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James Bryant Conant 1893 - 1978

Louis M. Lyons, Nieman Fellow '39 and Nieman Curator Emeritus, reflects on the life of President Conant, especially his tenure at Harvard University and his role in the Nieman Fellowships. Mr. Lyons was Curator of the Nieman Foundation for 25 years, some during the Conant presidency.

James Bryant Conant died February 11, just short of 85. At 78 he published the autobiography that the Carnegie Corporation provided him a team of researchers to complete.

It is 700 pages, titled *My Several Lives — Memoirs of a Social Inventor*.

The several lives included that of a chemist whose researches explored the mystery of chlorophyll, the presidency of Harvard, the first post-war ambassador to Germany, critic and reformer of the American high school.

His inventions included the atom bomb (as co-director with his MIT neighbor, Vannevar Bush, of the Manhattan project) and the Nieman Fellowship program, which he counted one of his most successful.

Others were the General Education program, to broaden the base of undergraduate study; the national scholarship plan, to secure wide representation of the Harvard student body; University professorships, to free leading scholars of departmental limits in their teaching and creative work; the "ad hoc" committee that summons leading scholars outside the university to advise on appointment of a full professor; merging of Harvard and Radcliffe courses; admission of women to the medical school; establishment of a new degree, Master of Arts in Education, which was the key to reorganization and vitalization of a mediocre school, and the "Education Commission of the States" created to cope with the chaos that Conant found dismaying in the secondary schools.

These were among his achievements.

But he dwells equally on his disappointments and failures, and the candid and philosophical acceptance of

(Continued on page 47)

On the Bakke Case

By Paul Freund

The 1977 Nieman Convocation, a gathering of Nieman alumni/ae, current Nieman Fellows, and Associates of the Nieman Foundation, met for three days last October at Harvard University. (The Associates is an organization of press executives who make voluntary contributions to the Nieman endowment and meet annually with scholars and journalists for discussions of mutual interest. This is the sixth such meeting.)

Paul Freund, Carl M. Loeb University Professor Emeritus at Harvard, addressed the group at the October 8th luncheon. A lightly edited transcript of his remarks follows.

It seems to me that there are two sets of issues raised by the Bakke case which are not always kept disentangled in discussion. One set of issues has to do with the intrinsic fairness of the racial preference plan and the other set of issues has to do with its necessity, its utility, its practical efficiency in achieving certain educational and social goals. The opponents of the plan tend to focus on the first set of issues, that of fairness or intrinsic justice. The proponents of the plan tend to focus on the second set of issues: namely, effectiveness, usefulness, pragmatic value. It seems to me that both sets of issues have to be faced, and that in particular the issue of fairness has to be approached more analytically than is often done. By the plan in the Bakke case I mean, of course, a plan whereby a limited number of places in admission to a professional school are kept for members of so-called disadvantaged minorities, meaning primarily blacks, and to some extent Chicanos and American Indians, who are qualified, that is, who predictably can succeed in the course of study in that professional school. Now over and against such a plan, is set the notion of meritocracy as the overriding criterion for any admission system that purports to be fair or moral or just.

An analysis of the meaning of merit in this connection is useful. What do we mean by merit as reflected in rank or test scores? My point is not that the tests themselves are biased; that is an arguable question; I don't know enough about the tests to have an opinion on that. My point is a somewhat more philosophical one, that what we mean by merit in that context is not a moral conception of

desert, because the scores don't test individual effort or character that ought to be rewarded. They test something more, something in the nature of both achievement and promise, which are instrumental for further contributions to the society or the profession which the students plan to enter. In other words, the concept of merit is not a purely moral concept in this context, but it is itself an instrumental concept linked with efficiency, effectiveness, future contribution, and the like. So that we are thrown at once into the second set of questions, namely, whether the plan is one that is relevant to proper functions and purposes of the university, both in its educational and social purposes.

But I think one ought not to leave the question of fairness quite so early. There are still some questions that will be raised about it. For one thing, it will be argued (granted that merit is not in this context a purely or basically moral concept) that the idea of race or ethnic origin or color is peculiarly illegitimate as a factor or criterion in choice for admissions. Color blindness, in other words, is our professed norm. That, of course, is a noble ideal. It reminds me a little of the masthead of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, on which I was nourished, namely, Mr. Pulitzer's motto: "Yielding neither to predatory plutocracy nor to predatory poverty." Shades of Anatole France!

The argument is that justice involves generality and reciprocity, not favoritism on the basis of color or race. There are two aphorisms, curiously each involving a goose, which exemplify these norms of generality and

reciprocity. The first, of course, is: What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. And the other, reminding us of reciprocity, is: "We prosecute the man or woman / Who steals the goose from off the common / But the greater felon we let loose / Who steals the common from the goose." Well, those are useful reminders of the moral ideals of generality and reciprocity, but what is sauce for the goose is not necessarily sauce for the gander if the sauce is estrogen, or if one of the pair had in the recent past been gorged and the other had been starved. I think one would not hold fast to the maxim. And as for reciprocity, well, I think even a lawyer can see the difference between a majority giving preferred treatment to a minority and a majority giving preferred treatment to itself.

The worker who is hired under a racial preference plan today need not be the identical worker who was excluded in the past.

In fact, of course, as we know, the Constitution is not color blind, at least where there has been in the past purposeful discrimination by the organization or the enterprise that is involved. We know that remedial measures are themselves asymmetrical, setting numerical goals where color is a highly conscious factor in choice in order to redress a prior, deliberate imbalance. It's true that those are cases where there has been purposeful discrimination in the past, and there is no evidence in the Bakke record that the University of California at Davis had purposefully discriminated. But the point I'm making now is that in that situation, which we have come to accept as a proper one for asymmetrical treatment, or if you will, preferential treatment — in that situation the beneficiaries of that policy today are not correlated individually with the victims of past discrimination. The worker who is hired under a racial preference plan today need not be the identical worker who was excluded in the past. Similarly, those who are presently disadvantaged need not be those who themselves discriminated. That is to say, the worker who fails to get a job today because of a racial preference to others need not be someone who has himself discriminated in the past. The employer or the union may have discriminated, but not the individual. At least in that situation of remedial redress, we have come to accept a lack of correlation on a one-to-one victim-beneficiary basis. And I submit that where there is no imputation of guilt or wrongdoing, where the institution itself has not discriminated in the past, there is even less reason to insist on that kind of correlation because we are not

branding anyone as having been guilty. We are not attaching shame. It's not a question of punishment or penalty; it's rather a question of equitable restitution, as where an innocent donee of property that has been stolen is required to return it to the victim of the theft or the fraud, even though the donee was no participant in the fraud or the theft in the beginning. It would be unfair to retain benefits at the expense of another innocent person who had been victimized.

How does that idea of equitable restitution without personal guilt fit here? One has to make the point that in a real sense all white persons have been advantaged in the past, including the recent past, by the preferences and advantages built into our society. Even those sons and daughters of recent immigrants who had nothing to do with the ante-bellum South and its aftermath didn't have to compete with blacks for jobs as clerks or sales people or railroad conductors because the jobs on the lower rung and only on the lower rung were reserved for blacks. They were the porters. They were the janitors. They were the custodians, not curators, and they could not aspire to reach the higher rung. Any white person was the innocent, if you will, beneficiary of a system that assigned priorities and preferences and denigrations on the basis of race.

Well, you may say, true, and some kind of restitution is due, but it ought to be at the expense of the whole society, not of a few people who are crowded out of places in professional schools or other kinds of gainful occupation. We do have social programs based on taxation, but that is not necessarily the exclusive means of redress. In any case of profound and dislocating social progress, it is always those closest to the new configuration who are the specially disadvantaged group in the transition. If, for example, land that had been residential is taken for a public playground, the people who owned the houses will be compensated, but the people next to them who may have depended upon those residents for access, for neighborliness, for customers will be specially disadvantaged. At least as far as the Federal Constitution is concerned, their property was not "taken" and they are not entitled to any special compensation. We may sympathize with them and yet we feel that this is an inevitable concomitant of social reconstruction. The people two miles away are not affected, just as the people at the bottom of the list in the admission roster are not going to be affected one way or the other. They are going to lose out regardless of the six percent — or sixteen percent — of reserved places. It's the people close to the new configuration — I'm using bridge words trying to assimilate, as lawyers do, by analogy the new playground to the new admissions policy — it is those people close to

the intersection who do bear a special burden, but that is the way the world moves, has moved, and the injury is not new in kind.

Another objection is that this plan would be an entering wedge beyond admissions, leading to favoritism or disparity in grading, in admission to the bar or in certification to specialties, and so on. Where do you draw the line? That's always a question. Where *do* you draw the line? The principle of the dangerous precedent was defined by F. M. Cornford as meaning that you should not now do an admittedly right thing for fear that you or your equally timid successors will not have the courage to act differently in a situation that superficially resembles the present, but is essentially unlike it. That's the principle of the dangerous precedent. Now one shouldn't be too flippant about it. I think the real problem is whether there is on the continuum a natural point of discontinuity, a natural point of distinction, so that one is not either logically or practically impelled to go all the way. And here I think the relevant concept is that of opportunity versus execution or ultimate performance. It seems to me that entrance to a university, including a professional school, is still in the stage of opportunity, and that one can say that after admission, the performance will be graded on a non-preferential basis, and certainly admission to the profession will be on a non-preferential basis. But when we are still in the stage of opportunity, we can take factors into account fairly and morally that we would not take into account if we were judging ultimate performance. Here we are judging potential or capacity for future contributions.

That leads me to the second cluster of problems. They can be dealt with more briefly and are the ones that are generally talked about, particularly by proponents of the plan, namely whether the preferential system is consistent with the appropriate functions of a university or of a professional school and is necessary and likely to be effective in its professed purposes. Here we are in a pragmatic realm. I'm not one to argue for multiversity when I speak of the functions of a university. I'm old-fashioned enough to embrace the idea that a university is designed to transmit, preserve and criticize learning or knowledge or understanding. That does not describe a social service institution performing contracts for various groups or for the state. Still, within the old-fashioned concept of the university, surely one's eyes must be open to the life for which the university is preparing its students. After all, Harvard was established "lest there be an illiterate ministry" and if you want to go to the Middle Ages, the classic trivium was law, theology and medicine — surely not without an eye to the world outside.

The purposes of the California program are served in two ways: one on the educational side within the

university, and the other on the social or community side after the university stage is ended. So far as the educational experience is concerned, there is evidence from the University of California at Davis itself that the Chicano students who had been admitted have been remarkably successful, uniquely successful, in establishing rapport with Chicano members of the community who are subjects of teaching and learning and not merely patients, but learning material, to use that barbaric phrase that hospitals and medical schools employ. Surely the establishment of a new rapport is not an unimportant part of medical education; it is very useful in the taking of case histories and in the diagnosis of ailments. On the legal side, there are aspects of law which used to be ignored

My revered teacher of constitutional law, T.R. Powell, told us that we would be docked five points on the final exam if we mentioned equal protection of the law.

that could hardly be ignored if you had a sizeable group of minority students in the classroom. My revered teacher of constitutional law, T. R. Powell, told us that we would be docked five points on the final exam if we mentioned equal protection of the law. To him it was a soft subject. It wasn't worthy of the rigor of analysis that he thought appropriate to constitutional law. I don't think that he could have said that if there had been a sizeable number of minority students. I am not now speaking of pressure but of intellectual awareness; and if he had been more thoughtful about the problem, I think he could have contributed intellectually to its analysis, and we would all have profited.

On the side of the professions themselves, it is sometimes said that the students will not go back to their own communities and that therefore the program is a loss. But I don't think that follows. In the first place, some of them will go back, but even those who don't will make a special contribution, just as William Coleman did when he became Chairman of the Lawyers' Defense Committee of the NAACP while he was a partner in a prominent Philadelphia firm. More basically, those who do go into establishment offices will themselves make a contribution by showing implicitly that they can hold their own in the world of law or medicine. In law, they will be seen by jury people, by judges, even by journalists, as persons who can hold their own in roles that have previously been closed and unfamiliar to the world at large.

There are risks. Of course there are risks. The whole program may be counter-productive. It may increase

tensions rather than relieve them. It may become the dangerous precedent whereby standards will be lowered and unqualified people will be admitted or allowed to practice. These are the risks. In the end, the question it seems to me comes down to this: Shall the court stay the experiment, or shall we judge the risks not *a priori* but on the basis of experience and experiment? Justice Frankfurter used to be opposed to advisory opinions because it was too easy for courts to nip in the bud some social legislation before it had a chance to be applied in practice, through advisory opinions immediately on the enactment of a statute. I quoted to him those lines from *Hamlet*, "The canker galls the infants of the spring / Too oft before their buttons are disclosed." That is not merely horticultural wisdom, but I think juristic wisdom as well. He seemed to be impressed. It was the only thing I ever did that seemed to impress him. On the basis of that, he recommended me for a clerkship to Justice Brandeis so I have been grateful to *Hamlet* ever since.

There is, finally, the issue of academic freedom. The policy in the Bakke case was adopted by the University of California at Davis. It was they who were experimenting and getting the experience. It was not imposed on them. But you may say, if it is upheld, the next step will be that HEW will require this in all universities, all professional schools. It does not necessarily follow. The power of HEW

is the power of the purse, namely to attach germane conditions to the giving of funds, and the question would remain whether a policy of racial preference is germane to the giving of funds to a university, particularly in light of the tradition of academic freedom and academic autonomy which is so precious in this country. It seems to me that a conservative judge who finds racial preference in admissions unappealing, *per se*, might yet decide that if it is adopted autonomously by a university, it ought to be allowed to run its course and have its day. At any rate, I don't think the experiment ought to be opposed by some abstract symmetry like color blindness or sauce for the goose and sauce for the gander. I think here of some lines of Wallace Stevens:

Rationalists, wearing square hats,
Think, in square rooms,
Looking at the floor,
Looking at the ceiling,
They confine themselves
To right-angled triangles.
If they tried rhomboids,
Cones, waving lines, ellipses —
As, for example, the ellipse of the half-moon,
Rationalists would wear sombreros.

What I'm really asking is that you let your minds be bold, look at the reality outdoors, and wear sombreros.

The 1977 Golden Pen of Freedom Award

Two South African journalists, Percy Qoboza and Donald Woods, were selected on January 21, 1978 to receive the Golden Pen of Freedom award from the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ) at their Executive Committee meeting in Copenhagen.

Qoboza and Woods were jointly selected in recognition of their long struggles for freedom of expression in their country and also as a tribute to other similarly sanctioned or jailed South African journalists. The two had been nominated by the American Newspaper Publishers Association, one of 25 affiliate organizations of FIEJ, as well as a number of other affiliates.

Attending the FIEJ Executive Committee meeting from the United States were Harold W. Andersen, president and publisher, Omaha World-Herald, and Jerry W. Friedheim, general manager of ANPA.

Qoboza was a Nieman Fellow in the Class of 1976; Woods will be a Visiting Nieman Fellow at Harvard University next summer (see page 55).

Journalistic Ethics: Some Probings by a Media Keeper

By James C. Thomson Jr.

As a Curator or Keeper of journalists for five years now, I have observed a sharply increasing preoccupation, both inside and outside the media, with journalistic ethics: the values and behavior of news organizations and individuals. The issue is hardly new. But the breadth and intensity of the concern, among Americans at least, seems new. Public officials, lay citizens, and practitioners all now have strong views on what's wrong — much less often, on what's right — with the press and its practices. And in the process one indispensable protector of First Amendment press freedom, a climate of public understanding of the media's proper role, may well be in jeopardy.

The causes of this preoccupation with journalistic ethics are multiple but fairly easy to discover in the record of the past decade:

—Never before have the media attained such visible national power — notably through the evolution of a de facto national press composed of three TV networks (ABC, CBS, NBC), two weekly news-magazines (Time, Newsweek), two wire services (AP, UPI), and at least two dailies (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*). Such power is the result of vast economic and technological changes. These changes include the primacy of television as a news source, media conglomerations, concentrations of multiple media ownership, and the striking growth of newspaper chains, along with new modes of electronic reproduction and distribution.

—The reportage of these national media, together with that of some of the others, helped end the Indochina War by turning many Americans against that conflict and forcing the virtual abdication of President Johnson.

Mr. Thomson, Curator of the Nieman Foundation, wrote the above Poynter Essay at the request of the Poynter Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. It is one of a series, and is reprinted with their permission.

—The efforts of one of these organizations, *The Washington Post* — with vital assistance from the courts, the Congress, and others — uncovered gross abuse of power by the Executive Branch and forced the pre-impeachment resignation of President Nixon.

—On other matters, from presidential election campaigns to demonstrations by minorities, students, and women (and, increasingly, terrorists), the electronic media in particular have been perceived as creators of, or at least participants in, the news. In the process, politics have seemed to become media events, with media stars — especially TV newscasters — achieving super-celebrity status.

—Meanwhile, however, a major and effective counter-attack was made on these national media by the White House, and especially by a Vice President, Spiro Agnew — an attack that (despite Agnew's eventual downfall) produced within the press not merely temporary fear but also increased self-examination and widened access (the creation of ombudsmen, more "op-ed" pages, journalism reviews, etc.).

—Meanwhile, too, journalism was subjected to severe criticism by a new generation of younger and more radical reporters who assailed their elders for alleged collusion with the Establishment. Their efforts led to so-called "advocacy journalism" as well as a spate of "underground" or "alternative" magazines and reviews. Some underground/alternative types were eventually hired by the more orthodox media.

—Finally, in these same years, the media found themselves involved in a spiraling series of conflicts with the courts on issues ranging from the confidentiality of a reporter's sources, to fair trial vs. free press considerations, the "Fairness Doctrine" in TV, "National Security" matters, and the invasion of a citizen's privacy. The high costs of litigation in such press-law conflicts have posed an especially heavy threat to First Amendment freedom.

No wonder, then, that the behavior of the media, the role, values, and conduct of journalists, have become of such concern to so many Americans — this in a period when the ethics of politicians have also come under intensified scrutiny and the “public accountability” of all professions has become a widespread demand. Inevitably, journalists themselves are also increasingly preoccupied with the issue of journalistic ethics. Newly powerful but assaulted, newly victorious but uncomfortably center-stage, nationally scrutinized as never before but uncertain of its role-definition, the press is — and should be — defensive. Because the natives, “out there,” are said to be restless.

A Bit of History

The issue — to repeat — is not new. As far back as 1923 the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) adopted a professional code, the “Canons of Journalism.”¹ And before that, individual newspapers and state associations had addressed the matter.² The ASNE code was finally taken out of the files and updated in 1975; yet it is doubtful that either old or new versions are familiar to recent generations of reporters, much less pondered by them.

Other efforts have been made to assess the collective and individual role of journalists — most notably the 1947 report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press (“Hutchins Commission”), issued in book form as *A Free and Responsible Press*.³ Denounced or ignored by most of the media of that time, the Hutchins report had little perceptible effect. Yet its recommendations regarding the proper function of American journalism — and by extension, the ethics of journalists — have a surprising pertinence thirty years later.

Consider, for instance, the Commission’s five main requirements of the media — which provided, as one observer has noted, “a theory of responsibility.”⁴

“1. The press must give a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning.

“2. The press must provide a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.

“3. The press must project a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society.

“4. The press must present and clarify the goals and values of the society.

“5. The press must provide full access to the day’s intelligence.”

These injunctions, re-read in 1977, raise more questions than they answer. They are the same questions

that hover over the media today. A free press, yes; but also a “responsible” press. But, “responsible” to whom, and for what, and how policed?

The Hutchins Commission also proposed the creation of “a new and independent agency,” a non-governmental body of private citizens, to “appraise and report annually upon the performance of the press.”⁵ This turned out to be the Commission’s most controversial recommendation, one that caused many journalists to bridle. Such an agency, it was suggested, would perform some of the following functions:

—Help the media “define workable standards of performance”;

—Point out “the inadequacy” of media services in certain areas;

—Investigate areas and instances “where minority groups are excluded from reasonable access to the channels of communication”;

—Examine the “picture of American life” presented abroad by the media;

—Investigate charges of “press lying,” with particular reference to the persistent misrepresentation of the data required for judging public issues;

—Appraise “governmental action affecting communications”;

—Encourage the “establishment of centers of advanced study, research, and criticism in the field of communications at universities”;

—Encourage projects which give hope of meeting the needs of special audiences;

—Give “the widest possible publicity and public discussion” to all its findings.

(1) For the 1923 and 1975 versions, see Appendix I and II. See also Appendix III for the “Code of Ethics” adopted in 1973 by the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi.

(2) For materials on these earlier efforts, see Leon Nelson Flint, *The Conscience of the Newspaper* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1925), and Nelson Antrim Crawford, *The Ethics of Journalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924).

(3) Commission on Freedom of the Press, *A Free and Responsible Press: A General Report on Mass Communication: Newspapers, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, and Books* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947). See also extracts and comments as reprinted in *Nieman Reports* 30:3 (Autumn 1976), 18-25.

(4) As paraphrased in W. H. Ferry, “Masscomm as Guru,” in *Ethics and the Press — Readings in Mass Media Morality*, John C. Merrill and Ralph D. Barney, eds. (New York: Hastings House, 1975), 48.

(5) Quoted in Wilbur Schramm, “Quality in Mass Communication,” in *Ethics and the Press*, op. cit., 43-44.

Such were the functions of this proposed private — and entirely toothless — monitoring agency in 1947. Although a very few local and state press councils eventually evolved, the recommendation of the Hutchins Commission was emphatically rejected by most news organizations. Twenty-five years later presiding giants of the media (*The New York Times*, the AP, and the three TV networks) still rejected the concept when it finally came into being in the form of a foundation-supported National News Council.⁶ Clearly, formal external scrutiny — and the suggestion of uniform standards — is still anathema to large sectors of the media.

Some Problems of Definition

Any discussion of journalistic ethics must tangle with a number of ambiguities about journalism, news and the U.S. Constitution.

First, the most obvious, what is a journalist — and thereby, what is journalism? By tradition, anyone with a printing press (or its functional equivalent) — or access to such — from Tom Paine through Katharine Graham and William Paley. Journalists are not licensed to practice their profession. There is no educational prerequisite, no professional certification, necessary for becoming a journalist. Some have journalism degrees; many more do not. Some have gone through college or beyond; many have not.

Indeed, it is an old, lingering question whether journalism is a profession at all. Many practitioners would instead call it a “craft,” even “trade.” In some ways it is one of the last of the medieval guilds, where professional access is centrally built on apprenticeship.

So at the root of the question of ethics is the question of role-definition: what codes, standards, or models could — or should — encompass the extraordinarily wide varieties of practitioners in, and avenues of approach to, journalism?⁷

A second and dominating ambiguity is the nature of “news.” For all the endless debate about objectivity versus subjectivity, it is a truism that “news” is an infinitesimal selection out of the totality of a day’s or week’s reality: selection made by the observer or reporter, the editor, and sometimes management. (As one veteran has put it, the journalist’s central problem is “what to leave out, rather than what to put in.”)

At one end of the process of news-gathering this creates what Leon Sigal has described as “the uncertainty factor”:⁸ since news is not definable, the reporter faces chronic uncertainty as to what is actually news; and so, up the ladder, do his superiors. Yet the reader or viewer is dependent upon the definition daily constructed by this

chain of command. As Sigal also points out, the reporter’s need for peer-group reassurance in this condition of uncertainty is what gives rise to “pack” or “herd” journalism; and it gives rise to the circularity and similarity of what appears in all parts of the previously described “national press” — and its pack of followers in the hinterland.

So: uncertainty about the nature of news can compound uncertainties about the definition of the profession, craft, or trade.

A third ambiguity stems from the character of news organizations. Although they may appear to the public to be monoliths, newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting enterprises exist in a state of constant internal tension on at least two grounds. One is, again, a question of role-definition — this time the institution’s role. Each organization is both a private profit-making business and, simultaneously, a Constitutionally-protected semi-public service. Such outfits are therefore operating both To Make Money (at the least, not to lose it) and To Do Good (or to expose iniquity, and thereby improve society). Therefore, a first and unresolvable tension is between greed and idealism. A second and closely related tension stems from the actual internal structuring of the media. Although print and electronic institutions differ in important ways, both contain two cultures, or at least outlooks, that are often at odds with each other: on the one hand, reporters and editors, who traditionally see their role as uncovering and disseminating the truth (or some approximation

(6) The National News Council, a by-product of a Twentieth Century Fund study in 1971-72, came into being in 1973. Although several major media institutions were cool to the Council and even refused to cooperate with it at first, CBS relented in 1976 and agreed to permit its president for News, Richard Salant, to sit as a Council member. Since January 1977 the *Columbia Journalism Review* has begun regularly to carry the Council’s findings.

(7) As one perceptive commentator on this paper has put it: “Implicit in the First Amendment is a judgment that ethics in journalism are less important than other values, and less important in journalism than in, say, medicine. We require that every medical practitioner adhere to certain ethics or be barred from medicine. But we think it worthwhile to put up with continual bilge from some journalists on the theory that readers will recognize and reject dross, and some day, even the worst journalist may discover an important truth, or print an important opinion. We outlaw quacks, but protect hacks, and it follows that journalistic ethics cannot have the force of medical ethics which have the law behind them.”

(8) See Leon V. Sigal, *Reporters and Officials — The Organization and Politics of Newsmaking* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1973).

This "journalist versus citizen" tension has become most acute at the national level in recent decades.

thereof); and on the other hand, owners, publishers, "management," who seek to stay in business and make a tidy profit. In this sense, much of the press is pluralistic, not at all monolithic.

There is also another important tension that affects both reporter-editor types and management. This might be termed the conflict between "good citizen" and "good journalist." In smaller communities it can mean the conflict within an individual journalist between the booster and the muckraker: the civic-minded affirmer, who wants to help neighbors, peers, bosses, and the town; and the civic-minded nay-sayer, who wants to ferret out crime, corruption, malfeasance, abuse of power—even among those one is taught to, and wants to, esteem.

This "journalist versus citizen" tension has become most acute at the national level in recent decades. Prior to the Korean War, the press usually shared the stated and unstated national consensus that politics stopped at the water's edge and — from World War II onward — "national security" began at the same spot. The patriotic tradition and journalistic convention was that the GI's and war correspondents fought the foreign enemy or enemies in concert, all adhering to what might be called a "national security ethic." Good citizen and good journalist were one and the same, accepting the nation's stated aims — and the government's information — without much question.

Korea, a limited and ultimately unsatisfactory war, began to erode that ethic among both Left and Right. But it took the next limited and very prolonged war, Vietnam, to weaken and finally destroy the unspoken alliance between journalists and the government. Here a post-World War II generation of reporters saw for themselves that the Cold War rhetoric of both Washington and Saigon was riddled with distortions and even lies. Good citizen eventually gave way to good journalist, even in semi-war-time; and reporters and their editors began to break with the national security ethic. The failure of *The New York Times* to print the Bay of Pigs story in 1961 prior to that fiasco turned into that newspaper's decision in 1971 to publish the "Pentagon Papers" and in 1975 (after some soul-searching) the Glomar Explorer expose.

To this observer, the collapse, or at least the waning, of the national security ethic is a belated sign of health in the media and good news for the nation. To phrase the matter bluntly, the reporter is the citizen armed with a

typewriter and a print or electronic outlet. The obligations of his craft are the obligations of the citizen, but writ larger: to report the truths he observes — and especially to do so when local, state, or national authorities seek to suppress those truths.

Tensions, then, both internal and external, are inherent in a journalist's craft. And the internal, structural tensions of the media *can* create a system of checks and balances that mute unethical practices on both sides. Management cannot often afford to suppress reporters or editors who know too much — and can tell the story elsewhere; and they can cloak themselves in the First Amendment when chided at their country clubs. Similarly (but more so), a reporter or editor is constrained from excessive hell-raising by a sense of what management will tolerate. More often, however, the centrally dual nature of media organizations can blur the whole question of journalistic ethics. When the overriding function of a newspaper or TV station is to make a lot of money, the "bottom-line ethics" of business usually take command (as one observer has put it, "Ethics start upstairs."). What recourse, then, for the reporter when his discoveries collide with management's interests — usually those of the biggest advertisers? What ethical code or standard might he evolve — other than "shape up or ship out" — that would permit him to survive with some sense of integrity?

A final and large ambiguity lies in that famous ultimate protection, the free-press portion of the Constitution's First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." The difficult fact, for journalists, is that the Constitution, its amendments, and its judicial interpreters have also recognized and guaranteed several other citizen rights. And although there have always existed purists who argued that First Amendment rights held primacy, courts and legislatures have usually agreed that when rights collide, some compromise must be found. The result is that while the press, specially protected through a strong constitutional negative ("Congress shall make no law . . . abridging . . ."), may well be a Fourth Estate or Fourth Branch of Government, its rights are not any more absolute than those of the other three branches, let alone those of the general public.

Even the First Amendment, then, is a source of ambiguity. And any code or standard of ethics based on an absolutist interpretation of that amendment — for instance, unrestricted reporting about an arrested person, or refusal to reveal one's confidential sources to a grand jury, or the publication of classified government documents — may run head-on into court decisions that give primacy to other constitutional guarantees.

One interim conclusion might be that “a journalist’s lot is not a happy one.” He is unsure of his job’s professional definition, unsure of the nature of “news,” unsure of his organization’s priorities, and unsure of his unique but fragile Constitutional protection. So along with the craft’s great freedom comes multiple ambiguity and a vast amount of ethical uncertainty. And that uncertainty is, in my view, both ineradicable and indispensable.

Some Observed Responses

For the past five years I have watched, at close hand, nearly 100 Nieman Fellows — journalists on sabbatical study at Harvard University — and, further removed, scores of their colleagues who are Nieman alumni or seminar speakers. During this period the question of journalistic ethics has hovered over and around our discussions, whatever the topic under consideration. Few lay visitors, for instance, can avoid the temptation to chastise the captive audience about media misbehavior in his or her field of expertise. Nor can Niemans resist the impulse to question visiting journalists or others about ethical practices in all fields.

At the risk of gross overgeneralization, I have observed two standard kinds of responses among journalists — both Fellows and visitors — to the issue of media ethics. They are the high-road response and the low-road response; and they are often heard from the same person.

On the one hand, there is a tendency toward heavy grandiosity. This involves invocation of the press’s specialness, also some useful shibboleths: first and foremost, “First Amendment rights,” or “freedom of the press”; second, and close by, “the people’s right to know”; third, “the pursuit of truth” (or “The Facts”); and fourth, the “free-press/free-nation” equation, meaning that all other freedoms wither to the extent that the press is at all constrained. This high-road response is often reflected in the stereotypical reporter who embodies some traditional male virtues: toughness, terseness, speed, authority, risk-taking, freebootery. What is usually lacking is empathy or compassion for their subjects, those reported about, or even token nods toward those qualities. Fairness, accuracy, and speed are up-front; compassion is almost never mentioned.

On the other hand (or perhaps on the under side of the same hand), there is a tendency toward individual self-denigration and institutional self-abasement. Journalists are the first to tell you that they don’t really know a goddam thing about anything and (maybe) don’t care; that their bosses are drunkards, liars, and perhaps worse; that their papers or broadcast stations have sold out to some

Journalists are the first to tell you that they don't really know a goddam thing about anything and (maybe) don't care...

kind of Mammon or Mafia; and that their profession or craft is rotten and stinks.

Somewhere in the mix of these two responses — often, to repeat, found in the same person in the same hour — there seems to me to lurk a touch of what psychiatrists have called the “Madonna-prostitute complex.”

At issue in the swing between low-road and high there exists, I think, an age-old question: the problem of means versus ends. The ends are so patently lofty, yet the means often so tawdry. The high-road, or idealistic, content of journalism tempts practitioners to believe that the pursuit of truth takes absolute precedence, that Anything Goes (probably) in that pursuit and its way-stations, the exposure of incompetence and evil; and that, therefore, the clean and beautiful ends can justify virtually any means. This perception emerges, for me, from long hours spent listening to journalists answer one fundamental question: how far would you, personally, go to obtain a piece of information you know (or have a 90 percent hunch) exists in order to expose a person who has committed a major offense — a felony, abuse of power, treason, etc.? “Would you,” the question runs, “lie, cheat, steal, pay money, wire-tap, commit violence (even murder) to obtain that information?”

Well, the answers vary. Violence, including murder, all — so far — would rule out, except in self-defense. As for other means that break the law — wiretapping, for instance — most wouldn’t (or won’t admit it), a very few would. Here the operative sub-question is: could I get away with it? In other words, law-breaking *if* you can get away with it can be justified by some in terms of the higher ends served. These sub-questions get more complicated when one deals with the issue (for editors), “Would you ask the reporter how he/she got that information (and would you want to know)?” — and (for reporters), “Would you answer that question honestly if your editor asked it?”

But behind the bravado of some responses — that anything goes in the Constitutionally-protected pursuit of truth — one soon detects tell-tale signs of uncertainty: a difficulty in laying down hard and fast rules as to how far one would really go; self-doubt, sometimes self-hate, about overstating the specialness of journalism and the journalist; a wonder as to whether he or she actually would or, after all, should break the law; a shrinking from

"playing God"; and a deep-seated cynicism about the purity of the journalist's own craft or organization while seeking out that pure commodity, "truth." The means, whether for oneself or one's institution, are never quite up to those highly-touted ends.

Consider a few instances:

—One of the nation's most famous investigative reporters who has broken many U.S. Government secrets says he would publish any so-called "national security" information he uncovered, and the consequences be damned; but when asked the usual questions about a troop-ship sailing date or an Allied mission to assassinate Hitler in World War II, he responds: "I don't deal with hypothetical questions."

—A major national columnist wonders, off-the-record and with deep seriousness, whether the media's new concern with the private lives of politicians — and their excesses in matters of sex, alcohol, and income sources — should not be paralleled by truth-telling by the press about similar excesses among their own journalistic colleagues, so far usually a taboo.

—A reporter-hero of the Watergate scandal warns his peers that they should all tread with new caution, prudence, and self-criticism in the wake of the ouster of Nixon; now a super-celebrity, he seems to be asking, "What hath God wrought?"

—That hero's publisher, in accepting a national award for the Watergate achievement, urges that journalists beware of the danger of becoming participants in history rather than professionally detached observers.

Such are some responses from a profession "riding high," post-Vietnam and post-Watergate: A curious drawing-in from bravado, an indication of new doubts, an implication of barriers beyond which one should not push.

Other types of responses, under the greater temporary duress of a simulated classroom, have been gathered during two years of intensive sessions on media-law conflicts in the New England region. When confronted with members of the Bench and the Bar, arguing hypothetical but important cases, most journalists return quickly to their high-road self-definition; and some (not all) judges and prosecutors give them good reason. A few quotes may illustrate the point:⁹

—A television journalist: "These are areas where we are right and the courts are wrong and there is no compromise."

—A judge: "Freedom of the press is not an absolute freedom, not an unlimited freedom."

—Another judge: "Make all the rules you want affecting the press but they'll go get the story and print it anyway; and that's the game, there's nothing moral or amoral about it."

—A lawyer: "Along with the press's obligation to protect us against the misbehavior of a trial judge are the obligations to protect the right to a fair trial and to preserve the liberty of its citizens."

—Another lawyer: "I don't think any public figure has a right to privacy."

—A publisher: "We are the final judge."

—A judge to a publisher: "Nobody elected you."

—A lawyer for a newspaper: "To hell with verification, print the story and we'll go for a law suit."

—A reporter: "Whether or not a reporter has committed a crime to get a story should be of no concern to his editor or publisher."

So, journalists — in the post-Vietnam and post-Watergate era — present a mixed picture of feistiness and wariness, chutzpah and prudence, relative certainty about ends but uncertainty about means. None of this should be surprising since visibility brings vulnerability, and power creates resentment among the less powerful. Underneath it all lie those multiple ambiguities previously cited.

Some Possible Solutions

A "free press" — most Americans will probably still agree — should be one of the watchdogs of the nation's other institutions, both public and private. But who shall watch this watchdog, and by what standards will it be watched? Back we come, of course, to the vexing question of journalistic ethics — the standards of behavior for both people and organizations under First Amendment protection.

Despite an interval of enthusiasm within the media for the enactment of state or federal "shield laws" to keep journalists from having to divulge their confidential sources, most reporters and editors seem to have concluded that what legislatures can give, they can also take away — and that there can be no better protection than the one provided by the First Amendment, whatever its limitations. No wonder, then, that any legislative solution to the creation and policing of journalistic ethics is anathema to practitioners.

Why not, instead, that Hutchins Commission concept, now thirty years old, media participation in the creation of a private institution, a National News Council, and media cooperation with such a Council? A paramount

(9) See Jonathan Moore, James C. Thomson Jr., et al, *Report of the New England Conference on Conflicts Between the Media and the Law, September 1974-September 1976* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1977), 3-4.

and perhaps insuperable objection lies in the heterogeneous character of American society and the mutual lack of trust on which it was founded—a system built, for that reason, on both federalism and elaborate “checks and balances.” News or press councils may gain acceptance and succeed in more homogeneous societies whose citizens share relative trust in their institutions—for instance, in Great Britain, where a Press Council has apparently won substantial acceptance and good repute, and also, closer to home, in the state of Minnesota. But can they work in areas of more clashing diversity and mutual suspicion? The irony, of course, is that those are usually the areas where such councils — such new checks or balances — are most needed.

There is a further objection to the concept of press councils that some journalists cite: a fear that the standards, codes, or guidelines adopted by press councils may suddenly be expropriated by judges and transformed into court decrees. That fear has been confirmed in a few cases. Eventually even a legislature might seek to enact such guidelines into law — a development recently impending in the Republic of South Africa, where the ruling party was for a while proposing to transform a media-wide code, together with its stiff financial penalties, into the law of the land.

For the foreseeable future it seems to me that much of the U.S. press will continue to resist participation in any nation-wide Press Council — this despite some recent new support for the New York-based National News Council.¹⁰

And yet the clock is ticking away on the matter of public attitudes for the reasons given at the outset of this essay. Is there no alternative approach to the protection of the media's freedom in a climate of widespread suspicion of, and potential acute hostility toward, all national institutions? Cannot modes of *self-restraint* be fashioned without encroaching on the reality of freedom?

The questions are inherently baffling since there is no single cure that would not be far worse than the alleged disease. Yet let me offer five very general and probably unsurprising proposals:

First, the media should push further and faster in the establishment of those two largely post-Agnew innovations: first, that mechanism to deal with both in-house and external redress of grievances, the post of ombudsman; and second, that vehicle for widened public access, the “op-ed” page or, better, pages. Increased self-criticism and openness can help increase public trust. More broadly — and especially among smaller dailies and weeklies that

can less easily afford ombudsmen or op-ed pages — editors should become more willing both to explain and to criticize the media in editorials, columns, and the like.

Second, public understanding of the role of the media — now very often lacking among educated professionals (like lawyers, doctors, professors, government officials), much less among the general citizenry — should be fostered by the press and by colleges and universities through symposia, seminars, and other special programs for professionals as well as the public. It is astonishing how widespread one finds the judgment, among highly sophisticated citizens, that freedom of the press is important to preserve, “but only for ‘responsible’ journalists.” That the First Amendment makes no such distinction is a point lost on millions of Americans. For, despite the Hutchins report of 1947, who shall define “responsibility”? This is a question best left unanswered, as the courts have so far left it.

Third, journalistic self-education is essential. Many more journalists should be permitted a sabbatical “breather” during their high-pressure deadline-oriented careers: opportunities to take time out — ideally at colleges or universities, but also on congressional staffs, or even in government service — not to study journalism but to study the society that is their focus. Such pauses, or changes of pace, in the journalist's race-horse routine can deepen understanding, expand horizons, and increase personal growth. Forty years ago the Nieman Fellowships were established as a pioneering experiment at Harvard University for precisely this purpose. Today many other sabbatical programs are available for the academic study, altered vantage point, and intellectual immersion that reporters, editors, and publishers desperately need in order to do their jobs better.

Fourth, despite the previously noted obstacles to a nationwide press-monitoring body, media organizations should consider taking the initiative in establishing local, state, or regional press councils on an entirely voluntary and private basis. If, for instance, in the Northeast, the entire New England region seems too large and disparate for merely one or even two press councils, the Boston metropolitan area would seem a natural base for such an experiment. The dangers of judicial intervention remain; yet careful consultation with Bar and Bench organizations could minimize those dangers.

Finally, journalistic ethics can be best inculcated and supervised through a system entirely appropriate to the “guild” structure of traditional newspapers: through the hiring by mature and experienced editors — people of humaneness, self-discipline, and idealism — of reporter-

(10) See note 6.

apprentices who can be counted on to learn and emulate the work-standards of their mentors. Mentorship is at the heart of the process — and depends, of course, on management's hiring of editors worthy of emulation. The chain may seem highly fragile and accidental; nonetheless, it is the essence of education at its best in all enterprises. I have yet to meet a successful and esteemed journalist who was not deeply influenced by some wiser, older editor or supervisor early in his or her career. (And I have met, of course, a number of hacks who apparently weren't.)

And what of the ethics themselves? Shall they be set forth in some code like a Boy Scout Oath or a Catechism? The answer is certainly no. The ambiguities of journalism are too endemic and ineradicable, its domain too wide and infinitely varied. Indeed, that domain is life itself — the endless contours of reality. What code can be written for such a special craft other than those of the philosophers and saints who have tried to teach men how to coexist?

In the end there seems to me no possible code, no firm guideline, for the ethical conduct of a journalist other than the craft's age-old by-words, "fairness" and "accuracy" — to which I would also add emphatically "compassion," not often highly rated in the newsroom. In this mix of qualities lies the possibility of what used to be

described as "situation ethics": conduct based on sensitivity to the unique elements of each decision-situation and the consequences to others as well as oneself. For the ingredient of compassion, Kant's categorical imperative — or the New Testament's Golden Rule — can offer the journalist not firm guidelines, but at least some degree of humane self-restraint.

When a reporter has found a wise mentor, and when he or she seeks to infuse judgments with fairness, accuracy, *and* compassion, the reporter and the organization will not go further wrong than most decent but fallible mortals.

But can the American public accept such an imprecise definition of standards for such a clearly powerful institution and semi-public service? One can only answer "yes" if the craft itself is willing to explain its role and its decision-making processes much more clearly, criticize itself much more generously. American journalism and its guardian angel, the First Amendment, are a unique national asset in the contemporary world. Unless both journalists and citizens learn to appreciate the rarity, fragility, and value of our Fourth Estate, it may well go the way of too many other formerly free presses in other nations.

Appendix I

Code of Ethics or Canons of Journalism

American Society of Newspaper Editors (1923)

The primary function of newspapers is to communicate to the human race what its members do, feel and think. Journalism, therefore, demands of its practitioners the widest range of intelligence, or knowledge, and of experience, as well as natural and trained power of observation and reasoning. To its opportunities as a chronicle are indissolubly linked its obligations as teacher and interpreter.

To the end of finding some means of codifying sound practice and just aspirations of American journalism, these canons are set forth:

I. RESPONSIBILITY: The right of a newspaper to attract and hold readers is restricted by nothing but considerations of public welfare. The use a newspaper makes of the share of public attention it gains serves to determine its sense of responsibility, which it shares with every member of its staff. A journalist who uses his power for any selfish or otherwise unworthy purpose is faithless to a high trust.

II. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: Freedom of the press is to be guarded as a vital right of mankind. It is the unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any restrictive statute.

III. INDEPENDENCE: Freedom from all obligations except that of fidelity to the public interest is vital.

1. Promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with honest journalism. So-called news communications from private sources should not be published without public notice of their source or else substantiation of their claims to value as news, both in form and substance.

2. Partisanship, in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth, does violence to the best spirit of American journalism; in the news columns it is subversive of a fundamental principle of the profession.

IV. SINCERITY, TRUTHFULNESS, ACCURACY: Good faith with the reader is the foundation of all journalism worthy of the name.

1. By every consideration of good faith a newspaper is constrained to be truthful. It is not to be excused for lack of thor-

oughness or accuracy within its control, or failure to obtain command of these essential qualities.

2. Headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles which they surmount.

V. IMPARTIALITY: Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free from opinion or bias of any kind.

1. This rule does not apply to so-called special articles unmistakably devoted to advocacy or characterized by a signature authorizing the writer's own conclusions and interpretation.

VI. FAIR PLAY: A newspaper should not publish unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without opportunity given to the accused to be heard; right practice demands the giving of such opportunity in all cases of serious accusation outside judicial proceedings.

1. A newspaper should not involve private rights or feeling without sure warrant of public right as distinguished from public curiosity.

2. It is the privilege, as it is the duty, of a newspaper to make prompt and complete correction of its own serious mistakes of fact or opinion, whatever their origin.

DECENCY: A newspaper cannot escape conviction of insincerity if while professing high moral purpose it supplies incentives to base conduct, such as are to be found in details of crime and vice, publication of which is not demonstrably for the general good. Lacking authority to enforce its canons the journalist here represented can but express the hope that deliberate pandering to vicious instincts will encounter effective public disapproval or yield to the influence of a preponderant professional condemnation.

Appendix II

A Statement of Principles

American Society of Newspaper Editors (1975)

PREAMBLE: The First Amendment, protecting freedom of expression from abridgment by any law, guarantees to the people through their press a constitutional right, and thereby places on newspaper people a particular responsibility.

Thus journalism demands of its practitioners not only industry and knowledge but also the pursuit of a standard of integrity proportionate to the journalist's singular obligation.

To this end the American Society of Newspaper Editors sets forth this Statement of Principles as a standard encouraging the highest ethical and professional performance.

ARTICLE I - RESPONSIBILITY: The primary purpose of gathering and distributing news and opinion is to serve the general welfare by informing the people and enabling them to make judgments on the issues of the time. Newspapermen and women who abuse the power of their professional role for selfish motives or unworthy purposes are faithless to that public trust.

The American press was made free not just to inform or just to serve as a forum for debate but also to bring an independent scrutiny to bear on the forces of power in the society, including the conduct of official power at all levels of government.

ARTICLE II - FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: Freedom of the press belongs to the people. It must be defended against encroachment or assault from any quarter, public or private.

Journalists must be constantly alert to see that the public's business is conducted in public. They must be vigilant against all who would exploit the press for selfish purposes.

ARTICLE III - INDEPENDENCE: Journalists must avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety as well as any conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict. They should

neither accept anything nor pursue any activity that might compromise or seem to compromise their integrity.

ARTICLE IV - TRUTH AND ACCURACY: Good faith with the reader is the foundation of good journalism. Every effort must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly. Editorials, analytical articles and commentary should be held to the same standards of accuracy with respect to facts as news reports.

Significant errors of fact, as well as errors of omission, should be corrected promptly and prominently.

ARTICLE V - IMPARTIALITY: To be impartial does not require the press to be unquestioning or to refrain from editorial expression. Sound practice, however, demands a clear distinction for the reader between news reports and opinion. Articles that contain opinion or personal interpretation should be clearly identified.

ARTICLE VI - FAIR PLAY: Journalists should respect the rights of people involved in the news, observe the common standards of decency and stand accountable to the public for the fairness and accuracy of their news reports.

Persons publicly accused should be given the earliest opportunity to respond.

Pledges of confidentiality to news sources must be honored at all costs, and therefore should not be given lightly. Unless there is clear and pressing need to maintain confidences, sources of information should be identified.

These principles are intended to preserve, protect and strengthen the bond of trust and respect between American journalists and the American people, a bond that is essential to sustain the grant of freedom entrusted to both by the nation's founders.

Appendix III

Code of Ethics

Sigma Delta Chi (1973)

The Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, believes the duty of journalists is to serve the truth.

We believe the agencies of mass communication are carriers of public discussion and information, acting on their Constitutional mandate and freedom to learn and report the facts.

We believe in public enlightenment as the forerunner of justice, and in our Constitutional role to seek the truth as part of the public's right to know the truth.

We believe those responsibilities carry obligations that require journalists to perform with intelligence, objectivity, accuracy, and fairness.

To these ends, we declare acceptance of the standards to practice here set forth:

I. RESPONSIBILITY: The public's right to know of events of public importance and interest is the overriding mission of the mass media. The purpose of distributing news and enlightened opinion is to serve the general welfare. Journalists who use their professional status as representatives of the public for selfish or other unworthy motives violate a high trust.

II. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: Freedom of the press is to be guarded as an inalienable right of people in a free society. It carries with it the freedom and the responsibility to discuss, question, and challenge actions and utterances of our government and of our public and private institutions. Journalists uphold the right to speak unpopular opinions and the privilege to agree with the majority.

III. ETHICS: Journalists must be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know the truth.

1. Gifts, favors, free travel, special treatment or privileges can compromise the integrity of journalists and their employers. Nothing of value should be accepted.

2. Secondary employment, political involvement, holding public office, and service in community organizations should be avoided if it compromises the integrity of journalists and their employers. Journalists and their employers should conduct their personal lives in a manner which protects them from conflict of interest, real or apparent. Their responsibilities to the public are paramount. That is the nature of their profession.

3. So-called news communications from private sources should not be published or broadcast without substantiation of their claims to news value.

4. Journalists will seek news that serves the public interest, despite the obstacles. They will make constant efforts to assure that the public's business is conducted in public and that public records are open to public inspection.

5. Journalists acknowledge the newsmen's ethic of protecting confidential sources of information.

IV. ACCURACY AND OBJECTIVITY: Good faith with the public is the foundation of all worthy journalism.

1. Truth is our ultimate goal.

2. Objectivity in reporting the news is another goal, which serves as the mark of an experienced professional. It is a standard of performance toward which we strive. We honor those who achieve it.

3. There is no excuse for inaccuracies or lack of thoroughness.

4. Newspaper headlines should be fully warranted by the contents of the articles they accompany. Photographs and telecasts should give an accurate picture of an event and not highlight a minor incident out of context.

5. Sound practice makes clear distinction between news reports and expressions of opinion. News reports should be free of opinion or bias and represent all sides of an issue.

6. Partisanship in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth violates the spirit of American journalism.

7. Journalists recognize their responsibility for offering informed analysis, comment, and editorial opinion on public events and issues. They accept the obligation to present such material by individuals whose competence, experience, and judgment qualify them for it.

8. Special articles or presentations devoted to advocacy or the writer's own conclusions and interpretations should be labeled as such.

V. FAIR PLAY: Journalists at all times will show respect for the dignity, privacy, rights, and well-being of people encountered in the course of gathering and presenting the news.

1. The news media should not communicate unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without giving the accused a chance to reply.

2. The news media must guard against invading a person's right to privacy.

3. The media should not pander to morbid curiosity about details of vice and crime.

4. It is the duty of news media to make prompt and complete corrections of their errors.

5. Journalists should be accountable to the public for their reports and the public should be encouraged to voice its grievances against the media. Open dialogue with our readers, viewers, and listeners should be fostered.

VI. PLEDGE: Journalists should actively censure and try to prevent violations of these standards, and they should encourage their observance by all newspeople. Adherence to this code of ethics is intended to preserve the bond of mutual trust and respect between American journalists and the American people.

A Response

The Media's Capacity for Self-Destruction

By Chris Argyris

I agree with Jim Thomson that the breadth and intensity of the concern about journalistic ethics has increased significantly. I also believe that whatever the intensity is now, it will become magnified in the future to the point where the liberal and thoughtful citizen will be demanding constraints on the media beyond the point that they presently imagine.

Part of the cause will be, as Thomson suggests, the increasing power of the national media. As any set of institutions gain power they also gain enemies. But, in my opinion, what will sour the thoughtful citizens on the freedom of the media is the citizens' strong concern for justice and their belief that the media people can destroy their own freedom.

First, the concern for justice. One of the underlying assumptions of the Founding Fathers was that along with power should go confrontation of that power. This was why checks and balances were designed among the legislative, judicial, and administrative branches of government. The Founding Fathers also believed that the actions of the powerful should be confrontable and influenceable, and one societal mechanism for that monitoring activity would be the media. This may be one reason why the media were protected by the First Amendment.

The sense of injustice will develop and magnify as the citizens realize that the institutions to which they have delegated power to confront error in society are themselves not confrontable on their own errors.

How can one conclude that the errors of the media are

not confrontable and influenceable? Are there not an increasing number of ombudsmen in media organizations? Is there not the Newspaper Council? Are there not the courts?

I should like to suggest that the main function of these institutions has been to identify and correct errors already made. But cannot the causes of error be discovered and corrected during these investigative processes? I doubt it for two reasons. First, a major cause of the errors is related to the defenses that media people hold. These make it unlikely that they will be aware of how closed they are to the learning required to overcome the causes of the errors. Second, the media people tend to create conditions within their organizations in order to inhibit such learning and to camouflage the defensiveness of the media people.

In order for the Newspaper Council to dig into and eliminate the causes of errors, it would have to reach into the minds, the psychological states, and the inner workings of the media organization. On the basis of my research I doubt if they would succeed. As a concerned citizen, I would not want them to meddle with these factors. I would prefer that such inquiry be designed, carried out, and monitored by the media people themselves.

As I hope to show below, I doubt that media participants or their organizations are presently capable of this self-managed inquiry — even if they wished to carry it out. Indeed, I would predict that no ombudsmen should succeed in dealing with these individual and organizational defenses. Hence, they will come to see that their role is equivalent to dealing with migraine headaches by dispensing aspirins.

I should like to begin the argument with Thomson's "Madonna-prostitute complex." I confirm his view — indeed I found it to exist in spades in one of our nation's leading newspapers.

There are two underlying characteristics of the

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complex embedded in his description that should be highlighted. First, the *same* individuals take on a high and low road response. Second, the individuals use the high and low road strategy in order to win the argument. The desire to win is so strong that the strategy is designed to make it impossible for the other to win. The high and low road is a tails-you-lose, heads-I-win strategy.

The thoughtful individuals on the receiving end of such a strategy will realize that they are in a no-win situation. They may argue for a while but as they find themselves pushed from the high road to low road and back again, they will tend to withdraw or take on the same strategy. If they choose the latter, they will soon find themselves in a competitive argument that generates much heat and little light. In either case, they will leave the situation with an attribution about the media representatives; namely, that they are compulsive resistors to learning, that they demand others not be so, and that they do it with a strategy that combines seduction and righteousness.

Little of this will ever be said to the media people; hence, they may leave the situation believing that they have won, that they have defended the freedom of the media, and that the others are thoughtful people who do not understand the importance of the freedom of the media.

The media people therefore may live in a world where they block themselves off from important information. To the extent that they are unaware of their own complex (they may be aware of others' complexes), they will act as if it does not exist. The recipients, in turn, will sense the media peoples' unawareness and will attribute even more defensiveness to them.

Nothing of what I have said is peculiar to people in the media. Professionals and executives manifest the same defenses in other fields. However, few hold these defensive strategies with as much compassion and, if I may say so, carry them out with such skill. More importantly, none of the others claim that these defenses are protected by the First Amendment and hence by the courts.

Now let us turn to the organizational aspects of the problem. People with tails-you-lose, heads-I-win strategies not only become uninfluenceable, they will create "learning systems" within their organizations that make their organizations unable to learn about these issues and therefore also uninfluenceable.

For example, in the study of the newspaper (*Behind the Front Page*) I found:

Item: Reporters would describe their colleagues (and themselves) as "highly competitive," "partially para-

noid," "out to show the emperor to be without clothes," "willing to commit substantial shady acts to get a story," "people who, when under stress, magnify reality," and people who are almost always under stress (low road). Building upon their descriptions, I would then ask if such predispositions had any influence on the way these news people might perceive and report reality. The response was immediate: the press must be protected by the First Amendment and *any* exploration of these issues by citizens could lead to the loss of their freedom (high road). The ultimate of the high-road argument that I have heard was the Nieman advisor who remarked that even the irresponsibility of the media people should be protected by the courts.

Item: I observed a long discussion among reporters, columnists, and editors. The editors were trying to find ways to deal fairly with the issue of subjective-objective reporting and to define the conditions under which each was appropriate. The essence of the reporters' and columnists' argument was that all reporting is subjective because it is all selective and, when published, highly incomplete. They polarized the issue in order to argue that nothing could be done.

As I listened to the reporters and columnists, I attributed to them a sense of fear and anguish about having to face the daily responsibility of writing minimally distorted stories under pressures of deadlines. I empathized with their problem because it is one that I face in my work as a diagnostician of individuals, groups and organization, (and I am rarely under the time pressures that they experience). But what impressed me was that they fought any attempt to define ways to increase the validity of their reporting. The social scientists in my field would never get away with such a response because it is basically a response against learning. Much evidence has been accumulated that social scientists who are against such learning also tend to distort reality without realizing what they do.

Let us dig a bit deeper. In previous interviews all the reporters and columnists had identified two reporters who were models of what they called "old-fashioned objective reporting." They admired the abilities of these two reporters to write a "straight story." The only trouble was that their stories had little color. These data appear to illustrate that some objectivity is possible. Admittedly the result was colorless stories. But if they did not value colorless stories, how could they speak of these two senior reporters with such admiration and warmth?

Further discussion surfaced the fact that the reporters themselves were ambivalent on this issue. On the one hand, they could see that the two "straight" reporters

were a valid model of "objective" reporting. On the other hand, they believed that such reporting ignored the responsibility of newspapers to discover injustice.

This led to the surfacing of another pattern of motivations and attitudes. On the one hand, many of the reporters had a very strong desire to identify and correct society's ills; especially as these ills were created by powerful individuals in powerful private or public organizations. On the other hand, all but one admitted that they would "be fearful as hell" to take a position where they would be responsible for curing some of these ills. They enjoyed discovering the ills; they feared taking a position where they would be responsible for correcting them.

Could these fears and ambivalences influence the intensity of "color" in the story? "Yes, I suppose so," was the most frequent response that I was given. But none of the reporters wanted to explore ways for identifying and correcting the possible distortions that could come from these defenses.

People who are fearful of taking action may also attribute to themselves a degree of cowardice. It is difficult to live with such feelings. One way to overcome the injustice implied in having cowardly behavior protected by the job is to escalate investigative reporting and dig out injustice. When injustice is discovered, report it relatively accurately but with color enough so that you can justify your own fear of taking on the job required to correct these errors.

Perhaps this explanation may be overdrawn. Consider the following experience. A Nieman Fellow described how he (and his newspaper) paid to obtain information that led to the jailing of a banker. A distinguished professor of constitutional law who heard the story asked the reporter why he did not turn over the data to a grand jury. The reporter replied that he did not trust the courts. Someone asked, why not reproduce the material; give it to the courts; and give them some sort of deadline. Before the reporter could reply, another Nieman Fellow said in effect, "Let's be honest, he published the story because he was hoping for a Pulitzer Prize and the editor published it because he had paid for it." Neither the reporter nor any other Nieman present rejected that possibility.

Back to the newspaper. I can recall vividly the elation and euphoria in the newsroom when the difficulties of the Nixon White House were being discovered and published. There were many statements made in the stories, and even more in the newsroom, that "milieu" had developed at the upper levels of the White House that caused the President and his chief advisors to distort aspects of reality and to be blind to that fact.

I was able to show that the innards of the newspaper had many of the same dynamics of the White House. I found the same kinds of interpersonal dynamics and internal politics; the same mistrust and win/lose competitiveness. The same deception and miscommunication existed among the reporters, between the reporters and their immediate editors, and between the reporters and the top editors. These similarities were confirmed by the reporters and editors. Yet the moment I suggested that the distortion of reality created in the White House (which they believed was caused by mistrust, deception and win/lose competitiveness) could also exist in their organization (due to the similar mistrust, deception and win/lose competitiveness), their reaction was an immediate closing off of inquiry (back to the high road).

Item: The ambivalence of the reporters and editors to learning about their personal and organizational defenses was the greatest that I have ever encountered in any organization. For example, the top fifteen officers met and unanimously voted to attend a three-day seminar to begin to discuss some of the defenses that they agreed existed. I was concerned about the genuineness of the vote after the meeting; therefore, I interviewed each member individually. Thirteen were against the meeting because they believed that their colleagues and the organization were too brittle to discuss these issues openly. I convened the group again and the same scenario was repeated. I then questioned if we should go further. They insisted that we give it a try. After some initial resistance the seminar progressed as fast as any of the best seminars that I had ever designed. In other words, their capacity for such learning was high; their strength for difficult learning was deep. Yet, they did not trust either their organization's or each other's capacities and strengths.

Item: After several successful seminars, some members asked for a halt. They did so even though they admitted that the progress being made was important. The newspaper executives chose to keep covered the personal and organizational defensive practices that they now knew existed and that they had discussed publicly. The reason? Their fear of the brittleness of the newspaper to the next stages of learning.

Several editors and owners of leading newspapers who have read the book have commented that the study illustrates the results of weak leadership. If the publisher were tougher there would be less ambivalence. There are two curious aspects about this conclusion. First, we have studied many organizations where the top was tougher. We have found that the ambivalence was still there but that it was smothered. The smothering, in turn, led to the subordinates' feeling less responsible. This, in turn, made

The citizens will...feel increasingly unable to influence those institutions that influence them.

it more necessary for the top to "take hold." Hence a self-fulfilling prophecy. Second, the argument is that the way to manage a newspaper is to create internally the conditions that the newspaper resists in its relationships with society.

Item: I never received so much pressure not to publish, or to delay publication, of the study as I did by some of the newspaper officials in this organization. But, the most interesting thing about the pressure was that it came mostly from those editors and columnists who were, and continue to be, most vociferous defenders of the "artillery of the press." And the basis for their censorship of me was freedom from censorship!

Should the internal activities of newspapers be protected by the First Amendment if they are as defensive as this study suggests? (Keep in mind, that this is one of the leading newspapers.)

It is important for media organizations to remain free from outside interference. Otherwise they may become co-opted by the institutions they are supposed to monitor. The point I am making is that there is an equally dangerous source of interference that comes from the inside: namely, the defenses of reporters and the defenses that they build into their organization. Unless these individual and organizational defenses are influenceable and correctable, the media will not be free. It is precisely the respect for freedom of the media that will lead the thoughtful citizen to seek to constrain the press.

Recently a Federal judge ruled that reporters' thinking processes could be influenced (presumably negatively) if they were asked to make them public. In my experience, that is true to the extent that the individuals in question are unaware of their thinking processes and wish to remain so or are internally conflicted about them. Being confronted about one's thinking processes helps one to become more clear about the processes that enhance and distort reality. How can a reporter, who is a member of a free press, be intimidated by making his thinking processes public unless the act of making these processes public is psychologically threatening to the reporter? I say psychologically, because if the reporter is a member of a media organization that is genuinely committed to valid information, no organizational harm could result. If the paper is not free then that is the issue to focus upon — not simply the reporter.

Society needs free media to help the citizenry reflect and monitor its performance. Ongoing societal learning is at the heart of a free society. How can a free society

tolerate the demand that media need not learn when their existence is predicated on the idea that learning is good?

The distortions, deceptions, and camouflages that reporters have found among people in key societal institutions and the same qualities that I found in the newspaper are increasing daily. (Chris Argyris and Donald Schon, *Organizational Learning*, Addison Wesley, 1978.) Those in power who are not protected by the First Amendment are creating all sorts of ingenious ways to protect themselves from being caught and to lay the blame on others. The losers in this situation will be the citizens, especially those citizens who seek to create a just society. They will find themselves living in a world where the quality of services and products are decreasing and where many private and governmental agencies created to monitor the performance of organizations will take on the same dysfunctional characteristics as the organizations they are supposed to be monitoring.

The citizens will consequently feel increasingly unable to influence those institutions that influence them. The result will be increasing frustration and paranoia. As these pent-up feelings reach the point of explosion, all powerful institutions that appear uninfluenceable will be attacked. The attack will be especially vicious on those organizations that create double binds for the citizens. For example, if the citizens believe that their media are uninfluenceable and if they believe that the media should be free, then they will find themselves believing that institutions that harm individual freedom should be free. One way to deal with such a double bind is to lash out against the media. The irony is that those who will get angry will be those who are intelligent and concerned enough to see the double bind. They will get angry because they will realize that they have created free media which, because of internal defenses, distort important aspects of reality — which, in turn, makes the media unjust and a highly unlikely base from which to understand the performance of society. The more this consequence becomes apparent, the more thoughtful citizens will feel that they have created a system which can be unfair and unjust.

In an editorial in the New Republic (November 12, 1977, p. 5 and 6), the editors explained that the reason they picked up on South Africa is not that all South Africans are sick or evil people. "He (Mr. Vorster) and his colleagues are not evil, but the system they are erecting is evil and it is bound to become more so. A social system that is itself an atrocity is more repellant than other atrocities, even though its individual inhumanities may not seem to add up to a surpassing indictment of it" (p. 6).

Cannot this statement become increasingly applicable to the communication media of our nation?

A Tribute to Donald Bolles

The following address by Robert W. Greene, Suffolk Editor of Newsday and president of Investigative Reporters and Editors Group, Inc., was presented at a convocation on November 17, 1977 at Colby College, Waterville, Maine. The text has been lightly edited for this publication.

The occasion honored posthumously Donald F. Bolles, investigative reporter for the Arizona Republic, as the 25th Elijah Parish Lovejoy Fellow.

My name is Greene. I am a reporter and an editor. I am here to speak not only of Donald Bolles, but also of the tradition in which he lived and died. It is the tradition of public service reporting. The responsible exercise of this tradition has earned the communications media its memorable moments of greatness. Callous disregard of this tradition has occasionally exposed us as venal, craven and manipulated.

Don Bolles died approximately 17 months ago at the age of 46. A bomb destroyed his car and mortally wounded him. Bolles was a fighter and he fought death. But his pitifully torn body could not survive. First he lost one arm, then a leg, then another arm. He died. The subsequent history of events has shown that Don Bolles was assassinated because of the stories that he wrote. They were investigative stories and they were in the highest tradition of public service reporting.

Time, geography, inadequate support and local apathy — all are elements that have conspired to deprive Don Bolles of any reputation for greatness in his profession. But he was responsible, persistent and courageous. He sought out and identified those who chose to abuse and corrupt their positions of power to the detriment of the citizenry. And he died because he was doing his job. He was a good reporter, if not a great one. He was also a martyr. And martyrdom in a just cause is in itself sufficient to merit the accolade of greatness.

Don Bolles is not the only member of our media to die because he sought to find and report the truth.

There was Socrates, the preeminent commentator on his times, who sipped from the bowl of hemlock rather than retract the truth as he had reported it.

There was Christ. The Man, the ultimate teacher and commentator on the *raison d'être* of existence, who chose death by crucifixion rather than renounce His truth.

There was, in our own nation, Elijah Parish Lovejoy of Colby, the editor, who persisted in telling the truth about the horrors of slavery and was torn to death at his presses by an angry, pro-slavery mob.

There was Gerald Bradley, the Detroit radio announcer, who was machine-gunned to death in 1932 because he planned to name the members of the corrupt cartel that was savaging his city.

There was George Polk, the network correspondent, who was mysteriously murdered in post-World War II Greece when he dug too deep and went too far in reporting on the real nature of that internal war and the real nature of the involvement of other nations in the conflict.

And, there was Don Bolles.

Others have also suffered rather than deviate from the path of truth or surrender their Constitutional rights. There was Peter Zenger in New York, the Sacramento Four, a still-blinded Victor Riesel. And today, facing detention in a Moscow, Idaho, jail there is newspaper

editor Jay Shelledy who chose to go to prison rather than to reveal his sources of information.

The work of these men, and the like work of many other men and women in the media who have paid a lesser price, represents the high watermark of our greatness. It was, I am sure, people like these and the media owners and editors who encouraged them, that our forefathers had in mind when they framed the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights.

The First Amendment singles out the press for special privilege when it comes to legal interpretations of freedom. This unique *caveat* was a succinct way of saying that the press — now our entire communications media — was of vital importance in our scheme of democratic government and that any tempering with its freedom to report could effectually thwart the very essence of the Constitutional design. No other craft or profession, even the law, has such a specific Constitutional guarantee of freedom.

The debate surrounding the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights clearly demonstrates the

In what is inaccurately known as the age of investigative journalism, few newspapers, radio and television networks employ investigative reporters, much less investigative teams...

thinking of the Constitutional framers. Giants, such as Thomas Jefferson, perceived the people as the government. The people were the substance. The actual structure of government and the holders of office were merely the form. If the people were to govern wisely, they must be made aware of the continuing nature of law, economics, foreign affairs, domestic policies. They must also be accurately informed as to the activities, performance and probity of those acting as their representatives in government. The only practical way in which the people could gain this knowledge was and is through the press. The more the press ignored the form of what it was reporting and concentrated on substance, the more wisely the people could govern. Ideally, the press would report not just what others proclaimed to be the truth, but also the truth itself.

As Emerson so aptly phrased it: "Truth is the summit of being. Justice is the application of it to affairs."

But it is the nature of government to be self-perpetuating, eventually arrogant and imbued with a sense of self-preservation. If the press were to fulfill its role in truth-

fully reporting to the people, it was inevitable that the press would occasionally pose a threat to government and those in similar positions of power. It is also natural to assume that a government threatened by the press, would seek to interdict the press. And it was precisely because of that eventuality that freedom of the press was emphasized by specificity in the Bill of Rights. For, as Franklin Delano Roosevelt remarked: "Truth is found, when men are free to pursue it." Freedom of the press, our forefathers were convinced, was quintessential to government by the people.

So, in the pursuit of truth and in the performance of public service, we have produced our honor roll of heroes and organizations. It is a list studded with familiar names: Pulitzer, Steffens, Watergate, Tarbell, Mollenhoff, Nelson, Hersh, *The Boston Globe*, *Newsday*, *The Chicago Tribune*, Fred Friendly and Edward R. Murrow, Radio Station KOY-Phoenix, Horace Greeley, and the *Sacramento Bee*. Large and small, all have had their moments.

When the founders of our government chose to emphasize freedom of the press, there was a non-articulated but clearly expressed faith that our press would be worthy of that freedom and would accept the enormous responsibility that it entailed.

This responsibility was noted by the late Zechariah Chafee, Jr., a prominent Boston lawyer and Harvard professor. Said Chafee: "Freedom from something is not enough. It should also be freedom for something. Freedom is not safety, but opportunity. Freedom ought to be a means to enable the press to serve the proper functions of communications in a free society."

Despite our honor role, have we merited this unique freedom? In balance, I would think not. There is hardly a college in this nation that has not produced a long succession of journalists. But less than a handful can boast a journalistic alumni with the courage and tenaciousness of an Elijah Parish Lovejoy.

In an age when more and more of our newspapers are being purchased by corporate conglomerates, our value too often is judged not on editorial excellence but in multiples of annual earnings. And, in pursuit of these earnings, we put increased emphasis on what the public wants to know instead of what it ought to know. On the corporate reward scale increased circulation figures, jumps in Nielsen ratings and surges in ad lineage overshadow Pulitzer prizes and Peabody awards. It is no wonder, in these circumstances, that S. I. Newhouse, Rupert Murdoch and Roone Arledge play powerful roles in the industry.

There are some notable exceptions to this trend. The Times-Mirror Corporation is an outstanding example.

In what is inaccurately known as the age of investiga-

tive journalism, few newspapers, radio and television networks employ investigative reporters, much less investigative teams, and few even give competent reporters the time or financial support to responsibly pursue stories of an investigative nature. Some of this is deliberate. Depth reporting and investigative reporting have been known to enrage some advertisers, to lead to circulation boycotts, to precipitate expensive libel suits. On their scale of priorities, too many publishers and editors place avoidance of all three high above the chance to render public service.

There is also the less deliberate avoidance. Many publishers earning substantial profits for themselves or their stockholders squeeze out extra dollars by keeping their editorial staffs undermanned. Harried city editors and assignment editors, faced with short staff and gaping daily news holes, are forced to opt for the less time-consuming story — the form, but not the substance. And, in this rather general broadside, I do not excuse the editorial craft unions which, having performed a much needed job, now encourage mediocrity and punish reporters who wish to devote their own time to developing sources and improving their own knowledgeability.

How many papers are there like *The Boston Globe* or *The Chicago Tribune* that sometimes field as many as three investigative teams simultaneously in their incessant battle to scourge corruption from the local body politic? Or like *Newsday*, that will spend in excess of \$50,000 every year to bring its readers a special voter's guide, or eight months and close to \$200,000 to learn the source of heroin coming to Long Island? How many networks are there like CBS that dare to bring you the Murrow reports on Sen. Joseph McCarthy, the Boston bookie expose and the Arizona Project? Very few.

Even our current heroes are not exempt. Watergate was an exception, not a rule for *The Washington Post*. And *The New York Times* so concentrated upon becoming a national fixture, that it could not hear the death rattle of its own New York City. Its current excursion into an examination of Third Avenue boutiques, Houston Street delicatessens and the delights of a freshly-made chocolate mousse offers little in the way of redemption. These are two of our finest newspapers. No one can forget the courage that they showed in the pursuit of Watergate or the Pentagon Papers. But even they lack consistency in the public interest.

Recently, I had the honor to address a group of some 500 students at Boston University. Fired by Watergate and a vision of the communications media as it was seen by the framers of our Constitution, more than 300 of those students stated that they intended to become investigative reporters. Similar situations have been reported from

The Lovejoy Award

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.

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.

journalism schools throughout the nation. What a tragedy! What cynicism we will breed in this generation when it learns that the vast bulk of the communications media offers little encouragement or opportunity to become even perceptive reporters.

I would submit that we have had our moments of greatness and we will have them again. But at this time, most of our industry is no more deserving of special Constitutional preference than General Motors, Lockheed Aviation or the Ideal Toy Company. Our ability to present the news in form if not substance, is unparalleled. But our inability to comprehend our public service responsibilities would lead a current-day Otto Von Bismarck to repeat his observation that "A newspaper writer is someone who has failed in his calling."

So bitter is our intramural competition for advertising and circulation dollars that we give only lip service — if that — to the defense of our colleagues when they are subjected to attacks upon their First Amendment rights. How many newspapers and broadcasting networks filed in support of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* when the government sought to prevent the publication of the Pentagon Papers? And where is the outraged voice of the print media in the face of the government's continued insistence that it has jurisdiction over the type and quality

The killing of Don Bolles was the ultimate deprivation of his First Amendment rights.

of news programs presented by radio and television? And how intensive is the spotlight that we play upon reporters like Jay Shelledy who are jailed because they refuse to reveal their sources of information? Why else do we care so little? It cannot be ignorance of the fact that only massive collective response in the face of all First Amendment threats will keep us from being individually but systematically deprived of our freedom.

The Don Bolles assassination is a case in point.

The killing of Don Bolles was the ultimate deprivation of his First Amendment rights. He was murdered because of what he wrote and because he might write more of the same. Bolles was one of a kind in Arizona. His newspaper, hopelessly co-opted by the reigning power structure, cracked his shield and blunted his sword. But he was still capable of an occasional thrust. With the death of Bolles, a powerful voice was stilled. Even if his murderers were apprehended, the assassination had served its purpose. And this successful method could hardly escape the notice of other power brokers in other parts of the country faced with similar exposure problems at the hands of the press. They are only too well aware that pawns are readily expendable in pursuit of a queen.

The inherent threat involved was perceived more quickly by the reporters of this nation than by its publishers and network presidents. And it was a reporters' organization, the Investigative Reporters and Editors Group, that decided that the time had come for a collective response. The plan was to establish an investigative reporting team, broadly representative of the communications media, which would go into Arizona to expand upon and conclude Bolles' work. Vengeance was not the motive. The team would not and did not work on the Bolles murder. It was an attempt to show that the solidarity of the American communications media is such that it is ready and willing to finish a reporter's work anytime and anywhere to demonstrate that assassination is an ineffective weapon against First Amendment rights.

A nationwide call was made for volunteers. And from this whole nation, 21 publishers, one local radio station (CBS-Boston) and one small television station agreed to supply reporters and to pay their expenses for periods ranging from eight days to six months. The volunteers were highly predictable: *The Boston Globe*, *Newsday*, *The*

Miami Herald, *The Detroit News*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Indianapolis Star*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Denver Post*, *The Eugene Register-Guard*, *The Arizona Star* and other smaller papers with a long tradition of public service.

Opposition to the project, strangely, came from two of our nation's foremost editors — Benjamin Bradlee of *The Washington Post* and A. M. Rosenthal of *The New York Times*. Bradlee remarked variously that investigative reporters were too egotistical to work together and that it was arrogant for outside reporters to feel that they could do a better job in Arizona than the local press. History has since proven Mr. Bradlee's assessment to be incorrect.

More provocative, however, were the thoughts of A. M. Rosenthal of the *Times*. He said: "One of the great strengths of the American press is its diversity and competitiveness. We shouldn't be getting together; if a story is worth investigating, we should do it ourselves. If you do it on this story, why not on other stories? Why doesn't everybody get together and investigate everything; you'd soon have one big press and no diversity."

As a veteran of more than 25 years in our industry, I am second to no man in my enormous respect for A. M. Rosenthal. But his reasoning in this instance was charged with big-paper elitism and totally lacking in comprehension that the Arizona Project was far less of a quest for a story than it was the first attempt at collective media response to the ultimate First Amendment challenge.

The fact that a giant like A. M. Rosenthal could not think in these terms is, I fear, a most serious indicator of our problem. His reasoning is also curious. Because there is a trend towards economic collectivization in the American print media and it is done in the name of preserving press diversity. I refer to the pooling of production, advertising and circulation departments by some of our larger papers operating in the same cities. This practice is now in effect in 22 U.S. cities including Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Miami and San Francisco. The argument, as advanced in the Newspaper Preservation Act, is that two newspapers with diverse editorial voices in the same city sometimes can survive only if they pool their production costs.

Obviously, when it comes to profits, the American newspaper industry has no philosophical reservations about teaming up to share operational expenses. Nor do I deplore this. It is the nature of our society that any business, including the media, must make a profit if it is to

survive. But I seriously doubt if our industry can successfully offer maximum profit to its stockholders in head-on competition with other industries and still effectively maintain an expensive public service profile.

Nor is Rosenthal's reasoning any less curious when applied to the editorial side of the ledger. As William Sexton, associate editor of *Newsday*, recently noted, *The New York Times* is a member of the Associated Press, a news-gathering collective formed by the American newspaper industry so that all members could obtain the same news stories at lower cost. And *The New York Times* has salesmen spread throughout the country asking other newspapers to buy for publication reportage of news events by *New York Times*' reporters. Here it would seem that the *Times* is in the business of selling news collectivization.

Mr. Rosenthal's reasoning is also taken to task by Columbia University journalism Professor Melvin Mencher (Nieman Fellow '53) in the current edition of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. He writes: "If the choice is between journalistic cooperation and, say, a Watergate inquiry left to a captive Justice Department, where does the public interest lie? Would appraisal of water rights in the West best be left to the attention of a state agency sympathetic to agribusiness? Finally, given a choice between waiting for a large news organization such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* to take up a subject, or forming a reporting group from smaller newspapers or broadcasting stations, isn't the pooling of resources the more responsible course?"

Naturally, I agree with Professor Mencher. The Arizona Project, of course, was unique. *Newsday*, for example, had the financial resources and talent to field its own team in Arizona. This was the first inclination of *Newsday* publisher William Attwood and editor David Laventhol. But this would have been the very story-hunting envisioned by A. M. Rosenthal. Because it was important that the Arizona Project be an industry-wide response, Attwood and Laventhol endorsed the

...When it comes to profits, the American newspaper industry has no philosophical reservations about teaming up to share operational expenses.

concept of the project and gave it unstinting financial and leadership support. This same selflessness was demonstrated by all of the other media organizations involved.

If smaller newspapers and radio and television stations are to exercise their public service responsibilities properly on a local and regional basis, pool reporting on a team basis may well be the most effective and economic answer. And for even larger papers and the electronic networks, selective pool reporting may be the most effective method of handling such major public quandries as the Warren Commission Report and the Martin Luther King assassination. Reporter Carl Bernstein recently told an IRE convention that the entire Watergate story would have surfaced much sooner if the three or four major newspapers working on the story had pooled their information. "We all had a piece of it," said Bernstein, "and together, the pieces made the whole."

The Arizona Project was a pioneering experiment. It worked. So says the vast majority of the participating newspapers and CBS radio. So say all of the leading law enforcement authorities in the State of Arizona. So say such recognized experts on investigative reporting as Carl Bernstein, Clark Mollenhoff and James Polk. More importantly, says the *Columbia Journalism Review*, the Arizona Project points the way to further experiments of its kind. When we all embrace our responsibilities to truly and courageously inform the people, we will be deserving of the First Amendment to our Bill of Rights.

If the Arizona Project can stimulate increased interest in public service reporting and broader participation in such reporting by the American communications industry, the tragic death of Don Bolles will have become meaningful.

Investigative Reporting: Defining the Craft

By Bruce Locklin

For many journalists, the term “investigative reporting” is redundant. They see all reporters as investigative reporters because all reporters are supposed to find facts and write stories based on those facts.

But there’s a technical definition of investigative reporting that makes it easier to isolate and to understand. Bob Greene of *Newsday* developed this definition several years ago and it has two elements.

First, investigative reporting is the publishing of significant material that someone is trying to keep hidden.

Second, the findings are the reporter’s own work product, not leaked material.

Maybe that doesn’t sound too exciting, but I think it’s a good, working definition because it draws a circle that separates investigative stories from other news reporting, and helps explain to publishers why investigative stories take so long to produce.

There are no value judgments in that definition. Many important stories would not be classified as investigative under Greene’s guidelines. For example, *The New York Times* publication of the Pentagon Papers might be excluded if viewed as leaked material.

Actually, my publisher defined my job a little differently when *The Record* decided to make a commitment to full-time investigative reporting almost seven years ago. The assignment: Expose wrongdoing, public or private.

Over the years, that assignment and some other factors have made *The Record*’s investigative operation lean more toward catching bad guys than finding flaws in institutions. In most of our projects, we try to do both — expose the villain and show how the system can be changed so that the next villain won’t find it easy to succeed.

The author, a Nieman Fellow for 1977-78, is investigative news editor of The Record, Bergen County, New Jersey. This article is based on his comments at a November gathering of this year’s Fellows.

Our approach was influenced by I. F. Stone’s thinking on investigative reporting. Soon after getting the investigative assignment, I happened to hear Stone speak at a *More* magazine convention. He said something that has stuck with me. In essence, his message was:

Don’t end up after 20 years of investigative reporting with just a string of withered scalps on your belt. There always will be new villains, no matter how many you expose. Go beyond them and expose the weaknesses in our institutions and agencies that allow such villains to flourish.

One of our investigative projects helped me to understand what Stone was talking about. The main culprit was a medical doctor who was cashing in on the acupuncture boom with fraudulent credentials. After a lot of effort, we published our findings about his activities plus his explanation. Several months later, when state authorities lifted the doctor’s license, I tried to contact him to see if he wanted to comment. I found he had moved to another state, but his answering service referred me to two physicians who had just opened a new acupuncture clinic. Yes, we chopped off the serpent’s head, but two more heads had sprouted.

The solution seems to be to build a reform element into each investigative project. We tried in our acupuncture report to point out that a state licensing system could bring some safeguards. But, on reflection, I think we did a better job in exposing the bad guy than in patching up the system.

My personal favorite type of investigative story has these elements: It exposes an outrageous and hypocritical villain, someone in a position of trust who has misused his position. It checks to see if abuses are widespread and may be repeated. It offers the best elements of a solid think-piece on the issue involved, using qualified experts to review possible reforms.

Systematic investigative reporting is a careful, step-by-step process. An investigation may begin with a tip from outside the newspaper or perhaps from a beat reporter spotting a suspicious pattern of events.

The first stage is a quick check to see if an investigation is feasible. We try in this initial period to move from a suspicious circumstance to sure knowledge of wrongdoing. Often, this means developing sources, either on the record or confidential, who know where the bodies are buried. We are looking for a road map, not publishable information. If we get the road map — detailed knowledge of wrongdoing — we usually can devote the time and effort needed to find the supporting evidence.

However, we don’t continue indefinitely on suspicions alone. If, after two or three weeks, we don’t have a clear picture of who has been doing what, we suspend the

project. The file goes into a drawer and can be revived if sometime later new information warrants it.

Whenever the first stage is successful, we then move into the careful accumulation of evidence. In this phase, the investigative reporter works almost like a bricklayer building a wall. His bricks are hard facts and he uses them to build a wall of evidence around the suspected wrongdoer.

Then comes confrontation. The investigator takes his wall and shows it to the suspected villain. The reporter says, in effect, here's my wall — knock it over if you can. Sometimes, beginning reporters will shy away from confrontation, settling for an easy "No comment." That's not the best way. If the wall is not sound, it's better to find out before publication rather than after.

We usually are able to get full confrontation by making it clear to investigative subjects that we're not pushing them for comment. We explain that we want to give them a chance to review our findings before they appear in print.

Sometimes, if nothing else works, we will write a letter to an investigative subject requesting a meeting and spelling out the harshest allegations which we are prepared to publish. We send this by certified mail. Usually it results in an interview.

It is extremely important that each reporter working on an investigative project understands that fairness counts as much as accuracy. It's easy for a reporter to adopt a killer stance that can ruin an investigation. That can happen this way:

The reporter is investigating Mayor Jones and already has uncovered evidence of substantial wrongdoing, but all of it of borderline legality, wispy conflict-of-interest material. He suspects Jones has gone over the line and he approaches Smith, an old ally of Jones. Smith now appears to be a Jones enemy.

In trying to get Smith to become a source, the reporter exaggerates his findings, saying to Smith: "We can prove that the Mayor is a crook. With your help, we can really expose him. We're just asking you to help us get him good." It's not a smart approach, and worse, it's both slanderous and malicious and could result in a law suit. If the reporters remember what the job really is, they'll never have to make such an approach. Their job is to get the facts.

Suppose that Mayor Jones really is a crook and that Smith knows about it and wants to see the Mayor exposed. The reporter can make a clean pitch, something like, "Help me get the facts about Jones." Smith knows that the facts will incriminate the Mayor so the clean pitch really has the same meaning to him as the slanderous approach.

It might seem surprising that a reporter can get hard,

incriminating information just by asking for it. However, we've found that many people are eager to help expose wrongdoing. To the extent that a newspaper's reputation grows as an agency that can right society's wrongs, more and more sources become willing to cooperate.

Sometimes sources won't talk unless given a guarantee that their names won't be used. Often their jobs would be in jeopardy.

We've found that there's a useful middle ground between off-the-record and on-the-record information. It works this way:

If the source's first-hand information is vital to prove a point, we ask the source to take the same risk as the

...We try to do both — expose the villain and show how the system can be changed so that the next villain won't find it easy to succeed.

newspaper is taking in publishing the story. We ask the source to sign an affidavit swearing to his observations. Built into the affidavit are sentences spelling out the source's relationship with the newspaper:

1. The source's name will not be used in our investigative report.

2. In the event of any legal action challenging that report, the paper has the source's permission to reveal the name, affidavit, and any tape-recorded interviews.

We have found this agreement is acceptable to many sources who are concerned mainly with the immediate reaction of the investigative subject. Basically, we are simply asking them to stand with us if at sometime in the future, we face a legal challenge on our findings.

Is investigative reporting really worth all this effort? I can't give you an economic motive. Investigative stories don't sell newspapers, particularly home-delivered newspapers. People don't subscribe to *The Record* for the five to ten investigative projects it produces each year.

I can sell responsible investigative reporting only on somewhat spiritual grounds. It seems to me that a newspaper helps define itself by the way it views investigative reporting. It can sit back and scoff, saying that a paper's proper function is to report news and not go looking for trouble. That approach, followed to the extreme, could turn a newspaper into a bulletin board.

But a newspaper that makes a commitment to investigative reporting, can become something more. It's not just the old watchdog function — it's an aggressive digging into reality. The newspaper then becomes an independent, outside check on the system, and stands apart from government and all other seats of power, ready and able to expose lies, wrongdoing, and injustice.

Journalism: Taught or Caught?

By Edward C. Norton

My introduction to teaching came suddenly, without warning. A copyboy in our shop, about to graduate from a state college, asked one afternoon if I would be interested in teaching a journalism course. Yeah, I answered. I was puzzled that this college allowed seniors to do its recruiting. Then I recalled that the copyboy, John, was known as the brightest in his class, was the editor of the school paper, and that we in our shop considered that he had the abilities for a fine future. That was two years ago. John the copyboy is now John the reporter for a national business news syndicate, working out of Washington. And I became a teacher. Of Journalism. And became convinced it can't be taught. It has to be done.

Before this point in 1975 the only other connection I had had with teaching was in the service, where for some months it was my hardship to lecture to GI's at 7:30 a.m. daily about the care and feeding of their rifles, and warn them about the perils of running afoul of the local off-post constabulary. All in all it was not a spiritually uplifting experience. The only thing it proved was that I was capable of speaking consecutive sentences while barely awake.

I did not submit this experience when I went for an interview at the state college. The journalism department head was far more interested in my working hours.

My working hours were important because around them I would have to construct a class schedule. Like many of my peers I had had daydreams about leaving the pressure tank of daily newspapering for the quiet, scholarly world of the academy. My peers and I, I discovered, had actually been dreaming about a world that probably ended in 1910.

In quick order I found that colleges today are built on forms and computer cards. The most pressing question I

discovered at the two colleges where I have taught is: where to park? The first school has 7,500 students, and almost as many acres devoted to parking fields. You cannot expect to get classes started exactly on time at that institution, because too many students are late, having missed the jitney bus from the farthest lot.

Before I was given a class list of students I was handed an official-looking sticker, bearing the name of the school, a number, and sober title: faculty.

"Don't just tape this to your car window," said the department chairman. "They will steal it." He didn't explain who "they" were. I could guess. At one time degrees, honors and of course, publications, were the badges of rank in the academic world. Now it's parking space. Deans and department heads get specially marked slots. In the Grand Prix Society it's not who you are, but rather what you drive, and where you park it. With my parking sticker welded to my car's front bumper I was ready to tackle the first class that bright, winter day.

The course was called, "Reporting Public Affairs." I had no say in the title. I had been asked to write a course outline and bibliography. I submitted them, and was surprised to find the outline somewhat expanded — puffed up with what can only be called academic jargon. This material, the department head explained, had to be approved by a faculty committee, and the thing had to look like every other outline. I did manage to evade stipulating a class text, on the grounds that there wasn't one in print that suited me. Actually, I had decided that the textbooks I had looked at were too expensive, and would provide the students an easy way out of attending each class.

"If I have to be here twice a week at 9 a.m., you'd better be here too," I told the class at our first meeting. They were about 25, women comprised about half the class, and most were seniors. I had been told that they had had basic news writing. They may have sat in such a class, but little of the material stuck.

For as long as I can remember there has been a battle going on about the merits or demerits of teaching journalism. Can it be taught? Is it better to get a grounding in liberal arts, and then pick up the trade in a real newsroom? The war never ends, and until I stepped into that classroom, the argument was strictly academic to me. I had had a mixed liberal arts and journalism program in college. The journalism courses were taught by working reporters from *The New York Times* and the *New York Daily News*. I enjoyed those classes, but only a few of us went into newspapering, and fewer still persevere at it to this day. Realizing that, I told my class that regardless of what profession or trade they found themselves in, they could learn a few things from the class. The students did not look impressed.

Mr. Norton, Nieman Fellow '73, and a reporter for the New Jersey edition of the New York Daily News, has taught in recent years at a state college and a private university.

*The Media Generation demands repetition
— you have to hammer the message home with
the insistence of a television commercial.*

For the first writing exercise I asked them to write their own obituaries. Some expressed shock. They expected to live forever, and were astounded that I would have the audacity to introduce mortality to the classroom. I explained patiently that the obit page of most any newspaper is often the most read page in the publication. They looked skeptical. When the papers were handed in I discovered what I had suspected — would-be journalists or not — most in the class could not write a simple declarative sentence. Their grasp of grammar was fragmentary. They knew not the use of dictionaries. I shuddered. I could not blame these soon-to-graduate seniors, however. They were only victims. They were the product of happier and sloppier times in elementary and secondary school education. These victims had already discovered on their own that the world is a bleak place when there are no jobs — no good jobs, that is. Most of them worked — as bartenders, waitresses, clerks, you-name-it.

Some were not angry to discover that they could not write; they were just disappointed that I could consider it important. They knew they were part of the Media Generation by birth, so what was the big deal? I carefully explained that most Americans live their lives on paper, and if they — students — hoped to become anything, they would have to be able to express themselves clearly in writing. They looked dubious.

A few classes later a young woman asked why I was not teaching about public relations. I told her that the course was about reporting public affairs. Yeah, she said, public relations. No, I replied, not the same thing. She went away unhappy. I became unhappy.

You see, I had enough experience with the Media Generation not to assume that if I told the class a statement clearly and once, that would be enough. The Media Generation demands repetition — you have to hammer the message home with the insistence of a television commercial. I quickly learned that these students who had allegedly gone through a basic training in news writing didn't know a round-up story from their left hind foot. It seems that they had been "taught" by an academic, with an advanced degree in "communications," but assigned no practical experience in the trade.

That, I found, was common. Wetback teachers, like I was, are a salvation to most colleges. "Adjuncts" they're called. Part time, no benefits, and generally not even a

mail drop — these are the advantages to college administrators of adjuncts when it comes to putting together a reasonably inclusive department offering.

The problems come when you mix academics with "wetbacks." The academics have been busy getting degrees, while the adjuncts have been busy catching flak and getting rained on. The courses they teach differ widely. The students I inherited did not know the difference between an A.M. and a P.M. paper. So much for their basic courses. I was not surprised to learn they had never heard of reporters like Lincoln Steffens or Jacob Riis. They didn't know how the modern newspaper evolved, how the mechanical advances had improved the product, or anything about the press lords who made millions and, sometimes, history.

The results of the next quiz were no surprise. I asked a dozen questions — starting with the identification of the incumbent U.S. secretary of state, and running down to statewide facts and figures. All were able to identify Herr Kissinger correctly, but not one could identify their state's secretary of state, even though the incumbent had been in the news for some time, as the target of investigations, and for his stubborn refusal gracefully to resign after the statute of limitations saved him from trial.

I was again confirmed in my belief that schools do a very poor job in educating students about their own states. These students, as adults, barely know how to apply for a driver's license, or how the various layers of American government affect their lives.

Depressed by this, I backtracked, tossing out chunks of the history and philosophy of the newspaper trade, along with the parallel growth of government. Some place in mid-course I caught flak.

This institution operated its academic departments on a post-1960's participatory democracy model — faculty, administrators and students met regularly to judge the merits of each course. One of my students charged me with leaning too heavily on history and philosophy, and not enough on how Woodward and Bernstein worked the phones to topple You-Know-Who. Guilty, I pleaded at my arraignment before the department chairman.

"The majority of students in the class are ignorant of the history and philosophy of the trade," I said. "It's like trying to teach economics without once mentioning Adam Smith or Gresham." I was told to go and sin no more. Laughing, I went back into the classroom and asked if anyone could identify Henry Luce. One guy thought he was a disc jockey on a local rock radio station. I laughed again.

It should be mentioned that there were some talented, interested students in the classes. They had read the Woodward and Bernstein books, and they understood

how the Dynamic Duo had worked the phones. They read books. They read newspapers. They asked questions — hard questions — about the trade and its role models.

I told them that when I started in the business in 1963 all you needed were the usual limbs, a college degree, a car, and a willingness to work 60 hours a week for \$80. There were plenty of openings then, on weeklies and small dailies all over the United States. Reporters could progress easily within their own shops, or to larger newspapers. There was a scruffy, underground feeling to being a working stiff in a badly lighted, scarred-desk office, pounding out obits and “briefs” for hard-nosed editors who fried the dank, smoky newsroom air with their frank comments about your abilities.

Something happened. The American newspaper leaped into the 20th Century. The scarred desks went, replaced by modular units in new suburban plants. I moved to one in 1965, and it looked like an insurance company headquarters. That’s what we called it.

In the new environment nothing was scruffy, except the newsmen and women. Reacting to the new surroundings, editors and executives weeded out the real old-timers, the ones who thought nothing of putting out their cigars on the new Kentile, or leaving a bottle of whiskey next to their typewriter.

Something changed. Suddenly journalists had a new visibility. In the late 60’s and early 70’s young men and women decided that being reporters was one way to change what they thought needed changing. The New Journalism, advocacy writing, objective-subjective controversies flared in news rooms around the nation. Suddenly, it was harder for an experienced white male to change jobs. Editors said they had to consider women and minorities first. Time served in the trenches of small dailies meant little when measured against the current scales of sex or skin tone. Woodward and Bernstein capped the tide. As Ben Bagdikian has so ably documented, this change in attitudes toward journalism was reflected in colleges. Puny journalism departments ballooned. Trendy academics and administrators let it happen. Who stopped to ask, “Hey, it won’t do to expand solely for fad and fashion. Why are we pushing journalism here when in the real world there are about as few job openings as there are in the depressed teaching market?”

Well, the answer is that in today’s academic world, college students are commodities, units of power.

When they come together, like iron filings, around one “hot” trade, there is a rush to “service” the popular need. The tide for journalism may be already receding.

Among my own students, I heard in the last year that the only seniors who could count on sure employment were accounting majors. The C.P.A. and his hand calculator may soon supplant the reporter in the trench coat as the role model.

There are also rumblings in the college communities. *Washington Post* reporter Bill Peterson reported that researchers have found that gloom is widespread. Peterson wrote of the findings, “They (the professors) give the colleges where they work poor marks. Standards, they say, have fallen. Many students are unprepared. Teaching isn’t what it should be, and two out of every three professors feel they’ve been too soft with students.

“Virtually all said that many students with whom they come in close contact ‘are seriously underprepared in basic skills, such as those required for written and oral communication.’

“Seventy-one percent said, ‘Too many people ill-suited to academic life are now enrolling in colleges and universities.’

“Sixty-four percent said, ‘the U.S. is creating a work force overtrained in terms of available jobs.’”

The responsibility for this situation can be spread everywhere. Sure, youngsters don’t learn their ABC’s in grammar school. But that’s the responsibility of both the school, its teachers, the parents, and the elected school trustees. There apparently is no stigma to being illiterate today — you wake up at 21 and find that the only job you qualify for is down at the car wash. Too many colleges have copped out to the fads and fashions, and the responsibility for that can be spread, as well.

In a letter to the editor one college department chairperson (his title) wrote recently that state colleges were offering “fast food education.” Courses in philosophy, literature, and English are being phased out and students are being urged to pass them by. He is chairperson of the college’s department of history, so we can presume that he had an ax to grind. This chairperson put much of the blame on the heads of the college’s trustees. They, he said, are mostly businessmen, or wives of businessmen, and they want what they consider an “efficient” operation. That means, he charged, a college which caters to the whims and fancies of an ever-changing student population in fast-changing times.

After a couple of years now teaching part-time, I take great pleasure when a student tells me he or she wants to work for a newspaper, and makes it on a weekly or a small daily. As for the rest, well, it’s been an education among the IBM cards, parking stickers, and low-rise academic horizons.

This Far by Fear

By Robert C. Maynard

The following was adapted from a lecture at the University of Michigan last year. The occasion was a conference to review the performance of the press in the ten years since the Kerner Commission Report. That report condemned the press as "shockingly backward" in the hiring and promotion of non-white journalists. The author, who was later Howard R. Marsh visiting professor at Michigan, is chairman of the Institute for Journalism Education. The Institute recently announced the National Conference on Minorities and the News for April 6-8, 1978, in Washington, D.C.

When you asked me to come and talk about Kerner 10 years later, my mind automatically flicked back to Watts as a seminal event in our discussion. I had to find a passage that had been nagging in the back of my mind and which appeared in Robert Conot's remarkable account of that uprising, *Rivers of Blood, Years of Darkness*. He describes the first few hours of the violence, and says:

On their transistor radios, the people in the street could hear the news broadcasts saying that a riot was in progress, that Negroes were attacking the police. They were angry with the newsmen for not saying why there was this riot, what the grievances of the people were, how it had all started . . . the white reporters couldn't understand (the resentment of the blacks) . . . they identify him (the newsmen) with the white press which in their mind ignores Negroes except when they commit crimes, slants what stories it does print and systematically works with the (police) to keep the lid clamped on. The newsmen thought he was a hero. The black man thought he was a villain.

This is how Conot sets the stage for an event whose image probably still lives in the minds of all journalists who saw

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the next day's wirephotos. It was the photo of the burning of KNXT's overturned mobile unit.

Since much of our discussion in this conference is likely to focus on the hiring and promotion of minorities — or more to the point, the lack thereof — I thought it important to go back and find that precise moment in time, August 11, 1965, to which virtually every working black journalist in America today owes his or her employment. It was that frightful scene in south central Los Angeles that made most editors across the country aware for the first time that there might be any imperative for even the token desegregation of their newsrooms. Something like that incident would occur in nearly every major city in which there was an uprising. The smart editors had received the earlier message from Watts and had a black reporter or so in place. The slower ones promoted a copy aide, a librarian's assistant, in one instance a circulation truck driver, and gave them spontaneous battlefield commissions as reporters. In hardly any instance was their assignment to sit in the office and interpret what was happening and help answer the complaint of the Watts residents by explaining this riot. No, the job was to blend with the crowd and report back to the office so that others could write a story they had not in most instances witnessed and whose causes they could only dimly perceive.

I retrace that early ground because I am still wondering what lessons the press in America can claim to have learned in the decade since the Kerner Commission complained that, "the journalistic profession has been shockingly backward in seeking out, hiring, training and promoting Negroes."

As you already are aware, the American Society of Newspaper Editors tried to count brown noses among the 40,000 newsroom professionals in 1972, seven years after Watts and four years after Kerner. It was able to find 253 for sure. It threw in another 50 for good measure and concluded that seven-tenths of one percent of all the journalists practicing in America that year were not white. ASNE went back a year later and found the number had declined and it gave up the count. To my knowledge, no such census has been attempted since, although I

understand, as of yesterday, that there is a new book out called *The Newspeople* that has some new numbers on the topic that show some improvement, but yet overall, I think we could still say that the number of nonwhite reporters remains dismal and no one to my knowledge has attempted to count the number of nonwhites writing editorials, running city desks, running foreign staffs or even choosing the pictures for page one. It's a larger number than it was at the time of Watts, but to say so is merely to say that any estimate now would have to be called a zero-based comparison.

What is my reason for this concern? What does it matter if there are no minority group members to speak of helping to present the news each day? Am I merely pleading for jobs for non-white writers? Partly, quite honestly, it is true that I am concerned to see my gifted brothers and sisters have an opportunity to work at the craft they love, but I will confess to a larger interest. I am concerned about the future of America. I happen to agree with the Kerner Commission when it said, "By failing to portray the Negro as a matter of routine and in the context of the total society, the news media have . . . contributed to the black-white schism in this country."

Long before Kerner, Walter Lippmann said it was the responsibility of the daily newspaper to see to it that its readers are not surprised by events. Few newspaper readers could say that the urban events of the 1960's came as anything but a sudden and searing shock. We all remember the story told of James M. Roche, the head of General Motors standing on the roof of the G.M. building above Detroit in summer 1967, watching the flames in utter dismay that such savage forces were at work in his city. It need not have been. Charlayne Hunter of the *New York Times* would later put it this way:

As black reporters, we know where the errors of omission occurred; know that if we had been given the chance all along to write what we knew, no one would have been surprised at Harlem, 1964; Watts, 1965; Newark and Detroit, 1967; Washington, 1968 and hundreds of other ignited cities. . .

As much as I might be concerned about the effects of segregation and bigotry in the news on blacks, I am even more concerned about its effects on the whole of our society. This schism to which Kerner referred is indeed a serious matter. The conditions that led to those uprisings were there, as Miss Hunter said, for anyone who cared to see to document and explain long before there was a Harlem or a Watts. A few newspapers did a few pieces, but only a few. So the vast majority of white Americans was left to suppose that for no particular reason a bunch of

blacks took it into their heads to burn down the city. Eventually, they would hear from Kerner that the cause was "white racism," but as a functional definition of the squalor of everyday urban life that designation leaves much to be desired, and much to the imagination. And there's more, more that isn't about urban squalor. Kerner hints at it in a phrase. It says the news media, "have not shown understanding or appreciation of — and thus have not communicated — a sense of Negro culture, thought or history."

Which brings *Roots* to mind as just another event for which the average American was not prepared. So many whites have since confided that they didn't know before exactly how blacks got here. They just hadn't really thought about it. And, of course, as Kerner said a decade ago — still largely true — there is not much to read of black history and black culture in the average American newspaper. Perhaps a big splash on the Sunday before Negro History Week, but if you happened to be out of town that weekend, you missed the black contribution until some future February.

So we have a case of double-barreled misconceptions. The whites have no notion on one hand of what it is like to live in today's inner city because our newspapers do so little to bring that fact alive. On the other hand, the positive aspects of black American history and culture are obscured for much the same reasons — because in all too many instances there is no black in a position to help shape a product so that it reflects accurately all the disparate elements that make up our society. The whites get to be surprised by riots and by *Roots*, never understanding before-hand about the true nature of either.

That, as I see it, is the way it has been, but it need not be that way for all time. That is why I am pleased to be here to partake in this discussion, and why I think Michigan is doing such an important thing in holding a conference on this subject. It is my belief that Watts and the other rebellions shook the nation's news media out of a state of unreality with respect to racial matters. Ours is a business that thrives on its criticism of the shortcomings of others while rarely examining its own. I do not think it too much to suggest that we have come this far by fear, fear of physical danger in a riot, fear of being beaten by that other news organization with a black staff member who might edge us out on a racial story. The question is whether such inauspicious beginnings can be transformed into concerted effort to be as fully representative of the total society as we possibly can be.

Since the 1960's, change has come to other fields that once were segregated. Many of my colleagues believe journalism, even while it has changed materially, is

behind the times. When Austin Scott resigned from the Associated Press five years ago, he put the problem in a letter to Wes Gallagher this way:

I marvel every day that there seem to be more black sheriffs, more black businessmen, more black educators and policemen, more black judges, and state legislators, and computer programmers, and salesmen, and heavy equipment operators. But in a nation of 22 million black people, only a couple dozen of us have the potential to make it in the Associated Press. It's funny how talent is distributed. We can sing and dance and hold conventions, but none of us can write.

Mr. Scott, unfortunately, is correct as far as I know in that the news business appears to be lagging behind many other fields in desegregating, especially in the middle and upper ranks. This is not only true insofar as minorities are concerned. I hear the same complaints from women. I also hear something else, sort of blowing in the wind, that concerns me greatly as we look at the future. A task force of the Justice Department came out the other day with a new report on Civil Disorders and Terrorism.¹ It said simply that it could find no evidence that the conditions that brought on the rebellions of the 1960's had changed substantially, and that we should be ready for another round of the same. It stopped short of a flat out prediction. It said, more or less, don't be surprised. It urged that society consider what measures it would employ in dealing with such rebellions if they should recur, and it surmised that we might want to consider suspending a civil liberty or two during the emergency. It didn't mention the Bill of Rights specifically, but that, I suppose, is the thought on which we should ponder for a moment before we get to the question and answer session.

The First Amendment is our charter in journalism. It invites us to be bold in pursuit of the truth and to tell it all when we find it out. It is not the unlimited license that many once thought it to be, but it is still the most extensive invitation to challenge authority known to exist in the world. No other people are so genuinely blessed with the right to raise Ned when the government oversteps its authority — or when we think it has.

When my friends from Africa or Latin America visit us in Washington, one of the first questions they always have concerns this odd device of ours called the First Amendment. I always tell them there is more to it than Watergate, that ours is a system of structured liberty with written guarantees against self-incrimination, against

illegal search and seizure, and for due process of law and equal protection under the Constitution.

And as I wind my way through this exciting 200-year-long story, I am aware of the exceptions that require to be enumerated. None so saddens me as when I must tell how this fearsome press, imbued with unparalleled liberty, remains one of the most segregated institutions in American life today. Think about those 250 or 300 newsroom professionals about whom we spoke in the beginning. At this very moment 10 percent of them are on one newspaper, *The Washington Post*. It has more than 25 nonwhite newsroom professionals. *The New York Times* has about 20. The Chicago papers probably a dozen or more. In other words, when you take the major metropolitan newspapers out of the 300, you may have 200 nonwhites remaining for the other 1,700 newspapers in the land. And when you consider that the traditional training ground for journalism careers is the small-town newspaper, you can see where this problem begins and where it must be solved, if it is ever to be solved at all.

We in the Summer Program at Berkeley have made the small-town paper our area of special concern for the very reasons I have outlined. And I think we should work as hard and care as much about solving this problem regardless of whether there is ever another round of urban uprisings. We should try to crack this case because the quality of democracy requires that we understand the nature of the society in which we live. I contend, and will contend for as long as I live, that it is impossible for all Americans to understand what they should about each other if only some kinds of Americans get to control the telling of that story. In their gross and angry way, that is what the residents of Watts were trying to articulate when they tipped over the KNXT station wagon and set it afire. If ever there was a symbol of our failure to communicate, that picture says it for me. And I cannot help but believe that if we learn to deal with the lessons of that failure, we may not have to relive that grim history, despite the postulations of that Justice Department task force. In that happy event, we will not have to contemplate the suspension of our liberties to accommodate our shortcomings.

(1) National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism, *Disorders and Terrorism: Report of the Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, December 1976).

The Percy Qoboza Case

As most of our readers will know, Nieman Fellow Percy Qoboza (1975-76), editor of The World and The Weekend World (Johannesburg, South Africa), was imprisoned in the Pretoria government's nationwide crack-down on dissenters on October 19, 1977. His newspapers were also "banned."

A few months earlier, Percy had returned to Cambridge for a dinner reunion with many of his fellow Fellows. After he was jailed in October, his classmates immediately began a campaign of protest, and they are still persevering in their efforts to obtain his release. The Nieman Foundation office has an astonishingly thick and geographically widespread file of editorials and commentary on the Qoboza case — clippings from all over the U.S. and from several countries abroad.

As part of the Nieman Foundation's effort to obtain freedom for Percy Qoboza and free expression for his viewpoint, a delegation of Percy's classmates met in Washington with the South African Ambassador, the Honorable D. B. Sole, on December 2, 1977. At that meeting, Nieman Curator James Thomson read to Mr. Sole a letter that follows. After that meeting, the delegation sent Mr. Sole a letter, whose text is also printed in full below. And we have received a response from the Ambassador, which is also printed in full.

The Editors

December 2, 1977

Honorable Donald B. Sole
South African Embassy
3051 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

As the Curator of a Foundation that has hosted seventeen years of South African journalists of all colors at Harvard University, I am writing to convey our sense of outrage and also despondency about the repressive actions that your Government took against both the Black community and the press this autumn.

Prior to that time, I had still hoped that common

sense and a collective sense of justice could bring your Government and your nation's multiple races to a non-violent and gradual sharing of power and resources in that beautiful land. But after the October repression, I fear the worst: a very violent, if temporarily delayed, solution that will be disastrous for all races and parties. And I say this as someone who has visited South Africa (in 1975), who has a great affection and concern for your country, and who has friends of every color, language, and political persuasion in your nation.

I have made my own views on these matters clear in statements to the press; and I know of the special message that Harvard's President Bok sent to you and Mr. Vorster on the arrest of Nieman Fellow Percy Qoboza. But I have refrained until now from writing to you directly.

I write at this point to try to emphasize something that your Embassy and Government may not yet perceive. That is that your Government's October repression has had an impact on American views of South Africa that is not merely "Eastern-seaboard" but national, and, I fear, permanent among opinion-leaders.

What has happened not only in Washington but also in the heartland of America since October is a turning point of which you and your Government should be aware. Let me offer some evidence.

On the attached sheets [see below] you will see a listing of editorials, columns, and other commentaries that have appeared throughout our nation's press on the Qoboza-World case over the past six weeks. They represent an extraordinarily wide spectrum of American geography and opinion: newspapers in a dozen states and Canada, including California, the District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Many of these articles have also been carried on wire services (*New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, Knight-Ridder, etc.) and have thereby been distributed to scores of other papers in many other states.

The attached list also cites major articles in five national and international magazines, also the one-hour special documentary on Qoboza that was shown on public television. (It does not include, of course, the extensive news coverage also provided by the three major television networks.) Finally, it includes copies of some of the

statements issued by relevant institutions and individuals in behalf of Qoboza and *The World*.

To document these listings, I am herewith providing you as well with copies of each of the articles and messages cited. I respectfully and urgently request that you convey this compilation to your Prime Minister and his Cabinet, and especially to your Foreign Minister and Minister of Justice. It is to me convincing and deeply moving evidence of the widespread feeling among

Americans that grave injustice has been done to Percy Qoboza and to press freedom in the Republic of South Africa.

Sincerely yours,

James C. Thomson Jr., Ph.D.
Curator
Nieman Foundation

Enclosures

PERCY QOBOZA: Clippings and Other Coverage

NEWSPAPERS

Editorials*

The Baltimore Sun — October 20, 1977
The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer — October 21, 1977
The (Portland) Oregonian — October 21, 1977
The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune — October 21, 1977
The Miami Herald — October 21, 1977
The (Montana) Missoulian — October 31, 1977

Commentaries

Dallas Morning News — October 30, 1977
(by Dave McNeely)
The (Montana) Missoulian — October 26, 1977
(by Dale Burk)
The Los Angeles Times — October 28, 1977
(by Robert Gillette)
The Boston Evening Globe — October 21, 1977
(by Ron Javers, from Philadelphia Daily News, Knight-Ridder Newspapers)
The Washington Star — October 21, 1977
(by Anthony Lewis, syndicated columnist, The New York Times)
The Harvard Crimson — October 25, 1977
(by Francis J. Connolly)
Philadelphia Inquirer — October 23, 1977
(by John Corr)
The Boston Globe — October 21, 1977
(by James C. Thomson Jr.)
The (Montreal) Gazette — October 28, 1977
(by Dorothy Chenier)
The Miami Herald — October 20, 1977
(by Arnold Markowitz, Knight-Ridder Newspapers)
The Chicago Tribune — October 21, 1977
(by Barbara Reynolds)
The San Francisco Chronicle — October 29, 1977
(by Maggie Scarf)

MAGAZINES & TELEVISION

The New Republic — November 12, 1977 (editorial)
The New Yorker — November 28, 1977 (editorial)
The Nation — November 5, 1977 (by Leonard Silk)
IPI Report (International Press Institute) — November 1977
Newsweek — October 31, 1977 (by Lester Sloan)
"South Africa: The Riot That Won't Stop" — national PBS, broadcast November 19, 1977, over Channel 2, Boston

STATEMENTS

American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) — October 20, 1977
Derek Bok, President, Harvard University, October 24, 1977
James C. Thomson Jr., Curator, Nieman Foundation, October 19, 1977
Gunter Haaf, Nieman Fellow '76, Science editor, Die Zeit, Hamburg, Germany, October 20, 1977

MESSAGES BY WIRE

Nieman Fellows, Class of 1976, to the Honorable D. B. Sole — October 20, 1977
Gene Carlson, Asian Wall Street Journal, Hong Kong, and Yoichi Funabashi, Asahi Shimbun, Tokyo, Japan (Nieman Fellows '76) to Peter Behr, Baltimore Sun, Nieman Fellow '76, in Washington, D.C. — October 19, 1977
Derek C. Bok, President, Harvard University to the Honorable Cyrus Vance — October 24, 1977
Derek C. Bok to South Africa Prime Minister Vorster — October 24, 1977
Derek C. Bok to the Honorable D. B. Sole — October 24, 1977

*Not included are editorials in The New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Los Angeles Times, and other "national" newspapers.

December 7, 1977

Honorable Donald B. Sole
South African Embassy
3051 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

As representatives of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism, Harvard University, and of the Nieman Fellowship Class of 1975-76, we are grateful to you for meeting with us at your Embassy on Friday morning, December 2nd. We appreciated your giving a full hour of your time to that discussion.

As you know, we asked to see you because of our deep concern, first, regarding the continued imprisonment of our close friend and colleague, Percy Qoboza, a Nieman Fellow in 1975-76, and second, regarding the ominous implications for press freedom in South Africa that arise from the jailing and banning of several journalists and the banning of the Daily and Weekend World newspapers.

We wanted your Government to know that concern and outrage on both matters are widespread and continuing throughout our nation and, unless soon defused by your Government's actions, will do irreparable harm to United States-South Africa relations. Some of the evidence for our assessment was contained in Mr. Thomson's letter to you of December 2nd, delivered to you at that meeting, and the nationwide press clippings that accompanied it.

Although we found ourselves in disagreement with much of what you and your associate, Mr. Noffke, said in defense of your Government's policies, we were grateful for the several assurances and suggestions you were able to offer our delegation:

First, we welcome your "personal assurance" about the safety and physical well-being of Percy Qoboza during his imprisonment.

Second, we welcome your assurance that fully adequate medical care will be provided to Mr. Qoboza during his imprisonment (despite, as you yourself noted, the disturbing evidence to the contrary presented on this subject during the Biko inquest).

Third, we welcome your personal agreement with us that Mr. Qoboza is not, in fact, a Communist or Marxist revolutionary and thereby is not a threat to your State.

Fourth, we accept your thoughtful offer to have Nieman Fellows and the Nieman Foundation communicate

directly with Mr. Qoboza through letters sent in your care and forwarded in your Embassy's diplomatic bag to him in the prison where he is incarcerated.

Fifth, we accept your offer that we communicate through you and your Embassy's bag our views on the Qoboza-World case to the Review Committee set up to look into the October detentions.

And finally, we fervently hope that you are correct in your assurance that the Qoboza case will be reviewed within three-to-six months. But we urgently suggest that that review be scheduled much sooner since, in our view, Mr. Qoboza's imprisonment, without formal charges or trial, is a travesty of "justice" as that term is understood in the civilized world in which South Africa claims membership.

Simultaneous with this letter, we are sending copies of it, through your volunteered good offices, to Percy Qoboza and to his wife, Anne. We will also be attaching a copy of this letter to the formal statement we will shortly be addressing to the Review Committee. Finally, we are sending a copy of this letter to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Mr. Richard Moose, so that he will be fully informed of our concern and our efforts on this matter.

In closing, we cannot refrain from noting that your cordial reception of our delegation, and your kind reassurances to us, were severely undermined later on the very day of our visit by the Pretoria magistrate's decision in the Biko case. We must inevitably now wonder how, in fact, a person of your obvious integrity and goodwill can give us any meaningful assurance about the safety and physical well-being of any Black South African held in your prisons. In view of the Biko revelations and outcome, it is more urgent than ever that your Government release Percy Qoboza, permit him to work as a journalist, permit his newspapers to be published, and move toward conciliation with the vast Black majority of your nation's citizens.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Behr, Nieman Fellow 1976
Ron Javers, Nieman Fellow 1976
Jim Rubin, Nieman Fellow 1976
Ray White, Nieman Fellow 1976
James C. Thomson Jr., Ph.D.
Curator
Nieman Foundation for Journalism

Embassy of South Africa
Ambassade Van Suid-Afrika
Washington, D. C. 20008

13 December 1977

Dr. James C. Thomson, Jr.
Curator,
Nieman Foundation for Journalism
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Dear Dr. Thomson,

Thank you for your letter of 7 December about our discussion of Percy Qoboza's detention, received only today.

Two points:

1. I said that on the evidence at my disposal I would not regard Qoboza as a Communist or Marxist revolutionary. I did not express any opinion on whether or not he or his activities constituted a threat to the state — since the evidence which led to his detention is not at my disposal.

2. Because of the differences between the South African and U.S. legal systems with respect to the limitations of a coroner's inquest, the United States press has presented a very distorted picture of the precise nature of the magistrate's findings in the Biko inquest. Sir David Napley, Past President of the British Law Society, who attended the inquest as an independent observer, while severely critical of the actions of many of the witnesses giving evidence, had this to say *inter alia* about the inquest and its presiding officer (*vide London Times* of December 9).

"Upon my arrival in South Africa I was virtually unfamiliar with both the law and procedure of the South African legal system. It follows that in observing the inquest I had, of necessity, to use as the yardstick against which to base my opinion, my experience of the English legal system over the last 45 years....

"I was concerned whether the inquest was conducted with thoroughness and fairness. I am abundantly satisfied that in so far as the South African Government was concerned, the fullest possible inquiry was facilitated from the moment that the inquest began.

"...However, it was evident to me that the chief magistrate was concerned to ensure that the inquiry extended over every relative facet. Indeed, there were some aspects of which it may be said that far more time was devoted to it than was justified.

"I am in full accord with the findings of the magistrate that Mr. Biko died as a result of the head injury associated with extensive brain damage and resulting complications. I also wholly accept that on the evidence adduced before the magistrate he had no alternative but to find in relation to the verdicts open to him under Section 16 of the Inquests Act that he could not, on the evidence available, determine that death was brought about by an act or omission involving an offence on the part of any person, i.e., any particular person. On the principle that in an Act the singular also includes the plural, this would also be true in respect of any particular persons.

"I do not, however, apprehend on a strict reading of Section 16 that it would have been irregular for the magistrate to have found that the death was caused by one or more of a group of persons without specifying such persons with particularity. In my opinion, however, he was demonstrably wrong in adding the rider that the head injuries which resulted in death, were probably sustained in a 'scuffle' with the police at police headquarters."

I would add that as the papers in the case have been referred to the Attorney General and as a civil action is also pending, it would be improper for me, under the sub judice rule which is applied strictly in South Africa, to comment further.

Yours sincerely,

D.B. SOLE
Ambassador

Letters

SOUTH AFRICA

To the Editor:

Re: "African Nemesis?" (Nieman Reports, summer/autumn 1977)

As one who has spent a great deal more time trucking around Africa than my family really thought was necessary, I have a special appreciation for your editorial phrase, "a deep sense of hopelessness." Somehow, it always comes to that when one writes about South Africa. I would also add that as a journalist, I feel "a deep sense of helplessness" in attempting to explain the bewildering complexities of — Alan Paton's term is the only fitting one — "the beloved country."

By odd coincidence I happened to be with Paton — he was on a lecture tour and happened to be in this neck of the woods — when Qoboza and Woods and the others were banned. I have never seen a more despairing man. Only a few weeks earlier, also by coincidence, we happened to have Philip Mtimkulu, who apparently is the chief officer of the black journalists organization of South Africa, in town for a couple of days and he seemed to believe that matters were headed precisely to where they came. I have an uneasy feeling that he may now be among the banned.

The only disagreement I find with your obviously deeply-felt editorial is that there has not really been a chance [for change] over the past three decades. In fact, I would argue that Vorster is a flexible and pragmatic man, measured by South African standards, and especially measured by the standards of an intellectual fanatic like Verwoerd, who is now in the

process of being canonized politically if not spiritually. You would not believe the kind of attack Vorster has endured from the far right of the Afrikaners — the Broederbond, as their Ku Klux Klan is called, I believe. I think he really wanted to do the right thing but, as you said, there is "a deep sense of hopelessness," and its implications, I fear, are far graver than the public generally suspects and certainly far broader than just South Africa.

You do good work with Nieman Reports; it is always a joy to read.

Ray Jenkins
Nieman Fellow '65

(Mr. Jenkins is Editor of the Editorial Page, Montgomery Advertiser, Montgomery, Alabama.)

DOCTOROW'S "TRUTH?"

To the Editor:

I was fascinated by that colloquy with Mr. Doctorow (Nieman Reports, summer/autumn 1977) (I kept waiting for someone to call him Dr. Misterow) on whether *Ragtime's* kind of imaginary history may not have a truth superior to "fact." It's the kind of thing that makes the Fellowships, and especially Nieman Reports, so valuable.

The mind reels in trying to get a mariner's fix on what to steer by when Doctorow makes that always elusive concept of Truth even more so. Tony Lukas put his finger on the problem, for journalists, when he commented: "I don't at all mean that journalists ought to be writing fiction, but I think there is a serious question about what

reality is. There were, in the 60's, let me tell you, real differences between people on American papers about what reality was..." And not only, I might add, in the 60's.

I find myself wondering, for example, whether the monumental \$100 million FBI building in Washington would still be named the J. Edgar Hoover Building (or even built) if the American press, from the 1930's on, had ever told the "truth" about Hoover. Starting with the killings of Dillinger and Pretty Boy Floyd, the press itself began a myth-building ("The FBI always gets its man") which in time enshrined J. Edgar Hoover into a hagiography beyond mortal question or criticism.

Not one Attorney General dared to treat him as what, legally, he was, merely one of many subordinate department heads. Nor did Congress ever dare to commit the sacrilege of questioning his constantly inflating budgets, or face the question of whether it is even possible to measure the efficiency of any department of government which manages to put itself beyond audit or even examination. By the shrewd mastery and manipulation of publicity, Hoover pumped himself into such a national hero that it became impossible to separate fact from fantasy. And virtually every publisher in the United States, for no more valid reason than getting on a "Dear Edgar" basis with this Gargantua, abetted the inflation without ever stopping to ask a seemingly self-evident question: "Isn't a democracy that idolizes the head of its secret police itself in danger?"

Time, where I then worked, circa

1950 stated the essential question in its caption on a cover story on Beria: "In a Police State, the Eye at the Keyhole is King." Shortly afterward, when it did a cover on Hoover — accepting the, by now, unassailable myth — it did not dream of asking the same question, though Joe McCarthy, eagerly abetted by Hoover, was already plunging the U.S. into years of a police-state mentality.

When I learned that Ed Cerf was doing this cover, I wrote him a 15-odd-page memo citing facts from my own long reportorial experience proving, to my own satisfaction at least, that Hoover was, among other things, incompetent, a self-evident fraud, and totally evading the nation's single biggest menace, organized crime (the heart of the shame of our cities), and suggesting that the famed efficiency of Britain's MI-5 might have some direct connection with the fact that its head was a man of total anonymity. Cerf's response: "I plan to treat Hoover as what he seems to me to be, a very useful citizen."

Some years later, when Hoover's "Masters of Deceit" portrayed domestic Communist conspiracies befitting only some Hollywood B-scenario, virtually every newspaper's review obediently praised it into immediate best-sellerdom, except Leslie Hanscomb of the *World-Telegram* who appropriately demolished it. When I saw Hanscomb at the Coffee House lunch table, I complimented him, and, as a Scripps-Howard alumnus, asked him: "How did Roy Howard like your review?" Said Hanscomb: "He sent me a note saying, 'Just because you strike out once doesn't mean you're out of the ball game.'"

A few days after I joined the *Herald Tribune* editorial page in 1957, the Mafia dons of America, as well as emissaries from Cuba and Italy, held their famous congress of crime at Apalachin, New York. They were accidentally flushed by a state trooper

puzzled by the sudden convergence of so many sleek Cadillacs outside Joseph Barbara's mountain hideaway. In a series of editorials I pounded at the implications of this convention of what I termed "The Invisible Government." A good many of these gangsters carried pistol permits from the very police departments in league with them. Not one was under FBI surveillance; Hoover himself had repeatedly denied the very existence of a Mafia network.

I pointed out that the worst possible thing was for the convention to be broken up, that if Hoover had been on his toes it would have gone undisturbed and all of its discussions and decisions learned, and that if Hoover lacked the power to accomplish this,

It has come to our attention that Mr. Miller's byline appeared under the lead article — "What's Wrong with the Newspaper Reader" — in Volume I, Number 1 of Nieman Reports, February, 1947. Now retired, he was on the staff of Newsweek at that time.

Congress should give him the power forthwith. Editor Ogden R. Reid, who had hired me, praised these editorials, but a few days later, presumably after Hoover had called him (he had long been on a "Dear Edgar" basis), Reid told me:

"Keep pounding away at the Mafia, but leave out the suggestion that Hoover be given the power to go after it."

"Why so?" I asked.

Reid: "He doesn't want it."

(In justice to Reid, I must add that later, as a Congressman, he distinguished himself as a challenger of such organized murder as the CIA's Operation Phoenix, and as a backer of that Freedom of Information Act which at long last opened the FBI's dossiers to individuals who had incurred its scrutiny.)

So, pursuing Tony Lukas' observation, where did "reality" lie in all this, and who was the true master of deceit?

In the colloquy, Papaleo discusses his present effort to make a fictional truth out of Sacco and Vanzetti. That will be especially interesting, since it seems to me people with the passion to tackle such subjects may be unable to handle a truth that may be a half-truth.

Most writers now assume, I suppose (as Gov. Dukakis implicitly did in retroactively declaring their trial unfair), the innocence of both men. Yet someone wrote a very persuasive analysis of the case a decade or so ago with fairly convincing evidence that Sacco may have been guilty but Vanzetti not.

And where is the author who can fictionalize a "truth" out of the Hiss-Chambers case? Having known Chambers at Time and finding him an exquisite writer but rather paranoid and not a particularly likeable person, I was nevertheless sure that he told the truth about Hiss. At that time I often rode the train from Chappaqua with Hanson Baldwin, who between Hiss's trials, asked me: "You work for Time, don't you?" When I said yes, he asked, "Know Chambers?" When I again said yes, he asked, "Do you think he is telling the truth?"

When I said I did, Baldwin observed:

"I grew up with Hiss in Baltimore. When we were 10 years old or so we used to go to the park, collect bottles of water, and sell them to picnickers for 10 cents a bottle. I never really liked him, because he was sort of a sissy. But later, when he was in the State Department, if I attended one — I attended dozens — of his briefings where he was merciless in his dissection of the Soviets and their intentions. If he's a Communist agent, I'm Santa Claus."

Then came the discovery of the Woodstock typewriter, and the second

trial and conviction. Next time I saw Baldwin I asked, "Are you still convinced of Hiss's innocence?" He merely shook his head from side to side and went back to his paper.

It seemed to me then, and now, that many liberals, including journalists, transferred their acute dislike of Luce and Time (hence Chambers), into a conviction of Hiss's innocence, despite the obvious *non sequitur*. I once spent a couple of hours at Bleeck's bar under the Trib vainly trying to shake my good friend Joe Liebling's total conviction that Hiss was framed.

Well, I was at Time that Sunday — we worked both Saturdays and Sundays — when Publisher Jim Linen's heels came pounding down the hall as he demanded, and got, from the Managing Editor, Chambers' dismissal. Chambers had told Luce at the outset that he had been an important Communist, but not until Hiss sued him for libel did Chambers, goaded by the prospect of great financial damage, go to that long-ago sealed dumbwaiter in Brooklyn and dig out the actual negatives of the government documents Hiss had photographed in his basement — the ones Chambers later hid in his pumpkin.

To me, the question was never more difficult than to ask why, in God's name, would Chambers — secure in a (then) princely salary of \$35,000 a year and a trusted confidant of Luce's — expose himself for the first time as having been, not merely a Communist, but a *courier* for a Soviet spy ring, thus get himself fired, and be forced to live thereafter on a sharply reduced scale of life, simply to injure unjustly a friend of his youth?

The untold part of the story is surely a more complex relationship. Only after Chambers' death did the opening of FBI files reveal his confidential admission of homosexuality. By accident years ago, I saw Hiss, after his release, running up the street like mad to greet, in a falsetto voice, an

attractive young man waiting for him outside "Sunrise at Campobello." Unobserved, listening to both I had little doubt Hiss was also of that company. So we can repeat, with a jesting Pilate, "What is truth?" And what, as Tony Lukas asks, was reality?

William J. Miller
Truro, Mass. *Nieman Fellow '41*

THE WALTER LIPPMANN MEMORIAL FUND

The Walter Lippmann Memorial Fund drive was officially launched on September 15, 1977, when President Derek C. Bok of Harvard University announced a grant of \$100,000 to the Nieman Foundation for Journalism in memory of Walter Lippmann, Harvard 1910. That grant, to be matched by external donations, was made to help inaugurate a fund drive for the renovation and endowment of a new Nieman headquarters in an 1836 Cambridge landmark, called Walter Lippmann House. This fund drive seeks a goal of \$400,000, beyond the original grant, in order to endow fully Lippmann House. (See *Nieman Reports*, summer/autumn 1977.)

Readers who wish to join their colleagues and participate in this memorial to Walter Lippmann are invited to make checks payable to: Nieman Foundation, Walter Lippmann Memorial Fund, One Francis Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. Contributions are tax deductible.

Already response from the media and Nieman alumni/ae has been encouraging. Comments from some of their letters follow.

I do think the idea of a permanent Nieman home dedicated to the memory of Walter Lippmann is splendid!

Francis P. Locke
Nieman Fellow '47
Riverside, California

Enclosed is a check from the Boston Herald American toward the Walter Lippmann Memorial Fund. We are more than pleased to join you in this worthwhile endeavor.

Robert C. Bergenheim, Publisher
The Boston Herald American
Nieman Fellow '54

It is our pleasure to help support this memorial to Mr. Lippmann and we wish you every success in achieving your campaign goal.

Charles R. Redmond, Secretary
Times Mirror Foundation
Los Angeles

I can think of no more fitting way of paying tribute to Walter Lippmann, and am most grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to participate in this initiative... I would like very much to make a special gift in his memory.

David Rockefeller
New York City

I am delighted to tell you that the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company will pledge... Best wishes for a successful fund-raising campaign.

David Kruidenier
President and Publisher

It is a splendid enterprise and I am truly delighted that you are going to have One Francis Avenue. It sounds like the sort of a promotion that cannot fail.

Professor Frank Freidel
Department of History
Harvard University

We are pleased to be able to participate in this very worthwhile project and wish you well in your fund-raising efforts.

Charles T. Brumback, President
Sentinel Star
Orlando, Florida

I am happy that this newspaper can play a small part in this very worthwhile endeavor. Please keep us posted on the results of what I know will be a successful drive.

*C. Gordon Bell, President
The Gardner News
Gardner, Massachusetts*

We wish you success in this worthy effort.

*Richard G. Capen, Jr.
Senior Vice President - Operations
Copley Newspapers
La Jolla, California*

I take pleasure in enclosing The Sun's cheque as a contribution to this worthwhile endeavour.

*Stuart Keate, Publisher
The Vancouver Sun*

The memorial you have planned to honor Walter Lippmann by providing new headquarters for the Nieman Foundation strikes us as being particularly appropriate. We are pleased to participate.

*Lloyd S. Combs
Business Manager
The Daily Pantagraph
Bloomington, Illinois*

The quality and ideals which Walter Lippmann brought to the field of journalism have given us the base upon which to build. This contribution is a way of thanking him, and seeing that we keep the construction going.

*Professor Jerome Aumante NF '68
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey*

The signers of the appeal state that Walter Lippmann was "one of the great Americans of the century." I agree with this statement. His books

were masterly, and as a newspaper commentator he had no peer. He ought to have been United States Secretary of State on a permanent basis.

*Corliss Lamont
Harvard Class of 1924
New York City*

Our papers certainly want to take part in this worthwhile enterprise in memory of Walter Lippmann.

*Barry Bingham, Sr.
Chairman of the Board
The Courier-Journal
The Louisville Times
Louisville, Kentucky*

Enclosed is a check with the very best wishes of Mr. Knight and the other Trustees of Knight Foundation for this important venture.

*C. Colmery Gibson
Acting Manager
Knight Foundation
Akron, Ohio*

Walter Lippmann was a man of far-reaching influence in the shaping of American opinion and public policy over more than half a century. He single-handedly raised the standards of journalistic commentary — part of the original Nieman mission.

*Derek C. Bok, President
Harvard University*

I think the idea for a Walter Lippmann House is one of the best ideas to emerge from the Yard in quite awhile. As long as I live, I'll rank my Nieman Fellowship as one of the luckiest and most valuable occurrences of my life.

*Sanford L. Cooper
Nieman Fellow '42
Holmes Beach, Florida*

An Open Letter to Niemans

The following is a communication of great importance to the Nieman Foundation and its alumni/ae. We hope that all Nieman Fellows will be responsive to Professor Aumante's inquiry.
The Editors.

February 17, 1978

To Nieman colleagues:

I have to measure the moon. Or, put another way, how can I drive a measuring rod deep into the layers of Harvard University's "dubious experiment" and come up with something more than brittle statistics about the general shape and content of the Nieman program?

To understand the moon better, I could call upon everything from light meters and telescopes, to mathematical measurements or even a lunar landing — if I had the budget. But there is still much beyond the "facts" concerning the earth's only known satellite and its ability to bounce sunlight off its 2,160 miles of girth and send the light 238,857 miles to our planet. For example, one can easily miss the magic of moonlight, the effect it has on the ebb and flow of ocean tides, the inspiration it gives to poets, or even its alleged effect on lunatics.

In a sense, the Nieman Foundation has acted in a moon-like way ever since its beginnings in 1937. It is an excellent mechanism for bouncing Harvard's collective illumination back to earth (the cliché is "real world"). The small but select group of 600 or so Nieman Fellows, honored by selection since the program began four decades ago, has had a significant effect on the

currents of thought in the field of print and broadcast journalism.

Former Nieman Fellows are deeply involved in specialized resource programs for the print and broadcast profession. For example, Harry Press directs a fellowship program at Stanford University, and Ben Yablonky heads the University of Michigan program. Julius Duschka directs the Washington Journalism Center. George Chaplin was a driving force behind establishment of fellowship programs for professional journalists at East-West Center's Institute of Communication and the University of Hawaii. Bob Maynard heads a program for minority journalists at the University of California, formerly administered at Columbia University, where yet another Nieman, Mel Mencher was involved. This is just a brief sampling — by no means a complete list.

Many of the above programs can trace their inspiration to the Nieman program. I myself have directed a training program for minority journalists at Rutgers University, and a resources institute we plan to establish at the university will draw from the Nieman experience. At Harvard itself, the Nieman program has inspired such programs as the Institute of Politics Fellows at the Kennedy School of Government; the Trade Union program; the Loeb Fellows in the School of Design, and the fellowship program at the Center for Criminal Justice in the Law School. The administrators here at the Nieman Foundation receive a steady flow of requests for information from around the nation asking for advice on how the fellowship approach can be adapted to other specialized areas, from corporate life to law enforcement.

But the real challenge in chronicling the Nieman program is to break beyond the entertaining and rich anecdotes which have built up like a coral reef over the years, and probe

the deeper waters of its history and effects. While anecdotes form a rich folklore and deserve a high place in any chronicle, what may be of more value is the careful reflection of those who have been in the program as administrators, participants, resource people, or friends.

This message to my Nieman colleagues is an introduction to a project that I hope will capture some of the shape, content and inspirational effects, both human and intellectual, of the Nieman years. To do it, I need your help.

First, some personal background. I was in the 1968 Nieman class and did most of my work in urban and metropolitan studies. At the time I was urban affairs writer for the *Detroit News* and had worked previously for newspapers in the United States and Europe.

Now I am a professor on the faculty of Rutgers University, where I founded the Department of Journalism and Urban Communications at Livingston College and am chairman. I continue to write newspaper and magazine pieces and have published a book. In addition, I direct the Urban Communications Teaching and Research Center at Rutgers, which has undertaken a number of applied communication projects in the development of community communications centers, the training of minority journalists, environmental documentation techniques, health and social service communications, and assistance to municipalities and non-profit groups in creating CATV and video systems.

Over the years I have become increasingly interested in the idea of universities as places to provide resources and special assistance to the print and broadcast media. During my current leave from Rutgers I have visited a number of such programs and interviewed their administrators and participants.

While visiting Cambridge last

summer to begin a review of the Nieman program, I sensed the development of a special "serendipity," as Jim Thomson described it. Originally I had planned to do a short site visit and a few interviews at Harvard. But in talks with Jim and with Tenney Lehman, it became clear that there was much, much more worth looking into.

Next, some Nieman background. At the time of my visit, plans were being considered for the Nieman Foundation's move from crowded quarters at 48 Trowbridge Street to the spacious 1836 landmark at One Francis Avenue, now the new Walter Lippmann House and the foundation's official headquarters.

For the first time the Nieman archives, including early applications, commentaries, reports and other uncatalogued material, are finally in a space that makes them accessible for a careful review. Jim Thomson suggested that my background as journalist, Nieman Fellow, teacher, and administrator, added to my current interest in professional study programs for journalists, offered the Nieman Foundation a unique opportunity to look closely at its history.

Professor David Riesman, a long-time faculty friend of the Nieman program, has been most generous with his counsel and interest ever since my Nieman days in 1967-68, and his current guidance formed an important factor in my decision to accept Jim Thomson's offer to undertake the project of researching special aspects of the Nieman program.

As to the cost, I should explain that the Ford Foundation and Rutgers University are providing financing. I was pleased that David Davis of the Ford Foundation agreed that an expanded look at the Nieman program was worthwhile. You will recall that it was a matching grant of \$1.2 million from the Ford Foundation which enabled the Nieman Foundation to

launch its three-year, successful fund raising effort in 1964. For its part in the present enterprise, the Nieman Foundation is giving me only office space; there is no exchange of funds.

In correspondence preliminary to my temporary move to Cambridge, Professor Riesman suggested a number of reasons why a careful look at the Nieman program is important. He believes that journalists have a lot to bring to the university as well as what they can take away from it — and a close look at just how this interplay occurs has many implications. For one thing, it will tell us something about the whole process of advanced study for mature professionals who return for post-graduate work in an academic setting largely populated by recent high school graduates. It will also tell us something about the ways that universities can extend their resources beyond the traditional entry paths, and have some salutary effect on the output of the mass media.

Far more difficult is the "value added" measurement which Professor Riesman cautions is so difficult to fathom. In any interviews with journalists during or shortly after they complete a special study program, they can point to things they liked and disliked. But the whole experience is still cooking.

In recent months, I have interviewed a number of journalists who were either in the middle of a special study program, or had just completed one. I have talked with others who were in programs many years ago. I am also sounding out publishers, broadcasters, and a variety of editors, on what they would like to see in such programs.

I learned that some people returned to their newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations with knowledge and analytical tools they would immediately apply to their work. Others found that the effect upon them was subtle and required the reach of time and new experiences for full

understanding. Most were wise enough to realize the effects were both immediate and long-range.

Here is how Nieman Fellows can help:

(1) In the coming months, you will be receiving a questionnaire which will provide me with important information on what you proposed to do at Harvard, what you did, and what short and longer term effects it had on your work and your personal lives. Just this once, fill it in and mail it back.

(2) In the interim, I would be extremely interested in hearing from you by mail here at the Nieman Foundation. Could you suggest people I might talk with on the Harvard faculty who had a particularly important effect on you or your work? *More importantly*, would you reflect on the central question of how the Nieman experience affected you and your work.

Specifically:

What was your educational and journalistic background before you came to Harvard? What did you propose to study here? What did you study here? How did you cope with the whole experience? What were the unanticipated benefits, or liabilities? How did you re-enter the atmosphere of your own working environment after wandering the lecture halls, faculty offices and library stalls of the university? What were the short and long-range effects on your work, your ideas, your personal and professional growth? How might universities act as continuing resources for print and broadcast journalists? What open-ended comments can you make about the whole encounter between the journalistic world and the academic world as it relates to upgrading the quality of print and broadcast journalism?

I will be grateful for the return of the questionnaire when it arrives, and more importantly, any immediate

written comments and suggestions you can share with me now while my study is in-progress, rather than in-concrete, will really help.

Your response will also contribute some informed insights to the debate about the validity of advanced study programs for journalists, whether they should be expanded, and at what levels of support.

It may be the nature of their work, but I have never met an inarticulate Nieman yet, and this is a good opportunity to reflect on such things and sound off to a very interested listener.

I will be mining the archives for clues; reviewing a wide range of materials from applications to evaluations; interviewing many of the principals who were involved in developing, administering and nurturing the Nieman program; and talking with as many present and former Nieman fellows as possible in interviews, and in correspondence. I also want to talk with Harvard faculty who had an effect upon, and themselves were affected by, Nieman fellows.

I intend to share the results of all this with you in the pages of *Nieman Reports*, in other publications concerned with the journalism field, and in a book-length manuscript. The results will also be helpful during my current assignment to design a resources program for professional journalists at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

Thank you for your cooperation. I can harvest statistics by the bushel in looking at the Nieman years, but what I really need is the comment and careful retrospection which your own experiences, before, during and after Harvard can bring to the process of capturing not only the dimensions but also a better understanding of the reflected light.

Jerome Aumente
Nieman Fellow '68

A Growing Controversy

The "Free Flow" of News Among Nations

By John C. Merrill

In this day when news flow among nations is said not to be what it should be, there is at least one kind of information flowing freely: denunciation of Western journalism for alleged inadequate and biased reporting and news dissemination as relates to the so-called Third World — the "developing" or "non-aligned" countries. Largely propelled by UNESCO conferences on the subject, proliferating throughout the world in recent years, a barrage of Third World criticism of Western¹ news practices pounds upon the ear and has become a major theme in communication.

Among the main targets of this criticism are the big international news agencies of the West — AP, UPI, Reuters, and AFP. Quite simply, it seems, the Third World is greatly disturbed over what it sees as the unenlightened, biased, and inadequate

journalistic theory and practice of the capitalistic Western nations — especially the United States.

The Fundamental Issue.

What is the main problem? Why are the Third World nations mounting this vigorous campaign against Western journalistic policies? Actually, the Third World has a whole list of complaints against the Western press, but at present the main target seems to be what is referred to as the "free flow" of news across national boundaries. According to Third World spokesmen, the Western news agencies — especially the AP and UPI — are disrupting this "flow" of news, are distorting the realities of the developing countries, and are basically presenting negative images of the Third World. This is the basic criticism, although there are many others.

The leaders of these developing countries,² both political and journalistic, recognize the great importance of mass communication, the potency of international information dissemination, and the impact of national images on the conduct of foreign relations. They are, justifiably, sensitive to the kind of press treatment they receive. And, by and large, they feel they do not fare well in the Western press — especially in stories from the big news agencies.

Individually, and through the inter-

national forum of UNESCO, these Third World countries are mounting an escalating campaign against Western journalism.³ They seek to eliminate the impediments they see blocking the "free flow" of information throughout the world. In other words, they want to see news flow as freely from the Third World to the Western countries as it flows from the West to the Third World. The big Western news agencies, they say, have a virtual monopoly on news dissemination and fail to provide the world with a realistic picture of what is really happening in the Third World. Too biased, they say. Too heavy on negative news — poverty, illiteracy, riots, revolutions, floods, antics of national leaders, kidnappings, etc. They ask: What about the *good* things that are going on — bridge building, highway construction, new schools, and the like? Why is it that the AP and UPI, and to a lesser degree Reuters and Agence France-Presse, so grossly neglect these aspects of the Third World?

(1) Such terms as "West" and "western journalism" are used in this article to refer to the capitalistic industrialized nations of Western Europe and North America (and Japan); the journalism of this group of nations is contrasted to that of the Third World (developing, non-aligned, new) nations.

(2) This term is often used to describe Third World nations; it is, of course, somewhat fuzzy and even unfair, for there are many kinds of development. *All* countries are developing — and *all* countries are underdeveloped in many areas. What is usually meant by called the Third World "developing," I think, is that these nations are intent on developing technologically, industrially, and economically.

(3) It is indeed strange that the Third World and UNESCO have little or no criticism for the journalism of the Communist world; evidently the "news flow" to and from these countries is satisfactory — balanced and free.

Dr. Merrill, a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Journalism Department for the 1977-78 academic year at California State University, Long Beach, is a specialist in international communication, with a particular interest in the Third World. He has lectured and held seminars in some 50 countries, and has written numerous articles and four books, the most recent being Existential Journalism (Hastings House, 1977).

Basic Conceptual Differences.

Having talked with journalists in some twenty Third World countries in the past four or five years, I have come to the conclusion that what they really mean by "free flow" of news is a "balanced flow." Western journalists mean something else by free flow. In other words, Western newsmen put the emphasis on the *free* and the Third World journalists stress the *flow* — with the main part of this "flow" relating to a desired *balance* or *equality* in the news that moves among nations and parts of the world.

This difference in concept is important, but it is not often stressed in discussions and debates about international communication. Western journalists, for example, have found many (most?) of the Third World nations to be highly restrictive and

Third World countries are mounting an escalating campaign against Western journalism.

secretive societies whose leaders go to great lengths to keep correspondents (and not only foreign ones) at arm's length. Sources in these countries are hard to reach; meetings are closed; leaders are touchy, and the record shows that in recent years foreign journalists have been threatened often with expulsion — and many have been expelled for reporting what in the West would be the most obvious kinds of news events. The Western journalists (including correspondents from the big news agencies) say that if there is a problem with news "flow" it largely rests with the controlled systems in which they are trying to report.

Third World critics, of course, reject this Western perspective (or at least

see it as simplistic); they shift the emphasis from the internal restrictive problems of the nations to the Western news agencies and foreign correspondents who take every opportunity, their story goes, to malign and distort the Third World. So we are constantly told that Western reporters in the Third World are either biased or uninformed (or both), that they are too few, that they are bound by traditional Western news values, that they are blinded to developmental concerns of the Third World, and that they are too warped in their reporting by extreme anti-Communism and by suspicions that the Third World generally is not really "non-aligned."

What the Third World Wants.

So, briefly, what the Third World seems to want from Western journalism is this: 1) a kind of "balanced" flow of news in and out of the Third World; 2) more thorough, incisive, and unbiased news coverage of their countries on a continuing basis, and 3) more emphasis on "good" or positive news of the Third World, including what has come to be called "development" news.

To Western journalists it is naive to expect the world to have a balanced flow of news. News simply does not flow evenly — for example, as much news flowing from South America to Europe as from Europe to South America, or as much flowing from the northern Mexican town of Saltillo to Mexico City as the other way around. Who can really talk of a "balance in news flow" in the real world? Why does the Third World keep asking for such a balance? It is a strange request, indeed. One might as well ask why so much more news flows from New Delhi to Poona than flows from Poona to New Delhi. This unevenness of flow is a basic characteristic of news in any context.

The Third World also wants West-

ern journalism to be "unbiased" and to present news on a "continuing" basis, eliminating the piecemeal, sporadic nature of news coverage. This is, of course, a worthy goal for any journalism, but it is unrealistic in practice. And, certainly the existence of such news does not indicate any Western prejudice against the Third World. News is always piecemeal and biased. In any society, the journalist selects what will be news and fashions it according to his subjective value system; this works within the United States and it works with news agency correspondents who report news internationally. Since journalistic decisions are strained through the journalist's subjectivity, it is safe to say that all news is "biased" in some way — unfaithful to reality and manipulated by journalistic judgement.

Then there is the indictment of Western news agencies for not presenting enough positive or "good" news of the Third World. First, what do the critics mean when they talk of not "enough" news of the Third World? How much is enough, and who is to decide this quantity? As long as the Western agencies are operating in a free-enterprise system and are doing the collecting and transmitting, they are the ones who will make these decisions. It is not reasonable for anyone to think otherwise.

It may well be true that much (or even most) of the news emanating from the Third World has a "negative" character, but this can also be said (and is said) of news flowing within Western countries themselves. Certainly, the news agencies do not seem to play favorites in this respect. It should be noted that this atypical, unusual, and often sensational nature of news is a very basic part of the West's definition of news; therefore it is completely natural for Western journalists to call on such a definition when collecting and sending news from a Third World country.

And What About Third World Editors?

It should be noted at this point that Third World editors who are critical of the West for the above practices and emphases in journalism have basically the same values themselves and do the same things journalistically. In selecting and printing stories they generally agree with the Western concept of news (if they exercise any real freedom of editorial determination) for it is easy to see in their papers reflections of the same negative and sensational news — generally about other (usually Western) countries, of course. I have been told by editors of the Third World that they have to do this because all the news they have is from the Western news agencies. But these editors know full well that they themselves, in assigning local and national news and deciding which of it to put on their pages, generally use the more dramatic, more sensational, more atypical of this material. And they get foreign news from embassies, from some of their own correspondents, from their own national news agencies, and from other sources. If they use the Western news agencies in preference to other sources, it must be that they prefer their news coverage; certainly they do not have to use it — and perhaps should not if they are so convinced that it is of poor quality.

One other thing should be said about the editors of the Third World. However reluctant they are to face it, they bear some responsibility in this whole matter of news flow. For example, the Western agencies send into Libya certain stories about other Third World countries. Surely Libyan editors get more such stories than are used. In fact, Third World editors admit that few of these are used. Why? There are two general answers: 1) the stories are not written to suit the editors, and 2) the readers of the newspapers of the country are simply not interested in such stories from

other Third World countries. So, it seems that Third World editors do not really have a dedication to presenting other Third World news in their papers; they simply want to use this as a stick with which to beat the Western agencies.

Concluding Remarks.

In this article I have tried to show that there is a basic difference between Third World and Western concepts of "free flow of news." The West stresses *media freedom* (or lack of government controls); the Third World stresses a *balanced and unbiased flow* to and from the Third World.

Also, I have suggested that a balanced flow of news in the world is an unrealistic expectation, and that internal restrictions on news in the Third World is an important (and Western) explanation for a paucity of serious and vital news flowing to the West.

It has also been contended in this article that Third World editors themselves place little importance on "development" news and generally use the same news determinants as do Western editors, and that these same Third World editors criticize the Western news agencies for doing exactly what they themselves do in their own countries.

Certainly I have not implied that Western journalism is perfect — far from it. Nor do I believe that Third World editors are unconcerned about improving journalism; I have been impressed by the obvious zeal and dedication of Third World journalists. But we all are concerned about the state of world journalism. It is just that we see the problem from different perspectives. We in the West believe "free flow" will be improved through the general enlarging of freedom throughout the world and the shrinking of governmental strictures on news

collection and transmission. The Third World, on the other hand, sees the "free flow" of news improving when the West comes around to sharing their concern with news balance among nations and to redefining news so as to bring it in line with the news concept which they accept.

This is a tough and complex matter; the differences in concept are not easily reconciled. Undoubtedly we will have this international journalistic problem with us for a very long time — perhaps forever.

Notes

The Nieman Foundation headquarters have moved to:

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Nieman Reports welcomes articles, letters and commentaries on or about journalism. The deadline for submissions for the next issue is April 15.

Lyons on Conant

(Continued from page 2)

these tells more about the character of Conant. Also they make more dramatic telling.

Though his own field was chemistry, and he had become chairman of the department of chemistry before becoming president of the university, he was convinced that an understanding of American history was an essential of education.

When he had been president six years, he persuaded the corporation to provide funds for appointment of a counsellor in American history, to be attached to each of the Harvard houses. His role would be to guide extracurricular reading in history of any students interested. "Practically no one was," he found, and after a two years' trial he reported the plan a failure to the Corporation, and discontinued it.

This practicality runs through Conant's administration, in tandem to Yankee ingenuity in seeking educational improvements.

Conant himself had been a great history reader. His favorite period was the Cromwellian, when the Phoenix-like revival of the English universities, after their faculties had been purged by both Royalists and Roundheads, demonstrated, he felt, the survival power of universities.

He had been stimulated by the history of science, in a course taught by Professor Theodore Richards, Harvard's most famous chemist, who was to become his father-in-law. As president, Conant discussed the subject often with George Sarton who also made it a vital course.

Conant initiated the new General Education program with a course of his

own that he called the "Tactics and Strategy of Science."

He developed his own tactics and strategy in his on-the-job training as a young university president.

He had held unorthodox political views as a young scientist. An article, "Wanted — an American Radical" that he published as late as ten years into his presidency, came back to haunt him at the Senate hearing on his confirmation as an ambassador.

When I suggested in an article in Nieman Reports, that he dropped such views when he had to raise money

This practicality runs through Conant's administration, in tandem to Yankee ingenuity in seeking educational improvements.

from the rich, Conant wrote from the ambassador's desk in Germany to correct me. He dropped them *only* because they didn't work, and he was not interested in promoting failures. His sense of humor, as was said of Eliot's, was unreliable.

I admired the style of his honorary degree citations at Commencement — succinct, often lyrical — that compressed a eulogy in a sentence. Once I ventured to ask if he wrote them all himself, which seemed an impossibility. His wife helped him on some, he said. Of course she helped him on everything and was a most gracious influence in the university. But to imply that he depended wholly on the talent in the family for this ceremonial was simply to end conversation.

Another disappointment was a

hope to develop closer relations between the social studies departments and the business school, feeling that their faculties should have an effective influence on each other. But the Charles River proved too wide. In retrospect, he admitted that nothing much came of this idea.

The need of wartime economy offered a chance to merge Harvard and Radcliffe classes — a long delayed reform. Radcliffe had had to negotiate with Harvard professors to repeat their courses as moonlight work. The agreement of the two presidents on this fended off predictable alumni protest with the bland statement that this did *not* make either college a coeducational institution.

It took him two years to overcome resistance of his governing boards to admitting women to the medical school. On his second recommendation to the Overseers he stated bluntly that a second veto would force him to make a public statement of responsibility for rejecting the petition of the medical faculty. This was 1944.

But it was another three years before he could be persuaded to open Nieman Fellowships to women. His response to my first proposal was, "Why, you serve whiskey at Nieman dinners, don't you?" and when he yielded, it was with the warning, "The blood be on your own head."

He was an effective "No" man. He particularly enjoyed using a gimmick alumni had given him, a crystal ball, that he kept on his desk. When any dubious project was presented to him, he would say, "Let's look into the crystal ball." It had "no" painted on the bottom.

He rejected proposals to set up an office of vice president for publicity and development, which had become fashionable in the college world.

"All the public relations in the world won't cover up poor policy," Conant said, "and if policy is sound, publicity is superfluous."

But he recognized that a university makes news which should be professionally handled. So after he returned from the atom bomb production, and I had become a full member of the Harvard staff, he raised the question of recruiting an adequate news officer. William Pinkerton, who'd been an early Nieman Fellow (class of '41), was persuaded to leave his Washington news job for Harvard. For a time, I did some backstopping of the news office and consequently joined him on summonses to the President's office.

Conant had a chemist's view of the press. "The thing is to make sure there are no headlines in it," he admonished me, on asking me to read over a speech. He wrote his own speeches. He worked in his den at home till 10:30 in the morning. His "secret weapon" he called this guarded time.

Before he set out on a round of alumni meetings, he had Pinkerton and me in to go over two speeches that he passed us. "But you are making three speeches?" Pinkerton asked. "Well, one is off-the-record," Conant explained.

"How large an audience?" Pinkerton asked.

"About 700."

Pinkerton burst out laughing at the notion of an off-the-record speech to an audience of 700.

"Well if you fellows are so smart," Conant said, "suppose you take these two speeches and merge them into a third." That was as close as I knew him to come to taking a ready-made speech.

He outsmarted us on one occasion. The University of Virginia asked for an advance copy of a speech he was to give there. But Conant wanted to keep it under wraps, for he had another speech to make in Boston immediately after. This was important to him. He was pressing the case of the public school, which he called "the

cement of democracy," and urging against public funds for parochial or private schools. So he suggested Pinkerton take his time about sending the manuscript to Virginia. They perhaps might not get it out in time for the press, and it would still be fresh in Boston next week. Again we laughed at his hide-and-seek game with the press. We watched the papers while he was away. No sign. When he came back he had on that cat-like grin. He'd got away with it. The day after he made the speech in Boston, headlines broke out with "Conant Sees Peril to U.S. Education" — "Dual System of Education Hurts U.S. Democracy, Conant Says."

He'd made his point. His private school friends were surprised as well as shocked. The issue of public

Conant's unwillingness to be associated with failures affected some Harvard institutions.

support of parochial schools was not new.

But Conant argued that "multiplication of private schools, whether church-connected or not, was not in the best interest of the nation's future. The introduction of one or more private schools in any given locality, alongside a comprehensive public school, tended to weaken the unity of the community."

Conant's unwillingness to be associated with failures affected some Harvard institutions. The Divinity School, the Graduate School of Education, and the University Press had all fallen on thin times. He had little patience with the financial problems of the press, nor with the Divinity School, after he failed to persuade Reinhold Niebuhr to take it on.

But he felt strongly that the training of teachers in America was disgraceful and laid much responsibility for this to the influence of Teachers College at Columbia. He admitted a prejudice about professors of education. Harvard's school was old-fashioned, seemed chiefly used for teachers to gain credits toward promotion. The retirement of its dean gave Conant a chance to move to strengthen it by gearing its curriculum into the college. He shaped a program for a new degree, Master of Arts in Education, which required the student to qualify in some subject matter in the college, while learning teaching processes at the Education School. To pin this down, he appointed the young assistant provost of the college as dean. Frank Keppel went on to become U.S. Commissioner of Education. Conant's satisfaction in the success of the new program was both in solving a Harvard problem, and in putting up a practical alternative to Teachers College.

Conant's own tactics and strategy in administration must have been influenced by his beginning experience at Harvard, trying to relieve the strain on the budget of the depression years. His attempt to solve this brought him into his most severe conflict with the faculty, that, as he felt, almost cost him the presidency.

He felt the budget was threatened by the tutorial system developed by his predecessor, President Lowell. This required numbers of young tutors, on temporary appointments, whose future depended on provision of permanent professorships. The money this entailed wasn't in sight. Their ranks would have to be thinned down, their services closed out with terminal appointments.

The dean, applying this, sent letters to those who would have to go. Two of these happened to be officers in a new teachers union. So the famous Walsh-Sweezy case was born. Im-

mediately the charge broke out in the press that the two were being dropped for their union activity.

"I guess we are in for a breeze," said Conant. A committee of senior professors waited on him with a petition of 100 of their juniors, asking for a full faculty inquiry.

Conant invited them to make the inquiry. The "Committee of Eight" found no basis for the charge of discrimination, but recommended the two men be reinstated.

This Conant rejected with support of the Corporation. But he encouraged the committee to a second report that proposed a revamping of the tenure system, to make the temporary instructorship a definite five-year appointment, to drop the assistant professorship so that the instructor would either obtain permanent tenure as associate professor or leave at the end of his five-year term. This "Up or Out" policy resolved the Walsh-Sweezy case, but only after Conant had been subjected to some very unhappy faculty meetings, facing the threat of the faculty taking over appointments. At the crucial meeting he took the advice of his friend, Dean Donham of the business school, and opened the meeting by admitting he had made mistakes but pleading that these should not be allowed to destroy the fabric of the university. He credited Donham's advice with saving the situation and his job.

Conant's handling of the Nieman bequest tells something of his administrative process. The bequest came just as Harvard had wrestled with problems created by a larger gift from Lucius Littauer, a manufacturer, who wanted to establish a School of Public Administration. The endowment was adequate. But the prospect of inserting a separate school with an independent faculty into the Harvard community presented problems. Its curriculum would include much that was already

offered in various Harvard departments. Conant stalled on it for a couple of years, while having a commission explore the idea.

They had come up with a recommendation that the new school should involve members of other faculties, that it should have a small number of students, and these should be *persons already in government work*.

This plan for the Littauer fellowships had just been settled when Mrs. Nieman made her bequest to Harvard "to promote and elevate standards of journalism."

This, Conant was to recall, was the last thing he should have thought of asking for. "How go about promoting standards of journalism? By establishing another journalism school? I hoped not."

Conant's handling of the Nieman bequest tells something of his administrative process.

But Agnes Wahl Nieman was, in his words, "the ideal benefactor." There were no strings to the gift. She didn't specify how it was to be used, as Littauer had his. "She led me to recommend creation of the Nieman Fellowships in Journalism — an invention of which I am very proud," he writes in his chapter on the Nieman "experiment." The Corporation authorized Conant to seek suggestions for the use of the money. "The president was left free to come up with an idea." He had suggestions from the faculty, and he talked with editors and publishers.

The English department proposed setting up special courses in writing for journalists. The library proposed the collection of newspapers from all over the world, to be microfilmed. But

Conant couldn't see how that would promote standards of journalism. "Some more imaginative scheme was surely needed." (Actually part of the Nieman funds was assigned the library for its project, but the start of World War II soon cut off its operation, and after five years, we bought the library off with \$25,000. As to the English department, Professor Theodore Morrison was to respond to the request of the Nieman group of 1945 to set up a special course for them. For years he was critic and coach of writing projects of Fellows and former Fellows — a service acknowledged by A. B. Guthrie in his Pulitzer prize novel, *Big Sky*.)

"Why not a fellowship scheme?" Conant asked himself. "Why not offer newspaper reporters the opportunity to take the best part of a year off to participate in the intellectual life of the university? I doubted if taking courses would be of much benefit. Certainly I was not going to suggest the completion of a program that would be marked by a degree. Indeed, one of the cardinal points in the plan developing in my mind was a direct prohibition against enrollment for a degree." (He had been told that it would take the bait of a degree to lure Littauer fellows from their government posts.) "No newspaper editor was going to ask a prospective employee about his degree. Journalism was not yet caught up in the tangles of academic red tape. Therefore the fellows I envisioned would obtain no tangible rewards for their year in residence."

The recipient of a fellowship, he decided, should have at least three years experience in journalism. His stipend should equal his newspaper salary. There must be a full-time person in charge and he should keep the fellows in contact with newspaper work by inviting editors, publishers and columnists, from time to time, for an afternoon or evening session. (This

was the germ of the Nieman dinners.) "The plan would work," he felt. So he talked to newspapermen. Did they think enough publishers would cooperate to give the scheme a fair trial? "The result was ambiguous," he said. He found little enthusiasm, but no special objections either. "You might as well try it."

On the practical side it was easy to try. No new building was required or any additions to staff. He told the Corporation his plan was "frankly experimental. The scheme is flexible and if found impractical, can be modified, or indeed abandoned, in favor of some other project."

But it took only the first year to convince Conant. "My indebtedness to Mrs. Nieman is the indebtedness of an inventor to a person who challenges his ingenuity."

It is impossible to imagine that Walter Lippmann was not consulted. He had been serving as chairman of a Harvard visiting committee. He was certainly the journalist Conant knew best, respected most. Conant persuaded Lippmann to serve on the first committee to select Fellows. Lippmann took an active interest in the program through its early years. He is the one journalist who might be thought to have planted the germ of the Nieman fellowship plan in Conant's mind. But neither of them ever said so.

It was the intended library microfilm project that led Conant to title Archibald MacLeish "Curator of the Nieman Collection of Contemporary Journalism." I always believed this smoothed MacLeish's confirmation as Librarian of Congress. It sounded librarianish.

But when Conant asked me, for a stipend of \$1,000, to take over for MacLeish in the second year, he had the grace to shorten the title to "Assistant Curator of the Nieman Fellowships." It appealed to his humor that I would become "assistant

to a non-existent curator of a non-existent collection."

When the war brought much curtailment and change in the university, some eager beavers on the faculty proposed converting the Nieman program into a war propaganda mill. Conant had me send out an inquiry to 50 publishers to ask whether the fellowships should be shelved for the war. More than half said, "No. Keep going." So we removed the age limit and continued.

An age limit was a postscript contribution of Conant's. He was away from Harvard on the secret atomic project practically all the first five years of the Nieman program. An ardent interventionist, he had also become vice chairman, under William Allen White, of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies.

"My indebtedness to Mrs. Nieman is the indebtedness of an inventor to a person who challenges his ingenuity."

I saw him most infrequently in those years. Archibald MacLeish had been lured to Washington by Franklin Roosevelt at the end of the first year.

My first concern with selection of fellows came, of course, only in the second year, for the third group.

When I encountered Conant at a cross walk, on one of his rare wartime visits to the Yard, he stopped to ask, "How is it going?" Then, without pause, "It's going all right, I hear."

There was one problem, I told him. So many senior journalists were applying for this sabbatical, that it was hard to rate the younger men against them.

"Why not put on an age limit?" Conant offered. "Say 40." I had been 40, the oldest of the first group.

At the end of that first year Conant had the Fellows in for dinner.

How was it going? Great. And the Nieman dinners? Fine. But, someone put it, the faculty guests don't do any talking. I suggested that might be because the Fellows talked so much. But Conant turned to me to suggest a second round of meetings, say one afternoon a week, with a faculty member as guest-speaker. "I'll give you a list," he offered. By that time, I didn't need his list. But this started the Nieman seminars.

Conant had left Harvard before the McCarthy period had peaked. He had stated that he would not knowingly have a Communist on his faculty. He was very much a Cold War man. But it remained for Provost Paul Buck and senior Corporation member Charles Coolidge to devise the policy that saved Wendell Furry in Harvard's classic case.

But Conant had been stout in supporting his faculty against the assaults of red-hot alumni. To one who wrote refusing to contribute to a Law School fund raising because Harvard tolerated what he called "the aid and comfort to Communists" from the pacifist activities of Harlow Shapley and John Ciardi, Conant replied that Harvard could not be influenced to change its traditional policy of freedom, by fear that gifts would be withheld.

Conant's most important service doubtless came after Harvard and Germany, in his studies of the American high school and his prescription to strengthen its needs, chiefly in English and math. But also in organization. A school of under 100 pupils could not be an adequate comprehensive high school, he held.

The NAACP was critical of his priorities, that good education was more important than integrated education. But in 1961, in his last book, *Slums and Suburbs*, he warned that the masses of out-of-work Negro dropouts from city schools spelled social dynamite.

Nieman Selection Committee 1978-79

Four journalists and four officers of Harvard University will serve on the committee to select Nieman Fellows in Journalism for the academic year 1978-79.

The Fellowships provide for a year of study at Harvard for persons experienced in the news media, and the Fellowship awards will be announced in the spring.

Members of the committee to select Nieman Fellows for 1978-79 are:

Daniel Aaron, Victor S. Thomas Professor of English, and chairman, Committee on Higher Degrees in the History of American Civilization at Harvard University.

Professor Aaron was educated at the University of Michigan and Harvard University where he received the Ph.D., 1943. Between 1939 and 1971 he was a member of the English Department at Smith College, and during those years a visiting lecturer at Bennington College, Amherst College, and Yale University.

At various times Professor Aaron has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, a lecturer at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies (four years), and a Visiting Professor at the University of Helsinki, Warsaw University, and the University of Sussex. He was appointed a Fellow at the National Humanities Institute, New Haven, Connecticut in 1975-76; and that same year was selected as the Coordinator for the third and fourth Courses by Newspaper offered by the extension division of the University of California, San Diego.

Professor Aaron's articles and reviews have appeared in many journals such as Harper's Magazine, New Republic, Commonweal, and The New York Times Book Review. He is the author or editor of many books including, most recently, Robert Herrick's *Memoirs of an American Citizen* (1962); *The American Essays of Paul Elmer More* (1963); with

Robert Bendiner, *The Strenuous Decade: A Social and Intellectual Record of the 1930's* (1970); and *The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War* (1973).

Norman A. Cherniss, Executive Editor and Editor of the Editorial Page, the *Press-Enterprise* (Riverside, California). He received the A.B. degree from the State University of Iowa in 1950.

Mr. Cherniss was an editorial writer for the Evansville (Indiana) *Courier* from 1951 to 1953, when he left to become Editorial Page Editor of the *Press-Enterprise*.

Mr. Cherniss was awarded a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University for the 1958-59 academic year. He was a Haynes Fellow at the University of California, Los Angeles, 1960-61; a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Southern California's School of Journalism in 1968-69 and the spring semester of 1971; and a Visiting Professor and editor-in-residence at

Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism in 1969-70. He has held staff and editorial positions on radio station KOIL, Omaha, the International News Service, and the *Des Moines (Iowa) Register and Tribune*.

He is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the National Conference of Editorial Writers, and Kappa Tau Alpha, an honorary journalism fraternity.

Ellen Goodman, syndicated columnist, *The Boston Globe*. She received the A.B. degree from Radcliffe College in 1963.

Ms. Goodman was a researcher with Newsweek magazine from 1963 to 1965; a reporter with the *Detroit Free Press* from 1965 to 1967, when she joined *The Boston Globe* as staff writer and columnist. She is a member of the Washington Post Writers Group, a nationally syndicated service; her column appears in 115 newspapers.

Ms. Goodman was selected as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University for the 1973-74 academic year, and in 1974 the Commission on the Status of Women made her the recipient of their Media Award. In 1975 the New England Women's Press Association judged her "best columnist" in its annual competition, and she received the Women in Communications Matrix award in 1977.

Ms. Goodman's articles and reviews have appeared in *The New York Times Book Review*, *McCall's*, *Ms.*, *The Guardian* and other publications. Her book, *Life Changes*, will be published by Doubleday in the fall.

Phyllis Keller, Associate Dean for Academic Planning in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. Mrs. Keller received the A.B. degree from Barnard College in 1950; the M.A. degree in English Literature from Columbia University, 1951; the M.A. degree in 1963 and the Ph.D. in

American Civilization in 1969 from the University of Pennsylvania.

Mrs. Keller was Director of Special Studies and Lecturer in the Center for Experimental Studies at Holy Cross College from 1971 to 1973, when she joined Harvard University as Assistant to the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and Equal Employment Officer.

Mrs. Keller was a Fellow of Radcliffe Institute from 1969 to 1971, and a resident of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Study Center, Italy, in the summer of 1976. She is a past member, Group for Applied Psychoanalysis, and she has served on the Advisory Committee, National Endowment for the Humanities, Film Series Project. She was a consultant to the faculty committee reviewing undergraduate education at SUNY-Binghamton. She is a member of the Board of Directors, Harvard Day Care Center, and has served on the Board of Directors, the Commonwealth School, Boston, and the School in Rose Valley, Philadelphia.

Mrs. Keller has had her work published in various professional journals including the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* ("George Sylvester Viereck: The Making of a German-American Militant," [1971]); and biographical sketches for *Notable American Women* (Harvard University Press, 1971).

John McCormally, President, Publisher and Editor of the *Hawk Eye*, Burlington, Iowa. Mr. McCormally received the A.B. degree from Emporia State College in 1949, and was awarded a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University for the 1949-50 academic year.

Mr. McCormally was a reporter for the *Emporia Gazette* from 1946 to 1949. He joined the *Hutchinson (Kansas) News* in 1950, and for the next 15 years served variously as Poli-

tical Editor, Managing Editor, Associate Editor, Executive Editor, and Editor. In 1965 he was appointed Editor and Co-publisher of the *Hawk Eye*, and in 1968 he was made President and Publisher.

In 1965, during his editorship, the *Hutchinson News* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for public service.

Under the auspices of the U.S. Department of State and the African American Institute, Mr. McCormally in 1963 conducted journalism seminars in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

Mr. McCormally is a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the International Press Institute, and the Inland Daily Press Association. He is president of the Iowa Daily Press Association, and of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council.

Anthony G. Oettinger, Chairman of the Harvard Program on Information Resources Policy, is Gordon McKay Professor of Applied Mathematics, Professor of Information Resources Policy and a member of the Faculty of Public Administration at Harvard University. Professor Oettinger received the A.B. degree in 1951 and the Ph.D. in 1954 from Harvard University. He joined the Harvard faculty in 1955 as Associate Professor of Applied Mathematics.

Professor Oettinger is chairman of the CATV Commission of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a member of the Research Advisory Board of the Committee for Economic Development, and of the Council on Foreign Relations. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. He was a Henry Fellow at the University of Cambridge, England, from 1951 to 1952.

Since 1965 he has served as a consultant to Arthur D. Little, Inc., on

the uses of information technologies in many industries; he served as a principal consultant to the team that prepared *The Consequences of Electronic Funds Transfer — A Technology Assessment of Movement Toward a Less Cash/Less Check Society*, a report for the National Science Foundation published by the Government Printing Office in 1975.

Professor Oettinger was a consultant to the Executive Office of the President of the United States through the National Security Council from 1975 to 1977, and the Office of Science and Technology from 1961 to 1973. He was an advisor to the Committee for Economic Development subcommittee that prepared the report *Broadcasting and Cable Television: Policies for Diversity and Change*, issued by CED in 1975. From 1966 to 1968, he was president of the Association for Computing Machinery. He was chairman of the Computer Science and Engineering Board of the National Academy of Science from 1967-73.

Professor Oettinger is the author of *Automatic Language Translation: Lexical and Technical Aspects* (1960); *Run, Computer, Run: The Mythology of Educational Innovation* (1969); and of numerous papers on the uses of information technologies. His most recent book, with Paul Berman and William Read, is *High and Low Politics: Information Resources for the '80's*, published by Ballinger Press in 1977.

Roger Wilkins, columnist for urban affairs, *The New York Times*. Mr. Wilkins received the A.B. degree in 1953 and the LL.B. in 1956 from the University of Michigan.

Mr. Wilkins was admitted to the New York bar and in 1956 became associated with the firm of Delson and Gordon, until 1962. He was special assistant to the administrator, AID, Washington, 1962-64; assistant direc-

tor of Community Relations Service, Department of Commerce, 1964-67; assistant attorney general of the United States, 1966-69; and program director and advisor to the president of the Ford Foundation, 1969-72.

From 1972 to 1974 he was a member of the editorial page staff of *The Washington Post*, and in 1972 he was cited by the trustees of Columbia University for his Watergate editorials. From 1974-77 he was a member of the editorial board of *The New York Times*.

Among Mr. Wilkins's other activities are membership, the Board of Directors, NAACP, the Legal Defense Fund, the Legal Aid Society of New York. He is a member of both the NAACP and the Urban League.

James C. Thomson Jr., Curator of the Nieman Fellowships and Lecturer on General Education, Harvard University. Mr. Thomson was graduated from Yale University in 1953, received the A.B. and A.M. degrees from Cambridge University in 1955 and 1959, and a Ph.D. from Harvard in 1961. He served as an East Asia specialist at the State Department and White House in 1961-66. He is the author of *While China Faced West* (1969).

About 12 Fellowships will be awarded for 1978-79. Each grant provides for nine months of residence and study at Harvard for journalists on leave from their jobs.

The current class includes 11 Fellows from the United States and 4 Associate Fellows from foreign countries.

The 1978-79 class will be the 41st annual group of Nieman Fellows at Harvard University. The Fellowships were established in 1938 under a bequest from Agnes Wahl Nieman in memory of her husband, Lucius W. Nieman, founder of *The Milwaukee Journal*.

Coming Home to France

By Adalbert de Segonzac

Recently I returned to France after more than two decades in the United States, and, to put it mildly, I am suffering from cultural shock. The problem of readjustment to my native land is more difficult than I had expected it would be.

Compared to when I left, people here in Paris seem to me to be less open and friendly, more temperamental and disgruntled. They are full of energy and talent that often appears to be badly misdirected.

As a returning Frenchman, whose nationalistic sentiment has been nurtured by many years abroad, I can take pride in the remarkable economic progress that has taken place here within the past generation.

Once a rural economy, France is now a powerful industrial nation, stronger than Britain and second only to West Germany among the nations of Western Europe. The skyline of its big cities, ugly yet impressive, is testimony to the economic growth that has been achieved. Moreover, conditions for Frenchmen of every social class have improved considerably.

Everyone enjoys free education and medical care. Unemployment may be high at the moment, but jobless workers are relatively well protected

Mr. Segonzac was formerly Washington correspondent for France-Soir, the Paris daily.

by compensation. Frenchmen traditionally complain that they are broke, but their wealth is surprising.

A majority of the French own vacation homes of some kind. The number of automobiles, proportionate to the population, is nearly as large as it is in the United States. Though their quality seems to me to have declined, restaurants are jammed — and at prices that would shatter Americans.

Nearly everything here, in fact, is more expensive than it is in the United States. Television sets are twice as much. So are cars, and gasoline costs three times more than in America. Believe it or not, we pay more for French wines here than we did in Washington.

But while life for most Frenchmen appears to me to be much better than I remember it having been before I went abroad, their gripes are more audible and pervasive than ever.

Businessmen, for example, contend that their profits are small because they are saddled with heavy social security burdens for their employees and cannot fire workers except under dire circumstances. They overlook the fact, however, that they are supported by government subsidies, especially in export industries, and benefit handsomely from selling their products in the European Common Market.

Workers also grumble that they are not paid as well as labor elsewhere in Europe, but they neglect to mention that they can rely on substantial help from various family, health and other allowances. They are worried by unemployment, but they will not perform menial jobs, which have to be handled by unskilled Africans, Arabs and Asians imported for the purpose.

The political scene, in my estimation, contributes to the grumpiness

and divisiveness of the French, and in this respect it is vastly different from the United States.

Americans approach politics with both idealism and pragmatism, the twin features of their Constitution. The French cynically seek to reinforce their preconceptions without reference to facts. As a result, the daily press here is fiercely partisan rather than investigative. Newspapers are filled with opinion, but rarely report political scandals. The Watergate revelations could not have happened in France.

Radio and television are different, though not much better. The three television channels, which transmit only at noon and in the evening, are owned by the government. Radio, partly private, is controlled by the government. Until a few years ago, critics of the government were barred from broadcasting. That policy has been eased, but the ruling political parties still get bigger and more sympathetic coverage.

Symptomatic of political thinking here is the attitude of many French to former President Richard Nixon. They shrug off the fact that he violated the law, but see him instead as the victim of a vindictive press. Despite my experience in Washington during that Watergate scandal, I am constantly being told by my compatriots that Nixon was one of the great American Presidents. Once again, it is conviction rather than reality that counts here.

Add to all this, my rediscovery of the annoying and contradictory aspects of daily life in Paris — elements that I probably failed to notice before I went abroad.

My years in America instilled in me a taste for organization, which seems to be lacking here. People seldom answer mail or telephone calls, and they frequently show up late for appointments, perhaps to establish their

superiority. Driving is a unique adventure.

The French seem to turn into monsters behind the steering wheels of their cars, forgetting what little sense of civic responsibility they ever had. They ignore traffic lights, break speed limits and disregard pedestrians, who, it should be noted, are as undisciplined as motorists.

The safest and fastest way to travel here is by Metro, the Paris subway, which is clean, comfortable and silent. Metro stations are being beautified, and they have become improved as well by the presence of jazz and classical musicians, many of them American, who play for passengers in order to earn money.

The disorganization here is ironically aggravated by rules, regulations, and bureaucratic red tape. Sending a letter abroad, for instance, requires a tedious visit to the post office. Why, with the heritage of Cartesian logic behind us, should airmail postage to the United States be more expensive than to Canada?

At the risk of sounding nostalgic, I miss the warmth and comfort of my house in America, which would cost a fortune to replicate here. I also miss the human rhythm of the United States, and I even miss the brutality, indifference and dynamism of New York City.

There are, on the other hand, the loveliness and sophistication of Paris. But I find, like General de Gaulle, that it is possible to love France and be dismayed by the French — and that may prove my attachment to my country.

(From the International Writers Service)

Donald J. Woods Visiting Nieman Fellow

President Derek C. Bok has announced that the Harvard Corporation has approved the appointment of the South African journalist, Donald J. Woods, former editor of the *Daily Dispatch* (East London), to a Visiting Nieman Fellowship for one year, commencing July 1, 1978.

Mr. Woods, 44, editor of his newspaper since 1965 and a syndicated national columnist in other papers, is widely noted as a critic of apartheid or "separate development." During a nationwide crackdown on dissenters, he was placed under "ban" by the Minister of Justice on October 19, 1977, and thereby deprived of his freedom to write or speak as a journalist; but he successfully arranged his escape from South Africa, together with his wife and five children, at the end of December and in early January. The Woods family now resides in Great Britain.

In announcing the Woods appointment, Mr. Bok said, "Donald Woods exemplifies the candor, courage, and commitment to non-violent multiracial justice that his society and many others so desperately need. We are very happy to give him a safe haven at Harvard."

The Curator of the Nieman Foundation, James C. Thomson, Jr., also welcomed the Woods appointment. "I came to know him," Thomson said, "during two days in East London in the summer of 1975. It is an honor to the Nieman Foundation for Journalism to have someone of Donald Woods' bravery, energy, wit, and wisdom join our ranks of Nieman Fellows."

The Visiting Nieman Fellowship at Harvard is reserved for unusual appointments from the field of journalism — appointments of less or more than the customary nine-month sabbatical Nieman Fellowship. It also carries no stipend. In Mr. Woods' case, however, supporting funding is being arranged from both Harvard and external non-governmental sources.

As a Visiting Nieman Fellow, Mr. Woods and his wife, Wendy Bruce Woods, will have access to all faculties, libraries, and other facilities of Harvard University. Mr. Woods will have no academic or journalistic obligations during this sabbatical year, but will undoubtedly be available for teaching, speaking, writing, and other commitments on the subject of the future of South Africa and its international relations.

(Editor's Note: The following is a statement of the mission of Nieman Reports, a quarterly founded by the Society of Nieman Fellows in 1947. The statement was written by Louis M. Lyons, Curator of the Nieman Foundation from 1939 to 1964, and Chairman of the Society of Nieman Fellows, in his book, *Reporting the News*. This is a Belknap Press Book, published by the Harvard University Press in 1965.)

It is intended to publish a quarterly about newspapering by newspapermen, to include reports and articles and stories about the newspaper business, newspaper people and newspaper stories.

... It has no pattern, formula or policy, except to seek to serve the purpose of the Nieman Foundation 'to promote the standards of journalism in America...'

... It was the one place a speech or lecture could be published, and, if important enough, published in full. To provide full texts, if significant, was accepted as one of its functions.