

nieman

spring 1975



Type and Tube • David Ives, Richard Salant,
Richard Wald

*We have licensing and can literally be
subject to capital punishment.*

Notes on the Press • James Reston

*This is not only an age of disbelief and
mistrust, but an age of ambiguity, and we
are not very good at handling ambiguity.*

How Fares the U.S. Press? • Mary McGrory

*As the church bells tolled the hours . . . the
jury got a crash course in the state of
the country.*

The Black Press in America • Louis Martin, Moses J. Newsome

*I thought somebody would say, "How do you
see the future?" This is what kids used to ask.*

A Radical Journalist in the 1950s • James Aronson

*We had assumed that our office telephones . . .
were tapped, and this . . . was confirmed by a
sympathetic telephone company employee . . .*

Book Reviews • New Class of Nieman Fellows • Viewpoint

reports

nieman reports

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Guest Editorial

How fares the US press? Very well indeed!

by Mary McGrory

WASHINGTON—There were any number of times during the three days we seven members of the jury were interviewing Nieman Fellowship applicants that we wished the proceedings were being recorded.

Since the passing of Spiro Agnew from the public platform, it is true, the press has not been castigated with the old fervor and spite. Watergate did much to change the climate, but there are still—as some of us who write for newspapers know—people out there who believe that the fourth estate is populated by hate-driven jackals who drive noble characters from office, trample on the flag and tell anything but the truth.

If those people could somehow have been brought into the smoke-filled room at the Hay-Adams Hotel—four of the judges were cigar-smokers—and heard the 45 press people who told us about themselves and their work, they might have been reassured not just about journalism, but about the future of the country.

There was a great deal of commitment and compassion in the polluted air.

Our job was to choose 12 candidates for the Nieman Fellowships program, which was established by Agnes Wahl Nieman in honor of her husband Lucius Nieman, the founder of *The Milwaukee Journal*. The 12 are given a year of study and leisure at Harvard. The vaguely defined purpose is “to elevate and promote the standards of journalism in the U.S.”

Four of the jury were from Harvard: our foreman, James Thomson, is Nieman curator; Prof. Samuel Beer, professor of government; Hale Champion, who used to be a newspaperman himself, the financial vice president, and Barbara Rosenkrantz, professor of the history of science. The three representatives of the press were Robert Abernethy of NBC, and Peter Lisagor of the *Chicago Daily News* and myself. We deferred to one another in various areas, but not much.

Those who followed the cigar fumes down the sixth floor of the Hay-Adams to the jury room were mostly between the ages of 30 and 35. Five women came, two blacks, one Mexican-American.

(continued on page 39)



Type and Tube

At an evening seminar this past fall Richard Salant, President of CBS News; Richard Wald, President of NBC News; and David Ives, President of WGBH, Boston's public television station, joined the Nieman Fellows and other guests from television and radio to discuss broadcast journalism versus print journalism.

The following transcript was edited by Eugene Pell, Nieman Fellow '75 and chief of Foreign News Service for Westinghouse Broadcasting Company in London.

James Thomson: Our statistics recently showed that we had very few television people applying for Nieman— and very few selected—because even the caliber of those who applied was not as high as those from print. That's a parochial issue. Does it have to do, for instance, with the fact that people in broadcast journalism make pots of money? Does it have to do with the fact that, being on camera, many of them can't be given a leave of absence by their bosses? Does it have to do with other things?

Now, from the other side of the spectrum I hear through the Salant-Thomson correspondence a wonder as to whether print journalists have a sort of built-in contempt for those who either are on the tube or run the tube. And out of this mix of questions, I am wondering if print people, broadcast people, are in fact in the same profession? I think that the answer is perhaps they are up against totally different types of things, and perhaps have very little understanding or sympathy for each other. And tonight we begin what is dangerously called a dialogue—

Richard Salant: Let me just take care of one of the questions that seems to be troubling you a great deal. The reason that broadcast journalists haven't applied for Nieman Fellowships is very simple. Most of them work for stations around

the country and most station managers distrust Harvard. It's as simple as that. I can speak from first-hand experience. If you move Nieman to—let's say Chicago—you'd be overwhelmed.

Since most of you do work in print and are interested in print, what I'd like in a very oversimplified way to touch on is just a few factors that make our business or profession or art or craft, or fraud, or whatever you want to call it, different from print. I do think we're all in the same business of trying to get to the truth as nearly as we can, and passing it along to the public as best we can. I do think that essentially we supplement each other. I think our main function in broadcasting is to bring an issue, a fact, or an event, to people for the first time and hope that they will go on and pursue it in print. Walter Cronkite has often said—but never meant—that he would like to wind up his evening news broadcast by saying, "For further details, read your morning newspaper." He's right.

One of the things that distinguishes us is that we don't have the luxury that an editor of a newspaper has. We never see the finished product when we're talking about a hard news broadcast. The show goes on the air and we can't shift around sentences or take a thought out. We can't edit in the way a good green-eye can. We have to take it or leave it, just taking hunks out. The result is that we are a business of immense delegation. I've always said the main decision that we in management in a broadcast news organization make is when we hire a guy. After that we pray. We have to go with him.

Second, consider how we go about putting together a news broadcast. If you ever watch how people read the newspapers, you notice that the young guys look at the sports pages first, and the affluent people used to look at the stock market; the old guys go to the obits, and you pick out what you want. If you find something that's very offensive,

like a riot or your favorite ball team losing or whatever, you skip it. Now, the reader of a newspaper sets his own pace. Our pace has to be different. Just imagine how an editor would put together his newspaper if he knew that his reader had to start reading on the first sentence of the column on the left all the way through into the back pages. His pace would be different; his editing would be different.

... We are a business of immense delegation.

One of the reasons why people get so mad at us is that we force down their throats things they don't want to hear, things they wouldn't read. And I guess you get people in a split-level in Des Moines a bit angry when they see these riots in these strange places. You threaten them.

Probably a main difference is that we have licensing. I'm blessed if I can define just how it affects us because I don't know. I know it creates a climate in our boss's mind, sometimes in our own minds, possibly in the minds of the reporters and editors who work for us. We have licensing and can literally be subject to capital punishment. It hasn't happened yet, but it's possible. As Clay T. Whitehead has said, it isn't important that the licenses haven't been taken away, it's the fact that the sword is hanging there over your head. And yet we do, presumably, perform a journalistic function which is subject to government scrutiny and a government decision that if we're very wrong, our company can get put out of business.

I think you'll forgive me if I say the way it's been put most dramatically is by that great journalist Ken Clawson, who used to work for *The Washington Post* and then became Director of Communications for the former President. The record shows that he was discussing how to get at these evil people in television news. And he said, "You can't do anything about print. But everybody owns a piece of television's ass." That's it. When you get a government state of mind like that, and you're trying to exercise a journalistic function, there's a dilemma. It has to make a difference. I know it makes a difference in the minds of some very nervous station managers. It's a terrible problem.

Those are the central differences, I think, in terms of news-gathering, and the kind of judgments we make on what stories to select, and so on. We do have an occasional instance where we have a story in simply because it's good visually. You see more fires on local television than you do in the newspapers because fires look better on television. But by and large, the news judgments on selections and omissions are approximately the same, the standards are the same, and I do think we are all in the same business.

Richard Wald: I'm a little embarrassed talking about the

differences and similarities between print and television because, like other people who get paid for their services, I give my allegiance to where the paycheck comes from. I've gotten somewhat to like my present profession or craft. I have always felt that journalism was more a trade than anything else, that it's somewhat like making chairs. You go in and find out how many legs it has to have, whether or not it has to have a back, and different people have different styles, and so you get Heppelwhite or Adam, but basically chairs is chairs and nobody's going to tell you any different. Well, it's the same thing I have learned in television. Basically, stories are stories and journalism is journalism, and it's all just organized gossip anyway.

The problems are different. The difference between television and print is the difference between linearity and simultaneity. And I don't wish to be Marshall McLuhan so I'll explain myself. In print, the system is linear. Somebody goes out to cover a story, or the story comes in over the wire. One way or another it gets itself printed, typewritten. In some newspapers now it gets itself put on a computer system. It then goes to somebody who looks at it, and it goes to somebody who edits it, and it goes to a machine or a person who transforms it into a form of printing, and then it goes into somebody or into a machine that makes it into a part of a page, and then it goes through a machine that makes it a part of a physical object. Then the physical object is distributed. Up to the moment that the physical object is created, you can stop it.

The two times I remember most about stopping it are a Boston Blackie movie, when somebody stepped into a phone booth and said, "Stop the presses, here's your headline," and one afternoon when a copy boy on the Herald Tribune, just for the fun of it, shouted, "Stop the presses," and they stopped them. It's possible.

In television, or in radio, you can't stop it. A whole lot of people you never even saw in your life are in there mucking up the sound and making the picture fuzzy and there are all sorts of things to it that you didn't really intend. So the delegation of effort is enormous. And it is, in effect, almost as though you make all of the people who belong to the big six unions parts of your reporting staff. The problem is that they're not all terribly sophisticated. The problem of delegation is one that bothers all of us, but I guess it shouldn't, because it also humanizes all of us.

Radio is the great background of American television journalism. A survey indicated that people who thought they saw something on television first actually heard it on radio first. The weight of television is such that news heard in your car or somewhere, you later think you saw on television. This drives radio people crazy, and it makes television people rich.

It's an interesting business. Television has strictures and problems that make it in some ways better than print. I

say this with great diffidence. I have spent the better part of my life in this business in print, and only the last six years in television and radio, but I think that some of the things that television does are just irreplaceable and impossible in print. One of the things that Walter Cronkite said, that I disagree with, is that he worries because the nightly news he does only amounts to three-quarters of the front page of *The New York Times*.

I keep remembering that what we do is in pictures. And the pictures convey information that print does not. In some ways a lot of people don't quite yet appreciate that the stupidity of people who watch television isn't so stupid. What they get out of what they see may be horrible, and may be wrong, but is usually better communicated and usually more accurate than a whole lot of what they read in print—if they read it. It is one of the unspoken glories of television that this information is conveyed.

Television's greatest faults are in the areas of intellection, the areas of abstraction. You ought to remember that those people who deal in print fill in concrete symbols. A word is just a lot of black space on a white space; it really isn't anything in itself. It stands for something. All of us were raised and were taught in words, in print. But a picture is the thing itself. It is concrete. It is not abstract. It is only itself. A picture of a man hitting another man on the top of the head with a bladder is either funny or sad depending on how you look at it, but it's all one thing. A word describing it is a world, a connotative, emotive system. I think that

(Television) . . . is somewhat like making chairs.

we have not yet come to what television will and should be in terms of its journalism, because we have not yet learned how to deal with the concreteness of a picture. We still deal with it as though it were just words transmogrified. A few years from now I hope we will learn how to deal with those pictures both as abstracts and as concretes, and possibly be much more propagandistic than we have ever been, but also be much more fruitful. I think that what we do is different from print, and much more dangerous than print. It is much more powerful than print, and may be much more long-lasting, although at the present time, far more ephemeral.

David Ives: The only thing I have to add about the difference between broadcasting and print is perhaps that broadcasting does have the extraordinary capacity to show things as they really are, and if you have all the time in the world as public broadcasting has, you can show them as long as anybody is willing to watch—even till three o'clock in the

morning. We've done this with the Watergate hearings; we've done this with the impeachment hearing, proceedings in the judiciary committee, and we play them at night, when poor weary workers are at home and are interested in watching what went on during the day, when the commercial fellows carried it and they couldn't see it.

We carried Governor Rockefeller's appearance before the Rules Committee and raised a very significant fairness problem, because we carried Rockefeller for two full days of hearings under questions, playing it back beginning at eight, nine, ten o'clock at night, and running into two or three in the morning. Then we heard that on the following day, when the opposition to Governor Rockefeller was scheduled for the next two days, we were going to be fed an hour and a half of summary. And the people who were going to appear against Governor Rockefeller got on the phone, and our telephone lines were pretty busy for one afternoon.

. . . You can make some very considerable judgments in the course of an evening or two, watching . . . people at work.

The significant thing about showing everything that is there, is that it does give an awful lot of credit to the viewer. You don't try to tell the viewer what it is that he ought to know about the news of the day. You simply say, this is something important, and you watch it and you make up your own mind. Television does have that extraordinary capacity to deliver that to you at home with your socks and shoes off, and your beer in your hand. You can judge whether those guys on the judiciary committee are doing a good job, or a bad job; whether they were good guys or whether they were bad guys. It seems to me that you can make some very considerable judgments in the course of an evening or two, watching those people at work. I have a feeling that this is going to become a more significant part of television in this country, if public broadcasting can become properly financed, and can demonstrate this kind of thing to the public.

There's a lot of this going on in Florida, where the state legislature mercifully has only a sixty-day session each year, and where they provide money for the broadcast for most of the proceedings. The Florida State Television Network has come up with the extraordinary device of guaranteeing to each legislator that of his speech during the day, they will broadcast only the first minute and the last minute. The astonishing thing is that in the first minute and the last minute these guys are condensing a lot of information. The people are learning a great deal, and the legislators in Florida are so enthusiastic about the feedback they're getting

from better-informed citizens that they've provided the extraordinary sum of \$3 million to the state legislature to keep this kind of thing up. Well, that's pretty encouraging.

David Bartley is getting very much interested in it, and we've had some talks with him about doing that in Massachusetts. The difficulty in Massachusetts is that sometimes they're in session for 365 days a year, and I don't know what the hell we're going to do about that.

Then, when Harvard had its strike and awful bust in 1968, WGBH did a program after about five days when things were beginning to cool down. We put a huge table up in the studio—there were about 16 or 17 places around it—and we announced that anybody who had anything to say about the situation—faculty, students or local people in the area—could come in and talk about it. And from seven o'clock in the evening until about two in the morning, we let everybody talk. It was a perfectly extraordinary session in demonstrating how television can let people from an enormous area in on what's happening. And it was a very exciting program.

But the thing I ought to tell you about was the opening of that program. We didn't have very good control over who came in, and there were a lot of crazies in the area, who had come in order to demonstrate that they knew what was what, and to make trouble. One of the most notorious was a man from Columbia; his primary claim to fame was climbing trees without any clothes on. Somehow he got into our studio and he got hold of the microphone at the very beginning. He grasped it, stood up, and said, "I want to tell you," speaking to 16 or 17 people around the table and to a very large number of people in the Greater Boston area, "What I have to say is FUCK HARVARD AND FUCK PUSEY AND FUCK EVERYBODY."

And it took about 20 seconds before somebody flicked the switch, and then the camera dollied around the room and you could see people going gaga. Well, I was upstairs and I thought, we're going to get a lot of telephone calls about this, and you have never seen so many telephone calls. The most interesting thing about them was the quality of what they said.

One woman stated, "I just want you to know that no language like that has ever been permitted in this house." And in the background you could hear a man saying, "You know goddam well it has." The prize came from a man who called and said, "I'm just not going to have any of that kind of shit in my living room."

Let me just get back to one serious question. One thing that distinguishes print from broadcast journalism, since you're all under the First Amendment, is that one goes under a regulation, and the other doesn't. You have what is called the Fairness Doctrine, and you also have FCC Regulation. I want to ask Dick Salant: does this impair

you, impede you, and would you call for a new regulation of TV as some have?

Salant: Well, the Fairness Doctrine is a bloody nuisance, it wastes an awful lot of our time, and brings lawyers—our lawyers—too much into the journalistic process. There's a terrible dilemma here, because broadcasters have to be licensed, at least so long as there's limited spectrum space. Somebody has to say, you can have this part of the space, and somebody else can have that part of the space, so there has to be licensing. But it has to be disentangled from the journalistic function.

I made a very modest proposal a couple of years ago. I suggested that the Communications Act simply be amended to provide that in granting renewal or revoking licenses, the Communications Commission cannot take into account news content. Just that. Not amount of news, and not how many people you employ—just news content itself. It's not a completely satisfactory way out of the dilemma. The problem is easy to state. The solution is very hard, and that's the only answer I've been able to come up with.

Question: What about the instance in Mississippi where the TV station gave no coverage to black people?

Salant: Well, let me ask you what did the Mississippi newspapers do? Somehow the nation survived. I think one of the prices you pay for the First Amendment is that you're going to get some awful people into the business who are going to abuse their rights. But so far it's worked. The newspapers are better now than they were back in the days when Harold Laski found it necessary to write his book on the one-party press. Newspapers are a lot better. It wasn't because of anything the government did, it wasn't because of the Fairness Doctrine. It was because these things go in cycles and people demand something better.

... The problem with lawyers, courts and judges is that their natural intent is a perverse system.

I think what you really have to decide is whether you think that the First Amendment is a bad idea, and that it would be better for the people, and their right to know, if we could apply an equal time rule and a Fairness Doctrine and a personal attack rule to newspapers. I think you have to decide whether it's a good thing or a bad thing and get away from these slogans about the people's air, and limited spectrum. It's harder to start a newspaper.

Wald: You have to come to a decision—not about whether somebody did something wrong under the umbrella of the

First Amendment, or whether you believe that the First Amendment allows for the problem it creates—but the problem I think with lawyers, courts, and judges is that their natural intent is a perverse system. We operate a series of courts on a totally unnatural basis, that if you take two contending parties, you will find the truth. That's not necessarily true.

It seems to me further that we have other regulation in this country that does not control the terms of the specifics. By that I mean, out here there are traffic lights. You can't go until the light is green, which is kind of like spectrum control. But it doesn't say you have to be in the car, or what kind of people should be there. You have to come to a conclusion about the fact that—imperfect as it may be—the

Licensing is a necessity with which we must contend.

First Amendment is a good idea; or—imperfect as it may be—the First Amendment needs help. If you say that the First Amendment needs help, you are saying something contrary to what I hold, and it's a perfectly logical and reasonable thing to say.

If, however, you feel that the First Amendment is a reasonable approach, then it seems to me you have to extend it to those things operating under it. And I do believe and obviously stand for the idea that we all operate under the First Amendment. Licensing is a necessity with which we must contend. What we've done in this country since the 1934 Communications Act is to embody in law the generous impulses of liberal people that lead to a kind of foolish totalitarianism. We try to make things perfect. And in trying to do that, we impose on them rules that are not pertinent. And in those places where the strictures apply, it doesn't work well. And it's a problem. I agree with all of the impulses of the FCC; I just disagree with the way it works.

Salant: Let me just go back to a point. There was a great professor up here at the Law School under whom I studied. His name was Zechariah Chafee, the world's greatest expert on the First Amendment. He said something like this: the trouble with allowing the government to start picking away at the First Amendment is that you always assume the decision is going to be made by a committee of friends. But, brother, it ain't going to be that way. They're not going to be your friends. If you just imagine a Federal Communications Commission being made up of Pat Buchanan and his two brothers and Bruce Hershinson and his father and his mother, and Father McLaughlin, or whoever—I mean,

they're going to decide fairness? Which is the way it can be. Let's see if you want the government to intrude in that.

* * * * *

Question: I've been to a good many press conferences which seem to have become a new form of happening since television came on the scene. And I've been to a good many things that were sort of pseudo-press conferences. That is, somebody would decide he or she was going to talk about an issue because television showed up, or somebody with a pencil turned up. My question is, due to the nature of your medium, I think you people let yourselves be duped—a lot. And I wonder what you hope to do about it, or what you can do about it.

Wald: I've got two answers. First, I am of the opinion that one of the greatest shields for the print press is this: nobody can see the questions they ask. I've been in the news business for 22 years. I've seen some of the dumbest people in the world submit stupid questions on paper, and the questions never got into print. Nor do the answers.

Question: What kind of defense is that?

Wald: Well, I tell you what the defense is. The problem with television is that there are a lot of dumb people in television. I've never hidden that. The problem is, television is of such a mechanical nature that the questions get on the air. And most people don't understand how ungrammatically or foolishly they speak. And what you see on television very often is the question that elicits an answer. I am interested in the problem that a question need not be sensible to elicit a sensible answer.

One of the absolutely fascinating things is that everybody in the world shoots at us. I went through *The New York Times* two weeks ago, looking for grammatical errors. The reason I did was that an Op-Ed page piece said television is full of people who speak ungrammatically. I read the piece, and I said, gee whiz, that's probably true. And I read *The New York Times* and by count, I found 141 grammatical errors. Now nobody goes through *The New York Times* looking for grammatical errors except nuts like me.

It is true, what you say is absolutely true. People ask dumb questions. My favorite is when they push the microphone forward and they say to the lady struggling out of the car that's just blown up, "How do you feel?" It is not true that this is unethical. What I think is true is that we edit badly. If we were smart, we would edit out—as reporters always do at the typewriter—the gaucheries of the past, and merely place the splendors of the commonly turned phrase.

Question: I'd like to ask, what about the policy makers and arguments over the general question of TV men helping to brutalize the society? We're having the same problem in some developing countries where you find the TV cameramen focusing, for example, where there is a demonstration. Maybe that could be two, three, or ten people making all the noise. And they train their cameras on these ten people as against maybe one thousand people who are quiet demonstrators. Is anything being done to offset this kind of treatment?

If we were smart, we would edit out . . . the gaucheries of the past, and merely place the splendors of the commonly turned phrase.

And secondly, there is this problem of American television exporting about 90 percent of their programs to the rest of the world, as compared to the developing countries, and importing about one percent. We find a cultural imbalance where we are fed with American things and God knows they are very often cowboy things or shows like that. And the Americans are not given a picture of the rest of the world—

Thomson: TV is helping to brutalize American society and through export, brutalize other societies. As an observer of television, do you want to think about it or not?

Press: Well, we've had some very good examples of this trouble in Boston recently when the schools have been desegregated. And there's been a very unusual attempt in Boston by the media and the black community through an outfit called the Boston Community Media Council to prepare for the coverage of the opening day of school and to attempt in ways that may even be slightly dubious, when you look at them carefully, to agree that the coverage—at least on television, and to some extent even in newspapers—should be as careful as possible in order to avoid inflaming people by concentrating on those very isolated instances.

There's been a lot of talk about it—a conspiracy to distort. And it's most interesting that the networks, when they came into town, paid no attention to this strenuous effort that was being made by the local television stations and without exception, they—the networks—focused on the violence in South Boston.

Comment. That's not true.

Press: It certainly was true of the pieces I saw.

Wald: I happen to have looked into this because this is a very interesting question. In Boston, we covered the South

Boston reaction to busing and a lot of people got upset about it. In the same programs that we covered the reaction in South Boston, we covered reaction in other parts of Boston where busing was working well. We pointed out that South Boston was the only place in Boston where it wasn't working well. The complaints I've gotten about the coverage uniformly, without exception, have concentrated on the fact, and said, you only covered the bad parts. We have covered Birmingham, Alabama, where for the first time there is such busing, and Denver, Colorado, where for the first time there is such busing. Both of those worked extremely well. And we did a large program on that.

People don't notice. The truth of what we do is that people do not watch television with their minds, they watch it with their stomachs.

Some years ago, in this country, there was a thing called the Kent State shooting, or massacre, depending on which side you're on. And the father of one of the girls killed appeared on television the following day. He lives in Pittsburgh, and he came out of a low ranch house, obviously expensive, and stood on his front lawn, and he said something.

Afterwards, I personally received 185 letters. My network received more than 2,000 letters saying, Why did you let that man on the air to inflame passions and say those terrible things about the President? I was absolutely startled. So I got out the text of what he said, and what he said was, "President Nixon, I voted for you. I support you. I think you are doing the right thing. My daughter was killed by the National Guard at Kent State. Surely there must have been an error. Would you appoint a commission to take a look at what happened?"

What happened was that because this father appeared without a tie and on the lawn and he was hot and sweating, people saw only a man who was yelling about something. True, he was yelling about the fact that his daughter was shot. But what happened to the country was, it was so appalled at what happened that it thought he was saying,

. . . We are badly misled by pictures.

"President Nixon, you did a terrible thing." I called him afterwards.

Question: How do you overcome the fact that those things most important to the American television viewing public may not be the most visually attractive, and thereby, a lot of junk gets on television that's not really necessary, simply because it looks good?

Salant: I'm glad you asked that question, because it gives me the opportunity to depart a little from my revered col-

league, Dick Wald. No, I agree with you. I do not attach the importance that Dick does to the value of pictures. I think we are badly misled by pictures. I think the talk we hear from the show-biz elements of television saying that a program was lousy because it has nothing but talking heads is nonsensical. I find nothing more exciting than talking heads if the heads have something to say. I have repeated over and over to my own people that while occasionally a picture may be worth a thousand words, more often a few well-chosen words are worth a thousand pictures.

What happened in our business originally is that the first people who came into television news were the people from the old theatrical news film, and then the producers who replaced them were from show business. And there always had to be movement, and excitement, and pictures. But I love talking heads, if they say what I like to hear.

Comment: The thing that strikes me about this whole conversation and this whole issue is that when we talk about the press and when we talk about television, we really are talking about apples and oranges. They're really not the same. What television journalists do and what radio journalists do is very very different from what print journalists do. That ought to be recognized. There is a dichotomy here. And I speak from the experience of working with both sides. You cover a press conference, and the guy who's doing it for TV is talking to his producer, he's talking to his light man, he's talking to half a dozen other guys, and he's putting together a "show"—a one-minute, a two-minute, a 30-second show. The rest of us are busy doing some digging, or some background. We're thinking about tomorrow's edition and we're getting some depth and some perspective; we're writing a very different thing. We're presenting some very different news. Ralston-Purina and

TV shows things as they happen, and that isn't necessarily how they are.

Swift are both in the food business, but one is, you know, feeding animals and one is feeding people.

As to the other points that were made, I don't think, as someone said tonight, that TV shows things as they are. TV shows things as they happen, and that isn't necessarily how they are. And I'll refer only to President Nixon's resignation speech, to show how that point can be made. What the President had to say to the nation on national TV was not at all the way things were.

Comment: I should like to align myself completely with everything just said, and refer back to the beginning statement by the gentleman from NBC who inferred, at least, that the written word is a kind of nebulous, ethereal thing

and that the picture, or the visual experience, is the concretion in which we apprehend stark reality. I don't agree with that, but I would like to hear more from him on this point.

Wald: I didn't mean—and I'm sorry you took it to mean—that pictures are superior to words. They're just different. Word is abstract. Words can handle things that TV can't. They can handle economics; TV can't. They can handle art and literature; TV has a hard time, except by showing the concrete thing itself. And these are problems. But you're wrong, about at least one or two things. One of those things is the feeling you have that because we put the President on that Thursday night people believed it. You cannot expect that the world is dumber than you are. A fool is born every minute. But we've got 230 million people. That's more than one a minute. A lot of people understand what happened.

Comment: Perhaps that was a bad example. Maybe I could have taken the steps of the courthouse in New York when John Mitchell was acquitted and his lawyers announced that justice was done.

Is it not inherent in [television] to create personalities who are actors in the news. . . .

Wald: Fine. Did People believe that?

Answer: I think so.

Wald: You're wrong. You're just wrong.

Question: I am very concerned about this whole business. It seems to me that televising the speech itself wasn't the issue, so much as all the bullshit that surrounded it, before and afterward. What about the commentary that seemed to free Nixon from all sorts of guilts?

Wald: Now wait a minute, wait a minute. I don't know what you've done in your life. I don't know what you've covered—elections, conventions, murders, and or anything else. I've always had the luxury of time, but you get the President on and then afterward John Chancellor says, "I don't think—" and I am quoting directly, because I remember it. He says, "I do not think that the President's words express a true view of the history of the last week, do you?" And Carl Stern says, "well, the President said that he has lost the confidence of Congress; in fact, however, he was about to be impeached. . . ." Then we go on and we talk about that.

Now what the hell did your publication do about that, that night? Did it do anything better a week later? It did not. I happen to have read every word of it, and it didn't do a damn thing better. It did more, but better?

Comment: Well, one of those two networks also called it statesman-like.

Salant: You get us coming and going. When a guy says something you don't like, and he's a damn good journalist—it was Dan Rather who said that—you say the network said it. When he says something you do like, it's to spite us. Now this was live, ad-lib, spontaneous. Dan had been told all through the day that this resignation speech was going to be a bitter attack on Dan Rather and CBS news, and he forgot. That's what I was talking about. We have no time to edit. That went over the air as it popped into his head and out of his mouth. And what are we going to do? You say, the network said. What did Roger Mudd say that night? He said it was a lousy speech and that Nixon left out all the important considerations, and never indicated any conscience about being guilty.

* * * * *

Question: Is it not inherent in the medium to create personalities who are actors in the news, and don't you think that really is what happened?

Salant: What you're saying is we cannot give our reporters who appear more or less regularly—the Dan Rathers covering the White House or the anchor-men, or so on—the kind of anonymity that a newspaper can give by a by-line. If you could think of some way of putting a mask over these guys, or something, I'd be delighted. Maybe they'd be unhappy.

... People do not watch television with their minds, they watch it with their stomachs.

Dan is acutely aware of this problem; he's spoken about it over and over again, about how unhappy he was over the Houston incident and the obviously personal attacks.

John Erlichman came up to see me for breakfast in 1971, and in the midst of small talk he said, Get that guy Rather out of here and send him back to Texas. Now who is putting Dan Rather front and center? Not Dan. But if you read the transcripts and the memos that Lowell Weicker put in, it was the administration. Now how do you duck that? It is a miserable thing. I wish we didn't have this front-and-center. I don't know how to avoid it.

Elijah Parish Lovejoy 1802-1837

Born in Albion, Maine, a graduate of Colby College in 1826 and an editor who crusaded strongly against slavery, Elijah Parish Lovejoy is America's first martyr to freedom of the press. He published strong anti-slavery views in the *Observer*, a weekly in St. Louis; and continued his crusading journalism at Alton, Illinois, where mobs destroyed three of his presses. He was killed the day before his 35th birthday while guarding another new press. His martyrdom helped advance the cause of abolition in the North.

Wald: Did you read the Woodward-Bernstein book? Did you read the comment by them—I don't know which one said it—that they didn't go to the White House conferences because they were afraid they would become the center of the story, rather than the reporters? Well, when they came front and center, they became part of the story.

Salant: I'm afraid Jim Thomson knew something that I didn't when he originally proposed to call this print vs. broadcast journalism. I wanted to substitute "and," but he was right. I'm very sorry that there is this hardcore of print contempt for what we do, which I think is based on nothing more than the fact that you have every right to have pride in your end of the business, just as we have pride in our end of the business. I think you're generalizing from the worst that you've seen. And it isn't true. Nobody who's worth his salt in broadcast journalism—and I think most of the people are—will take a happening and just let it go at that without trying to check it out, without trying to give it context, interpretation and background. Nobody takes things just as they are.

The good ones in our business perform the same function and do it the same way that the good guys do it in your business. And there are just as many bad ones in ours as in yours. Don't say the bad ones are typical of us, because I won't say the bad ones are typical of you.

Thomson: Salant has done a very good thing. In the famous Salant-Thomson correspondence, which I have mentioned earlier, there was a suspicion of contempt on the part of the print people about the broadcast people. Tonight, at this moment, that suspicion is confirmed. We shall consider this subject at future meetings. ~

Notes on the Press

James Reston gave the following address at Colby College, Waterville, Maine in March at a Convocation honoring him as the 22nd Elijah Parish Lovejoy Fellow.

I thank you for asking me to speak here in the name of Elijah Parish Lovejoy. I don't know about you, but I find this is a startling and even intimidating name. Elijah was a biblical prophet, who fought against the permissive weaknesses of human nature—sort of a Bill Buckley without television. Lovejoy's middle name, Parish, means an administrative unit of the church. I can only assume that his mother and father named him Elijah Parish because, with a last name of Love-Joy, they were a little worried and were trying to hold him back.

Anyway, he was faithful to his name. He was a "great helper" to people in need and "herald" or reporter of a better age. He was not only a reporter and teacher, but an ordained Presbyterian minister—an ominous combination bound to lead to trouble. He used the school-room, the press, and the pulpit to abolish slavery and stamp out sin. It's funny to hear young people talk these days about the "New Journalism"—meaning reporting with a moral purpose—for this was what Elijah Parish Lovejoy was doing when he was murdered in Alton, Illinois, in 1837, two days before his 35th birthday.

So much for history. But what does Lovejoy have to say to us today? Is his crusading spirit still alive in American journalism now, and is it relevant to the present age?

I believe it is very much alive and very relevant. I am not an enthusiastic cheerleader for heroic personal journalism. The great danger for journalists as well as politicians where I work is that they take themselves too seriously and begin to think they *are* what they merely represent. Also, I don't especially recommend martyr journalism. I prefer reporters and editors who keep digging for the facts and who chip away day by day and year by year at human folly rather than young heroes who get themselves killed at 35. Even so, the rising generation of American reporters is now writing one of the great chapters of American journalism.

It was not the Congress or the courts that first brought the facts of Vietnam, Watergate and the abuses of Presi-

dential power to the front of the American mind in the last decade but the press—and not the press in general but a few papers and a few reporters, some of whom, like Lovejoy, lost their lives in the struggle.

It may be, however, that we need intellectual vigilance now more than barricade journalism, and particularly the gift of seeing, and seeing in time, trends that may affect the life of the world.

For example, we were comparatively fore-handed about Vietnam and Watergate, but woefully slow about the energy crisis. All the facts were available to us months and even years before the Arab oil embargo. They were published in the official reports of the Federal Government, the United Nations and even the Petroleum Institute every month. With seven percent of the world's population in the United States, we were consuming over 30 percent of the world's gas and oil. We knew something about the law of supply and demand, but were insisting on selling our products to the highest bidder while assuming that the oil producers wouldn't do the same.

... We were ... fore-handed about Vietnam and Watergate, but woefully slow about the energy crisis.

After all, the United States and Canada control more of the world's surplus food than the Arabs do of the world's surplus oil, but for years we assumed that there would be plenty of cheap food and fossil fuel, even when we knew that the population of the world was increasing at an alarming rate and learning that malnutrition and starvation were not inevitable but intolerable.

This was a problem not for heroic editors who could confront the mobs, but for thoughtful editors who could read and analyze the facts and trends, but we didn't really pay much attention to the problem until the Arab embargo forced us to line up at the corner gas station.

Maybe we were running after the wrong thing. Pascal once said that most of the evils of life arose "from man's being unable to sit still in a room." Walter Bagehot, editor of the *Economist* of London, and one of the truly great journalists of his time, also suggested 100 years ago that reflection was often more important than hasty action.

"Civilized ages," he said, "inherit the human nature which was victorious in barbarous ages, and *that* nature is, in many respects, not at all suited to civilized circumstances." A main and principal excellence in the early times of the human races was the impulse to action.

The problems before men then were plain and simple. The man who worked hardest, the man who killed the most

deer . . . was the man who succeeded; the nation which was quickest to kill its enemies . . . was the nation which survived.

"But the issues of life are plain no longer," Bagehot thought. "To act rightly in modern society requires a great deal of previous study, a great deal of assimilated information, a great deal of sharpened imagination." Be careful of this "excessive activity," he suggested, this "passion for action," this impulse to "do something—anything" to avoid the tedious complication of thinking in advance.

"Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother men, not yet the new;
Ah, still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again."

I don't believe, like Lovejoy, that our main job is to preach, but to report, and by reporting, to teach. And not merely to report the events that are most interesting or dramatic, but the events that are most important to the lives of our readers and of the nation and the world. These events are often very complicated and boring, and while a newspaper can easily go broke by reporting what is significant rather than what's personal, or spicy, this is the primary responsibility of a serious newspaper.

On *The New York Times*, we put two million words a day through our hands and we print 100,000. We struggle and differ over what these 100,000 should be. Every time the cost of newsprint goes up \$5 a ton, it costs *The Times* almost a million and a half dollars a year. The cost of newsprint has gone up \$73.75 a ton in the last two years—from \$170 a ton to \$243.75 a ton—or \$21,387,000 a year in the cost of paper alone, not to mention cost of ink, which has risen like the cost of oil, heating, transportation and wages.

. . . A newspaper can easily go broke by reporting what is significant rather than what's personal or spicy. . . .

It is unfortunate, but it's a fact, that most of the privately-owned newspapers in the big cities of the capitalist world are in economic trouble. They can make more money by manufacturing newsprint with no words on it than by organizing a world-wide staff to produce and distribute a modern newspaper. So their first duty is to survive in a savagely competitive world. Only thus can they grapple effectively with the philosophy of news and opinion.

The intellectual demands on the modern newspaper, like the economic demands, are far greater than in Lovejoy's time. The issues of industrial societies are far more complicated. The scope of their responsibilities is far wider. The dangers of inaccuracy are more incessant and the consequences of inaccuracy more serious.

The men and women covering the present economic crisis today have to be far more knowledgeable than their predecessors of my generation who covered the economic depression of the Thirties. In a world of almost instantaneous communication, where the economy of one country affects the economies of many other countries, the errors of reporters are not only easier to make but harder to retrieve.

My generation of reporters was trained in the county court-houses and police courts of an isolated country. It seemed enough then on the average paper to publish the official record of what happened—which was usually the news of conflict and contention, of what went wrong in the community. Now, when the price of oil in the Persian Gulf affects every household and business down the street, and when conflicts in Southeast Asia take the lives of 55,000 young Americans, we have to see news in a much wider perspective.

Modern inventions have also added greatly to the intellectual responsibilities of the modern press. For example, the invention of the atomic bomb and the intercontinental ballistic missile required that the President of the United States be given powers never imagined by the Founding Fathers. For the Republic could be destroyed in less time than it would take to get the members of Congress through the downtown traffic in Washington.

It followed from this, however, that if the President had the power to save or risk the life of the nation, or to order an atomic counter-attack that might even risk the future of the human race, the health, judgment, character, and emotional balance of any President had to be watched with the utmost vigilance.

Even a generation ago, we did not pay all that much attention to such questions. Woodrow Wilson was paralyzed and incapacitated for months in the White House without the American people really knowing what had happened. We know, now, just from looking at the photographs that were available at the time, that Franklin Roosevelt was a dying man between Yalta and the election of 1944, but the reporters, the Congress and even his own family were deceived, and he was elected overwhelmingly for a fourth term and lived for only a few short months thereafter.

The moral questions before the press now are certainly no less pressing than in the age of Lovejoy. He regarded slavery as an abomination in America and a rebuke to the nation's proclaimed ideals, but every age has its own form of slavery. Most of the human race lives today under authoritarian governments of one sort or another, which is a form of political slavery. Most of the human family suffers from malnutrition today, which is a form of physical slavery. Most women in the world today are bearing more children than they can nourish or educate, which is a form

The Lovejoy Award

To honor and preserve the memory of Elijah Parish Lovejoy, Colby College annually selects a member of the news profession to receive the Lovejoy Award. The recipient may be an editor, reporter or publisher whose integrity, craftsmanship, intelligence and courage have, in the opinion of the judges, contributed to the country's journalistic achievement.

Through his columns Mr. Reston has become one of the most effective voices of the conscience of our nation, and his sharply discerning analyses of domestic and international issues have guided and influenced the thinking of men and women in the street, on Capitol Hill, and in the White House.

In previous years four Nieman Fellows have received the Lovejoy Award: in 1953, Irving Dilliard (NF '39) then the editor, editorial page, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*; in 1959, Clark R. Mollenhoff (NF '50), then a reporter for the Cowles Publications in Washington, D.C.; in 1963, Louis M. Lyons (NF '39) then curator of the Nieman Foundation for journalism; and in 1967, Edwin A. Lahey (NF '39, now deceased) then chief of the Washington bureau, Knight Newspapers, Inc.

of sexual slavery. And even in our own and other advanced societies, the cry of "women's liberation" implies not only inequality but a kind of intellectual and economic slavery.

Lovejoy had a simpler problem but a clearer mind. He thought we had to abolish slavery or be weakened and maybe even destroyed by it, but the problem still exists in different and more subtle forms in the world, many of them beyond our control, but it seems to me we could do with some of Lovejoy's moral fervor today and even with a more abolitionist spirit about modern slavery in the American press today.

I am not proposing here that we form a world abolitionist society and take to the barricades to impose population control, cheap gas, limitless supplies of food and redistribution of wealth on the world, for these things are obviously beyond our control.

But I am suggesting that economic isolation in the last quarter of the 20th Century could be as dangerous for America as political isolation was during the first two world wars of the first half of the century, and that, even if the press cannot abolish over-population and malnutrition in the world, we should be paying more attention to it than we are.

What we are beginning to see since the oil crisis is that, for the first time in history, a truly global economic system

is coming into being. It has long been true that the life of the advanced industrial nations affected the life of the poor nations that depended on our products and bought them at our prices.

Now the poor nations, having learned the simple lesson of supply and demand, are organizing cartels and demanding the highest possible price not only for oil but for other essential raw materials. Thus while it is clear that no nation—not even the United States—can solve the problems of peace, population, pollution, safety in the skies, trade and monetary stability—by itself we have not yet adjusted our minds to this emerging interdependent global economic system.

This creates a special problem for newspapers. Hiring and keeping trained people capable of reducing all this complicated diversity to some kind of identity is an expensive business. Also, the news and explanation of these complex matters is often precisely the news people don't want to read. In fact, probably the most prosperous newspapers today are those who are concentrating on local news in monopoly situations where they can use all the machines of the modern printing revolution without interference by the unions. The big papers worrying about global issues and union conflicts are certainly not encouraged by their earnings to concentrate more money and time on the coming problems of the world.

The press has come through a difficult period in the last five years in fairly good shape, but this is an age of disbelief when all institutions from the church and the university to the press are under attack. In this atmosphere, it will probably be wise for us to be as critical of ourselves as we are of many others.

Let me be more specific. We are very conscious of our rights under the first article of the Bill of Rights but we have not yet sorted out what to do when the freedom of the press and the freedom or privacy of the individual conflict. In the last few years of the political scandals, for example, we have often been almost reckless in publishing information

The moral questions before the press now are certainly no less pressing than in the age of Lovejoy.

out of the properly secret proceedings of grand juries. This is bringing us into increasing difficulty with the courts, and one of our shortcomings is that we have no adequate or accepted forum where we can hammer out our own code of ethics. Either we must reach some professional consensus on this or the Congress and the courts will do it for us.

Second, this is not only an age of disbelief and mistrust, but an age of ambiguity, and we are not very good at

handling ambiguity. I rather envy Lovejoy. When he was around here, the population of the United States was less than 15 million, now we are over 210 million. It is not easy, even in prosperous times, to find 2 million new jobs every year just to keep up with an expanding work force, or to find houses, schools and other essentials for such an expanding population, or to know exactly what to do when we have inflation, recession, social turmoil and a violent world all at the same time.

In our comments on these intractable problems, I sometimes think we could do with a little more perspective and a little more generosity. For example, we are now in the last year of the third quarter of the 20th century, or the first year of the last quarter, depending on how you read the calendar. In the first quarter of the century, we had to

. . . People . . . do not believe in much of anything these days, but they believe in believing.

endure the first great world war; in the second quarter, a second world war and a savage world-wide depression, which destroyed the old empires and whatever political order there was. In the third quarter, we had the Korean and Vietnam wars, the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance, and the emergence of Japan and the European Common Market.

But while there were only twenty years between the two world wars that almost wrecked Western Civilization, that civilization has survived and despite the Cold War, we have avoided a world war or catastrophe for more than 30 years. It is right that we should concentrate on our problems, but these positive developments are also news. I am not arguing for journalistic cheerleaders, but editors and commentators are not baseball umpires either. They cannot just shout "ball" or "strike" after each pitch by the President. The problems are too complicated for that.

Your neighbor and my friend and colleague Russ Wiggins has recently pointed out to the Maine State Bar Association that, between 1950 and 1973, the people with civilian jobs in this country increased from 62,208,000 to 83,299,000; median income rose from \$5,757 to \$11,116; Federal expenditures on education soared from \$7 billion annually to \$18 billion; home ownership in the fifties and sixties increased from 57 percent to 65 percent.

Now we are in the worst economic recession and perhaps more important, the worst spiritual depression since World War II, but the record of this country demonstrates that it can solve problems. More than that, the record shows that its greatest periods of progress have come out of intense conflict. The abolition of slavery which Lovejoy gave his

life for came only after a terrible civil war, the abolition of American isolation only after two disastrous world wars, the abolition of a reckless form of capitalism only after the depression of the Thirties, and the abolition of Presidential arrogance and defiance of the Constitution only after Vietnam and Watergate. It is, I think, critically important that temporary set-backs at home and abroad do not impair the self-confidence of the American people, and the historical perspective of the American press, radio and television are critical to that confidence.

It is one of the odd paradoxes of America that our people have been the most confident of any in the world, but have always had a weakness for pessimistic predictions. I suppose Walt Whitman was our most confident and hopeful poet, yet over 100 years ago, he wrote the following:

"Never was there perhaps," he said, "more hollowness at heart than at present and here in the United States. Genuine belief seems to have left us. The underlying principles of the states are not believed in. . . The spectacle is appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy throughout. The men believe not in the women nor the women in the men. The great cities reek with scoundrelism. It is as if we were somehow endowed with a vast and more and more thoroughly appointed body, and then left with little or no soul."

So much for the good old days. The only difference between that and the present mood of pessimism is that the old boys wrote better. I want to concede that we have made many mistakes in the press and have many weaknesses. I think, however, that if Lovejoy were alive today he would be rather proud of the press of America. Our main problem, like that of most institutions, is to gain or regain the confidence of the people. They do not believe in much of anything these days, but they believe in believing. My hope is that in your generation, if not in mine, we can win their trust.

Mr. Reston, a member of the Board of Trustees of The New York Times Company, and co-owner of The Vineyard Gazette (Edgartown, Mass.), has twice won the Pulitzer Prize. He is a New York Times syndicated columnist.

Coming: Reflections on Robert Frost

The Black Press

in America

Editor's Note: Continuing our practice of taping Nieman seminars from time to time, we present the following transcript of a session with Louis Martin, Vice President and Editor, Chicago Daily Defender, and Moses J. Newsome, Executive Editor, The Afro-American. The proceedings have been lightly edited by David V. Hawpe, Associate Editor and editorial writer, the Courier-Journal, Louisville, Kentucky, and a Nieman Fellow in the class of 1974-75.

Moses Newsome: The black press in America actually started—the first paper—about March 16, 1827, with a publication known as *Freedom's Journal*. That was in New York City. I think the newspaper's name sort of gives an indication of what it was all about—it was called *Freedom's Journal* and that in a nutshell is what the paper was about. Russell, who was editor of the paper, said in a front page editorial of the very first issue that what we would like to do as black people is to be able to speak for ourselves, and I think this was rather indicative of the purpose of the paper. From that period, I suppose, until about the Civil War there were approximately 40 black newspapers all over the United States. . . . Between the Civil War period and now there have been somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 black newspapers started in the United States.

Today we've got somewhere in the area of, I suppose, 200 black publications in the United States, and they are located in something like 38 of the states. If you read *Editor and Publisher*, you probably noticed a little story a few weeks ago saying that a lot of the black papers are owned by whites. That was of course inaccurate. Very few of them—almost none of them—are owned by whites. I think what that article actually referred to was something Sam Scott said. He's a special assistant to President Ford and is a member of the Scott family which owns the *Atlanta Daily World*. He was saying that of the 400 or 500 radio stations that are black-oriented, all but around a third are owned by whites, and some reporter may have mistaken the story.

Rather basically I suppose the black press in the United States has been what has generally been called "protest" newspapering. Well, I do think that it's sort of crusading newspapering—it's a paper that keeps Americans aware of the fact that America is not living up to the Constitution of

the United States—it's not living up to the ideals on which the country is set, as far as citizenship goes. Those deficiencies which we like to play up in the papers and discuss in the papers, and make people aware of, demand that changes are made, and let people know the frustrations and the concerns of black people. We number now about 25 million. Those are the best estimates we have, and that figure, as I'm sure most of you know, represents about as many black people as any country has, I suppose, except Nigeria and a couple of others. . . . Not only do they represent the numbers, they also represent financially a stronger nation than most of these other nations would be. That's the people we normally try to speak on behalf of. . . .

Generally we have the kind of problem that most low-profit organizations have . . . we don't have nearly as many staff people as we would like to have. We don't have the quality of staff persons that we would like to have, and we serve sort of as a training place for the bigger dailies in Baltimore and other places. They pay higher salaries, and when they need a good person they call the *Afro-American* newspaper or come around . . . and we're back into recruiting again.

I suppose you will have questions about things that you want to talk about, and they will give you better insight

. . . Everybody gets objective according to his own cultural background and what his interests are, what groups he goes with, so there are a lot of hassles about objectivity and what is and what is not. . . .

than my going into a lot of nonsense at the top of this thing. But basically we are still the kind of newspaper that is out demanding things on behalf of all Americans—specifically that 25 million who are black. We are about the business of talking about busing and the kind of coverage we're getting in the Boston papers and others. We have busing problems. Whether or not we are objective and whether the other papers are objective—there are questions about that. I think everybody sort of gets objective according to his own cultural background and what his interests are, what groups he goes with, so there are a lot of hassles about objectivity and what is and what is not, and we can get into that as this goes along. Now I would defer to Mr. Martin.

Louis Martin: I'll tell you I think Mr. Newsome has done a good job covering the papers. . . . I think from the point of view of those that are not familiar with it, some perspective might be gained in looking at the so-called special interest publications in the United States. Look at the labor press,

the church press, any special interest media. Probably even the Italian press. I remember I was out of this business for ten years, and I was in politics in Washington. I'll never forget how wonderful it was when Joe Califano was made assistant to LBJ, because I sent all this stuff to *Il Progresso* in New York and it made every Italian newspaper in the United States. Headlines in Rome didn't do much good because you couldn't get many votes over there. But anyway you can look at it from the point of view of special publications and put the black press in perspective.

We have an issue as the labor press has, the Catholic or Jewish press has . . . and the foreign language press in the U.S., which is quite important in some respects. I think also it's important to remember that the black press considers itself more a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the general press. We bring, hopefully, to our constituency information and points of view that are not available anywhere else. And we touched upon the business of objectivity. Frankly, we believe in advocacy journalism, and we are advocating a point of view. And I think that we are in a society we call racist. We suffer indignities, and we are fighting against those indignities, and as black leadership we have reflected in our pages the whole story of the black leadership in this society. We have national problems, regional problems that reflect themselves in the papers. The black papers in the South—for instance, Louisiana, Georgia where I originally came from—are a little different than those in the North, and some of them are very local; some are very national.

. . . It's important to remember that the black press considers itself more a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, the general press.

And we spoke about the kind of financing that goes on, and I think it's interesting to recall a little history. Up until about 1905 most black newspapers were either house organs, or some institutional newspapers . . . and that tradition also persists to some extent. "Muhammad Speaks" is somewhat a subsidized house organ. But in 1905 (this is our operation) Robert S. Adams founded the *Chicago Defender*. They not only wanted to do good, but they wanted to do well. They went out to make a commercial operation out of the black press. They charged enough money to make the thing economically viable. But from 1905 to the present, we have had a black press that has been paying its way.

This business of who owns it. . . . I think this can be seen very clearly by perusal of the kinds of guys who have been in the business. We have had some very able men—the top of them—who recognized that financing and economics in this business are very important in order to make a real free enterprise. It has been a marginal operation. All

of them suffer from the lack of advertising copy. Today, particularly, it is tight because you can no longer exist on circulation revenue. There was a time, in the 40's and 50's, that the black press was dominated by three big national operations that were financially successful. There was the *Pittsburgh Courier* operation which was a national operation, the *Afro*, and the *Chicago Defender*. We had a circulation in the *Chicago Defender* that was basically in the Middle West and the Middle South. The *Afro* dominated the Eastern Seaboard, and the *Pittsburgh Courier* was sort of inbetween with considerable readership in the West Coast and California. Those three big nationals dominated the scene in the '40's and '50's. . . .

David Hawpe (Nieman Fellow): I wonder if it's possible to characterize the editorial policy of the black press in

. . . About 19 or 20 million kids in this country are bused to school every day, for reasons which have nothing to do with desegregation. . . .

this country, particularly with respect to busing? Obviously there's some dichotomy within the black community with respect to busing, with the NAACP and a good many established leaders on one side and perhaps some more militant people taking a different view. I wonder if it is possible to characterize the black press editorial policy generally, in this sort of militant to non-militant spectrum, and particularly with respect to busing?

Newsome: I don't see a great deal of divided opinion in the press. As you indicate, there is some in the community to a great extent. There may be some division, but I think the basic position is that the Supreme Court has ruled that busing is a tool to be used in the desegregation of schools of the country. We take the very basic position that desegregation in the schools is part of educating young people to live together . . . that unless you are willing to do this you are both violating the law and maintaining that situation that the Koerner Commission found when it said we have two societies—one black and one white. You get into the degrees of what you can do in a city that's like Washington, D.C., which is 80% or something black, or even Baltimore where it's 53% black now and most of the kids are black. Those kinds of hassles go on and on . . . you know, where do the numbers stop? You may get some questions where somebody questions some ruling from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. But very basically we take the position that it's an ongoing process which has to go forward. And I think you get a lot of

jumping about and twisting the issues about, I think mostly in the white press. The facts of the matter are that about 19 or 20 million kids in this country are bused to school every day, for reasons which have nothing to do with desegregation—racial desegregation. They have done this for years and years—and years.

James Thomson (*Nieman Curator*): It's the great American tradition, to get on a school bus.

Newsome: I rode the buses down in Florida when I was a kid; you know, I rode the black bus and the white guy who lived up the corner from me rode the white bus. We were good friends, and he'd drive by and wave, but we couldn't ride the same bus. But people have been riding buses. Nobody—including the President of the United States and all the people who argue otherwise—has indicated how busing affects kids in a negative way, whether mentally or physically. Now you have all kinds of arguments about you're going to set these kids back, you're going to do that. But the basic argument is they don't want to desegregate the schools. And I think the black newspapers are rather firm in their position on this. You have a lot of different ideas—organizations such as CORE, for instance—who'd like for blacks to come in and own the schools and operate the schools in their areas and this kind of thing. There are some militants who take that viewpoint.

Hawpe: Do black newspapers take that viewpoint very often?

Newsome: Not very often because it's not feasible. You know, if you've got the school budget, you've got the city in your control and CORE doesn't have. You're not going to give some other group your money and whatnot to run these schools. It's not a feasible proposition at all.

Thomson: Mr. Martin, do you want to respond?

Martin: I've been trying to think while he's been talking . . . and I can't add anything—I agree with him completely. I don't know of any black newspaper that has taken a different position on this. There may be some.

Thomson: Is there no black separatist press to—

Martin: I should have said this earlier. There is the National Newspaper Publishers' Association to which practically every black newspaper belongs, and on policy matters—they are pretty unanimous, and this is one of them. Matter of fact, the slogan all of them use is that busing is a forced issue: it's not the bus, it's us. Now I'm not saying you can't find some papers somewhere, but . . .

John Maclean (*Nieman Fellow*): You must be feeling first of all the effects of black-oriented television stations, and secondly, efforts by what are called white papers to cover the whole black community. . . .

Martin: It's a factor that is important. However, there are several things that are not covered. . . . You take the three I's: to investigate, inform, and interpret. Our paper, for instance, opens its pages to all of the leadership types . . . left or right . . . any sort of leadership view you can see on those pages. Giving voice to points of view that we . . . might editorialize against. It opens a door. Secondly, you take the coverage of police matters. This is one of the things we've discovered: a police story involving a black who is not well known will not get much of a play in any of these papers—that is, the downtown papers. If the suburban girl is raped, it's a headline, and details, and they have the feature writers, they get everything . . . the works for them. A similar situation in the black community is not such a play. And our police reporter, who has an office downtown with all the other police reporters, is often chided by the guys at the "*Trib*" or the "*Sun-Times*"—"Why do you play these cheapies?" They call them cheapies. Well, there are black murders or black crimes that they consider cheapies because those involved are of no stature in the total community, and so it's the point of view you see. Similarly, the community life is not represented because the marriages—births and deaths and marriages in the black community—don't really mean much to those pages . . . the sort of community pages in the *Trib* and *Sun-Times*. The black guy who is a bigshot and is well known, and he dies, we give him the works. So you've got two things: you've got the protest business and then you have pure community coverage. I think that Newsome made a good point—we consider ourselves protest papers, but if you read the papers very carefully I would say 10% of the lineage is on protest and 90% of the lineage is all really community events: what is happening, births, marriages, deaths and all of those things

How much would the black community demand from the white community if there was not a black press?

that make up the community life you see. And I'm not saying that they (white newspapers) can't duplicate that to some extent, but given the space demands for metropolitan coverage where would you put it? Do you see what I mean: You can't give all that space to Kenilworth, Winnetka and all the social doings of the elite and still do that with blacks, except put out another paper. It's like *The New York Times*, you know like New York City. Can you imagine a city the

size of New York with, you know, two papers? It's ridiculous. But what happens is, *The New York Times* has 90,000 circulation in the Bronx. It's unbelievable. So you have to have all these community papers in New York. Some indication of what's going on, you've got about 40 or 50 communities in which to do a job. It's just physically impossible to do that whole job in one respect.

Secondly is this whole business of a point of view. . . . We're very much opposed to some issues that the *Trib* and the *Sun-Times* are interested in, like building another monument on the lake, or a sports arena, which take up some space, and which we very much object to. And we usually fight them on these issues. Right now there is a big fight on the county hospital situation run by a black guy . . . downtown papers have one point of view. If they put out a black newspaper they have got to make up their mind which way they're going on this thing, you see what I mean? So I think I'm not saying it can't be done, but we know the challenge is there, and I think we in the print media have suffered . . . in the black press as all print media have suffered.

As a matter of fact, most daily newspapers today—white—are glorified shopping guides. Take the department store ads out, and in six months you wouldn't have a damn thing left. There is nothing left in the daily paper. You see it's a shopping guide, and if you examine the circulations, this is the way you get all the sales. You know, you go to market from your daily paper. . . . I think the daily press—the print media—is in trouble. I know that the *Trib*, the *Daily News* from New York, the *Trib* in Chicago—you can't carry the damn thing home, it's so thick. But if you take all of the ads out, you have about six pages left of news. I think they average six original stories in the average daily in America. Eleven is about the limit. The rest of it is syndicated junk that they've already heard on TV earlier.

Newsome: I think he covered that very well; I'd just like to make a couple of comments. When we say a supplement, I don't think we mean that we pass up the key issues that the black press speaks most effectively to. I mean that we don't devote the kind of space to the Vietnam war . . . perhaps we should have, earlier. We don't get all the taxes and all those kinds of things that are important. I think this point made of interests and where a person's loyalty lies. . . . I think that's the critical thing, and I think that's the kind of thing you would have to face if you do go into black publications in Chicago. I think he who owns the publication determines what the policies are, and white America very often sees things differently. . . .

Since you're from Chicago, I think of a good example of what I see happens in the press. There's a case a few years ago when the Black Panthers who were a very unpopular

group—there was this raid, which I think was in December, an early morning raid. They went in and shot up a lot of Black Panthers. You know, every black editor in the United States woke up the next morning thinking, "Hey, there's something wrong." The white press in Chicago . . . basically went along with what the police said. Hardly questioned it at all. I mean this was one of the most obvious setups. You know all you had to do was look at any of these doors to see which way the bullets went and which way they didn't go. You even had these big network TV stations going into Chicago restaging this fake shootout, and blasting it all over America. Almost idiotic . . . actually idiotic type of coverage. Any cub reporter, if he had the interest—but the people who were handling the coverage were keyed into the thing that the Black Panthers were horrible people . . . and the police department of Chicago's made up of fine, upstanding people. And if they say they went in there and took 'em that way, by George that's the way it happened. But that's not what's happening all the time. And when you start your own publication run by blacks, you're going to get that dichotomy there.

Or I was in South Africa a few months back doing some coverage, and one of the things that was interesting there, (was that) the black people in South Africa demanded their own papers. They want to put out their own papers, that they operate and run. They have papers in South Africa now, such as *The World*—that's a big paper . . . a gigantic size newspaper there, which is run by black South Africans, but it's owned by whites. . . . They don't cover a lot of news from other places in Africa. I think you have pretty much a similar situation in Chicago.

. . . Who owns the publication determines what the policies are, and white America very often sees things differently.

Frank Swoboda (Nieman Fellow): Where do you see the role of the black press and the half-hour black news on TV? Is it the same in terms of content? Is a white-owned station running black news the same?

Martin: I think it is according to the city. We have some black news programs that are very effective, and the guys who operate them are fairly honest and straightforward, and I couldn't accuse them of bias, and I think we in print media are faced with the fact that electronic media are competitive media. They give you the news first, and so forth. The argument we have—of course, it is true of all print media—is that they just can give you so much and sort of excite you about an issue, but for a definitive story you have got to find it in print media. Now there are some

communities, of course, which I have seen where black guys obviously are walking on ice. So I think it is a mixed bag, and I don't know whether it's quite comparable to newspapers themselves. I think I remember the major papers used to have a black page, and that black page was church news. After you got off the church news, every now and then you got issues. When I was a kid you knew that the black news was always on the left-hand corner of the back page, if there was any black news—as usual it was a police situation. You just knew where it was. When I was a student, for a summer I edited a paper called the *Savannah Journal*. So I went down to the *Savannah Morning News*, and I wanted a little help from a guy named Miller, who was a legendary editor himself. . . . I went down to Miller and I said, "Look here. There is this thing that I am trying to be helpful on and I was wondering if you could give me some material on it. I understand you get a lot of stuff." He says, "Yes, I get all the damn news you fellas could want, and I don't use a damn one of them." So I says, "Well what about letting me have some of them." He says, "Well, you'll have to chisel off AP when you mortise. I mean when you cut out—when you cast your mat. If you mortise out AP I'll let you have 'em, but if you ever violate me on it I'll stop it." So I had all of the black news the AP was selling, free, because the *Savannah Morning News* had a policy that they didn't even exist. This is history, but nevertheless it's not so much, you know. In fact certain blind spots exist right now.

Thomson: There were special pages in the South, to think about terminology, that were called "colored," or were they "Negro?"

Hawpe: In Lexington, Kentucky, they were called Colored Notes and News, and it carried a picture so you would be sure and get the idea. The lady who did it, they carried her picture so that nobody would make a mistake.

Martin: Well, I am sure that there are tremendous versions of ways to do it. But, it's funny how you could almost ignore the existence of half the population of the city because at that time they just didn't exist. Strange enough that is the same way it is today. There is no social life among blacks. Blacks live from nine to five. If you go into major cities, they don't exist. They live from nine to five, and whatever they do at night is murder. Now this sounds like a joke, but this is true. So that's why the black press has to exist. Because it's at least telling that they're out there, and where they live. So apart from the protest angle . . . what amazes me is that you can't find out what's going on in New York by any newspaper. If you read *The New York Times* you don't know what the hell is going on in Brooklyn, Bronx or any-

where. Very rarely do you get a story that really tells you what's happening in Brooklyn-Bronx. Except a big political story. *The Daily News* gives you the fluff and that is that. So this is the way journalism is operated. Do you know what I mean? So you have to have all of these little subsidiary, supplementary journals of one kind or another. This is unfortunate. Now electronic media is moving in on all of this.

Olusegun Osoba (Nieman Fellow): (Osoba asked the speakers to comment on the lack of coverage of African affairs in American newspapers—particularly the black press.)

Martin: . . . One of the factors of the communications problem is that being a commercial operation most editors and publishers lean to what is demanded. . . . We have not found a tremendous interest to sell these papers in African affairs, at least to an extent that would justify the expensive kind of correspondence, that is from a commercial point. This kind of money is so short that you get more

. . . You get more results by having correspondents in Washington than Nigeria. . . . This is unfortunate, because what is happening in Nigeria is fantastic.

results by having correspondents in Washington than Nigeria. Do you see what I mean? Now this is unfortunate, because what is happening in Nigeria is fantastic. Here one out of every four black Africans is a Nigerian, and they are members of OPEC, and this year the revenue of oil alone was close to ten billion dollars. It's the one super-power in Africa, which is providing even aid to other African states, and that is a fabulous operation.

The press situation, however, has some problems because of the government. The Minister of Information is an old friend of mine, and I am working with him now on this business of the sports festival that is coming up. We have got a great educational job to do ourselves both there and here. And I think we have been remiss in relating the linkages that exist, and the deep roots.

One fascinating parallel that nobody has paid any attention to is this whole business of black revolution. We hear all this stuff about black revolution in the United States, dating from the '60's, particularly the decade of the '60's. One of the most fascinating stories to me is that concurrent with that development was the same thing happening in Black Africa. In the '50's when we started with the '54 Supreme Court decision, the movement and the boycott down in Birmingham when Mrs. Parks was too tired to get up for that white man on the bus . . . at the same time

we had forces in Africa developing. In one year, 1960, 16 African nations went independent within one year.

One of the great stories that we have not done properly in the black press, or anywhere else as a matter of fact, is that we talk about what has happened in the American revolution, political schemes, and so forth, (yet the) whole imperial, the whole European empires of England, France, the Dutch and Portugal are literally dead in Africa. They all ended within a period of less than two decades. It is a fabulous story, and we have not done the job in the black press.

... What amazes me is that you can't find out what's going on in New York by any newspaper.

Newsome: I think it's sort of a two-way street there, and as far as explaining to Africans, you know, what's happened with blacks, I think that is your newspaper's responsibility and the other publications in Africa, to get over here, send someone over here, make arrangements to find out what black America is thinking over here. From the other point of view, as an Afro-American newspaperman, I take the position that the fate of all black people, the destiny of all black people in the world, is sort of an intertwined thing. We are interested in black people in Brazil; we are interested in black people in Africa. To the extent that our budget permits, and it's not a terribly big budget ... as an editor I sort of get into the habit of insisting on covering a great deal of African affairs. ... We supported the Nigerian position during the civil war when most of the daily papers over here were going crazy about Biafran babies and trying to save them. ... I think the idea is we send people here and there. Currently we take the news service out of Lagos, African Features. I get special stories from Africa whenever possible. Whenever possible at "*Afro-American*" we try to keep abreast. I hope to be at the Commonwealth Heads of Nations meeting in Jamaica in April to talk to some of the heads of states. When I was in Nigeria I had an hour interview with General Gowon, and we did a series of articles on him. We also get very concerned about some of the reporting we get from sources such as United Press International which we buy at Afro-American Newspapers. When I get concerned I write to the president of United Press International, particularly about some of the coverage we got during the Nigerian War for example. When it was resolved we all saw the one-sided thing. ...

Question: There was a time when there was nothing a black newspaper needed to do to win the allegiance of black communities. Has that changed?

Newsome: I think that of course is the major challenge ranked by the press today. It's not that the black press isn't needed. It's a very basic problem of facilities and being able to cope. Just to make this brief, I came to Baltimore in 1957. Black people could not eat at any of the lunch counters. I am saying that to you for this reason: because when you operate newspapers, a lot of your advertising revenue comes from big department stores. Now if you can't eat there, you know, they're not too particular about your shopping there—they figure you'll be there anyway. So they don't advertise in your papers. Now you do that for years and years and years and suddenly a few years ago we started breaking through. So now we get several pages of Sears, several pages of ... you know, a lot of the other people that are shopping are going out to the counties, out to the suburbs. But what has happened is, during these lean years you are operating this press that might be a little old. You also allow a situation to develop where you are paying reporters \$150 a week, \$175 a week, and downtown they had to start them at \$175 and he's going to \$300 a week. That creates problems. That creates all kinds of problems. It doesn't matter how much I know about what's happening to the tax situation or what this housing move means. You can't hire somebody for \$150 a week who just came out of school to go down and compete. And when you do hire this guy, you know, you work 50 hours a week teaching him how to write his name ... his own name. As soon as he learns how, the guy comes along from downtown and says, "You look pretty good. How about a \$350 a week?" And he's gone. So this is a problem.

The facts are—the picture is—that the things that you have to deal with now in order that the paper is effective and maintains that loyalty that you are asking from your readers, become much more sophisticated. How they do things. Why they do things. ... There's no reason why the NAACP should have to sue the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to tell these guys they've got to enforce the law, but these things are going on. Somebody has to be about the business of exposing these things and making it look good, making it sound good, and making it stand up. That's the kind of person we need to do the job, somebody you can pay, somebody you can keep. ... I get the feeling that the publishers and the owners are aware of the problem of not moving as fast as they may need to, to have that longevity and that loyalty that we were talking about.

Question: You mentioned earlier the fact that black population is about 25 million in this country, and I'm sure that if there were some way of accounting for, or pooling, black resources, we would have resources comparable to some developing nations, yet the recent appointment of Nathaniel Davis (as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs)

suggests we do not have an effective and strong black lobby in this country in terms of international events, particularly in relationship to Africa.

I'm trying to get at what you see as roles of the black press in this country. I can understand the limitations placed on the black press due to the fact that you have to respond to the needs of the local communities. I can understand the limitations due to circulation. . . . The only national paper I suppose you see is *Muhammad Speaks*. But I'm wondering how you define the role of the black press, specifically to the black community, in terms of educating through the interpretation of the relevant decisions made by this country in international relations. . . .

Newsome: I really can't give you what you're looking for, I don't think. There are several ways in which people deal with power, other kinds of systems. When you boil it down to the nuts and bolts, we don't have so much power. Newspapers hammering away. I think the gist of what we're trying to get at is the possibility that the black press could have stopped the Davis appointment. The black press couldn't have stopped it; the black people in America

. . . It's a paper that keeps Americans aware of the fact that America is not living up to the Constitution of the United States. . . .

couldn't have stopped it. If we had started earlier, maybe before the point where Kissinger had it on the table and was reluctant to pull it back . . . we don't have the kind of power the Jewish community has, to say, "Pull it back." The black press is hammering away at this. We are working on the problem of getting power. One of the difficulties I guess is that there is so much trouble controlling the economic sort of power. It is just so spread out and (not) susceptible to being moved by a political base. Every black congressman in the United States comes from the cities or the districts where there is a black newspaper. Every one—New York, Houston, Detroit, Baltimore—all these areas . . . we're building strength in the states, all of the states. All of this is the result of the 1965 Voting Rights Act which we are all fighting now to get extended. We are building that power base.

It's unfortunate about the Davis situation. There is a situation where this meant something not only for the black American but the black African, because the Organization for African Unity also took the same position . . . that they didn't want the man in that position. It was one of those things that couldn't be stopped.

Martin: I agree with what you say, but . . . I think we are clearly remiss ourselves in moving on that question be-

cause we have seventeen or so congressmen. There are 86 congressional districts in the United States, where we have a black population in excess of 25 million. I think you are right in the sense that we are building, but we could do far more. I think this is the challenge before us. We can't do it alone, but the truth is, in any respect, what is the foreign policy of black America? Is there a foreign policy? Congressman Diggs is the only one in Washington at the moment (he is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Affairs) who has done his homework lately. We have

. . . Most daily newspapers today—white—are glorified shopping guides.

got to do a lot of mobilizing of our own resources towards a very specific goal. This is the next step. I think that the ball is in our court. Because that could have not have happened had we marshalled the forces we already had. There's no way that 85 to 90 guys on that Hill were going to let that happen if they knew that by doing it they were subject to some real retaliation. And that's exactly what that black vote could do.

Question: By the very existence of the black press, you allow the white-dominated press to ignore your problems. How much of your existence is self-defeating? How much would the black community demand from the white community if there was not a black press? You service them, so the white press doesn't have to live up to its responsibility to the black community, to a great degree, I would think. How much of that do you feel?

Newsome: Well, I think it boils down to really what we were talking about a moment ago. And it boils down to what problems you have, where they are, and how can you bring about change. In Baltimore we have sufficient votes to do things. You can say you will not be mayor or you will be mayor depending on what extent you react. . . . Then you've got a different situation. But where you have a situation where you have no power to bring about the action that you're demanding, you have a very tough situation, because it's not that people ignore your point of view. I think the black press keeps the point of view abreast of the world. It's not forgotten.

But I get back again to the proposition that people have different interests. It simply doesn't matter at a certain point that people are jumping up and down saying, "But, hey, this is what the law says and this is what you said you would do." Once you've decided that no matter what the law says this is in the interests of white people or this is in the interests of some, you know, then you go or you move,

and that's a pretty hard thing to stop. It's not a question of whether the black press brings it to the attention of people or not. You know, that's getting back to busing. It's not whether people know about it. It's what's done about it that really counts. I think the black press, where it has the ability to bring people together so that they can wield power, you've got a different situation. Otherwise it's kind of tough. If you get back to the Davis appointment and this sort of thing, Kissinger and the Nixon Administration and all those people got together with the tar-baby policy.

Comment: In Boston it was Notes in the News.

Sheryl Fitzgerald (Nieman Fellow): Mr. Martin, you said about the black press being business, and there were a lot of questions asked that sort of tiptoed around the basic function of the black press. Could both you and Mr. Newsome speak to the philosophy of the black press that has led papers like the *Defender* into all-out crusades against things like the Chicago Housing Authority because a three-year-old baby fell out of a fourteen-story window because the screens in the housing project were not properly put in . . . or cases of police brutality that one of your reporters carried on for a number of years before the Chicago Democratic Convention at which white folks discovered that police beat people. I think if both of you would speak to this philosophy of those kinds of seemingly hopeless causes that have been carried on by black newspapers for innumerable decades, for which you have been ridiculed, I think that you would have

. . . Carrying on crusades gives the thing some rationale. This is why you are in business. . . .

answered most of the questions about why the black press had to exist, does exist and will fight like dogs to continue to exist.

Martin: The whole business of carrying on crusades gives the thing some rationale. This is why you are in business . . . because these issues are overlooked. There's another element too . . . when you're black, you're also poor. And this society is an economic society. Poor people are shafted as a routine matter. The reason I brought it up is the *Michigan Chronicle*, which was started in 1936. It was the only paper in Michigan that carried the message of the CIO in their attempt to organize. The daily press called every organizer that John L. Lewis sent in there all Communists, etc., and the only official organ of the UAW was the *Michigan Chronicle*, which was a black newspaper. Today everybody screams about short-changing on food stamps, the

attitude of the federal government toward food stamps, the attitude of the federal government towards the whole welfare mess. The black press carried the burden of the work on that, so I think that we should not overlook that while we . . . appear to be a very separatist, limited, selfish operation, we are really in the mainstream of what American democracy is all about. In fact we are on the ramparts of the concept of the American dream.

Thomson: You said something very important, which was that poor people in this society are shafted. . . . Why has the black press, to my knowledge, stayed within the limits of the "free-enterprise," capitalist understanding of this society instead of going Marxist, in some form? Why hasn't it opted out?

Why has the black press . . . stayed within the limits of the "free enterprise," capitalist understanding of this society instead of going Marxist, in some form?

Martin: Not all of them have opted out. Some of them have. That may be the next step. I am very intrigued to notice that some of the leadership today has been . . . some of the nationalists . . . Baraka just the other day had a story in *The New York Times* where he has now adopted scientific socialism. Eldridge Cleaver, scientific socialism. But, basically the appeal of Marxism as such in this society ran up against this: "What do blacks want?" They want to get in, not to tear the place up. They want to share the pie and not to destroy the pie. That's been the general attitude.

Hawpe: Why don't you educate black people about what the American dream really consists of?

Martin: Well, this is what we figure we're doing.

Hawpe: Then why do they still want it?

Martin: They feel without the racism they would get their share. They figure racism is what keeps them from getting their share, and that white racism is the foe. You go back historically . . . just forget the whole history of color in this Western world. In 1900 in London at the first meeting of the Pan-African Conference at which you had representation from Black Africa as well as the United States and the Caribbean, DuBois made one statement that has been quoted time and again. And that is that the problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line. This is the thing, that if you remove the racism, erase the color

factor, blacks—whatever the context economically—whether it was communist, or socialism, or a modification thereof, or capitalism—you would take that irrational factor out and you would be competing. Because you see you could make the country Communist tomorrow, and if the color line was the same problem you would still have a second-class Communist. What is the issue? The issue is to eliminate this business of color as a factor in the judgment of people . . . human beings . . . and that goes for Pakistanis or anything else in England today. It's the whole Western world. They've been hung up on this business of color, and this is what the battle is all about. When you measure progress in this society in the Western world you have got to really go back to that statement DuBois said in 1900 about the color line. Where are we vis-à-vis the color line? And this is the fact.

James Scudder (*Nieman Fellow*): I have had this question for quite some time, but this is an appropriate time to ask it, because we now have black newspapers solidly in the capitalists' hands . . . If you're going to have a really commercially successful operation, sooner or later . . . you may be accepted in cities like Chicago or Baltimore where you have a significantly prosperous black population . . . elsewhere you're going to end up depending to some extent on these white establishments like Woolworths, Pennys, Sears, and so on, which while they will now let blacks sit at their lunch counters, are still problems.

Martin: They would be bankrupt without black customers.

Scudder: Will be bankrupt without black janitors sweeping out their buildings. . . . To what extent do you see black newspapers in a position where they cannot represent their constituency because, while their constituency is black, they become dependent upon the white supplier of capital. I know it would be impossible for a black newspaper in Little Rock, Arkansas, to succeed financially without depending on white capital. But the minute you editorialize about all those black women in their white jumpsuits getting on those buses to ride out to the western part of town to sweep out white people's houses, then that's the minute you also lose your capital. Now to what extent do you—

Martin: I don't think that's a major problem for this reason: the black papers in America by-and-large are not school papers. By that I mean advertisers don't put their advertisements in there because they want to be nice, friendly fellows. They put them in there because they're wanting to sell goods to the black market. It's fully a \$50 billion-a-year

market. The advertiser goes right wherever the hell he finds that dollar, and actually this black guy represents margin of profit in a lot of industries. But we know there's nothing like a capitalist after some money. He will do anything to get it. Even if he had no respect for black aspirations. He will go after that dollar. In fact, his greed is a great thing.

Scudder: To what extent does this affect the black publisher of a newspaper since he too is a capitalist? He too will do anything to get power.

Newsome: These advertisers that we are talking about . . . in the black press none of them had the capacity basically to do four colors and this sort of thing. The guys say, "We would like to spend a whole lot more money with you. You know, we can pay you \$7,000 more each page if you can do four colors." This kind of thing. And they thought that would be the last time they would see the poor bloke because the presses wouldn't handle that kind of thing. But the Afro-American Newspapers started a new magazine, and it's a four-color job. While we only have about a 150,000 circulation, we put the thing together now, and it's run in about 36 other black papers. So that it's the same sort of an operation as you've got with *Parade* and the other national

. . . We know there's nothing like a capitalist after some money. He will do anything to get it.

magazines. So now we've got a place where you can speak to four to six million black people once a month. So we are out there trying to find that dollar, just as he is.

The problem is, and speaking directly to your question, there's no place for us to go. We cannot turn away from the aspirations of black readers. Because we don't sell many white people any papers, basically speaking. In Baltimore all the politicians read the *Afro* because they are interested in the *Afro* or they've got to advertise in the *Afro* because of the black voters. . . . But they're not giving us money the way they used to the school paper. They are advertising for what market it has. You get people like Coca-Cola who may not expect to sell a Coke this week if they advertise. But they do that in all publications because they want to keep the name on. You have that sort of thing going. This could build advertising, but it's basically merchandising their market.

Dee Wedemeyer (*Nieman Fellow*): How are black publishers treated by the white press establishment? Are you

invited to dinner at Kay Graham's house? Are you put on Pulitzer committees? Are you invited into ASNE or ANPA?

Martin: We're on committees, and I've been to Kay Graham's home. The climate is changing because they recognize what we are about and where we are going. Another thing, I thought somebody would say, "How do you see the future?" This is what kids used to ask. I don't know whether this may be true in your area, but it seems to be true. If you examine very carefully, I think we are moving gradually—this is a very slow, glacial movement—away from being completely "race" to something you might call "community" papers. The racial factor is there uppermost. . . . But as this is modified you will find this community paper—for instance the sheer business of New York—*The New York Times* not being able to cover New York. So you'll have a paper covering Bronx. And you will be able to get more there. I think in the long haul, say about a hundred years, this is where this thing will be moving, but they will be in the publishing business. Now that's one point I want to make.

Secondly, I think that we pick up constituents and we are going to pick up more and more white constituents in some areas. In fact we have already done so. So I think that the press is not the static, stagnant institution that is going to be in the same shape it's in now, forever. I think that as society changes, the paper's going to change. And the guys that run this business change with it.

John Grimmond (Nieman Fellow): I'd like to ask really whether the black press has any long term objective or goal. It's very easy to see how its origins arose as Mr. Newsome told us earlier, as a vehicle of protest chiefly. But I am interested whether you are concerned with increasing your readership amongst whites or whether in fact you are content to remain a minority press along the lines of a specialist magazine. And if you are content to remain as a minority press serving, primarily at any rate, the interests of blacks, what kind of press is it to be? Because to a large extent the black newspapers I have seen—which have been a very small proportion of the total, but the *Atlanta Daily World* for instance—seem to reflect very much bourgeois, middle-class values. It tends to endorse Republicans. Whether they think Ronald Reagan is the spiritual heir of Abraham Lincoln, I'm not sure, but it's clearly not in the vanguard of the revolution. I wonder if in fact there is any purpose that you would ascribe to the black press in an evolutionary sense?

Newsome: Well, I think one of the things we do have is a sort of individuality in publishers. Basically, most of the

papers are likely to support Democrats because of the fact that we have found that over the years Democrats are likely to promote the things that we understand as a means to social change and to symbolize that sort of thing. There are exceptions to that of course. The paper you mentioned and a few others are very staunch Republican papers, and they stay with Republicans year in and year out.

I know you're not interested in a lecture, but there was a time here in this country when Republicans were widely supported by blacks—during the time of Abraham Lincoln and the Emancipation and all this sort of stuff—so some of those papers have chosen to stay there. And some Republicans in the culture have chosen to stay there. One of the things we believe in is the two-party system. We select candidates. . . .

To the point of your question, I think we are headed in the direction of contentment in the role of doing what we can to hasten the day when all the constitutional guarantees, all the economic opportunities will be available to all the people on an equal basis. Now we think as we move towards that day, we will pick up more white readers. There are situations now—

Thomson: Do you think it is ever going to come?

Newsome: Do I think it is ever going to come? I have to say that I'm optimistic that it will come. I see signs that indicate that there's going to be one heck of a struggle coming. A lot of people are running away from issues that need facing continuously.

That was about to be another point, because I see in cities like Baltimore, for instance, where it's 53% black, the daily papers began to take extra interest in what happens in Baltimore County and other suburban places like that. So they're beginning to leave a void there that in time we will be able to move into. We expect to continue in that manner. If that news hole becomes so small that they don't adequately get to some of the nitty-gritty coverage required to handle all of the city, then there are going to be a lot of things that people, white and black, are going to look to Afro-American newspapers to supply. But as a general thing, we think our readership among whites will increase as things change in this country. We are quite concerned about this.

Martin: I would add this. We are championing the underdog. For instance, in our papers there is probably more copy on the Indians, on the problems of Spanish-speaking. Actually we run more stuff on the women's movement than anybody else in Chicago. In fact our front page will have these Indian articles. On the Indian fighters in Wisconsin, we got as much as anyone. In certain black papers you have

got Spanish pages. The paper in Berkeley, California, has a Spanish section. We have had a Chicano column in our paper. In Chicago we now have, some estimates run as high as half a million, Spanish-speaking in metropolitan Chicago. So we are sensitive to these groups. Particularly wherever there is some basic social inequity. We are sort of underdog fighters.

I told you earlier about our founding of the *Michigan Chronicle*. While we were a black newspaper, we came to be successful on the backs of the organized labor movement. I walked Miller Road singing "Solidarity Forever" in '41 to close the Ford Motor Company like the rest. . . . Our history is on the basis of the underdog in American society. While it's been black, all these dimensions are there. I think right now the movement of Chavez out in California—the *Los Angeles Sentinel* plays that up. And so the future I think is in that direction. Whether you call it white-black or not, it's on the basis of a greater, more equitable democracy.

William Worthy (*Nieman Fellow '57*): The parents and the grandparents and aunts and uncles of those such as Eldridge Cleaver and some of the others, they read the *Afro*, and the *Courier* and other local black papers around the country and probably still do, if those parents are still on the scene. But there seems to be a generation gap where they almost forgot there were these papers available which, while not agreeing with them, would at least tell their story. Am I correct in saying that. . . ?

Martin: Part of the problem is these kids came up in areas where we really never were strong. For instance the California crowd—we had nothing. We had no . . . while they were militants, while they were against us in one sense, there was a white confusion, so that I don't think that story's ever really been told. I'm not saying that they weren't truly themselves. It was an indigenous situation. But there was a white overlay that confused a lot of them about what the black so-called "establishment" was about. And once they began to play with us they saw that we were wide open. But we had that problem. I was away ten years. I was in the service. I was back in '69. I made it my business to get the guys in. And I was really shocked to find that they had forgotten also about other institutions, the NAACP which was wide open. . . .

Worthy: —And was willing to defend them, legally.

Martin: It was willing to defend them. They didn't appreciate it. I said why don't you talk to Roy Wilkins or the Legal Defense department. And it was almost, "Well, that's establishment." Well, now they had been worked on by some other people vis-à-vis what was true of the so-called

"establishment" and what was not. . . . So you can go back and examine that era. It was a weird era. Why to get interested in blacks at certain levels. Out-black the blacks. I don't know how to express it, but this is what happened. . . .

The NAACP I knew legally had all the resources to go to court. And would have gone to court had they known about it. But some other ad hoc committee formed over in some corner. It had no real relevance to the black community. It was telling them what to do. And these were young kids now. These were 19- and 20-year-olds. They had no real feeling for what was going on. They didn't know a hell of a lot about it. Even their own black community. And I was very much amazed at the meeting with one of the guys who got killed in the Panther raid . . . Fred Hampton. He was such a young—he was such a beautiful guy. And I'd been reading about him . . . this was before he got killed, now. He'd been making news, and I spent three hours with him. Trying to understand. I got involved with him because he was making a speech about Africa or something, about we should form some extended family businesses . . . some African economics he was trying. I was trying to understand what the hell he was talking about. So we had a hell of a debate. What turned out was, this boy was completely lost in this sense. He really didn't know what the hell he was talking about when it came to economics. He was so aggrieved by some blatant injustices in his own community, he had formed little youth groups and moved from one little echelon to another trying to find something and he got ahold of the Panther thing. And he had no real ideology. It was just sloganizing. But the guy was beautiful. You know, you talk to him. . . . He had no more sense of violence than anything in the world. He didn't even think about gunplay and such. Although the symbolism appealed to him because it looked like it frightened some white people. It was one of those simplistic assertions. In the same period I got this boy with the Blackstone Rangers. I had the whole meeting with four of the so-called "real wheels." I was amazed at the innocence of the guys. . . . It was just a tragedy, but if you got to their advisors, you got some queer cats.

Newsome: I'll try to make this brief. I think the generation gap—it's one of those complicated things that I'm not sure we can really get into in depth tonight. I spend hours, hour after hour, talking to young people, to militant people, or whatever you want to call them. Particularly I'm trying to make people see some of the differences in the United States. What happened in Cuba, what happened in Algeria, eventually will happen in Rhodesia and South Africa. But those things are not about to happen here. They can't happen here. I think there are great frustrations in the difference in what the country promises people and what the country's

willing to deliver on. That's not only what the black press is about.

Since you brought me up here, and gave me all this nice food and the opportunity to talk to some professional people who go out and work for some newspapers that are not black papers, I would just like to say that one of the things that I was impressed with most was a point from the white press about some of the things going on in this country today. Some of the things that have got to be called. And you can't do it alone. I'd just like to throw it out because I think that a large portion of the white press is shuckin' and jivin', getting by, looking at what they think their real interests are . . . sort of sleeping some big bets. And one of these days real soon things are going to start hitting home. No place is going to be safe to anybody. You who are participating in this program, you professionals who are going to have some impact back on your papers when you go back, I think you ought to consider. You know the black press shouldn't be out here waging this battle just to survive. . . . We are all in the same boat. If the blacks stop buying Cadillacs the white folks get laid off. We go first because we're the last hired. But, one won't go without the other. From that point of view, I'd just like to throw it out to you. I think the big press had better start digging in, and if necessary, make it tougher for us.

Martin: I can't overemphasize what he said, because there is a limit in the traditional position of black leadership historically. And what is in the best interest of this minority is in the national interest, because we came here in different boats, but we're all in the same boat now. That is what civilization is all about in the cities. I think that you can make a tremendous contribution, not only to the white community and our self-interest, but in the national interest.

Thomson: May I say that I am deeply grateful, and I think we all are, for what I would think turned out to be a confrontation of the American conscience. Thank you.

There's no reason why the NAACP should have to sue the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to tell these guys they've got to enforce the law, but these things are going on.

—Moses J. Newsome

Floating Prose in Washington

"The pronoun," says our friend Fowler of *Modern English Usage*, "should seldom precede its principal." Precede its antecedent? "He" and "she" seldom do. But "it" and "what" and the adverb "there" will push ahead at the drop of a Washington dateline.

They don't often get by the old master, James Reston. Yet, puzzling over "Vladivostock Accord?" (Nov. 27), he suddenly floats away from the reader: "Meanwhile, it is clear that the Soviet leaders are being very careful." To whom is it clear, and why? The meaning, my friend explains, is "clear to me and presumably to anyone who thinks about it." Still, the next sentence starts tentatively, "They apparently concluded . . ." Reston, for his own reasons, could not just say, "The Soviet leaders are being careful."

Reston is not much given to floating. He is an earth-bound figure, not easily inflated. His feet more often than

The meaning, my helpful friend explains, is "extraordinary to me, and presumably to anyone who thinks about it."

most rest firmly on the ground. Yet in the thin atmosphere where he works—the higher altitudes of government, politics, business, and journalism—the air vibrates with floating. The rhetorical flourish of "It is . . . What is . . . There is . . ." launches many a deed without a doer, thought without a thinker, feeling without a senser. "It is hoped" floats hopefully above.

With an "it" to begin and an "it" to end, David S. Broder (Dec. 29) keeps his distance from his insights: "It is only when one looks back, back, for a moment, on the extraordinary events of the past 12 months that one can begin to grasp what a year this was. . . . But it is extraordinary—after a year of such extraordinary change—to find one's thoughts focusing once again where they have focused so often before—on the man in the White House." (The meaning, my helpful friend explains, is "extraordinary to me, and presumably to anyone who thinks about it.")

John Herbers, writing about the Ford people (Dec. 22), starts off, "It has been more than four months since President Ford took office, yet only in the past few days has it become apparent what kind of people he will put in key positions in Government," The "it" carries on: "It is not clear to what extent the next Vice President . . . will alter

the complexion of the Administration. . . . It has not yet been decided who will be the chief domestic adviser to the President. . . ."

Robert Healy opens a dispatch from Kansas City (Dec. 8): "There is a direct relationship between what happened last week to the Democrats in Congress and what is happening here at the Democratic mid-term national convention. In a sense it is the greening of the Democratic party." The column continues: ". . . There has been a minimum of blood spilling and a lack of contest that is apparent in so many Democratic conventions. . . . And there has been change which could be significant to the future of the Democratic party and the nation."

On a clear day (March 22), William F. Buckley Jr. gives us: "If there were the will . . . It was way back in the Middle Ages that . . . It is a matter of passing interest that . . . There is every reason to believe that . . . It is as logical to assert that . . . It is estimated somewhere that . . . What there is, temporarily, is . . . There is no doubting that . . . But what makes so many of these critics so abominable is . . ." (The subject, reaction to a speech by John Dean, prompts one sentence in which "it" takes four different meanings: "The student newspaper hailed it (the speech) as a 'Jail's-Eye View of the Nixon Administration,' which is OK—I mean, it (the headline) is in the lusty tradition of student iconoclasm, though it (the following) would be nice if they would also do it (the headline?) to people who become famous for other reasons at least as disreputable as having participated in the Watergate coverup.")

Since all these writers would rate carpets and carafes, we might assume that perceiving events untouched by human agency is an executive attribute. The reporter who writes (*Times*, Nov. 11), "Industry sources say it is uncertain how long the present surplus will continue," or (*Times*, Dec. 4), "There is recognition by management of the needs of performers, he said," may be on the way up. The executives who put together the challenging "Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes" for McGraw-Hill Book Publications start off with a hearty institutional "we": "We are

"It is. . . . What is. . . . There is. . . ." launches many a deed without a doer, thought without a thinker, feeling without a senser.

endeavoring through these guidelines to eliminate sexist assumptions. . . . We realize that the language of literature cannot be prescribed." But after 11 single-spaced pages of caution, the memorandum concludes: "It is hoped that these guidelines have alerted authors and staff members to the problem . . ." Forget about "we."

Did executive aspirations encourage this kind of writing among recent occupants of the White House, or were they affected by just living in Washington? We have H. R. Haldeman's memo to Douglas Hallett of Oct. 15, 1971 (*New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 26): "By c.o.b. (close-of-business) Oct. 22, it has been requested that you send your thoughts on how Julie and Tricia can be more effectively utilized in indicating the President's concern for youth." The disembodied request seems to have happened some time earlier. And we have Dwight L. Chapin's letter of apology to Hubert Humphrey for "dirty tricks" during a political campaign (*New York Times News in Review*, June 9): "Don Segretti's acts are my responsibility to bear. It is recognized how very wrong I was and that my actions jeopardized a system I love and respect." We know who does the loving and respecting, but are we sure who recognizes the wrong? "Mull the marvelous language," Wilfrid Sheed urged (in *New York Times Book Review*, Dec. 9, 1973), "not just the familiar examples but the whole cunningly flaccid tone of it: 'I am hopeful' for 'I hope'; 'he is supportive of, dependent on, cognizant that.' The bureaucratic mind recoils from active verbs because they fix responsibility. So, too, 'I was wrong,' becomes 'my judgment was incorrect'."

But many people in Washington write that way. A lobbyist writes to his constituents: "During the last five years there have been many pro-Israeli resolutions circulated on the Hill . . ." (Quoted by Stephen Isaacs of the *Washington Post*, in *Boston Globe* of Nov. 28). Even that good man, Father Theodore Hesburgh, releasing an important statement on civil rights (Oct. 13, 1970), slipped into the groove: ". . . while the report deals primarily with the current civil

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rights posture of the Federal government, it should be understood that the inadequacies described have roots that lie deep in the past. These inadequacies did not originate in the current Administration, nor was there any substantial period in the past when civil rights enforcement was at a uniformly high level of effectiveness. . . . There also has been a failure to provide over-all coordination and direction. . . . What we have proposed is nothing more than that use be made of existing laws to assure all Americans equal opportunity." Actions and failures happen; no one acts—or fails.

When problems grow large and complex, "it" and "there" rise to the challenge. In New York, David Rockefeller, the statesman in banking, issues (Dec. 9) a warning: "There

is considerable doubt that the global economic system can continue to function effectively unless prompt measures are soon taken to reduce the crushing financial burdens being placed on many nations."

What are all these nice people doing with the opening "it" and "what" and "there"? These words, as they are used in Washington, trickle out unstressed—not a statement but a mumble. The pronoun "it," we are told, can be used to represent "a word, phrase or clause that follows." So can "what" and "there" these days. The message they carry is: What follows is coming. Dignity prose.

These little words can still be used in the ordinary way of pronouns—to carry forward an idea already stated. For instance:

In a free country, freedom is indivisible. That is why every one of us has a right to comment on, and condemn, the actions of those students who are determined to suppress or shout down speakers at universities whom they have blacklisted in advance as "fascists" or "racists."

It is a policy that is meeting resistance from other students . . . (Editorial, *The Observer*, London, May 19, 1974)

And:

Will the President not soon begin to feel the hot breath of a multimillionaire warming the back of his neck? It is entirely probable and maybe inevitable unless Mr. Ford finds other ways to keep his Vice President occupied. (Russell Baker, Dec. 29, 1974)

The choices our leaders make in these matters—whether deeds happen or someone does them, whether feelings just are or someone feels—affect the way bright undergraduates

The choices our leaders make in these matters—whether deeds happen or someone does them, whether feelings just are or someone feels—affect the way bright undergraduates and aspiring bureaucrats and cub reporters think they ought to write.

and aspiring bureaucrats and cub reporters think they ought to write. A wise teacher, who battled against these fuzzy forms for many years, recalls: "It dawned on me after a while that one can become so fanatical as to fall into excess, but the battle needs to be fought. I used to say that I could see two uses for 'there is': one, to state the whereabouts of something—'There's a broom in the cupboard'—and another to affirm the existence of something with emphasis—'There is a God' or 'There is such a thing as responsibility.' I particularly tried to show how often 'there is' leads to an unnecessary relative clause—'There is a house on the corner which has stood there for a century.' I must say, though,

that it's hard to write ten pages without once or twice falling into 'there is,' and if the sentences comes out clear and the tone is right, no harm is done. The trouble is that . . . it's addictive, and leads to shuffles and empty-air predication."

A writer even at the Rand Corporation, for instance, may fall into the "that . . . that . . ." trap: "We believe that it would be risky to assume that test scores, whether they were up or down, were a consequence of demonstration characteristics per se, as opposed to the impact of the first year's change and excitement." (Letter to the *New York Times*, Dec. 23). Under pressure or out of habit, a writer may resort to "there is" doubled: "There were strong assertions in the medical community that there would be major

"The form in which events, even the greatest, are told to the living and to posterity is anything but a matter of indifference."

new restrictions on trimester abortions in Boston hospitals where they are performed." (*Boston Globe*, Feb. 16)

And if you mix the two ways of using these words, you invite confusion: "In America there are people who still like A. T. & T. and Con. Ed. In any event, there is the fact." (Russell Baker, June 25) The reader gets lost, too, when the quarterback in midplay switches his nouns from receiver to passer: "There have been at least two articles in popular magazines and, most recently, large newspapers such as the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, and the *Boston Globe* have assigned reporters to do the Chappaquiddick story. . . ." (Robert Healy, Sept. 23)

"It is" leads writers into other kinds of ambiguity: "In other times it might seem superfluous, but in this period of cynicism about government, it is reassuring for Nessen to pledge explicitly, as he did, that he will never lie to the press." (*Boston Globe*, Sept. 24) But is it reassuring for us?

The heavy-handed "It is . . . There is . . . What is . . ." seldom helps the reader, and at best leaves him with a vague notion. These forms lead to passive verbs or to no verbs at all.

"What" leads the writer into verb trouble of another kind: "What is truly disturbing are the many reports . . ." If "what" is a stand-in for "the many reports," why aren't both verbs "are"? But nobody ever writes: "What are truly disturbing are . . ." One reporter tried the opposite tack: "What there is, however, is four bedrooms and a price of \$47,500, with interior space of a generous 1,800 square feet." (*New York Times*, Nov. 29) That's an "are" crowd of facts, and won't take "is."

Yet an offhand "it" can tickle the reader's senses: "It looks like rain," "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," "It is agreeable to have a few intelligent, and perhaps even honest, men in the government and to be rid of a tribe of scoundrels and scalpers. . . ." (Richard Rovere, Nov. 18)

The problem is not an occasional vague "it" or "what" or "there." We warm to the effort of Elizabeth Drew (*New Yorker*, Oct. 28) to capture what the crisis was like in Washington: "There is already some talk about what 'the historians will say'—the historians, those unknown people who in the future will have the franchise to interpret what is going on now. . . . But I wonder if they will really understand what it was like. Will they know what it was like to go through what we have gone through? Will they know how it felt to be stunned—again and again—as we learned what had been done by people in power? Will they know how it felt to be shocked, ashamed, amused by the revelations—will they understand the difficulty of sorting out the madcap from the macabre? . . . Can they conceivably understand how it felt as we watched, on our television screens, our President say, 'I am not a crook.' Will they be able to understand why, almost two years ago, some very sensible people wondered whether it was the last election? Will they understand how it felt—as it did last fall at the time the President fired Special Prosecutor Cox, and on several later occasions—when it seemed that there were no checks on power? Will they understand how degrading it was to watch a President being run to the ground? Will they know how it was to feel the thrall of this strange man, who seemed to answer only to himself? Knowing the conclusions, as they will, will they understand how difficult, frightening, and fumbling the struggle really was?" The "it" wanders around a bit in a vague way but is comfortable and unobtrusive.

Doesn't that represent proper and honorable and pleasant work for "it"—and for "there" and "what"? Must so much more be asked of them?

These matters count. As the historian Jacob Burkhardt said, "The form in which events, even the greatest, are told to the living and to posterity is anything but a matter of indifference."

—William M. Pinkerton

Mr. Pinkerton, Nieman Fellow '41, is Bicentennial Coordinator for Harvard University.

The heavy-handed "It is. . . . There is. . . . What is . . ." seldom helps the reader, and at best leaves him with a vague notion.

Reporting:

A New Day

Recruiting good reporters appears to be as much of a problem abroad as it is in this country. Talks with editors, sub editors, and reporters at some representative newspapers during a recent trip to Europe revealed a marked concern about the availability of truly qualified reporters, whether they are called journalists or correspondents or anything else, who are educated, literate, self-generating, dedicated to excellence, and keenly sensitive to the nuances of humanity.

In discussing qualifications, there was an interesting recurrence of a somewhat esoteric and yet increasingly important aspect of newspapering: the reporter's attitude or understanding of what journalism is about, an understanding that goes beyond mere technical competence.

H. W. Sandberg, the managing editor of *Het Parool* in Amsterdam, lamented the lack of depth and sensitivity to the complexity of life among most reporters. "There is accurate writing, I must say, but much of it is quite superficial," he said. "Most journalists see only straight ahead." To develop better newspapermen and to equip them with a broader comprehension of the increasingly complex society around them, far-seeing newspapermen such as Sandberg set up about five years ago a school of journalism in Amsterdam, actively supported by Amsterdam's newspapers and publishing houses. "We used to promote good prospects or hire away, when we could or had to, certain journalists from other papers—a political writer, a business expert," Sandberg said in talking about the school's objectives. "But times were moving fast and we felt our readers were more demanding."

While Sandberg generally reflected the views of other editors, even some on Iron Curtain papers, he was obviously more deeply aware in some respects of a reporter's responsibilities, competence and social awareness because of his paper's turbulent social history. *Het Parool*, which loosely translated means "the word" or "this is the way it is," was started during World War II by Dutch patriots as an anti-Nazi underground paper. Besides its fierce anti-Nazi disposition, it also reflected the views of the then Social Democrats, whose policies were oriented to the Western world's values and culture. The paper was run, as it continues to be, as a group undertaking set up along the administrative lines of a foundation with all profits put back into the enterprise.

An aspiring newspaperman and a long-time member of the paper, Sandberg himself witnessed or actively participated in events that demanded special competence to provide responsible, meaningful information about a complex, shifting, often obscured and brutal social scene. In reflecting on the survival—and the power—of *Het Parool*, which has in recent years become more conservative although it retains its Western outlook, Sandberg spoke with authority about the unique importance of the printed word and the people who conceive it.

“There is accurate writing . . . but much of it is quite superficial. Most journalists see only straight ahead.”

In those days—during the war, he said, those on the *Het Parool* did not think of themselves as journalists exactly. Every member was concerned about telling the people all that we could about Hitlerism. And some wrote about the West, too, so that our people could be informed. It was hard to get much true information and so writers had to work hard and know a great deal to recognize something new or to distinguish between propaganda and rumor and fact.

Then, after the war, Sandberg went on to say, the paper entered another difficult period, not as bad as wartime, but one requiring new understandings, new adjustments to more intricate social developments. The paper, for example, wished to retain its old values but to do so meant opposing the violent left, extremism, and some forms of totalitarianism which often were motivated by a kind of shortsighted patriotism. At the same time in this postwar patriotic fervor we were maligned by many for opposing colonialism—Dutch colonialism in Indonesia as well as other colonialism. There were other issues, too, like opposing Communism and subversion. But all this, as you can see, required a new kind of staff. Educated, competent, socially responsible. Intelligent.

When the school of journalism was set up, it at first became a place of radicals, militants, extreme political activists, demonstrators. There was also a strong current of what you call in the United States advocacy journalism. These “students” saw the school as a good training ground for propaganda and special causes. After about two years the sponsoring newspapers, both liberal and conservative, Catholic and Protestant, cracked down. Either the school was going to be for professional careers in journalism or nothing. Now the school with greater participation of professionals, is turning out good careerists, men and women who are taught both the mechanics of reporting and writing as well as the meaning of their work.

Sandberg, like some others, spoke at length about the meaning of journalism, and in great degree, reflected a problem confronting American newspapers—the general lack of understanding among reporters of journalism’s role in the scheme of things. In his words, “a journalist must first understand that he cannot serve his inclinations or any special interest. His duty is to report and write about things from every aspect.”

In the various interviews with other newspaper men, this position was amplified to stress that no modern-day reporter can write adequately about anything unless he himself is educated, thoroughly grounded in his subject, and thus cognizant of the multiple forces involved in any news development. Unanimously deplored was the impressionist, the “see, react and write” reporter. As one sub editor commented, they are now intolerable, vapid as the oldtime American gossip columnist. In Vienna, incidentally, this need was brought out with added emphasis in response to a comment on the many newsmen holding doctorates on the paper’s staff. “We needed fully-qualified people—economists, critics, commentators,” said the editor, “and we found the average journalist not able enough.”

Especially noteworthy in these discussions was the inevitable reference to the Watergate case with emphasis on the ethical overtones of a concern not so much with the reporting as with the social atmosphere of the times that produced Watergate. The Watergate case, in short, was seen as the crystallization of eroded ethics with which society—including journalism—has been increasingly afflicted.

In more specific comments about journalism and Watergate, the feeling generally was that there was an element of inflation or overkill to the point at which reporters and editors at times bent journalistic integrity to keep the fires of the story alive from day to day, often tainting individuals who had only a tangential as well as a technical and innocent connection with the case.

While this element of ethics in journalism was brought up almost entirely by editors, one Polish reporter or *dziennikarz*—non-Communist, incidentally, and amazingly aware of world developments—put it in sharpest focus.

We do not know much, he said, about Watergate except for what we get from the Paris *Herald-Tribune* or visitors. But perhaps for this reason we can see Watergate as a familiar thing in giant proportions. For a long time now, starting with the war, ethics and honor have been more and more forgotten to achieve certain ends, in all parts of life, in all countries, and he feared most, he added, for the journalists as they too often let go of honor by writing with only part of the truth to get “what you call a scoop.”

The increasing emphasis on good reporters also exists in the Iron Curtain countries, but with a significant addition. While the interviewees there—three of them—preferred to remain anonymous, they were of some importance and ap-

peared to have considerable knowledge about the workings of Communist papers in other Iron Curtain countries. The talks dealt almost exclusively with qualifications—the training, the prerequisite competence of staff reporters. Attempts to discuss ethics were stopped short by the problem of semantics, but immediately evident was the fact that being a faithful apparatchik or ideologue no longer guaranteed anyone a job. Total ideological dedication to Communism was, of course, regarded as of primary importance. But also demanded are education and a cosmopolitan awareness of world developments. In the context of the discussions, this awareness seemed to have a broader meaning, including the sophistication to take advantage of any setbacks in the West or, on the other hand, to present Communist activities in the best light.

This sophistication comes into play in the selection, presentation and display of world news. No longer are the papers filled with the heavy-handed, elementary pro-Communist and anti-West propaganda of the late '40s and early '50s when I wrote regularly about Eastern European and Soviet affairs. There is still, to be sure, the repetitive, often nauseating concentration on the productive prowess of a best worker or the enthusiasm of factory employees, but the overseas stories, few and brief they are, reflect great care in selection as well as in writing.

In the metamorphosis of a story from the United States to the Communist version, most of the salient facts remain but the emphasis, wherever possible, is negative for the West.

"A journalist must first understand that he cannot serve his inclinations or any special interest. His duty is to report and write about things from every aspect."

To do this as well as to handle the multiplicity of contemporary events obviously requires competence, education and, of course, Communist zeal. The party and the newspaper hierarchy, also obviously, are fully aware that they can no longer feed their readers any ideological garbage under the guise of news.

Reporters covering local or area news are also required to be of some substance in order to compete with area papers, which in some Iron Curtain countries, although certainly circumspect, are not totally party oriented. A case in point is Warsaw's *Trybuna Ludu* and *Zycie Warszawy*. The *Trybuna Ludu*, a party paper, was once a shrill, propagandistic, ideological organ with very little that would pass as interesting news. It has developed into a sophisticated, technically competent, informed paper while still presenting all Communist activities in the best light possible. *Zycie*

Warsawy, though realistically aware of the limits of its efforts, is nevertheless relatively newsy in the Western sense and more or less covers the area "news" with surprising completeness. *Zycie Warszawy* is more popular and trusted, but *Trybuna Ludu* is respected, or at least regarded as a stalwart contender despite its prescribed Communist content.

As are many other outstanding papers, *Trybuna Ludu* is also sensitive, in the words of one of its editors, to abilities of the highest order, which in its case, quite obviously, include complete dedication to the truth as the Communists see it. There is apparently very little extemporizing about the staff at the *Trybuna Ludu*. Now and then, the *Trybuna Ludu* does hire an experienced reporter from another paper or magazine because of outstanding abilities and party trustworthiness. But generally, its staff is composed of thoroughly-trained, hungry-looking generalists who can easily serve as specialists when called upon.

The primary source of new reporters is from what appears to be a well-structured journalism school at the University of Warsaw. Here potential reporters are not only taught the mechanics of newspapering but are also indoctrinated with the policies or ideology of the socialist state. As part of the prescribed program, the students get a thorough formal education—cultural, sociological, political and economic. As if this were not enough, they are also given an intensive series of lectures by professional newspapermen and leading figures in the party or government. Almost all prospects also take what amounts to post-graduate work, concentrating almost wholly on the refinements of newspapering in all its forms. After this, they are given jobs in the provinces on secondary newspapers or magazines or party organs where they are closely supervised and carefully screened for promotion.

Whether it is in the Iron Curtain countries or Western Europe, editors who are obviously informed about the workings of their counterparts elsewhere note that there has been a steady growth in the social as well as financial status of reporters concomitant with their competence and professionalism.

"The days of the adventurers and what you call playboys is gone," said one editor, with a great look of relief. But the interviews—as well as studies of papers in the six countries visited—clearly indicate that there are still too few of the desired breed of literate, educated, ethical, dedicated reporters—reporters who realize that journalism is a mission for truth in as many aspects as possible for the well-being of society.

—Edwin D. Gritz

Mr. Gritz, recently retired World Editor of The Washington Post, teaches journalism at the American University in Washington, D.C.

Leads Grow Longer

Every ten years I write a little article for this journal about the length of the opening sentences in the *New York Times*. I am five years behind schedule in reporting on the year 1970, and I attribute my delinquency to Mason's Law. This law originated in a remark once made to me by a publisher friend named Jerry Mason as a result of his experience with newspapers, magazines, and books; and it goes like this: "The less frequent the deadlines, the harder they are to meet."

Anyhow, the five-year delay enables me to bring the story up to 1975 and makes the findings a bit more interesting.

The *Times*, after squeezing its opening sentences down to an average of about 21 words in the late 1950's, has allowed them to creep back up to 34 words in 1975. This means that the leads are back to where they were in the late 1940's.

Of course, before that, leads were even longer. Historians of journalism and all middle-aged and elderly newspapermen are well aware that old-time newspaper stories used to begin with a great overstuffed summary of what followed. The general idea was to tell who, what, when, where, why, how, and maybe some other things, all in a single sentence.

My spotty career as a word counter started in 1950 when my class of Nieman Fellows published a special issue of *Nieman Reports* which we called "Reading, Writing and Newspapers" (April 1950). My assignment was to write a chapter called "The Shape of the Story." Everyone knew, at that time, that the late 1940's had witnessed a sort of revolution in news writing. The Associated Press and United Press had embarked on readability campaigns to simplify all their language and particularly their leads. Many newspapers, too, hired experts to advise them to take pity on their readers. Other papers joined in, not wishing

Table 1. Page-One Opening Sentences by *New York Times* Staff Members in January at Ten-Year Intervals 1930-1960 and Five-Year Intervals 1960-1975

													Percentage of opening sentences followed by one or more additional sentences in same paragraph	

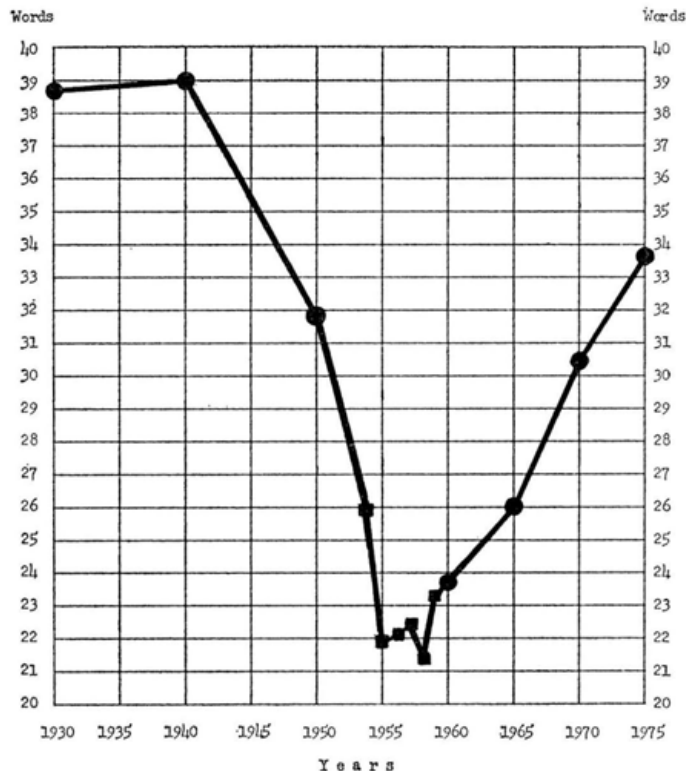
NOTE ON WORD-COUNTING: Datelines were not counted. Middle initials were ignored, but "C. P. Cabell" was counted as two words. "Jr." was counted as a word. The "de" in people's names, as in "de Gaulle," was ignored. "February 6" is two words, and "10 per cent" is three words. For some reason now hard to remember, votes and scores ("10-3," "10 to 3," "5-to-4") were counted as though the whole expression were one word. Hyphenated expressions were often troublesome. What seemed to be "manufactured" expressions ("self-determination," "crop-producing," "34-year-old," "German-American") were counted as though their components were separate words. Expressions containing prefixes ("inter-American," "anti-pollution," "quasi-

judicial") were treated as one word, and so were many expressions commonly thought of as a single term ("forty-five," "air-line," "world-wide"). The distinctions sometimes got pretty arbitrary.

In my statistics I did not include the wire-service stories occasionally used on the *Times* front page. Also, I did not include the one-paragraph squibs that the *Times* sometimes puts on the front page to call attention to inside stories.

If an opening paragraph included more than one sentence, I counted only the first sentence. The right-hand column, above, shows that the practice of putting two or more sentences in the opening paragraph has drastically decreased over the long term.

The Shortening and Lengthening of New York Times Leads, 1930-1975



The large dots indicate the average wordage of page-one opening sentences by *Times* staff members during the whole month of January; the exact figures and the explanations will be found in Table 1. The small squares, showing the trend from 1954 to 1959, the era when leads were shortest, are based on one-week samples; the exact figures will be found in Table 2.

to be out-simplified. Some papers even adopted strict laws against leads that exceeded some arbitrary number of words—such as 30. We wanted to see how deep the new custom had penetrated. We figured that if the *Times*, which then had always been noted for its aversion to perceptible alterations, had shortened *its* leads, the movement must be more than a fad.

So I counted the words in all the page-one opening sentences written by *Times* staff members in January 1940 and January 1950. Sure enough, the average had shrunk from

Table 2. Page-One Opening Sentences by *New York Times* Staff Members in the Era of Shortest Leads, 1954-1959

Jan. 11-17	Number of opening sentences in sample	Average wordage	Percentage of opening sentences under 30 words
1954	80	26.0	73%
1955	77	21.9	90
1956	82	22.1	87
1957	87	22.4	87
1958	94	21.3	93
1959	89	23.4	87

39 to about 32 words. This would turn out to be only the beginning, but we didn't know it then. About ten years later I repeated the process for 1960 ("Leads Grow Shorter," *Nieman Reports*, October 1961). The average was just under 24, and that was impressive (83 percent of all the leads were under thirty words, and 26 percent were under *twenty*); but actually, as shown by later research, the leads were already lengthening again by 1960, and they have been growing longer ever since.

The new spell of word counting in 1975 not only brings the story up to date but fills in a few gaps from the past, so that the trend of 45 years is reasonably clear.

The chart gives the picture at a glance. Anybody interested in further details can get them in Tables 1 and 2. For example, in January 1930 there were actually 31 leads of 60 or more words, and there were 10 of those in January 1940. (I have not seen a 60-worner since.) Another finding: in my 1958 sample, 93 percent of the leads were under 30 words, whereas in January 1975 only 30 percent were that short.

No attempt will be made here to connect the trends to the internal history of the *New York Times*. There is no doubt that two of the influential people in the shortening movement of the 1940's and 1950's were Turner Catledge, who became assistant managing editor in 1945 and managing editor in 1951, and Theodore Bernstein, who became an assistant managing editor in 1948. But that may not tell the whole story. Besides, somebody who knows more about the inner workings of that newspaper will have to explain why the pressure for short leads has been relaxing since about 1958.

Another worthwhile thing that I ought to do—but don't have time for—is to find out whether the lengthening trend in the *Times* parallels a similar trend in the newspaper business in general. Graduate students in journalism have probably been investigating this all along. I hope someone writes a letter to *Nieman Reports* illuminating the national picture.

—Max Hall

Mr. Hall, *Nieman Fellow '50*, is editorial adviser to the *Business School* faculty, *Harvard University*, after 13 years at *Harvard University Press*.

Elijah was a biblical prophet . . . sort of a Bill Buckley without television.

—James Reston
Notes on the Press

A Radical Journalist in the 1950s

When Lester Markel, the Sunday editor of *The New York Times*, read my letter of resignation from the staff and called me in for an audience, it was, I believe, the first time he ever smiled at me. That was in April 1948, when a resignation from the *Times* was a rarity and brought expressions of dismay from friends and family who had joined the staff by association: it was a prestigious coat of arms.

Within the *Times* staff itself, the act evoked amazement in some quarters (it could be, after all, a lifetime sinecure) and envy or shared pleasure in others (it was what they, in their frustration and unhappiness, would liked to have done).

My resignation was quite simply an expression of my disenchantment with a career in establishment journalism and of an unknown hope for the future. I had, at age 33, been 12 years with the *Boston Evening Transcript*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *New York Post*, and the *Times*.

I had never been fired from a job, and knew I had gained a reputation as a first-class journeyman in the trade, something a serious journalist values. At the same time, my first-

It was a complex time—exciting, bewildering, hopeful—yet carrying the seeds of disaster as well.

hand encounters with American politics and economics had led me to an inspection of socialism as an alternative system, and I concluded fairly early in my career that it was indeed a viable alternative. I have not had reason since to abandon that conclusion.

My participation in the affairs of the American Newspaper Guild, and a growing and vocal concern with fascism abroad and racism and repression at home, caused some of my superiors to regard me with some doubt. I became aware that I was being passed over for advancement in favor of compliant colleagues. These developments produced a twinge of resentment in me, but I knew I would be even unhappier (and subject to compelling pressures) in positions of greater responsibility—that is, greater responsibility to the management.

The real turning point was a year in Germany at the end of World War II—between the *New York Post* and the *New York Times*—where I served as a press control officer in the American Zone of Occupation, helping to establish what we euphemistically called “the free and democratic German press.” It was an abrupt encounter with

what the “Gleichschaltung” (political coordination) policy of the press of the Third Reich had done to the journalists and the people of Germany. It was also a head-on encounter with American occupation officials who seemed to accept without reservation that destiny was moving the United States toward a confrontation with “our brave Soviet ally,” then undergoing a transformation into our implacable enemy. The officers’ mess was already in the thrall of the Cold War and the theory of International Communist Conspiracy.

The most positive experience of that year was my meeting Cedric Belfrage, an English resident of the United States, who was engaged in the same press team as a British member of the combined allied operation. We sensed a kinship of views and an ability to work together which was rare then and proved even rarer in a collaboration that has continued for almost 30 years.

Belfrage went back to the United States in December 1945, and received a Guggenheim grant to write a book about the German press operation. I helped fill in some missing links in our first writing collaboration. But more important, our German experiences led us to begin planning an American publication which might become an antidote to the establishment press for which we had both worked, and a rallying place for dissident journalists who shared our radical perspective.

I use the word radical retrospectively. The term current then in the American Left was “progressive,” although we were commonly designated with the catch-all “Reds.” We could not call ourselves Communists because there was a Community Party with some of whose political principles and practices we disagreed. Nor was it practical to call ourselves Socialists because there was a Socialist Party whose rabid anticommunism was anathema to us. Above all, there was an internecine war of the Left among the Communists, Socialists, and Trotskyists which we regarded as destructive within the Left, and constrictive of enlisting support outside the Left.

It was a complex time—exciting, bewildering, hopeful—yet carrying the seeds of disaster as well. Vestiges of New Deal euphoria remained; rhetorical flourishes of the “victory against fascism” were pervasive; the struggle for political power in the trade union movement was in full cry; and the massive structure of established power was re-tooling for the effort to persuade the public that manifest destiny had decreed the second half of the 1900s to be the American Century.

The American press (television was just beginning to become a major factor) joined the effort with enthusiasm.

In fact, it could not have succeeded without the collaboration of the press. Among the few organs of dissent were publications such as the Communist *Daily Worker*, and its counterpart West Coast *People's World*, the Trotskyist *Militant*, George Seldes's newsletter *in fact*, and some brief-lived but lively weeklies such as Dan Gillmor's *Friday* and the Milwaukee-based *U. S. Report*.

In September 1946, Henry A. Wallace, then Secretary of Commerce in President Truman's cabinet, denounced the administration's Cold War policies in a speech at Madison Square Garden, and thus began a chain of events leading indirectly to the founding of the *National Guardian*. The groundwork was being laid for the establishment of the Progressive Party and a Progressive candidate for President in 1948.

Belfrage and I began seriously in late 1947 to consider the question of raising funds for a newspaper to support the Wallace candidacy. We did not subscribe to his ideas of "progressive capitalism" but felt that in the absence of a viable radical movement, a third-party campaign would

We believed that if we treated the reader with respect, the response would be as respectfully rewarding.

provide the most practical vehicle for alerting the public to the grave danger of a third world war. The first task for radicals in a society in which socialism remained a dirty word, we believed, was to inform the American public about the deceptions of Cold War policy and the disaster course on which the nation had been launched. Out of such a campaign might come the beginnings of a genuine movement for a political alternative.

I was still working at the *Times*. Belfrage was a free agent. I trust my former employers will forgive me if I disclose here that they were unwitting accomplices in the raising of funds for the *National Guardian*: when Belfrage ran out of funds, he would visit me in the Sunday department, and I would set him up in a booth from which he made phone calls in pursuit of money for the proposed venture. In extenuation, the calls were all local—no long distance.

In the spring of 1948, I left the *Times* to work full-time on the new project. Several of my colleagues on the *Times* and on other publications were excited by our plans and helped us with ideas and practical suggestions. Some even came around in the pre-publication days to work on articles. None offered to leave a job to join us. But there were enough young people recently out of the Army and free-lance journalists who were more than willing to sign up.

Funds were not easy to come by. The traditional givers to "progressive causes" had their own ideas of what a radical publication should be. One suggested a "poor man's *Time* magazine." Another thought we should model ourselves on the *Hobo News*, a kind of precursor to some of the underground press. Still another thought we should adapt our radical ideas to the *New York Daily News* format and presentation—his notion of a "people's paper."

We were stubborn enough to insist on our own ideas. We rejected gimmickry. We believed that if we treated the reader with respect, the response would be as respectfully rewarding.

We were joined in the summer of 1948 by John T. McManus, film critic of the recently expired New York experimental daily *PM*, who became a bulwark of the effort—good-humored, tireless, and always willing to tackle unaccustomed financial and business problems which have traditionally mystified radical entrepreneurs. Together with a high-spirited, penny-poor volunteer staff (no one got paid anything then), we managed to raise enough cash for what we termed a preview issue in August 1948, soon after the Progressive Party convention in Philadelphia had nominated Wallace as its candidate for President.

In York, Pennsylvania, the late Josiah W. (Jess) Gitt, publisher of the *Gazette & Daily* (a rare daily newspaper supporting Wallace), offered to publish a 75,000-copy, 16-page preview issue free of charge. It had articles by an illustrious roster, some of whom became regular contributors: British Labor MP Konni Zilliacus, Anna Louise Strong, Professor Frederick L. Schuman, John Lardner, Louis Adamic, and others. The issue was mailed throughout the country to left-wing lists and reaped 4,000 paid subscriptions at \$4 each.

With that money and other funds gathered in the intervening months, we were able to launch regular publication of the *National Guardian*, "the progressive newsweekly," on October 18, 1948. The cover drawing of the 12-page tabloid was by a well-known graphic artist of Latin origin (he used his mother's name) depicting Winston Churchill, cigar in mouth, brandishing an atomic bomb. The caption was a quotation by Emanuel Shinewell, British Labor M.P.: "Of course Mr. Churchill is a great war leader. That's why he wants another war." It also had an article by Norman Mailer titled: "Credo for the Living."

Three weeks later came the Presidential election. Fear of a Republican victory and the tenacity of the New Deal heritage gave Harry Truman a surprise victory over Thomas E. Dewey and held the Progressive vote for Wallace down to a disappointing 1,176,000. Wallace himself became disillusioned and withdrew from political life. The Progressive Party survived through a brave but doomed campaign in 1952, with San Francisco attorney Vincent Hallinan as the Presidential candidate and Charlotta Bass, a

black newspaper publisher from California, as his running mate. The Cold War and its counterpart, the domestic inquisition, were in full bloom, (the Republican slogan in 1952 was "Communism, Korea, and Corruption").

The Communist Party, still the dominant force on the American Left, analyzed the vote and adopted its "mainstream" policy in politics. Since the bulk of the workers were in the Democratic Party, it reasoned, the Communists should go where the workers are and seek to turn the Democratic Party to the left. Behind perfunctory campaigns for Communist candidates, the Party generally supported Democratic candidates, particularly in national elections, thus further muddling efforts to build a viable political alternative.

The *National Guardian* disagreed and insisted on continuing the effort to build a radical political movement outside the major parties. It fought against dismantling the American Labor Party in New York State (again opposing the Communist Party) and consistently refused to endorse a Democratic candidate for President. In fact, the last candidate for Governor of New York on the American Labor Party ticket was our own John T. McManus. Interestingly, the Communist leadership urged McManus to run, then gave tacit support to Averell Harriman, the Democratic candidate, who won. The margin of Left votes thus shifting to Harriman ended the life of the ALP as a ballot party (50,000 votes were required) and led to a bitter confrontation between McManus and several Communist Party leaders. It was a magnificent display of Irish political temper in which McManus denounced the Communists for their duplicity/stupidity, and then, in his typical fashion, refused a permanent break in relations. Rather, he made it clear that we would continue our efforts for independent political action, and challenged the Communists to prove us wrong. We made the same points, without temper, in the paper itself.

The Cold War and its counterpart, the domestic inquisition, were in full bloom. . . .

I tell this history for a purpose—a purpose related also to the attitude of the *National Guardian* toward the Soviet Union and the new (and for the most part Soviet-created) socialist countries of Eastern Europe. It is directed partly toward clarifying misconceptions prevalent among young radicals today about the radical movement of the 1950s, and particularly the problems of publishing an independent radical publication during that dark time. But an internal exposition is in order first.

The original staff of the *National Guardian*—it remained

almost intact on the editorial side for close to a decade—was gathered without a political litmus test. It was clear that all who came were deeply committed to working for a radical paper. The founding leadership was non-Communist, as were many of the staff. But there were also Communists who had considerable difficulty adjusting their Party commitment to the paper's independent line. Since Communist Party membership—except rarely—was not public, the internal staff discussions (there was a weekly conference with full editorial staff participation from 1948 until my departure in 1967) often had an unspoken ideological character. The exchanges themselves were open and vigorous, however, and sometimes bitter. But, remarkably, until the rise of the New Left in the mid-1960s, disputes were always resolved without damage to the basic interest of the paper.

The major staff disputes were not about domestic politics, however, but about international affairs, and particularly the paper's attitude toward the Soviet Union. Consider for a moment the world setting in the *National Guardian's* earliest years. The Soviet Union had emerged from World War II as the second most powerful country in the world, but badly scarred in terms of human casualties and industrial and agricultural destruction. The People's Liberation Army in China, moving steadily south, finally had freed the entire country from the Kuomintang grip and was just beginning, with Soviet help, the enormous task of building a socialist China.

The government of the United States, first under Truman and then under Eisenhower, with John Foster Dulles as the implacably anti-Communist swing man between administrations, had embarked upon a campaign to "roll back" Communism in Europe and Asia. The Central Intelligence Agency was active throughout Eastern Europe, and U-2 spy planes were violating both Soviet and Chinese air space daily.

On the home front, Senator Joe McCarthy was reaping the witch-hunt harvest on fields efficiently ploughed by the Truman administration—all in the interest of crushing the International Communist Conspiracy—and reviving a sagging American economy. The Korean War in 1950 provided new profits for war industry, jobs for the unemployed, and a jingo spirit to accommodate McCarthy's purposes. They were purposes identical with the needs of the establishment.

The Smith Act was reactivated. Communist Party officials were being arrested on charges of conspiracy to overthrow the government. The CIO was purging its ranks of "red" unions (that is, those which were genuinely acting in the interest of their members). Congressional witch-hunters—in addition to McCarthy—were cracking the whip in their three-ring circuses in pursuit of headlines which the press provided with fervor in 160-point type. In the respectable

press—the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, for example—the crusade against the International Communist Conspiracy assumed a cathedral quality: editorials were written to be celebrated as a solemn mass, with a celestial chorus pronouncing the litany of American virtue and godliness. In the “popular” press, the theme was less ornate: Kill a Commie for Christ (and Capitalism). But the distinction was merely one of quality.

The hysteria seemed contagious; in any case, it had echoes abroad. The Soviet government attempted to read Yugoslavia out of the socialist camp for deviation from the Moscow line (Yugoslavia, interestingly, was the only socialist country of Eastern Europe that had fought a full-

The major staff disputes were not about domestic politics . . . but about international affairs and particularly the paper's attitude toward the Soviet Union.

scale partisan war against the Germans and had established a socialist government on its own strength after the war). And in Moscow itself, the correspondent of the *National Guardian*, Anna Louise Strong, was arrested late in 1949 and charged with being a “well-known American espionage agent.”

These last two events, it seemed to us at the *National Guardian*, were crucibles for the kind of journalism—and political attitudes—we sought to establish for an independent radical publication. Our first commitment, we felt, was to focus on the policies of the government of the country in which we lived, worked, and could hope to influence others. We were persuaded that Washington's policies were the fountainhead of the causes of a rapidly deteriorating international situation, and that our main job was to make this known to as many Americans as possible.

Political common sense told us also that Soviet policy toward Yugoslavia would succeed only in driving Belgrade toward the West, and that the arrest and incarceration of one of America's most distinguished and devoted socialist journalists was criminal idiocy. We refused to climb aboard the “down with Tito” bandwagon led by the Communist Party and published a series of favorable articles from Yugoslavia by British MP Konni Zilliacus. This stirred opposition in the American Communist Party and within the staff of the *National Guardian* itself. As retrospective proof that “participatory democracy” was not a creation of the New Left 1960s, a series of intra-staff meetings were held and papers written for and against the position of maintaining a friendly view of Yugoslavia. The majority viewpoint was that we should keep both our common sense and our cool, and continue our policy.

The case of Anna Louise Strong caused even greater heat inside and outside the paper. Once again, the Communist Party subscribed to the Soviet view and accepted the charges against Miss Strong without question. The *National Guardian* did not. We insisted that in the best tradition of Anglo-Saxon law a person was innocent until proved guilty, and insisted that the Soviet authorities offer documentation of the charges against Miss Strong—if any—for publication in the *National Guardian*. None of course was forthcoming.

Miss Strong was released from prison and deported from the Soviet Union early in 1950 to face a rigorous journey through Poland and France to New York, where she arrived virtually at the point of collapse. She was met at the airport by the *National Guardian's* editor, Cedric Belfrage, whisked away to a private home in New York, and then after a night's rest to the home of her friend Dr. Emily Pierson in Connecticut, to be nursed back to the world of the living.

Some members of the staff opposed the editors' defense of Miss Strong and stated their case vigorously in staff discussions and even in letters to the editor. But once again a principled position prevailed, even in the face of threats by influential opponents of our view, outside the staff, to force the plant which housed and printed the *National Guardian* to shut us down. In her own fashion, Miss Strong

On the home front, Senator Joe McCarthy was reaping the witch-hunt harvest on fields efficiently ploughed by the Truman administration. . . .

sought to place her faith in socialism above her personal experiences. She wrote in the *National Guardian* that she felt the Soviet Union “still carried the hope of mankind.” The issue—and the controversy—remained alive for months in the pages of the paper.

Belfrage and I were among the few who refused to ostracize Miss Strong in the succeeding years. In fact, we persisted in our effort to persuade the Soviet authorities of the absurdity of the charges. Finally, in 1956, with the intervention on our behalf of a Polish diplomat, the Soviet government acknowledged (without apology) its gross error, restored to Miss Strong her apartment in Moscow and all her possessions, and let it be known she was once again welcome there. She did return, but did not remain. She proceeded to China, where she had come to know Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh and other leaders during the early years of the revolutionary struggle, and lived her life out there (continuing to correspond for the *National*

Guardian) as an honored resident. She died in 1968, convinced of the sound course of the Chinese revolution, but still refusing to express personal bitterness toward the Soviet Union. Hers was a remarkable life and personality. Her journalistic contribution to the understanding of socialism was enormous.

By mid-1950, the *National Guardian* had achieved a circulation of 54,000. It was largely mail subscription, distributed throughout the United States, with heavy concentrations in New York, California, and Illinois, but with generous per capita distribution also in New England, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Florida. We had succeeded in altering the urban image of Left newspapers by studying

The growth of the paper was achieved through dedicated work by staff members willing to tackle the business-circulation problems without aspiration to editorial by-lines.

the history of publications like *The Appeal to Reason*, the Debs-Socialist Party paper which in the early years of the 20th century had a steady circulation of 500,000, and at one point one million.

The growth of the paper was achieved through dedicated work by staff members willing to tackle the business-circulation problems without aspiration to editorial by-lines. The editorial staff participated in circulation building through promotional writing, public speaking, and "jimmy higgins" paper-peddling when necessary; but it was expected to devote its energies primarily to reporting, writing, and editing. There was a division of labor, with a mutual respect between the business and editorial side.

We had built up an excellent staff of foreign correspondents, mainly women, some Americans in exile, or non-Americans who had lived and worked in the United States (as correspondents for papers abroad or with the United Nations Secretariat) and were familiar with American journalism and reading habits. Most had full-time jobs elsewhere but were able and willing to send us their first-rate reportage and analysis for very little compensation because they wanted to be a part of what we were doing.

The problem of national and regional correspondents was more difficult. Except in the planning stages and in the first months of the paper, working journalists in the United States were reluctant to become associated with a radical weekly. As the Cold War repression became more severe, the reluctance increased. But diligent search yielded several competent reporters who sent us first-hand information about local events of national interest and about Left activities in their areas. This enabled the paper to act as a

kind of life-line of the radical movement, a journalistic counterpart of the Committees of Correspondence that functioned during the American Revolutionary period. The *National Guardian*, in effect, became a clearing house and forum of American Left activities: one had to read the paper to know what was going on and why it was going on.

In the years before the organized black freedom movement, we were among the few publications which rallied the defense of individual victims of racism, south and north. One of our earliest cases—in 1949—was the Trenton Six—a campaign which saved the lives of six black men who could not have committed the crime with which they were charged. Others were Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, Rosa Ingram—names probably unknown to younger generations. We sought also to break the color line in the communications industry with black editorial staff members of our own. We were for years the only publishing outlet for W. E. B. DuBois, who wrote for the *National Guardian* about 130 essays in the last 15 years of his life—invaluable articles which have become a rich source of research for young scholars. During his lifetime also, DuBois was the traditional chairman of the annual fund-raising dinner of the *National Guardian*. Another frequent contributor was Paul Robeson.

The *National Guardian*, in effect, became a clearing house and forum of American Left activities....

Among other precedents we established was payment, however modest, for all articles published by non-staff members. This tradition was maintained through the 19 years of my association with the paper, and was based on a respectful distaste for exploiting radical journalists, a custom which unfortunately persists.

Staff salaries, except for one brief period of gifted affluence, were far below the editorial standard in the industry, although we did seek to maintain a reasonable parity in the non-editorial departments. Again, this was an acknowledgment of respect for less-glamorous work. "Payless paydays" were frequent, and there was a long stretch in the early 1950s when the entire staff, including management, went on subsistence pay of \$40 a week, plus \$10 for each dependent. Most of the staff had working partners fully sympathetic with the goals of the newspaper; thus, combined income and philosophy played a large part in maintaining staff stability.

Payless paydays became standard in the years following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. The *National Guardian* vigorously opposed American intervention, and

the jingo spirit, whipped to a frenzy by government and press, reduced the circulation of the paper by more than 30,000 in little more than a year. Readers in civil service jobs, school teachers, exposed professionals in small towns, workers subject to loyalty oaths in "defense" plants canceled their subscriptions, often with letters of contrition accompanying a contribution.

Harassment of staff members began about that time too. We had assumed that our office telephones (and most likely our home phones) were tapped, and this assumption was confirmed by a sympathetic telephone company employee who suggested with concern that some staff mem-

When the *National Guardian* . . . took up the cause of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg . . . the harassment increased.

bers were being less than circumspect in their phone conversations. Treasury Department inspection of our financial records and accounts became more frequent. Families and friends of staff members were receiving visits from the FBI, and, for a period of months, staff members with listed phone numbers were badgered by phone calls at regular intervals all through the night. When the receiver was lifted, there was dead silence on the other end—not even heavy breathing. Apparently right-wing organizations recruited the services of fanatic night workers to spread this silent terror.

When the *National Guardian*, in August 1951, took up the cause of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who had been convicted and sentenced to death on a charge of conspiracy to commit espionage in connection with atomic secrets, the harassment increased. Metal scraps and tools were thrown into the presses of the plant which printed the paper. Staff members were accosted on the street. Police were demonstrably hostile to *National Guardian* reporters, and the hate mail flourished, as did provocative and suspicious phone calls seeking information useful to the government. Local post offices supplied the names of subscribers to the FBI.

It is a tribute to the staff that the harassment simply closed the ranks. I look back to that time with a feeling of pride and warmth: I do not recall a single staff member leaving for reasons of fear.

—James Aronson

Part II, concluding Mr. Aronson's recollections, will appear in the next issue.

Mr. Aronson, Associate Professor of Communications, Hunter College, is at work with Cedric Belfrage on a book about the founding of the *National Guardian*.

How fares the US press?

(continued from page 2)

They were, with a couple of uncompromising exceptions, painfully brushed and pressed for the occasion. Some were so nervous they could scarcely speak; some so nervous they could not stop talking. They had one thing in common; they knew a great deal about what they were doing. They did not think it was enough.

Most of them were engaged in covering roguery of one kind or another, corporate or official. They were pushing against land developers and mine owners, against corrupt city council members or short-sighted land planners, against greedy county clerks and voracious loggers.

As the church bells tolled the hours from St. John's church across the street, the jury got a crash course in the state of the country. The candidates told us about their mayors and their governors, their county clerks and city council members. Some word from the outside world seeped in about "human kindness day," the outdoor rock concert that turned into four hours of terror.

We asked an intellectual young street reporter from Chicago how he would have covered the event. He said cryptically, "before." He would have gone into the street and neighborhoods to find out about the plans and the mood, he said. Like practically everyone else who applied, he wanted to study economics. Only one man, from Philadelphia, mentioned race relations as a major problem.

A merry young editorial writer from North Carolina said his ambition at Harvard was to take the great historian, Samuel Eliot Morison, out to lunch. I thought it was the best reason I heard.

Two reporters in their 30s, one from San Francisco and the other from Arkansas, were writing about old people. The Arkansan had spent much of his childhood with his grandfather. The down-and-outs of Hot Springs were overcome by his coverage. One old derelict carried the clipping around with him. "I never thought I'd see my name in the newspaper until I died," he told the young reporter.

The balloting was the only unpleasant time of the experience. Strong wills clashed, trades were made. Sam Beer had on his jaunty black hat, ready to rush to the airport when the final tally was reached. There were some hard feelings about lost favorites. But we were unanimous on one point: the press is in the very best of hands.

(Datelined May 18, 1975, this column is printed with permission of the *Washington Star* syndicate.)

(Mary McGrory, a member of the 1975-76 Nieman Selection Committee, is a nationally syndicated columnist.)

Nieman Fellows 1975-76

Fourteen American journalists have been appointed to the 38th class of Lucius W. Nieman Fellows to study at Harvard University in 1975-76. The Nieman Fellowships were established through a bequest of Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, who founded *The Milwaukee Journal*. The Fellows come to Harvard for a year of study in any part of the University.

The new Fellows are:

Peter B. Behr, 34, political and White House correspondent, Washington bureau of the Gannett Newspapers. Mr. Behr received his bachelor's degree from Colgate University and will study 20th century American history and economics.

Dale A. Burk, 38, Associate Wire Editor, *The Missoulian*, Missoula, Montana. Mr. Burk holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Montana. He plans to study American literature, political science and theology.

Eugene Carlson, 35, economics reporter, United Press International, Washington, D.C. Mr. Carlson is a graduate of the University of Washington, and at Harvard will focus on courses about labor, public finance, population and the environment. His Fellowship is supported by the Price Waterhouse Foundation.

Cornelia B. Carrier, 37, environmental writer, the *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, Louisiana. Ms. Carrier holds degrees from Tulane University and the University of California. At Harvard she plans to pursue a program in environmental law, organic chemistry and the health sciences.

Foster S. Davis, 35, correspondent for CBS News, Los Angeles, California. Mr. Davis holds degrees from Bowdoin College and Columbia University, and proposes to study economics and the history of Southeast Asia.

Robert E. Gillette, 31, science writer, *Science* magazine. He is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, and at Harvard will concentrate on economics, history, science and public policy.

Jim R. Henderson, 33, reporter for the *Tulsa Daily World*, Oklahoma. At Harvard he plans to study history, political science and economics.

Ronald A. Javers, 29, chief editorial writer, *Philadelphia Daily News*. Mr. Javers received his bachelor's degree from Villanova University and will study political science, economics, and law.

Arnold M. Markowitz, 38, investigative reporter for the

Miami Herald. Mr. Markowitz holds a bachelor's degree from Marietta College and will focus on courses at the Law and Business Schools.

David M. McNeely, 35, reporter for the *Dallas Morning News*. Mr. McNeely holds degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, and at Harvard proposes to study political science, constitutional law and business.

James H. Rubin, 32, chief, State House bureau, the Associated Press in Trenton, New Jersey. Mr. Rubin is a graduate of Princeton University and will focus on contemporary American history, criminal justice and the role of a free press in a democratic society.

Margaret (Maggie) Scarf, 43, free-lance writer. Ms. Scarf attended Temple and Stanford Universities. At Harvard she plans to study the major stages of development in the lives of women; and expects to take courses in psychiatry, with particular emphasis on the theories and biochemistry of depression. Ms. Scarf is the second Visiting Nieman Fellow to be appointed by the Harvard Corporation. The first was *John J. Grimond*, 1974-75, a member of the editorial staff of *The Economist*, London.

Lester Sloan, 33, West Coast photographer for *Newsweek* magazine. Mr. Sloan holds a bachelor's degree from Wayne State University and will pursue a program in the history and economics of the Arab and Third World countries, and art history.

Raymond J. White, 39, Editorial Director, Post-Newsweek Stations, WTOP-TV and Radio, Washington, D.C. Mr. White is an alumnus of Syracuse University and at Harvard will study economics, law and business problems, and science and technology.

The Fellows were nominated by a committee whose members were: Robert G. Abernethy, news correspondent for KNBC, Los Angeles; Samuel H. Beer, Professor of the Science of Government, Harvard University; Hale Champion, Financial Vice President, Harvard University; Peter Lisagor, chief of the Washington bureau, *Chicago Daily News*; Mary McGrory, nationally syndicated columnist; Barbara G. Rosenkrantz, Associate Professor of the History of Science, Harvard University; and James C. Thomson Jr., Curator of the Nieman Fellowships.

Announcement of the appointment of Associate Nieman Fellows from abroad will be made later in the summer.

Viewpoint

On the Ending Of a War

At last it begins to end, suddenly very quickly. A re-run of Nationalist China's collapse, but delayed by 25 years of great-power interventions.

The horror of present Indochina suffering should be intensified for Americans by a sense of history: how it happened, and how it could have been avoided.

One beginning came thirty years ago this autumn when the United States permitted France to reoccupy her Indochina colonies after Japan's surrender.

A bigger beginning was the Truman-Acheson decision in early 1950 to recognize the French puppet Bao Dai as ruler of Vietnam, to spurn Ho Chi Minh's independent revolutionary government, and to commit American arms and dollars to the pro-French side in the Vietnamese civil war.

"With [this act] the United States embarked upon another ill-conceived adventure doomed to end in another self-inflicted defeat." So wrote veteran journalist Harold Isaacs back in the April 11, 1950, issue of *The Reporter* magazine. "The real problem," he added, "is not how to implement this policy but how to extricate ourselves from it."

This week, precisely a quarter-century later, Mr. Isaacs' prophecy is fulfilled as that ill-conceived adventure finally careens to a halt. Not tidily, arranged under chandeliers by men in morning coats around the green table. Not even gradually, allowing for the protection of the innocents. But suddenly, with breakneck speed and with suffering beyond belief.

The swiftness of the collapse is a surprise. But not the human tragedy. For how else do civil wars end? They are always an all-or-nothing contest; anything less than an ending is merely a suspension.

Three times now, in 1946, 1954 and 1973, Vietnam's revolutionary leaders—that potent early fusion of Communists and nationalists who threw out the French—were persuaded to accept a suspension. But only a suspension each time, an imposed intermission in an unfinished civil war.

For the overriding question, from 1945 onward, has been: Who shall rule a united Vietnam? And the mission of Vietnam's would-be liberators—Ho Chi Minh, General Giap, the party and the army—has been successively, for thirty years, to oust the French, to oust the Americans, and to displace those Vietnamese élites that collaborated with the foreigners.

True, of course, that those élites—officers, bureaucrats, politicians, businessmen, landowners, professionals, intellectuals, clergymen—included some who appealed to our best instincts, whose Westernized liberal values had little in common with the rampant venality, corruption, and barbarism of Saigon's changing cast of warlords.

True, too, that our Vietnam intervention had been in early times an explicable product of American ignorance and panic. Ill-informed about the indigenous nationalist roots of Vietnamese Communism, fearful of Moscow-run "monolithic Communism" after Mao's China triumph and blackmailed by the French (the price Paris demanded for joining any European defense arrangement), we took the wrong road in early 1950. And kept to it—even after the French went home—because of our enduring fear of Communism.

True, as well, that once anti-Communism receded as an overriding rationale, South Vietnam still seemed

to some Americans a beguilingly special place: a congeries of ethnic, cultural, religious, and geographic complexities worth preserving under our tutelage, separate from the North. Hence the South's strong attraction not only to our military "counterinsurgency" specialists, C.I.A. operatives and A.I.D. advisers, but also to a wide variety of our academic social scientists, church groups and journalists. Couldn't South Vietnam somehow prove a point or two, at least be a useful laboratory for "Free World" development? So was born the resilient canard that it was not, after all, a civil war.

Finally, of course, there was that wondrous Eisenhower invention of 1954, the "domino theory"—the proposition that all Asian states act alike (perhaps because they all look alike, to those who don't look closely); and that if one were to fall over, so too would all the others. Vietnam today, Thailand tomorrow, then Japan, and not far ahead, the beaches of Waikiki.

Even sophisticates, not alarmed about Hawaii, did worry about Laos and Cambodia. And well they should have, for reasons having nothing to do with Communism, but rather with one of the peninsula's traditionally potent forces, "Annamite imperialism."

At best the domino theory described a mere commonplace: a "ripple effect," meaning that what happens in Holland does in fact hit Belgium and Luxembourg quite heavily, France and Germany less so, Spain and Rumania hardly at all.

And for some time now that ripple effect has been belatedly at work. Laos, a traditional buffer between Vietnamese and Thais, has arranged a coalition of Communists and others that reflects the political realities of that backward kingdom. Thailand, after two decades of un-Thai behavior—putting all its security eggs in one American basket—is returning to the politics of multiple baskets (call it neutralism or a bal-

ancing act) that have guaranteed Thai independence from foreign conquest for centuries.

But Cambodia, most cruelly, is a victim of whiplash: preserved as an island of relative peace under the quick-footed Prince Norodom Sihanouk, it was betrayed by the Lon Nol coup of 1970 and then destroyed by the American "incursion," an invasion that created the successful Cambodian insurrection.

Of all the high crimes for which Richard Nixon must be held to account by history, none can be higher than the senseless destruction of Khmer civilization. What's left of Cambodia, after American aerial destruction, will be ruled by what's left of Cambodia's Communists.

There was, of course, a further reason for the continued durability of the domino theory. And that is—as Daniel Ellsberg and others have noted—the compelling feeling among Democrats and Republicans alike that the most important domino of all (perhaps the only one all along) was the Administration in power in Washington: the conviction that if an Administration were to "lose" any Asian country to "Communism," that Administration would proceed to lose the next national election. The alleged lesson had been learned when the Democrats were turned out of office in 1952 after President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson had "lost China."

The question now is still that same old Isaacs question of 25 years ago: Having chosen the path to a "self-inflicted defeat," how do we "extricate ourselves" from the policy that brought it about?

There are two ways. One is to replay the "loss of China" script. That would involve (quite soon) an open season in the search for scapegoats. President Ford and Henry Kissinger have already tilted in that direction: had not the Congress reduced Vietnam aid and "frustrated" Presidential freedom to "deter," etc., there would still be hope.

And who runs the Congress? The same party that "lost China"—the Democrats. (Actually, it was the Chinese Nationalist Party that lost China; but that is a different and too long story.) A dicey Presidential election is coming up. Can many Republicans and even some Democrats resist the temptation to return us now to the McCarthy-McCarran era?

But there is another way—short of the admission of error, the mea culpa of which governments seem altogether incapable. A way to face not Vietnam's "loss," but the misery-ridden end to our tragic intervention in the Vietnamese civil war. That would be simply to say we did our best, but that events went otherwise, that the Vietnamese chose otherwise. And that we will now allocate all we can to the relieving of immediate suffering, to the providing of safe haven for those whose lives are endangered through close allegiance to us, and to the rehabilitation of shattered lands and peoples—in the North and the South, and also in Cambodia. Even Lyndon Johnson offered as much in his famous Johns Hopkins speech on April 7, 1965, while our bombs were widening the bloodbath.

Who knows how we will choose, at a time of shaken economy at home and possible war in the Middle East. One way lies further folly, the wrath of spoiled children whose will has been thwarted.

The other way lies maturity: the willingness to learn from error, to accept our chastening, to cast off our grandiosity, to forgive and ask forgiveness, and to show the magnanimity of a strong and compassionate people.

—The Editor

(The above column, dated April 10, 1975, is copyrighted 1975 by the New York Times Company and reprinted by permission.)

James C. Thomson, Curator of the Nieman Foundation, was an East Asia policy aide at the State Department and White House, 1961–1966.

How True: A Skeptic's Guide to Believing the News.

by Thomas Griffith

(Atlantic-Little, Brown; \$6.95)

Thomas Griffith has been through the mill of journalism for nearly forty years. He knows where he has been and what it all meant. He has an extraordinary capacity for self appraisal and for appraisal of his craft. His writing is up to the demands he puts on it. His book is a blend of experience and evaluation.

As most of his life work has been with *Time* and *Life*, his years of combat with Henry Luce and his satellites crowd in to animate the judgments on journalism. These inevitably make the more exciting parts of his book. But it is because the internal struggle on *Time* to get the news straight was only in magnified, highly charged form, the condition of almost any news room, that his adventures with *Time* have larger meaning.

For as he puts it,

"In this contest of wills between forceful and ambitious people, are all the elements of the debate about the press that are going on today. It was not simply a Manichaean contest between darkness and light, but a continuing struggle between a man who had invented a new kind of journalism, was its owner, and felt he could do with it whatever he wanted, and those he had hired who had their own strongly held notions about any journalism they were going to be a part of, and had as their only weapons their talents, their arguments and their readiness to leave."

Griffith was graduated from a journalism school in the Depression and found a job on a nondescript newspaper in his home city of Seattle, where his reporter's instincts were frustrated by the meaningless humdrum of business office policy.

Lured by the excitement of *Time* magazine, Griffith at 28 obtained a try-out. A small piece of his attracted the attention of Henry Luce who soon came to find Griffith a stimulating if abrasive variant from his choir of Yes men.

The struggle for integrity against the slants of *Time* and the obsessions of Luce became Griffith's daily fare, which honed his mind as it toughened his sense of values. His maverick position was offset by his utility in one after another of *Time's* special departments. In 1960 he found himself temporarily in charge of *Time*. This brought a national sensation, the first presidential campaign *Time* had ever covered fairly. The elaborate manipulating it took is a fascinating story. When it was over, Luce, who had nothing to do with it, applauded.

"Luce told me with a grin that out in Arizona he had found *Time* unexpectedly admired by Los Alamos scientific types who wondered what had come over *Time*. 'I don't know what you tell your friends. But I just tell them, it is the times that have changed.'"

Griffith's insights into the complicated character of Luce tell more than Luce biographies. Their relation ripened in Luce's later years into mutual respect and intimacy. If there is some sentimentality and defensiveness in Griffith's portrayal of Luce, the most striking element is his penetrating effort at understanding him.

After Luce's death, Griffith became second in command to editor-in-chief Hedley Donovan, and later was made editor of *Life*. His analysis of *Life* from its spectacular rise with the debut of the candid camera to its death from television, is another informing chapter.

But such lively reminiscence is background for Griffith's judgment on journalism. His book's concern is with bias in the news, both the reporter's and the readers. His remedy for bias is skepticism, again both in reporter and reader, skepticism without cynicism.

"If you say the news is often too much for you, I sympathize. But if you say you can't believe anything you read in the papers or hear on television, I ask you to name your better sources."

His anatomy of bias is a temptation for more quoting than space allows. "An unaware bias, or a bias denied, is the worst kind. It suggests lack of imagination. The real question of bias begins earlier, in what is pursued or not pursued as news. Some news 'happens.' The rest is discerned, and it is this process of discovery of the news that is most mysterious and most creative. . . . Every good journalist I know has convictions. . . . But it is in his capacity to separate his beliefs from his reporting that a journalist should be judged. . . . Journalists who once spoke of objectivity now generally accept fairness as the criterion of their performance."

He concedes some "service connected disabilities" of the journalist. "A peculiarity of the trade is a bias toward novelty." So the importance of some demonstrations become distorted by the exploitation of the TV camera or the press headline.

His rejection of bias causes him to give the back of his hand to "the new journalism" and "advocacy journalism." "New journalists have about them a strong streak of show biz and a frank admiration for the techniques of fiction. . . . Advocacy journalists believe all journalism bloodless that isn't pushing a thesis. These new partisans are often lively, their causes worthy (though not always); their passion commendable. Yet finally advocacy is destructive of what journalism is all about, to the degree that it feels no scruple about accuracy, to get the whole story or to give the other side its due."

This of course was his basic quarrel with *Time*. But some stubborn streak in Griffith responded to passion and prejudice. "What I liked best was the argument of positions, instead of clinging to them. It didn't so much matter where you started in your thinking, as

where you wound up. The greatest gift of *Time* (and also the frustration of working there) lay in the feeling that it mattered, mattered painfully, what we said and how we said it."

Some of the frustrations are vividly recalled. After *Time* fell on its face in the Truman-Dewey 1948 campaign, Editor Tom Matthews put Griffith in charge of national affairs. "There followed an agonizing year and a half of my life, for *Time* was soon to have a new managing editor [Alexander] and it became evident that Luce wanted his Republicanism more explicit. I wasn't the man for that."

So Griffith was moved to foreign affairs. This brought him up against Luce on China. But first that year and a half. "At the beginning of the 1950's the 'bloody angle' of *Time* was not a pleasant trench to be in." General Marshall could hardly get a favorable mention in *Time*. Dean Acheson was suspect. . . . Luce and managing editor Alexander gave the foreign editor his head in eulogizing General McArthur and he proceeded to characterize President Truman's recall of McArthur as "a step that brings World War III closer."

"In my own national affairs section, we found it hard to report the news with any evenhandedness or fairness to the President without seeming inconsistent with what followed [in foreign affairs] . . . So we were at times reduced, like Pascal's Jesuit, to telling the truth in a low key."

That is certainly a low key way to describe a journalistic nightmare.

But when "suddenly we no longer had Luce to contend against, many of us felt a particular void in our lives . . . I realized suddenly how much, over the years, my views had been sharpened, clarified or changed in combat with him. It was possible to think of this as a learning process on his part and on ours. . . ."

"In journalistic history I think Luce will be regarded as the great innovator

of his time. For he did not so much start new magazines as create new forms. What gave his magazines their dynamism was his restless preoccupation with them."

Of course that last could be said of Hearst, Willy Loeb, Colonel McCormick, Beaverbrook or Northcliffe, none of them, I assume, on Griffith's admiration list.

Griffith's final chapters are on the mood and trend in American life and journalism's relation to that. He expects less of democracy than he once did.

"But I think there is in this country, at a level deeper than the tawdry political debates, an emerging national longing to act in community for community ends. For journalism to ignore the evidence of such a mood would be to delay its occurrence. For what journalism looks for, in ways that journalists hesitate to admit, has much to do with what they find." How true!

—Louis M. Lyons

The Opinion Function: Editorial and Interpretive Writing for the News Media

by John L. Hulteng

(Harper & Row, Publishers [paperback]; \$2.95)

"We report, we expose, we make available information, fact and clearly labeled analyses and commentary. While the material we print clearly is the basis of other people's decisions and actions, we should ourselves not be—nor are we—in the business of so-called 'tearing down' or 'building up'. It's not our business to make public policy or decide what is or isn't socially necessary or desirable."

—Katharine Graham, publisher of
The Washington Post

One does not have to approve of advocacy in the newsroom to believe in advocacy journalism on the editorial page. Mrs. Graham's startling observation simply does not apply to the operation of her own newspaper which, after all, does a reasonably good job of telling readers "what is or isn't socially necessary or desirable" through the editorial page.

Joseph Pulitzer, founder of the publication I work for, was not satisfied with the definition of a good newspaper as one that only gives a faithful history of yesterday. In addition, he said, "The newspaper that is true to its highest mission will concern itself with the things that ought to happen tomorrow . . . and will seek to make what ought to be come to pass." This aspect of journalism is the subject of John L. Hulteng's book, *The Opinion Function*, ostensibly written as a text whose purpose is "to help nurture new generations of writers and analysts." It is, however, equally appropriate for practitioners of editorial writing and for those outside the communications community who would like to have an understanding of perhaps the most mysterious process in a newspaper. (For a more textual treatment of the subject, students would find useful Curtis D. MacDougall's latest book, *Principles of Editorial Writing*.)

Mr. Hulteng, a journalism professor at the University of Oregon, a former editorial writer in Providence, R.I., and a Nieman Fellow (1950), covers feature writing, news analysis, cartooning, columns, and the underdeveloped world of radio-television editorializing, but his focus is on newspaper editorial writing. This is perhaps as it should be, for the editorial page ideally functions as the anchor for all opinion. It ordinarily constitutes the most expensive single page in a newspaper.

Mr. Hulteng does not mention what, in my opinion, is the basic reason for the editorial page's existence and survival in this country. In nearly every

other country with a free press, opinion is regarded more powerful than news and is liberally spattered throughout a newspaper. The press in this country still strives for objectivity and achieves an approximation of it in the news columns. This gives the editorial page a more conspicuous role—a role which I'm afraid is not fully comprehended by the technocrats who are slowly taking over the ownership or management of newspapers. One study shows that only 3.6 per cent of today's publishers have news or editorial backgrounds and, predictably, those who "think conglomerate" are inclined to believe that a controversial editorial page is bad for business. But a newspaper is not just another commercial enterprise and its soul or personality is not reflected by the slickness of its annual financial report. It is reflected, foremost, on its editorial page.

A convincing argument can be made that it is *good* business to speak out on the editorial page, "to build up" and "tear down," *good* because it helps make the entire newspaper more interesting. It is no accident, as one respected editorial page editor points out, that those newspapers considered to be the best are not the ones which necessarily adhere to their economic milieu, but rather to what they honestly believe to be the interests of the general public.

Mr. Hulteng reminds us of one especially critical interest. People rarely come to a conclusion solely because they are exposed to more and more information on a subject. Through their experiments communications researchers have found that a reader usually needs additional help if he or she is "to start sorting out the facts and organizing them toward solutions." Mr. Hulteng also makes the observation—frequently overlooked—that every newspaper, regardless of its credibility, can hope to influence readers. Although people tend to absorb information and opinions selectively—to accept those which conform with their views—it would not be

unusual if, over a period of time, they also tend to forget the source and continue to remember the substance of an argument, and to modify their views accordingly. This communication process has too been noticed by researchers.

So editorial pages are not vestigial organs, or as an editor once put it, "appendixes of newspapers, of no known use, their potential for trouble slight and easily contained." It is when they fail in their opinion function that they create a vacuum which some reporters and news editors perceive as their obligation to fill. It is when editorial pages indulge in banalities, in filling space, in being super-cautious, in rewriting news stories, that they are not successful in their mission. It is when they embrace the supermarket concept by creating op-ed pages not only for the presentation of diverse opinions, but also for the evasion of their own responsibility to editorialize vigorously.

Mr. Hulteng contends that in years to come, "the opinion function will have greater importance and greater emphasis than ever before as we move into the era of accelerating change and future shock." The changes he sees are not only in technology. I hope this means that the editorial page will take advantage of its unique situation in American journalism by experimenting in writing styles, and by expressing individuality. The editorial department, after all, is not bound by the rigid guidelines of the news department. It can help greatly in assuring that a newspaper not only remains alive, but stays lively.

—John J. Zakarian

Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time

by Marion K. Sanders

(Avon Books [paperback]; \$1.95)

Dorothy Thompson, who became the most spectacular newswoman of her day—from 1925 to 1950—never had the discipline and drudgery of work in a newspaper city room. She attained recognized superiority among American correspondents in Europe at a time when every great city in every major country was the stamping ground for a herd of brilliant journalists of the U.S. press.

Arriving in Europe as an inexperienced free lance, backed by a good education (Lewis Institute, Chicago, and Syracuse University), several years in the stimulating atmosphere of the woman's suffrage campaigns in upstate New York, and several years of writing special assignments, feature stories and publicity in New York City, she needed only five years for her rise to top rank among the elite observers who gave Americans their news of Europe.

When the 33-year-old Miss Thompson became the central European representative in Berlin for the Curtis newspapers (*The Philadelphia Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post*) in early 1925, she was the first woman to head any major American news bureau abroad. She had earned her way. Soon after she landed in Great Britain in 1920 she achieved her first "scoop," an interview with Terence MacSwiney, the hunger-striking mayor of Cork, during the Irish rebellion.

In Vienna and Budapest, after a lyrical interlude in Italy, she put to good use lessons learned from a man who became her lifelong friend and her skillful guide in the maze of central European politics and news sources. He was the clever and well-informed correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*,

Marcel (Mike) Fodor. He guided her to further momentous accomplishments, including exclusive reports on the attempts of Franz Joseph's heirs, Charles and Zita, to retrieve the Austro-Hungarian throne, and an interview with the Czecho-Slovakian president, Thomas Masaryk. In a year or two, the energetic, charming, vibrant and eager "girl reporter" perfected the skill of self-dramatization together with a remarkable instinct for being on the scene of great events to report them ahead of the pack.

She substituted for her vacationing bureau chief during the German inflation of 1922. Two years later, when he returned to the U.S., she stepped into his large shoes.

Quickly, then, she moved out on the big stage, where she gave a bravura performance for two decades, as a columnist commentator reaching some 130 U.S. newspapers, as a radio personality, as an international celebrity, and, after her dramatic expulsion from Hitler's Germany in 1935, as a popular lecturer, a leader of the free world in defense of freedom, and a crusader for U.S. leadership in World War II.

This is but a scanty outline of the tumbling and tempestuous story recounted by Marion K. Saunders in her biography titled simply, *Dorothy Thompson*. The book chronicles the eventful career of Miss Thompson with meticulous and widely-researched detail, making a story as gripping as a masterly work of fiction. Indeed, the tale of Dorothy's progress from the Methodist parsonages of three small towns in northwestern New York to worldwide fame and fantastic influence on the interpretation of international events, reads like the product of a fertile imagination—as it truly was. The imagination was Dorothy's own creative capacity for making the educated guess that turns out to be either popular or correct, or both, and her propensity for getting herself into the forefront of the news she reported.

Mother's Day . . .

Father's Day . . .

Independence Day . . .

Any Day!

—Send someone a gift subscription
to Nieman Reports.

Miss Sanders does not make too much of the Thompson influence on the art of news reporting and the effect of her splashing career on the press, but she lets the clear implication emerge that Dorothy Thompson was one of the early and most gaudy practitioners of advocacy journalism and a pioneer performer in the technique of reporting facts in terms of her own reactions.

Miss Sanders portrays, with wry, understated humor, and sustained, sympathetic insight, a highly intelligent, robust and outreaching woman who strides through the chapters as Dorothy herself pursued the shakers and movers of history across the boundaries of Europe. Dorothy Thompson comes through as an overwhelming human being, whose gusto and eager optimism overflow the biographer's pages. According to this full-bodied book, an enthusiastic love of life, people, excitement, and great events generated her achievements. Also, from this same personality, came frustration, disappointments and a recurrent sense of failure to complicate the dazzling fiction-like plot of the life she lived.

With wit and understanding and a diligent pursuit of the small, illuminating incident, the author documents Dorothy's veneration of her clerical father; her childhood conviction that the Lord held the Thompson family in benevolent concern; her self-reliant effort at the age of eight to fill in for the mother who died unexpectedly; her difficulties with an eccentric stepmother; and her intense friendships, at every stage of her life, with both men and women. Compassion shines through the book's account of Dorothy's three marriages to three entirely different types of men.

Married first to Josef Bard, during her halcyon early sojourn in Vienna, she was such a gadabout that Josef, a young lawyer who had turned to literary pursuits, shifted his affections to a less peripatetic nymph.

The whirlwind romance which culminated in her second marriage to the novelist Sinclair Lewis suffered initial strains during their honeymoon—a month's tour of England in a house-trailer. On the evidence garnered by Sanders, for 14 years their marriage was mostly on the downgrade until 1942, when it broke up in divorce. Lewis—like Bard—had found another woman. Hurt, puzzled and reluctant, Dorothy survived the two marital break-ups without bitterness, and retained a maganimous concern for both ex-husbands. Her affection for her stepson, Welles Lewis, was one of her abiding emotional ties; she grieved deeply when he was killed by a sniper in Italy. Michael Lewis, her son, apparently baffled her as much as she baffled him. She loved him dearly but understood him scarcely at all.

Sparklingly successful in her public career, Dorothy Thompson met with less fulfillment in her domestic life. For her, there was too much preoccupation with the events of the world around her; she could not immerse herself in the emotions of husbands and children.

In the end, Dorothy Thompson shared her years of fading from the scenes she had dominated with an unlikely partner. He was a burly Austria-Czech artist, Maxim Kopf, who had showed up at her farm in Vermont to visit her staff assistant. Kopf wanted to paint her portrait, and sparks of a new romance were flying well before the picture was finished. Already married, Kopf obtained a divorce, and he and Dorothy were married in 1943. During their 15 years together until his death in 1958, he gave her supporting affection, laughed when people called him "Mr. Dorothy Thompson," let them talk unchecked and unchallenged, and took a vacation when he needed time out.

Writing with restrained admiration and sympathetic appreciation, the author has made a compelling story of

a career filled with personal drama and public participation in major world events.

Dorothy Thompson's long "love affair with life" ended in 1961 on a rainy January evening in Lisbon. She had been sight-seeing; her mind was filled with plans for a new book and thoughts of moving permanently to Portugal to be near her daughter-in-law and grandsons. She died alone in her hotel room, reaching for the telephone, her dinner untouched on a tray.

The reader of this biography must share with the author the estimate that, whatever her shortcomings and even though she sometimes got in her own way, Dorothy Thompson had the indefinable quality of greatness.

—Rebecca F. Gross

The Pulitzer Prizes

by John Hohenberg

(Columbia University Press; \$14.95)

This book might well be subtitled: "All you want to know about the Pulitzer Prizes and in most cases a good deal more."

A valuable accounting it is. Cultural history it is not. It tells the story, era by era, of the 714 Pulitzers awarded since the whole thing started in 1917, in journalism, fiction and non-fiction, history, drama, biography, music and poetry. For twenty years, the author, John Hohenberg, has been the Administrator of the Prizes awarded each year under Columbia University's umbrella and through the beneficent but sometimes Victorian terms of bequests from the first Joseph Pulitzer. (Funds for the Prizes and a journalism school almost went to Harvard in some acerbic bickering with the formidable Nicholas Murray Butler.) The book is written from official documents, jury reports, dissents and recollections of some who

participated in the prize giving and receiving. It is, in short, an authorized chronicle prepared for the 60th anniversary of the Prizes in 1976.

The benefit from the official imprimatur on the work lies in its completeness; down to the fact that Diplomatist George Kennan used his prize money (*Memoirs* in 1968) to purchase a fine Spanish guitar—"for classical music." At the same time it suffers from its sponsorship in that the author sometimes gingerly picks up only a corner of the tablecloth on what must have been epic fights: for instance, Columbia University President McGill's unelaborated characterization of "xerox journalism" for award-winning dispatches on the Pentagon Papers and on Richard M. Nixon's tax returns. And, for instance, the ambiguous matter of Advisory Board awards for books its members hadn't read, for plays unseen; a practice that may or may not have ended by informal agreement.

The Pulitzers have engendered scores of burning arguments since their inception. Most frequently dissension has arisen between the all powerful and misnamed Advisory Board (newspaper editors plus Columbia's Presidents) and "expert" juries in the various award categories (too often in the past stacked with Columbia professors), whose functions are to recommend and to suffer frequent reversals by the Board. Hohenberg tells of these internecine quarrels with authority and with vigor. In 1941, for instance, the Advisory Board jettisoned its Fiction Jury's first choice and instead opted for Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, only to be blocked in turn by President Butler who regarded the book as lascivious. Hemingway went unhonored through his most productive years, until he was awarded a 1953 Pulitzer for *The Old Man and the Sea*. William Faulkner found his best novels ignored, received no Pulitzer until 1955, and then for *A Fable*. F. Scott Fitzgerald never

won a Pulitzer. In 1957, a Biography Jury was reversed in favor of John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage* after a Board member proclaimed: "I read it aloud to my 12-year old grandson and the boy was absolutely fascinated."

Occasionally, too, Columbia's Board of Trustees departed from its usual role of rubber-stamping Advisory Board prize recommendations. In 1962, it withheld an award to W. A. Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst* on grounds that the book fell outside the then-existing dictum for the Biography Prize—that it honor a book teaching "patriotic and unselfish services to the people illustrated by an eminent example." Eleven years later, likely in recompense, Swanberg was awarded for a far lesser book on the late Henry R. Luce. And in 1972, the Trustees twice vetoed journalism awards to *The New York Times* and to Jack Anderson, the columnist, for his reports on U.S. policy making in the India-Pakistan war on grounds that both awards involved possibly illegal publication of secret government documents. Only President McGill's prior pledge to support journalism award decisions when Jurors and the Advisory Board were in agreement caused the Trustees to reverse themselves and to certify the Prizes, though grudgingly and only after disassociating themselves from the judgments. Thus a crisis that could have busted the whole enterprise was averted.

Despite this skirmish, Hohenberg indicates that the long line of awards for various aspects of journalism have run a calmer course than those in other fields, probably because only here were generations of editors serving on the Advisory Board working on their own, familiar turf, regardless of the old reporters' refrain that "the editors wouldn't recognize a story if it bit them." The journalism awards down through the years have reflected the nation's contemporary concerns; the ardent nationalism of World War I,

the anxieties of Great Depression years, the onset and combat of World War II, the disillusion of Korea and Viet Nam, and like a shimmering thread running through the whole cloth, exposure of corruption in government from City Hall to the White House. Indeed, 61 of the 266 awards in journalism have gone for exposing governmental corruption while 48 went for war reporting and 30 for reportage on racial conflict—in itself a commentary on our times.

The Journalism awards should be faulted for their parochialism. Only work for daily and weekly newspapers is considered. It is incredible to grant awards for the best in news photography, with no mention of *Life* and its unparalleled photographic coverage. And it is at least as strange to grant awards for outstanding journalism without consideration, for instance, of television's special reports or the contributions of news magazines. Hohenberg lamely dismisses such shortcomings in the Pulitzer system by saying that other awards are available in these fields and that their inclusion would place an unconscionable burden on the Advisory Board.

That said, the Prizes for newspaper journalism generally, but not always, have been of a high order. Short of repeating a long, long roll call of memorable achievements and of superb reporters, one can but shout assent to Hohenberg's claim that: "Such an award can signify recognition at the highest professional level for an editor struggling in a revolutionary social cause . . . for embattled newspapers . . . (for) magnificent personal efforts. . ." And, after all, recognition is what prize giving is all about. As Archibald MacLeish, himself a three-time winner, told a Pulitzer Prize 50th anniversary dinner: "What these awards have done for many in this indifferent world of ours—this particularly indifferent American world—is somehow to *include* them. We need, most of us, a sign of

recognition . . . that we exist. That we are there. Among those who went before and those who will come after."

John Hohenberg has told the story of the Prizes with conscience and clarity. He also proves a point. Even a skilled old reporter needs a good copy desk to eliminate such banalities as "the stain of oil splattered on the White House . . . the bells began tolling the alarm . . . echoed like thunder in the nation's headlines . . . the 'red menace' stalked the land . . . swept into the vortex of World War II. . ."

But, caveats aside, he has told a good story of a good enterprise and done it well enough. These days, who can ask for more?

—John L. Steele

Muckraking Past, Present, and Future

Edited by John M. Harrison
and Harry H. Stein

(The Pennsylvania State University
Press; \$10.00)

An essential ingredient in reform, some sage once wrote, is that it fail. The optimist takes this to mean that the particular reform should fall somewhat short of its mover's goal, else what remains in that realm for future generations?

Presuming agreement on the meaning of the term "muckraking"—which of course there is not—it is utter folly for those who consider themselves in that general category to toy with the notion that their limited labors are somehow going to make over the world.

In this small volume, edited by Professors Harrison (Nieman Fellow '52) and Stein, with passages designed to connect the essays, the sentiment is perhaps best expressed by Carey McWilliams, editor of the *Nation*.

"Reasonable cynicism about how much reform journalism accomplishes is a healthy corrective, but total cynicism is stupid and unpardonable. Reform journalists may not be 'movers and shakers' but they do edge the world along a bit, they do get an innocent man out of jail occasionally, and now and then they do win a round."

Mr. McWilliams is one of ten contributors to this appraisal of muckraking, counting the editors and a foreword by Irving Dilliard, until recently Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University, one-time editor of the distinguished editorial page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and a Nieman Fellow in 1939.

The volume is worth its price for the bibliographies and citations given by the various essayists; one might call it a lifetime reading list for those who would be better informed about the social, economic or political history of a Republic preparing to celebrate its 200th birthday.

As the 1970s begin, it has become painfully apparent to all who ply the journalistic craft that the same social ills which preoccupied the upper case Muckrakers (1902–1912) are still around and kicking, and not in Argentina.

To name a few, as Mr. Dilliard does in his foreword, conditions are still less than ideal in "such diverse areas as industrial corporations, insurance companies, and railroads . . . financial controls, patent medicines, and harmful drugs . . . municipal corporation, commercialized vice and racial discrimination . . . unemployment and poverty . . . the judicial system and indeed the press itself."

The year of the conference that gave birth to this book is singularly impressive to me, for that happens to be the last year I attended a Nieman Fellows' reunion in Boston, and one evening's debate comes sharply to mind. Someone got up and mentioned "advocacy journalism" and the fur began to fly. Thereafter, one was reasonably able to date the speaker by whether he arose (usually

with heat) to extol "investigative" reporting or "analytical" reporting or "in-depth" reporting or "objective reporting or "hell, what are we arguing about? It's just reporting." Surely there were some "new" journalists present too.

The contributors to this readable review do not shed much light on the definitional problem either. What is a "muckraker," anyway? The spectrum is so broad here, one cannot ascertain unless he chooses his own; in such circumstances, I am constrained to pick from the essay of Louis Filler, Professor of American Civilization at Antioch College, comforted in the knowledge that, even then, there is latitude for multiple choice. Prof. Filler refers to "muckraking's two old reputations—of significant exposure without fear or favor, on one side, and of shabby and malicious rumor-mongering on the other."

Given this choice, the journalist naturally picks for himself the white hat, quite aware that there is a diminishing group which deserves to be numbered among the latter. What is sad to me is a strong suspicion that too large a sector of the American public accepts that second connotation. For true muckrakers, by my definition, are among the most important citizens in our society.

Let me name a recent couple, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, who are by now well known as the pair whose reporting for *The Washington Post* broke open a host of scandalous doings at the nation's highest level. Certainly their work is in the best tradition of Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbell, David Graham Phillips and Ray Stannard Baker.

It is hard to equate such writers, however, with the "blockbuster" fiction authors treated by John G. Cawalti, although everyone is aware that the fiction form is one of the genre, or Upton Sinclair would not turn up on everyone's muckraker list.

In other essays, Robert Bannister Jr. reminds us that the racial problem is a "then and now" affair and David M.

Chalmers lets us know that Law and Order—or Justice, if you will—are still on the subject lists.

One wonders how much import there is to the editors' attention to Filler's belief that muckraking was an appeal to the conscience of America's middle class, contrasted with Prof. Nathan Blumberg's opinion that it was, rather, an assault upon mid-America's value system. (The presumption is made here that both referred to the 1902-1912 group).

As Filler has written: "Hardly a muckraker had any expectation of muckraking," and the best guess is that each felt they were striking a blow for liberty without much conscious notion about such matters. Was it not Sinclair who wrote, "I aimed at America's heart and hit it in the stomach"?

No supporter of "advocacy journalism" (unless you let me define it), I still think it helpful to remind the overly squeamish to go back and read Phillips' *Treason of the Senate* before either considering it a modern innovation or putting it down altogether. This was the series that earned the muckrakers their name and there is no question that it was an influence in bringing about adoption of the Sixteenth Amendment.

One is inclined to disagree strongly with Prof. Jay Martin's declaration that "today, the question is not whether muckraking is being done, but whether anything *except* muckraking is being done." Nevertheless, this assertion that it is very much alive today is accurate. Neither did it begin in 1902; and it is about as apt to disappear from the journalistic scene as America is apt on its bicentennial to change its name to Utopia.

—Gene S. Graham

"... True muckrakers ... are among the most important citizens in our society."

G.G.

The American Connection

by John Pekkanen

(Follett Publishing Company; \$7.95)

John Pekkanen's methodical and piercing study of the rocky road to drug regulation lances another boil on the hide of our body politic. The author, who was a Nieman Fellow in 1970-71, traces the incredible deviousness of corporate drug pushers working their will on servants of the people, while a handful of small imperfect resisters fight an all too often ineffective holding action against insurmountable odds. What might have been a tedious account of governmental hearings and recitation of evidence reads as a rather good suspense account of national and international intrigue. Men of prestigious corporations, their "Mr. Nice-Guy" agents and friendly legislators pit themselves against gritty committee staffers, young lawyers and, in particular, one discredited Senator.

From 1958, when the nation found itself in the midst of a precipitously born drug crisis, until 1973, when major drug control legislation emerged, the American Connection spilled into our society enough dope to make every man, woman and child high. Even at the conclusion of 1973, major areas of drug control remained unclosed although the thrust of industry influence seemed to have been blunted.

Long before momentum gathered in the Congress for rational drug control in the mid 1950's, scientific and governmental investigators had warned of already existing dangerous drug abuse. The Congress, through official hearings, had identified the problems from the housewife's relatively simple dependence on diet control pills to teenager's deaths and psychoses from addictive "popping" and "shooting-up" techniques. Pivotal figures, like Harry J.

Ainslinger of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, were already immersed in the quagmire of heroin and marijuana control. Their commitment was to an untempered broadside at marijuana "as an indicator of moral and social decay" ... leading "to heroin use. Amid this kind of thinking there was little likelihood that much attention would be paid to pills."

However, figures like Senator Thomas Hennings of Missouri, singled out symbolically as a man with his own special addiction, and Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut, discredited and anxious to recoup some semblance of moral behavior for himself and for the public view, initiated investigations anew and introduced control legislation repeatedly. The story of this legislative trail exposes an unseemly side of Congress, the pharmaceutical industry, and the American Medical Association. The abandonment of the AMA's respected Council on Pharmacy and Chemistry, and the substitution in its stead of an industry-oriented Council on Drugs presents another sad chapter for organized medicine, as the AMA turned from its role as a professional society to a political and economic lobby.

During the period after 1950, when critical review of new drugs by the AMA was withdrawn and the enormous promotion of new drugs escalated, revenues to the AMA through journal advertising increased four-fold. The AMA seemed launched on its own drug promotional efforts. With the addition of an army of special drug detail men recommended by an AMA-sponsored study, the "selling" of the doctor was assured.

Much of this writing is bitter medicine and will be labelled poison by many. Men's motives in these endeavors cannot be proved but Mr. Pekkanen assembles the puzzle pieces so compellingly that an inescapable picture of collusion unfolds. While several drugs take prominent roles in this picture, the amphetamines hold center stage. In many

medical minds, the need for these drugs is minimal, numbering in the thousands of capsules for the country in one year's time. Actually ten billion capsules were being produced each year and nearly half of these diverted to black market "street use." The efforts of respected national drug houses in resisting controls of production and distribution, in the light of medical evidence of their uselessness in ethical practice and enormous potential for harm, appears unconscionable beyond belief. Even as the noose tightened for sale in the United States—in a last effort for profit it seems—one firm escalated the already "overkill" shipments to neighboring Mexico from where double strength "Black Mollies" appeared along our Southern Border. One wonders, not only how the problem could have grown so large, but why it escaped the general knowledge for so long.

As an epilogue Mr. Pekkanen raises provocative questions for all of us. Henry Kissinger has said recently that "History is a tale of efforts that failed, of aspirations that weren't fulfilled, and often turned out to be different from what one expected. So . . . one has to live with a sense of the inevitability of tragedy." *The American Connection* is a story of efforts which did not fail entirely. In the wake of Watergate, when another exposé may thud on tired ears, there is some hope that simple men can take hold of a government which, in the Spenglerian view, suffers a crisis of authority unable to act with decisiveness when confronted with hard and complex issues.

One can argue the relative preponderance of weakness or strength in the human character. Reality says that both exist. Certainly the drug industry, aided and abetted by the medical profession, has played to weakness. We have all been subjected for a generation to blatant and subtle appeals to that inner voice calling for calm and tranquility. And when successful, this appeal blunts the natural usefulness of anxiety as one

of our most valuable protective devices. Hiding behind a screen of sedation, the energy required to handle misfortune, grief and disaster dissipates. Often a seemingly endless slough of despair or inaction overcomes those called upon to exert a maximum effort. Calm can be restored only after stress is weathered and crisis is solved.

Television and drug advertisements to the contrary have diverted our minds from reality. This is a time when we have seen frail and imperfect men grind a train of wrong-doing and corruption to a halt and, with shoulders to the wheel, recommence the workings of our social and political machinery in a healthier direction. However, the examples are too few and bring to mind another Kissinger remark that "a shrinking spirit could lead us to attempt too little." *The American Connection* is an important contribution, not only for the factual presentation of a timely problem but also for the glimpse it gives of spirits not shrinking but attempting.

—Russell S. Hoxsie

The Wound Within: America in the Vietnam Years, 1945-74

by Alexander Kendrick

(Little, Brown; \$12.95)

What Washington Said— Administration Rhetoric and the Vietnam War, 1949-1969

by F. M. Kail

(Harper & Row [paperback]; \$3.95)

It was during one of the last big Washington demonstrations against the Indochina War when a middle-aged Detroit woman, who once again had made the all-night bus ride to the

capital with the Michigan contingent, approached a group of reporters.

"I haven't been one of the leaders in the anti-war movement, just a housewife and a marcher," she began. "But I read the papers, I have some common sense and I've been meaning to ask you a question. I've been demonstrating against this war for years. I don't have any inside knowledge like you people in Washington and I'm not an expert. What I want to know is how is it possible that people like me were right and all you experts in Washington were wrong?"

The facts are, of course, that some of the "experts in Washington"—more in journalism than in government—had been "right" about the Vietnam War from the early days of American involvement, and that much of the information supplied by a critical press helped bring the lady from Detroit and thousands of others to the Washington demonstrations. But her perception, which was shared by millions, was basically sound. The voices of authority and expertise, including the press, were wrong. And people who had no access to high officials, congressional investigators or background briefings had been right.

How wrong officialdom and its transmission belt, the press, were, is one of the more important by-products of these studies. And although the press, of all American institutions, acquitted itself best during the long agony of Vietnam, it is still painful to review the record in the light of what we know now.

Kendrick, a veteran of broadcasting and foreign reporting and a Nieman Fellow in the class of '44, has written a kind of *War and Peace*, stitching together the events, large and small, within a nation going to peace and a new kind of war at the same time. His chapters paint broad murals, which include the budding American civil rights movement, the roots of McCarthyism and the history of Viet Minh. Some of the details might seem extraneous and

the sweep of the book may be overly ambitious, for it leaves an impression that every incident which could possibly fit into the author's thesis was included.

But perhaps Kendrick is making up for lost journalism, trying to put down what else was happening in America which put it into the swamp of Indochina, the better to understand why we went there, and why those journalists and officials who were preoccupied with Vietnam didn't see that it was of a piece with all the other swamps of the Fifties and Sixties.

Much of what Kendrick and Kail tell us we already know or we remember hearing dozens of times. But it goes without saying that we need to be reminded of that big story the Washington press so faithfully recorded—the struggle against communism—and where it led. Before Watergate, before Vietnam, before civil rights, American journalism's central contribution in the coverage of Washington and world affairs was the exposure of communism, and its threat to national security.

Kendrick's book chronicles the events, that is, the top stories, in the decade following the Second World War, which made all of us suckers for the Vietnam propaganda. But now, with hindsight, Kendrick shows how the nation overreacted to McCarthy, the Rosenbergs, Stalin, the triumph of Mao, Korea and the nationalism of Ho Chi Minh. Overreact? How else could we have responded in that black and white world our leaders and our media painted for us? As Kendrick and Kail point out, even our most sophisticated leaders—then Secretary of State Dean Acheson, for one—had the most simplistic views towards the communist world.

Kendrick recalls Acheson's 1950 cable to the American ambassador in Saigon, declaring that the U.S. had to help the French hang onto Indochina to prevent it from falling "within the Commie-dominated bloc of slave states." Four years later John Foster Dulles, who

personified the "with-us-or-against-us" world depicted by officialdom and the press, refused to shake hands with or even acknowledge the presence of Chou En-lai at Geneva. And in 1961 Vice-president Lyndon Johnson, in a confidential report, told President Kennedy that we must defend South Vietnam or start worrying about Hawaii and San Francisco.

It's possible that these officials knew better and that they were cynically preparing the American people for large-scale intervention in Indochina. But a reading of documents, like the Pentagon Papers, which were meant to remain confidential, or listening to the Nixon White House tapes, one finds considerable evidence that many of those who led the nation into Vietnam really believed what they were saying, no matter how simplistic it now seems.

Again, why shouldn't they have believed it? Look at the playback they got in those days when the press popularized the Iron Curtain, monolithic communism, the evils of appeasement and the wonders of a bi-partisan foreign policy. Both Kendrick and Kail note that America went to war in Vietnam with the support of Republicans and Democrats, conservatives and liberals, all of whom gave basically the same reasons—the need to stop communism, meaning the Russians, the Chinese or both, depending on what was happening at the time.

There were a few in politics, like Wayne Morse, and in the press, like John S. Knight, who seemed to know what was coming in Indochina, in the early days. But they were generally ignored. For the decades of monolithic anti-communism in the press (interrupted only during the World War alliance with the Soviets) had given us a monolithic post-war foreign policy.

Kail sums it up in a laboriously researched study of the dominant themes in official American statements on Vietnam. In 1950, for example, when the U.S. reversed Roosevelt's anti-colonialist

policies and went to the aid of the French in Indochina—66 per cent of the official statements included rhetoric about opposing "communism" and protecting "freedom and liberty." Incredibly, although the struggle in southeast Asia clearly was an internal one in those days, most American rhetoric invoked the threat of "outside powers" as the reason for American intervention.

In a rather revealing statement, Kendrick notes that after the Geneva Conference of 1954, which created North Vietnam and temporarily (or so it was thought) gave life to South Vietnam, one of the most vocal critics of the settlement was Adlai Stevenson. As if apologizing that Stevenson, a liberal, should be saying such things, Kendrick suggests that politics interfered with Stevenson's otherwise good judgment. But the fact is that politics, and probably good politics at that, colored most of the judgments that got us into Vietnam and out. For better or for worse that's the way the system is supposed to work. What the woman from Detroit, and thousands of others who were "radicalized" by Vietnam and its domestic offspring—Watergate—have been saying is now that both are fading from memory, the lessons of books like those of Kendrick and Kail include this one: the system that got us out of Vietnam and Watergate, got us in, in the first place.

—Saul Friedman

Law and the Student Press

by George E. Stevens and John B. Webster

(Iowa State University Press; \$7.95)

Incongruous as it may seem to adult journalists, who recognize that informing the public is anything but child's

play, there is a lively struggle for press freedom going on every day in the colleges, high schools and even junior highs.

The adversaries, as in the so-called real world, are, on the one hand, people in authority, and, on the other, reporters and editors who feel compelled to tell their readers what the authorities believe is none of the readers' business.

The latter-day children's crusade is documented in this small straightforward book which is, as much as anything, intended as a primer for would-be "Woodsteins" and incipient Zengers.

For the most part, Professors Stevens and Webster, who are Purdue University journalism colleagues, have attempted to mark a trail through the thickets of uncertainty and potential conflict for administrators as well as students, and consequently, their guidebook—like those in general—runs to the dry side.

What it lacks in forcefulness—which the book might have had if the authors had attempted to say what *ought to be* (in terms of the right to speak and publish) as well as what *is*—it makes up in part by its simplicity and readability.

Students and their advisers may learn from the book how better to stay out of the clutches of administrative censors. Administrators might—in the unlikely event that they are so inclined—find considerable justification for forbearance.

The courts, as Stevens and Webster show, are beginning to take note of the students' struggle and its relationship to freedom of expression outside the academy; even to rule in their favor "so long as they do not substantially disrupt school operations." And where administrators seek to squelch expression, the book shows that the legal burden is being placed more and more on administrators to justify the need for restraint.

Nevertheless, the authors walk gingerly around the smoldering issue of the right of student journalists to have access

to official meetings and records, stating that while legal principle and precedent are on the side of the student reporter, in practice he would be wise to rely on politeness and tact to achieve his goal.

In the light of the recent *Tornillo* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, in which a newspaper's right to reject copy was upheld, the Stevens and Webster discussion of similar problems shows how much more difficult are the decisions facing student editors. They appear to have the right to reject any article on the basis of editorial judgment, and any purely commercial advertising, but they may not be upheld if they reject "editorial" advertisements submitted by students on matters "of the highest public concern," whatever that may mean.

Finally, it is worth noting that in instances where student publications have been incorporated as non-profit entities (in order to be free of restraint imposed by academic authorities), some have been imperiled by Internal Revenue questioning of their tax-exempt status. (The revenue men apparently object to strong political endorsements by the "independent" student journals.)

The discussion of that situation provided a clear opportunity—one of several—for the authors, if they had been less inclined to be objective and discreet, to tell someone in authority to drop dead—and thus win hearty applause from this reviewer. But then you can't please everyone.

—Mort Stern

The Memphis Murders

by Gerald Meyer

(Seabury Press; \$7.95)

The discovery of the sexually mutilated body of a 46-year old nurse and her semi-invalid husband startled the city of Memphis, Tenn. in the late summer of 1969.

Both had been strangled and robbed of a small amount of money. The double killing was the start of a 29-day nightmare for Memphis residents.

Three other victims met death at the hands of the murderer before the largest manhunt in the city's history netted a 23-year old suspect.

The suspect, George Howard (Buster) Putt was a drifting petty criminal who wore dark sunglasses during all his waking hours, even indoors.

Buster Putt was caught fleeing from the fifth murder with arms that "looked as if they'd been dipped almost to the elbows in a bucket of bright red paint." His last victim had been hacked to death.

The petty, and definitely small time criminal activity Putt had been involved in prior to his final arrest seemed hardly likely to prepare him for his role as the stealthy murderer who made almost a million souls fear for their lives.

Putt confessed to the murders soon after he was captured, citing robbery as the motive for all five killings. But the sexual mutilations tell us that something darker and more gruesome than simple larceny was lurking behind the sunglasses.

Gerald Meyer, the author and *Nieman* Fellow '72, has done a masterful job of reporting, as far as it goes. And that is the problem. Straight reporting is inadequate in this type of book. An interpretive, and even analytical, spotlight is needed to pierce the psychological haze in Buster Putt's mind.

Instead, Meyer recreates the victims' lives and last moments in great detail. The killer's relationships with his wife and brother are examined carefully. But running beneath the entire book like a broad underground river is the unanswered question of what was it that made Buster Putt a mass murderer.

Buster and his brother Clifford shared the same miserable childhood, being shuttled from one institutional "home" after another, yet Buster be-

came a murderer, and Clifford did not.

Meyer states about Buster; "In his case, such forces were so overwhelming that his life was directed very early into paths that could lead to nothing better than a tragic dead end." The question the reader is likely to ask, is what about Clifford? Why didn't he end up like Buster?

There are other flaws in the book also. A great deal of space is dedicated to Buster Putt's pathetic wife and family in Mississippi. Very little of this is germane to the main theme of the murders in Memphis.

The comparison between Meyer's book and an earlier one by Truman Capote is inevitable. Capote's brilliant work, *In Cold Blood*, precisely answers the question of what it was that led two twisted young men to murder an entire Kansas farm family in 1959.

However, it should be pointed out that Capote interviewed the two killers extensively while they were imprisoned and awaiting execution for their crimes.

Meyer on the other hand, dealt not with Buster Putt, but with his wife and brother. The only words he obtained from Putt, were those from his confession.

The author at one point addresses himself to the key failure of the book—"Only the last question remained: Why? That proved to be the most difficult question of all. In time it became clear that George Howard Putt was himself incapable of providing an answer." Unfortunately, neither does Meyer.

Other than this main problem and a few minor technical questions, Meyer's narrative is briskly written in a clear, easy to read style. He has even managed

to keep the reader in suspense until the very end as to which one of the Putt brothers is actually doing the killings.

But unfortunately, the reason the murders were committed at all remains elusive. As readers, we shake our heads at the senseless death of five innocent people, but we have not been provided with the key to understanding people like Buster Putt, so we could, if inclined, prevent further similar murders.

Was Buster Putt a "bad seed" or was it society which made him "formed and deformed by forces over which he had no control?" Gerald Meyer leaves it to us to puzzle out, and to find the cause(s) in the mountain of facts he piles up for us in the strange case of Buster Putt, itinerant murderer, retired.

—Ronald Gollobin

Notes on Book Reviewers

Irving Dilliard, Nieman Fellow in the first class, 1939, has retired as editorial page editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and is a member of the National News Council. **Saul Friedman**, Nieman Fellow '63, is a reporter with Knight Newspapers in Washington, D.C. **Ronald Gollobin**, Nieman Fellow '74 and an investigative reporter, formerly with the *Trenton Times* in New Jersey, has joined Channel 5, WCVB in Boston, an ABC affiliate. **Gene S. Graham**, Nieman Fellow '63, is Pro-

fessor of Journalism at the College of Communications, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Rebecca F. Gross, Nieman Fellow '48, has retired as editor of the *Lock Haven* (Pennsylvania) *Express* and is consultant on communications and periodicals. **Russell S. Hoxsie, M.D.**, has conducted a family medical practice for 20 years on the island of Martha's Vineyard, off the coast of Massachusetts. **Louis M. Lyons**, Nieman Fellow '39

and Curator of the Nieman Fellowships for 25 years, has retired and is news commentator for WGBH—Channel 2, Boston's public television station. **John L. Steele**, Nieman Fellow '52, is Senior Correspondent with *Time* magazine in Washington, D.C.

Mort Stern, Nieman Fellow '55, is Dean of the School of Journalism, University of Colorado. **John Zakarian**, Nieman Fellow '69, is on the editorial page staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Group Review

Freedom of the Press for Whom?

by Jerome A. Barron
(Indiana University Press; \$8.95)

Voice in the Wilderness: Collected Essays of Fifty Years

by Corliss Lamont
(Prometheus Books; \$10.00)

The Amendment That Refused to Die

by Howard N. Meyer
(Chilton Book Company; \$7.95)

These eight books have something very much in common. They all deserve a lot more attention than they are getting. In particular they are entitled to far more notice in the newspapers and magazines and other forms of the news and opinion media. For how can the public be expected to know about them if print and electronic journalism do not tell about them? Countless books are reported on every day. These are respectfully submitted for proper recognition.

This is not to say that every word in these books is to be taken as gospel truth. Or if true, is to be applauded in every instance or even approved. But each has something substantial to offer thoughtful citizens who care about significant trends in American life. Each is worth editorial examination and exposition.

Jerome A. Barron, a recent dean of the Syracuse University College of Law

J. W. Gitt's Sweet Land of Liberty

Compiled and Edited by
McKinley C. Olson
(Jerome S. Ozer, Publisher; \$8.95)

Other Voices: The New Journalism in America

by Everette E. Dennis and
William L. Rovers
(Canfield Press of Harper & Row; \$3.75)

Them and Us: Struggles of a Rank and File Union

by James J. Matles and
James Higgins
(Prentice-Hall, Inc.; \$6.95)

and a specialist in communications law, is quick to raise, in *Freedom of the Press for Whom?* the question whether, in view of the "current deluge of facts and propaganda, an informed public opinion" is any "longer possible." His answer is that he prefers to think that it is, since if the answer is No then "democracy is not possible either." But to make the answer even perhaps Yes, he says, "certainly requires that the public, through newspapers and broadcasts, have access to all shades of opinion."

That indeed is what Dean Barron's book is all about—the right of the public, as he sees it, to access to the mass media. The essential situation, in the author's view, is simply stated. City after city has a single newspaper ownership. At least 20 states do not have what Barron calls "competitive dailies." The national broadcast news is largely restricted to network outlets.

Memoirs of a Man: Grenville Clark

Collected by Mary Clark Dimond,
Edited by Norman Cousins and
J. Garry Clifford
(W. W. Norton and Company; \$10.00)

The Pulse of Freedom: American Liberties, 1920-1970s

Edited by Alan Reitman
(W. W. Norton and Company; \$12.50)

Thus, choice of news and dissemination are in relatively few hands everywhere. And so this close student of the matter calls for much wider access than now exists.

Since the publication of the Barron book, the Supreme Court decided a major access controversy, *Miami Herald v. Tornillo*, June 25, 1974, with Jerome A. Barron representing the appellee, Pat L. Tornillo, executive director of a classroom teachers' association in Dade County and candidate for the Florida legislature. After the *Miami Herald* criticized his candidacy, Tornillo demanded access to the *Herald's* columns under Florida's "right of reply" statute. Speaking for a unanimous bench, Chief Justice Burger ruled that the press could no more be told what it must print than what it must not print.

The Supreme Court decision does not leave the citizen without any support when he seeks access to print. Justice White put it well in his concurring opinion:

"One need not think less of the First Amendment to sustain reasonable methods for allowing the average citizen to redeem a falsely tarnished reputa-

tion. Nor does one have to doubt the genuine decency, integrity and good sense of the vast majority of professional journalists to support the right of any individual to have his day in court when he has been falsely maligned in the public press. The press is the servant, not the master, of the citizenry, and its freedom does not carry with it an unrestricted hunting license to prey on the ordinary citizen."

* * * * *

"It all began in the Yard," writes Corliss Lamont in *Voice in the Wilderness*, the yard being Harvard Yard and "it" a half century devoted one way or another to free speech and other cherished Bill of Rights liberties. Lamont was a senior in the class of '24, when he led a movement to invite Debs, William Z. Foster and Scott Nearing to speak. That ignited a furore and the immediate goal was not attained, but the attendant public notice induced "a more liberal program of speakers."

After that there would be many Lamont achievements, perhaps the most notable of which came in 1965 when the Supreme Court in the case of *Lamont v. Postmaster General* declared unconstitutional an act of Congress that had empowered the Post Office Department to screen for "Communist political propaganda" all second and third-class mail from overseas and to destroy it unless the addressee returned a postcard saying delivery was desired. It was the first time that a federal law had been voided for violating the First Amendment. All it took was someone with the courage and initiative of Corliss Lamont to issue the challenge and see it through. For the Supreme Court joined unanimously in Justice Douglas' pioneering opinion.

As this harvest of essays of 50 years shows, Lamont has stood foursquare against Joe McCarthyism, aggressive militarism, and other political and social evils, and just as firmly for peace,

for collective security, for humanism, for economic justice for all mankind. We live in a better world because of Corliss Lamont, his countless good works and his enlightened books. The level of any public library collection will rise the minute *Voice in the Wilderness* appears on its shelves.

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How the third book listed above—Howard N. Meyer's *The Amendment that Refused to Die*—could have gone almost totally unnoticed in the nation's press is nothing short of a mystery. Some journalism graduate student ought to be tracking down an explanation. Here is the story of one of the major parts of the American Constitution told as it has never been told before. It is the crucial part which says plainly that no state shall "deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Yet these unmistakable words, though approved by a Civil War Congress before Appomattox and duly ratified, were denied, ignored, undercut for decades. Early judicial interpretations said in effect that the words did not mean what they said. But at long last, in 1925, in the case of *Gitlow v. New York*, Justice Sanford in a majority opinion began the new completed Bill of Rights "incorporation" process with this historic though incidental sentence:

"For present purposes we may and do assume that freedom of speech and of the press—which are protected by the First Amendment from abridgment by Congress—are among the fundamental personal rights and 'liberties' protected by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment from impairment by the States."

That was the first real break in a century and what went on in that century is a large part of Howard Meyer's "never say die" narrative. The author, who is a former special assistant to the

United States Attorney General and a member of the New York bar, deserves our gratitude. So far his work has been largely a labor of love but future students and scholars and many members of the general public will be indebted to him. Meantime, this heartfelt salute!

* * * * *

Morris H. Rubin, publisher of *The Progressive*, calls J. W. Gitt's *Sweet Land of Liberty* an "extraordinary book by and about an extraordinary man." He is entirely right on both counts. Josiah William Gitt—Jess Gitt as he came to be known—published just about the freest newspaper in the country in his *Gazette and Daily* of York, Pennsylvania. Though York is not a large city and the *G & D's* circulation reached only about 35,000, still men from coast to coast knew about it and many envied the fortunate few who made up its staff, among them the free-swinging, hard-hitting, articulate cartoonist, Walt Partymiller.

Lamentably the Gitts, father and son, are both dead and the *G & D* was purchased by the *York Record*. But what the Gitt paper was like from 1915 to 1970 can be known from this collection of editorials and other writings from its tabloid pages. Time after time it got out in front, took its stand and went on ahead leaving it up to the press generally to catch up if it could. McKinley C. Olson, former *G & D* reporter photographer and editorial writer, serves American journalism handsomely by bringing "Sweet Land" into being. May it strengthen 10,000 editorial backbones!

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Although their stocktaking of the "new journalism" requires barely 200 compact pages, journalism teachers Dennis (University of Minnesota) and Rivers (Stanford University) have assembled an amazing amount of information on the differing media trends abroad across the nation. They report

on and assess the "new non-fiction" in the press, "modern muckrakers," such as Cervi's *Weekly* in Denver, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Texas Observer*, *Village Voice* and the *Maine Times*; the counter-culturists, the journalism reviews, "precision" journalism, the editor-writer-advocates, and their counterparts in broadcasting. Happily each category is topped off with an exciting example—by Tom Wolfe or Ron Dorfman or Pete Hammil, David Deitch or Philip Meyer.

Dennis and Rivers find electronic journalism responding to those "other voices" hardly less than the print forms. Thus, "on CBS News, Charles Kuralt's 'On the Road' series was a creative example of the visually descriptive reports on obscure places" and "used many of the tools of the new nonfiction." The central question, say the authors, "is not how many new voices are raised but how many listeners care to hear them. . . Diversity in journalism pivots on diversity in interest among the American people. Like the many journalists who are building careers on the new journalism, we believe the question 'Who cares?' will be answered—many do."

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James Higgins, managing editor of the *York Gazette and Daily* from 1950 to 1970—see above—had a hitch as a shipyard sheet metal worker in the mid-1940s. After that he joined the international staff of the CIO Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers. In his shipyard union days, Higgins met James J. Matles, machine

shop worker and organizer, who rose to general secretary of the United Electrical and Machine Workers, known in the trade as UE. The two longtime friends are collaborators in *Them and Us*. Their chronicle of the "struggles of a rank-and-file union" is not always pretty reading. Opposition came up on every hand, from New Deal days to the era of the multinational giants.

A sample of the care with which they did their research comes in the account of Joe McCarthyism against union workers Carner and Lewin at Westinghouse. Quite correctly they point out that Truman's 1947 Executive Order No. 9835 launched the political witch hunt three years before Wisconsin's McCarthy got going. *Them and Us* deserves a fair hearing.

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The present reviewer has known no finer career lawyer than the late Grenville Clark. This deep admiration led to a biographical appreciation in the Winter 1963-64 issue of *The American Scholar* entitled "Grenville Clark: Public Citizen." That is just what Grenny Clark was—a citizen who throughout his life, without holding office, took on public duties and responsibilities. A graduate of Harvard and then of its Law School in the class with Felix Frankfurter, he did not hesitate in arguing before the Supreme Court against the compulsory flag salute as a requirement for staying in school. Justice Frankfurter won the first round, eight to one, in 1940 but Grenville Clark's historic brief prevailed, six to three, when the Supreme Court with

better perspective reversed itself in 1943.

As "public citizen Clark," he worked for officer training in two World Wars, for World Peace after the second; for civil rights, for academic freedom; for professional legal ethics. He deserves in memory every page in this book of essays gathered by his talented daughter Mary Dimond of Kansas City. It ought to be put into the hands of every law school graduate as evidence that if lawyers Nixon and Agnew, Mitchell and Ehrlichman and their kind were tearing down true law and order, this good, quiet, sound member of the bar was outstanding among those working hard to build it up and achieve a better world in the process.

It is now just a half century since Roger N. Baldwin and a few associates started the American Civil Liberties Union. To read the essays by John Caughey, Milton R. Konvitz, William Preston, Paul L. Murphy, Jerold S. Auerbach, Roger Baldwin and Alan Reitman, the editor of this wide-ranging, historical collection, is to wonder what would have happened to our Bill of Rights had there been no A.C.L.U. in these critical years. The A.C.L.U. has had its troubles, plenty of them, and still does, but it has made a difference of unmeasured degree on the side of constitutional freedom. It would be impossible to write the history of the United States in the twentieth century without taking notice of the contributions in one sensitive area after another by Robert Baldwin and his co-workers in the American Civil Liberties Union. Theirs is a book of lasting value.

—Irving Dilliard

