did the Zenger trial do for liberty? First, it established the right of a jury to decide what is libelous and what is truth and not leave it to a judge who might be biased by some consideration or some pressure. Also it established the principle that truth is a complete defense against libel and therefore a newspaper has the right to print the truth.

I wonder how many American newspapermen and women today would go through the trials and tribulations and heartaches that Peter and Anna Zenger suffered in order to print the truth.

Zenger's trial is as important today in 1966 as it was in 1735, because the issue of freedom of the press and of the people to criticize their government is today, as it was then, the central issue of human liberty.

Then, for the first time the people, through a jury and the press, successfully asserted their power to preserve free speech and a free press against the tyrannical power of both the government and any judge of the court.

Freedom of the press and freedom of speech in the United States are in greater danger today than they were in the time of Peter Zenger. For today the power of government over the lives and fortunes of the people is greater than at any time in our history, and that power is being used in many different ways to subvert and destroy the freedom of the people to examine the acts of their government, to criticize the policies of their government and to expose the failures of their government.

What do we mean when we talk about freedom of the press? Well, to me freedom of the press means freedom of the public to look behind the curtain of secrecy which

governments erect to hide their activities; freedom to read about politicians who want to carry on corrupt and shady deals out of public view; freedom to learn of businessmen whose successes have depended as much on kick-backs and influence-peddling as on their ability to compete in the economic market place; and freedom to criticize labor bosses who employ tactics of coercion and intimidation.

In short, freedom of the press means the freedom of the public—the people—to be informed, to know the precise nature and character of the political and economic forces which control their destinies.

Thomas Jefferson said, ". . . were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter."

James Madison said, "Nothing could be more irrational than to give the people power and to withhold from them information without which power is abused. A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with power which knowledge gives them."

If the press does not shine the spotlight of publicity on malefactors of the public trust, who will? Who but the press can act as the public's watchdog in the nation's interest? Who else is on the firing line day after day, fighting for the right of everyone to have access to the facts? Only the newspapers have the resources, the time and the manpower.

What I am saying here is that it is the responsibility of newspapers to do for the public what it hasn't the time or the facilities to do for itself—gather information, select that which is important and present it to the reader. But there are powerful forces aligned against the press, and therefore against the public. They are working to frustrate the free flow of information. It has been said many times, and newspapermen should never forget it—government is always the tyrant of a people, never its friend. Government is the natural enemy of the newspaper. Government understandably wants to conduct the nation's business—your business and mine—in secrecy. Government's relationship with the press has changed and deteriorated drastically in recent years. It is no longer enough for administrations to refuse to cooperate with the press. Now they consider it their duty to mislead and deceive us. I could cite you instance after instance where government officials have defended their policy of actually lying to the public.

Another factor working against the unfettered flow of information is the death of strong competitive newspapers.

It is undeniable that each time a legitimate newspaper folds, our nation comes that much closer to surrendering its prerogatives to centralized government. Each time a newspaper writes "30" to its existence, one more community watchdog disappears.

So I say to you as newspapermen that our responsibility to the public was never more important. It is quite obvious to me that the bureaucrats in Washington find nothing to worry about when a newspaper folds. With taxation and other forms of government intervention, weak newspapers have found it impossible to survive. Washington bureaucracy apparently wants to see to it that all cities of America become one-newspaper towns.

Washington bureaucrats care not for law or constitutional rights. They strive only to make the federal government all-powerful and all-inclusive over the lives and businesses of American citizens. With only one paper in a town, the bureaucrats would have fairly easy sledding in a Congress dominated by a strong chief executive. Newspapers would be brought under government regulation just as radio and television are now regulated.

With federal regulation of the press, government officials would be free to intimidate the press with decrees and orders which would be enforced with the effect of law. Bureaucratic regulation and even outright federal takeover of the press is not beyond the range of possibility. It has happened in other countries and we blindly deceive ourselves if we think it cannot happen here. The multitudinous restrictions of individual freedom under which we live today would, twenty-five years ago, have been unthinkable.

It is easy enough to find scapegoats for the unprecedented conditions and problems facing newspapers today, but it seems to me the blame must be shared by the following:

1. Unions which prevent the introduction of labor-saving and cost-cutting machinery.

2. The continually increased taxation for every conceivable type of social security and welfare, above and beyond the needs of even a "Great Society."

3. The dogged policy of the anti-trust division which today makes it almost impossible for a newspaper publisher even to speak to a weak competitor, much less help him keep his paper going.

4. The public, which seems often to care more for entertainment than for knowledge and enlightenment. And, finally, the newspapers themselves for their aloofness and their resistance to change.

Let me give you an example of publisher oversight, aloofness and stupidity for which there is no justification. Some weeks ago the heads of the various printing trades unions and the labor relations committee of the American Newspaper Publishers Association held a joint meeting here in Phoenix. Nina and I had a dinner party in our home for the union officers and the publishers' labor committee, together with their wives. In the course of the evening the president of a union which is represented in the majority of the newspapers throughout this country told me this was the first time in his life he had been invited to a publisher's home!

Here was a man with the same feelings and ambitions as other men, a man who has reached the top of his chosen profession, yet never before had a publisher thought to invite him to his home. Was this inexcusable oversight deliberate? I don't think so. My personal opinion is that too many publishers fall into the human error of thinking in terms of friends and foes, rather than in terms of human beings.

Instead of constantly fighting each other, I believe the printing trades unions and the publishers should get together on a program of mutual advancement and self-protection. Thousands of mechanical jobs may be at stake if the federal government ever brings the newspapers under federal regulation. The unions and the publishers have so much in common that I cannot help but believe that tolerance and common sense and a willingness on each side to see the other's viewpoint will solve almost any problem confronting us. And we need a united front—the printing union and the publishers—in this fight to head off federal domination of newspapers, for ours is a common cause versus government.

Also, I think publishers have been very negligent in their efforts to recruit bright young men and women for the newspaper industry. We should do everything we can to convince young people that the newspaper profession is a calling just as fascinating and as useful and as rewarding as the ministry, medicine or the law.

The final area where the public's right to know is being curtailed is in that twilight zone where the First and Sixth Amendments clash head-on—where the constitutional guarantee of a free press runs head-long into the equally explicit constitutional guarantee of a fair trial by an impartial jury. In spite of everything everybody has said—judges, lawyers and columnists—it is very obvious that if the legal profession succeeds in shutting off the flow of pre-trial news on the pretext of assuring an impartial trial, other professions, armed with equally convincing sounding arguments, will agitate to reduce the newspaper profession to re-writing handouts and routine release.

There isn't an honest newspaperman in this country who wouldn't fight for the right of any man to have a fair trial. But our job is to protect the public and to make sure the public is informed about what goes on. And we can't do it if the legal profession is going continually to harass us with new regulations and new proceedings which give judges almost a mandate to muzzle the press. It is a fight that affects every newspaper in every city in America.

I don't for one minute condone trial by newspapers. But let's get one thing clear, let's get this straight: no civil right, including the right of a fair trial, is worth a tinker's damn unless it is protected by the right of free expression. If an accused man can't say his piece in court, cannot have lawyers and friends plead his case, what good is his so-called "civil right" to a fair trial? Without the right of free expression, justice would deteriorate into a tragic comedy. When these two amendments clash—and it seems they clash only when publicity-seeking lawyers stage the collision—the First Amendment must take precedence over the Sixth Amendment, because without the First Amendment, the Sixth Amendment would become a mockery of justice.

Thank God we have in America hundreds of judges in the high courts and in the lower courts, many of them in this state, who realize that freedom of expression is the fundamental right of all liberty.

The world of 1966, like Peter Zenger's world of 1735, is still engaged in mortal combat with those who would be free and those who would deny freedom to others; those who believe people should have access to the facts and those who are convinced they know what is best for you and for me. So long as the forces of freedom exist, we who are privileged to be part of those forces must resist arbitrary power and secrecy wherever and whenever it appears. We must take our stand on behalf of the people, all the people. It is the only choice for those who cherish freedom and justice. Liberty can be destroyed by tyrannical government and tyrannical courts if the people can be threatened or persuaded to abandon free speech and a free press. Newspapers defend the right of individuals against the entrenched power of arrogant abuse by public officials. They fight to bring the truth to light, to support justice and oppose injustice; to make certain that every individual is treated equally before the law; to make certain that every American can speak his piece without fear or favor. Today the United States is the last great bastion of liberty in the world, and a free press in America is the last great bastion of the people against complete domination by government.

If newspapers will recognize their responsibility, as well as their opportunity, to print the truth; refuse to be intimidated; refuse to bow to government bureaucracy; then they will serve the higher cause of civilization, which is individual freedom, the freedom of choice and the right of free expression.

Without the right of freedom for the individual, without the right of free expression for everyone, there can be no lasting or satisfying progress for us in America. This is the freedom we must cherish, this is the freedom we must fight for, this is the freedom—if necessary—we must go to jail to preserve. We must cherish it and hold it the dearest thing in life, because if America maintains its freedom, then sometime, somehow, America being free will show the rest of the world the road to freedom. This I believe, my friends, is the divine mission of America—freedom for ourselves and eventually freedom for all the world.

And because it is our special mission we should remind ourselves every morning that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Book Review

Instant History And Its Writers

By David E. Corbett

THE STORY OF AMERICA As Reported in Its Newpapers from 1690 to 1965. Edited by Edwin Emery. New York: Simon and Schuster. 311 pp. $19.95

Did you ever see an old-fashioned kineograph? You worked it by cranking a sequence of pictures fast enough to produce a moving image. You could even do it with a picture book, flicking the leaves like a deck of cards, to produce the animation.

This book is a bit like that. It consists of facsimiles of the front pages of American newspapers at famous moments in history. Taken individually, they reflect all the frailties and extravagances of instant history, and you might suppose they give an odd perspective to the story. The newspaper, after all, is not supposed to be a history book.

And yet when you put two-and-a-half centuries of these great front pages together in one volume, you get a very vivid and faithful history indeed. You turn the pages and the past comes to life, like the animated picture in the old-fashioned kineograph. This is what Professor Edwin Emery of the University of Minnesota School of Journalism has accomplished. He has brought the past to life in a most ingenious and thoughtful way.

Here is the Boston Tea Party as described by "An Impartial Observer" (who turns out to be Sam Adams) in the Boston Gazette of 1773. Here, two years later, are the first accounts of the battles of Lexington and Concord. Darwin's "Origin of the Species" is reviewed in the New York Times of 1860—and 65 years later the Knoxville Journal reports the famous trial of John T. Scopes for teaching Darwin's evolutionary theories in the public school.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address fills just 30 lines in the New York Times of 1863, and is swamped by an invocation three times as long. The San Francisco Examiner heralds "Peace on Earth" on November 11, 1918, and 23 years later the Philadelphia Inquirer reacts to the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

The news may be sometimes incomplete, sometimes distorted, sometimes in error, but it is often courageous, often painstaking, always vivid and always urgent. In sum, it is a fascinating view of history.

Emery has illuminated each page with a few lines of commentary, sufficient to whet the reader's appetite for the rest of the page and to set him straining at the small type. He has divided the book into nine eras, and prefaced each with a description of its historical and journalistic setting. Footnotes on the development of the printing press add another dimension to the story.

At the end of the book are two useful indexes. One lists the major events and people focussed upon in the facsimiles. The other lists the newspapers represented, and it is interesting to note that they are from every state of the Union. The abdication of King Edward VIII, for instance, is reported through the Deseret News of Salt Lake City. Orville and Wilbur Wright's first successful airplane flight is reported by the Norfolk Virginia-Pilot, whose detailed story from the North Carolina dunes near Kitty Hawk remains a journalistic triumph. The great Chicago fire of 1871 is reported by the Milwaukee Sentinel, and the Dodge City Times of Kansas chronicles one of the great cattle movements of the 1870s. The story is never dull.

This book is large—the size of a tabloid page, to permit sufficiently clear reproductions—and it is relatively expensive. And yet it should fit well on a variety of shelves. It would be an excellent adjunct for the history teacher who is trying to bring the past to life, and a splendid browsing book for the layman who is fascinated by the flavor of history.

But above all, "The Story of America As Reported in Its Newspapers" should be of vital interest to the newspaperman. For one can't leaf through a book like this without being sharply reminded of the newspaperman's obligation to history. Heaven preserve us from the temptation to outguess the historians. It is the newspaperman's job to chronicle what he finds, as he finds it, and this may quite properly be different from the findings of history. But the story the newspaper tells is not just for today. It is, as this book so well illustrates, itself an incident in history.

American journalism, from its earliest days, has been blessed with men who understood this. The very first newspaper reproduced in this book is Benjamin Harris' short-lived "Publick Occurences," published in Boston September 25, 1690. It launched its first edition in these words:

> "That which is herein proposed is, First, That Memorable Occurrents of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are. Secondly That people every where may better understand the Circumstances of Publique Affairs, both abroad and at home; which may not only direct their Thoughts at all times, but at some times also to assist their Businesses and Negotiations.
>
> "Thirdly, that something may be done towards the Curing or at least the Charming of that Spirit of Lying which prevails amongst us, wherefor nothing shall be entered but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears an material mistake in any thing that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next.
>
> "Moreover, the Publisher of these Occurrences is willing to engage, that whereas there are many False Reports, maliciously made, and spread among us, if any well-minded person will be at the pains to trace any such false Report so far as to find out and Convict the First Raiser of it, he will in this Paper (unless just Advice be given to the contrary) expose the Name of such person as a malicious Raiser of a false Report. It is suppos'd that none will dislike this Proposal, but such as intend to be guilty of so villainous a Crime."

"Publick Occurrences" was quickly banned for its bluntness, but this spirit of involvement—of the newspaper's role in history—has endured. Sometimes it has manifested itself in the single-mindedness

of an abolitionist like Elijah Lovejoy, sometimes perversely in flamboyance and egocentricity, as in the days of yellow journalism, sometimes in the crusading spirit of a William Allen White.

Today, this sense of involvement and obligation lives on in another way. The newspaperman has been thrust—or has thrust himself—into the mainstream of history. To the "Who? What? Why? When? Where?" of traditional reporting has been added a sixth dimension, the "So What?," and the newspaper today has undertaken to supply a daily answer. Call it interpretive reporting, backgrounding, news analysis or what you will, it represents a conscious effort on the part of the reporter to meet his obligation to history and to the shaping of events. No longer is he merely an observant spectator: now he undertakes to recall causes, explain implications, and foretell consequences for the daily procession of news, and thereby to help shape their outcome. Thus a growing awareness of the world makes instant historians of us all.

There is nothing wrong with this. Today's news would be largely meaningless if today's complexities were not placed in context for the reader, and thus made intelligible.

But there are two vital prerequisites for such a heavy responsibility. The first is that there should be a sufficient range of interpretations for the reading public to choose from—a sufficient diversity of newspapers, in fact, that mere conformity of thought need not prevail. The trend to one-newspaper cities and chain ownerships does not always point in this direction.

Second, there must be a sufficient supply of high quality recruits to journalism—men capable of meeting the new challenge. Here journalism finds itself too often at a disadvantage. Industry, commerce, the law, and the ubiquitous public relations business too often are able to outbid newspapers for the brightest brains.

Fifty years from now, some bright soul will revise and update Emery's excellent book. It is an interesting speculation whether the story will appear then as history, or merely punditry.

Mr. Corbett is associate editor of the Tulsa Tribune and is a member of the current class of Nieman Fellows.

Book Review

"Is Canada Really?"

By Ralph Hancox

CANADA: the uneasy neighbor. By Gerald Clark. New York: David McKay Co. 433 pp. $6.50.

Back in May, 1965, when the American Assembly held its seminar on Canadian-American relations at Albion College, Michigan, the teetotal surroundings lent a fitting atmosphere to what was soberly afoot. The gathering, after all, was examining the rectitude, aptitude and ingratitude of a child of divorced parents. The participants were heavily conscious of this onerous task. Reconciliation of the parents could obviously not be considered. Yet the pesky child clearly needed parental attention of some kind.

It had to wait for John W. Holmes, formerly a diplomat and currently the Director of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, to state the problem succinctly. "Is Canada really?" he asked a dinner meeting, and "Are Canadians?"

This was something new; the gathering was now being asked to consider that what they had been discussing may be a kind of arctic fantasy, which had rolled like a mist into the continental clime of the United States of America. It was visible, possibly, but hardly tangible evidence of actual childbirth.

Readers of the early editions of the New York Times must suspect, for example, the faint unreality of the Dominion. They know that Canada has fast dwindling caribou herds and that this threatens the survival of the Eskimo. They also know how many square miles of muskeg enjoy Canadian sovereignty, and that an electrical fault in Ontario caused the most disagreeable power failure in the history of the American states of the Eastern seaboard. But, in the end, can Canada be, *really?* American newspaper readers would be hard put to answer the question.

A long history of this amiable unbelief prompts Canadians to say: 'Hey buddy, would you mind not sitting on my hat?' The remark is made with varying degrees of good humor. Sometimes it is prefaced with sir and sometimes not. Some whine, some josh; most people say it at one time or another—or are paradoxically in favor of direct economic and political union with the United States. There is, after all, more than one way to get your hat back.

Into this seasoned jostling, a new Canadian fact has intruded: Quebec. Quebec has always been a Canadian fact, of course, the first in fact. But the Province has awoken to a new destiny precipitately and with no warning to speak of. 'What's with Quebec?' says the American, 'That's Canada, isn't it?'

A reply to this question is now available in Gerald Clark's book: *CANADA: the uneasy neighbor.* As Mr. Clark points out, Quebec is not Canada and Canada is not Quebec. Mr. Clark is in the dilemma of most Canadian writers; the uncertainty of where to direct his message. To direct it to Canadians means it will receive something less than mild interest: to direct it to Americans entails a certain stridency to gain attention. Mr. Clark has emerged creditably from this dilemma with a well-modulated, well-groomed piece of writing on Canadian affairs fit for Americans *and* Canadians. I await news of its success with interest. As for the outcome of the problems he deals with, that is another story.

There are two pressing matters confronting Canadians. Most acute is the difference of opinion between French-speaking and English-speaking Canada in a hitherto much-admired bicultural confederation. In 1967 Canada will celebrate its centennial, as a nation, a confederation, a dominion, depending on which view one takes. Quebec regards itself as going back to before the Pilgrim Fathers. Mr. Clark, drawing from the interim findings of a Royal Commission on "biculturalism and bilingualism," suggests that the celebration may turn out to be a wake or an eruption, such are the pressures within Canadian borders.

The more chronic problem concerns

Canada's relations with the United States, that great, friendly, amply proportioned neighbor, whose cheeks (some people think) are crushing the Canadian headpiece. American ownership of Canadian industry, American influence in Canadian affairs, on its culture through consumer goods; all these have prompted a number of legislative counter-measures. Not one has made the slightest difference to the United States—though all have given Canadian politics some of its few piquant moments.

Mr. Clark attempts to reduce the differences between the U.S. and Canada to fundamentals: "American ignorance, Canadian touchiness." This is a rough-hewn platform which serves the purpose well enough, though I think matters go much deeper than this. Ignorance and touchiness can be overcome with forthright Rotarian goodwill: these problems are not so simply resolved.

The fundamentals, to my mind, are differences in attitude towards the entrepreneurial spirit, and a divergent view of the world at large. In many ways, Canadians are more wizened and worldly-wise about human affairs than Americans, and their optimism is colored by the fact that they enjoy nationhood as an act of will, rather than as a matter of geography, economics, or divine right. The force of compromise is powerful in Canada—which is perhaps the reason that large numbers of Canadian troops wear the blue helmets of the United Nations on the Gaza Strip, in Cyprus, and in the Congo.

Canadian nationalism can be thorny and harassing for Americans. When high-level visitors arrive—even Presidents—they sometimes appear to be grotesquely ill-informed. Ordinary visitors from the United States find a substantial facsimile of what they left at home. There are a few differences, it is true, but nothing greater than an American from Oklahoma might expect in Wisconsin. The domestic crisis of Quebec's demand for *maitre chez-nous* is well-concealed from the visitor though not from the American investor. Only if the conversation turns to grievances do Americans find out how prickly Canadian nationalism can be.

They discover why Canada has a different attitude from theirs towards Cuba, Red China. They hear about Russians in Canada, poking into everything from agriculture to industry—and regrettably into things that they would be better kept away from. They discover a second attitude to those pillars of popular American culture: *Time, Life, Reader's Digest,* and *Look*. They may even perceive the paradox that though Canadians assert that they want a national periodical press, they do not buy Canadian periodicals. What is worse, despite a continuous railing against American television, Canadians prefer it to their own Canadian Broadcasting Corporation if they have a choice. Meanwhile, the C.B.C. regularly wins awards for television excellence at Columbus, Ohio.

Gerald Clark is a newspaper journalist of wide experience and unusual skill. In *CANADA: the uneasy neighbor* he has written a book that honestly and reasonably sets forth the proposition that Canadians are Canadian, rather than United States, Americans. At the same time he powerfully suggests that neither variety can have any cause for peace of mind about contemporary Canada. The marriage bonds of confederation are tenuous, and subject to strains from American economic and cultural seduction and a French-Canadian suit for divorce.

Quebec is being transformed. Many Canadians, with the demagoguery of the Maurice Duplessis years in mind, think the transformation is for the better. Quebec is asserting the French language, the statehood of the Province, and the right of French-Canadians to move in Canadian commerce and industry, culture and development, as Canadian, and not as second-class, citizens. The Province is beginning to tear its schools and institutions from the grip of reaction and to address them to modern industrial society. Its endeavour is to preserve the French fact at the same time. As with all such movements, it has its lunatic extremity of headline fame. But Gerald Clark puts Canada, Quebec, and its frictional jostling with the United States into an American focus.

Mr. Hancox, a member of this year's group of Nieman Fellows, is editor of the Peterborough, Ontario, Examiner.

Book Review

How the Washington Press Corps Operates

By John M. Harrison

THE OPINIONMAKERS. By William L. Rivers. Boston: Beacon Press. 207 pp. $4.95.

That so little has been written about the Washington press corps is one of the remarkable phenomena of the literature of American journalism.

Certainly this group exerts a major influence in our national life. Yet aside from Leo Rosten's study, now almost three decades old, they have been almost ignored. More recently Douglass Cater, Bernard Cohen and Dan Nimmo have discussed the press corps, but they have done so only tangentially in writing about the larger problems of how news of government and foreign affairs is transmitted to the public.

William L. Rivers' *The Opinionmakers* does not fill the existing vacuum, nor does it pretend to. It does provide a highly readable analysis, which is both informed and informative, of how the Washington press corps operates. Always lively, often provocative, it reflects both its author's long-time involvement with the matters about which he writes and the detachment afforded him by a few years on a campus far from the nation's capital.

Rivers concerns himself with both the general problems of covering the world's most complex news center and the particular significance of half a dozen individuals and organizations involved in that process. This is an ambitious assignment to be encompassed in a couple of hundred pages. If there are thin spots, the wonder is that they are so few—or, at least, so unobtrusive.

"This is a book," the author begins, about modern political journalism. More precisely, it is about the interplay of politics and the press (meaning all the mass media) in Washington today. It is about government officials using reporters—and reporters using government officials."

If a single overriding theme can be ascribed to *The Opinionmakers,* this is it—that the news which comes out of Washington is the product of a continuing interplay involving reporters and officials. Rivers disposes quickly of the notion that "news management" is a recent phenomenon. It has gone on since a time before there was a Federal Government, he insists. And he proves his point with an informative discussion of incidents surrounding the activities of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. He suggests that "some of the genius of the American idea" is a result of the "anomaly of an information system that is *of,* but not *in,* the government" and declares that "much of the history of Amerian government pivots on the use of the press as in instrument of political power."

The author's problem in choosing representatives of the media to illustrate the role of the press corps in Washington obviously was difficult. Almost every reader is likely to find that some of his own particular favorites have been omitted. But Rivers cannot be seriously faulted on his choices, given the limitations imposed by the scope of his study. They are Walter Lippmann, James Reston and the New York Times, David Brinkley and his colleagues of the television corps, Drew Pearson, and the Washington bureau of Time. These latter two are placed in a unique category and discussed in a chapter subtitled "The Influence of the 'Outcasts'."

If this group is less than truly representative, if it leans rather heavily in the direction of commentators and pundits as opposed to reporters, it does add up to an array of individuals who substantiate the title of this book. Whatever else they may or may not be, these men and institutions do stand out as opinionmakers.

Bill Rivers' approach to them is refreshingly candid. Some of them he obviously admires, others he just as obviously does not. But he is neither obsequious in his appraisal of his particular favorites nor condescending in his estimate of the others. He writes about them as contemporaries with whom he has recently been associated in covering the nation's capital, and his account often has the flavor of shoptalk at the National Press Club (about which, incidentally, he writes with equal candor). Some readers will object to such rather gossipy observations as the suggestion that "Scotty" Reston didn't really get going as a journalist until he married a very bright young woman. But there appears to be no malice in these tidbits and they help give the book a certain irreverence which is one of its special charms.

Through these individual vignettes, Rivers succeeds in establishing the point—without ever belaboring it—that there are any number of different ways in which members of the Washington press corps can and do exert an influence on the affairs of government and on public attitudes toward them. Each has his own methods and his own special sphere of influence. Their combined impact, as the author details it, is a sobering—sometimes frightening—fact of our national life.

Two chapters of *The Opinionmakers* are devoted to careful study of the way in which Washington officials—both administrative and legislative—have used the press in modern times to serve their purposes. One of these concentrates its attention on the administrations of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The second deals with the Kennedy-Johnson era, in which the charge of "news management" has been heard most frequently.

Rivers' analysis of this aspect of press-government relationships is perhaps the most valuable contribution of his book. What he has to say about them obviously is influenced by his admiration for Roosevelt, Truman, and—most of all—Kennedy, and by his lack of identification with Eisenhower and Johnson. Yet he manages to remain remarkably dispassionate in assessing the strong and weak points of their relations with the press. And he does greatly clarify the often confused and distorted picture of the complicated interrelationships between the press and Washington officialdom. This book adds significantly to an understanding of the meaning and function of the Fourth Estate in the United States in the 20th century.

A final chapter examines how well the Washington press corps does its job (not well enough, the author concludes) and how best to go about improving it.

"The best solution to the problems suggested here," Rivers asserts, "is embodied in the consequences that should flow from an obvious fact: The mass media must face up to their involvement in public affairs."

And how does it accomplish this facing up? Through establishment, the author suggests, of a "critical apparatus," which would measure press performance and publicize its findings. This means, Rivers thinks, something similar to the British Press Council, which "could shine a searching light on those components of the mass media which, in Alan Barth's shrewd phrase, were started by men who had something to say but are carried on by men who have something to sell."

This may seem a disappointing suggestion. We have long talked—all of us who are in any way involved with the press in America and its performance—about the desirability of a "critical apparatus." And we have generally begun and ended with the British Press Council concept, or some variation of it, so that we have the feeling that we have been here before. Which may only be to emphasize that it is about time the press in the United States got cracking on just such an apparatus as this one we have so long discussed, and so long put off with the excuse that, after all, we are doing a better job than was being done fifty years ago.

As this book suggests, it is not good enough. In 1966, we can no longer afford to be complacent about it.

Mr. Harrison is professor of journalism at The Pennsylvania State University.

The British Press

By John F. Day

The British press on the one hand, and the society in which it operates on the other, have a distrust of one another that borders upon the tragic. This distrust, lack of mutual understanding, lack of mutual respect—all translate, for one thing, into the contempt the mass circulation press seems to have for its readers. And they translate, for another, into a lack of status for newspapermen, whether they be covering the Parliament or a meeting of a Parish council.

They translate also into a sort of guerrilla warfare between the press and the public. That in turn has various components: On the big-city level, the buying of scandal and crime stories; the "playing up" of those stories to the limit of the libel laws; the invasion of privacy to the furthest extent of the law; the lack of humanity in a "publish and be damned" attitude carried to its limits. Its opposite on the public's side is a hands-out-for-that-cash posture and a readiness to sue for huge sums whenever a crack seems to be showing in the armour of the enemy. On the local level the guerrilla warfare manifests itself in an attitude of belligerence against, instead of rapport with, a public that is very quick to attack and very slow to praise, a public that wants the paper to get the news so long as it isn't from and about them—unless, of course, they are handling publicity for some club or have ennobled themselves by winning an award.

The "status" of the reporter may be the core of the whole matter. Mutual distrust between press and society eventually comes down to distrust between individuals. And we arrive at a sort of "chicken and egg" question. Does the reporter have low status because he doesn't deserve any better, or because the public is too mean, or too stupid, or too something to recognize his worth?

Before I undertake to answer that question, I should like to emphasize that while the status of the British reporter is improving, it is still lowly—and sometimes shockingly so. You will never get any argument among men and women who have worked in both Washington and London as to where their job is more respected and their services appreciated. And the same goes for their counterparts in cities and towns outside the capitals.

In one way this seems strange, for the British press is much older than the American, and the importance of the job of the journalist in Britain was recognized to some extent 138 years ago when the very term "Fourth Estate" came into the language. Lord Macaulay, in speaking of a book called *Constitutional History,* by Hallan, said in 1828, "The gallery in which the reporters sit has become the Fourth Estate of the Realm."

Yet today Parliament often looks upon the press as something to be suffered rather than as an integral part of the democratic system. Parliament still has not given up its authority to send a newsman to gaol for the heinous crime of merely reporting its proceedings. This power, thank heavens, has not been used in a long time, but some M.P.'s still mumble in their beards about "contempt of Parliament," and no Government has bothered to sweep aside the cobwebs of this archaic "right."

This spirit, if it can be called a spirit, filters right down to the smallest unit of local government. I don't know how many hundreds of councils in the land take the attitude that the business they are carrying on is *their* business, not the business of the press to pass on to the public. The press keeps fighting to be allowed to cover committee meetings—where all except formal procedures are carried out. But how much support does the Press get from the public in this? Precious little, I will tell you. And this despite the fact that were it not for the press' eternal battle to learn how, when and where the public's taxes are spent, the amount of corruption in governments high and low would be considerable.

I am glad to say that we in Exmouth are suffered into the committee meetings of the councils of the area (except for planning, and finance and policy), but I cannot assure you that the press or the public know *all* that both of us ought to know, and at the *time* we ought to know it. For, too many councillors forget, or do not care to know, that the business they are transacting is the public's business. And some of the secrecy in which they indulge can be traced to their distrust of reporters. One of the biggest, but mirthless, laughs I had in a long time was when the East Devon Board voted to bar reporters from its committee

meetings after one of the members had argued it would be a shame to *bore* reporters with their proceedings, and other members apparently felt this was an excellent reason to give.

The feeling that "this is our business, not yours" is also very strong in police forces in many parts of the country. There are places where there is close cooperation between the press and the constabulary. But in many, the relationship ranges from just passable to bad. It goes without saying that there is a limit to what the police can divulge, and of how much time they can spend in liaison with the press. But a great deal of information is withheld or delayed needlessly.

Our relationship with the police locally is not too bad. But just let me give you a little example of something that happened in Exmouth just the other day.

An elderly woman fell or jumped from a fourth-floor window in Morton Crescent and was killed. That happened at about 7:30 a.m. on a Friday. Reporters checked the police headquarters on Friday morning, Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. But the first that any reporter was told about that occurrence was on Saturday afternoon *after* an inquest had been held. Thus even the inquest couldn't be covered.

Now, it may not matter much to you that this story had to appear in our paper more than a week after it happened instead of the next morning (since we go to press on Friday evenings). But it matters to us. And I daresay that if *all* our news were that late you would have less interest in subscribing to the Journal.

The trouble seems to be that the police too often look upon reporters as nuisances to be avoided if possible instead of as people who can be of immense value to them in some types of stories and in helping them in such matters as crime prevention and road safety. On the side of the police, it can be said that they have had some bad experiences with unethical reporters, particularly some called "free lances."

To return to the matter of the reporter's status, there have been a couple of occurrences here in recent weeks which point up what I am talking about. They are not, I am glad to say, the usual sort of thing, but I fear they indicate in what low regard some people at least hold the press. Both were at local organizations' annual dinners, to which reporters had been invited.

At the first, the man making what was introduced as the "Toast to the Visitors" named a reporter for the Journal, and his wife, as being present, then launched an attack upon him and his newspaper, upbraiding the young man for what he considered sins of omission and commission, including adverse criticism of the young man's handling of the sports pages—which had not the faintest connection with the organization concerned. Not only was the attack unjustified, but a "Toast to the Visitors" at a social evening was an incredible place in which to launch it. It happens that I am a member of that organization, and I was present. So I felt I really had to stand up and say at least part of what I thought of such a performance.

That incident might well be passed over as a transgression by one person—except for the fact that neither the chairman of the club, nor the toastmaster of the evening, or any other officer of the club, either said or wrote any word of apology for the occurrence either to the reporter or to me.

The other matter took place at the annual dinner of a sports club. A reporter for the Journal and a reporter for the Express and Echo put on their coats and left the hotel after the dinner chairman, who was also club captain, informed them that they would have to sit outside the dining room proper until after the dinner, when they would be permitted to come in to cover the speeches.

That chairman came to my office subsequently—not to say he was dismayed at what had happened, but to protest against the "behaviour" of our reporter in daring to leave. I tried to explain to him that reporters had been asked to the dinner as guests, and as special guests at that since they had a function to perform. I pointed out that such dinners were beyond the regular working hours and that at the very least the reporters had a right to expect courteous treatment.

He said he couldn't see why they objected to eating outside the dining room, since all the places inside had been taken by members. I said that if he had had the misfortune of over-selling the dinner, then late-buying members should have been informed that they would not be in the main dining room. He nearly jumped out of his chair, and exclaimed, "Why, we wouldn't put *members* outside the dining room; *they* would be insulted."

To him, at least, reporters are a lesser breed—and to be treated as such.

I don't tell you of these incidents as a personal complaint, but simply to try to demonstrate what I am talking about with respect to the reporter's status in the eyes of a part of the public.

Now let us look at the other side of the coin. Because Greater London includes nearly a fifth of the population of Britain, and because distances are relatively short, the London press dominates the country. The London press in turn is dominated by the so-called "popular" press through the sheer weight of circulation and consequent impact.

The "class" newspapers—The Times, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, the Sunday Telegraph, The Observer and The Sunday Times—have total circulations which are only a fraction of the total circulations of The Daily Mirror, The Sunday Mirror, The Daily Express, The Sunday Express, The Evening Standard, The Evening News, The Daily Mail, The Sun, The Daily Sketch, The People, News of the World, and The Sunday Citizen. Thus the "tone" or "im-

age" created by these mass circulation newspapers tend to set the tone or image with which the rest of the press of the nation must live.

If these mass circulation papers are admired and respected, the rest of the press is much more likely to be. If they practice only ethical journalism, ethical journalism is beyond any doubt the standard.

But *are* they admired and respected? Each of you can answer that in your own way. And *are* they ethical? I suppose that, in part at least, the answer to that question depends upon one's definition of the word "ethical." Let me tell you of something interesting and indicative that happened to me recently.

Through a series of circumstances, I was able to obtain for the Journal an exclusive story which we carried on page one under the headline, "The Truth About The Vicar Of Withycombe." I had talked at some length both to the Rev. J.P. Henton and Mrs. Elinor Moverly and had obtained from them their very frank and somewhat astounding story of how a highly respected vicar in our midst had resigned his ministry and was leaving church, home, wife, three children to live with a married woman who herself had two children.

Now this is not the Journal's "type" of story. But after having written the story and showed it to them to be sure they actually wanted to say all this, I could see no way in which any Editor in his right mind could avoid publishing such a local happening.

As it turned out, the story was not only exclusive, but I became the only source for it because Mr. Henton and Mrs. Moverly decided to go off together to an undisclosed destination before the Journal appeared.

Fairly early on the Saturday morning on which the Journal appeared with this story, I received the first of many telephone calls I was to receive that day. It was from a reporter for the Devon News Service in Exeter. That is an independent organization of former Fleet Street men who sell stories from the South West to the nationals. Unable to locate anyone who could verify the story, they had turned to me. The reporter asked me whether I was sure of the facts. I said I most certainly was. He asked whether I had any documentation. I said Mr. Henton and Mrs. Moverly had read the story, including the headline, and had signed a document saying that they had read it, found it to be wholly correct and approved of its publication in the Journal. He asked whether he could quote my story. I said he could, if he would attribute such quotation to the Journal—although there was very little I could do in any event, since the story was in print. There was a laugh at the other end of the wire, and the caller said, "That would be all right with us, but I'm afraid Fleet Street wouldn't buy that."

Later, reporters in London for the Sunday papers began to call one after another. The Devon News Service had found it necessary to give the source of their story, although they were not attributing it to us in what they had written for publication. Now the nationals were trying to make relatively sure they weren't getting themselves into libel suits.

To each I said substantially what I had to the Devon News Service, except in more detail. But with the exception of a reporter for the Sunday Express, each expressed either horror or amusement at the idea of a big national giving credit for a story to a provincial weekly. The Express reporter said that, personally, he felt we should be credited. But about 15 minutes later he called to say his news editor was willing to send me a check for the story but would not credit me or the Journal. I said I didn't want to be paid; asked whether a checkbook was his newspaper's only ethic, and repeated that all I wanted was the ethical practice of an attribution—since the Journal was in fact the sole source of their story. He said, "Sorry."

Next day the story appeared in the mass circulation Sunday newspapers. It was the same story in each, written by the Devon News Service and incorporating my story almost word for word. The Express carried a by-line, "Sunday Express Reporter." The Mirror carried a by-line, "Sunday Mirror Reporter."

I would like to turn briefly now to the matter of libel laws, because they are a part of the dividing wall between press and society. The Press of Britain labours under libel laws that are not only strict but to a certain extent throttling. In some cases they prevent worthy publications from publishing, in the public interest, news which they are reasonably sure is correct and which should be published as a duty to the public. The law does not recognize any such duty.

"Grotesque" is the word used by Lord Shawcross to describe application of the libel laws in some cases. And he knows the law of libel well, since he was formerly Attorney General. For example, let us say the Soviet Prime Minister in a propaganda tirade—or real anger for that matter—should call the British Prime Minister a liar, thief and scoundrel. If the press of Britain published these words of the Soviet Prime Minister, it would do so at its peril. The libel laws forbid the press to do so; yet is it not wholly in the public's interest that they know what a powerful head of state is saying about their own head of state?

Such men as Lord Shawcross and Lord Devlin, chairman of the Press Council, have said on more than one occasion that the libel laws should be changed in some respects and that, in particular, libel cases should be tried by judges only, not by juries. Lord Devlin says, "Juries do, I think, give damages in the heat of the moment."

I expect that a great many Members of Parliament, perhaps even a majority, recognize that the libel laws should be modified. But are they going to loosen the handcuffs

even a little bit until and unless the dominant press of the country proves it is ethical and responsible? I think not. And thus *all* the press, and *all* the public, must suffer as a result.

Now to return finally to the matter of the status of the reporter and to the question of whether he and his newspaper deserve more respect or get only what they deserve.

I doubt that anyone would say, other than in anger, that until relatively recent years most reporters were oafs. But I don't think, either, that anyone can argue successfully against a contention that for all too long journalists as a group were not the best, or the best trained, of breeds.

But, fortunately, it is precisely on the front of more carefully selected and better trained personnel that the press of Britain is making the most hopeful progress. One could hardly expect much respect for a press that employed low brow, uncouth, undereducated men and women. And the press of Britain is not doing so. Thus there is real light on the horizon when one can see that, year by year now, the *quality* and the *training* of men and women in journalism is improving.

It takes "A-level" passes these days for a young man or woman to be accepted for indenture as a junior journalist. And the day is coming when nearly all journalists will be university trained—as they have been in America since soon after the First World War. I do not mean that a university education automatically creates a gentleman or works any other kind of magic. But the journalist is certainly more likely to be of higher quality if he is well backgrounded and well trained. There is no question but that standards were too low for too long.

Many components of the British press have suffered and are suffering because of the sins of some of its powerful members. The status of the reporter has been low, and probably deservedly so. Also, on the whole the public gets the kind of newspapers it deserves, and the press—through its personnel and its standards—gets the kind of public it deserves. So far neither has deserved the best.

Mr. Day, a Nieman Fellow in 1942-43, is now publisher of the Exmouth Journal in England.

Nieman Notes

1941

Editor of the Honolulu Advertiser, **George Chaplin,** has been named by the Governor of Hawaii as a director of the University of Hawaii Research Corporation.

Vance Johnson was recently appointed Associate Director of Development at the University of Chicago.

1946

Robert J. Manning is the new editor of The Atlantic.

1947

The James T. Grady award of the American Chemical Society will be presented this spring to **Frank E. Carey,** AP science writer in Washington, D. C.

1950

Robert H. Fleming is the newly appointed deputy press secretary to President Johnson.

1951

Roy M. Fisher has been named editor of the Chicago Daily News.

1956

John L. Dougherty has been promoted to managing editor of the Rochester Times-Union.

1957

Robert F. Campbell has left the Winston-Salem papers to become executive director of Southern Education Reporting Service in Nashville.

1958

The Washington Post has opened a new bureau in Hong Kong, which will be headed by **Stanley Karnow.**

1960

Reg Murphy, former political editor of the Atlanta Constitution, is now with the management consulting firm of Towers, Perrin, Forster and Crosby.

1961

Peter Goldman is the author of CIVIL RIGHTS: The Challenge of the Fourteenth Amendment, recently published by Coward-McCann, Inc.

The Los Angeles Times has transferred **Robert Toth** to its London bureau.

1962

John Emmerich is the new associate editor of the Houston Chronicle.

John A. Hamilton, formerly an editorial writer for the Detroit Free Press, has recently been named associate editor of that paper.

1964

James McCartney, formerly in the Washington bureau of the Chicago Daily News, is now with the paper in Chicago, serving as city editor.

1965

Smith Hempstone is now in Latin America for the Washington Star.

Ronald J. Ostrow is now with the Washington bureau of the Los Angeles Times, covering the Supreme Court and regulatory agencies.

1966

HOW TO SHAKE THE MONEY TREE, by **Robert Metz,** financial writer for the New York Times, is being published this Spring by Putnam's.

The State of Urban Design Reporting

By Grady Clay

In the past ten years there has been a great change in urban design reporting in the United States. More publications are getting into the act, more writers are competing for readers and income, more conferences held, "information packaged," resolutions passed, and political campaigns conducted to deal with the quality of urban design in the United States.

The fact that much of the reporting is inept and cautious, that many of the publications are faddistic and ephemeral, that much of the current interest in urban design, "natural beauty" and the quality of the environment is bound to be short-lived "tailgating"—none of these facts can conceal the basic change in public temper since the 1950s.

These great changes have come about for the following reasons:

(1) We are having the longest unbroken era of widespread prosperity, and the greatest construction boom in the history of the United States. The annual rate of expenditures for new water-supply-and-control structures is approximately ten billion dollars. The nation is producing around one and a half million houses per year. There is great likelihood this will increase. To take care of all students expected on American campuses by 1975 "colleges will have to construct new facilities equal to twice all of the campus buildings erected since Harvard opened its doors in 1636"—about 19 billion dollars worth. (Bricks and Mortarboards, Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc. New York 1964.)

(2) There has been a great liberalization in the laws of libel, and in various legal and regulatory controls over "fair comments"—not only in the world of architecture but everywhere else. To publish EROS and get away with it—or even get a favorable court ruling;to publish *Fanny Hill* and spread it around the world—these would have been possible hardly ten years ago.

(3) We have started into a revolution in communications which has only begun to affect journalists; it has already changed the *temper* of our readers, the *volume*—flood-deluge--of communications which surround them and us; and our *potentials* for effective communications in the future.

(4) A comparatively small group of dedicated people—especially at the University of Pennsylvania, have been stirring up controversy, promoting the cause of more mature evaluation of the American scene—and this Conference is one of the results.

The construction boom is one of the best-reported and least-expertly evaluated phenomenon of our times. Every newspaper and magazine is filled with stories of bond issues, construction programs, school shortages, crop surpluses (and the buildings required to house the surplus), urban renewal and all the rest. The current wave of books on urban problems is one aspect of the boom; growing interest in birth control is another.

Every boom produces its critics, and it would be a wonder if this one had not generated its own. My own view is that critical evaluation of the boom, its products as well as its processes, has been slow in starting, inexpert in much of its content, but—I am an incurable optimist—promising for the future.

It's high time. Some of the worst offenses against the environment in the history of the country have been and are being committed today. Of the 1-½ million tons of silt being emptied into the Potomac River every year, more than half is done by private land speculators and developers and public road builders in the Washington metropolitan region.

But I am not here to list troubles for you; you can make your own list. I want to describe changes that have taken place.

Look at what has happened to the *laws of libel* in only a few years: With the help of Bernard Thomson, whose column, "It's the Law" in PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE is an excellent source on this matter, here is a very brief summary.

> "Until recently the classic approach of publications dealing with architecture was to praise the good and indict the bad by ignoring it. This concept is rapidly giving way to more aggressive architectural criticism." (July, 1959)

The concept of "fair comment" has been fairly consistently enlarged in the commentator's favor. But in determining how fair a comment must be,

". . .it is necessary to consider to what degree the public interest is involved."

While architecture is often work done for a private client, even a client who fears, resists and tries to avoid any comment about his building, yet the work of the architect

> . . . . "involves artistic expression, which is represented to the public upon the execution of his plans. The architectural work is thrust into public view and consciousness and becomes part of the environment in which the public lives and works. In this sense, architectural performance is comparable to that of an artist. . . There is very little consideration given in legal texts to the application of the 'fair comment' doctrine to architectural work other than public buildings. There would appear, however, to be no logical distinction, in this respect, between a public building, a building which the public utilizes, or a private residence. The public has an interest in all buildings and if there is a distinction, it is only one of degree."

As Thomsen sees it,

> "The area of public interest justifying critical comment under the 'fair comment' concept is ever-broadening."

Perhaps the most pervasive comment from the Supreme Court is in the case of Berman vs Parker, which established in 1954 the validity of the Southwest Washington, D. C., urban renewal plan, and became the chief legal doctrine on which the national urban renewal program now depends. In the majority opinion, Justice Douglas wrote:

> "The concept of the public welfare is broad and inclusive . . . the values it represents are spiritual as well as physical, aesthetic as well as monetary. It is within the power of the legislature to determine that the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well balanced as well as carefully controlled."

However, many editors still labor under a basic timidity —influenced by advertisers or influential individuals, which has nothing to do with libel—or, by a fear of libel based on a particular local case.

Much of the fear goes back to a New York decision following a criticism published in *The New Yorker* in 1927. In that instance, the magazine critic wrote:

> "Another disappointment on proud Fifth Avenue, at Forty-fourth Street, is the Delmonico Building . . . which causes older members of the profession, wending their way luncheonward at the Century Club, to burst into tears. They do not look at the building itself. They can't. Every proportion appears to be unfortunate. The central tower, curiously set on no particular axis, has the grace of an overgrown grain elevator. Of the details, one of the profession said, 'Isn't it curious how a simple element like a band-course or a moulding can produce a feeling of nausea?' "

When the offended party took *The New Yorker* to court after this publication, the New York court ruled that such a graphic and caustic criticism amounted to personal criticism of the architect, and sustained the plaintiff.

This case stayed on the books, whittling away at the courage of a generation of would-be architectural critics. However, Thomsen observes that "there is doubt whether it (that doctrine) would be followed today."

Subsequent cases have made it quite clear that sarcasm and ridicule of a building *is* permissible, so long as one does not charge the architect with general unskillfulness or negligence.

> "A charge that an architect has disregarded possible danger, to life and property is, of course, of entirely different quality than criticism concerning the esthetics of a structure.
> . . . "the public interest in architecture certainly justifies the widest area of privileged comment in this field . . . The 'fair comment' concept is entitled to the broadest application when applied to the field of architecture."

It seems there is another dimension that goes beyond "fair comment." This is the *tone* of the criticism itself. Othello said somewhere that one should "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." Too much critical evaluation is nothing more than a compendium of extenuation. *"Reproof offered in the language of flattery is virtually worthless."* (Lord Altringham in Manchester Guardian Weekly, Jan. 26/61) "Criticism which does not hurt is ineffective. The wounds inflicted must be painful but not poisonous."

I agree with Anthony Lewis, who covered the Supreme Court for the New York Times, before going to the London bureau, when he says that criticism of the court. . .

> "like the court's work, must be held to a standard. It should be particular, not general; dispassionate, not biased; directed at the justices' performance, not their honor."

While the interpretation of "fair comment" has been broadened in the past ten years, the volume of information and comment of every sort has almost swamped every literate person in our society. The "communications revolution" as it is called, has only begun. You and I can see the automation and computerization of information moving

into many fields; into record-keeping at the Court House, decision-making at City Hall, long-distance snooping, eavesdropping or more legitimate information-gathering by TV, radio, press reporters and investigators. A newspaper report on a hot industrial story may be competing with four investigators from insurance companies representing all parties and possible future claimants; and with reporters from specialized publication, not to mention all the electronic fellows from TV.

The average person's access to information has multiplied thousands of per cent since the 1950s. Perhaps he is no better able to assimilate it now than then but I think he can and does. He has traveled, is a part of the Kodachrome revolution, and the TV mass exposure, that puts the Place Vendome, the Blue Nile and the Manhattan blackout into everybody's living room.

We face an audience better informed and more cynical: better read and less inclined to take the published work as gospel; more experienced and therefore more willing to attribute venal egocentric or self-serving motives to the contents of newspapers. Gene Cervi, who owns and writes in Cervi's Rocky Mountain Journal, recently observed:

> "I think the opinion making in America has shifted away from the fast bulletin flashers of the daily press to the studied and thoughtful publications that have emerged since the end of World War II, the intelligent organs of foundations, institutions, alumni associations and professional fraternities, not to mention the monthly and weekly magazines . . . quarterlies . . . quickly produced paperbacks and 'white papers.'" (Oct. 13, 1965)

Before trying to summarize the state of urban design reporting today, let me remind you of an event in 1954, held during the Bicentennial of Columbia University. A small group of editors, architects and others met to discuss "What can be done to improve our architectural press." To them the word "press" included everything from "technical literature to the whole picture of architecture and architects which people get from newspapers, magazines, and the spoken word."

They were especially critical of architectural magazines in the US which were given to "too much presentation of the finished work on the basis that this is it."

This was an inward-looking group, architects concerned with their "image" as is the American Institute of Architects today.

The focus was radically changed in 1958 when Cladbourne Gilpatrick, then head of the humanities division of the Rockefeller Foundation, living in New York and reading New York newspapers, was astounded to realize that a vast new development project had been conceived, legalized, designed, contracted for and was being built without ever once having been subjected to the kind of detailed, well-informed, expert analysis which regularly greets every other sort of performance in the public arts—books, plays, compositions, movies, etc. He was astounded, and began asking questions.

Fortunately for us today, he came to the University of Pennsylvania, which collaborated in holding the first Conference on Urban Design Criticism at Rye, New York, in the fall of 1958. That conference gave considerable encouragement to a dozen or so people to lend their own efforts to improving the volume and quality of urban design reporting. (The word "criticism" was in the conference title, and has been much used ever since, but I prefer the term "evaluate reporting." At the Rye Conference, Prof. William Wheaton, one of the authors of the 1949 Housing Act, and now at the University of California, had this to say:

> "The low state of urban design in America today reflects an inadequate understanding of the values of design by the public, by officials . . . and inadequate standards and knowledge on the part of professions directly concerned with city building. . . In considerable degree, these popular and professional weaknesses arise because of the almost complete lack of critical writing about the design of cities in the American popular and professional press."

Shortly afterwards, the University of Pennsylvania held a faculty conference on the same subject, with distinguished experts in attendance. One of them, the Dutch architect-author Steen Eiler Rasmussen, commented that critical evaluation of urban design was done no better in Holland than in the U. S.

> "We find expert criticism of music, for instance, but not of the art of city planning. The reason cannot be that it pays better for the paper to write on music. It gives but little advertisement and interests only a minority of readers. I think the reason for the fact that you can have an independent music critic is that music is an established art. But you can have your doubt whether there really exists any art of city planning."

Rasmussen spoke in 1958, and he was right in 1958. He is correct in 1965. City planning in the European sense of the term (heavily influenced by architecture), or urban design as it is increasingly called today, *is not an established art. It is an emerging art,* in constant change and transition. It is developing in front of our eyes, *one of the most significant stories of our generation.*

Urban design is the process of artfully asembling structures and open spaces according to a pre-determined pattern. It is being practiced by Edmund Bacon in Philadel-

phia, James Rouse in Columbus, Maryland, and—with more craft than art—by hundreds of zoning commissions who enjoy "amateur hour" at City Hall by applying to the urban landscape the theories of Adam Smith, their wives' Law on Downtown Parking, and the National Association of Home Builders' latest propaganda on cluster-zoning.

Consciously or not, all are shaping the future environment of our cities according to theories old or new. And more of those who do it are gradually acknowledging that what they do affects the shape of the city, its visible environment, its total design.

This realization represents a massive change since the 1950s. And the fact that urban design is an art, changing before our eyes, makes it an even hotter subject for daily and weekly journalism.

In 1958 ARCHITECTURAL FORUM published its first clearly-labeled article identified as "CRITICISM." Since then, the publication of sometimes frank, sometimes excessively technical, but generally improving critical evaluation has become common in the architectural press.

Meanwhile, newspaper columnists and TV commentators have jumped on the bandwagon, and for the past year or two one could hardly pick up Eric Sevareid, Inez Robb, Robert Ruark or Joseph Alsop without finding a shotgun denunciation of "acres of concrete," excessive-demolition, traffic, Brazilia or some other convenient target.

Several of the larger daily newspapers now have regular writers who critically evaluate the urban scene. The only person clearly labeled "architectural critic" is AdaLuise Huxtabel of the New York Times. There are probably a dozen writers with regular newspaper or magazine columns covering the field today. I estimate there is ten times as much evaluation of urban design in its largest sense today as there was in 1958.

But it is not enough to shoot fish in a barrel, or raise hell about things that are over and done with. The real tough job for journalists is to recognize incipient change before it happens, to spot dangers before they strike, to be able to forecast with reasonable success the probable results that will come from local proposals; and most of all to use his eyes carefully, and interpret what he sees. This is *"eyewitness journalism"* of a new sort.

Ideally, the journalist on a metropolitan or regional publication is well-suited to identify large shifts in architectural thought and practice, especially as it affects the entire city or large portion of it. The central-city redevelopment project, for example, may be seen daily by millions of commuters and visitors, who don't have time to "put it all together." An evaluation reporter with access to plans can do just that.

No one who pretends to cover architecture and metropolitan trends can do so without traveling. Raymond Vernon, in writing the remarkable series of books on New York City's region, says he spent the equivalent of ten days in a helicopter—just looking, looking, and finally, understanding.

Consequently, to look merely at ground level is not enough. If you are able to fly over your region, do so with a notebook and camera, spotting future stories that a professional can photograph for you.

Quite often an emerging pattern of change will thrust itself upon you in an aerial view, or from a map or planning proposal; something you would never see from the ground.

You can "become" a frustrated pedestrian, and approach the story from this woebegone point of view, or a motorist lost in the maze of public-and-private streets-that-are-not streets. Whatever viewpoint you pursue, you are acting as agent provocateur for the average citizen who confronts a damnably difficult and badly-arranged environment.

Most journalists depend upon others to do their generalizing for them; this is the lazy man's way; the "That's what-the-man-said" school as opposed to "That's-what-I-know" method.

If you are willing to pile experience upon experience, vicariously or directly, you may find yourself in possession of knowledge which *nobody* else can get, or has bothered to get. This may be expensive in time, but it results in an exclusive story of considerable impact.

The familiar picture in journalistic mythology is the police reporter digging patiently through old records, or the reporter-accountant painstakingly pasting together evidence on some utility company's misdoings.

You can do this sort of thing outdoors. To investigate the history of a highway, accumulating the evidence along the roadside, can also result in "scoop" of another sort. This story can be told in many ways, but words-plus-pictures are highly effective. The evidence is all here: roadsides which change as the political boundary changes; dangers manufactured by careless law enforcement; bits-and-pieces of the environment which, viewed as a totality, add up to a work of art, but to a dangerous, man-made mess.

A well-informed metropolitan reporter who cultivates his eyesight as well as his other sources can often produce ideas, new suggestions, which may have occurred to nobody before.

If so, do not be overly modest about it; you are in the communication business, and a good idea should be put into print quickly and in an interesting fashion.

It is traditional, among "community minded newspapers," to treat every new highway, civic building, or speculative commercial development as an altogether welcome, if not God-given, addition to the local scene. This is only one way to look at one's environment. When the largest

enclosed shopping-center was opened in Louisville, it was given tremendously enthusiastic and on the whole non-evaluative reporting in the daily press.

However, if one took a closer look there was a great deal to see less pleasing to the eye. Such an article is a little like the child saying naively "Queen Godiva has no clothes." But an ugly building, with penny-penching defects, should be so described—and it was.

Mr. Clay, Nieman Fellow '49, is real estate editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal.

Custodians of the City

(continued from page 2)

creates an illusion of controversy as a painless substitute for the real thing, and makes you feel even better during the rest of the convention when the politicians who follow this panel tell you how great, and good, and free, and indispensable you are.

I considered the possibility of using a re-run of one of the speeches delivered here by my colleague, Robert Hutchins. As I recall, he is brought in quadrennially to release the sluggish bile of the membership, and once was even offered up as living proof of ASNE's devotion to free speech in a joint appearance with David Lawrence. On these occasions Hutchins has offered you much good advice, and it still remains fresh and unfollowed.

On my own balance sheet, you are doing a little better than you used to—but I can't say that it is really your fault. On the news side some of you finally seem to have recognized that you can only meet your electronic competition on the Texas League principle—you've got to hit 'em where they ain't. And one place they conspicuously are not is in providing a systematic, comprehensive running interpretation of what's going on in the world. They'll get there first with the bits and pieces of news, and they'll swamp you on a really big set piece like a political convention, but they're not going to get out there and meet you in between. The broadcasting business isn't even up to puberty yet and it's already so fat that it won't put out the money and effort—and endure the controversy—required by fully effective use of its great documentary capacity. It's a lot more profitable, and a lot safer, to give Dave Brinkley another 15 minutes of film clips and six more commercials than it is to turn him loose among our spreading social ills with a camera crew.

What this means is that broadcasting has settled down as a mass entertainment industry, with just a little frosting of news and public affairs programming. This may turn out to be in the public interest, convenience and necessity after all if it forces newspaper editors to go back to their original business, where you can still offer a unique service—back to the news and commentary trade.

Hard news, interpretation, and advocacy—that's where you can set the pace and broadcasting can't meet you on your own terms. The morning newspaper I read these days is one that has recognized this elementary truth and set out to act upon it. Of course, the Los Angeles Times did not impair its financial health when it merged out the morning competition in the country's biggest megalopolis. But, still, the Times is surrounded by no less than eleven television channels and a body of glassy-eyed citizens who seem to be natural-born TV viewers. The editors meet this condition by putting together a complete, well-written news report, backed up by expert comment on every serious subject from art to zoology. They have done this by (1) meeting the salary competition for first-rate talent, no matter the source, and (2) making room to use the result by throwing out most of the junk that used to clutter the paper, and by the best and tightest departmental organization I have seen anywhere.

The fact is that hard, cold cash-register considerations now demand that every metropolitan newspaper cut out the trivia and treat seriously with its readers. Lou Harris has defined a highly significant area where the television audience is in retrograde—among people who are educated and have money enough to pay for something richer than bland television fare. The Harris poll reports:

"TV appears to be losing its audience among adults who have been to college, whose incomes are $10,000 or over, and among suburban residents."

This ought to suggest several things to the most obtuse

newspaper business office—one of them being that there is a core readership that can pay a high enough circulation rate to offset the mass advertising income lost to television. And since it's a class audience it ought to be possible to jack up the rates for the advertising you do have left—on the demonstrable theory that only newspapers are reaching the big spenders.

Acting on this principle, newspapers undoubtedly will become leaner—which, I am told, is good for the health. But I think they also need to become meaner. If Lou Harris is correct, you have inherited by default the dependence of respectable citizens who go to college, live in the suburbs, and acquire more than their share of worldly goods. But you should not allow this to obscure the most profound truth I ever heard uttered before ASNE in my years as an active member—Jonathan Daniels' admonition that journalism is *not* a respectable business. It would be an interesting exercise to see how many newspapers have foundered on the fatal error made by a publisher who stood in the bar of his country club and thought he was listening to the voice of the people. And now we have entered a remarkable era of expense accounts so flexible the fellow standing at the club bar next to the publisher is likely to be his editor.

You can't justify your existence—and your special immunities under the Constitution—even with a superlative news report. You're also supposed to be advocates. And this side of Utopia, when you advocate something really important, and do so effectively, you're going to split your following and outrage a good many of your customers, and very probably they're going to be among your most important and influential customers.

Let us not leave this profound, but abstract truth, dangling in the air. Let me suggest to you the urgent, continuing assignment that confronts every editor of a newspaper of consequence.

You gentlemen are the ultimate custodians of The City.

It is possible, of course, that we may get blown up by a hydrogen bomb. But it is also possible that we may not be lucky enough to enjoy so neat and simple an ultimate solution—and that we will continue to have to live in those urban complexes that constitute your circulation territories.

If all of you decided to leave foreign policy to the New York *Times* and Walter Lippmann I wouldn't be unduly alarmed. Indeed, I suppose I would be unduly comforted, if I could assume that Lyndon Johnson still is disposed to read either except darkly, through a red haze.

But when we come to The City—that presumed refuge of all the gods of our culture—you gentlemen are indispensable. This is your domain. A newspaper will certainly reflect the character of the community it serves, and if it is to survive I suggest that the metropolitan newspaper will also have to accept the obligation of shaping the character of that community.

You face real if fragmented competition on the national scene—from network TV and from magazines and books. But there in the city, and metropolitan, and all-other zones where you and the circulation manager live, the newspaper is the only responsible voice.

I suppose, in charity, I should note the possibility that there are cities where broadcasters are performing notable local public services and providing strong local leadership in public affairs. I can only say that I don't know of any. I most often find local TV, such as it is, a kind of obscene caricature of network TV. Local broadcast news, as I encounter it around the country, usually consists of 60-second airport interviews with people affluent enough to afford the services of a public relations firm. Since the interviewer ordinarily spends more time on camera than the subject, and the only lasting impression I take away is that TV newsmen have remarkably good teeth.

No, you don't have any local competition in your role as custodian of your city's conscience—and no national competition either, since the meddling outsiders come in only when you have a political convention, a race riot, or some other natural disaster. Your ambulant colleagues take off once order is restored, and that, of course, is precisely when things get tough for a newspaper that accepts its obligation to tell the community not only how and why it went wrong, but what it ought to do about it, and where it is likely to go wrong next time.

Here assembled are the editors of this country's metropolitan newspapers—and I suggest that no one of you has much impulse to brag about how this metropolis is doing. You can look out your office window and see your city pockmarked by all the signs of decay—physical, social, and moral. It may be that most of your subscribers have blacked out these sights, planted them out with shrubbery in the comfortable refuges of suburbia. But you know what's there—and you know what it means.

What it means is that we are not going to do anything effective about the cities until we tackle the problems of land use head-on. That means taking a new look at property taxes. It means taking a look at the manner in which the real estate promoters use land for what they happily call "tax shelter"—the whole system for interlocking state and federal taxes and exemptions and write-offs that seem to put a premium on bad land use and a penalty on good land use. It means really effective planning and zoning, with all the outraged cries of mother, home and free enterprise this is bound to invoke. It means a willingness to go to the mat with the land owners, the speculators, the promoters, the lending institutions, and all their fuglemen in and out of public office. It means, in short, taking on the richest and most influential people in town.

Why should you? Well, if for no higher reason, because the metropolitan press is the only agency that has a vested

short- and long-range interest in making the American metropolis habitable. If you don't do it, nobody will.

So, gentlemen, this is your assignment for today, and for this year, and the next, unless, of course, you decide to join the parade and sign on as editor of the shopping guide that has just become a new suburban daily out in West Euphoria. In that case you may have as much as ten years left before the smog comes and automobiles glut the shopping centers—just about time enough, that is, to work your blood pressure up to a level suitable for residence in John Birch country.

Mr. Ashmore, who was a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41, is Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and is Director of Editorial Research of the Encyclopedia Britannica. This is an address he delivered to the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

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(signed) Dwight E. Sargent

The Press and the Assassination

By William L. Rivers

The reports of President Kennedy's assassination and its aftermath were swift, lengthy, appropriately couched in grief and boxed in black, and the various journals of the news business made it clear during the following weeks that the press was proud of them. The chronicle of reporters' actions and the advertisements acclaiming them in Editor & Publisher—the Associated Press bought two pages, United Press International bought four—were highly self-congratulatory. The analyses of press performance in The Masthead and in The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors were similarly positive. Although W.S. Harrison of the Toledo Blade charged in The Masthead that the press must share in the blame for the murder of Lee Oswald, such questioning voices were muted. Other, louder voices in the same issue held that the Dallas police were responsible: they should not have given in to the demands, primarily from television, that Oswald be transferred publicly from jail to jail. And although television may have emerged from Dallas with honor for having given up millions to broadcast nothing but unsponsored news for nearly four days, Earl Johnson consoled the newspaper world in the UPI Reporter by pointing out that TV's sacrifice was more apparent than real: some sponsors paid for their broadcast time anyway, and others simply rescheduled commercials for a later date.

There seemed to be little change even when, months later, the Warren Commission report criticized the mass media for swamping Dallas in reporters. The report quoted one FBI agent as likening conditions at the police station to "Grand Central Station at rush hour," and pointed out that newsmen in the mass may influence events almost as decisively as they cover them. The Commission called on the press to develop a code of ethics and practices embracing crime and court proceedings. This was a sobering indictment. Miles Wolff, then President of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, called together newspaper and broadcasting representatives to discuss it. The group was concerned enough to select a five-man steering committee to study the Warren Commission recommendations, but made it clear that the sense of the meeting was not at all apologetic: "Within forty-eight hours, the print and electronic media reported the Dallas Story so accurately and completely that the Warren Commission, in ten months and with unlimited resources, did not alter the basic outlines of what the media had reported." All in all, if the assassination coverage was not a journalistic triumph but a chaotic encounter of the unprepared with the unforeseen, the press is not saying so.

Much of the self-congratulation seems deserved. The press associations and many metropolitan newspapers and mass magazines put platoons of editors and reporters on every aspect of the story everywhere without regard to cost. Some newspapers canceled columns of scheduled advertising to make room for sidebars to the assassination story. With only hours to go before their weekend deadlines, the news magazines were transformed. U.S. News & World Report junked its deadline along with many pages that were ready for printing, produced twenty new pages, and remade the entire issue. Newsweek produced twenty-five new pages. Time added seventeen pages, including a cover story on President Johnson. It was all worthwhile; not even hugely increased press runs could satisfy the demand. (In the first real test of the print media *versus* total news on television, the record indicates that electronic journalism is never likely to make newspapers and magazines obsolete.) In Dallas, the Times-Herald sold eighty thousand copies more than its daily norm. The first issue of Life after the assassination was quickly depleted; single copies were selling for as much as ten dollars in San Francisco.

Some of the individual reporting performances were remarkable. Tom Wicker of the New York Times stitched together a lengthy report that was at once a crisp news story, a detailed chronicle, and a stark revelation of mood and atmosphere. Merriman Smith of United Press International, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his work in Dallas that day, proved himself capable of distinguishing

between the moving and the maudlin in a time of tragedy by writing an almost clinical account of what he heard and saw:

> The President was face down on the back seat. Mrs. Kennedy made a cradle of her arms around the President's head and bent over him as if she were whispering to him.
>
> Gov. Connally was on his back on the floor of the car, his head and shoulders resting in the arms of his wife, Nellie, who kept shaking her head and shaking with dry sobs. Blood oozed from the front of the Governor's suit. I could not see the President's wound. But I could see blood spattered around the interior of the rear seat and a dark stain spreading down the right side of the President's dark gray suit.

And yet there is much more to say about press performance during the assassination period that is far less positive. And if nothing like a solution to the problem of crisis reporting emerges from saying it, it may nonetheless suggest some of the questions that might have accompanied the self-appreciation.

The story of the press and the assassination actually began several hours before a shot was fired. Early on the morning of November 22, the issue of Editor & Publisher dated November 23 came off the press carrying a curious article. Headlined "The S.S. Ruffians," it was a reporter's protest that the Secret Service is overprotective in guarding the President—and the writer's acidity creates the suspicion that the use of "S.S." was not so much designed to save space as to suggest an unpleasant analogy with Hitler's crack troops. The reporter, Thomas Del Vecchio, wrote as a veteran of 24 years of interviewing dignitaries who arrived at airports. His complaint was that reporters were often excluded from the groups that greeted President Kennedy at Idlewild:

> How come? What's happened here?
>
> It's all in the name of security.
>
> Now where does the problem of security end and the problem of a controlled press kept from access to the news begin?
>
> There is no question that the press and the Secret Service have reached that point and beyond.
>
> On top of all this is the rudeness and ruffian manner a good many of these agents assume toward the press under the guise of security.
>
> They often act as though newsmen were not Americans and did not have a record almost as impressive as theirs for respect for their President and his security.
>
> Just where do the rights under the First Amendment end and the assumed and overriding rights of the Secret Service take complete charge?

There was much more in the same outraged tone. Predictably, the article provoked a strong reaction. One reader's reproving letter to the editor of the magazine pointed out that even aside from the assassination Del Vecchio's article was bitter, petty, subjective, and poor journalism. Editor Robert U. Brown responded with a column entitled "Hindsight Criticism," holding, "If such articles have to be written with some intuition as to whether the President might not be alive tomorrow because of an assassin's bullet, there would be very little criticism." It was a predictable rejoinder, and perhaps a persuasive one, but it dealt not at all with the central question: Was Del Vecchio right? Brown might have decided this easily by pondering a related question: Would he have published the article after the assassination?

It would have been a curious article had there been no assassination. Despite charges that the Kennedy Administration "managed the news," the President's own relations with the press were open to the point of porosity. Never in history had so many reporters been so free to talk with the President and explore the presidency. In sharp contrast to his predecessor (who preferred the company of businessmen to journalists and preferred reading Luke Short to Walter Lippmann), Mr. Kennedy fostered such warm relations with many Washington correspondents that his press secretary once complained amiably that the comings and goings of reporters were creating a traffic problem in White House corridors.

Del Vecchio's article is chiefly notable for showing that some spokesmen for the press, not content with continuing dialogues with the President in Washington or with frequent confrontations elsewhere, demand unlimited access wherever the President touches ground. The President is not to be a public servant but public property. That this is something more than one peeved reporter's view is suggested by the fact that Editor & Publisher, which echoes the opinions and yearnings of a good many newspapers, chose to make "The S.S. Ruffians" its lead article. Copies of the issue were flown to Miami for distribution at an Inter-American Press Association meeting on November 22. Presumably, some editors and publishers were reading the article when they learned of the assassination.

The two issues of the Dallas Morning News that appeared immediately before the assassination are similarly interesting. Much has been made of the full-page advertisement purchased by the "American Fact-finding Committee" in the issue of November 22. Headed "Welcome Mr. Kennedy," the advertisement posed questions like, *"Why* have you scrapped the Monroe Doctrine in favor of the Spirit of Moscow?" and *"Why* have you ordered or permitted your brother Bobby, the Attorney General, to go soft on Communists. . ."

The editors of the News have answered critics by pointing to the sweetly phrased editorial with which they greeted the President. One editorial could hardly change the image of a paper whose publisher, E. M. "Ted" Dealey, had become a national figure of sorts in 1961 by charging at a White House luncheon that Kennedy and his administration were "weak sisters." Dealey had interrupted the President to say that the nation needs a man on horseback, but "you are riding Caroline's tricycle." However, the most provocative aspect of Dealey's paper during Kennedy's tour of Texas was neither the advertisement nor the editorial but the news columns. The day before the President arrived, the top of the front page was covered almost five inches deep across seven columns with a story epitomized by the headline "JFK Visit Ires San Antonio Liberals." Three columns at the bottom were given to "Rain Seen in Dallas During JFK Visit"—a "weather story" in the conventional sense only until it reached the third paragraph, where the reporter slid smoothly into the real subject with "political skies should remain dark" and went predictably on from there.

The News of the following morning, the day Kennedy was to arrive, was a strange celebration of a Presidential visit. The lead story on the front page ran across two columns that extended from the top almost to the bottom of the page. Headed in huge type across seven columns "Storm of Political Controversy Swirls Around Kennedy Visit," it was built largely on Senator Ralph Yarborough's complaint that Governor John Connally had not invited Yarborough to a reception at the Governor's Mansion. Nearly four columns at the bottom of the page were covered with a story headed "Yarborough Snubs LBJ." All eight columns at the top of page 12 were four inches deep with "President's Visit Seen Widening Democratic Split."

One cannot know the extent to which the News, always passionate, excites the passions of Dallas. But surely Walter Lippmann is correct in contending that Dallas is the very atmosphere of violence and that it is only incidental that Lee Oswald turned left while those Dallasites who assaulted Lyndon Johnson and his wife in 1960 and those who hit and spat upon Adlai Stevenson a month before the assassination turned right. "The common characteristic of all of them," Walter Lippmann wrote, "was their alienation, the loss of their ties, the rupture of the community." On the morning that this analysis was published, Jack Ruby killed Lee Oswald.

But one can commend these issues of the News to those who study conflict as it is promoted in the press. And one can venture that the News and similar papers, so many of them so noticeably devoted to seeking out political conflict, should consider the possibility that they are manufacturing it as well.

As for the coverage of the assassination, the problem for the reporter may be suggested by the fact that the most recent precedent was more than six decades in the past. The President is shot. The natural movement is toward him; this much is certain. But, the President is dead—bewilderment reigns. Does the reporter stay near the body to glean the details of death? Or does he try to attach himself to the police who seek the assassin? Or does he attempt to divine the next movements of the new President and move with him? And whatever his decision, what should be his manner, what are his rights and privileges, what is the priority of information in tragedy's hierarchy of values?

Above all, where in the midst of chaos does the reporter find incontrovertible fact? This is the most important question, for one who reviews the journalistic record of the assassination period can recognize the inevitable difficulties, award many high marks for enterprise and diligence, and yet be left with the inescapable conclusion that the press reported many more facts than there actually were.

Item: The rifle was found by window on the second floor of the Texas School Book Depository. Or it was found in the fifth-floor staircase. Or it was hidden behind boxes and cases on the second floor. Ultimately, all reports agreed that it had been found on the sixth floor.

Item: The rifle was first reported to be a .30-calibre Enfield. Then it was a 7.65mm Mauser. But it was also an Army or Japanese rifle of .25 caliber. Finally, it became an Italian-made 6.5mm rifle with a telescopic sight.

Item: There were three shots. But some reports mentioned four bullets: one found on the floor of the President's car, one found in the President's stretcher, a third removed from Governor Connally's left thigh, and a fourth removed from the President's body. There was even one report of a fifth bullet found in the grass near the side of the street where the President was hit. Finally, there was general agreement that there were only three bullets.

So far, the mistakes seem to be of no great moment—small discrepancies fairly quickly resolved. But when these conflicting reports were coupled with some of the more mystifying details, the pivotal importance of absolute accuracy became evident:

Item: The first reports of the President's wounds described "a bullet in the throat, just below the Adam's apple" and "a massive, gaping wound in the back and on the right side of the head." The position of the President's car at the time of the shooting, seventy-five to one hundred yards beyond the Texas School Book Depository, explains the head wound. But how can one account for the bullet in the throat?

Item: The shots were fired between 12:30 and 12:31 P.M., Dallas time. It was reported at first that Oswald dashed into the house at Oak Cliff where he was renting

a room "at about 12:45 P.M." Between the time of the assassination and the time of his arrival at the rooming house, Oswald reportedly (1) hid the rifle, (2) made his way from the sixth floor to the second floor of the building, (3) bought and sipped a Coke (lingering long enough to be seen by the building manager and a policeman), (4) walked four blocks to Lamar Street and boarded a bus, (5) descended from the bus and hailed a taxi, and (6) rode four miles to Oak Cliff. How did he accomplish all this in fourteen minutes?

Item: Oswald was only an average marksman in the Marines. Yet gun experts who were meeting in Maryland at the time of the assassination held that, considering the rifle, the distance, the angle, and the movement of the President's car, "the assassin was either an exceptional marksman or fantastically lucky in placing his shots." The Olympic champion marksman, Hubert Hammerer, said upon being interviewed in Vienna that *one* shot could have been made under the conditions described, but he considered it unlikely that anyone could have triggered three accurate shots within five seconds with a bolt-action rifle. How did Lee Oswald do it?

All this is the stuff of conspiracy theories. Given a mass of conflicting and mystifying detail about the actions of an accused assassin, it is natural to seek an easier explanation. One is that Oswald was not the assassin—except that so many of his actions were suspicious. Another is that he had an accomplice—"No one remembered for sure seeing Ruby between 12:15 and 12:45," one press report ran—and the mind leaps to the desired assumption. Small wonder that the Warren Commission's findings are unlikely ever to receive anything approaching total belief.

It is a curious fact that the most involved of the conspiracy theories sprang from those who are usually the sniffiest about press reports, the academicians. Some of them know that the press goes to the authorities for quotations on matters of moment. Deep down, they are likely to suspect authority more than they suspect the press. Thus it was that a political scientist and a historian, Jack Minnis and Staughton Lynd, wrote "Seeds of Doubt," which appeared in The New Republic.

"Seeds of Doubt" was by far the most remarkable article to appear during the assassination period. Without ever actually saying that someone was suppressing information and rearranging evidence, Minnis and Lynd seemed to be saying nothing else. Their article was a catalogue of conflicting press reports from the time of the first news up to mid-December, and broadly hinted that the authorities were making changes as they went along in order to bring inconvenient facts into line with indisputable evidence. The tone was typified by the section dealing with the speed of the President's car:

> All early accounts of the assassination put the speed of the President's limousine at about 25 miles per hour, but now it has slowed to 15 miles per hour (*Life,* November 29), "no more than half the 25 miles per hour first estimated by authorities" (Newsweek, December 9), and 12 miles per hour (U.S. News & World Report, December 9). The latter magazine comments: "If President Kennedy's car had been moving even 20 miles per hour, the experts say, it might have made the lead time too difficult a problem for the sniper."

Assessing the Minnis-Lynd article and an accompanying sidebar that speculated about the throat wound and the whereabouts of Jack Ruby at the time of the assassination, one horrified reader commented, "What can it all mean, except the insinuation that Oswald and Ruby *were* connected and that Oswald's death was part of a mysterious conspiracy in which both were engaged and which the authorities are trying to hush up?"

As it turned out, the structure of the Minnis-Lynd thesis came crashing down only a few days after the article appeared. The President's throat wound, it was finally determined, had not been caused by the entry of a bullet but by the exit of a fragment. Oswald had not made his trip in fourteen minutes but in thirty, having arrived in Oak Cliff at about 1:00. The exceptional marksmanship is perhaps best explained by Gertrude Himmelfarb: "But why . . . assume that each of the shots found its intended mark? It would appear that not three out of three but one out of three achieved its purpose (the first inflicting no serious injury and the second hitting Governor Connally). To know how extraordinarily successful or lucky an assassin is, one would have to know how often he was unsuccessful or unlucky." As if to confirm this diagnosis, it was later reported that Oswald had earlier shot at General Edwin Walker.

In the end, one must conclude that the press performed in *its* best tradition. The *news* of the assassination was made up almost entirely of authoritative reports. After all, reporters did not say that a bullet entered the President's throat; they quoted Drs. Malcolm Perry and Kemp Clark of the Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas. The Dallas police first identified the rifle as a .30-caliber Enfield and a 7.65mm Mauser. A Secret Service man said he thought the weapon was a .25-caliber Army or Japanese rifle. The housekeeper at the Oak Cliff rooming house said that Oswald had come dashing in at about 12:45. And so on.

But the central question is whether the best tradition of the press is good enough. To blame a quoted authority is not a defense of the press but an explanation of two errors: the authority's for making a mistake and the press's for publishing it. The lesson of Dallas is actually an old one

in responsible journalism: reporting is not democratic to the point that everything posing as fact has equal status.

It must be said immediately that some errors were inevitable. Governor Connally says that the car had just made the turn at Elm and Houston Streets when the firing began. Mrs. Connally says that the car was nearing the underpass—220 yards from the turn. Both cannot be right—in fact, the consensus indicates that both were wrong—but where can a reporter find better authorities than those who were in the car at the time?

Putting aside the discrepancies that are never likely to be resolved, one must ask whether the press was too eager to satisfy the hunger for detail and to beat the competition. It is one thing to report certainties such as that the President has been shot and is dead, and quite another to quote a seeming authority—the nearest Secret Service man, a flustered housekeeper—whose speculations breed suspicion. Is satisfying the public desire for a story adequate reason for rounding it out with supposition? Is it possible that the proud Age of Instant Communication sparks competition that debases journalism? These are questions, in any case, that journalists must continue to debate.

This article by **Mr. Rivers,** of the Communications Department of Stanford University, is reprinted from *The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public: Social Communications in Crisis,* edited by Bradley S. Greenberg and Edwin B. Parker (Stanford University Press, 1965).

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Harvard University has appointed its Selection Committee for Nieman Fellowships for 1966-67. The committee:

Malcolm Bauer, Associate Editor, The Portland Oregonian.

John Colburn, Editor and Publisher, Wichita, Kansas, Eagle and Beacon.

Eugene Patterson, Editor, Atlanta, Georgia, Constitution.

Bruce Chalmers, Professor of Metallurgy and Master of Winthrop House, Harvard University.

William M. Pinkerton, News Officer for Harvard.

Dwight E. Sargent, Curator of the Nieman Foundation at Harvard.

Applicants for the Fellowships will be received until April first. The committee will award about twelve Fellowships for the academic year opening in September.

The Nieman Fellowships provide for one year of residence and background studies at Harvard for newsmen on leave from their jobs. Applicants must have at least three years of news experience and be under 40.

This will be the 29th annual group of Nieman Fellows at Harvard. The Fellowships were established in 1938 under a bequest from Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, Lucius W. Nieman, founder of the Milwaukee Journal.