

NiemanReports

January, 1956

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NiemanReports

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Freedom To Dissent?

Newspapers have every right to be jealous of the liberties they have won at such great cost. It is proper that they call attention at regular intervals to their role as public protectors of traditional freedoms.

But there is another side to the coin. How concerned is the press in upholding freedoms in other areas? While some of our most inspiring orators were planning their speeches for National Newspaper Week, one of our Washington editors demanded the dismissal of two University professors for daring to speak out against something the two had questioned even as the editor must have spoken out on many occasions.

The professors had challenged the legality of the most recent state law requiring loyalty oaths of teachers—an issue as close to the professors as, let us say, tax laws are to the business man.

The professors had not defied authority, any more than the business man who challenges a tax law. Both professors declared publicly that if the legality of the oath is upheld by the peers, through the courts, they will both sign the document, just as the business man pays the disputed tax under similar circumstances. The professors did not organize a mass demonstration. They did not solicit names for a petition, which might have spread their responsibility—and there were many on the faculty willing to back them in this way. They took the most orderly approach possible—through the courts, which are set up for just such a purpose. For this the editor would have them punished “because their action casts a shadow of suspicion on their loyalty.”

There is a moral to all this. Dissent today too often is confused with disloyalty. The right to challenge is as es-

sential to the press as it is for others. But the press cannot have freedom just for itself, for the peculiar thing about freedom is that we have it only to the degree in which we give it away. There would be no freedom of the press without the other freedoms. Laws protect the press, and those laws depend upon freedom of the courts, just as freedom of the courts has depended on freedom of speech and speech has depended upon freedom to worship openly. The freedoms are like four walls around the citadel of the American way of life. A breach in any of these walls threatens all the others.

That is why the press should be the last to attack others' freedoms and rights. We should be just as indignant if the right of the Washington editor had been attacked, but the public will have even greater respect for its press if that press guards other freedoms as zealously as it guards its own.

H. L. SMITH

Henry Ladd Smith is the new chairman of the University of Washington school of communications, and this is from their publication, *Northwest Communications*, for November. *Nieman Reports* salutes a vigorous new voice in the Northwest.

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Free Press and Fair Trial

By Simon E. Sobeloff

I suppose that all editors would agree as an abstract proposition that the right of a man to a fair trial should be respected and all judges would assent to the proposition that the press should be free.

Let us look away from the necessarily imprecise legal boundaries that have been sketched out in various decisions of the courts, with which you are familiar, and consider more generally the interests of society that are at stake.

The courts and the press both have their responsibilities. The courts have a duty to assure fair trials; the press has a duty, no less vital, to inform the public. Each of these functions is essential in a civilized society. But while the direct burden of insuring fair trials is on the courts, the press, too, carries a responsibility for the fairness of court trials. It should be equally clear to the judges that while journalists naturally have a primary role in maintaining the freedom of the press, the courts are also concerned to preserve this freedom. Freedom is indivisible.

Fair trials could not be held if newspapers were free without limit to intrude in pending judicial proceedings, and conversely, it is equally certain that trials would not long remain fair if newspapermen were not free to observe and report proceedings in court, and then comment freely upon the court's performance.

In our society both the judge and the editor enjoy special status. Our system has no special consideration for judges and editors either as individuals or as a class, beyond assuring to them independence in the performance of their respective public duties. If special powers and freedom are granted them, it is not in tribute to their individual merits or to exalt them, but to protect the functions they perform. It is the simple but august task which the Declaration of Independence calls "securing the blessings of liberty." The editor and the judge are set apart from other citizens only that they may act as guardians of other men's liberties.

Both judges and editors sometimes forget this and think only in terms of their privileges and immunities. Both need to be reminded that it is neither the judges' rights nor the editors' rights that are of primary importance; the area is completely filled by the citizens' rights. When editors or judges forget their responsibilities they sink, not to the common level, but below it, for they are recreant to their trust.

I hasten to add that I realize that not all newspapers are alike. With 1700 papers, performance is bound to be unequal. So also, not all judges are alike. The profession has a quaint saying that equity varies according to the length of the chancellor's foot. Generalizations are misleading. Most courts operate with dignity and effectiveness while a few cover up under the protective label of "judicial discretion" the most extreme indiscretion and arrogance. It is not flattery but simple truth to say that, by and large, newspapers are mindful of their public responsibility, as are courts. And if there are abuses, we can take comfort from Chief Justice Marshall, who said that we must bear with the inaccuracy of the press as "the calamity incidental to freedom." But newspaper publishers, as businessmen, are not immune from the laws regulating business.

Courts are not exempt from scrutiny and criticism by the press. My illustrious fellow-townsmen, Henry L. Mencken, once gave an irreverent definition of a judge. "A judge," he said, "is only a law student who marks his own examination paper." If that were really so, what a happy existence it would be—for him; but it is not so. No judge marks his own examination papers. The examination papers of judges are marked by other judges, at all levels of the judicial hierarchy, even in the rarefied heights of the tribunal from which there is no appeal to any other human tribunal. And their examination papers are constantly being marked by the public. To make this possible is one of the reasons for newspaper reporting and commenting on court cases.

It is a great illusion shared by too many that only the courts are the guardians of our freedom. The courts have on numerous important occasions made historic contributions to freedom's cause; but while I hold the judicial function in reverence, I submit that it is a limited one. It is not the only branch of government that is charged with the preservation of freedom. Nor is the government as a whole the sole custodian of the people's freedom. In a free society each individual has a responsibility, but the press has a unique responsibility. When the Declaration of Independence speaks of "a government by the people" it does not mean that the cause of freedom was committed to government alone and that the people had no further part to play. Implicit in our whole constitutional system is the assumption that individuals will maintain an "eternal vigilance." The press is the special instrument for the maintenance of vigilance. The press provides and must continually man the watchtowers from which the operations of the courts and other public agencies are observed. The work of the Supreme Court is concerned in large measure with the problem of achieving a proper accommodation between the various coordinate departments of the government. Similarly, some of its most notable cases have dealt with the problem of integrating the freedom of the press and the independence of the judicial system.

This is from a talk that Solicitor General **Simon E. Sobeloff** gave at Temple Ohabei Shalom Brotherhood, Brookline, at their 15th annual dinner for the Nieman Fellows, Nov. 29.

Mr. Justice Black has said that free speech and fair trials are two of the most cherished policies of our civilization, and that it would be a trying task to choose between them. His associate, Mr. Justice Frankfurter, has pointed out that the core of difficulty in judging is that there is hardly a question that comes before the Court that does not involve more than one so-called principle. He remarks—"Anybody can decide a question if only a single principle is in controversy." In support he quotes Mr. Justice Holmes' wise words: "All rights tend to declare themselves absolute to their logical extreme. Yet all in fact are limited to the neighborhood of principles, of policies which are other than those on which the particular right is founded." The truth is that both principles—the independent judiciary and the free press—have to be made effective. The advocates of one side or another make a mistake when they insist on arrogating to either principle an importance which would ignore or unfairly subordinate the other. As has been said, freedom of the press is not an end in itself but a means to achieve a free society. And indeed, is not this true of all our governmental and social machinery—that they are created to serve the same end—the freedom of society?

Recently the Court of Appeals of New York invalidated the conviction of a socially-prominent young man charged with profiting from the immoral activities of young women. The ground of the reversal was that the presiding judge had barred the press from the trial. The law that insists that trials be kept public is not for the benefit of the press; public trial is deemed essential to a fair trial.

The horrors of the Star Chamber were fresh in the minds of those who wrote the First Amendment. The press is given a status here only as it serves a larger public purpose. I think that your profession and mine both welcome the doctrine laid down by the Court of Appeals of New York in the case I mentioned. Courts may not take unto themselves the power to enforce their notions of public decency and morality and suppress the sensational and the vulgar, if in doing so they sacrifice basic rights.

We will all agree that it is better not to have a court sit in judgment over what is good and what is bad for the public to know. Granted, judges are no more competent than other men to act as censors of public information, even information emanating from the courts. But is this an end to the question? Does it, therefore, mean that the press has no further obligation, but should avail itself to the full of its legal right and publish with impunity every sordid detail of a vice trial, or divorce proceeding? One of our greatest newspapers has coined the phrase: "All the news that's fit to print." Lesser journals, I am told, have changed it to "All the news that fits." Does not the press owe an obligation to consider the question of fitness, and ask itself earnestly whether the public's "right to know" really requires the indiscriminate spreading of such matter before them?

In some places interrogation of discharged jurors is not allowed. In others it is legally permissible, but it is a serious question for the press to ask itself how far such inquiries may be pressed without embarrassing former jurors or inhibiting future jurors.

I would like to suggest, in all good spirit, that in the frontier cases, in areas where the law is still in the making, if the press abuses its freedom, restrictive decisions may emerge. In England, as you know, far less latitude is permitted the press than in this country. There proposals were pressed for still further restrictions, and apparently this led to the creation of voluntary committees of journalists to police the profession from within.

It is sometimes said that the denial of a public trial unreasonably impairs the right of the accused, and usually this is so. But not only the accused is concerned; he may consent to the exclusion of the press; he may even prefer it. The press, however, may not be excluded for its presence is required, not only for the benefit of the accused—certainly it is not for the sake of the press itself—but in order that the public, through the press, shall be informed as to the operation of the courts. It has been held that an accused has no constitutional right to a private trial. The underlying theory is that while doubtless courts are, in most cases, manned by good people, even good people by and large, will do a better job if they know that their acts are under public scrutiny, and that they are not above criticism any more than other functionaries, public or private.

There have been, as we know from observation, useful by-products of great public advantage from the full and free reporting of public proceedings, judicial and other. Fraud, corruption and dishonesty, in and out of government, would in many instances go undiscovered but for the vigilance of the press. Many social evils would go uncorrected, because unnoticed, if it were not for the activity of the newspapers.

The principle of a free press has always had its opponents. This freedom was established with difficulty and in comparatively recent times. In totalitarian systems the idea is scoffed at. The masters in a totalitarian regime fear it. Lenin put it simply enough: "Why," he asked, "should freedom of speech and freedom of the press be allowed? Why should a government which is doing what it believes is right allow itself to be criticized? It would not allow opposition by lethal weapons. Ideas are much more fatal things than guns. Why should any man be allowed to buy a printing press and disseminate pernicious opinions calculated to embarrass the government?" Contrast this with Jefferson's insistence that no government ought to be without its censors, meaning, of course, not censorship by the government but censorship of the government. There you have the essential difference between a free system and a totalitarian regime.

The turbulence which surrounds this question of the freedom of the press in relation to judicial proceedings and elsewhere is not something to be deplored. It proves the vitality of the idea of freedom. Much more to be feared would be a condition in which the question did not arise, for quiescence on the part of the press would be the surest sign that freedom was on the wane.

In all walks of life there is an unfortunate disposition to treat legality as synonymous with propriety. Not everything which is lawful is wise: not everything which is permissible is decent and just. The thesis which I respectfully submit is that even if a publication is within legal limits, a newspaper has an obligation to weigh the propriety and fairness of what it publishes. Indeed, in this area, where it is so largely free from control, it is the newspaper rather than the judge that bears the greater responsibility. It is interesting to point out that judges operate within a framework of law which cabins them; we are fond of speaking of a government of laws rather than men. But what of the editor? If he is to a large degree exempt from judicial or other government control, what is to guide him? Has he not a heavy responsibility?

Three times in recent years (since 1941) the Supreme Court has considered the validity under the First Amendment of convictions of newspapers and editorial writers for contempt for editorial comment on pending cases. In each case, a majority of the Court concluded that on the facts before them they could not find a sufficiently serious threat to the administration of justice to warrant abridgment of the freedom of the press to comment on the trials in question. But it would be a disservice to your profession to suggest that the scope of the freedom to report and to comment on pending trials that the Supreme Court has recognized is a license to abandon self restraint. Such reserve is frequently desirable, if not absolutely essential, to the attainment of impartial justice.

So, may I, in this spirit, and without presumption, suggest that even where there is no legally enforceable obligation there is a high moral duty to act with as great a measure of discriminating judgment as is possible under admittedly difficult circumstances. It is your high ethical obligation to avoid injuring the good name of an innocent person or to prejudice one accused of crime or a litigant in an ordinary civil case.

Headliners have a facile formula—action verbs and few qualifiers. Is it an answer to plead the limitations of space in the headline? Many do not read beyond the headline, and sometimes people are injured by this kind of hit and run treatment.

I am not even remotely intimating that there should be

legislation to restrict reporting anytime in any way. I raise no question as to whether you are within your rights to publish. What is more, in most cases you may not even be answerable in a libel suit. But is the indiscriminate megaphoning of abuse consistent with sound and wholesome journalism? It seems to me that though you are free, you are not discharged of responsibility. Rather, because you are free, you are the more responsible. What I have been saying is so general that it may offer little help in specific instances. I have purposely avoided here all pretense of particularity. You will know better than I the precise application of what I am saying. What is important is the spirit in which these matters are approached in the day to day decisions you make.

I was once discussing with an editor a completely erroneous and unjust editorial and he was gracious enough to admit his error—in private conversation, though, not in a subsequent editorial. His defense, which to him seemed all sufficient, was “You know, we are publishing a daily; we don’t have time to make inquiries.” I realize that there isn’t always time to inquire, and errors and mistakes will occur despite the most cautious care; but neither is there a compulsion to opine instantly on issues when there is insufficient time to assemble the relevant information. Members of the press are not more often guilty of these sins than lawyers and others, but with your great power and privileged position goes an obligation which is commensurate.

And let us never forget that one of the reasons for press freedom is to enable it better to pursue the task, so indispensable in a democracy, of educating the people to enable them to perform their civic duties intelligently. May I raise the question whether newspapers, in selecting what to report of court proceedings, and how, are acting with due regard for their educative function. If a Sadie Zilch is hailed before the police court for entertaining strangers in her home, there is likely to be adequate press coverage of every detail. If the Supreme Court hears a case involving the constitutional powers of the President to make agreements with foreign nations not much is likely to be said about it, even in good papers. I can assure you that there is good, interesting news, and real drama in the higher courts. It isn’t all technical by long odds, but these sources are often neglected on the assumption that the public is not interested. Are readers really on such a low level of taste and intelligence? Are you sure that what you give them is really what they want? And how far is it legitimate to pander to prurience even when there is a market for it? I have nothing against Sadie Zilch. I speak merely for better coverage of more important court proceedings in the sharp competition for limited space, and I am thinking of the newspapers’ role to educate, as well as titillate, its readers.

As Gainza Paz Takes Back *La Prensa*

by Richard Dudman

(Richard Dudman covered the Argentine revolt for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1953-4.)

Albert Gainza Paz became a symbol of embattled freedom throughout the world when his great newspaper, *La Prensa*, was wrested from him by Peron. The Lonardi government that overthrew Peron failed to restore *La Prensa* to its former owner. It remained for the Aramburu regime, which ousted Lonardi, to give *La Prensa* back to Gainza Paz. He immediately returned from his exile in New York to take charge of his newspaper. But as he starts the task of restoring *La Prensa*, he faces a mixed public attitude in Argentina which is little understood in the United States.

In a word, Juan D. Peron's confiscation of the powerful independent paper in 1951 was a bigger issue among liberals in the United States and other countries than it was in Argentina.

State Department Latin American specialists, both here and at the embassy in Buenos Aires, expressed this view quite freely, though privately, in the months before Peron was ousted last September. It supported the department's policy of doing business with Peron. The line was that Peron's press in the United States would be much better had it not been for the seizure of *La Prensa*, which was so offensive to newspapers in this country. The action against *La Prensa*, this line continued, was entirely unjustifiable but had been blown up out of its proper proportion.

"It is a sad fact," one State Department man in the South American section said, "that it was less important to United States policy that *La Prensa* continues to be published independently than that the Rio treaty be ratified or that Argentina collaborate with the United States against international communism."

The United States never made official protest against the seizure, accepting Peron's view that it was an internal matter.

When Eduardo Lonardi took over the government after Peron had fled, one of the Provisional President's first moves was to announce that he would not force the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) to give up *La Prensa*. Peron had turned it over to the union as its propaganda organ. Lonardi's announcement was one of a series of actions he took to appease the pro-Peron workers, actions that were unpopular with the middle class and the military and led to his ouster in November. It was his successor, President Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, who ordered *La Prensa* restored to Gainza Paz and took a generally tough attitude toward the Peronista party.

But Lonardi's soft approach to the CGT had its supporters, too. A physician, who had been an active member of the anti-Peron underground—he had kept two rifles and a rack of "Molotov cocktails" in his home in preparation for the hoped-for revolt—was one of many who felt that Gainza Paz had taken the easy course in fleeing to the United States when his newspaper was confiscated.

"He ran away to the United States and lived in comfort and freedom, while the rest of us stayed home and made a revolution," this doctor said. "Then, when the revolution is successful, he is the first to say, 'Give me back my property.'"

Gainza Paz has his strong supporters, among Argentines who had waited 12 years for a return of democracy, including freedom of the press. He also has his enemies, among the revolutionists who felt he ran out on them and among the remains of Peron's workers, who consider him a member of the hated oligarchy.

The months ahead will tell whether the famous editor can rebuild the paper to its former position of strength and influence.

An Advertising Man Looks At Journalism Education

By Daniel S. Warner

With a wave of his hand, Mort Stern dismisses the question of teaching public relations and advertising courses in schools of journalism. "You can classify them as you like," Stern says, "but as specific courses they belong in the business school."

He is right, or rather half-right. Advertising courses—to narrow the subject to my own area—do belong in the business schools. Or at least a basic course in advertising should be required of business school students. Most businesses today make use of advertising in some form, and as fewer and fewer families are left in the subsistence income level, the importance of advertising as a distribution tool increases.

But—as a Harvard-educated advertising executive friend of mine points out—teaching people how to buy advertising is quite a different thing from teaching people how to create advertising. A produce buyer for a supermarket and a truck gardener require quite a different set of skills. And the skills needed to create advertising aren't usually developed in business schools any more than skill in basic journalistic writing and reporting are developed in the English departments. They are nurtured in the environment of the journalism school. Mr. Stern says that acting as interpretive middleman between the specialist and the reader is a very useful function of the journalist. It is more than a very useful function to the advertising man. He *has to be* the in-

terpretive middleman between engineer and purchasing agent, between designer and distributor, between retailer and consumer.

The courses Mr. Stern suggests as essential in journalism education—reporting, creative writing, logic, make-up and production, law of the press—are essential foundation material for people who are to create advertising. The first responsibility of the advertising copywriter is exactly the same as the first responsibility of the reporter; he has to get the facts and get them right. And they aren't often handed to the copywriter on a dittoed sheet any oftener than they are to the reporter.

All I have said so far is that the environment and core courses of the journalism school provide the right foundation for students who want to create advertising. But unless your definition of journalism is an outdated one, advertising is an important subject to the journalist, whether student or practicing.

When Mr. Stern summarily dismisses advertising from the classrooms of journalism schools, my impression is that he must visualize the journalist in a smaller and older frame than I do, or than my 1934 New International dictionary, which defines "journalist" in these words: "*Orig.* one whose business it is to write for a public journal; an editor or other professional writer for a periodical; *now, esp.,* one who conducts a public journal."

It seems to me that anyone who conducts a public journal—or anyone who contributes to the policy or management of a periodical—should have some understanding of the department that produces from 50 to 100 per cent of the publication's total revenue. As Professor James E. Pollard of Ohio State University says, "The day is past when the editorial department is sufficient unto itself, or when the advertising department can be conducted without regard for the circulation or production departments. There are no longer separate watertight compartments in the scheme of newspaper organization and management, if, indeed, there ever really were."

Too many journalists overlook the fact that they are engaged in the production, at one and the same time, of two quite different products bought by quite different people. One product is a consumer product—a package of news, of information, of entertainment, bought by the man on the street for his personal enjoyment. The other product is an industrial product—an advertising medium, bought by businesses for hard-headed business reasons.

The first product—the consumer product—can be, and often is, a monopoly—a sort of public utility operating without benefit of official franchise. If Mr. Stern's friends up in Cheyenne want to read about what the folks in Cheyenne are doing, they have to buy the *Wyoming Eagle-State Tribune*.

But the other product the journalist is producing in the

same package is never a monopoly, even when it is the only newspaper in town. The business man can distribute his advertising to his customers and prospects in Cheyenne by radio, or by television, by outdoor posters or direct mail. And with today's trend in sectionalized editions of national magazines, more and more regional advertisers will be able to skim off their prospects with this medium.

If two different products are going to be wrapped up successfully in a single package, both products must be produced by one designer or two designers must cooperate, with a knowledge and understanding of each other's problems and objectives. And since a newspaper—whether it is a metropolitan daily like Mr. Stern's *Denver Post* or the Limon, Colorado, weekly *Leader*—is two very different products in one package—journalism students should learn something about the principles and problems of producing both types of products.

Perhaps Mr. Stern's curriculum suggestions raise a more important question for journalism schools to answer. What is a journalism school? Or, for that matter, what is journalism? Is the field restricted, as Mr. Stern implies, to the reporting and editing functions of a metropolitan daily—or does it include those 8,000 one-man bands, the weeklies?

Does the field of journalism include the 30-odd magazines published by McGraw-Hill? There are more of these "journals" than daily newspapers. Does "working-press" apply only to those who are employed by printed media—or is the radio and television newscaster a journalist? Journalism schools should help determine the answers.

Whatever the original connotation of journalist might have been, to most laymen and apparently to many journalists today it means someone who writes editorial material for a newspaper. Radio is something else. Television is different. And advertising is a separate area. To me it makes little difference whether these are or are not labelled journalism. All are effective, and important, channels for distributing news, ideas and opinions from their sources to multitudes of people. And if journalism schools insist on limiting their mission to the teaching of writing news for newspapers, these other important methods of delivering news, ideas and opinions will be developed in other schools—just as Mr. Stern's basic course in journalistic writing was developed to meet a need not supplied by the English department.

Here at Washington we have already climbed through this semantic thicket. The school of journalism founded in 1907 by Merle Thorpe is now officially the School of Communications.

Prof. Warner teaches in the School of Communications at the University of Washington, after advertising experience with Crowell-Collier and the Chrysler Corp. and Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn.

The Balance Sheet of Newspaper Prospects

By Raymond B. Nixon

ONE OF THE STRANGEST paradoxes of our time is the gloom which appears so often these days at national gatherings of newspaper publishers. For example, the American Newspaper Publishers Association at its annual meeting last April heard a magnificent address by Henry Ford II. He told them that "no nation ever had it so good." He described an economic outlook which should be just as rosy for newspapers as for automobile manufacturers. Yet when the publishers went into closed session, the atmosphere seems to have been clouded by fears: fears about rising costs, fears about anti-trust suits, fears about FCC decisions, fears about labor, fears about newsprint, and fears about television.

These are all serious problems, and as a newspaper reader and a journalism teacher I am much concerned about them, I assure you. But as a student of economic trends, and one whose chief interest in life has been the newspaper, I am even more concerned lest publishers as a class develop an occupational neurosis. Through too much obsession with the purely negative aspects of our situation we may become like two young women who were overheard talking during Mental Health Week. "Isn't it awful?" one of them said. "You never know when mental health may strike you!"

A psychiatrist friend to whom I related this incident told me about two older women who were enjoying a cup of coffee. Suddenly, one of them glanced at her watch, put down her cup and exclaimed, "Oh, I must go! I have an appointment with my psychiatrist, and if I'm not there on time he starts without me!"

CONTINUING this medical analogy in a quite serious vein, my diagnosis of the newspaper publishing industry is this:

1) The American press as a whole was never in sounder economic health than it is today.

2) Our greatest danger is not rising costs, television, or any of the others usually mentioned: it is the danger that we ourselves may fail to keep pace with the changing needs and interests of our readers.

3) Unless some newspapers move more rapidly to get in step with the dynamic economy in which we live, their readers may, indeed, have to "go on without them."

Let's look at the facts upon which these conclusions are based.

Raymond Nixon is editor of *Journalism Quarterly* and professor of journalism at the University of Minnesota. This was a talk to the Inland Daily Press Association in Chicago, May 13, 1955.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS about the economic health of the newspaper business, and its prospects for the future?

Despite rising costs—and, in large part, because of them—the newspaper publishing industry in the United States has attained the highest degree of economic stability in its history. Ninety-four percent of all our daily newspaper cities are now without any local newspaper competition, 82% having only one daily, and another 12% having only one morning and one evening paper under the same ownership or in joint printing. In the weekly field, a similar stabilization has taken place: more than 90% of our weekly towns now have either a single paper, or "twin weeklies" under a single ownership. But, daily or weekly, most American communities today have about the number of papers they can decently support. As a result, newspapers are sounder financially than ever before.

During 1954—a year which was only "second best" for American business as a whole—the people of this country raised their newspapers to a new high both in total daily circulation and in total advertising revenue. True, total daily circulation since 1950 has not been increasing as fast as the country's population, but we have had such cyclical dips or lags before. The long-term trend in circulation is upward and should continue to be—provided publishers sense the meaning of a cycle quickly enough, and do something about it.

That the United States is still far from the saturation point in daily circulation is revealed by a recent UNESCO survey of *The Daily Press* in all major countries. Great Britain leads the world with an average circulation of 611 daily newspapers per 1,000 inhabitants; Sweden has 490 per thousand; Luxembourg, 447; Iceland, 439; Australia, 416; Norway, 396; Belgium, 384; Denmark, 381; and New Zealand, 358. The United States is tied with Japan for only 10th place, with 353 copies of dailies sold each day for every 1,000 inhabitants. And when we consider differences in purchasing power, we find that the reader in almost any of these other countries pays more per copy for his paper than the 5-cent price which still prevails in five-sixths of our American cities.

The population forecasters tell us there should be from 200 to 220 million persons in the United States by 1975. Compare this country's resources with that of any of the nine countries that now rank above us in per capita daily circulation. Then ask yourself whether it is unreasonable to expect a U.S. population of 200 to 220 million in 1975 to be buying from 100 to 110 million papers a day. At the University of Minnesota's 1955 News Executives Conference, many editors in the Upper Midwest were talking confidently about "twice as many readers by 1965!"

AS FOR ADVERTISING, the consensus of long-range economic forecasts is that the nation's annual advertising budget by 1975 will be approximately \$15 billion, nearly twice the \$8.1 billion spent on advertising in 1954. Three years ago Dr. J. Edward Gerald of the University of Minnesota made an analysis which indicates that our expanding economy can support the rapidly growing television industry without seriously altering the newspaper's share of total advertising revenue, and events so far have borne him out. In fact, if he erred at all for the period to date, it was on the conservative side!

Instead of merely selling more space, the newspaper's most urgent problem on the advertising side is to make certain that all classes of rates provide a fair margin of profit. Look at the ever-widening differential between national and local rates, and at the wide variation in local rates on a volume basis. Remember (how can we forget it?) that expenses on most papers have been going up faster than revenues since 1946. Note the tremendous increase in the ratio of advertising to news and editorial content. Then I believe you will conclude, as I have done, that some of the advertising in many of our fat papers today is being carried at an actual dollars and cents loss.

A thorough cost analysis of advertising rates is long overdue on most dailies. Moreover, the newspaper which has won the confidence of its community, through good service and fair dealing, should emerge even stronger from any logical readjustment that may result. The timid and the fearful should read about the experience of the York (Pa.) *Gazette* and *Daily*—in the April 30 *Editor & Publisher*. This paper has solved its revenue problem by raising local rates closer to the national level, and wiping out quantity discounts. It did something about rising costs!

FIGURES about the number of "disappearing dailies" in this country have been widely misinterpreted and widely misunderstood. According to the records kept by ANPA, there were 12 new dailies started last year and 26 papers merged, suspended, or changed to less frequent publication. This is a net loss of 14 dailies. The 1955 *Editor & Publisher Year Book* reported a loss of 20, but it made an error of four in adding its state-by-state figures—its total number of dailies at the end of 1954 should be 1,769, instead of 1,765. Also, the *Year Book* counted as two papers each the *Texarhana News-Digest*, which was listed in two states, and the all-day Washington *Times-Herald*, which was treated as both a morning and an afternoon paper. Thus, ANPA's figure of a net loss of 14 dailies in 1954 appears to be approximately correct.

When we examine the entire list of 26 "disappearing dailies" closely, what do we find? Six of the papers were *News-Digest* tabloids subsidized by the International Typographical Union to combat local "monopolies." They had

been losing money steadily ever since their founding, and would have gone under much sooner but for some \$7 million poured into them by their sponsor. Ten other dailies became weeklies or semi-weeklies; two were in morning-evening combinations that changed to once-a-day publication. Two went into mergers, like that of the *Times-Herald*. Only six "full-fledged," independent, commercial dailies suspended outright, and only two of these had been in business more than five years. Can you name one other free American business or industry of comparable size and extent that has done so well?

MUCH PROMINENCE has been given to the obituaries of a number of old and distinguished metropolitan papers. This makes it easy to forget that there has been a net increase of 25 in the total number of U. S. dailies between 1945 and 1955, as compared with a net decrease of 200 from 1930 to 1945. These more numerous but less publicized births of new dailies have been chiefly in the faster-growing communities of less than 10,000 population. Many are former weeklies that became dailies—an experiment successful, on the average, only one out of three times, but in any case requiring far less capital risk than the establishment of an entirely new paper. Because of these developments, the United States today has 52 more cities with daily newspapers than it had in 1945.

More than a fourth of the so-called "disappearing dailies" of the last 25 years have gone back to weekly, semi-weekly or tri-weekly publication, with little loss of either capital or employment. For that matter there also are more than 400 smaller dailies which have eliminated unprofitable Saturday editions and now publish only five days a week, or five days and Sunday; 24 other "dailies" actually appear only four days a week. Readjustments of this kind are not necessarily a sign of weakness; on the contrary, they frequently have resulted in papers both stronger and better.

FORTUNATELY, outright suspensions of newspapers should not be so numerous during the next 20 years as during the last three decades, for the simple reason that there are not many unprofitable papers left. The relatively few "marginal dailies" today are principally at either end of the "economic spectrum"—a few in places too small to support a daily, where there will be readjustments of the kind I have described, and a few more in some of the larger cities, where there is excessive competition for the same kind of readers. Most other newspapers today are making money and are basically sound—first because of the essential nature of the commodity they sell, and second, because of the non-competitive position they hold in their local communities.

For this same reason, consolidations and mergers also

will be less numerous in the future. Only 82 cities now have locally competing dailies, and only 29 of these cities are in the 100,000 to 500,000 population group, where morning-evening combinations or joint printing arrangements appear to be most feasible. Thirty-six cities of less than 100,000 population also have locally competing dailies, but in cities of this size the trend for the last 10 years has been toward a single daily—a trend which seems certain to continue.

THE KIND OF CONSOLIDATION most likely to increase in the future is illustrated by the *Southern Illinoisan*, a strong single daily now serving the closely adjacent cities of Carbondale, Herrin and Murphysboro, where three separate papers formerly struggled for existence. In some 30 other clusters of two or three adjoining communities, a single daily or a single morning-evening combination in recent years has replaced two or more separate papers. Two mergers of this kind occurred during the month of April—one in Blackfoot and Pocatello, Idaho, and the other in Norfolk and Portsmouth, Va. The "hyphenated city" daily—something between a local combination and a newspaper group—may be the only answer in some cases to statistics showing that the minimum circulation required to support a paper of any given frequency today is much larger than formerly.

As for newspaper chains or groups they too will continue to grow in number, but probably not in average size. At no time since a count of 13 U.S. chains with 62 dailies was made in 1910 does their size appear to have averaged less than 4.1 or more than 5.7 papers per group. On January 1, 1955 there were 95 daily groups (two or more dailies in different cities under a common ownership), with an average of 5 papers each. Because of the very real objections to absentee control, the trend should continue to be away from the large national chain and toward smaller regional operations, with a greater degree of local editorial autonomy. Even the relatively few large groups in this country today either operate in only a limited area or areas, or show a definite tendency toward decentralization.

Even if concentration through both local and group consolidations should proceed for the next 20 years at approximately the same rate as that of the last decade, this country would still have in 1975 a total of approximately 1,800 dailies under some 1,100 separate ownerships. This is far from being an alarming degree of national concentration, especially when it is compared with that in many basic U. S. industries. In the automobile industry, for example, three major companies last year controlled 94% of the production. But the largest U. S. newspaper publishing organization—Hearst—had only about 9% of the daily circulation, and its proportion has been dwindling.

THIS BRINGS me to the second part of my diagnosis:

the question of possible changes in reader attitudes. For journalism is no ordinary business or profession, and the high degree of economic stability which the newspaper publishing industry has attained today would afford little protection to private ownership if the majority of readers ever became convinced that freedom of the press was being used merely for the benefit of newspaper publishers and owners, rather than in the interest of the public's "right to know."

Despite talk in some circles of a "cold war on newspapers," a study of both governmental and public attitudes which I made last year confirms my belief that the people of this country still have faith in newspapers—that is, *good* newspapers. As I pointed out in an article in the Fall 1955, the present-day willingness of the public for newspapers to be subjected to general social and economic legislation does not necessarily imply any special hostility toward the press. It is more likely that the average layman simply does not see the same possibility of some future abuse of governmental power that the newspaperman or the student of history is inclined to see. Public thinking along this line also has been blurred by the fact that our broadcasting system, even though "free," must be regulated by law because of physical limitations.

AS FOR RECENT DECISIONS in which the Federal Communications Commission has favored non-newspaper applicants over newspapers for television licenses, the newspaper publishing industry obviously faces a dilemma. For years publishers in non-competitive newspaper cities have been contending that there can be no such thing today as a "local newspaper monopoly." The main basis of their contention has been that new media now provide a far greater diversity of information and ideas than competing newspapers ever provided. The argument is convincing—so convincing that newspapers find it turned against them in the FCC's policy of attaching prime importance to the factor of competition among the media.

In a country which holds the Sherman Anti-trust Act in almost as much reverence as the Constitution itself, it seems unrealistic to expect either the Commission or the Courts to lessen the present emphasis upon ownership diversification. After all, the FCC's policy is quite similar to policies which the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Civil Aeronautics Administration have followed for years in the field of transportation. The policy was welcomed by many publishers when it was adopted in 1944, for it took the place of an earlier proposal to bar newspapers completely from radio and television ownership. Since it calls for the consideration of other factors besides diversification, newspapers should insist upon fair treatment. The number of newspapers with broadcasting licenses has grown

under the policy, and it should continue to grow. But the ratio of newspaper-affiliated stations to the total number of all AM-radio and TV stations has been going down since 1949, and it is almost certain to decline further.

Entirely apart from considerations of public policy, there are both economic and physical limitations to the number of newspaper publishers who can operate television stations. This is small consolation, of course, to one who feels that he has been treated unfairly in his application for a profitable channel. But investigation has revealed no inherent savings in the joint operation of a newspaper and a radio or television station. Since this is true, even those who are so fortunate as to own both a newspaper and a broadcasting enterprise should insist that each stand upon its own financial feet. Instead of looking to television to "pull it out of the red," the newspaper should develop its own strong points. Foremost among these is the advantage of being able to provide a much wider range of timely information, in more detailed and convenient form, than any other existing medium.

SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE newspapers which do a good job of developing their natural advantages have little to fear, in my opinion, from either governmental regulation or new competition. This view is borne out by my surveys of state legislation, judicial decisions and reader attitudes at the "grass roots" level. Indeed, in only three of the 48 states did the manager or chief executive of the state press association tell me that he thought the "climate of opinion" in his state regarding newspapers had "become less favorable" since 1945. One would not express an opinion, and 18 said they thought conditions had "remained about the same." But spokesmen of publishers' associations representing 26 states said they thought the public's attitude toward newspapers definitely had "become more favorable."

In this same connection, I have reported elsewhere on two sets of comparable reader attitude surveys conducted over the 1949 to 1953 period in four single-ownership cities—Atlanta, Des Moines, Louisville and Minneapolis. In all four of these cities readers revealed in 1953 an even higher regard for the quality and fairness of their papers than they had shown two to four years earlier. They also revealed a generally higher regard for their so-called "monopoly" dailies than was revealed by readers of the highly competitive papers in Boston, Massachusetts. And Boston didn't come out so badly, either, although it showed a much wider range of reader attitudes than any of the non-competitive cities.

These surveys, of course, do not warrant any generalizations about other newspapers, either competitive or non-competitive. The results undoubtedly would be different in any kind of ownership situation where a greedy, com-

placent or incompetent publisher has been turning out an inferior product. But these studies—and the fact that certain newspapers were willing to have them made—do demonstrate that a socially responsible owner and publisher, with a competent staff, can win increasing public confidence. And this is true even though the papers in question have a local "monopoly" and even though, as in three of these cities, they also are part of a chain or group. What such research shows, above all, is a growing tendency for each paper to be judged upon its own individual merits, regardless of whether ownership is competitive or non-competitive—local, group or even absentee.

SINCE SECRECY breeds suspicion, every newspaper should bring its ownership and control into the open. There may be competitive situations where the publication of annual financial statements would be unwise, but there seems to be little justification for the fact that only 47 of the 95 newspaper groups in this country identify themselves fully on the page devoted to that purpose in the 1955 *Editor & Publisher Year Book*. Most of these group ownerships or affiliations are known locally, but these also should be acknowledged nationally as added assurance that the owner has nothing to hide. Even the Anaconda Copper Mining Company probably would profit in the long run by freely acknowledging the ownership of its eight papers in Montana.

It is the confidence of a fully informed public that will enable responsible newspapers to survive, even in the face of possible increases in price. The reader does not like the idea of a 7-cent or a 10-cent newspaper any more than he will accept necessary price increases in either before he will continue to buy, at any price, a product in whose quality and integrity he has lost confidence.

NORMAN ISAACS summed up my first two points for me when he reminded the National Newspaper Promotion Managers Association that the really great newspapers of this country—newspapers which rank highest in public confidence and esteem—are also successful newspapers financially.

But it is also true that a few of these leaders in social responsibility and financial independence have been extremely backward in other respects, such as modernizing their typographical design. And none of them has been entirely immune from the ills caused by rising costs, even though as a group they have suffered less than others. This leads us to wonder whether the third question raised by my diagnosis may not be the most crucial of all: Do newspapers have the ability to adjust themselves rapidly enough to the changing needs and interests which the future has thrust upon us?

The answer to this question will depend primarily, I

think, upon what newspaper owners and publishers do about two matters—research and personnel.

MARK ETHRIDGE, publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and *Times*, said recently at Ohio State University that “newspapers are at least a generation behind in research that might make production more efficient,” and I believe he would agree that most papers also are at least 50 years behind other leading American industries in their personnel methods and policies. “In an age of jet propulsion”—to paraphrase Victor Ratner—we “continue to fly by the seat of our pants!”

PRODUCTION is only one of the areas in which the newspaper has suffered. The urgent need for scientific cost analyses on the business side, especially in advertising, already has been mentioned. On the editorial side, there is an equally urgent need for comparative studies of newspaper content, and for experimental research to determine the effectiveness of new ideas in both content and its presentation. If the railroads of this country had shown no more ingenuity in improving their trains than newspapers have shown in improving their product, we still would be riding behind wood-burning locomotives; the dirty, uncomfortable coaches would be unchanged except that the seats would be shrunk in size, with perhaps an extra row crowded into the same or less space.

Mr. Ethridge is a great editor who became a successful publisher by demonstrating that “the newspaper’s best and cheapest box office attraction is its news and editorial content.” Here is his indictment of his fellow publishers: “Publishers have done precious little to help themselves. In 1953, the aviation industry was spending 13% of all it took in on research; electrical people were spending 6.4%. The average for all industry was 2% of its sales and that percentage was dragged down by the printing industry, of which newspapers are a part—the sixth greatest industry in the United States—which spent 0.017% of its revenue on research. It’s not only too little; it’s too late to save some papers.”

IT MAY BE “too late to save some papers,” but there is evidence that others will prosper, and also as to what kind of papers they will be. Part of the evidence is contained in speeches like that of Mr. Ethridge and the one which John Cowles, president of the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune*, delivered last fall at the national convention of Sigma Delta Chi. Other evidence is found in the fact that during the last 12 months some 175 U. S. dailies have banded together in the Institute of Newspaper Operations to support research in newspaper production and business methods on an extensive scale. But the most convincing evidence of all—oddly enough—is in the studies of what has been happening to daily circulation since the advent of television!

ONE SUCH STUDY, published in the Spring 1954 *Journalism*, shows that in the five largest cities the Sunday papers which have lost readers since television have been primarily those that emphasize entertainment—a field in which television has an obvious advantage. Another study, mentioned by Mr. Cowles, shows that the 11 largest daily and Sunday circulation losers since 1947 have been, with only one exception, papers which depend “primarily upon entertainment features or sex and crime sensationalism to attract readers.” Moreover, some of the losers also have been papers “which frequently editorialize in and slant their news columns to present their publishers’ prejudices and opinions.”

During this same seven-year period, other daily and Sunday papers gained more circulation than the eleven big losers lost. These more successful papers, as Mr. Cowles points out, “are with only minor exceptions publications that regard full and fair presentation of the news as their primary function and reason for being.”

THESE ANALYSES of circulation losers are extremely important to all of us—even to those small and medium-sized papers which have not lost circulation and which, because of limited resources, feel they cannot engage in research. The reason was suggested by Dr. Frank Luther Mott, the journalism historian, after he had analyzed the content of a group of metropolitan papers over a 50-year period. “When circulation holds up,” he said, “it seems like tempting fate to change the offering,” but when circulation begins to drop, papers become willing to engage in research and experimentation. Moreover, so far as smaller papers especially are concerned, “imitation of successful newspaper practices is the oldest and most consistent secondary cause of newspaper trends.”

SIDNEY GOLDFISH disposed of the television bogey so effectively in his recent address to the Northern States Circulation Managers that I don’t intend to say much more about it except to urge you to get his address, and read it. But, in conclusion, I do wish to mention the service television has rendered the newspaper by bringing out the difference between *readership* and *reader interest*.

In both Minneapolis and Des Moines, newspaper readers recently were asked whether they thought television ever would “take the place of daily newspapers.” Nine out of ten replied “no.” These readers then were asked to specify “what you get out of newspapers that you don’t get out of television.” An average of 60.7 percent said “more news and more detailed coverage” or “more local and regional news,” 18.5 percent specified “more time for reflection” or “time to reread,” 8.4 percent named “advertising,” and 4.8 percent, “editorials.” But only 2.3 percent made any reference to “funnies” or “comic strips”!

Now I haven't a thing against comic strips, except that few of them are funny any more. I enjoy reading some of them myself, and I know the readership of the better ones continues to be quite high. But in study after study, the same fact emerges: that what readers say they read is one thing, but what they value most is quite another. There is mounting evidence that reporting the news in greater breadth and depth is far more vital to the future of the American newspaper than making the comic strips a column wider, or even putting them in technicolor 3-D.

NEW TYPES of research can help the newspaper to solve its problems, economic and otherwise, but well-trained, well-paid personnel is even more important. For, as Dr. Charles Swanson of the Curtis Publishing Company's research department observed in the recent forecast of future trends, the knowledge gained by research is of no value "unless it is absorbed and restructured in creative, imaginative, dynamic and courageous minds, able to meet and cope with change. Research is simply a process of discovering facts; it is helpful only if we have the intelligence and judgement to use it wisely."

If newspapers are to attract and hold news and editorial workers capable of coping with the problems of a rapidly

changing world, they must choose those workers by the best possible methods; they must pay them well—at least as much as workers in the business and mechanical departments are paid; and they must maintain standards and working conditions which give the editorial employee a sense of status, independence and self-respect. This isn't an easy order to be filled, but our best papers today prove that it can be done.

ANY BUSINESS forecast today has to be limited by the possibility of a general war or a serious depression, no matter how remote. But newspapermen have a great advantage over most other business and professional groups in this respect: through sound and responsible journalism, they can make it much less probable that any such catastrophe will befall us. Certainly President Eisenhower could have had no more important group in mind when he said: "I believe that it is high time, in this great, growing, productive land of ours, to put behind us the rash of fears that for so long have haunted some among us—fear of war, fear of unemployment, fear of ourselves—fear of the future."

We must not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by fear at the very threshold of what should be—and can be—the American newspaper's "finest hour"!

Adventure in Mississippi

A Negro Reporter at the Till Trial

by Simeon Booker

Millions of words were written about the recent Till murder trial, but the most dramatic and, by far, the most significant development during the hectic week in the backwoods Mississippi community remains untold. It was an incredible interracial manhunt which located three key Negro witnesses whose testimony almost changed the course of the trial. It involved the unique cooperation of Negro and white reporters, top Negro leaders and Mississippi law enforcers working together in a hard-hitting team at a time most of the U.S. thought the Dixie state was doing nothing about gaining convictions in the case.

When I came away from the trial, I was somewhat downhearted by the acquittal verdict but I was not embittered. I was proud of the law enforcers. I personally knew they had done what they could to produce the murder evidence. As a party to this manhunt—which even I as a Chicago newsman would describe as unbelievable—I had gained great respect for three white Southern newsmen, Clark Porteous

of the Memphis *Press-Scimitar* and W. C. Shoemaker and Jim Featherstone of the Jackson *Daily News*. Porteous, a former Nieman Fellow, served as the main liaison agent for the operation and he did so unflinchingly in an atmosphere which was charged with tension and fear.

For the group of twelve Negro newsmen who covered the trial, it was a bitter, at times frustrating experience. As soon as we arrived in Sumner, Sheriff H. C. Strider laid down the law—there was to be no mixing with white reporters—and any violation meant ejection from the courtroom and town. The day before the trial opened, our *Jet-Ebony* crew ran into a truckload of gun-bearing whites on a truck near Money, Miss., which brought it home to us that our assignment was no good neighbor get-together. The Sheriff's edict further restricted our movement. As a result, we stayed to ourselves in the far corner of the courtroom as the antagonistic Exhibit A of Northern Negro reporters who were capitalizing on lowrating the South.

On the first night of the trial, we had a pleasant surprise. Two white reporters (I better not mention names) defied the state's segregation laws to breeze into our town for a visit. They gave us the first report that the trial was "a fix," that the State had obtained only two witnesses (Rev. Mose Wright and his 12-year-old son, Simeon) both of whom were at the house when Till was kidnapped. Said our guests: "The trial won't last two days. The State doesn't even know where this boy was killed. They have

Simeon Booker is on the staff of *Jet* Magazine. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1951. He covered the Till trial.

no murder weapon. They have hardly circumstantial evidence of a killing."

The white reporters also gave us some tips on conduct in the courtroom. Said they: "Take it easy. Don't get excited. They're waiting for just one incident so they can pitch out all of you."

After the pair left, we got a spine-tingling phone call from Dr. T. R. M. Howard, Mound Bayou surgeon and perhaps Mississippi's foremost Negro civil rights leader. His information: two Negro workers had vanished on a Milam-owned plantation. One was reported to have knowledge of the crime. What it was no one knew.

The next day we heard reports that other Negroes were being "jailed" or whisked away from area plantations. Why this sudden exit, we still didn't know but we had ideas. But it was not only difficult, it was dangerous to try to track down some of the stories, the section being so hostile to intruders. We continued attending the trial and awaiting further word from Dr. Howard.

Finally, on the day that the State presented its first witness, aging Rev. Mose Wright, things began to happen. A Negro plantation worker, on the pretense of going to church, made his way to Dr. Howard and told him a hair-raising account. He knew of the whereabouts of a group of Negroes who not only had seen Till being carried on a truck into a barn, but later had heard some one beaten and cry for mercy.

Immediately, Dr. Howard met with the Negro reporters and NAACP officials to plot a course of action. This was the hottest story of the trial. It would give the State just the evidence it needed. But there were major problems. There was a vast wall between the races. There were the barriers of mistrust and lack of confidence. One group argued that in the event we continued to withhold this valuable information we would be obstructing justice. But others contended that hasty action would be dangerous. There were lives at stake. In any event, the Negroes had to be taken away from their homes for their safety.

After working out plans to evacuate these potential witnesses, we agreed to call in the most reliable and sympathetic daily paper reporters covering the trial. In return for sharing this headline story, the white reporters would be asked to make the first contact with the law enforcers and prosecution. They would notify them of the new evidence. As our part of the bargain, we would then produce the witnesses.

On our original list of newsmen to be summoned were several topnotch reporters covering the trial. But Dr. Howard refused to accept the full list. He had confidence in one man—Clark Porteous, a fair and square Southerner. When he called Porteous, however, Dr. Howard didn't make this clear and Porteous (probably for company) brought along two Jackson *Daily News* reporters, James Featherstone and W. C. Shoemaker. Thus, these newsmen

became the only whites who actually knew of the behind-the-scene activity and since they were involved they modestly have refrained from disclosing their roles in later stories.

At the initial meeting, Dr. Howard, in his excitement at the turn of events, forgot to tell the white delegation that his uncovering of the "surprise witnesses" was to be kept secret until they were brought from the plantation. When notified of this, Featherstone balked and stated that he would run the story the next day. Porteous intervened and finally got Featherstone to hold up the story on condition that no other reporter would be tipped off. We agreed on these terms: the whites would have the law enforcers in the town at 8 o'clock the next evening when we would produce the witnesses.

The tight ring of reporters also included Jimmy Hicks of the *Afro-American*, Clotye Murdock and David Jackson of the *Ebony-Jet* team, and L. Alex Wilson of the *Defender*.

While excitement increased, we could hardly believe the true impact of our project until Judge Curtis Swango the next day allowed the State to delay its case for a half day. The reason: to find our new witnesses.

But our well laid plans for the 8 p.m. meeting didn't work out. The Sheriffs of two counties showed up but not the witnesses. We discovered that "some white men" had visited the plantations in question in the morning and by the time our party reached there, the witnesses had vanished, frightened to death. Later, we learned that the visitors were law enforcers who somehow had been given advance information and had probably become restless. So we had new problems—and only some twelve hours to locate our people.

Sheriff George Smith of Leflore County, fair man that he is, promptly routed the pessimism. Said he: "These witnesses have a story to tell. We've got to find them if it takes all night. We'll stop court until we find them."

Some of the law enforcers got on the phone and began calling up plantation owners warning them to produce such witnesses or face legal action.

In this manner, Mississippi's first major interracial man-hunt began. Each sheriff agreed to take a Negro and go to a plantation home. All would be visited before morning. The Negro escort would plead with the potential witnesses to testify. There would be no warrants issued. No one would be carted out of his home. We agreed to round up our people and bring them to the State enforcement agent's office in Drew.

Three of us (Porteous, Featherstone, and myself) followed Sheriff Smith in a 70-mile-an-hour chase along dusty backwood roads to get 18-year-old Willie Reed. This youth had actually seen Till on the truck and heard the beating. During the run, we got lost and headed back to Drew where in about a half hour business began to pick up.

The first Negro rounded up was middle-aged Frank Young. He refused to talk to anyone except Dr. Howard, who hadn't yet arrived at the office. So Young was allowed to go home—to be summoned on call. An hour later, when sheriffs went after him again, he was missing. He didn't turn up at his plantation home until two days after the trial.

Throughout the night, the search continued. Each person was brought in and asked to testify. All were frightened. Finally, Dr. Howard promised to take each of those who would testify to live in Chicago. This worked with three witnesses—Willie and his 74-year-old grandfather and Mandy Bradley, who later was forced to leave her cabin in the dead of night to get away from the plantation.

When the court opened in the morning, the new wit-

nesses were on hand. Newspapers blared the story of the new witnesses—the fact that these people could give an account of seeing Till go into the barn and hearing the outcries; evidence which strengthened the State's case. But none mentioned the all-night manhunt.

Later, special prosecutor Robert Smith praised the work of the reporters in gathering the new witnesses, one of whom, Willie Reed, became the trial's star witness. But the reporter whose calmness and keen judgment was responsible for the smoothness of the operation was Clark Porteous. He was the reporter Mississippi's Negro leaders had faith in because of his outstanding work in the section, and he proved it again at the Till murder trial.

What's News in the World?

Does It Tell the Story of What's Happening?

By W. McNeil Lowry

We know somewhat more than we used to about the role of the press in the flow of information among peoples. UNESCO has contributed to this knowledge. In addition, the study completed in 1953 by the International Press Institute describes in detail the nature and extent of the flow of news among ten countries—India, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Western Germany, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland. As a basis for this study there was daily examination of 177 newspapers and 45 global and national news agency reports. In the roughest outlines, what picture does this study present? Let us remember that we are talking about 1953.

The prime source of foreign news is, of course, the global news agency. Dependency upon this source, rather than upon a newspaper's own correspondents, is greatest in the United States and India, among the ten countries studied. In the United States, four large news agencies bring about 80,000 words a day of foreign news. To Western Europe global and national agencies combined bring about 135,000 words a day. To India, four agencies supply together about 32,000 words each day.

In the United States, the average newspaper prints a little more than four columns a day of foreign news. In Europe and India, the *average* paper prints less, though in doing so it gives a higher proportion of its space to foreign news than does its American counterpart.

From the point of view of geographical origin, foreign news is centered heavily on a few major countries—the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and one or two others. Ranking with any of these national

sources, however, if taken together, are the seats of the international organizations that have been established since World War II—the UN, NATO and so on—and this is the most significant shift in the pattern of foreign news of the past generation.

What subjects are dealt with in the flow of news? The International Press Institute study analyzed fourteen categories or types. Five were what might be broadly called "official" news—war, politics, foreign relations, defense and economics. Five were broadly social in interest—cultural news, educational, scientific or technical news, religious news, judicial and legal news and news of general social measures. Four represented news that is personal in interest, its foreign origin more accidental than intrinsic; these categories included "human interest" news, news of crime, news of disasters and news of sports.

In the flow of news on the agency wires, and to only a somewhat smaller extent in the newspapers themselves, "official" news—war, politics, foreign relations, defense and economics—heavily dominated. Agency foreign news to U.S. newspapers, for example, was two-thirds in these categories. News of personal interest accounted for about 22 per cent of the agency coverage; broadly social and cultural news for only about 12 per cent. Similar, though mathematically different, proportions were found in the flow of news to Western Europe or to India.

If we pause now with this purely quantitative description, we find that the press, as a medium for the flow of information among peoples, deals in relatively inadequate space with the most complex issues affecting governments and their interrelations, and only marginally with either the more lasting preoccupations of foreign peoples or their daily lives.

This is just another, and unnecessarily complicated, way of saying that the great world news agencies deal first and foremost in "spot news" and "headline news" stories, and that in the period when this study was made, as today, it is national and world politics that has properly made headlines.

Accepting this postwar world in which we live, however, we still have a fair question whether the picture the press gives of other countries has balance and proportion. Complex stories of governments acting upon political, economic and diplomatic problems require interpretation even when the government concerned is the reader's own. They require even more when the government is a foreign government responsible to people with another tradition, another language or even another national objective. Beyond this lies the question raised by one critic, whether the portrayal of his country in a foreign press gave any idea of "the significant, though subtle, events in a country . . . outside the lofty abodes of statesmen." At bottom, the change required may not strictly be a change in the kinds of news reported but a change in the perspective from which *any* kind of news is written.

If you will indulge me, I shall refer once more to the study made by the International Press Institute and to what I consider to be the most interesting exercise conducted therein, the attempt to reconstruct the picture of one country in the press of another. We took representative samples of the press in each of ten countries (in the United States, this meant 105 newspapers on both a circulation and geographical spread), extracted from them every news story from a particular country over the space of a month, and on the basis of these wrote a composite picture of that country as if we had no other source of information concerning it. This picture, together with all the clippings, was then given to a correspondent representing that country for his evaluation, inquiring of him whether the picture was accurate, whether it was complete, whether it was balanced. We gave the correspondent's report, then, to editors of some of the newspapers in which the stories had appeared, and asked them to judge the evaluation.

You will be glad, I think, to learn that only rarely did the factual components of the picture come in for censure. Equally rare was the conclusion that there was willful bias in the reporting on country A in the press of country B. But almost universal was the judgment that either the *incompleteness* of the picture or the almost total lack of *interpretation* of the factual components led to an absence of proportion, of balance and, alas, sometimes even of meaning.

Here is one illustration: "The coverage of France in the American press is generally objective, but spotty and incomplete. It gives a fairly accurate idea of what happens in France but seldom conveys the significance of the news and even less often tells the American reader how his French counterpart lives, thinks, acts. Everything is the third, im-

personal person. Glancing quickly through a backfile, France looks like a succession of crises, accidents and murders. In short, quite unwillingly, it creates more distrust than confidence, it accentuates the differences rather than brings together peoples of a same civilization with a common ideal."

Here is another: "The sins of the Italian press . . . are sins of omission. . . . If it fails to give an accurate picture of the United States, this is due not to deliberate distortion or suppression of news, but rather to overemphasis on some negative or purely accessory aspects of American life, and to underemphasis on other aspects that . . . would serve to put the whole picture in focus."

And one more: "The fragmentary coverage of India in the German press is no more distorting to the picture than the almost complete absence of any explanatory remarks. Generally, the stories throw no light whatever on the background or the attendant circumstances. They can hardly contribute to the building up of any sort of a picture of Indian life and conditions."

We are not totally dependent upon the press for the flow of information among peoples. If we were, we should learn woefully little, for example, about the educational, social and cultural interests abroad. Many editors, it is worth noting, are aware of this particular gap in their coverage and desire to see something done about it. But even these newspaper editors never expect to see the daily press devote a major share of its attention to this particular area of news.

What we need to face realistically, I think, is the conclusion that the foreign news subjects that *are* treated in the press will themselves continue to lack balance if the point of view of the ordinary people is lost. What are the motives of the man in that other street? What is he thinking about his taxes, his job, the objectives of his government, the relations of his government with others? What is he like in the first place?

The obstacles to filling in this shadowy portion of the picture are many and various. Some are purely mechanical, but not less important for being so: these are, for examples, differentials in cable rates; the heavy dependency upon news gathering agencies which serve many clients while heavily supported by a few, or which, in one or two instances, are officially controlled; the excessive reliance on governmental statements and handouts; the high cost of newsprint; the attrition in the ranks of full-time foreign correspondents; and so on.

Even if the press could cope with all these problems, the picture of country A in the press of country B would still have its shadowy portions. However it is transmitted and in whatever volume and over whatever distance, news must first be gathered, and gathering it is a process of selection. If there is to be a free flow of information among peoples, the press must ensure two things: the reporter's understanding

must be equal to his opportunity to make the selection, and his opportunity must be unlimited.

I should like to dispose of the second requirement first. The reporter's opportunity to select the news he gathers is limited if the pressure of events writes his story for him. Barely elaborated transcripts of official texts or pronouncements are less noteworthy than the texts themselves, for standing alone the texts are what they are and do not purport to be anything else. Again, the reporter's opportunity to select the news he gathers is limited if his assignment for today is to write in a different form what his competition wrote yesterday. I could elaborate on these limitations at the source of our news, but I think these two examples may adequately suggest their nature.

The other requirement was that the reporter's understanding should be equal to his opportunity. I mean much more than that a foreign correspondent should know the language of the country in which he is stationed, that he should know something of its history and traditions. Studies in which I have taken part suggest we have a long way to go to fix these two qualifications. But let us stipulate that the emergent role of foreign affairs will in our lifetime prompt even journalists in the Western Hemisphere to learn more than one language and a good deal of history.

In a larger sense, the foreign correspondent must remove *himself* as an obstacle to the flow of news. I do not think he can realistically do this by a concept of "One World" and himself a citizen, though of course I do applaud the efforts of any man to make himself at home in many cultures and many lands. If there is not yet one world, I think there is a kind of international mindedness open to any perceptive man who imaginatively understands his own roots and knows enough about other peoples to understand what they can understand about him. If he thoroughly masters even this, he can begin to judge accurately the task of translation he has assumed in attempting to report back to his own origins.

As things are now, we depend mainly upon a reporter from country A stationed in country B trying to account for what B is doing *only* in terms of where A stands. Occasionally he will try to account for what B is doing in terms of where B stands, but this is a small part of his file and what he has been writing on all the other days often gets in his way.

Before the next decade is out, I believe we may have an international daily newspaper in which a reporter from A reports on A, a reporter from B on B, and so on, but each reporter selected for that "international mindedness" to which I have alluded. Photocomposition and photoduplication bring this prospect much nearer, I think, though we still have to determine whether there are many people in even the most prosperous countries who would pay the subscription cost for such a paper.

But even waiving this possibility, almost every country in the world can command the educational resources and the educational talents by which to train the kind of correspondent I am describing. We can all remember a time when everything but the financial page of a newspaper was almost completely innocent of economics. In recent years, reporters who originally trained themselves by covering fires or chasing patrol cars have been forced to write about balance of payment deficits and other such matters.

As this century develops, press traditions, too, are no longer completely isolated. The American tradition of so-called "hard news" interpreted only in headlines is gradually softening to permit interpretation in the body of the story. At the other extreme, in certain European countries, news sources are beginning to be identified. If there were an adequate corps of independent foreign correspondents, particularly for the American newspapers that can afford them but do not now hire them, the picture would not be as gray as it is.

Even now the editor of a newspaper can begin to look at his job in a different way. The file of his back issues is the source for his examination. What picture of other peoples is created by the stories he has printed concerning them? If the picture is so sketchy and unbalanced as to be unintelligible, the editor is not printing enough foreign news. Perhaps, however, he has no more space that he can, or will, allot to foreign news. Then he had better throw out the foreign news he is printing, and demand of the news agencies that they report foreign events in terms of people and not of abstractions. There will be a time lag, of course, but eventually he will get the kind of news he demands. And meantime, the news agency executives will point out to him—fairly, in most cases—that the editor himself has been trimming out of agency dispatches copy that was designed to explain the background of events.

If foreign news continues to be burdened by complex governmental events and pronouncements, there will be a revulsion. I think personally this revulsion has already hit the reader, if not yet the editor. We may see the return to journalistic eminence of the literary artist, as the effort is made to report foreign events in terms of people rather than of structures and other abstractions. Political understanding among nations is not the goal of the press as a medium of information. But intellectual understanding is, and the press is not yet fulfilling its role.

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A Smaller Group Than Usual

By Desmond Stone

(The Nieman tour of the Harvard Library is recorded by the Associate from New Zealand.)

No one else could have stood alone on the pyramid of steps that announces Harvard's Widener Library and remained in full character. Yet the Assistant Librarian seemed to manage it with ease, standing there as comfortably as a housewife on her kitchen steps, and quite as anxious to reveal his treasures. His eagerness was surprising. One would have thought he might have had his fill of conducted tours.

"Oh, I admit they're sometimes a little trying," he told the members of the group as they straggled up at clock chime. "But I like to think Niemans are different," he added, and brought 16 hard-boiled journalists into the fold. "As holders of fellowships, you've come to Harvard with a clear objective. And that's good. Widener asks no passwords of men with a serious scholarly purpose. What's more, I've always found Niemans to have an intelligent curiosity. I like the kind of questions they ask. I find them easy to get on with."

And that, the group decided, was a good deal more than the copy desk editors allowed.

"Thank you sir," said the man from West Virginia. "Perhaps it's just that all journalists have a habit of—well, a habit of kinda ingratiating themselves."

"Oh no," interrupted the Librarian, "I don't think that's the right word. You do yourself less than justice." And that was Mr. James all over—always fussy about words and details, precise in the way all librarians are, and yet withal warm and gregarious, and so very, very proud of his books.

"Come on then," urged the Librarian, "we may as well get started," and he turned about on the steps with an almost military precision. But there was no forming of fours behind him, and no impetuous surge into the hall of learning. These men were journalists, not academicians, and they had been a long time away from school. They made their way up slowly, with awkward crabwise movements. According to Mr. James's count, they were 17 in all—11 from the United States and one each from Canada, India, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, with the Curator of the Foundation blocking escape to the rear.

Waiting until the last of the procession had wound around the marble columns, Mr. James distributed his brood about him and explained the mysteries of the Union Catalogue, the master catalogue as he put it, the granddaddy of them all. "Yes," he mused, "some five million books are indexed here." The man from Florida wished he could have brought his wife along. She was forever complaining she could never get a decent book to read. For

this year at least, he would run no risk of taking the same book home to her twice.

"Perhaps you might tell us what you're planning to show the Fellows, John," said the Curator to the Librarian.

"Well, first, I thought, the reference room, unless you would like to see the Harry Widener memorial room. You know about him of course gentlemen. He went down with the Titanic."

"Kinda looks to me," drawled the pressman from Denver, "as if the Titanic stayed afloat. Why, you've got enough books here to sink a—"

"A ship?" twinkled Mr. James. "Well, then, shall we take in the memorial room?"

"No, no, I don't think so, John. The Fellows can do that in their own time." The Curator was anxious that the tour should have its confines. And he knew from experience how long and lingering was the verbal embrace of the lady attendants in the room.

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll show you our reference room, our public catalogue and the circulation desk and then we can go into the stacks."

"There's the Lamont Library of course," said the Curator. "Don't forget, John, most of the Fellows will be doing their work there in the open stacks. They want to know how to use them."

"Of course. But I thought perhaps that after we've seen the stacks here, we might first show the group our map room on the top floor of Widener. We have some very handsome maps." And the Librarian's eyes sparkled as he spoke.

"We'll see," replied the Curator, taking a mean advantage of long friendship. "Meantime . . ."

Meantime was the public catalogue on the second marble floor, the right way and the wrong way to use it, the reference room and all its answers to the 64,000-dollar question, the newspaper indices, the encyclopaedias, the circulation desk and its hours of opening and closing and a thousand other things besides.

For the first hour, the group stayed up remarkably well with its indefatigable leader. Then the Fellows began to straggle. Just before Mr. James lowered his head to burrow into the stacks, the man from Kentucky dropped out altogether. He had an appointment to keep with a professor. Or so at least he claimed. The 17 had become 16.

Deep down in the entombed wisdom of the stacks, Mr. James lifted the lid of the sarcophagus and brought forth the treasures of the centuries—wall upon wall and floor upon floor of books. Why, there must have been as many books of as many kinds as there were rats in the plague of the Pied Piper's mending. The field by now was badly strung out. At the time Mr. James was descending to English literature—"if you'll pardon the term," he chuckled—the last of the Niemans was only just rounding the cor-

ner of "United States Government," a corner he usually preferred to cut. Five minutes later, there were Niemans on the 2nd floor West, the 3rd floor East, and the 4th floor South.

And it was there in the Widener stacks that Mr. James lost two more of his flock—the journalist from New Zealand and the man from Oregon. It was the Literature of the East that proved the New Zealander's undoing, for there on a top shelf he spied the unexpurgated edition of the *Arabian Nights*. Many times he had tried to read it before. But no self-respecting book-seller would stock it at home. The local library had a copy he believed. But because he lived in a small town among small-minded people who turned whispers into gales, he had never dared to ask for it. So the New Zealander dropped out of the race. His fellow scribe from Philadelphia became a casualty in the stack floor above. He got lost in the Classics, and by the time he found his way out, the procession had wound on.

The 17 were 14 as Mr. James paused for stocktaking.

"Time's going, John," pressed the Curator. "Don't you think we should move on to Lamont?"

"Why, yes, I suppose we could. And yet while we're here now in Widener, it might be a chance to let the Fellows see the map room. If they'd like to that is," he added, with a little of the dumb yearning of a dog. "It's a very fine collection. I may say I've taken a special interest in it myself."

The Curator was kind, but remorseless. "I think, if you don't mind, John, we might see Lamont first."

"Mind?" said the Librarian. "No, of course not."

"Then after Lamont, the Fellows could come back with you to Widener and look over the maps. I may not be able to come myself, John" added the Curator, "for I have an appointment at 5."

With laggard steps now, the Nieman group regrouped and moved on. Casualties were beginning to mount. The journalist from Canada went missing in the gangway from Widener to the Houghton library, and the Australian inserted himself between the pages of the rare manuscripts in the Keats room and waited until the stepfalls had died.

Stopping only to hold the door open for a freshman, Mr.

Haynes hustled into Lamont with 12 jaded Niemans in his wake. In and out the open stacks the Librarian went, and up and down the stairs. But the group was sniffing less often at the trail, and its number kept on diminishing. The man from New York found refuge in the toilet, and the Delhi journalist clapped on the earphones in the poetry room and disguised himself as air crew.

By the time the Lamont tour was over, the 17 had shrunk to 10, and when the Curator took his leave to keep his appointment, only nine were left.

"Now," announced Mr. James as he left Lamont behind, "those of you who would care to, can come back to Widener with me and I'll take you over the atlas room."

All nine moved down the path behind him, but not, alas, with a single intent. Outside the back door to Widener, at the point where the College trails met the path to the world outside, five of the Niemans executed a quick left wheel and went marching out of the Yard.

Mr. James turned and looked at the decimated group, and not a muscle betrayed him. "This way gentlemen," he said, stepping into the corridor. "We'll go up in the lift."

As they waited for the lift to come down, Mr. James made an unexpected late capture. The journalist from Washington, the first of the field to pull out, had stayed on the premises and now he came blundering round the corner right into the Librarian's arms. "Ah, you've struck it lucky," he was told. "We're on our way up to the map room now. Why don't you come on up with us."

The map room librarian rose to greet Mr. James as he entered and then shook the six Niemans by the hand. It had been her pleasure, she told them, to meet the Fellows every year.

"But there are not so many this time," she went on. "It's a much smaller group than usual this year Mr. James."

The Assistant Librarian was magnificent. "A lot of them had appointments Miss Brown," he said with a brave bright smile and then kept right on polishing his glasses.

Desmond Stone is on the staff of the *Southland Times* of Invercargill, New Zealand and is the associate Nieman Fellow from New Zealand at Harvard this year.

As Pigeons Feed Their Young

For a Balanced Diet of News

By Charles H. Campbell

My title is based on a quotation from the Second Scene of the First Act of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. You don't have to be a Shakespearean scholar to find it: you will find it under the heading of "News" in Mencken's *Book of Quotations*. In the play Celia says to Rosalind: "Here comes Monsieur le Beau"—and the dialogue goes on:

Rosalind: With his mouth full of news.

Celia: Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young."

Rosalind: Then we shall be news-cramm'd.

Celia: All the better; we shall be more marketable.

What better definition of a reporter (I thought) than a man "with his mouth full of news," and what better way to make a newspaper marketable than to cram it with news! Moreover, when I decided that I wanted to talk about the need for a **balanced diet of news** in our daily papers, I was sure that it **must be such a balanced diet** as pigeons feed their young **to insure that they will grow up to be healthy pigeons!**

It seems to me that the prime and the essential responsibility of the press of this country is to give its readers a balanced diet of news, and to report that news in depth and with understanding. Implicit in these two responsibilities is the challenge to newspapers to lead in educating their public, in elevating public taste, and in inspiring the people of their communities more intelligently to operate the democratic processes. This is a challenge to lead rather than to follow. It is a challenge to avoid the age-old refuge of those who don't want to be shaken out of their complacency—the old cry: "We give the public what it wants."

The future of newspapers in America is yet to be determined. Much will depend on how they meet these responsibilities: on how they adjust themselves to a world of rapid changes and broadening horizons for the masses of men.

Too many newspapers are still reporting news almost exactly as they did when I started in the business more than 30 years ago, long before fast, cheap transport and the ubiquitous atom had shrunk the world to its present proportions, and before they were faced with the vast changes in competition that radio and television have brought.

A whole new concept of news presentation is needed as well as a realization of the changing needs of a mass democracy.

Bernard Kilgore, President of the *Wall Street Journal*, and publisher of the weekly Princeton (N. J.) *Packet*, got

to the fundamental of one aspect of the situation in a speech last month to the New Jersey Press Association. He said: "When the press was beaten on speed by the radio, it did not respond at once with a new and much greater emphasis on depth or quality."

"Quality," he went on, "is an elusive concept in the newspaper field. It's a little like the small boy's definition of salt—the stuff that makes the potatoes taste so bad when you leave it out. So quality is what makes a newspaper seem flat in the face of radio and news magazine competition when you leave it out."

We too often forget that for most newspapers in the United States the competition of radio and television and of news magazines is the only news competition that they have to meet. Eighty per cent of American cities have only one daily newspaper. In another 11 per cent having two or more dailies, all of the newspapers are controlled by one publisher. This means that 91 per cent of the cities in the United States have newspaper monopolies.

I am not one of those who feel that monopoly in the newspaper business in the United States is altogether a bad thing.

One of the good things about a monopoly press is that it tends to be a strong press, which does not have to pander to the least educated and most parochial-minded in its community in order to survive or even to prosper. But surely this monopoly press faces the greatest challenge of all the press to experiment with new concepts of reporting, to provide reporting in depth and to bring its readers a balanced diet of informative and instructive news of local, national, and international affairs, as well as to provide them with gossip and amusement.

This new concept calls for careful interpretation of the news. It is no longer sufficient to treat all facts as though they were created equal. Eric Sevareid, the distinguished chief correspondent of Columbia Broadcasting System in Washington, put it very well when he said:

"Our handling of the news has given the lie the same prominence and impact that truth is given; it has elevated the influence of fools to that of wise men; the ignorant to the level of the learned; the evil to the level of the good. Thus the press is witlessly aiding the destruction of honorable men and helping to create giant public myths." He went on to say that the reporting of news was still "2-D, the flat fact accompanied by the flat opinion because we are not handling the depth, not illuminating the background."

Nowhere in the field of news coverage is the need for this handling in depth greater than in the reporting of foreign news, and in no field is the diet of the average Ameri-

can newspaper reader so unbalanced as in the field of foreign news.

It has long been my contention that all news is local news in the hydratomic age. Local news is the business of reporting news of one's neighbors; and the world is now so small that all men are neighbors. Moreover, as columnist Joseph Alsop put it so succinctly in one of his columns not long ago:

"Probably the most trying characteristic of the new world in which we live is that what is distant often matters more than what is near."

There are countless illustrations of this. One outstanding one comes to mind at once:

There isn't anything more personal or universal or local in its impact than the draft. The local news that led to it and affects its daily intake is made many thousands of miles away.

In our time-shrunken world it becomes increasingly important that people know more about their neighbors everywhere in the world: about what makes them tick. The average American newspaper is not giving them anything like a fair proportion of such news in their reading diet.

This is not a matter of headline reporting or even of odd paragraphs here or there that bear foreign datelines. It is a matter of putting across to readers that fact that there are points of view in the world other than their own. To realize that is the beginning of wisdom. To understand why is a further step. Ignorance of such things is one of the great threats to peace. It is not only important that people realize the reasons for the blacks and whites of opinion in the world, but also the much more difficult matter of the shades of gray.

Anyone who has travelled the country knows how many cities there are in which the traveller is unable to keep up with what is going on in the world by reading the local newspaper. Many of you must have had this experience. I certainly have had it, and I find it a constant point of remark by visitors from abroad when they come back to New York or Washington after a trip around the country.

But after all, this is only an impression: and I decided the other day to take a sample of three newspapers, selected by chance, and each a monopoly in its own city, and to examine their handling of foreign news on dates also selected by pure chance. Two of the papers were in the Middle West and one in the Far West.

The result was far from reassuring.

The largest of the three papers has a circulation of about 70,000. It announces proudly that it has at its disposal Associated Press, United Press, International News Service, Reuters, New York *Times*, Chicago *Daily News* and Chicago *Tribune* services. On the day on which I measured

the paper it devoted 5.4 columns to news with foreign datelines. This was 3.7 per cent of its news space on a day when it ran 40 pages. By news space I mean that space not devoted to advertising. Some of the foreign news was unimportant by any standard and at least one story which occupied more than half a column was devoted to the bailing out safely of the crew of an American bomber that ran into trouble while it happened to be overseas. None of the articles gave any background to the news.

However, on the whole I was agreeably surprised. There was some diversity of foreign news and 3.7 per cent was not to be sneezed at.

The next paper I measured had a circulation of 50,000. It boasted International News Service, Associated Press, United Press and NEA. On one day on which I measured it, it printed slightly over one column of news with foreign datelines in a 44-page paper, plus another column and a half divided between an editorial about Geneva and an Associated Press background column on another facet of the news. Taking this background column and the editorial into the count, the paper devoted 3 per cent of its news space to international news.

The news stories in the paper were limited to Geneva, the matter of arms for Israel, the Chinese claim to Macao, and Princess Margaret having dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Neglected entirely, and reported in some other papers on the same day, were such news stories as the announcement of the formation of a republic in Vietnam, the announcement of the British budget, and the visit of Sharett to Paris to ask help for Israel from the United States and the United Kingdom in the face of the Russian-Egyptian arms deal.

A look at the same paper the day before showed that in 30 pages it devoted 1½ per cent of its news space to foreign affairs, including another AP background column. Its foreign news stories, excluding this column, were three in number: from Paris, from Teheran, and from London.

This seemed to me to be a woeful neglect of foreign affairs, but worse was yet to come. I looked at a smaller newspaper, with something over 30,000 circulation, and the services of the Associated Press. On the first day that I examined it, it had two news stories with foreign dates: one of them was about the decision of the Chinese on Formosa to scrap an old war vessel that had been built in 1880. That was on page 4. On page 60 there was a piece about newspaper criticism of the Royal Family in the matter of Princess Margaret and Group Captain Townsend. That was the sum total of world news and represented 7/10th of 1 per cent of the newspaper's news space in a 64-page newspaper.

I thought this might be an exceptional day. I measured the same newspaper the day before, when it had only 26 pages and considerably less advertising. On that day it

printed two foreign news stories and no foreign comment or background of any kind whatsoever. The two news stories were about the sinking of a ship in a gale in the North Sea and the fact that Princess Margaret was going to dine with the Archbishop of Canterbury. This represented one-half of 1 per cent of the news space.

It doesn't seem to me that it is necessary to labor the point that readers of some newspapers are obviously not getting anything like a balanced diet of news.

What is the remedy of this imbalance?

Obviously, the first step a newspaper can take is to allocate more of its news budget for news from abroad.

The next step is a matter of intelligent selection. The paper can take greater advantage of the background pieces that all news agencies now provide. After all, the agencies tend to emphasize those things which they find most clients publishing. If newspapers print more reporting of foreign news in depth, more interpretation of it, the agencies will give them more of it, and of better quality.

A third thing that a newspaper can do is to call on the resources of its own community for localized slants on foreign news. University professors, teachers, travellers can often provide helpful background pieces which will have the local flavor of being locally written.

The information services of foreign governments can be extremely useful and here I might inject my one and only commercial for the day. None can be more useful than the British Information Services, which provides all manner of background to British news on request.

More informed editorial comment on foreign affairs, based on the news that has appeared in the same newspaper, would be useful as would encouragement to local discussion groups that are interested in hearing speakers on international affairs. The same amount of encouragement given to them as is given by newspapers to civic groups interested in purely parochial affairs could work wonders.

Printing syndicated columns in which international and national affairs are discussed is a good thing, but it is no substitute for printing the news which the columnists are discussing. They are an adjunct to the news, and a useful one: they are not a substitute for it.

You may well ask what happens to national and local news in all this. In my judgment, it would be improved. In order to make space for the more balanced diet of other news, local news would have to be better written and better edited. Moreover, if the same approach of reporting it in depth and with understanding were adopted, as I have suggested with respect to other news, the community

would profit by it. A good complete story a couple of times a year about the work and achievements of a neighborhood civic organization reported in this way would take the place of piddling reports week in and week out about the same organization that takes up space without really telling anybody anything very much. I feel sure that not only the community would profit, but that the organization would be more pleased by this sort of coverage. That is only one small illustration.

Perhaps the golden rule would be to let copy readers apply the same tests to local news as they do to wire news!

Of course all of this, like Barney Kilgore's elusive quality in newspapers, must depend on the quality of the staff. Interpretive reporting cannot be done by the least imaginative and the least educated of those who find their way into daily journalism. Norman Isaacs, managing editor of the *Louisville Times* and chairman of Sigma Delta Chi's Committee on Ethics, told the Iowa Daily Press Association the other day that low pay and low quality newspapers are driving the more promising products of journalism schools and liberal arts colleges into other fields. "Involved in this trend," Mr. Isaacs said, "you have two basic factors: wages and pride."

Surely a better paid, smaller staff with pride in the paper for which they work because it comes up to their intellectual standards is better than a large staff of mediocrities.

How can an editor or publisher tell whether he is putting out the kind of newspaper that meets the challenge of the mid-Twentieth Century? The answer is that it is the right kind of newspaper if it tells *him* enough about the news of the world in which he lives and what that news means.

Editors read a great deal. They read other newspapers besides their own. Most of them read many magazines. They are informed. They forget that a majority of their readers rely for their picture of the world on their daily newspaper and what they get on television and radio. The average editor doesn't realize how much his average reader depends on him—and him alone.

I well remember how years ago I used to throw city news into the papers with a shovel—and without regard to what happened to telegraph news. I got my picture of the world elsewhere. I had no idea of what I was doing to the reader's mind. Any intelligent editor who can conscientiously say that he would feel well informed about the world if he had no other source of news but his own newspaper must be putting out a pretty good one.

Charles H. Campbell has been for 13 years director of the Washington office of British Information Services. He has back of that 19 years as reporter and editor on the American scene. This is from a talk to Sigma Delta Chi's national convention in Chicago, Nov. 10, 1955.

Go Anywhere, Young Man

An Argument that Turnover in a Staff IS Healthy for Both the Man and the Paper

By Edgar F. Seney Jr.

The current alarm by editors and publishers (and some reporters, too) over what they frantically call the "migration" or "floating" of reporters and newsmen I believe is over-emphasized.

The pat answers of "poor personnel," "poor newspapers" or "poor wages" should not be factors in reasoning out the "whys" of this dilemma.

Why not instead make the question: Is it a dilemma?

A paradox lies in the fact that their alarm is over what I believe is a healthy state of journalism—and not a disease. I would not advocate a "tramp" state of journalism similar to the tramp printer who might hold eight or ten jobs in five years, but a few periodic moves by a newsman is healthy both for the paper and the man. I believe that if a newsman hasn't worked on several newspapers in his lifetime he has become bogged down in a sense of "security," "seniority" or that of gaining "experience."

No real experience can be gained by a newsman who is born, raised, educated and indoctrinated in one community.

He is too tied in with his community to be either objective or interpretive (whichever you prefer) and he boils his experience down to what I'd like to call an "apathetic familiarity," or figuratively he is a man who cannot see the trees because he is too deep in the woods.

If I were to create a new newspaper in a city I would seek men from all over the country—would care less if they knew who was mayor in 1918 or where Main Street was, than I would that they could see the city, the people and the government as they should be seen by a newsman—as an objective and—or interpretive onlooker. The danger to watch in this new paper, I believe, would be that my staff could not see the obvious because they had looked at it too long.

Those who have let large tears over the departure of trained staff men fail to realize that this very state of migration is their biggest asset. The man they get for replacement may or may not be as good, but at any rate he is looking at the city with new eyes. I have seen newsmen

come into a town where I had been several years and point and say: "How long has that been going on?" about something I had seen many times but hadn't realized the significance of it. I too have gone into new cities and pointed the same way.

Publishers lament that it costs several hundred dollars to train a new man. I'll grant that, but who has made a cost analysis of the men who are bogged down in journalistic apathy?

I have seen men bogged down for years in one job with no foreseeable future finally make a move and rise quickly to the top.

Familiarity with a town, city or politicians creates either too much hatred or too much familiarity. There seems to be no happy medium except in the eyes of a man new to a job. I would not advocate working only a few months or a year on a job—three to five years should be par for the young—but I despair to see the struggle for seniority from copy boy to executive editor over some forty years. The only reason for more seniority than five years should be rapid promotion.

One very bad fault I have seen is "old timers" in newspapers tied in too much with the economic, social and political mores of a community. Many experts may say that this is good, that a reporter should "know" his community, but reporters are not objective thinking machines—they are humans who allow the social and political mores to become inculcated into their way of thinking.

One great fault in turnover, perhaps, is the irritation of employers over trying to find replacements. This is a valid criticism, but over a very necessary "evil." The Utopia of any managing editor or publisher is a constant, little changing staff. Show me such a paper and I will show you apathy and incompetence.

Another fault would be too much turnover of too many at the same time. This would truly hurt a paper's efficiency. But the gradual turnover is what I refer to as a healthy journalistic state; the process of systematic infiltration and departure.

Some might object to the three to five year limit of employment and that is why I qualified it by the suggestion of promotion. To enlarge on it, I would like to add that if a man can move around in the room he calls his city, if he can advance or be enabled to make a change, then I'd give him up to ten or twelve years. If he becomes

Edgar F. Seney, Jr., has practised his preaching. He has moved from the Chicago City News Bureau to the Hammond (Ind.) *Times*, to his own weekly in North Adams, Mich. before founding the *Florida Keys Keynoter* in Marathon, Fla. He is a Nieman Fellow at Harvard this year.

top brass then it is worth his life's work. But I would like to leave an opening here: That this same man who spends ten years to life in one paper and eventually becomes top brass has done a little snowbirding when he was younger.

Don't bemoan the traveling newsman. If he travels from a small to medium to large paper, he has helped himself as well as those three newspapers he worked on. And while the large paper benefits the most from this migration, the small paper benefits too by getting some of these "broadened" men back in executive positions.

Would you, as publisher of a small paper who can pay \$125 a week for a city editor prefer a man who had been with you all his life, a "home town boy," or would you prefer one who has been on several other papers to bring the experience of those associations to you?

Some would answer, I know, that they would prefer the home town boy. This is the bugaboo. Most of them hire outsiders over the heads of the competent men on their staff.

For an example of home town preference I would like to take a paper I was acquainted with many years ago. Its editor, managing editor, news editor, wire editor, city editor and several of the "stars" had been on the paper all their lives. Seniority ranged from fifteen to forty years in this group. Many good new men came to this paper, worked a few years and then left—there was an "iron curtain" against their chances of going up. The natives on the paper had a closed shop. And I might add that with a couple of exceptions these old timers were not as good newsmen as the migrants, neither as newsmen nor as objective or interpretive journalists. The paper suffered.

A few were so tied up with the political and social network of the city that they no longer possessed the ability to judge any story on its merits. It afflicted their thinking. Their likes and prejudices influenced the tenor of the paper. They knew where Main Street was and who was mayor back in 1918, but they couldn't evaluate any political issue, any civic improvement or change beyond their noses.

The only refreshing thing on this newspaper was the new men, migrants, who were able to see and evaluate the news.

In one or two instances the staff was so bogged down in politics that their favorites could do no wrong—they conscientiously felt there was no wrong. It even went so far as killing stories detrimental to their party. One editor held a county elective office. Another hated the incumbent mayor, who was fair and honest, because he had gone through high school with him and held some childhood grudge.

I'll grant that there may be a small problem of turnover in isolated cases, but there is no overall cause for alarm. I have seen too many newsmen mired in self-satisfaction, complacency and apathy—all the way from reporters to the top editors. (I have seen exceptions, too; men who have served long terms on one paper but who are searching their profession from an analytic point of view.)

Outside of economic discomfort in some small papers. I see no disadvantage in Nomadic practices among reporters. If I thought a reporter was bogged down in self-satisfaction on my paper after three or five years, and there was no future for him there, I would advise him to move on, even if it meant the loss of a good man. I would do it for his sake now and mine later. I would tell him that he would be welcome back in five years or so at one of the top jobs, if available. I would feel he was a much better man than he would have been if he had stayed with me.

Don't bemoan employment turnover; it's the most healthy purge in the business.

In his article in the October issue of *Nieman Reports*, Norman Isaacs summed it up briefly that, "It is costly NOT to have turnover. It may indicate an organization that is dying on its feet."

And my advice is: Don't be a floater, but move a little in life.

Go Anywhere, Young Man.

It's better than going nowhere.

An Outside Look at Our Editorial Pages

By Max Freedman

It is my conviction that the power which has now become an acknowledged prerogative of the American press can be the shield of freedom and the sanctuary of justice. A strong press is hard to bully. It can resist the gross bribe of power and the more subtle bribe of popularity. It can defend an unpopular cause, champion the neglected truth, attack the consecrated fallacy, honor the bruised martyr, contract the frontiers of prejudice, and expand the empire of truth. Many papers have accepted that vocation with devout courage and sustained scholarship. Others have made a timid forfeit and given their conscience in custody to the Gallup Poll.

Is it the fact of monopoly or the presence of excessive power which is the dominant consideration? Not in the least. The brave editor would be unable to hide his courage in the luxury of the most comfortable monopoly; just as the timid editor would never succeed in discovering the virtues of courage even under the most strenuous competition. Long years ago William Jennings Bryan complained that "newspapers watch the way people are going and run around the corner to get in front of them." John Morley in England made essentially the same criticism when he remarked that the conductors of a newspaper believe that they can only please their readers "by being very cheerful towards prejudices, very chilly to general theories, and disdainful to the men of principle." It is perhaps worth more than a moment's casual emphasis to remember that Morley and Bryan brought their indictments long before the shortcomings of the modern American press had begun to outrage the tremulous conscience of Mr. Robert Hutchins. If power has its temptations, it also brings its opportunities; and only a churlish or petulant observer would wish to deny the many glories of the American press today.

I am one of those readers who always judge every paper by its editorial page. By one of the cherished gifts of fortune I grew up on the *Winnipeg Free Press*, whose editorial tradition has become a legend and inspiration in Canada, and now, to my continuous amazement and gratitude, I find myself a junior member of the *Manchester Guardian*. It would be unseemly for me to praise the *Guardian*. It would be unseemly for me to praise the of Lord Robert Cecil who said the *Manchester Guardian* exists to make righteousness readable—try writing a dis-

patch from Washington on the Presidential prospects of Vice-President Nixon with that refrain ringing in your mind—I much prefer the occasional comment of American newspapermen who see in the *Guardian* the not unworthy exemplar of some important virtues in journalism. I have spoken of the *Guardian* because the editorial page is incomparably the most important thing in it; the best written, the most characteristic, the most influential product of the *Guardian* mind. Yet the *Guardian* circulation is less than 200,000. An even more memorable instance is the *Westminster Gazette* which, under J. A. Spender, became one of the ruling influences of English thought despite a circulation which never exceeded the meagre figure of 27,000. So true is it that wisdom need not be armed with a giant's strength to make itself felt. Find another William Allen White, and the voice of the country editor will once again begin to fill the land.

It seems to me that there is one essential difference between the functions of the American and British press, quite apart from the greater stature and importance which the editorial page has always enjoyed in Great Britain. Every national newspaper in England, as you know, competes at once for the attention of the public mind. Under these circumstances there must be far less emphasis on local news, and the editorial debate must grapple with the themes that engage and dominate the national mind. As a result there is a fierce stress of competition between the editorial pages of Great Britain, a pride in intellectual leadership and in the swift impact on public policy, quite unknown in the American press. I am not drawing up an indictment; I am merely trying to define the broad frontiers which divide the two editorial traditions.

In the United States, where every editor has to raise his voice in order to be heard, there would be a clear and inexcusable default of duty if editorial pages failed to reflect and embody the needs and ideals of their local communities. I have examined some fifty editorial pages in preparation for this assignment and I am compelled to admit, without speaking the language of eulogy, that nearly all papers fulfill this role of local leadership with high distinction. Their comment is vigilant, thoughtful, direct, impressive. Hardly an ugly stain has been left by the old querulous tradition which winced away from local problems and lectured the universe on its mistakes and failures.

But acting as the conscience of the local community is only one function of the American editorial page; it must also judge national policy in the light of its regional and local commitments, while remembering always that the lesser interest must yield to the national good. I must say with regret but with conviction that I found the record of the American editorial page on this point hardly an unblemished success.

Max Freedman is Washington correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. This is from a talk to the National Conference of Editorial Writers in Washington, October 12.

The vast size of the United States gives an editor the I took a number of problems which are now dividing the national mind and providing the themes of national debate; farm policy, the Dixon-Yates contract and the future of TVA, desegregation, civil liberty, negotiations with Russia and Communist China, East-West trade, America's commitments to NATO and the United Nations. What did I find? Well, I found, as I expected, some splendid papers which gave their readers the true mintage of their own editorial wisdom. But they were the exceptions. It was easy to recognize and even easier to dismiss the editorial pages which were content with the shabby role of being the clamorous advocate of local prejudice. These papers, I must add, formed a small and unrepresentative minority.

My principal criticism is very different: It can be formulated by saying that in the American press today there is a disturbing amount of thinking by proxy and leadership by imitation. I found the same ideas beating again and again in weary iteration through the columns of the most diverse papers. The degree of intellectual impoverishment which would at once mark editorial offices across the country if the *New York Times* missed a delivery must really be quite astonishing. Now this seems to be a matter which goes to the root of the democratic process. To the extent that any paper allows itself to borrow its convictions and its scholarship from other papers published in another part of the country it excommunicates itself from its responsible share in the formulation of national policy.

When Mr. Dulles and Mr. Humphrey ask their officials to make an inventory of editorial thinking on foreign policy or taxation problems they have a right, I believe, to find the most challenging differences of opinion in editorials from the Eastern States and the Pacific Northwest, from the Mid-West and the Deep South. All too often, I am afraid, they would find little more than endless variations on the same theme.

Is the national columnist to blame? Hardly. Some papers solve that problem by having no columnists apart from the members of their own staff; other papers have adopted the equally heroic measure of running many columnists and using them as incentives to make their own editorials more sparkling and memorable.

chance to make a truly distinctive and constructive contribution to national policy by becoming the thoughtful spokesman for his own region. No comparable opportunity is open to an editor in Great Britain. If I were privileged to be an editorial writer in this country I would try to make my parish in the Republic speak with its own brave voice on the imperious issues of national policy. In an

age of echoes I would try to resist the tyranny of slogans and the easy success which comes from conforming to other people's opinions.

I turn now from criticism to praise. In the crowded tumultuous years which have seen the United States emerge from a protected isolation to the dominant place of world leadership, it has been necessary for American editors to realize that *Main Street* has become simply another frontier of human freedom. I never can quite subdue my astonishment at the skill, the judgement, and the responsibility with which the American press has met these new and indeed **unprecedented** tasks. American editors sometimes suffer from Viscounts Bryce's habit of believing that all facts are born free and equal. They occasionally are visited by the fallacy that a true insight into a nation's destiny may be obtained by piling up a complicated pyramid of social and economic fact. Sometimes this process leads to the solemn blunders of which only the truly learned editor can be guilty. American editors, on the whole, are less inclined than American politicians to lecture foreign nations in the high terms of moral indignation. The best corrective, it seems to me, for feeling despondent about the American editorial page's comment on world affairs is to compare it with the comment of newspapers in other countries. The moment one leaves the isolated mountain peaks of intellectual grandeur, one finds oneself in a rather slovenly plateau of journalism in which impertinence is often mistaken for intelligence and the debased coinage of spurious wisdom is honored. I think the American editorial page's treatment of foreign affairs is one of its strong points.

Journalism, as its name denotes, may be only the dailily of literature; but it occupies a kingdom of literature all the same; and there is an obligation on editors to remember what Robert Louis Stevenson called "the piety of speech." On this theme I content myself with wishing, as delicately and remotely as I can, that the literary tradition were somewhat more pervasive on the American editorial page.

I want to add, with less tact and greater boldness, that I have never been able to appreciate the point or purpose in having an editorial carefully rewrite a news story from the front page and then cautiously struggle towards a bleached assortment of timid and tired truisms in a final paragraph of editorial comment. Some of the most memorable utterances of the *London Times* were cast in the form of expository editorials; but they rang with the authority of scholarship and compelled conviction by their eloquence of fact. They were more than a frayed carbon copy of yesterday's event.

The Moral Imperative

By Charles A. Sprague

At the moment I think the campaign for making our press freedom secure has largely been won. The Nazi menace has been overthrown. Even *Pravda* is starting to print some news—it told the other day about the party the Russian leaders gave to diplomats, and later that Bulganin was ill. There is no visible threat to freedom to publish in this country. While reporters are in a running battle with beaureaucrats and top level executives in government over the withholding of information, that will always be. In fact it adds zest to the reporter's occupation.

May we not look for a moment at the other side of the picture? I fear that in our zeal as editors and publishers to defend the precious right of freedom to print we have been inclined to ignore our own abuses of that right. The mantle of press freedom has been stretched to cover many sins. Defenders of the free press find themselves at times in scaly company. The printing press itself is just a machine. It may print books and magazines and newspapers for the edification, enlightenment and entertainment of the people. Or it can be subversed for the printing of false propaganda or of banalities, or prostituted for commercial ends.

We are familiar with charges against the American newspapers as a "one party press"; also that they are subservient to the business viewpoint either because of the pressure of advertisers or by some process of osmosis through association of publishers with men of wealth. The criticisms have some validity, but even more serious are other shortcomings of the American press. Henry Luce, editor of *Time-Life-Fortune*, set them out quite accurately in an address before the Oregon Press Conference in 1953 when he said "that freedom we so uncritically demand is often nothing more than the freedom to pander. If we pander to sensuality that is bad enough. But there may be an even greater danger in the fact that freedom of the press is freedom to pander to ignorance, to pander to mediocrity, to pander to group passions and prejudices, to pander to hatred and meanness, to pander to all that is unlovely in a democracy."

Editors, themselves are aware of ease with which press freedom may be abused. The selection of news to be published or omitted, the treatment of the facts in the news story, the placing of the story in the paper, the headlines given it, the twist applied by a descriptive adjective or action

word—all offer daily opportunities for distortion of the truth by the press. The sin committed may not be one of intent, it may be one merely of ignorance or of carelessness, but the result is the same.

Journalism suffers from another grave deficiency, and that is in the quality of the work performed. We have heard often in late years that the present world conflict is one for control of the minds of men. Those minds are going to be influenced and in large degree guided by what they read on the printed page. Yet there is no recognized standard, legal or professional, for the journalist. Those who treat the ills of the body must first undergo special training and qualify in examinations. Those who want to practice law to defend the rights of others are subject to similar requirements. Qualifying examinations are required of barbers who trim the hair, cosmeticians who pretty the faces of women, chiropodists who care for the ills of the feet; but no examination or license is required of one who as a journalist sets about operating on the minds of men. Anyone who can run a typewriter may get a job as reporter or type off an article for a magazine. If he can't run a typewriter but can use an adding machine he may get a job as a publisher!

I am not proposing any system for the licensing of journalists any more than for the licensing of publications. We never had the former, and the requirement of the latter in this country was shortlived. The first genuine American newspaper, the *Boston News-Letter*, carried the imprint "Published by Authority;" but when James Franklin successfully launched the independent "New England Courant" in 1721 the requirement of a government license to print was doomed. Our only test is the test of survival. Admittedly that is a poor one, for the boneyard is full of the skeletons of publications launched with high purpose and competently edited which failed to make the financial grade. But it is the only test for the paper and for the writer.

If we do not have and do not want any legal control over the press, save for the laws of libel, and if we fix no qualifying standards for those who make journalism a career, is there any protection against the abuse of press freedom? Since our country is under a democratic form of government where the people have the power of decision in political affairs it is of the highest importance that their channels of communication be kept clear and clean. Where then lies the public security?

For answer I turn back to Elijah Lovejoy. During his Alton troubles a mass meeting was held, which Lovejoy attended. The mayor of the city laid down this proposition:

"Without desiring to restrain the liberty of the press in general " (How often is that a preface to a particular violation of rights?) "it is indispensable that Mr. Lovejoy should not be allowed to conduct a paper and that he

Mr. Sprague, former Governor of Oregon and former delegate to the United Nations, is editor of the *Oregon Statesman*. This is from the 1955 Lovejoy Lecture at Colby College, October 6, 1955.

should retire from the charge of the Alton Observer."

Lovejoy himself declared:

"For we distinctly avow it as our settled purpose never while life lasts, to yield to this new system by attempting to destroy by means of mob violence the right of conscience, the freedom of opinion and of the press."

You note what Lovejoy put first: "the right of conscience." He was driven by a moral imperative. Freedom to use the press for this purpose was the right he died for.

The press then is merely the symbol of what we are fighting for. Too many however exploit their press freedom without a sense of moral responsibility. To them it becomes license, with only a few restraints as for libel and recognized indecencies. What we need therefore is less generalized agitation about freedom of the press and greater indoctrination in how the press should be used, less concern over Canon 35 and picture taking in courtrooms and more concern over fair and full reporting.

Of course in applying the "moral imperative" to current journalism the term requires a broader definition than is exemplified in the career of Lovejoy. He and William Lloyd Garrison and John Brown were all zealots, dedicated to a cause. The abolitionists were troublesome radicals, unpopular even in the North. Lovejoy's paper, and Garrison's were tracts. Our general publications of today, magazines and newspapers, can indulge in no such concentration of attention. They must exercise greater tolerance, at least in their manner of expression, to appeal to a mass audience. Yet the impulse of the "moral imperative" is needed even with general publications. I found a very good statement of my thesis in an editorial with which the *Manchester Guardian* on July 2nd, 1955 reviewed its century as a daily newspaper. It concluded:

"The press is free and one would not wish to be self-righteous. But it is still permissible to wonder whether in spite of all the immense progress in technique, much of English journalism today is not losing the moral purpose that until recently it took for granted."

"Moral purpose" is the authentic impulse for the proper employment of press freedom—moral purpose in its broad sense. I do not mean to convert the press into a moral tract, heavy with homily. What I mean is that every one working through the medium of print should strive to serve his public with sincerity, with fidelity to truth, with inner integrity whether in the reporting of events, the presentation of opinion or the provision of entertaining features. I know this sounds like a platitude; probably it is. But I know of no better way of setting forth the obligation which must be assumed by proprietors and workers in journalism if they are to be fit stewards of the press freedom which has been guaranteed to them.

A Precedent the Press Should Examine

By Clark Mollenhoff

Within the last two years a precedent has been established which I believe constitutes one of the greatest threats to freedom of the press in the United States in our time.

I speak of the May 17, 1954, letter written by President Eisenhower to Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson. It was written during the Army-McCarthy hearings to prevent Army Counsel John Adams from testifying as to conversations with Deputy Attorney General William P. Rogers and Assistant to the President Sherman Adams.

The letter was only a broad statement on the rights of the executive branch of the government to keep certain things "confidential" and out of the scope of Congressional inquiry. It was the broad statement on confidential records that made the precedent dangerous. The application of this letter by a number of agency heads clearly shows why the press should be concerned.

Budget director Rowland Hughes refused to allow certain witnesses to be questioned and certain papers produced in connection with the handling of the Dixon-Yates contract. Hughes cited the May 17, 1954, letter and declared that under this letter it was his opinion that Congress was entitled to the decisions of the agency, but could not go behind those decisions since such papers and conversations involved in formulating policy were "confidential."

Normally, the ability of the press to penetrate executive agencies is pretty much contingent on the power of Congressional committees to penetrate those agencies. I've heard of a few hardy journalists who feel they can pry loose sufficient information without any aid from Congress. However, I think that most realists will admit that their own effectiveness in getting information of an unfavorable character from an agency is pretty closely tied to the power of Congress to move in and document a case.

We should not confuse this ability to get information unfavorable to an administration from the executive agency with the ability to get a flood of information that is so favorable that it borders on propaganda. Regardless of what administration is in power you'll always be able to get the favorable information.

The Hughes letter interpreting the May 17, 1954, letter from President Eisenhower to Defense Secretary Wilson set down this principle:

Clark Mollenhoff is in the Washington Bureau of the Cowles publications. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1950. This is a talk in a panel at the National Conference of Editorial Writers in Washington, October 12, 1955.

The executive department can regard as confidential all of the conversations and papers leading up to a decision. Only the final decision is subject to the subpoenas of Congress.

If Congress can't get the information leading up to a decision, then reporters can't get it.

That precedent stands today as the greatest potential barrier to every reporter who starts an inquiry into the actions or spending of an executive agency.

It stands as a convenient umbrella under which any executive agency head can take cover when questioned by Congressional committees or reporters. Fortunately most agency heads have too great an appreciation of their public responsibility to use this precedent. However, enough have used it to make it completely clear how great is the potential danger.

Dozens of times, witnesses before Congressional committees have commented:

"We consider that information to be confidential under the President's May 17, 1954, letter to Defense Secretary Wilson."

This phrase will be heard thousands of times if the precedent is not changed. Congress, newspaper reporters or the public should be able to go behind the decisions of government agencies to find the specific actions and motives that went into those decisions.

The precedent of the May 17, 1954, letter is shifting the burden of proof on the question of access to government records. Under this precedent, the government need not prove why information is "confidential." You must prove why information is not "confidential" under the terms of that letter.

This is not an effort to picture the press today as closed out in the quest for facts by any public-be-damned attitude. This is not an effort to paint this administration as any worse than past administrations. It is difficult to generalize about whether one administration had a better or worse information policy. My own experience indicates that some agencies are better, and some are worse.

The fact that you can get as much, or even more information from some government agency today makes the precedent of the May 17, 1954, letter no less a threat to the press. As long as the precedent remains unchanged, the press can be closed out at any time on the whim of the agency head. Congress can also be blocked.

I do not believe that the May 17, 1954, letter was any devious act planned to strike at the press. On the contrary, I am sure it was innocently devised to meet an intra-party political problem presented in the Army-McCarthy hearings. However, the fact that the blow was not aimed at the press is unimportant if it puts the press within the range of danger. The blow fell directly on the power of Congressional committees, and has the potential of seriously limiting the power of those committees to obtain records and testimony.

The Dixon-Yates hearings provided example after example of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Bureau of the Budget and the Securities Exchange Commission arbitrarily declaring information beyond the bounds of Congressional committees. Senator John McClellan's special Senate Investigating Subcommittee has run into the same roadblock. A similar experience has been had by the House Government Operations Subcommittee investigating the Interior Department's power policy. These agencies did not plead that "security" of the nation was involved. They did not plead that loyalty files, diplomatic papers or raw investigative files were involved. They arbitrarily drew the line beyond which it was contended Congress could not go. When Congress cannot investigate, the press is also blocked out. Let's face the fact.

It is not necessary for newspapers to take sides on the various squabbles between the executive agencies and Congressional committees that happen to be operated by chairmen of a different political complexion. We should consistently take the position that Congress is entitled to the maximum information unless clear reasons are shown why public policy dictates that the information should not be available.

I would not propose to allow Congress to interfere with the operation of the government by the executive branch of the government. However, when the executive agency has made its decisions, the Congress and the press should be entitled to know what factors went into those decisions. If we are ever barred from going behind decisions, the door is opened for the fixers.

This is not a policy of making war on the executive agencies. It is support of the open-record policy which can save executive agencies from betrayal from within. An open-record policy may reveal a few mistakes, but those mistakes are often less embarrassing than the weeks of squabbling over whether records should be produced.

It is necessary to examine the circumstances surrounding the May 17, 1954, letter from President Eisenhower to Defense Secretary Wilson really to analyze whether the principle involved should continue as precedent.

The administration did not wish John Adams, the army counsel, to give testimony concerning conversations with Deputy Attorney General William P. Rogers and Assistant to the President Sherman Adams. Senator McCarthy wanted the testimony in the record apparently to show the White House efforts to stop him.

In furthering the administration's desire to keep those conversations out of the record, some administration leaders obtained the May 17, 1954, letter from President Eisenhower.

That letter set out a general statement on the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches of our government. It stated that certain matters in the executive department must be held confidential, but did not mention the Adams testimony or give any specific

reason. Attached was a bulky list of precedents of the executive branch's refusal to give information to the legislative branch.

I was disturbed by that letter, not because of any argument with what it said. My complaint was with the inference left by what that letter did not say.

No specific reason was given for the refusal to let John Adams testify. There was only the generalized reason that certain things in the executive department were confidential. It seemed to me that this would allow each agency head to decide what records or conversations could be hidden from Congress as "confidential."

I discussed this with Ed Milne of the *Providence Journal*, and found him to be in agreement with my thinking. It seemed to us that this was an extension of the confidential orbit to a degree that it would be possible to block nearly any congressional inquiry before it got started. **WHAT WAS EQUALLY IMPORTANT WAS THAT IT WOULD BE A BARRIER TO OUR OWN RIGHT TO INFORMATION.**

Milne and I wrote stories that day setting out the possible threat to inquiries involved in the May 17, 1954, letter. We pointed out that if Adams could refuse to testify as to his conversations with Bill Rogers and Sherman Adams, the cabinet members, sub-cabinet members and others could seek the same refuge of "confidential communication" when they wanted to cover their crimes or mistakes. We pointed out that the Teapot Dome scandals of the Harding and the tax scandals of the Truman administrations could have been buried under such a policy.

I had assumed that the members of the press would react sharply to such a precedent. I was surprised to pick up well-known and respected newspapers and read editorials lauding the May 17, 1954, letter for its doctrine of separation of powers. The interest of the press was completely overlooked.

The press had failed to see the threat to its own operations. The press was, in fact, praising the letter and helping to solidify a policy that could throttle the press if the government ever fell into evil hands.

I called one editor friend who has been active in fighting for freedom of information, and I expressed my fears about the May 17, 1954, letter. I stated that the danger was in the fact that no specific reason was cited for Adams' refusal to testify.

My editor friend said he believed the refusal was because some personnel security files might have been discussed in the meeting. I stated that if the sanctity of personnel security files was involved it should have been set out in the letter and that otherwise the precedent would be a broad policy under which any erring public official could hide his mistakes. **I DID NOT CONVINCE MY FRIEND OF THE DANGERS AT THAT TIME. I AM THANKFUL TO SAY THAT HE HAS SINCE COME TO**

VIEW THE MAY 17, 1954, LETTER WITH CONSIDERABLE APPREHENSION.

This problem should not be approached as a political problem in which the Republican administration is the villain. The letter happened to have been written in a Republican administration, and it so happens that some Republican officials have used it to block investigations.

I have no doubt that Democratic administrations will use it in the future if this precedent is not changed. We must face the fact that it is not safe for us to allow any policy to stand under which the agency heads can scream "confidential" and not even make the pretext that security or other specific problems of national interest are involved.

We must also accept the fact that public officials, whether Democrats or Republicans, will always be tempted to hide their mistakes or their corruption from public view. It is only natural that they would. It has happened in the past. Human nature has not changed.

It is the duty of the newspapers to stick together and fight for one thing—freedom of access to information about the government. The burden of proof should always be on the government to prove why information should not be made public. We should never be forced to prove why we are entitled to it. Those who established this government realized that freedom of the press is essential to a working Democracy. Writers since Alexis DeToqueville have commented on the fact that Democracy is dependent on an informed public—and an informed public is dependent upon freedom of the press. Whether we like it or not, freedom of the press is dependent upon the ability of Congress to pry loose the details.

There are clear reasons why the press, Congress, and even the executive branch of the government should want the precedent of the May 17, 1954, letter changed. Republican Congressional leaders have complained for years of the way they were barred from obtaining information from the executive branch during the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. In many cases their complaints were justified, and it should be easy for them to see their own future interest in changing the precedent of the May 17 letter. Democrats in Congress are now facing the barrier of the May 17 letter, and many of them have become aware of its potential as a barrier to investigations.

The President of the United States should see clearly why the open-record policy is to his advantage. Unless records are open to the press, the public and to Congress, the President is at the mercy of those he appoints to head the agencies. Regardless of the care used in making appointments, there is always the possibility of an agency head going wrong and perverting the function of the agency. The President does not normally conduct an independent investigation of the reports filed by various agencies. He depends on the men who report to him. It happens often that his first ink-

ling of misfeasance or malfeasance in office comes from a news story, or a question at a press conference.

So far the press has been mighty slow to see the dangers inherent in the May 17, 1954, letter. That letter won support because it came clothed as a weapon to stop Senator McCarthy. I do not believe the letter made one bit of difference in the outcome of the Army-McCarthy hearings. It only saved a few high officials from the embarrassment of giving testimony on precisely what they had said about the Senator from Wisconsin.

The great popularity of President Eisenhower was another factor contributing to the failure of the press to question the letter at the time. There have been only a few questions asked of the President since then. The answers have failed to modify the precedent.

President Eisenhower has stated that this letter can never

be used to cover up improper acts by officials in his administration. I am sure that most of us are convinced that he would never allow the letter to be used for an improper purpose, if he knew about it. BUT IS THAT ENOUGH? WHAT ABOUT FUTURE REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTS OR FUTURE DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTS? Their motives may not be so high as those expressed by President Eisenhower.

Even if we would disregard the public interest involved, there is enough selfish interest involved for the press and political leaders of both parties to justify an all-out fight to overrule the precedent.

We shouldn't try to make this a political fight. Republicans and Democrats alike should see the danger of allowing the party in power to have such control over access of information. At this stage it shouldn't be necessary to draw any further blueprint on the potential danger to the press.

Letter to a Departing Newspaperman

by Richard H. Costa

Dear——,

So you're really leaving the paper. Though you told me the news more than two weeks ago and had led me to anticipate it for months, I cannot accept the fact. Certainly the evidence could hardly be more conclusive. We've tossed the company party and presented you a portable typewriter in the name of our Newspaper Guild local which you headed for the last two years. Most of the newspaper crowd would say you're moving out in a blaze of accolade you might never know if you were to stay on here for twenty more years.

Yet, ——, do you know what I was thinking at your farewell party? Do you know what was going through my mind as I watched the procession of co-workers, each one dutifully shaking your hand and saying the same old goodbyes? I was wishing you had been fired. At least then all the questions your departing leaves unresolved would be thrust into the open.

As things stand, the valedictory flurry has left all the really important things unsaid. I suppose if I thought they were left unfelt too, I might not be writing you now.

Do you remember the short business session of the Guild which preceded your party? Towards the end of it you gave up the gavel you had held for two terms. I recall distinctly the words of the interim president as he took

it from you. He spoke with all the self-consciousness such terms invariably call up of your "frustrated idealism," your "crusading spirit." Now any newspaperman of today knows these are no longer by-words of our calling. We hardly ever think back to that journalistic never-never land to which they've been relegated. So I watched, with more than a trace of self-consciousness myself, the effect of these discarded words on that audience of newspaper people. From the rawest cub on his first job to the grizzled veteran of two dozen assorted newsrooms, nobody snickered or flinched. Everybody in that room seemed to feel the words applied.

The impact of your departure strikes hardest at those of us who knew you best. But in order to get across what I'm trying to say I must separate my sense of personal loss from something else that represents the greater void. This other has nothing to do with your technical competence as a newspaperman, though that is considerable. It bears small relation to the stories that only you would be writing and which will now go unwritten. The only thing I'm concerned with is our newspaper's continuing loss of identity, to which your moving on contributes generously.

Last spring I spoke at the college's annual publications banquet. I never know any longer what to say to aspiring young journalists. I am close enough to them as a part-time instructor to admire their zeal and enthusiasm, yet far enough away as a fulltime newspaper worker to be painfully aware of the remote relationship between newspapers as they are and the way they're often depicted in the texts.

Richard H. Costa is telegraph editor on the *Utica Daily Press* and instructor in journalism at the Utica branch of Syracuse University.

It is a sobering experience to pick up any undergraduate weekly with its headlines charged with knight-in-shining-armor thrusts against evil, and compare it to many of our professional journals carefully edited to avoid controversy. For the uninitiated, this is no mean gap to be spanned. How possibly could I say anything to help bridge it?

Desperately trying not to make my candor seem funereal, I suggested that every last one of those about to embark on careers in newspaper journalism would have to face up to a twin-pointed premise. First, they would have to realize that all those dragons whose bodies littered the campus might well be, editorially speaking, the last antagonists they would ever be permitted to slay. And second, while recognizing this state of affairs in our ranks, they should still enter newspaper work enthusiastically, determined to transfer to the professionals some of the fire ignited in their college papers.

So far as some of the papers with which you and I are familiar, I can't believe I overstated the case. This need to feel again some fire of non-conformity presses our newsrooms ever more urgently. We need it to counteract the passing, in all but a relative handful of cities, of competition for news and readers; to deliver us from the inertia of comfortable torpor in which many of us in one-newspaper towns wallow.

It was this combustive quality that you brought for an all-too-brief time to our newsroom. You presented to us that rare picture of a fellow who has never wanted to be anything other than a newspaperman following his calling wherever it might lead. If it led you to step on some of the town's sacred toes, you stepped. If it meant touching the untouchables, you touched. To be neutral was unthinkable. You became more than a reporter. You emerged through your stories a passionate partisan strengthening the arm and arguments of what you saw as the right against the common enemy.

Frequently your editorial patriarchs disagreed with your conclusions. More frequently they felt what you wrote could not be published in just the way you wrote it. I don't have to quote line and verse. For every crusade on your horizon there loomed a chamber of commerce at the front door. The editor's blue pencil has been a bitter potion for many another reformer in a hurry. Today's editor is

much better trained in public relations than in crusading. His greatest efforts are directed toward avoiding controversy, not engaging it. He wins his biggest battles by default.

I've known for some time that you weren't long for our tidy little world of compromise. From my vantage point on the copy desk your stories foretold your departure better than any words. It was made crystal clear to me by all those once-happy turns of phrase that had begun flipping on their other side, scowling and biting at the reader. Good reporter that you are, you had sensed editorial death. Soon you saw every effort to edit your copy as an insidious chain reaction to kill or hopelessly emasculate your story. Eventually you became sure the paper's—the town's—pillars were leering at you, paralyzing your ability to make the proper use of yourself as a newspaperman.

So far I've portrayed you as the valiant crusader with a dash of the martyr thrown in. Brave trumpeting for 1955! But for our paper, this characterization carries its own validity; we can ill afford to lose the assertive independence you lent to us. But the picture is not yet rounded, full. There remains to be added the darker side revealed by the reckless, somewhat impulsive adventurer: the warrior making his private wars the newspaper's battles. How often, when those battles were resolved to anything less than your complete satisfaction—are they ever?—you would emerge storming, a facile generalization on your tongue. The paper has no guts. The paper is nothing but an extension of the chamber of commerce. The paper caters less to news than to some promotional or advertising gimmick. Along with the courage there was a little of the pouting campus hero whose dragon wouldn't stay dead.

I wish I could say with complete assurance that your new paper represents, for you, the perfect marriage of talent and vehicle. The fact remains you are leaving this one-newspaper town for another. All I am sure about is that somewhere, sometime you will achieve a peace with yourself. Then it will be mere formality to find peace with your newspaper.

Perhaps you already have.

Good Luck.

Reviews —

Civil War Correspondents

by Richard Harwood

THE BOHEMIAN BRIGADE, Louis M. Starr. Alfred A. Knopf, 367 pp. \$5.

The homily might be appropriately revised to read that "nothing is certain these days but death, taxes and books on the Civil War." Volume on volume, they come from the publishers in awesome numbers. "This generation," Bruce Catton observes, "cannot leave the subject alone."

That is not to be regretted. The writing of history gets better all the time. What is more, the historical vein of the Civil War period is not worked out.

The Bohemian Brigade confirms both observations. It is a beautifully written original, the first book to recount thoroughly the fabulous experience of the Civil War reporters. No newspaperman should miss this one.

The Civil War correspondents were the first of an honorable breed.

"They styled themselves the Bohemian Brigade," one of them wrote at the time, "and exhibited that touch of the vagabond which Irving charitably attributes to poetic temperaments."

"Bohemian," however, is a word that today carries a connotation not fairly descriptive of these reporters. They were, on the whole, a corps of dedicated and competent men who did much to transform the institution of American journalism into its modern form.

War reporting in the 1860s was a fantastic business, a mixture of great peril, intrigue and overwhelming technical hardship.

A correspondent's reception in the field or in Washington was likely to depend on the political complexion of his paper or on the degree of intimacy he might establish with an ambitious general or a disgruntled cabinet officer. Even the President's wife was a pawn in the unbridled competition for news.

There were no press officers, no news handouts. It was every man for himself.

"Competition," Starr writes, "ruled the Bohemians ruthlessly, like an unseen hand at the scruff of the neck. If it in-

spired some of their finest work, it also drove them to bribery, subterfuge, plagiarism and outright fakery. It fueled the whole news revolution. It left a residue of anecdote and legend which enriched the lore of American journalism. Largely because of it, newsmen of the next generation were schooled to exalt the beat above all."

Yet, at their best, the Civil War reporters were good. Here is an excerpt from Jerome Stillson's story to the *New York World* on Lee's surrender at Appomattox:

"... Grant was too quick for him. The flight of the Army of Northern Virginia had not begun before the hounds—swift legions with steel fangs and baying cannon—were on its track..."

"Three days and nights, hurrying, hurrying, the two great armies, scarcely fifteen miles apart, thundered in through villages and valleys, over hills

and streams, toward a common goal. That goal—the Richmond and Danville Railroad—which should strike it first? Should we come upon it to find that the prey had passed; . . . to sit ourselves down forthwith, thanking God and Grant that at least we had got Petersburg and Richmond? Or should we, *could* we have the gladness of meeting the hunted thing face to face out of its dens, giving it a shot between its scared eyes, worrying it, torturing it into giving up its fearful ghost at last?"

Louis Starr has made a real contribution to the literature of journalism with this book.

Those who read it may want to follow it up with the recently published memoirs of Sylvanus Cadwallader, the *Chicago Times* man whose relationship with Grant is something of a legend. An excerpt from this book appeared in the October issue of *American Heritage*.

Telling Our Side

By Julius C. Duscha

FACTS TO A CANDID WORLD. Oren Stephens, Stanford University Press. 164 pp. \$3.50.

America's overseas information programs have been investigated so often by Congressional committees, studied so frequently by citizens' commissions, written about so much by persons who used to work for what the public loosely refers to as the Voice of America, and criticized so many times by newspapermen, account executives, radio and television vice presidents and other self-appointed experts in world propaganda techniques that a reader approaches another book on the subject gingerly.

However, this slim volume by Oren Stephens, a 1943 Nieman Fellow who is now with the United States Information Agency as Deputy Assistant Director for Policy and Programs, is a useful addition to the literature of this so vital, but so controversial field of American propaganda.

Stephens readily admits the difficulties of determining public opinion, let alone the shaping of it through the government

propaganda agency which is the U.S.I.A.

He divides his book into two parts. In the first he surveys the background of the problem—the unquestioned power of public opinion, the still unresolved question of what public opinion is, the struggles of the World War I Creel Committee, Elmer Davis and the World War II O.W.I. and the post-war problems of what has lately been called psychological warfare. In the second, and more interesting, half of his book Stephens tells what the American overseas information program of today is and what it ought to be.

Stephens lists psychological warfare, "the planned use of the power of ideas," as one of the four instruments of foreign policy, the other three being diplomatic, military and economic measures, and notes that public relations, or propaganda, must be both an auxiliary to the other three as well as a primary instrument. He says "the public opinion factor" must be considered when government policy is determined, enunciated and executed.

"News," writes Stephens, "is the prime mover of propaganda. Most news is dis-

seminated through media over which the propagandist has no direct control. To utilize these uncontrolled media, the propagandist must concentrate on making news which is helpful to our purposes and which the media are forced to disseminate in order to maintain their status as news services."

Stephens recognizes that most American newspapermen vehemently deny that the press of the United States knowingly disseminates propaganda in its news columns, but he also notes, as but one example, the way Franklin D. Roosevelt got the story of the New Deal, or, if you will, New Deal propaganda, on all the front pages through the skillful use of public relations techniques. Senator McCarthy used the newspapers, too, of course.

What Stephens wants is a larger role for the propagandist in the making of

American policy. It cannot be all propaganda, of course, and Stephens realizes that. Deeds must accompany the words, deeds, he says, like better conduct by Americans who work or play abroad, improved race relations at home, exchange visits such as those fostered by the Fulbright program.

"One of our most serious shortcomings as propagandists," comments Stephens, "has been that we have thought too much in terms of media mechanics and too little in terms of creating material that will tell a meaningful story convincingly."

But there are dangers in the approach Stephens recommends, too. Indeed, much of the criticism that has been directed at the Eisenhower-Dulles foreign policy is that it has been too concerned with propaganda and that the deeds have been all too few.

DeVoto's Last Book

By Edgar F. Seney, Jr.

THE EASY CHAIR, By Bernard DeVoto. Houghton Mifflin Co. 356 pp. \$4.00.

It was late that Sunday night in November and I was unable to put down the book I was reading. I was being carried through 20 years of the finest reportorial English I had ever read, *The Easy Chair*, by Bernard DeVoto.

The next morning news was received that "Benny" DeVoto was dead.

His death coming while I was only part way through his book posed no problem in review for me. In death we may be inclined to over-eulogize a man, no matter who he was or what he did. But I was a convinced DeVoto fan that Sunday night, for he had long before carried me away with the depth of his writing. That Monday morning news told of the death of the man, but there will be no death of what he wrote.

DeVoto was the brand of writer you could call a "Jack of All Subjects." And a good Jack he was. The second part of the tribute turns the phrase, though. He was "Master of Them All." He would be the last to claim that he knew everything, but he was the kind of writer and reporter who, if he didn't know something, made certain that he found out conclusively before he wrote about it. In his writing you can see the painstaking care he

took in digging deep into the subject; you can see how he had weighed it, actually chewed it, before you saw the finished work. He has been severely criticized, but seldom corrected.

Just two weeks before he died I saw DeVoto at a Nieman Fellows' gathering. While talking to him I mentioned that I had been delegated to review *The Easy Chair* for *Nieman Reports*. Joking, he said something like, "I'm going to leave you, then. I don't want you to feel that I am trying to charm you into a good review—nor do I want to alienate any good feeling for me you might have now."

He could have spilled my martini and I'd still like his book.

The Easy Chair is nothing new. It is a selection of his columns written over the past 20 years, reprinted as they appeared in *Harper's*. They weren't his best, because he had no bad ones. There may be Easy Chairs which will interest some more than others, but whether or not you like his subject or his view, you can't resist his style.

He started the book affectionately with a column based on a talk last year with Nieman Fellows and the editor of *Harper's*, who was asked why good writers write for *Harper's* when the pay is "not of Hollywood size." The *Harper's* editor explained that they publish articles written

by people who want to write for *Harper's*.

That brought to my mind's eye a very clear picture of DeVoto.

In another of the columns he proudly stated that his articles are printed as is, with the only limitation on length. He tried to keep out of "The Easy Chair" anything that smacked of "free plug" for some interest or group.

No sacred cow was immune from his searching pen. In one article, "Due Notice to the FBI," he blasted that halo-crowned body by serving notice that he would not inform on any neighbor or acquaintance on inquiry from a door-knocking G Man.

He said, "Representatives of the FBI and of other official investigating bodies have questioned me, in the past, about a number of people and I have answered their questions. That's over. . . If he wants information from me about anyone whomsoever, no soap. . . I will perform that duty under subpoena, in open court, before that person and his attorney. This notice is posted on the courthouse square: I will not discuss anyone in private with any government investigator."

Down on DeVoto's ears came a high shriek from the District of Columbia (a high G shriek, that is) from a man named J. Edgar Hoover, who stated to the click of busy Washington reporters' pencils (making a press cliprating of 99.6) that he would not "dignify Mr. DeVoto's half-truths, inaccuracies, distortions, and misstatements with a denial or an explanation."

Naturally this Washington gentleman's feelings were hurt, but he never did specify just what "half-truths" or "inaccuracies" DeVoto was guilty of committing.

DeVoto's column, "Twenty-Hour Vigil," was a masterpiece of television criticism, enough to make any reader with psycho-televitis skip his next appointment with his analyst.

"Most of what I saw in 20 hours was intended to be entertainment, and most of this was, for me at least, a dismal failure," DeVoto wrote.

Whether or not you knew DeVoto personally, you could always get the feeling that he was in the room with you—in your favorite Easy Chair—talking to you personally. If you want to get that feeling, try on a few old Easy Chairs for size and you will see.

Morals Under Law

By Donald J. Sterling, Jr.

THE MORAL DECISION: RIGHT AND WRONG IN THE LIGHT OF AMERICAN LAW, by Edmond Cahn. Indiana University Press. 342 pp. \$5.

Any reporter knows that the usual courtroom is not an easy place to find neat expressions of moral principles. Is the defendant the unhappy product of inexorable social forces, or just an ignorant punk with dirty fingernails? Does the judge's decision represent the distilled conscience of a civilization, or the opinion of a man oppressed by a crowded docket and distracted by an unwisely-chosen lunch?

Mr. Cahn concedes the law's preoccupation with the often tawdry, often touching details of life. He goes on to use selected decisions of our state and federal courts as platforms from which to launch wide-ranging speculations of prevailing notions of right and wrong. He also suggests a standard of "due process" by which an individual may arrive at those judgments of good and evil which personal responsibility requires him to make.

This is essentially a book of philosophy. Although Mr. Cahn does not attempt to outline what he thinks a comprehensive moral code ought to be, he offers a stimulating series of discussions of the moral problems which arise between human beings in crucial moments. These include the crises of life and death, of sexual relationships, business dealings in commerce and with government, and of what the author calls those instances of "enlargement of personality" when an individual is moved to unusual actions by such factors as compassion or the urge of artistic creativity.

These are heady topics, and anyone who looks in this book for a breezy collection of the law's foibles is going to be disappointed. Mr. Cahn writes with wit and warmth, but his appeal will be to those readers who enjoy closing the book frequently for a few moments of meditation before going on to the next section.

Most of the cases he has chosen to discuss are fascinating. Is a sailor guilty of murder who throws a male passenger overboard so that the lifeboat will be seaworthy enough to save the women and children—and the crewmen? Does a

Soviet composer have the right to prevent the use of his music in an anti-Soviet movie?

Mr. Cahn frequently makes pronouncements on controversial topics, and naturally not all of his readers will agree with all of them. For example, he moves from an abstract discussion of the need for "fact-skepticism" (a recognition of human fallibility) to these remarks, which are a good sample of his fairly complicated style:

"If there is any single practical corollary of fact-skepticism that stands out more obviously than all the others, it is that capital punishment should be abolished in American law. . . . Execution is the only completely irremediable punishment the law can inflict. Death alone can never be reversed, or compensated for, or mitigated. . . . Capital punishment would be hard to defend in a society of the omniscient; in a human, fallible society which grows continually more aware of the implications of fact-skepticism, it is quite intolerable."

The author was a practicing lawyer for twenty-three years. Since 1950 he has been a full-time professor of philosophy of law, law and society and constitutional law at New York University. This year he won the Phillips Prize of the American Philosophical Society for earlier writings in legal philosophy.

French Politics

FRANCE AGAINST HERSELF, Herbert Luethy, Frederick A. Praeger Inc. 476 pp. \$6.50

This study of modern France was published in Europe two years ago. While the delay in bringing out the American edition is regrettable, because the book is such an excellent analysis of France since the Liberation, the passage of two years does not make the volume, written by a Swiss journalist who has lived in Paris for ten years, read like yesterday's newspapers. For the problems of the France of 1953 are the problems of 1955, even as they were of 1945. As this review is being written the French National Assembly has just failed again to reach agreement on one of the many problems it has sought, but failed, to solve since World War II, the method of electing members of the Assembly.

Marching across these pages are the

familiar figures of post-war France—de Gaulle, Bidault, Mendes-France, Monnet, Schuman, Plevin, Quicelle, Sartre. Here, too, are the ghosts which bedevil modern France—Louis XIV, Bonaparte, Napoleon III, Petain.

Luethy is perhaps not in love with France, but he does like her. Probably that is why he is so infuriated by her contradictions, her exasperating ways. He has difficulty finding words to describe the incredible Halles, which distributes the produce of France in much the same way as it did in the twelfth century, when it became the Parisian market place. He vividly contrasts the Frenchman's pride in the liberty he firmly believes he has with the shocking miscarriages of justice which are an everyday occurrence of the French "police machine." A privileged class of "old tenants," he points out, lives absurdly cheap in slowly collapsing houses at rents which are kept low by law; yet "the first characteristic of a building site remains idyllic chaos." The more familiar aspects of modern France are also detailed, sometimes cynically, sometimes with understanding care, sometimes brutally. It is a long list of failures—the failure to control inflation at the end of the war, when it would have been so easy to call in the currency and issue new money; the failure to recognize that Overseas France wanted independence, not some vague form of appendage to Paris; the failure to stabilize the government; the failure to expand French industry so that it could at least keep pace with the rest of the western world.

Yet, despite all this, France manages to keep going. Perhaps it is because, as Luethy puts it, "The exciting secret of France is that an extremely durable order prevails behind its apparent disorder." The best example of such order is the French government itself, which is largely, if not wholly, run by the French bureaucracy.

"France has again and again succeeded in squaring the circle by miracles of dexterity and adroitness, and an unpretentiousness in matters of bodily comfort that approaches the miraculous," Luethy writes. "But the little bit left over every time the circle is squared has now grown so big that it can no longer be ignored."

Luethy explains the impasse in the

conventional terms of the history of the country and the characteristics of its people. If there is a weakness in the book, it is Luethy's failure to recommend some basic solutions to the problems. Perhaps there are none. While Luethy may not have discovered the kind of cure Mendes-France thinks he has found, the book is an incisive analysis which should be read by anyone who seeks to understand France.

—JULIUS C. DUSCHA

The Censorship Battle

THE RIGHT TO READ. By Paul Blanshard. Beacon Press, Boston. 339 pp. \$3.50.

The battle against censorship is never over and no part of its story should escape the attention of those who live by the press. Paul Blanshard has given censors some provocation himself and suffered from them. This may have led to his extensive exploration of censorship. But in this book he is not a man with any particular axe to grind or any special set of antagonists to attack. He is writing vital history and appraising it. His book could have had a greater impact a couple of years ago. But it was doubtless the sharp threat of that time that started him on it. It will arm its readers against the next cycle of censorship. He treats the whole range of censorship on textbooks and comics, against sex as against unorthodox ideas, against books and movies and the press. The optimistic aspect of Mr. Blanshard's book is that the most unconscionable attempts at censorship have ultimately failed. But while repression was on the march, the issue has often been in doubt, and the press has not always looked like a plumed knight when freedom needed a champion. Some of the more curious corners he explores are the ways that newspapers censor themselves, both as to news and advertising. Some of these are challenging, although he has, of course, no universal answer to what must always be an arbitrary decision on such individual standards as good taste or wise policy.

Our deadline for reviews had struck before this book was received, and this denies me the chance to give it the detailed attention its contents should command.

L. M. LYONS

The Dynamics of Our Politics

By John M. Harrison

THE AGE OF REFORM. By Richard Hofstadter. Alfred A. Knopf. 328 pp. \$4.50.

This is another important contribution to the process of examining the current of American political thought and action of the last hundred years variously known as the Liberal Tradition, the Progressive Tradition, and the Reform Movement. Professor Hofstadter, another of the young historians who have staked out this area as their private preserve, comes up with some fresh and startling notions that will be argued and discussed far beyond the Groves of Academe.

Anyone who has read this author's lively study, *The American Political Tradition*, is prepared for the combination of scholarship and readability which makes *The Age of Reform* both easy and informative reading. Sometimes he seems on the verge of getting involved in sociopsychological lingo (won't some modern reformer get "ethos" banned from the language?), but then the insouciance of his ideas stirs up a breeze which blows the gobbledygook right out the window.

This is not a history of the Reform Movement in the sense that Eric F. Goldman's *Rendezvous With Destiny*, published in 1952, was intended to be. It is rather an effort to examine the motivations—philosophic, economic, and political—of the various phases of reform activity in the United States.

Like most of these young historians who concern themselves with this aspect of history, Professor Hofstadter is—currently, at least—more impressed with the differences among the three major manifestations of the reform tradition than with what they have in common. And although he frequently goes out of his way to reaffirm their common heritage and point out what was carried over from one to the other, the very freshness of his thinking about the contrasts tends to emphasize them.

Mr. Hofstadter does insist that the re-

form movements of the last 90 years represent a continuing concern of Americans with adjusting the performance of their political and economic systems to the promise that always has been claimed for them. And although he raises the question whether this promise hasn't sometimes been confused with historical myths, he acknowledges that the reform groups have honestly sought to achieve these ideals—sometimes by one approach, sometimes by another.

The Populist movement is traced out of the myth of agrarian superiority, through the notion of conspiratorial force against the yeoman, and into the area of moral indignation. Mr. Hofstadter's approach is sympathetic. But he nonetheless emphasizes in Populist thinking those strains of "provincial resentments, popular and 'democratic' rebelliousness and suspiciousness, and nativism" which went hand in hand with liberal ideas. He urges a further study of this aspect of Populism in many areas where it flourished as a likely explanation of nativist sentiment in Congress and the nation today.

In his examination of the Progressive movement (by which he means the whole reform effort which centered around Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson) the author gives a good deal of attention to the status revolution and to the clash between the native American concept of the citizen's responsibility and the immigrant's rejection of it, with the consequent growth of city machines. From Populism, then, Progressivism inherited strains of nativism and moral fervor. It went beyond Populism in trying to prescribe methods by which responsible citizens could combat the growing influence of gigantic industrial combines and political machines. Yet it grew out of prosperity, rather than want, and it became not so much a protest of minority groups as a never quite united expression of the conscience of a majority, trying to control forces it regarded as dangerous. By the 1912 election, for example, less than 20 per cent of the total vote was cast for the only candidate who openly opposed

the Progressive tradition.

It is in his notions about the essential differences between the New Deal and these earlier reform movements that Professor Hofstadter is most adventurous, and most likely to stir up real controversy. He sees the six years (1932-38) in which Franklin D. Roosevelt got the approval of Congress—and, eventually, of the Supreme Court—of most of the legislation which constitutes the New Deal as essentially a period of pragmatic experimentation.

The reform movement, he contends, had lost the quality of moral indignation which had characterized its earlier phases. Such of this moral fervor as survived was expressed now in the bitter opposition to the New Deal, experimentation intended to bring the Government's power directly to bear on behalf of those groups in the population which needed aid and protection.

Interestingly, Professor Hofstadter finds in the writings of Thurman Arnold the nearest thing to a New Deal credo. He offers a contrast of key words in Arnold's books—needs, organization, results, technique—with those prominent in Progressive writings—patriotism, citizen, character, conscience, morals, sin, etc. Oversimplification? Perhaps. But surely an effective method of contrasting the bases of these two reform movements.

Considerable violence is done Mr. Hofstadter's closely reasoned critique by any effort such as this to select what seem his most important and most characteristic ideas. This is a book to be read whole, then carefully weighed and thought about.

It will dissolve some fond illusions of those who have identified themselves with this Liberal Tradition, or Progressive Tradition, or Reform Movement. It will elicit shocked protests when it may seem especially irreverent.

Yet when it has been finished, and when a certain amount of weighing and thinking has been done, it is almost sure to leave that Liberal or Progressive who has met up with it at least a little solidier and sounder in his concept of just what it is he does believe.

This is an important piece of writing about the political history and philosophy of the United States.

Our Supreme Court

By Louis M. Lyons

ON UNDERSTANDING THE SUPREME COURT, by Paul A. Freund. Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1951. 130 pp. \$3.

This is a wise and practical little book, beautifully written, by one of our finest constitutional minds. It describes the way our Supreme Court operates as the balance of our government and our society.

These three lectures were given at Northwestern Law School in 1949 and published in 1951. Only a few weeks ago Professor Freund was called upon to repeat the essence of them to the National Conference of Editorial Writers. They focused their annual session on understanding the Supreme Court. This itself was a journalistic benchmark worth noting. For the newspaper reporting of our highest tribunal represents probably the most inadequate performance of the press in America. This is the more strange because the strategic relation of the Court to the course of the national government has been recognized for 150 years, since John Marshall successfully defined its dominant role. Every school boy has known about this, at least since the Dred Scott case. Yet meaningful reporting of even the great issues that come to decision in the Court is notably lacking from almost the entire press. Any continuity of coverage, such as is given the other two great branches of the Federal Government is a universal omission. This is not for lack of materials to the job. The briefs and records are available for advance preparation of background, and the regularity of Monday as decision day would seem to make this the simplest assignment to schedule for top coverage. For some reason peculiar to itself the press has not made the Court an assignment calling for special qualifications, experience and continuing attention. This cannot be explained on the ground that its product does not touch our lives closely. Often enough the Court decisions break into the top headlines. But when they do, it is usually with the suddenness of some unpredictable act of nature. Even the reporting of science and labor, both in their

unrealized infancy, are far more developed than reporting the Supreme Court.

The casual way news of the Court is treated accounts for one of the great gaffs in journalistic history. The first report flashed to the nation on the Gold Clause decision of 1935 was directly contrary to fact. Because the opening sentences of the decision as read from the bench sounded as though it was going against the government, that was the report that went to thousands of newspapers. That muff seems to have made the great news agencies shy of the Court instead of leading them to seek mature Court reporting. True it takes time to digest the dissents and to discover the full import of a decision. It cannot all be supplied to the next edition. But this was true of the Salk vaccine, and of Dixon-Yates and of every political campaign.

Well, let the editorial writers take the lead, and with Paul Freund's able and urbane book as guidance, help their colleagues on the news side to understand the Supreme Court and its importance. For all the great controversial issues come to decision in the Court. Or else political strategy has led to bypassing this showdown—and that is a part of the story too. Freund's final chapter discloses a whole sheaf of fascinating stories that are now part of our political history. They describe the jockeying between government and private interests over the timing and selection of the test cases on such great issues as TVA, the Holding Company Act, SEC and others of equal import. No newspaperman can read this chapter without asking himself, "Where were the Washington correspondents?" For these surely were key moves in the endless chess game of politics.

The quality of writing in Freund's book is a discovery to delight any writing man. The penetration, the precision and economy of language, the style of the whole disclose a distinguished mind at work. They suggest an answer to the question: why study law?

An evidently germinal experience of Paul Freund's development was his service as law clerk to Justice Brandeis. His chapter that describes the ways of that great Justice in dealing with the issues before him illuminates not only the character and greatness of Brandeis, but the

incomparable opportunity the Court affords a great mind to affect our society. His 32 pages on Brandeis' approach to the public issues that required his decision are essential to any comprehensive biography of the great Justice. They show us profound differences between his attitude and philosophy and Justice Holmes', even when they were so often paired as the great dissenters. Any reader is bound to hope that Paul Freund can find time to expand his brilliant portrait of Brandeis. For here is the nucleus of such a classic of biography as could stand with Beveridge's John Marshall, and do more to bring to our day an understanding of the Supreme Court.

Letters

On Teaching Journalism

University of Washington
School of Communications
Seattle 5
November 10, 1955

To the Editor:

As a new reader of *Nieman Reports*, I want you to know how particularly interesting I found two articles in the October issue.

Professor Walsh's reactions to teaching journalism at Fordham after years on the "outside" are so close to my own since coming "inside" a year ago that I am writing him a note of thanks. He has helped strengthen my convictions.

Mort Stern's views on journalism education, on the other hand, gave me the shakes. I believe his position is vulnerable from several directions. Since I understand you sometimes like to publish dissenting opinions, I'm attaching some comments which you are welcome to use if you wish.

DANIEL S. WARNER

Associate Professor

P.S. All my experience until last year was "outside"—Chrysler Corporation, BBDO and Crowell-Collier Publishing Co.

[See Prof. Warner's article in this issue.—Ed.]

Tenth Anniversary

To the Editor:

I note in the October issue of *Nieman Reports* which came to the office this week that the next issue—in January—will mark the start of the tenth year of publication for what is clearly one of the top professional journals of its kind anywhere. This fact came to my attention, incidentally, because with the completion of Volume IX I can now have the last three years bound together, to complete a set I now have consisting of Volume 1-3 and 4-7 already made up in two durable bindings—durable enough to withstand continual reference.

May I hope that you are thinking of some appropriate special issue during Volume X to give fitting recognition to the completion of this first decade of useful publishing? Something as excellent in its way as that special issue on "Reading, Writing and Newspapers," which still is a textbook for our classes in journalism.

In the event that you may not have seen it, I enclose herewith a reprint of an *Editor & Publisher* article which supplements the statements of journalism teaching made in the October issue by Messrs. Walsh and Stern.

WILLIAM F. SWINDLER, *Director*
School of Journalism
The University of Nebraska
Lincoln 8, Nebraska

Scrapbook—

Dr. White on Exercise

Topics of The Times

Dr. Paul Dudley White's remarks about exercise during the recent Denver press conference doubtless caused some self-scrutiny among those who lead what he called "a chair and elevator existence." He may even have touched off some resolutions to do better, exercise-wise, among some readers. It is doubtful, though, that many will resolve to work their way up to ten-mile hikes, which the good doctor hints would not be a bad thing for most of us, heart-troubled or untroubled. His advised formula for neither too little nor too much exercise will not, so far as most of us are concerned, be more than half obeyed. —New York Times, Nov. 15

Harvard Crimson
Nov. 4

What TIME Is It?

One of the journalistic consequences of our harried age has been the rise in the circulation of the weekly news-magazines. To those who wish to keep up with the world, but can't bother to plow through the newspapers, these magazines offer a week's events boiled down into one easily-digested serving. And they are influential. As *Time* (circ. 2,000,000) modestly admits in its advertisements, "America's leading educators, presidents of business corporations, members of Congress, the top men in practically every field vote *Time* their favorite magazine. . . They depend on its accuracy."

The casual reader cannot check the accuracy or objectivity of *Time*, dependent as he may be upon them. His memory rarely stretches back past last week's issue. However, since *Time* has bound its back issues and put them on reserve in the library, its objectivity can be examined. We have decided to do this by comparing *Time's* reporting of the same men and the same events during the Democratic Administration of 1946-52, and the Republican Administration of 1952-55.

Take the income tax, an event of annoying recurrence. The "average American," of whom *Time* writes with great apparent familiarity, was bent over by his tax burden during the Democratic years. Thus: "*This week once again, the American taxpayer . . . was working over his income-tax return. He did not do the job happily. . . The blow, in full and crushing measure, now lands each March 15 on the chin of a fellow named John Q.*" (March 10, 1952)

But in 1955: ". . . 60 million Americans have by this week signed their 1954 income-tax forms. . . They did this, wonderful to tell, without riots or protest. . . It has become more and more unfashionable to criticize the income-tax level." (April 18, 1955)

Or look at the periodic reports on the economic health of the nation:

April 2, 1951 (Democratic Administration): "*Never in U. S. history had the cost of living been so high. Between*

January 15 and February 15 the consumer's price index jumped 1.3% to 183.8."

July 4, 1955 (Republican Administration. Consumer price index: 192.3) "After a considerable shift in domestic economic policy, the U. S. is more prosperous than ever before."

The sudden glow which accompanied the Republican Administration even transformed personalities. George E. Allen, when a government official in the Truman administration, was worked over as follows:

"For 18 years, roly-poly George E. Allen bobbed around Washington like a pneumatic rubber hose." (October 16, 1950) "Last week . . . The President [Truman] eased his croniest crony, George E. Allen, into the Board of Directors of (the) Reconstruction Finance Corporation." (January 28, 1946) "George is all the more remarkable because, to the naked eye, he is a clown." (August 12, 1946).

But behold: "Last week . . . the President [Eisenhower] chatted quietly with . . . golfing companion George E. Allen, Washington lawyer and friend of Presidents." (December 14, 1954)

Time's technique is perhaps best revealed in its weekly column on the Presidency. Its reports on Presidential behavior are able to rise above objectivity and perceive distinctions where none are apparent. Thus, "President Truman flapped open his leather notebook, and began in his usual flat tone to read his message to Congress on the state of the Union. When he finished 45 minutes later, he had made little news." (January 21, 1952) However, "President Eisenhower's 1955 State of the Union Speech had sweep and calm and balance;" and although "it elaborated the obvious, perhaps that was precisely what the nation needed." (January 17, 1955)

The casual observer might also have failed to detect the difference in the way each President handled the question of whether he would seek a second term: "The subject of Harry Truman's 1952 intentions came up again in his weekly press conference. The President wasn't

saying, just acting deliberately mysterious. It has become an unprofitable inquiry and a stale joke." (July 23, 1951)

". . . he [Eisenhower] has skillfully refused to commit himself on 1956." (January 24, 1955) "Adroitly, he fielded questions about a second term." (July 11, 1955) "At the President's news conference last week, his 1956 intentions seemed to be on the mind of almost every one of 188 reporters present . . . both the questioners and the answerer were obviously enjoying the banter." (March 14, 1955)

Where all else fails, Time can find a difference in the motive: "About May 1, after a month back at his desk in the White House, the President will begin a slow trip westward. . . Officially, the trip will be billed as non-political, an ancient device whereby a President can pay his expenses from his \$40,000 travel allowance instead of from the party treasury." (March 20, 1950)

"From time to time, the President of the United States must travel around the country. . . Last week, President Eisenhower announced one of the most intensive tours since he assumed office. First stop this week: West Point . . . University Park, Pa. . . Washington . . . San Francisco . . . and a speaking tour of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont." (June 13, 1955)

What bothered Time about the Fair Deal was its omnibus character. "In this best of all Democratic worlds he [Truman] had something for everybody. For the businessman, he had his new program of government loan insurance and other aids to small business. For the farmer and consumer, he had the Brannan Plan." (May 22, 1950) "For everyone else, there was a whole grab-bag of social and economic promises." (January 18, 1948). One might expect that Time would be similarly annoyed when President Eisenhower proposed such familiar Fair Deal items as ". . . lower tariffs . . . technical assistance . . . public works . . . highways . . . public housing . . . strengthened health services . . . alleviation (of) the shortage of schoolrooms . . . increase in the minimum wage . . . higher pay scale

for postal employees . . . [amendment of] the McCarran Act to eliminate injustices and discrimination." (January 17, 1955)

But once again, Time was able to spot the difference: "Through the departmentalized details of his [Eisenhower's] proposals runs a clear, consistent thread, joining each fact and each measure with all the others. The thread is the general good. He has not thrown together a hodge-podge of group interests. Every proposal seems to be tested by the standard of the whole nation's interest." (January 18, 1954)

It is perhaps arguable whether a weekly has any more right than a daily to editorialize in its news columns. But Time does not editorialize outright. Instead, with what must be a great expenditure on interviews and questionnaires, it tells its readers what "the people" think:

"In the eyes of most U. S. citizens, Harry Truman's administration had bogged down in ludicrous futility." (June 3, 1946)

"The public had an impression of a petulant, irascible President who stubbornly protected shoddy friends, a man who has grown too touchy to make judicious decisions, who failed to give the nation any clear leadership in these challenging times." (April 23, 1951)

"They saw Ike, and liked what they saw. . . They liked him for his strong, vigorous manner of speech . . . and for an overriding, innate kindness and modesty. But most of all, they liked him in a way they could scarcely explain. They liked Ike because, when they saw him and heard him talk, he made them proud of themselves and all the half-forgotten best that was in them and in the nation." (June 16, 1952)

It is comforting to know that the educators, corporation presidents, Congressmen and others who depend on Time, can draw their opinions from such a clear, pure fountain of fact. Makes the rest of us feel more at ease.

Milton S. Gwirtzman

(This ribbing of Time was by a former Harvard Crimson editor, now at Yale Law School.)

New York Times, Nov. 13

On Television: No Comment Decline of Commentators on the Air

By Jack Gould

The commentator is today's tragic figure of broadcasting. His voice has been all but stilled by the coming of television—little wanted on the home screen and little heard on the remnants of network radio.

Eagerly, the anxious analyst deals with the world's most pressing problems, yet in his heart he knows his influence has waned. The ratings tell their own grim story of what has happened to all radio shows—the program that reaches 3,000,000 homes is a phenomenon, not a commonplace occurrence—and the voices of authority are well down the list of survivors. Often the commentator can only wonder if he is just talking to himself.

The passing of the commentator from a position of importance in broadcasting would seem a matter of more than minor moment. Yet his injection from the spotlight has taken place without anyone apparently caring very much.

The commentators have been too numbed by the power of TV to cry out that their decline should be of concern to others besides themselves. The public similarly has been so bewitched by the animated screen that it has barely missed the seers of yesteryear. The broadcasters long ago largely abandoned the analytical minds in favor of the videogenic announcers who can recite a bulletin.

But the plight of the commentator is no joke. His relegation to the ethereal limbo is the public's loss as well as his own. For with his exit from the main stream of broadcasting there has been left behind a virtual coast-to-coast vacuum in the realm of mature analysis of the contemporary scene. A curtain of expediency has quietly closed off one of the country's major platforms for stimulating public opinion.

Television is the villain. It has scorned the commentator as an antiquated oddity

of the crystal set era and denied him a rightful place on the screen. Yet simultaneously it has lured away the audience that used to be his on the radio.

The effect of this two-pronged assault on the institution of commentary has been to wrap the country's largest mass audience in a protective cloak of continuous escapist entertainment and insulate it from an adequate awareness of the realities of day-to-day life.

The public, which once had on radio a regular and sustained exposure to a variety of opinions on national and international affairs, now lives, so far as broadcasting is concerned, in a trouble-free cathode cage. Night after night a viewer can watch TV and never be reminded that something has happened to the world which then and there should be analyzed, discussed and thought about.

It is ironic that out of all the formats TV borrowed from radio it should have calculatedly avoided the one form of programming which required a set owner to think the most: the commentary that either challenged or complemented his own views. On what one subject is brave, fearless video willing to tolerate forthright nightly comment? The weather.

Admittedly, the decline of commentary is not wholly a broadcasting problem. In times of prosperity there is a normal slackening of public concern with the weightier issues of life; until some news event begins to pinch an individual personally, his interest may not be too great.

But this is precisely why the role of the commentator is more important than ever. It is at times when the public may be lulled into a deceptive sense of security that there is need for a professional watchdog to make us constantly aware that the world never stands still.

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ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

The death of Robert Emmet Sherwood has taken away from us not only one of our most distinguished men of letters but also a valuable and lovable fellow-citizen. Mr. Sherwood was one of the best craftsmen in playwriting of our time. He was a political and social historian, both in his plays and in his prose works. The high honors that he received, again and again, were richly merited.

But to literally thousands of persons today the grief will not be for Robert Sherwood, playwright, Pulitzer Prize winner, political consultant and draftsman, analyst and critic. It will be a "Bob" Sherwood who was part not only of the life of his country but of the emotional life of all the many individuals with whom he came in contact. There is no disrespect in using his nickname, because it was always the mark of affection.

It was no accident that the powerful stream of his literary inspiration came from a deep spring of human interest. He was at his best when he was speaking out for all of us. The cause of mankind was his cause and he was its eloquent spokesman.

He was often called "idealist" and "dreamer," but there could be no reproach in such terms. He assumed the burdens of what he saw as his duty with constant courage. Much more than that, in all his dealings with those with whom he worked there was always the great and saving grace of a deep humility and a quick sympathy.

The "Robert Emmett" Sherwood will be honored for years to come for the magnificent things that he wrote. He will be remembered for his interpretation of ideas and for his part in some controversies. But the "Bob" Sherwood is mourned today as a great and good human being who made the lives of many persons richer and happier because those lives included the privilege of knowing and loving him.

—New York Times, November 15, 1955

Education As A Policy For the South

From an Address by Jonathan Daniels at Coker College, Hartville, S.C.

The title that Editor Daniels gave this when he printed it on his own editorial page was "Ignorance as a Policy for the South." But this of course was his straw man to knock down. Lest any headline reader misconstrue him, we have taken the liberty to change the policy to the one he advocates.

Conditions in this autumn, like everything else, seem much changed. But the harvests and the hobgoblins remain. We seem, indeed, to have increasing reason for both our festivals and our fears—and at the same time. Celebration is more fun than the contemplation of catastrophe. But we keep fear and festival all the year round in the South now. Perhaps we have always been a people equally, steadily and separately sharing barbecue and bitterness. Certainly today we seem to have only two things on our minds and in our mouths: the decentralization of American industry Southward and the desegregation of the schools Southward, too.

They are not regarded as identical twins. Eagerness attends one. Indeed, we are credited with such eagerness to take our part of the pattern of industry from the North that we have been charged with a zeal in looting never before equalled except by Sherman's soldiers. We were recently accused of robbing the industrial graves of devastated New England industrial towns. That was slander which will not stop the belated development of the South in terms of its neglected resources and the needs of its people. The building of new plants at a million-dollar-a-day rate in the Southeast will not slow soon.

The change in the people is more significant than the modern brick buildings which stand in the fields where the broom sedge was golden only in color. The Southern poor white, that creature deemed incapable of any but the dullest skills, seems to have disappeared everywhere except in Erskine Caldwell's novels. The tenant farmers of twenty years ago are imperceptible as the citizens of our bulging cities in a South in which urbanization is proceeding at a faster rate than the country as a whole—twice as fast in some sections. State the fact as we can see it, there are a great many more permanents than poke bonnets to be seen in South Carolina today.

But let us not count too rapidly in the South. The South has begun to feel rich before and sometimes to its undoing. It may not be amiss today to note that that phrase that lies like honey on the Southern tongue, "The New South" is seventy years old—and there was not only no honey but little enough hominy in some of those years. Henry Grady, out of an always expansive Atlanta, used the phrase first, I think, in 1886 in a search applauded by the same New Englanders who today sometimes seem to regard it as a label for Sherman's march transplanted and reversed.

It seems hardly worth noting now that the year Mr. Grady spoke exultantly and eloquently of the New South, Pitchfork Ben Tillman began to holler at the elegant people in South Carolina. Things definitely did not look so good to Mr. Tillman or the noisy thousands who flocked behind him. It will, I know, shock you young ladies today to know that he spoke of The Citadel as "a military dude factory." It will seem as absurd to your sisters, well dressed and well curled on their wages in South Carolina industry, to know that he spoke of the textile industry of the State as a "moral graveyard" for young women.

Mr. Grady's eloquence and Senator Tillman's violence both are a long way behind us. In our times hope is not only high; it is hung there like the moon. In a day of young and confident marriages, the babies, so thick in our suburbs, are clearly born to be the more and more skilled operators of our industrial plant and its multiplying customers, too. The highways everywhere widen. Their lanes run to shorter work weeks, higher wages, more fun, and a clear faith in the future. We have a right to celebrate our harvest in this autumn, South 1955.

We have a right also to our fears. No man—certainly no Southerner—in his

right mind would minimize the dimensions of the problem of the South created by the Supreme Court decision ordering the desegregation of our schools. It is not solved by the fact that our population has altered almost as rapidly as our pace. Indeed, it seems irrelevant to present people in the midst of the present problem that the white-Negro ratio in South Carolina has altered from a Negro majority of 150,000 in 1910 to half a million more white people than Negroes today. It is not made simple by the fact that in South Carolina the population of cities has doubled in two decades.

Nothing makes it a simple problem. But it can be made a more serious problem by those who step promptly, confidently, angrily forward with ruthless remedies. And the most tragic proposal ever made in a presumably intelligent land is that the South solve this great public problem by putting an end to public education—indeed to all education so far as the overwhelming majority of the people are concerned. The anger of those who propose such drastic remedies is understandable in the South but what they propose should be understood, too, as something beyond secession from the Union. What they urge is secession from civilization.

Maybe once the dictum was uttered and believed that one Southerner could whip ten Yankees. There may be those today who believe that a South denied public education could compete with the skills, the training, the schooling available to men and women and their children in other states and sections. It is an enterprise upon which I as one Southerner would not wish to embark. It would, I believe, if such a fantastic proposal should be accepted in the South, reduce a whole people to levels at which they could not be expected intelligently to cope with this problem or any other. Give us one generation of abandonment of public education in the South and we would all be poor, poor whites together.

In our own personal fears and in all those fears put together by men, who put such fears together, one thing we need to hold to hard in our hearts and our heads is that ignorance is no defense against integration or anything else.

Education is the basis of all we possess and all we hope to be—and I know no better place to say that with certainty than Hartsville, South Carolina, and Coker College. Trouble is not new in the South. Sometimes it has seemed our heritage. Long ago virtually the last words of John C. Calhoun were "The South, the poor South." Others have seemed to us very often to bring us our troubles. It is just possible, however, that we are not without fault, too. Just a few years before Calhoun whispered that phrase, one of the most distinguished scholars who ever came to South Carolina, Francis Lieber, now too much forgotten, proposed an epitaph for himself, "Here lies a man who died of the South." He did not die, fortunately, but he lived to go to other regions where he felt his learning was appreciated more.

But here in Hartsville, I'd like to talk about a man who left fewer phrases in either despair or complaint about the South, but who I suspect may serve as a better model for Southerners in troubled times. It seems to me time today to talk in Hartsville and everywhere else in the South about such a man as Major James Lide Coker. I do not find his name mentioned much in the angry records of Reconstruction in South Carolina but I do find, still alive and creative, the works he began in industry, business, agriculture and education not only here but in every part of this South we love together.

I suspect his image on this campus is venerable, maybe bearded. I like to think of him as the boy he was when he went to Harvard at 20 in 1857. He was not alone. In that center of abolitionism as well as erudition there were 63 Southerners when your Charleston neighbors fired on Fort Sumter. He studied there soils and plants, chemistry and botany under the great Louis Agassiz. It may be pertinent in the South now that when Agassiz came to America he said that it was a "land where

Nature was rich, but tools and workmen few. . . ." Certainly he stirred one great workman from South Carolina in James Lide Coker.

Well, of course, young Coker came home. He went to war. And he came home from war with a thigh shattered by a ball in Tennessee. He was Major Coker. That may not evoke any such image in your young minds but a Confederate Major always sounds elderly to me. This one was just 27 and he went to work, the historians say, "with a crutch in one hand and a hoe in the other." Frankly, I think that gives as false an image as a gray beard would. It sounds indeed heroic. I think he was. But the burned hills of South Carolina in those days were filled with heroic men to whom neither the crutch nor the hoe were strange.

What marked Major James Coker was that he had education in his head and put education to work in building this town, this state, this college. He could have devoted himself to futility and fury. Instead, hardly anywhere has the education of one man so blessed a family, a town, a state, a South. It does not seem strange to me that he capstoned his success with a college. It would only seem strange to me if anywhere within the expanding influence of his memory any person might consider the abandonment of education as a remedy for anything.

Of course, we have great problems in the South—and swiftly growing possibilities, too. Of course, we have traditions which are precious to us—and a destiny worthy of the best in our powers as in our past. We shall not find the way into the future easily—I find no easy roads for most people running through the past.

* * * *

The South has no greater tradition than that made by its educated, enlightened leaders. And the only hope of the South in this autumn of both festival and fear lies in the determination of its people that, come what fear there may be, no folly will lead us to the abandonment of the education of a whole advancing people. Those who would close our schools will not save the traditions of the South but they may destroy the South's hope. Our hopes and fears are indivi-

sible. Here where a man's education blessed the South, I invoke your blessings on public education. Indeed, I ask you to hold stubbornly in your hearts the understanding that any man who proposes that the South solve its great problems by greater ignorance is a great fool or thinks you are a greater one.

This is not a time for the South to withdraw into the dark. What the South needs is the continuation of its march toward more education for all its people.

—Raleigh News and Observer,
Oct. 10, 1955

Christian Science Monitor
Nov. 26

Good Sense on Passports

Nearly every week sees new steps of recovery from an unconscious acceptance of totalitarian attitudes in the United States. The latest is a federal court decision requiring the State Department to divulge information on which it denies a passport.

This follows a series of cases in which the passport division has been forced to retreat from a dictatorial position. In too many instances in recent years it has denied citizens the right to travel abroad without giving its reasons or permitting them to be questioned in a hearing. This was done supposedly to protect the identity of informants who might be useful to the FBI.

But it established a procedure which provided no assurance that federal officials possessed any real information. The system made it possible for an official to deny freedom of travel as arbitrarily as any petty despot in a totalitarian state. It unconsciously reflected an assumption that the citizen exists for the state—the very totalitarianism against whose threat restrictions on travel were aimed.

The true American philosophy is that the state exists to serve the citizen and must respect his rights. Another federal court has recently held that among these is freedom of travel. The whole direction of these decisions is healthy. It indicates that Americans are regaining their common sense and their confidence that freedom can defend freedom.

Nieman Notes

1939

Edwin A. Lahey becomes chief of the Washington Bureau of the Knight papers Jan. 15, when Paul A. Leach retires. The Knight papers include the *Chicago Daily News*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Miami Herald* and *Akron Beacon-Journal*. Ed Lahey has served in the Washington Bureau for 14 years and on the *Chicago Daily News* altogether for 26 years. Labor was his special field for many years, first as a Chicago reporter and later on a national basis. From Washington he has covered the national political conventions and Presidential campaigns and many foreign assignments, notably the troubles in Guatemala and Argentina the last two years.

Frank S. Hopkins of the State Department is home from a three-year assignment at Stuttgart, Germany. Starting November 15, he became deputy director of the UNESCO Relations staff, concerned with all the varied activities of the United States participation as one of the 74 member States in UNESCO, and with the 100-man National Commission on UNESCO.

His oldest son, Nicholas, returned to Switzerland to complete his studies at the Ecole Internationale, where he is preparing for college entrance next fall, Nicholas was the first "Nieman baby," born Feb. 20, 1939.

Hopkins writes that "Stuttgart was a wonderful experience. Ruth and I enjoyed it so much that I'm afraid we'll have itchy feet whenever we go abroad again. I had a staff of 12 Americans (originally 17) and 150 local residents. The cultural-information work we carried on was a big operation, including five U. S. library-cultural centers, known as American Houses. I think the staff did a bangup job there in this work for the USIA."

Herbert Lyons has moved back to New York from Mobile and is copy chief for Denhart & Shaw, book publishers advertising. Address: 114 East 32d Street, New York City.

1941

Crowell-Collier Publishing Company announced appointment of **Vance Johnson** as general manager on Dec. 7. This is a newly created position. He had been assistant to the editor-in-chief for editorial direction of the company's magazines, *Collier's*, *Woman's Home Companion* and the *American Magazine*. Former managing editor of the *Amarillo (Tex.) Daily News*, Johnson had a dozen years of Washington experience as correspondent of the *Chicago Sun* and then the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He is author of *Heaven's Tableland: The Dust Bowl Story*, 1947.

Alexander Kendrick on the overseas staff of CBS has been leader of a writer-photographer team covering Africa for a future network special production.

1942

Harry Ashmore took a leave from his executive editorship at the *Arkansas Gazette* to run Adlai Stevenson's headquarters. His appointment was based on his strategic services in the 1952 campaign when Ashmore assisted with speeches in the South and in liaison with Southern editors and politicians.

Victor O. Jones is now managing editor of the *Boston Globe*. Former sports editor, he has been night editor in recent years. He was one of a panel discussing news coverage at the first session of the new New England Society of Newspaper Editors, December 2, in Boston.

1943

John F. Day, Jr., news director of CBS was the guest speaker at a Nieman dinner in October.

Edward J. Donohoe, city editor of the *Scranton Times*, gave a talk on "interpretive writing" before a seminar jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Society of Newspaper Editors and the University of Pennsylvania Journalism Department.

1944

Beacon Press announces publication of a new book by **Lawrence Fernsworth**, *Spain's Struggle for Freedom*, with an introduction by Vincent Sheean. Fernsworth was for ten years the correspondent in Spain of the *Times* of London and covered the Spanish Civil War for them.

1947

Robert C. Miller has returned to newspaper activity with his old outfit, United Press. His appointment as UP manager in Australia was announced December 1. He was an energetic war correspondent, both in the second World War and in the Korean War. He was wounded at Verdun by a German bomb fragment.

After his Nieman Fellowship he was given a roving assignment that took him into the troubles of Palestine and Indo-China, then on to war service in Korea. When things quieted down, he was assigned to Phoenix, Ariz., where bomb tests did not provide enough excitement to keep him interested. He then laid off newspaper work for several years until the UP baited him with the Australian assignment.

1948

Carl Larsen finds time from a heavy assignment list on the *Chicago Sun-Times* to teach a course at the University of Chicago, in its evening division. It is entitled "The News You Get." He instructs in how to evaluate data from the mass media. He returned from a Southern trip to report "it looks very promising for Stevenson."

Robert W. Glasgow has been transferred by *Time*, Inc. from Toronto to Los Angeles.

1949

Upon the retirement of James E. Chappell as editor of the *Birmingham News* in November, **E. L. Holland, Jr.**, was promoted from associate editorial page editor to associate editor. His editorial chief, McClelland Van der Veer, was made editor.

Tillman Durdin was home on vacation leave this fall from his New York *Times* assignment in Southeast Asia.

1951

Dwight Sargent, editor of both Portland, Me. papers, is treasurer of the newly organized New England Society of Newspaper Editors which held its first sessions in Boston Dec. 2-3. Dwight is a former president of the National Conference of Editorial Writers. He shared in forming both these professional bodies and also in setting up the Lovejoy lectures on Freedom of the Press at Colby College, his alma mater.

Bob Eddy, of the copy desk of the St. Paul *Pioneer-Press*, was awarded a Reid fellowship for study and travel in Europe next year. He had just done an article for the *Saturday Evening Post* of "Children's Day," at the Eddy's. "This came about," he writes, "when our eight-year old daughter Kay said 'Well, we've had Mother's Day and Father's Day, when is Children's Day.'"

"We intend to leave on the Reid fellowship, Feb. 1, for Europe—all six of us."

Wellington Wales became managing editor of the magazine *Woman's Day* in November, moving from an executive position with the United Press.

1953

Robert F. Nielsen was on assignment to Europe last summer for the *Toronto Star* where his regular berth is editorial writing.

1954

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoyt announced the birth of Lisa K. Hoyt, their third child, March 17, 1955 in Akron where Bob is assistant city editor of the *Beacon-Journal*.

1955

Piers Anderton and his wife visited Cambridge just before Thanksgiving, on some days off from *Collier's*.

Henry Shapiro, back in Moscow for the UP since September, talks about the possibility of a visit home in February. His wife is on a fellowship with the Russian Research Center at Harvard and their daughter, Irene, is at Buckingham School, Cambridge. Henry now has a second man helping on the Moscow assignment which has built up into a bigger news file since the Russians opened up some last summer.

William H. French, back on the *Toronto Globe and Mail* after what he de-

scribes as a very successful tour of Europe with his wife last Summer, is giving a journalism course at the Ryerson Institute of Technology (Toronto's journalism school).

Selig Harrison resigned from the Associated Press to accept appointment as associate editor of the *New Republic*, effective, Feb. 1. He will work in Washington. His home address: 3611 Spring Street, Chevy Chase, Md. Harrison was a correspondent for the AP in India for three years and was assigned to the New York desk after completing his fellowship.

From Lowell Limpus

Nov. 22, 1955.

To the Editor:

I am considerably shocked to find that the w. k. Co-op has left Fair Harvard stranded away up on the headwaters of a famous creek, oarless, up the equally well known tree and with its neck stuck out a mile and a half. (You may credit any mixed metaphors to my state of mind as a result of the discovery.)

Anyhow I (and I presume other former Nieman Fellows) received an advertising pamphlet from the Coop, offering from its selection and for my Christmas shopping pleasure a beautifully illustrated set of alleged British neckties.

I was roundly shocked by the idea that any loyal son of the Crimson would consider decking himself in regimental colors he was not entitled to wear, but I was rendered virtually speechless by the discovery that *the ties themselves are phonies*. (They ain't any sich regiments in the British army.)

I am reliably informed by English journalistic colleagues that the names attached to each necktie closely approximate those of legitimate regiments, but the only one that can't be successfully challenged is that of the R.F.C., which is being disbanded.

Under the circumstances, I am refraining from ordering any of them. I think I'd prefer to wait until the Coop offers me a Rosette of the French Victoria Cross, the British Croix-de-Guerre or the Czechoslovakian Congressional Medal of Honor.

Yours for accuracy in journalism (advertising).

N.Y. *Daily News*

Lowell M. Limpus, N.F. '41

Nieman Dinner in New York

In New York for a day's program at the United Nations, the current Nieman Fellows had dinner with 27 of the New York Nieman Fellows November 10 at the Overseas Press Club. Frank Kelly rounded up the New York group and arranged the dinner and persuaded Robert Hutchins, president of the Fund for the Republic and W. H. Ferry, vice president, to discuss the work of the Fund.

The New York Fellows present were:

Piers Anderton, Robert Crandall, John Crider, David Dreiman, Robert Drew, Stephen Fischer, Stephen Fitzgerald, Thomas Griffith, Hazel Holly, Lionel Hudson, Donald Janson, Vance Johnson, Frank Kelly, William P. Miller, Harry T. Montgomery, Jay Odell, Arch Parsons, Robert Shaplen, Watson Sims, William Stucky, Leon Svirsky, Charles Wagner, William Woestendiek, and Ben Yablonky. Sam Zagoria was up from Washington, after attending a Nieman seminar in Cambridge with his chief, Sen. Clifford Case of New Jersey.

Tillman Durdin, New York *Times* correspondent in Southeast Asia was home on leave and attended. Grady Clay of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, in New York on assignment, was another guest.

Arch Parsons, New York *Herald Tribune* correspondent at the UN, helped shape up a crowded day's program of briefings and talks on November 11.

Nieman Dinner in Washington

On Nov. 2, 1955, the Washington Nieman Fellows had a dinner at the National Press Club with Prof. Dan Throop Smith, of Harvard Business School and the Treasury Department. There were eighteen Niemans present: Ed Lahey, Ed Edstrom, Clark Mollenhoff, Richard Dudman, Murrey Marder, Carroll Kilpatrick, Alan Barth, Robert E. Lee, Lawrence Fernsworth, Frank Hewlett, Henry Tanner, Stan Allen, Charles Jennings, Charles Molony, Selig Harrison, Osburn Zuber, Sam Zagoria and John Shively.

Bernard DeVoto

1897-1955

*From the news broadcast WGBH-TV-FM
by Louis Lyons, Nov. 14, 1955*

The Vitality of DeVoto

Bernard DeVoto was our friend and neighbor. He went to New York Sunday, as he had to do very often, and appeared on the CBS television program, "Adventure," seen everywhere except in Boston. This was at 3:30. He suffered a heart attack soon after and died at 8:30 last night. The New York Times and Herald Tribune went to press too early to chronicle his death today. So I give these details for their readers. He was only 58.

Only last week I talked of Bernard DeVoto on the publishing date of his last book, *The Easy Chair*. As it turned out this was his valedictory to his host of readers—selections from his work over twenty years as the "Easy Chair" editor of *Harper's*.

I need not now repeat my recent appreciation of the many-sided genius of DeVoto as historian, writer, crusader, and especially of his superb qualities as a journalist. For a last word, I would speak of the vitality of DeVoto. He fought for his causes. He put all of himself into his work, and worked and reworked it. Whatever he produced was always his best. This was a high compliment to his readers. Benny DeVoto never believed the cliché that readers were operating on a 12-year-old level. And his readers were not. He had the great quality of getting excited about the issues and events he explored and wrote about. And he put his excitement into them so that his product was exciting. You had to share his conviction that this was important and worth getting excited about.

To very many people the world of events and the periodical discussion of it will for a long time be less exciting because it will not be seen through the penetrating eyes and blunt pen of Bernard DeVoto. He was always himself, a thorny, salty personality, always a fighter, a very human man, a warm friend. He leaves a big jagged hole in our times that will not be readily filled.

* * *

A postscript, suggested by a listener who called me this evening, on one of Mr. DeVoto's earnest long-time projects. Born in Utah, his heart was with the causes of the West—Across the Wide Missouri. He fought as a conservationist against putting a dam in Echo Park in the Dinosaur National Monument on the Colorado-Utah line. It would have destroyed some of the finest canyon scenery in the

public domain. But it had the support of the Administration and of the politicians of the region as part of the Upper Colorado Development.

Only Sunday, yesterday, in the New York Times, John B. Oakes reports that the governors and congressmen of the Mountain States met last week and decided to drop Echo Park Dam as politically unfeasible.

This was the last fight DeVoto won, and in this very definite, tangible, conclusive form. This heartening news may easily have been the last thing he read yesterday.

A man could live a long time and achieve less satisfaction.

* * *

This station has just disclosed to me a surprise they had planned for November 25, when Mr. DeVoto was to appear with me on "Backgrounds." *Harper's* editors had arranged with WGBH to have me present him with a bound and inscribed copy of the current (November) *Harper's*, which observed the twentieth anniversary of his occupancy of the Easy Chair.

The inscription:

To Bernard DeVoto, seasoned practitioner of the journalistic craft, widely ranging in competence and punctual in deadlines, as resolute in his approvals as in his dislikes, partisan of sound sense and adversary of cant, friend of the public lands and enemy of the lukewarm martini, who in the twenty years he has occupied the Easy Chair has never learned to write a dull sentence.

The Editors of *Harper's*

*From the news broadcast over WGBH-TV-FM
November 2, 1955*

The "Pro" in the Easy Chair

Harper's for November is full of celebration of the 20th anniversary of Bernard DeVoto's occupation of the Easy Chair. So are the review columns of the New York newspapers today because Mr. DeVoto has published in a book by that title a fine selection of his Easy Chair articles over these 20 years.

His article this month is titled No. 241. This is not a

book review department. But it is news and local news—because Mr. DeVoto is a Cambridge neighbor—that he has completed this distinguished stint of 20 years in *Harper's* and has given us a notable book to mark his two decades.

Benny DeVoto is a lot of things—novelist, historian, lecturer, crusader, conservationist. But, as he himself likes to emphasize, he is primarily a journalist, and in the Easy Chair he has operated with the keenest journalistic enterprise, often enough opening or deepening the channels of news into such issues as the management of the public lands and waterways. Champion of causes that no one else, or hardly anyone else, is handling so doughtily, he goes to

the mat on censorship, tells off the FBI, takes on an officious or incompetent bureaucracy, battles the Western cattle or timber barons, and has his say about the idiocies of the TV commercial and other of our blatant commercialisms. If we didn't have a Benny DeVoto we should need to invent one. A fearless, competent critic, a talented writer, and in all he does, as he likes to insist, a pro.

His new book, *The Easy Chair*, is a notable collection of essays on the American culture in many of its facets of the years we have just been through.

LOUIS M. LYONS

Editorials by Former Nieman Fellows

Toledo Blade Nov. 15

BERNARD DeVOTO

There is a story—apocryphal, no doubt—of how the experienced clerks in the book department of the Harvard Cooperative Society's store in Cambridge would scatter to the four winds when Bernard DeVoto approached, leaving the newer help to face his storied wrath and exasperation. This is the impression most people had of him and he seemed to work very hard at enhancing his reputation as the kind of man who takes pleasure in frightening little children.

Yet in the current issue of *Harper's*, where his lively Easy Chair column had been appearing for exactly 20 years, this description of him appears:

In fact, Mr. DeVoto is a sentimentalist, with a coronary melting point 14 degrees lower than maple sugar. He is incapable of saying no to anybody who sounds either needy or put-upon; so he collects underdogs the way a blue serge suit collects lint. As a consequence, he spends a large chunk of his time helping people find a job, a publisher, a sound whisky, an elusive fact, a comfortable motel, a sense of prose style, justice, or a reliable psychiatrist—all the while emitting roars of exasperation.

When he died in New York Sunday night at the age of 58, Mr. DeVoto's claim to recognition as a friend to man was, in fact, already well established, despite his best efforts to convince the public to the contrary. For in addition to his humanitarian acts, he had won the undying grati-

tude of large numbers of people as a writer of history that was as readable as it was solid, not to mention his having originated the 3.75-to-1 formula for making a proper martini.

What Bernard DeVoto hated was not people, as sometimes has been alleged, but sham and pretense in any of its forms. He delighted to deflate a pompous historiologist who accused him of popularizing history. He could unhorse a politician (of the sort who rides forth armed only with his assumptions) with a deftness that was a delight to see.

Because men of such integrity always are so scarce, Bernard DeVoto's death is a calamity. Fortunately, his roars of exasperation survive him in printed form. These, with his excellent historical writings, will continue to make his influence felt in the land.

Washington Post Nov. 15

Bernard DeVoto

Bernard DeVoto never allowed his reputation as a scholar to inhibit his vigor as a journalist. There were few who knew more than he about the great westward movement of settlers and civilization across the North American Continent, and none wrote about it with more color and excitement. But he will be remembered equally, we surmise, for his contentious contributions to magazines and especially for his conduct of the department in *Harper's* known as the "Easy Chair." Number 241 of the "Easy Chair" appearing in the November *Harper's* is

at once a self-appraisal and an obituary.

It was as a journalist that DeVoto preferred to think of himself. Most of what he wrote was strongly opinionated. But if he was sometimes arrogant, he was never pretentious; and his convictions were bolstered by research and understanding. He was a crusader for preservation of the public lands, for reclamation and conservation. A great range of subjects evoked his indignant comment, however—the importunities of advertising, the amenities of martini-making, the pretensions of politicians, the callowness of some aspects of American culture.

"Some battles cannot be fought after the fact," he said, "and in journalism a writer runs into some he does not care to be above." Some years ago, DeVoto had the temerity to write an "Easy Chair" article sharply critical of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This blasphemy produced a good deal of denunciation. But even among those who disagreed with what he said, there must have been many who respected his doughtiness. He was never above the battle.

Literary Giant

The sudden death of Bernard DeVoto leaves the world of books without one of its giants, *Harper's* magazine without one of its best writers of this generation, and Maine without one of its warmest friends and severest critics.

His associates called him Benny, some out of love but most out of respect. While as sensitive as the next man in many ways, DeVoto cared little for personal adoration

but much for the truth and kept a warm spot in his heart for those he considered allies in pursuing truth. It was his devotion to the facts, of course, which brought him into controversy just prior to his death over the trashy appearance of much of Maine's Route One. Those less devoted found him hard to take.

What was often mistaken for arrogance on DeVoto's part was actually an impatience with mediocrity. He considered himself, and with good reason, a truly professional writer, using the term to embody the competence and skill and sincerity inherent in the best of literary works. Criticism within literary circles was more often than not the product of jealousy.

Adroitness with the English language was but one of his assets. He was a crusader, a dedicated crusader for conservation of natural resources, a courageous crusader against sham and hypocrisy wherever he found it.

It would be a snide understatement to say merely that the world of letters will miss his brilliant pen. The world will be a drearier, less informed place without him, and that includes every state of his beloved New England.

Portland *Oregonian*
Nov. 15

Uneasy Chair

"The Easy Chair" corner in *Harper's* magazine will probably never again have so uneasy an occupant as Bernard DeVoto, who died suddenly Sunday. Mr. DeVoto was a writer's writer, a professional to the core. He spent long and regular hours at his desk and in research, and few contemporary American authors could match his work in quality, quantity or range.

Fortunately, however, he was not "professional" in a sense implying personal indifference. He was well and affectionately known in Portland and elsewhere as the "terrible tempered" Mr. DeVoto. His well-executed phrases were hurled angrily and with stinging impact against a variety of targets. He ridiculed literary sophists, badgered careless historians, railed at way-side chefs who over-lard fried potatoes and hammered relentlessly at anything he took

to be spoliation of the wilderness areas of his native West. And all the while he went about building up a shelf of historical works of such solid scholarship that there was little room for retaliation by other critics.

Mr. DeVoto's editorial voice was piercing, but it was not blatant. It will be sorely missed. It is depressing to reflect that his latest book, a collection of pieces from "The Easy Chair" just come from the publisher, has become a memorial volume at a time when its author's service was ascendant.

Buffalo *Evening News* Nov. 15

Bernard DeVoto's Legacy

Whether writing history or fiction, literary criticism or current comment, Bernard DeVoto was usually a controversial figure. Ever a man to enjoy a good battle of words, he was in the midst of one when death came to him this week. For a day or two, he and the State of Maine were in the news columns because of a teapot tempest over what he had written about the costal resort areas of self-styled "Vacationland." The incident was typical of many in his career, but his legacy to American letters is fortunately of a more substantial character.

Many will remember DeVoto as a man who contributed significantly to a re-awakening of interest in American history after a period in which too many contemporaries were expounding alien isms to the neglect of their own country's great saga. They will recall, too, that his literary and historical province included the vastness of the trans-Mississippi West; that he brought home to many readers the truth that not all of our great deeds had been wrought on the Atlantic seaboard.

Others will remember DeVoto with affection because of the way he resolutely championed the cause of Mark Twain against the genteel literary traditionalists who found native Americanism too rich for their blood. That DeVoto garnered a Pulitzer Prize along the way is of less moment than his gift for the tale well

told, the argument worthily presented, which is always a boon to one's fellow men.

Salt Lake *Tribune* Nov. 15

West's Literary Rocket

He disliked being called controversial. But even his last words were controversial. On a television program Sunday featuring Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, he spoke pessimistically about the future of the West which, he said, was chronically plagued by "violence." A short time later, Bernard DeVoto, one of the West's all-time greats in literature, history and criticism, was seized by a fatal heart attack.

A native of Ogden, he taught for a time in Ogden Junior High School and later at Northwestern and Harvard. It was in the fields of literature and history that he won international eminence. The author of some 20 books under his own name and considerable fiction (for grocery money) under the name of John August, he was possessor of Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes and numerous other awards.

He did not specialize in history while a student at the University of Utah and Harvard, but he made academic historians sit up and take notice with his monumental story of the American frontier, told in *The Course of Empire, Across the Wide Missouri* and *The Year of Decision*, the trilogy being written in reverse order. Mark Twain was another of his preoccupations and he served with distinction as "literary executor of the Mark Twain estate." As editor of "The Easy Chair" department in *Harper's* magazine, he kept the professionals in a score of fields near boiling point.

Bernard DeVoto had little academic education in botany and forestry, but he became one of the country's most vigorous and influential conservation advocates. He reported quite accurately recently that no other publication had covered the subject any where near as adequately as had *Harper's* with him as author. Outspoken and sometimes intemperate in his writing and lecturing, he nevertheless succeeded in stimulating conservationist-minded people throughout the country into acting

to protect the public land. His "West Against Itself" theme infuriated some Westerners but it also caused many to take a second look at policies involving the region and he made complacency about parks and forests impossible.

He pulled no punches, and none were pulled when he was the target. He was described variously as "Chief Thunder on the Mountain," "a literary volcano," a "castigator of follies" and a "man who makes his points with both fists and both feet." Charles Poore, of the New York *Times*, wrote once that "Mr. DeVoto's normal prose style often sounds rather like that of a man who is making a speech before a crowd of ill-informed hecklers. This gives it a perspiring sort of vitality."

Harper's editors revealed the man behind the blustering exterior this month, however, when they said, "Mr. DeVoto is a sentimentalist, with a cornary melting point 14 degrees lower than maple sugar. He is incapable of saying no to anybody who sounds either needy or put-upon; so he collects underdogs the way a blue serge suit collects lint. As a consequence he spends a large chunk of his time helping people to find a job, a publisher, a sound whisky, an elusive fact, a comfortable motel, a sense of prose style, justice, or a reliable psychiatrist—all the while emitting roars of exasperation."

Prophetically, Mr. DeVoto's 20th anniversary "Easy Chair" column was a kind of swan song, a summing up. In it was an epitaph worthy of the great and courageous writer that he was: "I hope that what I have said has been said gracefully and that sometimes it has been amusing, or informative, or useful. No one has got me to say anything I did not want to say and no one has prevented me from saying anything I wanted to."

Eugene (Ore.) *Register-Guard*
Nov. 15

Two Distinguished Men of Letters

Two of America's most distinguished literary figures died this weekend. Robert E. Sherwood, playwright and biographer, and Bernard DeVoto, essayist, critic, conservationist, historian, editor, teacher and wonderful guy, died within a few hours of each other. Each gave something

distinctive to American life and letters.

Mr. Sherwood, a playwright of renown, turned to biography to do his monumental study of *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, thus earning a Pulitzer Prize, one of four he claimed. His plays *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *There Shall Be No Night*, and *Idiot's Delight* are outstanding examples of modern American drama.

In the death of Benny DeVoto, we feel a personal loss. A number of delightful hours spent in his company and a correspondence reaching over nearly four years established him in our hearts as one of those people who can never be replaced. In thinking about him we have wondered how he will be remembered. Will he be thought of as the historian who did such a superb job on the Lewis and Clark Journals? Will he be remembered as the critic who turned out the literary criticism on the Book of Mormon? Or will it be his vast knowledge of Mark Twain that keeps his name alive? Conservation was his passion. Will that be his niche in history?

All these things will count. But more important, he was a masterful prose stylist and a great human being. He believed in human dignity and wrote of it in powerful terms. Was somebody, anybody, getting pushed around? Benny would charge to his defense with the instincts, as an associate observed last month, of a mother bear protecting her cubs. Is there in the land an unskilled chemist who tips the vermouth bottle too heavily when mixing a martini? Benny had sharp words for him, growling that the proper proportions were 3.7 to 1. This growl was just Benny's way. Actually he was a friendly cuss who could not say "no" to a sad story. As John Fischer, the editor of *Harper's*, observed, the growl was a protective device like the quills on the well-meaning porcupine or the armor plate on the defenseless armadillo.

The versatility of the man was amazing. It was best illustrated in "The Easy Chair," the column he had conducted for *Harper's* for 20 years. All culture was his province—the F.B.I., the martini, the power dam, the politician, the cheap motel, the unzoned strip of highway, the juke box, the undisturbed spot in the woods, the western movie. Nothing was out of place in "The Easy Chair."

Oddly enough in the current *Harper's*, he all but wrote his own obituary. Celebrating his 20th year as the conductor of the oldest column in American journalism, he wrote at length of his beliefs and faiths and dislikes. A book of two dozen "Easy Chair" essays is newly published.

Born in Utah, he continued to travel often "across the wide Missouri." Although he lived a stone's throw from Harvard Square in Cambridge, Mass., he thought of himself as a Westerner. His Western friends thought of him that way, too.

Few living writers can equal him as a prose stylist. His stuff was simple and powerful and appealing. It was so easy to read—and so hard for him to write. He fought an uphill battle as he worked on returning the essay to its place in American letters. Only if Americans are very lucky, will his kind be seen again in our time.

St. Louis *Post Dispatch*
Nov. 15

Two Armed With Words

The writing trade was deprived of two of its most proficient American practitioners when heart attacks struck down almost simultaneously Robert E. Sherwood and Bernard DeVoto. And fair play lost two of its most vigilant and vigorous advocates; this second loss being the greater.

But for the string of crises which began with the depression, ran through the war and the end of which is not yet, the paths of these two might have come together only briefly as students at Harvard College. Sherwood might have gone his way as a playwright and movie-writer, turning out hit after hit and winning a Pulitzer Prize every now and then.

DeVoto might have been well content to be Harvard's best writing teacher since Bliss Perry, turning out magazine fiction or history—just to show he could practice what he preached—just to show he could practice what he preached—and also getting his recognitions.

Both did get their Pulitzer prizes, Sherwood three of them for "Idiot's Delight," "Abe Lincoln in Illinois" and "There Shall Be No Night." DeVoto's came for "Beyond the Wide Missouri," a book pre-

pared largely in St. Louis in the archives of the Missouri Historical Society.

These two Americans, however, were not cut out to be "non-political" after the fashion of so many of their European counterparts. There would be no American Hitler except "over their dead bodies." And the threat did not have to be so great to arouse them. Sherwood came to Franklin D. Roosevelt's aid in the writing of speeches, worked hard in the wartime information services, wrote articles for liberal causes and crowned them with "Roosevelt and Hopkins." winner of a Pulitzer biography award.

DeVoto's birth in Utah made him conscious not only of the history of the West, but of the necessity for defending its natural resources against ever-present plunderers. He was just as zealous for personal rights as for public property. He fought battle after battle against erosion of the Bill of Rights, whether by book-banning or by the prying of public authorities.

Occasionally he might devote one of his "Easy Chairs" in *Harper's Magazine* to kidding the female beautification industry or to ruminations on Mark Twain whose unpublished papers were in his custody. But mostly he was fighting. He loved good fights and he was always determined to win them.

Sherwood and DeVoto showed that they could write for money the easy way, but they were not minded to take that way. To them, writing was not just a way of making money; it was the great instrument of enlightenment and progress, the great weapon against the enemies of enlightenment and progress. So they will be missed—and remembered.

Dayton *Daily News* Nov. 15

Sherwood and DeVoto

American politics, philosophy and letters suffered a grievous double blow over the weekend in the untimely deaths of Robert Sherwood and Bernard DeVoto.

Sherwood at 59 and DeVoto at 58 should have had many useful years ahead of them. Yet heart attacks claimed the lives of both.

This was one of many similarities between two men whose personalities and careers were different in numerous other

ways. Sherwood was primarily the playwright, DeVoto the essayist. Yet both brought their interests and talents into focus in the field of history and in the lists of down-to-date political combat.

DeVoto was by turns relaxed and stern as for a score of years he purveyed opinions on morals and manners from *Harper's* "Easy Chair." He was a sophisticated connoisseur of the nuances of the cocktail hour, yet he was a mordant, Jeremiaic crier of the havoc that greedy men have tried to wreak on his native Western lands.

More of the poet and humanist, Sherwood made his impact on contemporary politics through presidential speech-writing, and his contribution to history through his chronicle of the crusades of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins.

Two brave and sensitive men have been taken from the scene at a time when there is urgent need for persons of like ideals and comparable effectiveness in championing them.

New Orleans *Item* Nov. 16

Double Loss

The deaths of Robert Sherwood and Bernard DeVoto almost at the same time and both from heart attacks must surely have had a doubly sad effect on many of their readers.

For these two writers were enough alike in their viewpoints and fields of interest that a great many people who admired one would also admire the other.

They were, to be sure, not at all alike in literary style. Sherwood was best known as a playwright and DeVoto as an essayist and historian.

Yet both wrote from deep convictions and they had a common devotion to the American heritage and the fundamental truths of democracy.

They were of the same generation—in fact, their ages were 59 and 58—and each was representative of it. Their influence on the creative literature of their own time has been great, and in both cases this was at least partly due to their sincere concern for the world and the country in which they lived.

Oregon *Statesman*
Nov. 17

Authority on the West

Two distinguished American men of letters, both winners of the Pulitzer prize died this week, prematurely one might say, for neither had reached the age of 60. Robert E. Sherwood, who won his laurels as a playwright, was a New Yorker, aged 59. Bernard DeVoto, 58, native of Utah but long-time resident of Cambridge, Mass., was a man of varied interests and talents: teacher, novelist, historian, critic, conservationist.

Each took a keen interest in public affairs; both were liberal in political outlook, but their expressions of public interest differed. Sherwood was a frequent aid to the late President Roosevelt as speechwriter. He was a strong internationalist in the pre-World War II days. The only American author to win the Pulitzer award four times, Sherwood won it for his plays: *Idiot's Delight*, *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* and *There Shall Be no Night*, and fourth for his biography, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*. He was still busy at writing plays for stage and screen, and his death removes one of the ablest of American dramatists.

DeVoto was a much more versatile individual. His writings were addressed to a much wider audience, and his frequent plunges into controversy brought him into nation-wide prominence. Not only were his interests diverse, his scholarly attainments were multiple. Teaching and lecturing at Harvard where he graduated did not occupy him long. He turned his hand to fiction writing, both as novelist and, under the pseudonym of John August, as writer of thrillers for popular magazines.

As literary critic he found himself in frequent feud with fellow literati, for he was a man of independent mind, disinclined to hunt with the pack. Thus he turned from such modern stylists as Hemingway and Thomas Wolfe to favor writers of an elder day, particularly Mark Twain, who was a frequent subject for his literary efforts. (He regarded *Huckleberry Finn* as the greatest American novel, and Thoreau's *Walden* as the greatest piece of non-fiction written by an American.)

DeVoto's works of most solid worth, however, relate to the great West where

he was born and reared. He became the greatest living authority on the exploration of Western America. Four great historical volumes are the fruit of his labors in this field: *The Year of Decision, 1846*; *Across the Wide Missouri*; *The Course of Empire* and an edition of the Lewis and Clark Journals. As a historian, DeVoto was not merely one to grub in libraries and to decipher old manuscripts though he did much of that. He crossed and crisscrossed the Great West whose geography was a vital part of history he was writing. He knew Montana and Idaho and Utah and Oregon intimately. It was his practice to revisit the West by automobile at frequent intervals so he kept fresh his acquaintance with the West.

This exploration made him a stout champion of conservation. He poured out his bitterest philippics against the despoilers of the range and the rivers and the beauties of the West. Recently he turned his guns on those who are desecrating the attractions of New England. DeVoto was a vigorous foe of the D'Ewart bill of 1953 to entrench graziers' rights in national forests. He became, too, a sharp critic of Secretary McKay—and worked among his conservationist friends for the election of Richard Neuberger as senator in 1954.

These articles were done for "The Easy Chair" in *Harper's* magazine, "the oldest editorial feature in American journalism" as he noted in the current issue of the magazine. In this number DeVoto took a backward look over his 20 years of supplying this feature to *Harper's*. Referring to the 30 articles and the monthly column he figured he had written some 800,000 words for *Harper's*—"more than anyone else now living." He admitted this was "personal journalism" and classified it as "cultural criticism." That may do as well as any other label. Fact is, that his range of subjects for "The Easy Chair" was extremely wide. The feature may have been "easy" for him, but it made many of its readers very unhappy. DeVoto admitted an indulgence in polemics, and when that is permitted for one with as sharp a wit and facile a style as DeVoto, polemics is a mild word for the product. Whether it was to hound book censors or nail to the corral fence the Western stockmen who had stripped the land of its cover of vegetation or to jibe at prohibitionists, DeVoto

wrote with such vigor and pace that his victims were left dead Indians. Variety was characteristic of DeVoto's themes for "The Easy Chair." This gave freshness to the subject matter and added to the zest which *Harper's* readers had for the feature.

Though his death comes as a shock to his constituency, it might be said that if it had to come, the time was well chosen. DeVoto had completed the trilogy on Western exploration,—he regarded the Lewis and Clark expedition as of the greatest historical significance in the settlement of the continent. He had rounded out 20 years of "cultural criticism" in *Harper's*. (A Book is just coming off the press with a compilation of selected articles from "The Easy Chair.") And he had won a substantial victory for protection of public lands.

A man with such varied interests and tastes and such physical and intellectual energy would never be content to retire. In his 58 years however DeVoto had packed important and durable work in history, in literary criticism and carried responsibilities of citizenship.

—CHARLES A. SPRAGUE

Charles Sprague, editor of the *Oregon Statesman*, served with the Selecting Committee for Nieman Fellowships this year.

New Republic,
Nov. 28

Bernard DeVoto: American Patriot

Bernard DeVoto was, above all, a man who loved his country—who loved it deeply, with knowledge and with compassion, sometimes with exasperation and an appearance of despair but always with a basic faith. He hated ever to leave it. He never set foot outside the North American continent, and it was only with great reluctance that he would venture across the Canadian border. "Love," Whitehead somewhere says, "is very penetrating; but it penetrates, not to facts, but to possibilities." Bernard DeVoto's love for his native land included both facts and pos-

sibilities. He sought out facts, cherished them, armed himself with them, used them to club others over the head, felt uneasy away from them. But he penetrated always to what lay beyond—the hope, the dream, the fertile valley over the next hill.

His so-called irascibility was not old-curmudgeonism. It was rather the outrage of a man who could not bear to see his nation falling below its own highest standards. One of the last incidents of his life made the point. When he condemned the transformation of the beautiful state of Maine into a jerry-built, neon-lighted vacationland, he did so, not because he hated Maine, but because he loved it. (One state official responded by cancelling the state's advertising in *Harper's*, where DeVoto's article appeared; but Governor Muskie understood DeVoto's passion and reversed the action of his subordinate.)

This love for country meant an inexhaustible delight in its physical aspects, from the deserts and canyons of his native Utah to the green hills of his beloved Vermont. But DeVoto was no sentimental nature writer. He cared, not only about deserts, but what caused them; not only about forests, but what threatened them; not only about rivers, but what could be done to purify them, control them and enlist them in strengthening the land and the people. He was dedicated to the struggle for the preservation and development of the country's natural resources.

* * * *

But Bernard DeVoto's passion above all was for the moral dimension of America. He was a fanatic for the tradition of individual freedom. "When an American says that he loves his country," wrote DeVoto's friend Adlai Stevenson, "he means not only that he loves the New England hills, the prairies glistening in the sun, the wide and rising plains, the great mountains, and the sea. He means that he loves an inner air, an inner light in which freedom lives and in which a man can draw the breath of self-respect." Because Bernard DeVoto loved freedom, he hated the smelters and the snoopers, the witch-hunters and the book-burners, the censors and the investigators.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.

Times of London
Nov. 16

Mr. Bernard DeVoto

Historian of "The Frontier"

Mr. Bernard DeVoto, who collapsed and died on Sunday night at the age of 58, shortly after appearing in a television programme in New York, was a scholar who did not believe in remaining in the study.

Bernard Augustine DeVoto was born at Ogden, Utah, on January 11, 1897, and was educated at the University of Utah and Harvard. His studies were interrupted by the entry of the United States into the 1914-18 War and he served in the Army as a musketry instructor. Having graduated from Harvard in 1920, he worked for a time as a schoolmaster and then as assistant professor of English at Northwestern University. In 1929 he joined the teaching staff of Harvard and remained there for some five years. For the next 20 years he was editor of the excellent feature in *Harper's* magazine, "The Easy Chair."

As befitted his origin, he was intensely interested in "The Frontier" and his greatest work, a trilogy which appeared between 1943 and 1953, stands in the forefront of vivid historical writing. The pioneers, Verendrye, Michaux, Mackenzie, Bill Burrows, Lewis, and Clark, move life-size across the broad canvas, vital and imposing. The Pulitzer and the Bancroft prizes awarded to him were due recognition of, perhaps, the greatest historian of America, who has done for the settlers of the West what Trevelyan has done for the men of the *Risorgimento*. The three volumes, *The Year of Decision, 1846*, *Across the Wide Missouri*, and *Westward the Course of Empire*, look a formidable task to read; they are, however, so gripping that once the reader has begun there is only pleasure. The material on which they are based is not only documentary, though all seems to have been consulted. What makes DeVoto's writing so vivid is the fact that not only was he born in the territory he describes, but constantly visited the scenes he depicted.

His other works on the Middle West, though on a smaller scale, are of high merit and his understanding of the quaint genius of Mark Twain is deep and communicable. In lighter vein, he wrote a number of

"thrillers" and popular magazine fiction under the *nom de plume* John August. Indeed, when the extent and gravity of his historical writing are considered, his output, serious and gay, was immense and of fine quality.

Manchester *Guardian Weekly* Nov. 17

Keep Off The Grass

It is impossible to imagine DeVoto dead and gone: this restless historian who made other restless men dead for centuries—La Verendrye, Michaux, Mackenzie, Bill Burrows, Lewis and Clark—more vital than the newspapers can make most of our living statesmen. He had achieved and delivered his great work—the three-volume masterpiece on the settling of the West: *The Year of Decision, 1846*, *Across the Wide Missouri*, and *The Course of Empire*. He chose his field as a young man and would let nothing—not comfort, nor friendship, nor the easy chance of riches—keep him from it. He even gave up teaching to pursue it, by the mountain pass and the mule as well as by the forgotten journal, buried text and maps, and Government surveys, expiring on the shelves of the Library of Congress.

He took the prize all good scholars, writers, and artists of every kind hanker after: to have seen one's mark and made it. DeVoto had made it by 30 years of ceaseless probing and reading and journeying. Yet he was too good and necessary a man to die so soon. For he never used his scholarship as a sanctuary from the battle of his own time. When he was not up to his knees on an old *voyageur's* trail through the Rockies, he was up to his powerful larynx in all the controversies of the day. He defied the Federal Bureau of Investigation to come and force him to tell about any personal association, however trivial. He blasted continuously the power and conservation policy of the Republican Administration. He saw the public domain being gradually pre-empted, not by evil men but by ignorance of the history and the disciplines necessary to preserve it.

Only last month he protested at the deterioration of the Maine coast into a "jerry-built, neon-lighted, over-populated

slum," and had the wounded Down-Easters foaming at him. One of his proudest moments was to be sitting on the Stevenson campaign train three years ago and just be able to hear McCarthy, over a radio, crackling with static, identify him as "Richard" DeVoto, one of Stevenson's malignant crew of associates.

The individual's right of privacy. The public's right to its own public lands. These were his gospel. There ought to be some simple, strong, Twainian epitaph for him, something as succinct as the inscriptions on the graves in Tombstone, Arizona. "Bernard DeVoto, 1897-1955. Keep Off the Grass" would do very well.

—Alistair Cooke

Winnipeg *Free Press*
Nov. 26

The Causerie

by M.F.

Many Canadians are familiar with the articles which Mr. Bernard DeVoto has been contributing over many years to *Harper's* magazine. He has made "The Easy Chair" not only the oldest "feature" in American journalism but also one of the most intelligent and stimulating. His death robs American journalism of a stalwart warrior for freedom and enemy of conformity.

* * * *

It is usually forgotten, and even the obituary notices in the American press forgot to point it out, that Mr. DeVoto wrote the single, most impressive political commentary on the 1952 Presidential campaign.

Very early in that campaign he wrote an article pointing out the serious risks of giving the Republicans control of Congress and thereby of the committee chairmanships. He published the list of the Republicans who would serve as chairmen and gave them the contemptuous nickname of "murderers' row."

It would be of little avail, he warned, for Mr. Eisenhower to be making noble gestures when his policies would be exposed to this ugly gauntlet in Congress. He predicted that national affairs in the event of a Republican victory would waver ominously between a stalemate and a feud. One must recall the first two years of the

Eisenhower Administration to realize the cruel precision of this prophecy.

Mr. Walter Lippmann tried to counter Mr. DeVoto's argument by claiming that it was essential to convert the Republican leaders in Congress to a sense of responsibility by making them partners in a Republican Administration. Mr. Stevenson sneered at this syllogism by observing that never before in American politics had a party gone to the country with the cry, "Throw the Rascals In!"

The last footnote to this episode was written when Mr. Lippmann, some months ago, formally abandoned his discredited theory. He announced his new revelation that the strength and progress of the American people demanded a Republican President and a Democratic Congress.

* * * *

Enough writers have praised DeVoto's books on the West, his veritable passion for conversation, his love of Mark Twain. But his life was spent in controversy and it is as a controversial figure and not as a stuffed saint that he should be remembered.

N.Y. Times Editorial—Nov. 15, 1955

BERNARD DeVOTO

The sudden death of Bernard DeVoto is a major loss to the world of American letters. Historian and novelist, critic and editor, he was a writer both scholarly and colorful, pugnacious and humorous, skillful and profound.

Bernard DeVoto was first of all a careful and distinguished chronicler of the majestic story of this country. His famous trilogy—*The Year of Decision: 1846*, *Across the Wide Missouri* and *The Course of Empire*—comprise a classic of America's Westward expansion, written by a man whose knowledge and love of the West has been surpassed by no other contemporary historian. But he was not content to be considered a writer of merely Western History—he complained about being known as "some kind of tributary of the Missouri River"—and there is little doubt that had he lived he would have made equally great contribu-

tions to the history of other areas. He was renowned for his work in literary history, too, and one of his books on Mark Twain has been described "as the first thorough application of the methods of social history to the problems of literary criticism."

But he probably exerted his greatest influence on American life and thought through his twenty years of editing the famed department of *Harper's* magazine called "The Easy Chair." Crusader, critic and caustic commentator, his trenchant paragraphs were in the best tradition of literary journalism. Though "The Easy Chair" covered many fields, that one in which he was perhaps most effective of all was as a conservationist who knew what he was talking about and who pulled no punches. His contribution in awakening the national conscience on this subject has been of the most practical and enduring value.

It is sad but fitting that Bernard DeVoto's last memorial should have been a collection of essays, largely from "The Easy Chair," published only a few days ago. In it he was justly proud to write: "No one has got me to say anything I did not want to say and no one has prevented me from saying anything I wanted to." That expressed the spirit of DeVoto, a great American, and the spirit of the America he loved.

The first ten of these editorials were by former Nieman Fellows: Ernest H. Linford, *Salt Lake Tribune*; John M. Harrison, *Toledo Blade*; Dwight E. Sargent, *Portland Press Herald*; Millard C. Browne, *Buffalo Evening News*; Francis P. Locke, *Dayton News*; Alan Barth, *Washington Post*. Robert B. Frazier, Eugene (Ore.) *Register-Guard*; Malcolm C. Bauer, *Portland Oregonian*.

Irving Dilliard is editorial page editor of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*.

George Chaplin, editor of the *New Orleans Item* says he did not write their editorial himself. The *New York Times* does not identify their editorials with individuals but a good guess would lay it to John B. Oakes, a member of this year's Selecting Committee on Nieman Fellowships.

North Star (Oklahoma City)

DeVoto's Monument

Editor, *North Star*:

The death of Bernard DeVoto is a major loss to conservation at a time when the remaining natural resources of the United States are under greater pressure than ever before.

With his pen, DeVoto was at the forefront of the modern conservation movement. Although he voted in Massachusetts, his principal realm of service was in the Far West where remain such natural assets as timber, mountain ranges, scenic watersheds, wild life and upland meadows.

Bernard DeVoto had done more than any other living American to alert his fellow citizens to the danger that these resources might be exploited and looted. He had helped to prevent and thwart schemes for such exploitation which were aided and fostered by some in high places.

The Western outdoors is DeVoto's monument. None could wish for a finer living memorial.

RICHARD NEUBERGER,
U. S. Senator from Oregon

PUDDING...

"San Francisco is a colorful newspaper town."—Louis Lyons, in a talk to the Nieman Fellows, Nov. 29, 1955.

...PROOF OF THE

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 3 (UP)—Mayor-elect George Christopher of San Francisco has fulfilled his first election pledge to the delight of City Hall reporters.

Christopher has filled the press room water cooler with bonded bourbon whiskey, as he promised the newsmen he would do if elected.

—Boston *Evening Globe*