

# NiemanReports

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# Nieman Reports

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## Editors Plan Study of New England Papers

The New England Society of Newspaper Editors, at their November 20 meeting in Providence, voted to authorize an "objectivity study" of the newspapers of their region.

The resolution voted approval of a report by Sevellon Brown, editor of the Providence *Journal-Bulletin*, who is chairman of a committee appointed the year before to explore the possibilities of such a study.

Mr. Brown's report, describing the study plan, is as follows:

The last annual convention of the New England Society of Newspaper Editors adopted a resolution authorizing the Board of Governors to create a committee "to explore the possibility of a study, or even of an award, to encourage maximum objectivity and impartiality in the news columns of the newspapers of this region."

Subsequently, the Board named me as chairman of this committee, with authority to choose its other members and directions to report to this convention.

Those who have consented to serve on this committee are Robert B. Beith of the Portland *Press Herald*, Herbert Brucker of the Hartford *Courant*, Mrs. Rhoda Shaw Clark of the Claremont *Eagle*, Daniel J. O'Brien of the Boston *Globe*, and Forrest Seymour of the Worcester *Telegram and Evening Gazette*. This is our report.

There never has been a truly meaningful study of news objectivity on a broad basis, or even a widely accepted method of accomplishing such a study. This does not

mean, however, that such a study could not or should not be attempted.

On the contrary, your committee has come to basic conclusions:

(1) If an acceptable and workable procedure can be devised, a study of objectivity in the news columns of New England papers would be eminently worthwhile. The whole American press asserts for itself—habitually, aggressively and quite properly—the right to examine and report upon just about every segment of our society. How can the press, then, in reason or good conscience, maintain that its own performance should be exempt from scrutiny? The very fact that others have resisted such study, or have attempted it and failed, means that if the NESNE could bring it off, the Society would have performed a valuable service for the press and the people of this region, and would greatly have reinforced its own reason for existence.

(2) The only feasible way of determining whether such a study is possible is to try it on a strictly limited and experimental basis. That, in essence, is what we recommend.

An examination of past attempts to conduct studies of news objectivity—notably the abortive Sigma Delta Chi proposal for a nationwide study of press performance in the 1956 election campaign—discloses that they encountered these main obstacles or entailed these principal weaknesses:

(1) The work was not confined to trained news men, but involved also journalism professors, pollsters and others from outside the craft.

(2) The projects tended to be too ambitious, and the procedures too complex and mechanistic.

(4) Too many editors and publishers were afraid of any kind of scrutiny.

We believe it *may* be possible to evade these obstacles and avoid these weaknesses in a pilot study of New England newspapers.

First of all, such a study should be conducted exclusively by trained newspapermen. Ideally, perhaps, the study should be conducted or at least directed by a small committee of news executives detached in one way or another from active New England newspapering, but nevertheless thoroughly familiar with our problems. Such men might have more time for work, and might be less vulnerable to suspicion of bias than working editors in the region. We are thinking of individuals like David Patten, retired managing editor of the Providence *Journal-Bulletin*; Carl Lindstrom, formerly of the Hartford *Times*; Dwight Sargent, formerly of the Portland *Press Herald*; or even a non-New Englander like Ben Reese, retired managing editor of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*.

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# The Guys on the Opposition

By Desmond Stone

Nothing so intrigued me in becoming a newspaperman in the United States as the prospect of working for a single ownership or "monopoly" press. This was something foreign to my experience, for nowhere in New Zealand are two newspapers in the one city owned by the same company. But I had read a number of articles (some argued mostly from statistics) on the dangers of the trend toward consolidation in the American press. So there were many questions in my mind to be answered.

Three months is no time at all in which to get to know a newspaper. But it may be long enough for someone coming in from the outside to make a few limited observations on city room operations. And if I have a natural bias toward the company that employs me on the Rochester *Times-Union*, it is offset perhaps by a degree of detachment which I will no longer possess by the time another three months have passed. Hence these few comments at this time.

The two main Rochester dailies, the *Times-Union* (evening) and the *Democrat and Chronicle* (morning), are the headquarters papers of the 19-paper Gannett Company group. They are also the largest. Both newspapers and their staffs are housed in the same building, and both make use of the same linotypes and presses. Although the library is the only resource the editorial staffs have in common, they live cheek by jowl on the same floor. A couple of dozen paces down the corridor takes you from one to the other.

Producing two papers in this physical setup may seem a little like pouring water from a kettle with two spouts. Yet the *Times-Union* and the *Democrat and Chronicle* manage to be surprisingly unlike. Each has a soul of its own.

The *Times-Union* is essentially conservative, sober, factual, with its prose as taut as the wire on a well-strung fence.

The *Democrat* is more discursive, warmer perhaps, more personal, more apt to show its petticoats.

Which paper achieves the higher standards is beside the point. What matters most is that they are different enough to allow each staff to feel that its own paper is far and away

Desmond Stone came from New Zealand to join the staff of the Rochester *Times-Union* last Summer. Here he reports his impressions of a "monopoly" newspaper. Mr. Stone first visited Rochester in 1956 when he was on a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard. His Nieman colleague, John Dougherty, city editor of the *Times-Union*, persuaded him to leave Invercargill for Rochester.

the better—and different enough also to allow separate identities to be preserved in public.

Until I came to Rochester I could not conceive how two staffs separated only by a stone's throw could operate in any other way except as the two halves of the same hockey team.

Yet this is not the way it works out. Nothing delights me so much as to hear the *Times-Union* members refer to the *Democrat* staff as "the guys on the opposition." For all we see of them, for all we mix with them, the *Democrat* staff might just as well be working on the unlighted side of the moon.

And this to me seems a wholly healthy situation. The sense of distinctive identity is quite marked. I have heard our staff members almost hoot with scorn when someone has come in with a meeting report and said, "Now I take it you'll pass this on to the *Democrat* too." The fact that the public does not make the same distinctions is not especially important—for this is often true of the public whether the press is competitive or not.

At least in Rochester, single ownership has not dulled the competitive instincts of newspapermen. There is still that sharp sense of delight when we scoop the opposition, and still that feeling of mortification when we are scooped ourselves. I listened the other day as one of our young reporters told us how he had managed, quite legitimately, to delude the man on the other paper into thinking he was not going to touch a certain story when in fact he intended to give it full treatment. And that, too, seemed healthy.

The drive to be first with the news is quite as pronounced as I have ever found it in any competitive situation in New Zealand. The deadline is, if anything, a little more tyrannical. And no newspaper in a competitive situation, I am sure, could get better mileage from its staff or urge them toward more objective standards.

Although employees all work for the same company, each staff has a loyalty of its own. Revealing to me was an incident the other day. I had gone to lunch with half a dozen of the staff and had listened to them talk shop and gripe about this and that aspect of the paper's operation.

Later the same day, when we were back in the office, one of the staff I had lunched with came up to me and said: "We were talking after you left and hoping you didn't think that that was what we really thought of the paper."

I hadn't assumed this, as a matter of fact, for it's a newspaperman's privilege all over the world to gripe about his paper. I have listened to many such sessions in my own

country. But it did seem to me significant that this man should go out of his way to see that I didn't get a wrong impression of staff feelings.

Neither has single ownership in Rochester made the getting of news the cheap operation it could very easily become. In my own experience, no time or expense is spared to dig out the facts and to give them the best treatment possible.

I do not say the papers cannot be improved or that single ownership is without its dangers. But what these dangers appear to have done here has been to create a keen awareness of the extra responsibilities of a single ownership press. Any newspaper in this situation is extremely sensitive to charges of captive readership. It is, therefore, especially on its guard against being unfair or biased in its treatment of news.

The single ownership paper tends to assume also a special responsibility toward the community—it throws time, money and lots of sheer hard work into a dozen different community activities. Close participation in so many things may bring its own special problems. But there is, on balance, more good than harm in it.

### Editors Plan Study

(Continued from page 2)

If this proved impracticable, the study might be conducted by a group of working New England editors split up on a regional basis, so that no editor would have to judge his own or neighboring newspapers.

In either case, the study panel should agree upon one running story of major significance, either nationally or regionally, as the focus for the pilot study. The panel might select this story either in advance or after the fact. There would be advantages and disadvantages in both methods, and it seems reasonable to leave it to the panel to decide which is preferable.

The panelists should agree in advance, next, on the specific points on which they were going to judge each paper's handling of the chosen story. The approach should be frankly professional and even subjective, rather than purely mechanical or "scientific." Such factors as page position, size of head, area of picture and length of story should be measured, *but only to provide part of the answer*. Less tangible factors, such as accuracy of head, selection of source, tone of story, completeness of story, fairness of writing and play definitely should be included. Any special factors affecting a given locality or certain newspapers also should be taken into account. For example, it would be obviously unfair to compare the treatment given the test story by small newspapers compelled to rely on a

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of single ownership is the suspicion it arouses in the minds of some of the public—people who simply cannot or will not credit the paper with any honor or integrity.

But this kind of person exists even in places where newspapers are truly competitive. And he represents the minority, I feel, rather than the majority.

The test is surely the degree of public cooperation and here I have been quite honestly impressed in Rochester with the readiness of people to keep the papers informed of what is going on.

I remember on my first day being phoned by the local office of the state department of public works about a bridge that had been closed temporarily for repairs. Being new, I was not at all sure I had taken down the names of the streets correctly. So I went up to the city editor to confess as much.

"That's OK," he said. "I've already got that item." The city police department had phoned him personally about the same time with the same item of news.

Single ownership cannot be making out too badly when you can get this kind of cooperation from the city.

single wire service with that of larger papers subscribing to several services, and perhaps using staffers as well. It might prove necessary to set up certain categories of papers in advance.

Once these decisions had been made, it should be easy to devise a simple mathematical formula for judging—perhaps a one-to-ten scale; judging each paper's story in each category previously agreed upon by the panel. Then the scores might be totaled for each paper and divided by the number of editors doing the judging to arrive at an average score for each paper reflecting the consensus of all.

The undersigned believe that such a pilot study is small enough in scope to be manageable; that the strictly professional approach outlined would make the results meaningful; that the experiment emphatically is worth trying. We urge the New England Society of Newspaper Editors to undertake such a pilot project.

ROBERT B. BEITH, *Portland Press Herald*  
HERBERT BRUCKER, *Hartford Courant*  
DANIEL J. O'BRIEN, *Boston Globe*  
RHODA SHAW CLARK, *Claremont Eagle*  
FORREST SEYMOUR, *Worcester Telegram-Gazette*  
SEVELLON BROWN, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*  
Chairman

(The Society accepted the proposal of the report.)



# What's News

By Herbert Brucker

Ralph Crosman served the press by being its conscience. I have here an *Editor & Publisher* clipping dated October 19, 1946. It reports Crosman's "latest indictment against the newspapers." And the first count is this: "We are failing to give the people the information they need regarding social, economic, and political conditions to enable them to vote intelligently."

Now here am I, exactly 13 years later, bringing exactly the same indictment. And I think the chief reason why we still fail to give the people the information they need is that we are serving up the news of 1960 in a style suited to 1920.

Why should this be? Newspaper people have been saying this for a generation. Everybody talks about modernizing the press, but nobody does much about it.

Perhaps one reason can be found in what Jack Knight of Knight Newspapers in Detroit, Miami, and way stations reports that the late Charles F. Kettering once said to him: "If you fellows would devote as much time to research as you do to protecting a free press, newspaper technology might catch up with the times." But I insist that more than the mechanics of printing newspapers is behind the times; our editorial mechanics are also anachronisms.

If by now printing technology had caught up with the times we would be out of the cost squeeze. And then we would have more money and time and energy than we can spare today to use in bringing newspaper editorial methods up to date. But most of us can do little to increase the productive efficiency of newspaper printing. We shall have to wait until the publishers, the scientists, and the engineers develop some cheaper and easier way than our 1896 mechanics to get words out of the typewriter and onto the reader's doorstep. Even so I insist that there is a lot we could do right now that we are not doing to increase the efficiency of editorial methods. It doesn't cost much to summon up enough spirit, and enough imagination, to get out of a rut.

I am aware that there have been a few minor changes over the years. We have increased the size of body type, gone in for a bit of horizontal makeup, and learned to use

Herbert Brucker is editor of the *Hartford Courant*. This is from the seventh annual Crosman Memorial Lecture, established at the University of Colorado in honor of Ralph Crosman, late dean of the journalism school there. Crosman believed it was the function of a school of journalism to assert standards and to appraise the performance of the press in the light of those standards.

a few more pictures. We have also, relatively at least, shrunk the size of the news hole in our papers. And it is in that hole that we have to do our job.

Maybe the cost squeeze leaves no alternative to a small space for news. But is that any reason why, in the space available, we should still write our stories and display them as though there were no such thing as radio and TV, as though nothing had happened since Woodrow Wilson died?

The results of doing so are not good. Consider the Advertising Research Foundation's Continuing Study of Newspaper Reading. This, you remember, is a summary of what the subscribers of 138 different dailies of various sizes in various places actually read in specific issues of those papers, as revealed in a reliable, door-to-door study made over the years between 1939 and 1950.

The basic idea was to show that the people do read papers—and read the advertising in them. Thank God it did show that. It also showed good readership in such peripheral fields as pictures, comics, society news, and sports. But it revealed a real shocker at the heart of things; namely, that of the nearly 18,000 general news stories published in those 138 daily newspapers men had read only 14 per cent, and women only 11 per cent.

There seems to be only one explanation: people aren't interested in news. Or is there, perhaps, another: that people *are* interested in the news, but are not interested in it in the form in which newspapers present it?

This reminds me of a line I quoted in a little book published 22 years ago, *The Changing American Newspaper*. In speaking of the fact that already in those Depression years news had acquired more depth than our reporting traditions could cope with, I quoted a line from a play of the time, *Clear All Wires*, by Sam and Bella Spewack. In it a World War I type of sensation-seeking hero reporter was told by a more modern type, "People aren't interested in news any more. They want to know what's happening."

The fact that we do not tell enough about what is happening is, I submit, the reason why our news does not get better readership than it does, why the cost squeeze pinches as sharply as it does, and why we are often uneasy about the job we are doing, and the future of the newspaper.

How can we give flesh and blood to a new concept of news? I think only by starting all over again, by thinking afresh as though the newspaper were being invented for

the first time today. It must be a paper that fits naturally into a world of soap opera and Gunsmoke and Dave Garroway, of jet planes, Khrushchev, moonshots, and electronic brains.

I rather think that much of what needs to be done has already been done—here and there. It is nothing revolutionary, just common sense. But instead of regarding these new methods as isolated curiosities, we ought to make them the models of all we do. I would like to examine a few of these ideas and experiments. Specifically, I suggest that we must:

1. Re-define news.
2. Search out the new kinds of things people are interested in, and print them.
3. Re-think our concepts of what space a particular item is worth.
4. Scrap our formula for writing news in favor of one suited to 1960.
5. Find ways of organizing and displaying the news that are suited to today's needs.

Let us look into each of these possibilities. First, what is news?

If one thing can stand as a symbol of our difficulties, it is our basic assumption as to what news is. You all remember I am sure the classic definition of news, the one usually attributed to Charles A. Dana of the *Sun* but apparently actually originated by Dana's city editor, John T. Bogart, in 1880. It is this: "When a dog bites a man, that's not news, but when a man bites a dog, that's news."

In other words, news is the unusual, the unexpected, the spectacular. And that is still true, as far as it goes. But does it go far in the life of the 1959 newspaper reader? Why should he get excited if his paper tells him that a man did bite a dog—when radio or TV have already told him about it before he even gets his paper? Why then should we write and display the news in ritualistic obeisance to this Victorian heirloom, this 80-year-old idea that only the spectacular, the novel, or the bizarre are news, as though Moses had brought it down from Sinai and nothing had changed since?

Turner Catledge, managing editor of the *New York Times*, has a definition of news more suited to 1960 than the 1880 version: "News is anything you find out today that you didn't know before." There is a lot that today's newspaper can tell its readers that they didn't know before, beside the fact that Joseph K. Blow, 39, of 2478 Maple Street, bit a dog yesterday.

First, though, there is some dead wood that we ought to get rid of. I nominate as first candidate for the scrap heap that phony, the overnight lead. We are all familiar with

the fact that of our 1751 daily newspapers only 307 are morning papers. In the nature of things morning papers have the time to collect the day's news and present it in ordered fashion. They tend to be the ones with prestige, the ones that set the standard despite their small numbers. Besides, it often happens that what is in the morning headlines has already been broadcast the evening before. Inevitably the evening papers must still sell essentially the news of what happened yesterday. In this fix our fetish that news is novelty impels us to invent for the 1444, evening papers an overnight lead that looks new even if it isn't new. So it is that our local reporters and our wire-service men alike scratch their heads to get a new lead that, synthetic though it usually is, seems to be newer than the one that has already appeared in the morning papers.

Do we really have to telephone around to needle some local politician, or some Washington bureaucrat or Senator into expressing a reaction to something that has happened today, just so that when the wire services get to clacking early in the morning, or when we sit down at night to write a little piece that is not going to be published until noon the next day, we shall have something that qualifies as news by the man-bite-dog standard?

Again, the results are not good. I quote from a letter an able but frustrated Congressman wrote me recently:

Here in Washington I have been impressed with another variation of newspaper business, and that is the reluctance of even the best newspapers, such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, to pick up a story that lacks the drama of a personal attack or some extreme slant.

Clair Engle of California, for instance, spent weeks preparing a speech for the Senate floor on what was wrong with our China policy and why he felt it should be drastically changed. Although this was the first sharp break with the Knowland line in Congress by anyone of stature, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* printed a single line of it.

Sitting here in Congress week after week, it is easy to understand why Congressmen and Senators resort more and more to bitter charges and extreme criticism. This is the one sure way they can get publicity. I do not know what can be done about it, but I have a strong feeling that many public figures behave irresponsibly because only by behaving in that way can they make themselves heard.

Perhaps this complaint makes too much of too little. But is there not truth in it?

Hopelessly confusing and vast though this world is, what goes on in it is fascinating. There must be some way of reporting it that makes good reading, without relying on

men who bite dogs. Without such a fresh, straightforward way of reporting we often miss the real story.

Sure, conflict still makes news, and so does money, sex, or anything else spectacular or juicy. Sure, lots of people are bored stiff with the complexities of their world that they ought to know about, and flock to the cheapest and most vulgar that TV (or newspapers) can dish up to them. Still, isn't there a little readership to be had, a little money to be made, by ceasing to act as though the important were trivial, and the trivial important?

There is another reason beside the increasing complexity of public affairs that makes the Why more meaningful to newspapers than the remaining trio of the classic Four W's, What and Where and When. This is the coming of radio and TV.

What a change electronic journalism should have forced upon us was borne in on me when one night I emerged from a session of the 1952 Republican National Convention in a sweltering Chicago. This was the first national convention to be given saturation coverage by television. There was a dramatic moment when Senator Dirksen, from the klieg-lighted rostrum, had pointed a finger of scorn at Governor Dewey. What was the point in the millions of words filed from the convention hall that day to report this fact as news, when for all practical purposes the whole country had seen it happen?

I want to be clear. We all know that the person who has been at the ball game, or has been present at a great event via radio or TV, is the best customer for the newspaper's ordered account of what really happened. On top of that we obviously must go right on getting and printing the hard core of news just as always. We cannot be sure that every reader has been in faithful attendance at the loudspeaker or TV screen.

There remains also that fundamental merit of the newspaper that it provides a permanent record, one that the citizen can pick up and read at any time, and keep to consult again another day if need be. Finally, we have the supreme advantage that the reader can select at will from a vastly varied bill of fare in the newspaper, while on radio or TV he has to take all or nothing.

Even so the point remains: it is high time we changed our methods of reporting, to suit them to readers who have access to radio and TV. Don't forget that in 1957 the number of homes with TV sets for the first time outnumbered those receiving a daily paper. And for some years before that homes with radio outnumbered homes with daily papers.

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If we could recover some of our youth, even some of our naivete, maybe we wouldn't dismiss as un-newsworthy a

multitude of events and activities that the customers find absorbing when they do see them in print. *The New Yorker* has been taking apart the obvious for a generation, and in so doing has come up with fascinating fact-stories that the newspapers have missed. Newspapers do it too—occasionally. For example last year the *New York Times* presented a behind-the-scenes account of how New York's Board of Elections prepares for election day. Under our 1880 formula as to what news is only the election itself, or what a candidate or other big shot says about it, qualifies as news. But here was a graphic account, in words and pictures, that told all about an important part of political life that most newspapers take for granted and so ignore. It made fascinating reading.

Then again, those of you who read the *Wall Street Journal* know that on its front page every day, in the leading news-story positions, there are three stories that often, according to journalistic folklore, aren't news stories at all. They belong in that second-grade category, feature stories. Or do they? Actually they are detailed, readable, authoritative news roundups based on extensive fact-gathering. They will tell you anything from what the 1960 cars will look like and be like—in advance of the official release date—to a fascinating account in personalized, pictorial terms of how department stores recovered this year from last year's slump. And when you have read one of these accounts you feel you know all about its subject. These are, if you will, magazine articles. But like much else in the magazines themselves, and even some books nowadays, they do a more adult job of reporting than we do most of the time.

Let me remind you that two years ago, at the ASNE convention in San Francisco, Dr. Gallup reported that newspapers weren't publishing a lot of the things that his studies revealed their readers to be most interested in. Among these were: health and related matters of medical science and practice; education; religion; financial problems of the people; what people think; and people in the news.

Some might fear that to put skilled writers to producing magazine-type articles in such fields would be too costly for all but big-city newspapers. But earlier this year there appeared, at a news-writing clinic sponsored by the University of Illinois School of Journalism and the Illinois Press Association, the managing editor of a weekly newspaper in the Chicago area, Charles Hayes of Arlington Heights. He declared that editors of small papers are wrong when they say that reporting in depth is beyond their resources. And he cited chapter and verse from his own experience:

We have stimulated community concern for approaching problems in crime, health, delinquency, poverty, and prejudice as our area continues to make the transition from country village to city. The area has responded to this need.

We have assigned reporters to dig into problems of hodge-podge development, traffic congestion, poor drainage, slums, sewage trouble, crowded schools, understaffed public offices, police, fire, and sanitation emergencies. . . .

We applied this policy of depth reporting to religious news and have attempted to present better interpretation of the affairs of the church and to educate the public on the nature and implications of expanding religious life.

\* \* \*

I realize that much of what I am urging gets into interpretive reporting. And some among us fear interpretive reporting, on the ground that it contaminates that greatest achievement of American journalism, reporting facts without bias. Actually, though, interpretive reporting does no such thing. It is just reporting suited to the complexity of today's world, and is not a license to express opinion.

By using interpretive reporting, indeed, a newspaper can achieve objectivity rather than depart from it. One remembers the instruction Palmer Hoyt issued to the *Denver Post* staff six and a half years ago to preserve objectivity against the rising tide of McCarthyism. He sought in various ways to set the almost daily McCarthy blasts into the perspective of related facts, right at the time of first publication. Surely this was more objective reporting than the inherited brand, which Elmer Davis used to denounce as deadpan reporting—the publication of a suspected or unknown lie without qualification, just because a noise-making Senator issued it from behind Congressional immunity.

Let's sum it all up this way: we still have to print a certain amount of jazz and guff and corn, to suit enough of the customers. But for the most part we can leave the trivial, the froth, and the vulgarity to the mechanized show business of radio and television, while we return to the news itself. We can find the news as it is today in this crazy, mixed-up world, if only we have the wit and the will.

So much for re-defining news. Next on my list of things to do is re-thinking our standard of what space a given item of news is worth. Here, too, we ought to scrap our traditions, and look at news values as though for the first time. For a generation now *Time* has been showing us how to condense, but we haven't taken the hint. Here is what *Time* said earlier this year in hardly more than an inch of large, readable type:

"A mite miffed when woolly-mopped pianist Van Cliburn begged out from their ceremonial dinner (reason: a prior engagement), the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce brooded once more, decided that Prodigy Van was not really one of the nation's ten outstanding young men of 1958 after all, instead named fresh-faced Crooner Pat Boone."

The AP account, gold standard of orthodox news writing, took 8½ inches of small newspaper type to tell the same story.

Maybe then it would be worth a little time and money to compress standard news into paragraphs that pack a punch, and to use the space thus saved—there would be an enormous amount of it—for detailed, readable stories about the new kinds of news that Dr. Gallup prescribes.

One paper, at least, has already done it. I refer again to the *Wall Street Journal*. Back in 1934 it launched twin columns headed "What's News—" that appear on page one every day. One column summarizes business and finance, the other the general news, mostly national and foreign. Both let the reader find out effortlessly and in incredibly brief space the essentials of what has happened. And if he wants more about some of the big stories, he can find it all inside.

Maybe such condensation is too stiff for the general newspaper. But still, is it necessary for us to give routine stories all the space we do?

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Next after space on my list is the style in which we write the news. Why, for example, do we still slavishly fit news into the inverted-pyramid formula? Those of you who may not be in our trade should know that the inverted pyramid is a Procrustean bed to which we adapt all news stories. The formula is to hit the reader between the eyes, bing-bang-biff, with the essentials of the whole story, in the least possible space. Thus we give the reader all he needs in the first paragraph or two. Then, if by some chance he is still interested, he can in the succeeding half-dozen paragraphs sample an expanded version of the same information, together with a few new facts. Next, if he is still with us, he can jump over to a back page, where the tale gradually gets less and less interesting, until finally it peters out in sheer insignificance.

This literary strait jacket was developed for good and sufficient reasons between the Civil War and World War I. In those days, when nobody had any way to get news but from a newspaper, the inverted pyramid was fine. It made it possible to present a lot of news about the growing, bustling United States by offering it all according to a formula that let the reader sample any story that struck his eye or his fancy. For the first time he didn't have to read everything in a newspaper of growing bulk. But the technique has had the effect of lessening the drama in an individual tale, and has encouraged the reader to pass on to the next item after a paragraph or two, secure in the knowledge that he knows the essentials of the event already.

In today's world of complexity, radio, and TV this formula has only partial validity. Urs Schwartz, foreign editor of Switzerland's *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, recently summed up its present state in these words: "The thoughtless inversion



of a story, confusing the reader, involving repetition, obscuring the course of events and the relationship between cause and effect, is now out of date." Why don't we do what Louis Lyons, curator of the Nieman Fellows, recommends: Write the news according to the simple formula of the Queen in Alice in Wonderland, which is to "begin at the beginning and go on to the end?"

There remains one more suggestion in this prescription for preparing the newspaper for 1960: departmentalization. Now, a generation ago there was vast enthusiasm over doing in newspapers what *Time* had taught us could be done in the way of segregating news into categories. But those who tried it learned that it just is not practical, in the hurly-burly of getting out a daily newspaper, to sort the news into that many compartments. So that was that. But must we therefore throw at the reader the undigestible, disorganized hodge-podge we give him every day? The New York *Times*, again, does an admirable job of collecting all on one page or set of pages everything it finds fit to print in the foreign, state, local, and other kinds of news—just as we all do with a few stock items like sports or comics or women's news. There seems little reason why even the smallest papers cannot do something like what the New York *Times* does. The medium-sized St. Petersburg *Times* in Florida, for one, does an excellent job of it. And Tom C. Harris, executive editor, notes that while in 1933 his paper did not have even 12,000 subscribers, it has 100,000 today. He admits that the

phenomenal growth of Florida is largely responsible. But, he says, the paper's editors know "that departmentalization of news has played a big part, too," in building the paper. Again it seems to me less an inherent difficulty that stops departmentalization than lack of enough energy to try it.

I am certain that, if we explore the possibilities already at hand with thought and enthusiasm, we shall be rewarded with more of the time of those readers we already have, and shall win new readers as well. The successful examples before us hint at what can be. Note that the *Wall Street Journal*, under its modernization program, has shot up from a circulation of 32,500 in 1940 to 620,000 now.

\* \* \*

But are changes in formula enough? I do not think so. One of the reasons we honor Ralph Crosman is that he was concerned not only with the technical excellence of newspapers, but also with their moral purpose and courage. While we wait for the increase in productive mechanical efficiency that can make journalism over, while we busy ourselves with modernizing our 60-to-80-year-old editorial methods, we can if we will also recapture something of the dedication to ideals, even at what may on the surface seem like financial risk, that made the great editors and publishers of the past. We can resolve that the only sacred cow we shall respect is the truth, as best we can find it out.

If we do this, we shall be living the ideals for our profession that Ralph Crosman and his like bequeathed to us.

## One Day's News

*Memorandum from the circulation manager of the New York Times on the Sunday paper of December 6:*

Yesterday we distributed 1,424,000 copies of the Sunday *Times*, each weighing 5 lb., 14 oz.

Approximately 60,000 trees grown on 250 acres of woodland were required for manufacturing the 8,000,000 pounds of newsprint for this issue. These trees were processed through 200 million gallons of water in manufacturing the newsprint. Approximately 320,000 pounds of ink were used for this edition.

Each issue was 2 ¾ inches thick and if piled on top of one another would make a pile reaching 62 miles into the sky. If the 25,000 issues sold in Washington, D. C. were piled one on top of the other, it would make a pile about seven times the height of the Washington Monument.

The engraving department reports they manufactured 130,000 square inches of engraving for the issue and the stereotyping department cast 30,000 40-pound stereotype plates—another record. We shipped out approximately 250,000 pounds of printed papers by air, which makes us the largest shipper of air freight in the country.



# The Quiet Thunderer

## The Times of London

By Donald J. Sterling

In the foreign news department of *The Times* of London a visitor is greeted by this sign on the wall:

"Members of the Staff are asked to cooperate in observing quietness in this corridor."

Observing quietness. The quaint phrase describes perfectly the way *The Times'* staff does its job, daily gathering and publishing the news calmly, methodically and with a dogged devotion to understatement.

This is not an American newspaper scene. It is not even Fleet Street. *The Times'* warren of four-story Georgian brick buildings faces on Printing House Square, three blocks south of the famous street where most of London's newspaper palaces stand. In contrast with the hectic atmosphere in some of the latter, it might as well be on a desert island.

Here I was privileged to spend a month recently, with *The Times* but not of it, under an arrangement worked out by the English-Speaking Union. With the E-SU's help and financial aid, the *Oregon Journal* lifted me out of my assistant city editor's swivel chair and sent me to Britain to write articles home about what I saw. *The Times* adopted me for a month of my 13-week itinerary.

The remarkable history of *The Times* needs no repeating here—how from its start as a promotion device to sell printing machinery, it reached such an awesome influence a century ago that Abraham Lincoln said that it was "one of the greatest powers in the world—in fact I don't know anything which has much more power—except perhaps the Mississippi." It slipped from its pinnacle, almost fell,—in the 1930's—and recovered its balance to remain what it is today—the oracle and breakfast companion of the Establishment—the Briton's wry term for the influential persons who run Britain.

For the story of "The Thunderer," here are a few current backstairs footnotes.

The entrance to *The Times* consists of a short flight of steps leading to a small waiting room, an elevator cage and a blue-uniformed guard. The friendly guard telephoned ahead and then furnished me with an office boy

as a guide to the office of the foreign news editor, J. S. Buist, who is expected to take charge of a good many visiting foreigners.

It is not wise for a stranger to try to find his own way in *The Times'* plant, which consists of a series of adjoining buildings that do not match up. The corridors dip and twist confusingly, and the staff works in small rooms behind closed and generally unlabelled doors.

Mr. Buist, once reached, proved to be a pleasant man with a soft Scottish burr and a clipped reddish moustache. His office, the control center for news coverage from Denver to Dar-es-Salaam, is a room about 20 by 25 feet. At the peak of the day's activities it contains the foreign news editor, two young deputies and two girl secretaries. Mr. Buist, whose name is pronounced "byewst," has his desk in one corner, under bright travel posters of Japan and San Sebastian.

At the opposite end of the room is a large world map studded with colored pins. Blue pins indicate places where *The Times* has stringers, Mr. Buist said, and red ones cities in which it keeps its own staff correspondents.

"And what do the green pins mean?" I asked.

"I don't know, really," Mr. Buist replied. "I think they mean that we ran out of red ones."

Offhand though its methods may appear—and there are other evidences of this as well—the foreign news department keeps track of correspondents in 15 major cities around the world, 10 of them aided by full-time deputies, and of some 80 stringers in lesser spots. In the United States *The Times* maintains two men in New York and two in Washington. It also has stringers in Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles and—significantly—Little Rock.

Most of the foreign newsmen report in as events warrant. But to those in the principal European capitals the London staff places telephone calls at a fixed hour every night. News telephoned from abroad is taken down in shorthand, backed up by tape recordings which can be replayed if the stenography appears to be doubtful.

The standard way these days to become a foreign correspondent for *The Times* begins with attendance at one of the British universities, preferably Cambridge or Oxford. In place of the traditional seasoning on the police beat or a country weekly, a new graduate freshly come to *The Times* is likely to break in by writing for and helping edit *The Times'* supplements—special sections which the

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Donald J. Sterling is assistant city editor of the *Oregon Journal*. His observation of the London *Times* is a product of the same three-months in Britain last year that yielded "Behemoths of Fleet Street" in the October 1959 Nieman Reports. Sterling was a Nieman Fellow in 1955-6.

newspaper issues occasionally on particular subjects. One recent foreign-side trainee moved next to the department which edits *The Times'* prestigious section of letters to the editor. Eventually the new man becomes a deputy foreign news editor, helping keep track of the correspondents' stories, reading some copy and doing other chores. After a year or two of this he should be ready for overseas duty, first as a deputy in one of the larger foreign offices, then in one of the smaller ones, and finally as a full correspondent on his own.

"It takes a man a year to learn a new foreign post," Mr. Buist told me. "He does his best work when he has been in a country from one to five years. After five years the chances are that he will have picked up too many of the attitudes of the people he has been dealing with, and he probably should be moved."

While the foreign staff covers events abroad, the news from the whole of the British Isles is the responsibility of the home news editor. As is a common arrangement on British papers, the home news department combines the work of the city and regional desks usually found in American newspaper offices.

The current home news editor of *The Times* is R. H. Dobson, a tall, lean man with the look of an actor born to play Sherlock Holmes. He presides over a room even smaller than the foreign news editor, and shares it with his deputy, a secretary, a copy boy, and a woman who organizes the calendar of public events which appears daily on *The Times'* "leader" (editorial) page. His reporters have a room of their own on the next floor up. They troop down in the morning for the day's assignments. If Mr. Dobson wants one of them unexpectedly he has to call on the telephone.

To cover the doings of all of the 8,300,000 people of London, the home news editor has at his disposal between 9 and 14 general assignment reporters on any given weekday—and perhaps two or three fewer when Parliament is in session and extra men are needed there. After tea time and on Sundays there are just one or two reporters and a deputy news editor on duty, and they spend much of their time checking the early editions of the next morning's competition for stories *The Times* may wish to follow up. There is but one reporter working on Saturdays, since *The Times* prints no Sunday edition.

The newspaper maintains only three full-time reporters in other British cities—one each in Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow. Supplementing them are innumerable stringers, some of whom may report in only once in two or three years. One of the jobs of the deputy home news editor is to swing around the country periodically, making sure the correspondents have not died or disappeared.

By American standards this may sound like a thin red line of heroes indeed for a newspaper with a world-wide reputation for excellence, seated in the world's second largest city, and with a circulation of 255,000. One partial explanation is that *The Times* simply elects not to cover some of the news which, while trivial by *Times* standards, is meat, drink and dessert to several of its far more widely circulated competitors. For another thing, *The Times* has separate staffs for its regularly-published supplements—the weekly educational and literary sections, for example, and the monthly science section—and these men cover news which on other papers might be handled by the home news department.

But a more important auxiliary is *The Times'* stable of specialists, who are on call for advice or writing whenever news arises in their particular fields. Some are full-time members of *The Times'* staff. Others are outsiders—editors of trade journals or even knowledgeable amateurs—who enjoy the prestige (and the occasional extra pay) which comes from being a specialist for *The Times*. The home news department maintains a printed handbook of respectable proportions with the names and addresses of the specialists. Their fields range alphabetically from agriculture to the zoo, and include, to cite a few near the top of the list, bridge, banking and coins, canoeing and the china clay industry.

One field in which *The Times* does not at present have a specialist is crime. It had one, but he died a few years ago and has not been replaced. *The Times* keeps no reporter at police headquarters, for one reason because policemen and newsmen seldom maintain the relatively cozy relationship in Britain which usually exists in the United States. At the criminal courts building—the picturesquely-named Old Bailey—*The Times* retains one seasoned reporter who works for the *Evening Standard* and the [Sunday] *News of the World* as well. He couldn't afford to live on what one paper alone would pay him, he told me.

A full-time reporter for *The Times* may make about £1200 (\$3400) a year. This is considerably more than he could earn in the provinces, but a lot less than the £1800 paid by the mass-circulation *Daily Express*. *Times* men claim that they enjoy advantages in pleasant and dignified working conditions which more than make up the difference.

"I had a friend who spent 18 months on the *Express* without ever writing a story," Mr. Dobson said. "They simply ignored him. With 40 or 50 reporters they can do that. Here I have to think about every individual man."

Just after World War II, Mr. Dobson said, *The Times* recruited most of its new reporters from provincial papers,

because they were the only ones available with experience. More recently the paper has been "trying to get better writing and a more intellectual kind of story," and for that reason has been turning more to the universities for its young staff members.

What, I asked, has *The Times* done to improve the quality of its writing?

"Hired better reporters," said Mr. Dobson.

While its criminal court news is handled by a regular reporter, *The Times* has a unique way of covering the civil courts of London. It subscribes to the service of a barrister who is in the business of compiling official digests of court decisions for legal journals. There is in Britain a serious oversupply of lawyers, many of whom never expect to practice law. The barrister, R. P. Colinvau, hires several of them, chiefly women, to serve as reporters for him. I listened to the decision in one damage case, of which the reporter for the tabloid *Daily Mirror* wrote about the personal plight of little Johnny, who had sucked, coughed and breathed in the metal reed from a defective toy bagpipe. *The Times'* correspondent, however, concentrated doggedly on the legal point involved, which was whether a wholesaler could be held responsible for the quality of merchandise re-sold by a street peddler. By thus keeping its eye sternely on the legal ball, at whatever cost in general reader interest, *The Times* has established itself in the position of being accepted by the British courts as an authority which may be cited by lawyers in their arguments.

Also impressive is *The Times'* method of covering the sessions of Parliament. This it does in far greater detail than any other newspaper, with a Parliamentary staff of ten reporters. Of these, two enjoy the privilege of accreditation as lobby reporters, which enables them to enter the members' lobby to interview the MPs. The other eight are gallery reporters. To cover the House of Commons they sit in the steep press gallery, looking down on the back of the speaker's chair, and take practically verbatim notes in shorthand of everything that is said while Parliament is in session. Each gallery reporter records for a stint of about 15 minutes, after which he is relieved by a colleague and goes out to *The Times'* office in the Parliament building to transcribe his notes. As the evening wears on, one senior reporter combines these transcriptions and his own observations into the daily "sketch"—the lead news story on the day's events in Parliament. In addition *The Times* runs several columns a day of the transcribed proceedings themselves—in full when the issue is important; condensed or omitted when the going becomes trivial. All of this material is sent from the Parliament building to *The Times'* plant, a couple of miles away, on a set of tape-punching teletypesetting machines.

*The Times'* men share with other Parliamentary reporters the simple comforts of a press bar and dining room near the chamber of the House of Commons. There is a ticker tape, projected on a large screen, to show them who is speaking and how long he has held the floor, and a system of bells to alert the newsmen to major developments in the chamber. The members themselves have their own drinking and dining facilities in the building. Seldom do the press and politicians invade each other's precincts. The relations of reporters with members of Parliament, as with the police and other public officials, tend to be distant and formal.

These sketchy glimpses of *The Times* at work must omit mention of several of the departments of the newspaper. It has, for example, flourishing sports, financial, literary and theatrical sections which I did not visit.

The writers of "leaders"—editorials—also were protected from my eyes. They work behind closed doors, clustered two or three together, in several small office rooms on an upper corridor of *The Times'* building. Here *The Times'* tradition of authoritative, scholarly writing still flourishes, though one copy editor complained to me that the number of interesting eccentrics among them is dwindling. To him, one hopeful survivor is *The Times'* specialist in heraldry (and how many papers have one of *those* these days?). Himself a member of the College of Heraldry, the man had an official role in the coronation ceremonies for Queen Elizabeth II. He hurried back from Westminster Abbey and sat down at his typewriter, still in his medieval finery, to turn out a piece for the next day's *Times*.

The leader page is literally and figuratively at the heart of the newspaper. After considerable puzzled fumbling, a newcomer learns that to get to the meat of *The Times*, he must open it to its center fold. The leader page then will be on the right, and the principal news of the day will be on the left, arranged under discreet one-and two-column heads on what the staff calls the "bill" page. The next page after the leader page carries society news and is called the "court" page because the official doings of the royal family are recorded there. Incidentally, *The Times* charges a fee for publishing most of the run-of-the-mill news about engagements, wedding and parties which appears on this page. The front page of the paper is occupied by classified advertisements, beginning with listings of births, deaths and marriages which are avidly scanned by *The Times'* subscribers. The personal notices column on this page can be intriguing. It is the chief bulletin board in Britain for people seeking to rent quaint hideaways in Majorca or to find a job which will enable them to "go anywhere, do anything legal." The personal column also is one of the best places to trace some of the quirks in British thinking, as, for example, in this advertisement:



*Horses Need Holidays*—A poor horse-owner cannot afford to give his horse a rest; the Home of Rest for Horses looks after overworked animals, rests them and provides poor owners with substitute horses at a very small charge. Send your donations to The Home of Rest for Horses, Westcroft Stables, Boreham Wood, Herts.

The back page of the paper is given to a layout of the best photographs of the day, and to real estate advertising in the classified ("small advert") form. Just ahead of it comes the financial ("City") news. The front page, bill page, leader page, court page, City pages and picture page have fixed places in *The Times*' makeup, the rest being fitted in daily as seems best.

This makeup planning is done by the night editor and his assistant, who work on a large glass-topped mahogany desk in one corner of "Room 6." Like most of the other rooms in the plant, it has no identifying label on the door, but Room 6 also is the place where the daily editorial conferences are held. Much of it is filled by a large board-of-directors type of table and chairs. After the conferees have gone, the night editors do their work in carpet-hushed silence, with pigeons cooing soothingly in the window shaft outside. Occasionally the picture editor or the head of one of the copy desks comes in for a few words. Rarely, the telephone tinkles. But mostly the two men sit working over their dummies, murmuring politely to each other now and then. They have, these days, usually from 20 to 24 pages in each night's paper, and they plan the layout of the advertisements as well as of news stories. Advertising is kept to about one-third of the space in the paper.

To guide them the night editors have the results of three brief editorial conferences, held around noon, 4:30 and 7 p.m., with the editor himself or one of his deputies presiding and the heads of the various departments laying out their wares. Usually these conferences consist simply of one man after another summarizing the day's stories in his field, with little give-and-take over what should be done with them. Some of the editors tend to scoff at the conferences as a waste of time, but that may be simply a form of understatement.

"Were any of you ever a choir boy who smoked between the services?" a deputy editor asked to open one such conference I attended. Unfortunately the question never got the discussion it deserved; the editor turned immediately to declaring "24 pages today, and 94 columns [of news space]." He went along, estimating how many columns each department should have. As one story or another was mentioned, he would rule occasionally, "That ought to go on the bill page," or "There should be a leader coming on that." After a few minutes the last of the

dozen men present had spoken. "Well, that ought to fill the paper," remarked one. "I hope not—not so early in the day," chipped in another, and they broke up to go back to their offices.

No description of a British newspaper for American readers should omit mention of the sub-editors—the copy desk, in American terminology. In England they handle most of the rewriting chores, as well as the copyreading and headline writing. On some papers—particularly ones with a breezy style and tricky makeup—it apparently is a lucky reporter who sees much of his work come out in print the way he wrote it.

By contrast, *The Times* is "not a sub-editor's paper," one *Times* sub-editor told me. He meant that *The Times* tends to rely more heavily on the judgment of its reporters than do some of its Fleet Street neighbors.

But still the role of the sub-editors (usually called "subs") is important. Local copy, for example, goes directly from the reporter who writes it to the sub-editor. The home news editor sees only a carbon copy of the stories he has assigned his men to write. The deputy home news editor, Frank Roberts, said this system has the advantage of "having a completely detached mind say, 'Never mind the excitement and the trouble you went to and the people who were very kind to you in giving you the information. Let's have a look at the product.'"

*The Times*' sub-editors function behind another of those anonymous doors, this one marked "33." They sit facing each other at two long tables—about seven home-news subs at one table and six foreign-news subs at the other. There are two chief subs, one for foreign and one for home news. Each chief designates the head he wants for the stories he handles and assigns out the work to one of the subs. When the sub has read the copy and written the head he puts it in a basket. From there an elderly messenger carries it back to the desk of the proper chief sub, who checks it and drops it down a pneumatic tube to the composing room.

All of this is accompanied in a hush as deep as that in the reading room of the British Museum. There are no typewriters; the subs write their heads in longhand, and do their rewriting that way too, when rewriting is necessary. There are half a dozen telephones in the room, but they ring only rarely. *The Times* has only four editions a night, and there is no pressure to rewrite heads for each edition unless later news developments or second thoughts require it. With fewer than 20 pages a night to handle copy for, and a relatively large staff to do it, the subs have a comparative eternity by American standards to polish most stories. Several of them bring books to read between chores. On the night I sat in, one was browsing through James Thurber's *My World and Welcome*

to *It*, and another was absorbed in *A Short Walk Through the Hindu Kush*.

*The Times* has a well-stocked reference library, but the subs' room is equipped with books of its own, including such exotics as *Who's Who in Nigeria* and the *Malta Directory and Trade Index*.

(The same placid conditions exist for sub-editors on some other British papers, notably the "serious" ones. It seems reasonable that the absence of distractions improves their work.)

There are quite a few facilities for socializing in *The Times'* buildings, though the instincts of a true *Times* man cause him to proceed with caution. One sub-editor who has been on the staff 11 years told me he had worked there two or three years before suddenly he "broke through their layer of consciousness" and three or four leader-writers and others outside his own department began conversation with him.

Mr. Buist said that when he took over the job of foreign news editor he found that his deputy was working in a separate office across the hall. It was a major achievement to bring his assistant into his own office. Today there is a foreign editor—whose functions as distinguished from those of the foreign news editor I frankly did not learn—who works in a room of his own and sees other members of the foreign staff only a few times a day.

For relaxing, though, *The Times* maintains an office pub right inside its buildings, and a cafeteria where the mechanical and news staffs rub elbows. The middle range of editors—the literary editor, editor of the education supplement and the like—have their own dining room in the plant to which a dozen or so of them repair every day for lunch, preceded for some by a glass of sherry. One man in this group explained to me why he seldom invited his subordinates to this table: "Some news might break in the middle of lunch and I would have to send my guest to cover it. That would be embarrassing for both of us."

At the pinnacle of the newspaper, *The Times'* board of directors meets Thursdays for lunch in The Private House. This is an inner structure in *The Times'* complex of buildings with a tiny garden which stands very near the site of the Blackfriars Theatre, in which Shakespeare once owned an interest. The directors and a few invited guests have a rather stately meal here, with an assortment of wines, port and cigars, before holding their weekly meetings. The board includes a few members of the two families which own *The Times*—the English branch of the Astors, and the Walter family, descendants of John Walter I, the printer, who was *The Times'* founder in 1785. The Astors have held a majority interest in the paper since Colonel John Jacob Astor helped the Walters purchase it from the estate of Lord Northcliffe in 1922. The current owners have an

agreement that any transfer of shares must be approved by a committee of some of the most exalted men in England—the Lord Chief Justice, the Warden of All Souls College at Oxford, the president of the Royal Society, the president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the governor of the Bank of England. In passing on a transfer of ownership this committee is charged with considering the importance of maintaining the best traditions and political independence of *The Times* and national rather than personal interests, and of eliminating as far as reasonably possible questions of personal ambition or personal profit.

Its reverence for tradition has not blinded *The Times'* management to the need for modernizing its plant. It installed new printing machinery just before World War II and extracts superior work from it. But the muddled confusion of old buildings which house the staff is out of date and work began this year to replace it, in an intricate set of maneuvers which involve tearing down old structures and building new ones on the same location, hopefully without upsetting the routine of getting out the paper.

It takes 1700 people to publish *The Times*—from reporters, editors, printers and janitors to the man who maintains the company's private employees' recreation ground outside of London. They tend to stick with the paper through long careers, and even to make working there a family matter. One story around *The Times'* office is that a previous administration decided it was bad policy to have many related persons working there. But it had to give up that idea when it discovered that the staff was so inter-related that to cut down to one employee per family would seriously cripple the newspaper.

Out of the 1700, the man who bears the heaviest responsibility for carrying on *The Times'* tradition is The Editor. The Editor's name is Sir William Haley, but among the staff it is seldom heard: usually they refer to him only by his title.

"The Editor will see you at 3:30 on May 12," his secretary had told me a month earlier when I first arrived in *The Times* building, and on that hour I presented myself.

Sir William has a small, comfortable office with little in it besides a large flat-topped desk and a couch. A print of an Impressionist landscape hangs on one wall, and behind his desk a uniform line of small photographic portraits—possibly former editors. Sir William's own image is that of a stocky, round-faced man with fair hair. He was director-general of the British Broadcasting Corporation before being called to the editorship of *The Times*. Before that he was for some 20 years on the staff of the *Manchester Evening News*, which has the same ownership as *The Times'* great rival, *The Guardian*.

"I often tell visitors from other countries that you cannot learn anything about journalism from visiting *The Times*,"



he opened. "But you can see something essentially English in operation."

I asked him what were *The Times'* objectives, and he answered:

"First, to be a journal of record.

"Second, to be of assistance to the people who are running the country—down to the smallest town and parish clerk.

"And third, to be of interest to intelligent people."

He explained that by being "of assistance" to those in authority, he meant that *The Times* aims to publish information which they need to do their work well.

Sir William volunteered that to some extent these aims interfere with each other. *The Times'* interest for the general reader inevitably suffers when it publishes, as it feels it must for the sake of the record, long lists of transfers on the military staffs of the nation, for example.

Referring to the staff of another leading British newspaper, Sir William said, "They write about what interests them. That is why it is such an interesting paper. But it is not a newspaper of record."

He pointed out that *The Times* stuck by its principles in World War II, when paper rationing made it necessary to reduce the average daily number of pages from 32 to 8. While sales of other newspapers soared, *The Times* voluntarily cut its own circulation deeply in order to save enough paper to print the record it thought needed to be made.

Today, he said, *The Times* is satisfied so long as its circulation shows a steady rise. This it is doing, although at 255,000 *The Times* is the only one among the eight nationally-circulated London papers with a press run of less than 1,000,000 a day. Sir William did not mention *The*

*Times'* promotion campaign of sprightly advertisements which, in less than two years, have made a national byword of the slogan "Top People Take *The Times*." He did state his belief that if the content of a newspaper is of sufficiently high quality, circulation inevitably will increase.

The conversation turned to the writing of leaders, on which *The Times* particularly prides itself. *The Times'* leader writers, he said, "spend three times as much time taking in [information] as giving out," and as a result may produce only one or two leaders a week. Just how many leader writers there are is difficult to estimate, he said, because many of the articles are written by the specialists who are expected to serve *The Times'* periodical supplements as well as the daily paper. But he said he did have a check made not long ago which showed that in one year *The Times* published leaders by 52 different authors.

Sir William gave this explanation of how *The Times* has assembled its staff of experts:

Britain is a nation of amateurs with special interests. There are not many places where they can find jobs. And there is a cachet to being on the staff of *The Times*. If they are offered a reasonable salary, they usually are glad to come.

He added, "We have a saying in England, 'Thank God there are still a few places left for a gentleman.' *The Times* is such a place."

I had set myself a ration of half an hour of The Editor's time, and at the end of 30 minutes stood up to leave.

"Goodbye," he said as he saw me to his office door. "Don't forget us when you get back home."

It would be impossible.

## Plugs Inc.

Corporate publicity men step up efforts to get promotion stories into publications.

More big companies are paying up to \$400 a story to have subtle promotion articles included in Feature and Precis, two catalogs of "features" available free to over 10,000 newspapers, magazines, trade publications. Editors send for articles that interest them. Though stories plainly are publicity releases, many editors don't tell readers the source. The feature syndicates, which write some stories, boast they've cracked such dailies as the New York *Herald Tribune*, Miami *Herald*, Chicago *Sun-Times*. Some publications scorn such practices, of course.

Current stories include: Please Be Seated, "700 springy, unpadded words" on the history of auto seating from Oldsmobile; a piece on laundering lore by DuPont; a banking article by American Express. Over 2,200 editors requested four stories by Interchemical Corp. Some papers put bylines of their own reporters on these items. One feature syndicate quits sending stories to editors who are unreasonable about deleting company names.

A Chicago feature distributor warns company PR men: "It is not a good idea to put your plug in the first few sentences."—*Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 19

## Algeria and the French Army

By Edward Behr

The events of May 13, 1958, are still fresh in most people's minds. The threat of a French Army coup then came as an immense and only partly understood surprise. The question uppermost in people's minds in France is: why did this threat arise then, and could it happen again?

To give any satisfying answer it's tempting to go back a long way in time and trace the development and political attitudes of the French Army ever since Napoleon. Avoiding this temptation, I'll merely recall that one must remember that the French Army was consistently used, throughout the 19th century, very much more as an internal security force—as in its dealings with the Commune, for instance—than most western armies of the time, and that the disastrous Franco-Prussian war of 1870 did more to turn Frenchmen into militarists than any overwhelming French victory could have done.

Charles Maurras, the reprehensible grand old man of extreme French nationalism, described the period after 1870 as the "golden age of national sentiment." Between 1870 and 1914 the status of a French officer became more socially desirable than at any previous time. The existence of a high-minded goal—the reconquest of France's former eastern provinces of Alsace Lorraine—was in itself a guarantee that the French Army would not jeopardize its power by indulging in politics. When another nationalist, Paul Deroulède, tried to stage a revolt by planning a march on the Elysees Palace, the general he contacted promptly got in touch with the police. The Boulangist movement was a farcical failure. The army, as at no time before, was vested, with the public consent of most of its citizens, with almost mystical powers: to cement national unity and prevent strife between different political groups while preparing for the day of revenge over hated Germany. The introduction of compulsory national service for all, together with forward-looking reforms of French military institutions helped the army to regain its place as an intrinsic part of the nation. And the enormous sacrifices made during World War I were proof of its success.

But the rot set in immediately after World War I, and there is a case for saying that this rot has never quite stopped since: it started with the parliamentary misrule of the Third Republic after 1918. Professional French Army

cadres ceased to be a reflection of national sentiment as this sentiment itself became increasingly divided. The French Army cadres tended to become the instruments of a certain kind of political thinking: roughly summarized, such thinking regarded the growth of socialism as by far the biggest world menace. It tended to respect and even admire the order and discipline apparent in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. It was hostile to the on-the-whole legitimate aspirations of the French working class. It regarded advent of the Popular Front in 1936 as an unmitigated calamity. At the same time, the aging French general staff failed to adjust itself to change: General de Gaulle's book on modern tank warfare sold less than 1000 copies when it was published in France; in that same year, in Germany, in translation, sales exceeded 10,000.

These reasons explain the defeat of 1940. In a way, they explain the curious phenomenon of Vichy: having lost the war, France clung to the trappings of glory. The Vichy regime turned on the politicians who had held office at the time of the Popular Front, not on the general staff which had lost the war. At the Riom trial, the only general present was Gamelin—not because he had failed in war but because he had been closely linked with the Blum government in 1936. In a directive to the docile Vichy press on the eve of the Riom trial, a Government guidance note stated that whatever happened "the honor of the French Army must be safeguarded."

The resistance movement was, at least in its most active form—antimilitarist. Its leaders were to a large extent civilians—former government officials like Jean Moulin, journalists like d'Astier de la Vigerie, teachers like Bidault. As the tide turned against Germany, so the great bulk of the French Army rallied to de Gaulle. But one should bear in mind the tremendous strains and psychological difficulties facing the French Army cadres at the end of the war: in several theaters, French troops had fought each other. To this day there is a gulf between the Gaullist who proudly wears his Cross of Lorraine on his lapel and the officer who remained loyal to Petain, or remained in Indochina under Japanese occupation. Inevitably, these events left an indelible mark on the French Army.

Those who had experienced these divisions and upheavals resolved that the army should never again be placed in a position where it was liable to become divided against itself. The army cadres, reconstituted at war's end, never quite lost their inferiority complex, caused by the humiliating memories of the 1940 rout, the fact that France's actual

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Edward Behr is correspondent for *Time* and *Life* in North Africa. This is a talk to a seminar of the Nieman Fellows at Harvard, October 20, 1959, which Mr. Behr released for *Nieman Reports*.

contribution to military victory had been small in proportion to her size; such feelings explain the lavish shows put on by the French Army of Occupation in Germany after the war. They explain, too, the relative eagerness with which the French expeditionary force involved itself in an Indochina war.

The Indochina war was to have, in turn, a further immense effect on the French Army. It was a war fought in a climate of general indifference in France itself. It certainly succeeded, as nothing else would probably have done, in unifying the French Army cadres, but only at the expense of turning them into a lonely group isolated from the French nation and bitter at the nation's almost total indifference to the war. Since it was a war confined to regulars, the nation's youth was not really involved. Since American aid more than paid for its cost, there was not even the sense of financial involvement. Only with the catastrophe of Dien Bien Phu was France jolted into consciousness of Indochina. By that time it was too late.

The theme of treason is dear to a defeated army: and it was easy to adopt the myth that the Indochina defeat was brought about by French Communists, leftists, Mendès-France and the French opposition press. The regular army's hatred for politicians first expressed itself in May 1954, just a few days before Mendès-France came to power, when several senior French Army officers, in civilian clothes, slapped and kicked two cabinet ministers as they were commemorating the Second World War victory at a flame-kindling ceremony at the Etoile.

The Indochina experience left the French regular Army with an abiding contempt for French politicians of the Fourth Republic, and forced them to draw some bitter conclusions. The first was that promises, in politics, mean very little. The army, acting in the light of repeated public statements by successive governments, had pledged itself to stay in Indochina and to protect the loyal pro-French minorities there. The French Army had gone and these minorities were left to their fate.

The second conclusion was that the army's Indochina war had once more been fought all wrong: that in wars of the Indochina type, the battle for men's minds mattered far more than military control over a given territory. The third, brought about by the somewhat hasty way in which the U.S. replaced France as an economic and political "big brother" in South Vietnam, was the quite unfounded suspicion that within the free world itself, the U.S. had a vested interest in supplanting France in her traditional spheres of influence. These conclusions hardened into obsessions with the proclamations of Tunisian and Moroccan independence, which the French Army saw in simple black and white terms. The French flag was being hauled down, the French Empire was rapidly and tragically shrinking.

There were additional, less high-minded reasons for anger: after Indochina, Tunisia and Morocco had been the last bastions of gracious living for the traditionally underpaid French Army.

Thus the cadres of the French Army came to examine their fresh crop of misfortunes and humiliations and drew up a new doctrine which took all these factors into consideration. Gradually spread by officers with Indochina experience, this doctrine became known as "revolutionary warfare." The French regular Army had seen, at close hand, the work of Communists and Communist-led nationalists in Indochina. The same methods, which had succeeded there, must also be applicable to the other side. Soon, the Algerian rebellion gave them the opportunity of putting their theories into practice. Briefly, methods advocated and gradually put into practice by the army in Algeria consisted—and still consist—in devoting as much time as operational requirements will allow to propaganda, 'good works' and close contact with, and direction of, the Moslem population. In Algeria, the army has been building roads, teaching school, looking after the sick. In so doing, they have attempted to win over the allegiance of the Moslems, and, in a number of cases, they have succeeded—at least for a time.

Unfortunately they have not been content with this. On a pattern outlined by Mao Tse-tung, they have attempted systematic, crude and generally ineffective indoctrination and brainwashing: what is described, in French Army memoranda, as the "mise en condition de la population," the setting up of secret "hierarchies parallèles" to counter the FLN conspiracy. They have also, and this is perhaps the most serious thing of all, put forward a seemingly logical but totally inadequate doctrine to justify all such activity—including the force (and occasionally torture) needed to implement it. Roughly, this doctrine is expressed as follows: it is based on the assumption that there is a perpetual, irrevocable cold war going on between the Communist bloc and the rest of the world, and that one of the main Communist aims is to undermine the West through the encouragement of subversion in under-developed countries.

While many of us will agree that there is some truth in this, it is not, I think, possible to accept the second half of the French Army's doctrine, namely, the Manichean proposition that the growth of nationalism, in any form or context, is bound to lead to catastrophe for the West, since, in an under-developed country, independence equals neutralism which in turn equals satellization by the Communist bloc. Moreover, in their eagerness to prove their point, French Army doctrinaires lump all past nationalist and revolutionary phenomena in the same boat. A special issue of the "Bulletin Militaire d'Information" is devoted to a survey of all past revolutions in the last 50 years, from the original Bolshevik revolution of 1917 to the present Algerian rebel-

lion, and taking in such various conflicts as the Spanish Civil War, Indian and Burmese nationalist agitation, the wartime revolt in Iran, and the events which led up to Tunisian and Moroccan independence. The similar characteristics of all these events are codified and stressed. Their differences are deliberately or unconsciously ignored. Again, the French Army doctrinaires mistake French indifference over what happened in Indochina and what is happening today in Algeria as proof of the existence of a criminal conspiracy. Just as, over Indochina, it became widely accepted that the war was lost in the Paris 'salons,' so it has become widely accepted, in the French Army at least, that the FLN rebellion draws most of its strength from outside Algeria and particularly from FLN sympathizers in France itself. Even before the May 13 coup they blamed France's democratic institutions for failing to provide safeguards against "treason." Their chief complaint—though this was naturally expressed more orally than in writing—was that French Governmental instability was the rebellion's best weapon. Since it could never be taken for granted that a dramatic change in government would not lead, as in Tunisia and Morocco, to a complete reversal of past policy.

The inference was clear: once the FLN's success had been attributed to these factors, the root cause of the rebellion appeared to be not in Algeria but in France itself. Hence the proliferation of army plots to overthrow the regime during the first months of 1958. Hence the army's overwhelming support of the May 13 rebellion against the shaky Pflimlin Government.

The army's own view of the May 13 coup was recently authoritatively expressed by General Paul Ely, its senior active French military commander, in an important article in the *"Revue Militaire d'Information"* (no. 297). Ely agrees that the army "assumed, alone and on its own initiative, responsibilities which should normally be shared." But, he says, both in Algiers and in Paris there was a power vacuum, and the army was the only unifying factor between a rebellious Algeria and a leaderless France. Ely affirms that the army did not foment the May 13 'coup' but once it had occurred was determined to "channel the movement to keep it within the national interest." The army, he adds, was in any case only a few days ahead of public opinion, since Parliament, and later a referendum, legally ratified, by a huge majority, the army's own choice of de Gaulle.

What follows in Ely's report is an interesting analysis of his conception of the role of the French Army. In an attempt to explain why the army behaved as it did on May 13, Ely points out that "owing to the very nature of the Algerian emergency, the army has in fact already been assuming far wider powers than it ever enjoyed before." Whereas, Ely goes on, France has, as a nation, only adapted

itself to economic forms of change (and has failed to adapt itself to political forms of change), the army has moved with the times, has come face to face with the Communist peril: the Algerian conflict, he wrote, "became a symbol of our will to greatness. Slowly, silently, over twelve years of war, an ideal has been forged. We have rejected the easy way out for the costly but generous task of keeping Algeria within the French Community."

It is clear, both from General Ely's tone and from last year's events themselves, that the regular cadres of the French Army have no intention of willingly surrendering their Algerian vocation. As early as 1842, Marshal Bugeaud, the conqueror of Algeria, had written: "the army is no less necessary to develop than it is to preserve our Algerian heritage. It is and will remain for a very long time the only serious task force capable of transforming the country, of opening it up to African and French commercial channels." After a little more than 100 years of neglect, that is still the aim of the French Army today.

Nor is this view held exclusively by the army: a senior French official in Algeria, deploring the lack of any political foundations on which to work in Algeria, told me recently: "There are in fact two political parties in Algeria—there is the FLN and there is the French Army." Those who have watched the Algerian crisis at first hand know that the army takes its social and educational role very seriously indeed, to the extent, very often, of protecting the Moslem from the high-handedness of French settlers. It is not generally known that one of the army's abortive plots—interrupted by the May 13 coup—was to arrest the most notorious French 'ultras' in Algeria and expel them from Algeria, at the same time turning their estates over to landless Moslems. Far more than in Indochina the French Army, for better or for worse, has assumed responsibility for the underprivileged Moslems caught in the nightmare world between FLN and French domination.

This realization explains de Gaulle's extremely cautious policy in attempting to end the Algerian war and in his dealings with the French Army, since both issues are inextricably linked. He removed a large number of officers from Algeria who were tainted with political extremism. But he sent them back to France and Germany, mostly with special promotions, was careful to sound out the French Army before making his important September 16 offer of "self determination," and reassured them that their work would go on. But has de Gaulle succeeded in keeping the French Army permanently under control?

The test, of course, will come with a cease-fire. Will the French Army allow—as de Gaulle has pledged—a really fair referendum campaign, enabling the nationalists to state their case? Will the army in fact obey any orders to stop



fighting so long as armed FLN troops remain on Algerian soil? Or will they, once more, side with the settlers against metropolitan France, on a far bigger scale and with far more serious consequences than during the May 13 coup? There are no cut and dried answers to these questions. Every French officer I have met in Algeria since the de Gaulle "self determination" offer has told me that he regards it as unthinkable that the FLN should be allowed to campaign for independence by political means, and there is considerable apprehension, among French liberals, that the army will by police methods and intimidation stage the same kind of "managed answer" to any eventual referendum as they did in the 1958 referendum and subsequent elections. In Algeria, unlike Tunisia—where French troops and Tunisian armed nationalists collaborated in keeping order in 1955—the French Army cannot remain neutral: it has by now got so heavily and emotionally involved in Algeria that it would almost certainly oppose, directly or by stealth, any move toward peace which would not be the unconditional surrender of the FLN. And the FLN, like the well organized guerilla movement that it is, can keep going indefinitely.

On the other hand, there is a thinking minority within the French Army which is aware that there can be no clearcut, permanent military solution. It is aware, too, that because of Algeria France is becoming hopelessly outdated for any other war than a colonial-type guerilla one, that France has become, at best, a sleeping partner within NATO. Only a fraction of France's Air Force pilots are jet-trained—the bulk of them are flying operationally in World War II and light Cessner aircraft over the Algerian 'djabel.' Back in Paris, French senior officials and some officers are beginning to realize the drawbacks of maintaining a doctrinaire politically minded army, some of whose members are not above "applying Algeria's methods to France itself." As the war goes on, there is growing realization that it is compromising not only its relations with the whole Arab world, but with black Africa as well. Finally, the new swing towards coexistence between the Communist bloc and the West appears to make nonsense of the rather simple French Army theory of a permanent Communist conspiracy through the encouragement of nationalism in under-developed countries.

Unfortunately, such thoughts are restricted to a very small minority. As far as one can see, most French officers regarded Khrushchev's visit to the U.S. as yet another example

of naïve friendly Americans being bamboozled by expert Communist plotters. Most French officers consider, quite sincerely but preposterously, that they are defending the West far more effectively by fighting the FLN than within any NATO framework. They are still prepared to be swayed by the French Army 'activists' who are already scheming to stage a further 'coup' if de Gaulle dies suddenly, or if he moves toward peace too fast. They are desperately looking for a channel into French political life, for a "new Soustelle," as one of them put it, who would not let them down. (Soustelle is now considered to be a traitor to Algeria's cause.) The allegiance of former Gaullist Free French officers to de Gaulle is entire. But it should be remembered that in the younger ranks of the cadres of the French Army a new generation of captains and majors is emerging, most of whom are too young to have fought in the Second World War, and who do not regard de Gaulle, as the elder Free French officers do, as a mystical father-figure whom it would be criminal to disobey.

To a very large extent, the behavior of the French Army in Algeria depends on two factors: de Gaulle's ability to explain to the army that it has won, whatever the results of the referendum may be; and his vigilance in overcoming conspiratorial activity against him. His major asset, at the end of 1959, is the overwhelming confidence which the majority of the French people still place in him to put an end to the Algerian war while keeping France's name respected. Whereas the French Army could very well have taken over the running of France in May 1958 without firing a shot—nobody was prepared to die for the Fourth Republic—today the French Army would almost certainly provoke bloodshed and chaos if it rebelled against the authority of de Gaulle. Most French Army officers are realists enough to understand that out of this chaos they would ultimately be the losers. Backed by popular support in metropolitan France, and with enormous Presidential powers at his disposal, de Gaulle should be able first to check, then to canalize into less harmful directions, the passions and energies of the French Army. In spite of his own record as a rebel, there is evidence that he has no illusions about the evils of military despotism. In 1932, in a book called *Le Fil de l'Épée*, he wrote: "In a country where the military would make the law, one cannot doubt that the springs of power, extended to excess, would end by breaking . . . It is a very fitting thing that politics and the army do not mix." For France it is fortunate that de Gaulle abides by the ideas he expressed as an obscure colonel.



# Shield of Secrecy

## The Claim of Executive Privilege to Withhold Information

By Clark Mollenhoff

On the surface it would appear there are few threats to the free press today. Those who are critical of governmental officials or of the great institutions of our nation do not have their presses smashed, nor are they likely to be subjected to the continuous personal harassment that resulted in the death of Elijah Parish Lovejoy.

Today there is the tendency in America to take our freedoms for granted. We assume that freedom of the press is so well established that it will always be with us. Our daily newspapers are filled with columns of print exposing wrong doing, and criticizing the mistakes of judgment by our public officials, our labor leaders, our television performers and television executives. Many newspapers pride themselves on finding room for all points of view, and have demonstrated it by carrying columnists who are as far apart as the conservative David Lawrence and such a liberal as Marquis Childs.

Members of the public and many newspapermen are inclined to accept the idea that the American people are so steeped in the traditions of a free press and its part in a democracy that no public official would dare to attack our idealistic concept of an uncensored and independent press. There is the view that Americans, born and reared in this tradition, would rise in fury to strike down the government officials who would seek to control or suppress the nation's newspapers. We often hear it said that Americans, reared in an atmosphere of freedom, would not put up with the encroachments on liberty that have been forced on people behind the Iron Curtain. We are told that they would not put up with the kind of conditions that have stifled many freedoms in our own hemisphere.

It seems to me that this philosophy of the indomitable American presupposes that Americans are somehow braver, stronger, wiser and more valiant than people living in other parts of the world. I would think that the present stage in the space race would teach us that Americans have no monopoly on wisdom, enterprise, strength, or know-how. For years we kidded ourselves into thinking, simply because

we are Americans, with many advantages over the Russians, that we were guaranteed a long lead in the fields of nuclear weapons, aircraft, and space exploration. In recent years we have seen our lead dwindle and vanish while many of our leading scientists have complained that nonsensical security on many matters interfered with our scientific progress.

Now, many realists are willing to admit that we Americans have no guaranteed superiority in scientific areas. We have been forced to learn the hard way that the rate of accomplishment in scientific areas is tied pretty closely to our willingness to work, to study and make sacrifices.

There is little in our lazy, well-fed, luxury-loving attitudes of the present to make me believe that any great number of Americans have awakened to the recognition that we are not a super race. There is little to indicate that any large segment of the American people recognize that we must work and study to recognize when there are encroachments on our freedoms, or risk seeing these freedoms go down the drain as has our lead in the scientific field.

My concern today is over the apathy that exists toward serious encroachments on the right of access to information. It is an apathy that covers not only the general public but a good many representatives of the press. This lack of concern is either the result of a lack of knowledge of what a free press means to a democracy, lack of enough interest to dig in and learn where some arbitrary governmental secrecy policies can take us, or lack of guts to speak out.

It is time that more Americans recognize that we are no brighter, stronger, or more courageous than many people who have been crushed by totalitarian governments. We are only luckier—luckier because we are fortunate enough to be living in a free nation.

We are fortunate that the slogans of a free press are deeply enough rooted in our history that few American political figures would take the risk of any direct attack on the institution of the free press. I have no doubt that a direct attack on the free press would result in a loud outcry from the press itself, and from a few citizens. There is a recognition of the possibility of political repercussions from a direct assault on the press, and public officials are almost unanimous in giving at least lip service to the concept of an uncensored press. But, many of these same public officials find indirect ways to control the information available to the press.

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The Lovejoy Lectureship at Colby College is dedicated to freedom of the press. Clark Mollenhoff, Washington correspondent of the Cowles Publications, delivered the 8th annual Lovejoy Lecture December 3d. Pulitzer Prize winner for national reporting in 1958, Mollenhoff was a Nieman Fellow in 1950.

They also find subtle ways to influence or coerce reporters or columnists who are too aggressive and too critical.

What are the subtle methods used to influence the press?

There are the smooth public relations operators who are helpful to the point where some newsmen lean on them too much, and forget how to do their own digging and thinking.

There is the misuse of security classifications—top secret, secret and confidential—to withhold information that should not be classified. This is a particularly effective means for officials in the Pentagon to cover up mistakes as well as improprieties. This overclassification is expensive from a standpoint of the extra cost to the government where there is misuse of government property or the rigging of government contracts.

There are efforts to give the impression that material is being withheld for security reasons, when it is actually being withheld for political purposes.

There is the practice of officials being unavailable or slow in responding to calls from reporters who are regarded as critical of the administration in power.

There is the practice of granting special interviews or other privileges (such as invitations to the White House dinners) to reporters who are regarded as basically friendly.

Most important, there are the efforts to hide arbitrarily the records of executive agencies on grounds that some vague "national interest" unconnected with security is involved in refusing to divulge "confidential executive communications."

We of the press must accept the fact that an aggressive press will always be faced with some obstructions or harassment. Regardless of which political party is in power, there will always be some men in the administration who will adopt the attitude that public business is not the public's business.

I would like to emphasize at this point that I do not believe the press is entitled to any special access to information. We should be entitled to the same access that every citizen should have in a democracy if the citizen is to inform himself on how officials are handling his government.

I would also like to warn that the freedom of the press and the rights of citizens in a democracy are not an issue when a woman columnist refuses to tell a court the source of her hearsay information on the temperament or excessive weight of a movie and television actress. Gossip columns, comics and a good many other features in our newspapers are mainly froth to attract readers, and have little connection with the real purpose of a free press—the informing of the public on the conduct of government and on other matters that are vital to the general welfare.

Labor organizations operate under the privileges of special laws. The steel industry is a basic industry, tied to our national defense and to the public welfare. Television channels operate on government licenses, and represent a powerful force in moulding public opinion. These are areas in which the press and the public have an interest second only to the conduct of public affairs by government officials.

Government secrecy represents our major reason for concern today.

A few of these secrecy-minded officials are malicious and tyrannical despots with no real concept of the responsibility to the public that is inherent in the operation of a true democracy. Such figures can grow even in a democracy.

But, I would say that a majority of those who erect secrecy barriers are well-meaning, but misguided and short-sighted.

These secrecy fanatics include men who believe a near totalitarian type of censorship is needed to protect U.S. secrets from the Kremlin. Read the testimony before the congressional committees and you will see who they are.

There are other secrecy fiends who rationalize the hiding of matters that have no connection with military secrecy on grounds that information released by the government will be slanted or twisted by political enemies. They rationalize their own slanting of government press releases on grounds it is really "in the national interest."

There is also the secrecy group that argues that secret discussions of governmental problems result in greater efficiency, and more frank discussions of different viewpoints.

Each of these groups overlooks the long documented record of how secrecy has been used to cover up corruption in government. They disregard the basic right of the public to know the arguments involved in a decision to award contracts or dispense other rights, unless some real military security problem is involved.

There are some reporters and editors who will tell you that there is no real problem in obtaining information in Washington.

It may be true that some reporters and editors have run into no secrecy barriers. There is no problem of obtaining information that is favorable to an administration that is in power. There is usually no problem of obtaining access even to the busiest individuals if they are reasonably sure they are to be the subject of articles puffing their importance.

The problem of access to information arises when officials know (or suspect) that the inquiring reporter may unearth facts that are not wholly complimentary to the administration, or when the reporter is known to have been critical of the administration.

Point out the newsman who says he has no trouble obtain-

ing information, and it is likely the subject will fit one of these patterns:

1. A reporter or editor who has been largely a patsy for the administration.

2. A reporter or editor who lacks either the imagination or the energy to go behind the self-serving declarations of agency press releases.

Reporters who are considered "friends" of the administration in power may have a few exclusive stories dropped in their laps in return for understanding and uncritical treatment.

By contrast, there are often efforts at retaliation against those who are critical of the administration in power. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt went so far as to summon Lyle Wilson, United Press Bureau chief, to the White House in a direct effort to kill a story. Roosevelt also threatened reprisal against the United Press if Wilson did not give in to his demands, but Wilson refused. Occasionally, presidents since then have been equally blunt.

But, it is seldom that a president will take such direct action as to summon a reporter or editor to the White House. More common are the subtle efforts of lesser officials to interfere with the reporter, to ridicule or undermine his work, to erect barriers that interfere with him on even routine assignments.

The New York *Times* occupies a unique position that makes its reporters less susceptible to the pressures of federal officials than other newspapers. It is a paper read in Washington and in the embassies all over the world. It has a voice that is loud as well as respected and feared by official Washington.

Yet, some reporters for this mighty newspaper find themselves subjected to subtle pressures when they are critical of the administration. Bureau Chief James Reston has been highly critical of the Eisenhower administration's foreign policy, and its conduct of other matters. Although Reston was highly critical of the foreign policy of the late John Foster Dulles, the New York *Times* Bureau chief praises Dulles for "never taking any step to cut off my sources of information."

However, there were others in the administration who were not so understanding of the role of a critical press in a democracy. Reston's critical comments were met with hostility in some quarters, and with subtle harassment by officials who were unavailable for interviews and dilatory or unavailable on telephone calls.

Columnist Walter Lippmann, speaking from the experience of his 70 years, commented before the National Press Club this fall on the tendency of government "insiders" to ridicule criticism from outside government as coming from

ignoramus—persons who don't have access to the conferences and secret files of the government.

Lippmann declares that formidable as this criticism is, he has no trouble getting the better of it:

"I tell the critic, you be careful. You will be denouncing the principle of democracy itself, which asserts that the outsiders shall be sovereign over the insiders. For you will be showing that the people themselves, since they are ignoramuses because they are outsiders, are therefore incapable of governing themselves."

Furthermore, Lippmann declared that as far as the affairs of the world are concerned, those who regard themselves as insiders are actually outsiders since none of them read all of the U.S. papers and they have no access to the records of foreign governments that are equally important if one is to have the total wisdom the insiders indicate they have.

Columnists Drew Pearson and Joseph Alsop report that when they were critical of government policies and personalities, they found themselves subjected to investigations by agents of the F.B.I. and other government bureaus. They contended that no breach of security was involved but that they were subjected to probes to dry up their sources of information.

On the local level, the *Arkansas Gazette* found itself the target of the barbs of Governor Orval Faubus for aggressive opposition to Faubus on the explosive issue of the Little Rock schools. Despite the fact that the paper found its circulation cut and its advertising revenue off sharply, the publisher and editor stuck with their position to win an expensive victory.

Executive editor Harry Ashmore left the *Gazette* this fall. He had won his battle, but he was aware that the bitterness of the integration fight had left scars that would remain as long as he directed the editorial policy of the newspaper.

Wallace Turner and William Lambert, reporters for the Portland *Oregonian*, tackled the corruption in local politics and the mighty Teamsters Union. They found themselves and their newspaper subject to immediate attacks and a series of libel actions that might have terrorized a less courageous editorial department.

Vance Trimble, reporter for the Scripps-Howard syndicate, had no more than started his series on the nepotism on Congressional payrolls when he was subjected to vicious attacks from Congress. Fortunately, many newspaper groups rallied behind Trimble's effort, and an atmosphere was created that forced many members of Congress to drop relatives from the payroll or to cut their salaries. The impact of public opinion also forced the Senate to adopt new rules opening Senate office payrolls for public inspection.

As head of Sigma Delta Chi Freedom of Information Committee, V. M. (Red) Newton, managing editor of the

Tampa *Tribune*, lashed out at the secrecy that covered spending of counterpart funds. He was immediately subjected to a personal attack by members of the House Administration Committee. That crusade to open these spending records has been unsuccessful so far, but Newton and others are still pushing for open records on this Congressional spending.

The term "managing the news" was used by James B. Reston in explaining to the Moss subcommittee his complaint about government information practices. Reston, whose work has been largely in the foreign affairs field, was objecting to the practice of releasing selective facts to present the favorable picture the administration wanted to get across to the public. He complained that barriers were erected to block those who sought further facts that were inconsistent with the picture presented in the "managed news."

In the foreign affairs field and in some other areas, the "managing of the news" can be accomplished by misusing security classifications to cover part of the facts.

In fields where national security cannot be used to hide the facts, a new device has come into wide use for "managing the news." It is the claim by the executive branch of government that it has some inherent right to refuse arbitrarily to produce any records or give any testimony that includes advice or recommendations in the executive agencies.

The Eisenhower administration has pressed this broad secrecy doctrine with the argument that all communications containing advice or recommendations are "confidential executive business." The administration claims some inherent "executive privilege" to hide such communications from the press, the public, committees of Congress and even from auditors of the General Accounting Office.

Leonard J. Saccio, acting International Cooperation Administration Director, testified before the Hennings Subcommittee that he believed this so-called "executive privilege" gave the I.C.A. the authority to withhold practically every document in the agency from the Government Accounting Office auditors.

"If I.C.A. wanted to apply the executive privilege, G.A.O. would not see one thing because practically every document in our agency has an opinion or a piece of advice. . . .," Saccio testified.

No agency in the executive branch has carried this arbitrary executive secrecy to the extreme point Saccio says it could be carried. However, the testimony by Saccio was an admission from within the executive department of the danger inherent in a doctrine that any executive department official can withhold any document that includes advice or recommendations.

It may be that some have such faith in the present ad-

ministration that they feel quite content to have that administration exercise an arbitrary power to refuse to produce records for the Congress, the G.A.O., the press and the public. However, it would be well to question whether they want such unchecked power to conceal records lodged in the hands of some other administration.

If you are a Republican, ask yourself if you would feel comfortable in letting the administration of a Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Jack Kennedy or Hubert Humphrey put up such a barrier to Congressional investigators or the G.A.O.

If you are a Democrat, ask yourself if you want the administration of a Richard Nixon to have such a total arbitrary power to withhold records of government actions.

It is only by viewing the power of arbitrary executive secrecy in the hands of the other political party that many can test their true reaction to such a broad claim of a right to refuse to produce records.

Apply the doctrine of arbitrary executive secrecy to the Teapot Dome scandals of the Harding administration. Then you will see how the claim of arbitrary executive secrecy could have been used to conceal these notorious scandals.

The oil scandals of the Harding administration involved communications between Secretary of Navy Denby and Secretary of Interior Fall. Had a claim of arbitrary secrecy been invoked, it would have been impossible for Senator Thomas Walsh, the Montana Democrat, to establish the fact that eventually sent Secretary of Interior Fall to prison.

Assume that the Truman administration officials had claimed a precedent of executive privilege and refused to give testimony or produce records on the tax scandals. The communications between top officials in the White House, Justice Department and Treasury would have remained buried, along with the crimes involving some of the highest officials of the huge tax collecting agency.

In 1948 there were some restricted efforts by the Truman administration to bar Congressional investigations from some executive department records. The personnel records of William Remington were withheld under a general executive order placing loyalty files outside of the reach of Congressional committees. William P. Rogers, now the Attorney General, was then the chief counsel for the Senate committee investigating Remington. Rogers presided over the preparation of a report that was highly critical of this executive secrecy.

Vice President Richard M. Nixon, then a young Congressman from California, had some sharp comments to make about this limited withholding of records by the Truman administration. Nixon said:

The point has been made that the President of the



United States has issued an order that none of this information (on Remington) can be released and therefore the Congress has no right to question the judgment of the President.

I say that that proposition cannot stand from a constitutional standpoint or on the basis of the merit for this very good reason. That would mean that the President could have arbitrarily issued an executive order in the Meyers case, the Teapot Dome case, or in any other case denying the Congress information it needed to conduct an investigation of the executive department and the Congress would have no right to question his decision.

Nixon was only one of many prominent Republicans who attacked this executive secrecy at the time. By contrast, a good many high ranking Democrats—including House Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas—were defending the secrecy of the Truman administration. Many Democrats who were inclined to defend the secrecy in the Truman administration are now highly critical of the Eisenhower administration for merely extending the same basic principle. It demonstrates that political expediency has a tendency to encroach on the views of our elected representatives and to color their thinking. The press and the public cannot depend on either political party to be the beacon of right where their freedoms are involved.

After the Truman administration was so severely criticized by Republicans for imposing unjustified secrecy, it was amazing to see a Republican administration lay down a claim to a right of arbitrary executive secrecy that is broader than any similar claim in our history.

The new secrecy doctrine was made public in connection with the Army-McCarthy hearings on May 17, 1954—the same day the United States Supreme Court pronounced its historic ruling against racial segregation in public schools. The fact that the Supreme Court ruled on segregation on that day did not bury the colorful Army-McCarthy hearings or the fact that officials of the executive branch were refusing to give testimony before a committee of Congress.

President Eisenhower, in a letter to Defense Secretary Charles E. Wilson, authorized Army Counsel John Adams to refuse to relate conversations with Presidential Assistant Sherman Adams and William P. Rogers, then the Deputy Attorney General. The President wrote that in his view members of the executive branch should not be required to testify on conversations and communications with other members of the executive branch where recommendations and advice were involved.

Many large newspapers—still hysterical with the fear of the McCarthy era—saw this letter only as a blow at Senator Joseph McCarthy. If McCarthy wanted the testimony, then these newspapers were opposed to it. Unthinking editorial

writers praised the Eisenhower letter as some new and brilliant statement of the separation of powers doctrine. Only a few looked behind the minor inconvenience it presented to McCarthy in his television battle with the Army and saw the full claim of arbitrary executive secrecy it embodied. Since then, many have changed their views.

The full threat inherent in Eisenhower's May 17, 1954, letter did not become apparent immediately. It took months and even years before it became clear that the administration would use that letter as a precedent for refusing a wide variety of information to the press, to a dozen Congressional committees, and to the General Accounting Office.

Sherman Adams refused to testify in a Congressional hearing on the Dixon-Yates case on grounds that his activities were all confidential executive business. His action was to set the pattern for officials of more than a dozen agencies of government to inform Congress and the G.A.O. that important records and testimony would not be produced. A half dozen committees of Congress prepared reports castigating this arbitrary withholding of testimony and documents.

The refusal of the executive branch to make certain evaluation reports and inspectors general reports available to the G.A.O. and committees of Congress has become a major barrier to investigations of the Defense Department and Foreign Aid spending.

Comptroller General Joseph Campbell, an appointee of the Eisenhower administration, has declared that the withholding of documents was hindering the G.A.O. in the performance of its statutory duties and "could be almost fatal" to the G.A.O.'s effectiveness.

The Moss Government Operations Subcommittee on Government Information has lashed out at the withholding from G.A.O. as being a violation of the law since the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 provides that all agencies must turn over all records requested by the G.A.O. auditors.

In recent months, liberals as well as conservatives in Congress have become concerned over evidence indicating that the executive secrecy has covered up fraud and mismanagement in the foreign aid program. Even a rider tied to the foreign aid appropriations bill has not changed the administration's position.

The President has continued to provide a blanket secrecy shield to evaluation reports and inspectors general reports with a vague comment that the withholding is "in the national interest."

Some members of Congress are so concerned that they are proposing to tighten the law and withhold all funds from those agencies that do not make full reports to the G.A.O. on their spending and activities. This is a serious



step, but many members of Congress feel that this matter has reached a serious stage.

The concern of Congress is not so much over what has been withheld as it is worry over where this broad claim of a right to withhold records may lead at some future time. Members of Congress recognize that in the wrong hands the precedent could become a major tool in forming an executive dictatorship.

They know that it has been necessary to keep a constant surveillance over military spending—now 60 per cent of our budget—to expose corruption and force action against officials involved in the corruption.

As we have greater expenditures and more complex operations of our government, we need more Congressional investigations to burrow constantly into the activities of our public officials. The press needs the skill and the power of Congressional committees to spotlight the big problem areas in our society.

Congress and the G.A.O. need the power to obtain records and testimony from those public officials in the executive departments who are responsible for administration and enforcement of laws.

This is a great issue of freedom in our time. It goes to the question of the right of Congress to serve as a check on the Executive department's activities. It goes to the question of whether a free people are entitled to information on the activities of government when no question of national security is involved.

This year, in this administration, it may represent only an inconvenience to the press, an irritant to Congressional investigators and an impediment to efficient work by the G.A.O. auditors.

But, what could such a precedent of arbitrary executive secrecy do under some later administration that may be less kindly in its basic outlook?

This problem may pass quickly. I hope it does. But it is the type of problem that you, as citizens, will be asked to face many times in the years ahead. As graduates of a fine liberal arts college, you will be expected to give some leadership when arguments arise over whether projected government activity is a threat to freedom and the operation of a democracy. Some of you may be reporters, editors or public officials deeply involved in grappling with the problem of whether certain practices are good for the nation in the long run.

Or you may be the voters—the great American jury that must ultimately decide whether officials will be allowed to appropriate certain powers to themselves.

You may not be asked to defend your printing presses or your life, but in many ways you will undergo tests that will determine whether you have what it takes to carry on in the spirit of Elijah Parish Lovejoy.

After college, will you have the perseverance and the industry to continue to work at the job of knowing about public affairs? Or will you follow the mass that takes the position that this responsibility belongs to others?

Will you have the interest and moral indignation to fight against injustice or encroachment on freedom?

Will you have the integrity to disregard partisan politics and measure an issue or a man on things that are in keeping with his true worth?

Will you have the courage—the pure guts—to fly in the face of the currently popular view to do battle for what solid and serious study leads you to believe is right?

I am sure a certain percentage of this group will have the industry, the integrity and the courage to face the large issues. But the real test of whether the spirit of Elijah Parish Lovejoy lives—at Colby College and in the United States—will be based on how large a percentage learn that democracy is not something that can be taken for granted.

# The Defense of Journalism

By Louis M. Lyons

Walter Lippmann, in his magnificent birthday address to the National Press Club, reminds us:

We are only the first generation of newspapermen who have been assigned the job of informing a mass audience about a world that is in a period of such great, of such deep, of such rapid and of such unprecedented change. We have all had to be explorers of a world that was unknown to us and of mighty events that were unforeseen . . . The Washington correspondent (that was his audience) has had to teach himself to be not only a recorder of facts and a chronicler of events, but also to be a writer of notes and essays in contemporary history . . . We do what every sovereign citizen is supposed to do, but has not the time or interest to do for himself. This is our job. It is no mean calling and we have a right to be proud of it.

Lippmann holds with the old-fashioned notion that the primary function of the press is to inform; that it has a responsibility to its readers; that this function is essential to a self-governing society; that the press is a strategically vital institution, parallel to the public school system. That it is and must ever be more than just a business.

Indeed, on no other basis could we justify the historic immunities to the press, written into our Constitution. On no other basis could we justify the erection of schools of journalism in practically all our publicly supported universities.

The implication is that the press is necessary to a democratic society—that such a society requires a source of information, independent of government, that is dependable, competent and responsible to its high obligation.

Anything that weakens the press, that corrupts the press, that diverts the press from this central function, is a peril to the kind of society that the fathers of the Constitution and the creators of our land grant colleges had in mind, that indeed has been the basic principle of the American system.

This is so axiomatic that you may ask why I take your time to say it. I might answer that we need constantly to remind ourselves.

But a more urgent reason is that the pressure of our times, in all the complexities that Lippmann suggests,

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crowds hard upon us. Any of us concerned with the education of journalists must feel this urgency, this exacting demand for adequate men.

It is by no means only the man in the ivory tower who feels it. The very day I was reading Lippmann's address the chief of a Washington bureau telephoned me to ask help in finding a man to take charge of the bureau's library. A rather routine technical job, you might think. But he didn't see it that way. "I want a man with a real feeling for history," he said, "a man who'll see the whole story and all its possible background and initiate the research we'll need on it, even if we aren't always conscious of the need."

Well, this is a new man—librarian, newspaperman, researcher, historian. I don't have him in stock, in standard sizes and salaries, to meet such a demand.

The importance of the press in its function grows greater as its task grows more difficult. Our society becomes more complex. The world crowds in upon us its complicated problems even as our own multiply and deepen. The citizen is hard put to it to understand the central issues of his government, even when they are fully reported to him.

No other time ever had to try to puzzle out the riddles of an adequate defense as posed against the dangers of annihilating destruction in war and possible radioactive poisoning without war. Nor the other defense problem of a sufficient shield that does not bankrupt the nation or inflate its economy to ruin.

Our leading economists tell us that our cities in decay, our schools starved for support, our hospitals insufficient and medical costs more than most of our population can support, call for rethinking of the support of the public sector of our economy, which can be sustained only by our taxes.

We are faced with problems in labor-management relations which have rent the country and blockaded its production, and the measures that are used do not meet the problems. An administration that has thrown its weight to curbing the power of labor faces a dilemma in acting as impartial arbiter of a fundamental strike.

Drew Middleton, London correspondent of the *New York Times*, can report candidly on a parallel issue in England. He writes, Sunday, October 11:

Although theoretically the government is neutral in conflicts between capital and labor, capital and government are so closely allied in any Conservative regime that its bias inevitably is on the side of capital.

How often do we get such candid reporting on our own government?

The Khrushchev visit was a landmark in many ways. We talked a lot about the importance of Khrushchev getting an impression of America. But the American impression of Khrushchev was a revelation too. The President gave us his own impression, of an extraordinary man. How much of this need have been new to us had our reporting from Moscow gone further than it had from merely echoing a government doctrine that you can't do business with the Russians? The tone of the reporting and the picture we got of Khrushchev changed with the length of his stay here. Part of this came from a reversal of attitude by our officials handling the tour. But the interaction of the official attitude and the press performance was such that an old wire service man remarked to me: "We can turn it on and off too, about as well as the Soviets."

This is worth thinking about.

On a recent Sunday I heard Governor Brown of California, on a television panel, answer two questions that pricked up my ears. I looked in the Boston and New York papers that I read next morning and found no trace of it.

One question was whether Lyndon Johnson would be an acceptable candidate in California.

Politely but definitely, the Governor of California said, No. California consumers were paying through the nose for the preferential privileges conferred on Texas oil and natural gas interests.

The other question was what issue the Democrats could have in 1960 against an administration claiming peace and prosperity.

Governor Brown immediately brought up the issue of high interest. In his state necessary growth was blocked by high interest, and he thought it a most inflationary factor.

I can't think of two newsier items, both wrapped up in the perennial American game of guessing the next Presidential election. I would think many a listener to Governor Brown would be suspicious of such a gap in the newspapers next morning. It could easily have been just a news muff, but I would expect some to connect it with that phrase of the sociologists that I am hearing now very often from newspapermen—"the local power setup." The implication is that the newspaper plays along with the elements of power in the community—the people who run the town.

This is what makes cynics of young reporters.

As mergers increase and more and more cities are reduced to a single newspaper ownership, the danger that the newspaper will become chiefly a voice of the local power setup increases.

To be sure, the mere fact of the newspaper having to convince its advertisers of a mass market, that it covers

the potential readership, is a safety brake. It must retain a degree of confidence that will keep people buying the paper. But they may buy it for the funnies, or for the ads, or for the television program, or for the birth and death notices. Or the baseball scores. Or the stock quotations. These indeed are all services, properly merchantable. But they don't guarantee a citizenry informed on its public affairs. Nor will any amount of reading weekly news magazines enable them to keep an eye on city hall or their local utility rates. And it is only the exceptional reader, whose sophistication comes from some experience of publicity of his own, who can sense what is left out of his newspaper. He may detect a news slant or an inadequate report. But it is impossible to ferret out facts that are not printed at all. This isn't a fancy. In one New England state this past winter the largest newspaper in the state was keeping from its readers the case for the budget of their state university, which it was opposing.

You here in Minneapolis are fortunately located on the journalistic map. You have the diggingest reporter in Washington in Clark Mollenhoff, and one of the most seasoned and wisest of labor reporters in Sam Romer, to handle two of the most strategic areas of news, and you have a newspaper management that is alive to the issues of the modern world.

My St. Paul acquaintance was limited until today to the managing editor, Bob Eddy, one of the finest men in the business, and Robert E. Lee, an old Nieman Fellow in their Washington bureau.

Some other places have good luck in their newspapers. But one has to call it luck, for great newspapers are no more equitably distributed among our cities than championship baseball teams. We have to take our luck with both.

We have some magnificently independent newspapers. But we don't have anything like enough of them. Too few of those we have are appreciated and admired by the very public they seek to serve. This is basically a failure of education in a land which has had more of it than any other, and longer.

For independent journalism goes to the very core of the American tradition. History ascribes heroic stature to such editors as Matthew Lyon, Horace Greeley, Samuel Bowles, Josephus Daniels, William Allen White.

They had to be tough.

When William Allen White was conducting a one-paper resistance to the no-strike law of his friend Governor Allen, White said:

"Only in time of stress is freedom of utterance in danger. Only when free utterance is suppressed is it needed; and when it is needed it is vital to justice."

When White wrote that editorial, his own State justice

department was preparing to prosecute him. They had to drop the charge.

The rigorous independence of Joseph Pulitzer was written on the wall of the city room of the old New York *World*: "The World has no friends."

It takes toughness.

The *Arkansas Gazette* has withstood a boycott for demanding decency and responsibility and legality in its city and state government.

Ralph McGill persists in puncturing irresponsible demagoguery in a state that is drenched in it.

The Louisville *Courier-Journal* has stood out against a demagogic machine that had taken over control of its own party in Kentucky.

The Toledo *Blade* under Paul Block's chemical analysis of his community's needs, pursues its own course regardless of what the power elements think of it.

Any of us can add to such a list. A number of small newspapers would stand out on it. Some have turned in heroic performance, such as Buford Boone's *Tuscaloosa News* standing up to the dominant white citizens council in his home town.

This is a hard course to take and it is more than can be asked of an enterprise which must survive by the willing support, both of the commercial interests and the general readers.

All we can ask is detachment in informing the community and independence of the elements of privilege which have axes to grind at the expense of the community.

Even a newspaper so established in dissent as England's (Manchester) *Guardian* lost heavily by its opposition to Anthony Eden's Suez adventure. The publisher, in the doughty tradition of his grandfather, C. P. Scott, told his editor to stick to his course. But the drop of 25% in local readership was not recovered in its own local area. The *Guardian* dropped its place name to focus on the role of a national newspaper that in reality it had long enjoyed. That course is not open to a local newspaper in our continental area. A dissenting daily cannot draw to itself the minority of the whole land or any large part of it. In my own youth the old Springfield *Republican* waxed vigorous as an independent newspaper, stout in its mugwump opinions, just so long as the Berkshires provided a constituency of independent farmers. When that was gone, the *Republican* lost out to the complacent commercialism of its rival's sound business principles.

The problem of maintaining an independent press—newspapers guided by the objective detachment of professional journalism, unswayed and undominated by the power elements of their communities—will inevitably increase as economic pressures bring more mergers to more concentrated control.

The peril is roughly parallel to that of the public school system that seeks to present any realities of modern life, that are not already understood and accepted by the Chamber of Commerce and the American Legion.

An independent and informed press should be the chief support of a free school system against the pressures of ignorance and bigotry and special privilege.

The schools and all other vital institutions of an open society must look to an untrammelled press for support.

But where is a valiant and beleaguered editor to look for support?

Or where is a complacent or weak or irresponsible publisher to find effective criticism?

We come back to a question Walter Lippmann asked a dozen years ago about the press. Who is to criticize the critic? Who is to police the policeman?

He asked it when the Hutchins Commission, reporting on the state of the press in 1947, urged an increase in mutual criticism among newspapers, of each other's lapses, and proposed establishment of some body of citizens to appraise the performance of the press and inform the public of its judgments.

Lippmann thought both proposals unrealistic. Time has supported him.

Where then may we look? The schools of journalism in our free tax-supported universities are the only place I can think of that could become adequate to the role. To be professional critic, appraiser, examiner of the newspapers.

This would require that they accept or develop the full status of professional schools.

They have a precedent in our law schools, whose law reviews provide highly respected and highly influential critiques of our judicial process. This is more needed, and will be increasingly, in respect to a privately owned press with a public responsibility, than to the law whose officials in authority are subject to voter control, even if indirectly.

It seems to me that the responsibility upon our schools of journalism to set standards and keep score on performance is apparent and will become a conspicuous lapse if it is not soon accepted.

A chance was lost when Sigma Delta Chi, itself an outgrowth of our journalism schools, permitted itself to be dissuaded from the post-mortem examination of the press performance in the 1952 Presidential campaign, when the charge of one-party press was raised and left unresolved.

The research burden was not so great but that a young copy desk editor in Boston, using his own nickels to buy newspapers, turned in a revealing performance all by himself. Ted Rowse in his book, *Slanted News*, examined the 35 largest circulation papers on their treatment of two



strategic issues of the campaign, the Nixon fund and the Stevenson fund. He didn't have any research staff to add up column inches and evaluate stories. He picked a shibboleth that was a valid test of the tone, the attitude, the direction of policy by the biggest papers in the campaign. Thirty-five was only a sample, but it was the top sample. It was what one man could bite off to do for himself. It showed the problem is not insuperable.

Indeed, I know that there have been instances of journalism schools making surveys of press performance in their local areas. One notable instance was a cooperative enterprise of the school and the newspaper guild in that area. California. It can be done.

Such a function can stem only from independence and detachment. This I think we have a right to expect of any part of a university.

I have one other suggestion. But before I make it, let me say that I am convinced we must find the answer ourselves, within our own institutions. As editor of *Nieman Reports*, I receive many suggestive articles about the way problems of the press are handled in other countries. These are often suggested as a cure for invasion of privacy, or trial by newspaper, or the curbing of irresponsible publication.

But I don't believe we can look abroad for any direct answer to our own journalistic problems.

Our system is unique and it needs to be. We are serving an open society whose members bear direct responsibility for the issues of their public affairs. It is like no other society.

It is not enough that a few be informed. No other country that shares our traditions has even the physical dimensions of our country. London and Paris circulate their papers across the land. The American syndicated columnist is unique. London and Paris want no syndicated competition in the provinces they dominate.

I spent my summer vacation in Britain and came away depressed with their journalistic situation and the chance of learning anything there except a plight to avoid.

But I did discover in Francis Williams' wise and penetrating book on British journalism, *Dangerous Estate*, a clear statement of their situation which my own experience as an avid newspaper reader for a month supported.

Williams' evaluation of the British press situation is in part suggestive for us.

Francis Williams I would describe as approximately an Elmer Davis to British journalism. He was editor of the *Daily Herald*, when it was a vital voice of Labor, and is now a familiar voice on British television, commentator, critic and author.

Williams finds that only 2.8 per cent of the British

people read the serious, or as the British say, "quality" newspapers.

Now London dominates the British press. More than half the circulation in the country comes from London and it puts the few serious provincial papers under increasing squeeze. For simplification, look just at London then.

Daily the brilliant, informed (Manchester) *Guardian* sells 185,000 papers all over Britain. The majestically independent *Times* sells about 225,000. Williams tolerantly brackets with them the very readable but quite unobjective *Telegraph* to add another million readers on the serious side.

But in contrast the *Mirror*, which may lead the paper with a stunt dreamed up in the office, sells nearly five million, and the intensely partisan *Express*, which Beaverbrook himself says he prints only for propaganda, sells more than four million. Almost equally sensational and uninforming I found the *Mail*, *News-Chronicle* and *Herald*, which add up to five million or so more.

On Sunday the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times* are among the most readable and informed newspapers in the world. But the *Observer*, which I found the most interesting paper I have ever read, sells only 600,000, the *Sunday Times* a little more, while the *News of the World*, with no real news of the real world, sells more than seven million, and a flock of its competitors in sex and sensation have circulations in the millions. These are more to be classed with our comic books than our newspapers of any level.

In short, a small circle make up the informed public opinion of Britain. To the great mass of readers, the newspaper is what T. S. Matthews has called a sugar pill, and bought about like chewing gum, with as much nutriment. Those who get information must get it from the B.B.C.

Williams says better than I can, of the mass circulation Sunday papers of Britain, that "they are, as regards a large proportion of their contents, not newspapers at all, but entertainment sheets."

With nothing against entertainment, Williams insists that "they must accept some of the obligations of the journalist in the field of public affairs."

Williams' appraisal of the British newspaper situation is:

"The great journals of information and opinion are secure in their position. They exert an influence on thought and decision not easily to be calculated. . . .

"The great mass circulation papers command their millions. . . . Only the middle group of serious popular papers is in serious difficulty, and that not so much because of any journalistic defect, as because trading conditions impose on them with increasing severity. . . . Their decline is as

much a public tragedy as a journalistic one, for such newspapers perform a service no others can provide." (He means something between the heavy London *Times* and the saucy *Mirror*. Almost all the American press would fall between these extremes.)

The present danger to journalism, as Williams sees it, "is of its becoming simply a business . . . that it be pressed into a pattern that denies it all purpose, other than the purely commercial one of attracting the largest number of paying customers by whatever means comes most readily to hand."

In such case, he goes on, "the responsibility of journalists becomes very great.

"The defense of journalism, as more than a trade and greater than an entertainment technique, is properly the journalists' and no one else's. They have both a professional and a public duty to look after their inheritance."

What can we say to Williams' challenge that the defense of journalism as more than a trade is the duty of the journalists?

Is there any organization of American journalists we can expect to meet this challenge? Can we expect it of the Guild, which is not a professional organization but a trade union? Or would there be a natural suspicion that the Guild had an axe to grind against the employing publishers, as a labor union?

Is an evolution of the Guild's role in journalism too much to look for? Now that it has more security than in the days when it had to fight for recognition and found frequent enough necessity to be aggressive?

For the function I am seeking, it is of course a limitation of the Guild that it began as it did, as a trade union, instead of an independent association of newspapermen, dedicated to the professional standards of their calling.

This means no criticism of labor unions. Nor do I see any sign that union membership has made reporters less dedicated to the journalistic grail of objectivity. At the time the Guild was organized, in the depth of the great depression, and in a craft enmeshed in an institution whose other crafts are highly unionized, the rise of a reporters' union was perhaps inevitable, if only to protect its members, who presented about the only group whose salaries could be cut when business fell off.

The Guild, I am sure, has brought more pay to the news room. Unhappily this has had a leveling effect which has brought the star reporter's pay closer to the office boy's, and has left less margin to recognize exceptional talent, and consequently has let it leak away at a debilitating rate. It has increased the difficulty of weeding out those who proved to be misfits and has maintained staffs with too many members unqualified for newspaper work. To be sure, this happens in other institutions, notably the public school, and

in all civil service. But it has no less deadening an effect on those institutions.

It was further unfortunate that the Guild, created in the days of vertical union development, grouped reporters and copy editors with a miscellany of workers whose only relation to the profession of journalism is that they worked in the same building.

It has had the effect of making reporters liable for cooperation with the people who tie the bundles and drive the trucks, and we have had such fantastic phenomena as that in New York last winter when a nondescript union of curious leadership could deny the millions of a vast metropolitan area their prime source of information for a month, besides wiping out the profits of the papers for a year.

Such a strike, on such a base, surely cries out for some form of a Taft-Hartley act that will protect the public from having their most vital information denied them at the arbitrary whim of people who never saw a journalism school and never gave a thought to the responsibilities of journalism.

The simple fact is that we do not have American journalists joined in a common bond of professional association, independent alike of management and union. The potential of such association, it seems to me, is very great, and its absence a serious vacuum. I know that the association of university professors has been a powerful influence in maintaining the freedom to teach.

Perhaps I am taking my case to the wrong institutions: the Journalism School and the Guild. These happen to be the institutions that invited me to speak my mind on this occasion.

It is perhaps rash and tactless to lay this problem so directly in your laps. But I am quite sure that it is not unrealistic to say to you that this is a problem we must all face and that it will press upon us more inescapably as newspaper control becomes more concentrated, and more papers come into the hands of those who run them only by their balance sheet, and sometimes at long distance from their local issues.

I cannot do better than to close with Williams' last words, as he ends his provocative last chapter:

"Those who serve journalism serve one of the great professions. The allegiance it properly commands is absolute. Those who give it that allegiance need stand in no man's shadow."

"For," he says, "a newspaper is more than a piece of property; it is a living personality with a character and tradition deriving not only from those who own or edit it, but from its readers, from the interests it has historically served, and from the community of which it is a part. . . ."

# The British Press Council

## A Summary and an Evaluation

By J. Edward Gerald

The General Council of the Press, an independent voluntary professional organization with the duties but not the powers of similar structures in law and medicine, has been in operation in Britain for more than five years.

The Council has chosen to operate without a formal code of ethics, but the cases it has handled can now be presented in digest form and its operations described and tentatively evaluated.

Several forces in British society that exist in counterpart in America are responsible for establishment of the Press Council. Two are particularly important:

First, feeling on the part of members of the Labour party, one of the two major political parties, that the press is biased in character and that Labour's candidates and its program have been denied a fair hearing.

Second, sustained criticism of the amorality of some of the largest newspapers and magazines by groups that have in common little more than parallel attitudes toward mass media content. In these groups are critics who believe that the popular press, particularly the sensational Sunday newspaper, tends to degrade millions of unsophisticated individuals who turn to them for entertainment and, if to any source, for information.

The political critics of the press were the more influential of the two groups in the agitation for establishment of the Press Council, but in five years not a single complaint of political unfairness has been mentioned in the Council's reports. Instead the cases concern mostly protests of unfair treatment of individuals and claims addressed to the professional conscience of journalists. Of these kinds of protests, there has been no shortage.

### ATTITUDE IN THE PARLIAMENT

The importance of the Council has been underscored on occasion by the House of Commons in actions against individual journalists and newspapers for errors in reporting or for comment based on incomplete evidence. It has

The British Press Council had been in operation five years when Professor Gerald made this first hand study of its performance. The author is a member of the journalism faculty at University of Minnesota and former president of the Association for Education in Journalism. This article was first published in the 1959 Summer Issue of *Journalism Quarterly* and is used here by permission.

been made clear to the press on each of these occasions, as if it could have been forgotten, that Parliament is sensitive to criticism and jealous of its ancient prerogatives.

One full-scale debate, and frequent critical mention of press performance, coupled with use of the power to punish for contempt, imply that the House of Commons is looking over the shoulders of members of the Press Council as they work. Some members of the Commons are uncomfortably solicitous of the Council's welfare: Does it have all the power it wants? Would it not like statutory powers so as to confer privilege on its members in their work? Would it not be best to enable the Council to enforce its judgments?

The Press Council has said it does not need and does not want statutory powers, and the suggestions from Parliament serve simply to keep journalists reminded that some men in government always are ready to work for an official press council if the private one lags or falters.

### NATURE OF THE PRESS COUNCIL

The origin and purpose of the Press Council are by now so well known that a detailed review is unnecessary. But, in summary, the Council began its work on July 1, 1953 as the culmination of events over the four years since a Royal Commission on the Press had recommended to a Labour government that an unofficial professional council be established with a lay chairman and lay representatives among the membership. The government decided to leave formation of the council to private initiative, but the press did nothing. A private member's bill introduced in the Commons and set up for prompt consideration ended the period of waiting.

Newspaper trade associations, unions and professional organizations of journalists joined to form a private council of twenty-five members. Fifteen members represent the editorial side. Of these, three are elected by editors of London national newspapers, four by editors of Provincial newspapers, one by members of two Scottish trade associations; four by the National Union of Journalists, and three by the Institute of Journalists. The managerial members all represent trade associations. Four are elected by London dailies, four by the Newspaper Society, consisting of Provincial daily and weekly and London weekly newspapers, and two by Scottish organizations.

The first chairman was Colonel the Hon. J. J. Astor,

the principal owner of *The Times*, now Lord Astor of Hever. He served during the first critical year of operation and until ill health forced his resignation. He was succeeded by Sir Linton Andrews, editor of the *Yorkshire Post* of Leeds, one on the country's quality morning newspapers. Sir Linton is one of the scholars in British journalism and a contributor to serious journals of comment and criticism. His journal articles telling of the effect of newsprint rationing on the editorial side of journalism during and after the war are an outstanding commentary on this critical period in British journalistic history.

The Press Council budget for 1958-59 was £4,100, and it has been small from the beginning. The Council secretary, Alan Pitt Robins, C. B. E., a retired executive in *The Times* news department, receives only a part-time salary in addition to his pension. Sir Linton gave up the chairmanship July 1, 1959 because of the double burden of work in London and Leeds. Robbins has found the work requirement out of proportion to his stipend. Seven members of the Council, including the chairman, serve as members of the General Purposes Committee which meets monthly and carries on the principal burden of investigating complaints and preparing recommendations for the quarterly meetings of the full council. George Murray, C. B. E., of the *Daily Mail*, a member of the General Purposes Committee since the beginning, served out Sir Linton's term and a new chairman will be chosen to take office January 1, 1960.

#### PROCEDURES AND ATTITUDES

The Council decided against writing a general code of ethics for the reason that it prefers to consider disputes in the light of community and professional ethics, as they are generally understood. The Council has hoped that each decision would serve as a basis for considering other cases as they arise. Sir Linton described the Council in one context as a court of honor.

This original policy decision meant that the Council would occupy a middle-of-the-road position between the most vociferous critics and defenders of the press alike. Sir Linton summed up the Council's feelings in the third annual report: "Among men of repute in the press, whether proprietors, editors, or other journalists, there is a considerable measure of agreement on what constitutes sound professional practice." He said the Council was trying to safeguard the traditions and interpret the aspirations of the profession. The Council did not want to be judged by the number of convictions it obtained. "If it is a good police force, citizens will be less tempted to seek profit by lawbreaking. With a vigilant Press Council in existence reporters are less likely to be ordered or tempted to get news by unscrupulous means."

The Press Council from the first has argued for apt and truthful, rather than intemperate, criticism of the mass circulation newspapers, but at the same time it has condemned specific excesses in sensational human interest, crime and sex news wherever found. In its first report, it observed:

Readers range from the most highly educated to the least literate. To maintain the circulations on which their existence depends, newspapers have to flavor themselves according to their public's requirements and to compete hourly with others catering for a similar public. . . . And with millions of the less cultivated in the land now buying a paper there is a proper and important place for what, without priggishness, can be termed a vulgar press. It should be remembered that what we here style vulgar papers often disclose public abuses which would not come the way of the others.

#### CRITICISM OF THE COUNCIL'S STRUCTURE AND POWERS

Expression of moderate views with reference to the popular press has brought criticism on the Council from those who have extreme views. The Council reacted to this criticism by asking the public to judge it on its whole record, not alone on its willingness to assess temperately the performance of the popular press. It was not, it said, a gang of journalists who would always defend other journalists. Instead, it defended freedom of the press.

In its discussion of the popular press, the Council argued strongly against those who would give it punitive powers. It did not want sanctions and did not believe they were necessary. "The law provides already for the punishment of serious misdeeds by the press," the Council wrote in its 1956 report, "such as the publication of offensive physiological details, contempt of court, or seditious libel. If we are to set up a statutory body with power to impose sanctions we shall have to bring in the government. This evolution might develop into a censorship with a threat to the freedom of the press. We do not believe in government censorship."

The chairman, in his foreword to the 1958 report, turned directly to confront the most passionate segment of believers in a press made good by government decree:

My view, after much experience, is that many of the would-be reformers of the press are in need of the curbs they propose for others, since they themselves are guilty of the offenses they allege—wild exaggeration, distortion of the truth, and the unproved assumption that they speak for the nation. Even worse, they seize eagerly on any accusation against journalists, at once assuming that it must be true and condemning before the facts are



known. . . . Events in the past year have shown how badly [the Press Council] was needed to speak for justice.

#### DEBATE ON THE STATE OF THE PRESS

An organized and partially documented criticism of the press was presented in the House of Commons May 17, 1957, when a Conservative member, Anthony Kershaw of Stroud, made the following motion:

That this House, recognizing the great importance of a free and independent press, views with concern some recent examples of newspaper reporting, and is of the opinion that a vigorous effort by the industry itself to maintain a high standard of conduct is desirable.

Two amendments to Mr. Kershaw's motion were proposed by Labour party members and were debated but did not come to a vote. Mr. Kershaw's motion passed.

In debate, Mr. Kershaw said the Press Council was too complacent and said this attitude reflected a complacency in the press itself which had been noted by the Royal Commission on the Press. He said the Council, in his opinion, needed the power to suspend or expel journalists from the profession. Lawyers and doctors had this power, he said, and did not bring the government into the scheme of professional discipline. He did not see why the journalists could not also have discipline without government interference. He suggested that management had too much influence on the Council, both through contributions to its budget and the weight of its membership, and that efforts to establish higher standards of press performance, which management might oppose for fear of a loss in sale of papers, should be handled by a subcommittee of the Council from which management representatives would be excluded.

One of the motions to amend contained expressions of concern over concentration of ownership and restrictive practices in the distribution of papers to readers; the other asserted a "failure of most national newspapers to deal fairly or adequately with industrial, political, and international news," and urged the addition of lay members to the Press Council. The second of the two amendments was much in the spirit of the motion which created the Royal Commission on the Press in 1947, but this time the government was in the hands of the Conservative party and no support was given to either amendment.

The Council summarized the Commons debate in its report for 1958 and stuck firmly to its middle ground position. It accepted its responsibility to discourage and eliminate offensive content, but it denied the charge of complacency. It accused some of its critics of wildness and said they would rather have their grievances for propaganda than to have them tested and remedied. The chairman wrote:

We are not complacent about our work. We have no right to be. Those who blame us most for falling short of their idealistic hopes imagine that the faults of the press fall into sharp categories of monstrous wrongdoing. If that were so the law could stamp out such evils. It seems to me the faults of the press are mostly faults of excess; the remedy is a moderating influence and that is precisely what the Press Council is.

#### PUNITIVE ACTION BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

The use by the House of Commons of its power to punish journalists for breach of privilege, or contempt, previously alluded to, came as a result of newspaper comment on a gasoline rationing law passed during the Suez crisis. Among the individuals entitled to extra rations were officials of political parties in the constituencies. The *Sunday Express*, a national newspaper, and the *Romford Recorder*, a provincial weekly, were among the publications to comment that many members of Parliament were also officers of their parties in the constituencies and would benefit by the extra ration of gasoline. The *Recorder* let its comment show in a headline, "M.P.'s too kind to themselves;" the *Sunday Express* voiced its criticism in an editorial.

On motion of its Privileges Committee, the House of Commons forced the editor of the *Sunday Express* to appear and to offer his abject apologies. In the case of the *Recorder* the Committee of Privileges issued a statement that the headline constituted a contempt but was "not of such a nature as to make it necessary to take further action." When the *Recorder* editor, feeling that his paper had been condemned without a hearing, asked the Press Council for help, he was told—in the words of Erskine May, an authority on privilege—that in matters of contempt the falsity of the libel is not an essential element of the offense and "if the defamatory character of the writing is apparent on its face, no explanation which might be offered could alter the decision of the House on that point, though it might materially influence the House in deciding what punishment, if any, to inflict upon the parties responsible for the publication." Under the law, the Press Council said, it did not feel the editor had been treated unfairly.

The case decisions of the Press Council can be grouped for analysis in these categories: A. Regulation of Content. B. Privacy. C. Professional Ethics. D. Access to News. E. Sex in the News. The conditions in each of the categories will be set forth briefly and the cases will then be digested and references provided to the volumes of the annual reports.

In the background of the controversy over content is crime news reporting and the fact that competition for readers between the London morning papers, the Sunday dailies, and the larger Provincial daily and Sunday papers is very

intense, unlike anything known in America. Complaints arise in large part because of actions spawned by this competitive effort. The principal complaint from educational, church, and social work leaders is that some of the newspapers give the criminal a kind of glamor and tempt moral weaklings to follow bad examples.

The Council has described most of the complaints in this category as grossly exaggerated. It has said that the press not only reports crime but punishment as well, and that it is worthwhile to permit constant repetition of the fact that crime does not pay. As to the effect of crime news on children, it has said: "A newspaper would be of little use to [children] if it gave only an idealized picture of life." At the same time, the Council said that criminals should not be painted as "reckless heroes."

As to category B, privacy, the Council has had to deal with a number of cases important to the press. It has explained that privacy complaints usually arise when a person inexperienced in dealing with the press, and sometimes emotionally upset, finds himself—without a staff or friends to help—confronted and often bewildered by many questions and demands from a large number of reporters.

Two such unusual episodes, coverage of the murder of a Dutch girl temporarily resident in England, and a rush of reporters to a hospital after an air crash in Germany that killed and injured members of a leading British football team, were dealt with by the Council. The Council also had to deal with the Royal family on several claims of invasion of privacy. Two of the cases also involved claims of access to news, but one case of clear intrusion by the press into a private party was dealt with. Two freelancers and a woman reporter for the *Daily Sketch* smuggled themselves into the private home of the Duchess of Kent for the birthday party of her son and were cornered and forcibly ejected.

In the course of its deliberations, the Council selected a definition of intrusion: "To intrude is to force oneself upon others without invitation, permission or welcome." The Council said that the word intrusion ought not to be applied to the polite inquiry of someone in the news, "Would you care to make a statement for publication?" "No intrusion would arise unless, after the person had declined, attempts were made to force him to say something when he had no desire to do so," the Council said. But it then appealed to the public to realize that it has a stake in thorough work by reporters and that in order to get the facts, rather than rumor, questions must sometimes be addressed to the beleaved. "Those who resent polite inquiries have often something to hide."

The Council suggested that the press explore methods of cutting down the number of reporters and photographers who swarm about unprepared and helpless persons who

might be sources of news. "We welcome the spread of co-operative methods to avoid this kind of harassment," the Council said in its 1956 report.

The largest number of cases handled by the Council fall into the category of professional ethics. The Council insists that journalists have a primary obligation to be accurate. "It should be accepted as a journalistic principle that where a misstatement of fact is made and a person or group of persons likely to suffer by it calls the editor's attention to it, there should be a frank correction and apology on a page where the correction and apology are likely to be seen by those who read the original misstatement."

It has been equally insistent that the public accept as necessary the printing of reports which, in faithfulness to the obligation to be accurate and fair, the journalist is obligated to print.

One of the sharpest impressions that emerges from cases in this category is that there are important public and private elements in society who ardently desire press complaisance with their selfish view of the community interest.

In dealing with access to news, the Council gave its attention principally to relations with municipal government. A feature of the Welfare State has been the addition of thousands of housing units under the control of local government and the expenditure of large new sums on other activities. The laws governing press access to local government were enacted in 1908 and 1933. Both statutes are considerably behind the times. The Press Council has argued strongly for amendments and the national government says it is now trying to negotiate an improvement in the situation.

The Council wrote in its 1955 report that "It is not for the editor to suppress what the public ought to know merely because an official or a public authority finds it far more convenient if the press keeps quiet about it." The Council also condemned reliance on the label "Private and Confidential" as a bar to the press, and its attitude caused publication of several such documents and later hearings on the ethics of such use. The Council said, "If hushing up a matter is against the public interest the duty of the press is clear: It must tell the public what is happening."

Because of the mixture of private and public interest in the story of Princess Margaret and Group Captain Townsend, this case fell partly in the access to news category. So did publication of articles by former employees of the Royal household. The Press Council finally indorsed the Queen's claim to privacy like that to be enjoyed by any other family, but it noted carefully that the Royal family is not an ordinary family. It also condemned forthrightly excesses of bad manners and intrusion in the stories dealing with the Royal family. Finally, it negotiated with Buckingham Palace to obtain improved service from the Queen's press secretariat and, as a result, the staff was enlarged.

The most volatile of the charges levied against the press has been misuse of sex elements in the news. Large circulation newspapers seeking to entertain rather than to inform readers, and the competition among them for readers, bear the brunt of the criticism. One hysterical group of critics has termed the press pornographic and the Press Council has defined the term and explained patiently that the press just isn't that bad—if it were the law would take care of it without help from the Council or any one else.

Nevertheless, the Council has been anxious about extremes in some of the popular papers and has undertaken to organize and to lead condemnation of offensive material. Let the press avoid those sex allusions that "may initiate imitation of wrong conduct," or "reckless imitation." Early in its work it issued a statement: "That this Council, while defending the right to the press in the contemporary world to deal in adult manner with matters of sex, is deeply concerned by the unwholesome exploitation of sex by certain newspapers and periodicals. It places on record its view that such treatment is calculated to injure public morale especially because newspapers and periodicals are seen and read by young persons. It is also contrary to those standards of journalism which it is the Council's duty to maintain. The Council intends to keep this matter under review."

Working under difficulties from its middle-of-the-road position, the Press Council also defended the real worth of the popular papers, pointing to many useful features. For its moderation it was assailed by the critics as a gang of journalists defending other journalists and a member of the House of Lords even introduced a bill to replace the Press Council with a three-man press authority that would have ended freedom of the press completely. The bill made no headway, but its wording is indicative of the temper of one section of the press opposition.

#### DIGEST OF COUNCIL DECISIONS

The decisions of the Council through July 15, 1958 are summarized below. The Press Council itself does not use a legal style; that is adopted here to facilitate reference to the annual reports, *The Press and the People*. London: General Council of the Press, 1 Bell Yard, Fleet Street, W. C. 2. The effort is not intended as a reference to each of the decided cases, but is directed at stating the professional and ethical attitudes and rules expressed by the Council. A companion work offers a summary of each case.

##### A. Regulation of Content

*Content.* A wide range of content is demanded by a diverse public. The popular press, vulgar in the sense that it is of the people, performed a valid function and should be criticized not alone in terms of upper-class values but also in terms of the needs of the society it serves. Standards of decency and good taste are not monopolies of one particular

social group. Obscenity laws apply to all publications alike. Excesses in coverage of sex and crime news are to be condemned wherever found. The Press Council does not believe that a newspaper must give the public what it wants regardless of restraint. (Dicta, 1957, p. 2; 1954, pp. 4-8; 1955, pp. 5-6, 9-11) The method of censorship takes no account of legitimately varying tastes among newspaper readers of different kinds, in different regions, and at different times or of inevitable changes in the public attitude to discussion of public affairs. (Dicta, 1956, p. 16)

*Statutory authority.* The Press Council does not want statutory power to apply sanctions to those who disagree with it. An appeal to fairness has rarely failed. (Dicta, 1956, pp. 6, 16; 1957, p. 2; 1958, p. 1)

*Criminal heroes.* It is worthwhile to permit constant repetition of the fact that crime does not pay but criminals should not be painted as reckless heroes. (Dicta, 1954, p. 8)

*Rape cases.* Offensive details of rape cases should not be printed. Juvenile and women victims of sex offenses should not be identified. Such cases must be reported in the public interest but this can be done without going into offensive detail. (Hull Vigilance Assn. et al v. Hull Daily Mail; Children's Rescue League v. Daily Mail et al, 1955, p. 29)

*Faults of excess.* We agree that journalists ought to remember that they are dealing not merely with names on bits of paper but real people, people who may be harmed by careless references in support of a romantic or breath-catching headline. The faults of the press are mostly faults of excess, the remedy is a moderating influence, and that is what the Press Council is. (Dicta, 1956, p. 5; 1957, p. 3)

##### B. Privacy

*Open Courts.* All phases of the judicial process should be kept open. (Dicta, 1958, pp. 24, 39)

*Definition of privacy.* A definition useful in determining boundaries of privacy: "To intrude is to force oneself upon others without invitation, permission or welcome," but polite inquiry in search of news is not intrusion and actions based on the sure warrant of public right as contrasted with public curiosity may reasonably infringe the normal limits of privacy. (Dicta, 1958, p. 3)

*Mixed private and official roles.* When a unit of government offers a service sometimes or often provided by private individuals, as in public housing, it should deal with the press under the conventions of public rather than of private business. (In re Quarry Hill Flats, 1955, p. 24; Town of Poole, 1956, p. 16; Town of Llanelly, *ibid.*, p. 17)

##### C. Professional Ethics

*Correction of error.* In order to be effective, a demand for retraction or correction must be based on a true statement of the facts. (Napier v. Gordon, 1954, p. 26)

*News judgment.* News reports should be judged for space and display by the editor independently of the advertising



manager. (National Trotting Assn. v. Bogner Regis Post, 1954, p. 28)

*Advertising standards.* A publication has a right to reject advertisements on the basis of reasonable standards. (Stopes v. Times, 1954, p. 28)

*Eavesdropping.* The conventions with reference to eavesdropping are the same for journalists as for gentlemen, but a journalist's offense is made more serious by publishing what he overhears. (Gluckstein v. Driberg, 1955, p. 19)

*Rights of affected parties.* A running series of letters on a particular topic may be terminated at will by an editor but persons with material interests should not arbitrarily be deprived of a right to state their case. (National Assn. of Retail Furnishers v. Evening Chronicle, 1955, p. 22)

*Release embargo.* The release embargo system is for the benefit of the press and may not be abused without destroying it. (In re British Railways, 1955, p. 22; Colville v. The People, 1956, p. 27; Times and Manchester Guardian v. Daily Telegraph, 1957, p. 24)

*Criticism of office holders.* Criticism of an individual office holder is not to be withheld on the score that it will damage prestige and usefulness of the office. (Metropolitan Mayors Assn. v. Daily Sketch, 1955, p. 24)

*Equal treatment.* When two or more are convicted of the same offense the names of all should be published if any are published. (Town of Inverness v. Highland Herald, 1955, p. 26)

*Editorial page ethics.* It is not unethical for a paper to be a partisan in its own editorials. (Torquay Trades Council v. Herald Express, 1955, p. 27)

*Intrusion.* Complaints of intrusion based on the sheer numbers of reporters on a story can and should be avoided by co-operative newsgathering efforts. (Milward's complaint, 1958, p. 33)

*Objectionable photographs.* As a general principle a photograph of a seriously injured person likely to cause needless distress and pain to relatives should not be printed. (Milward's complaint, 1958, p. 33)

*Claims to official privacy.* News of public figures affecting their official capacity is to be judged by the degree of truth and error it contains, and by the quality of public interest, not by standards of privacy or intrusion. (Colville's complaint, 1955, p. 15; Educational Institute of Scotland v. Sunday Post, 1955, p. 16; Town of Poole v. Dorset Herald, 1955, p. 16; London County Council v. South London Press, 1955, p. 20; Du Pre v. Daily Express, 1954, p. 24)

*Intrusion.* Callous intrusion into private grief is damaging to the reputation of the press. (Fearon's complaint, 1958, p. 20; War Office v. Daily Sketch, 1956, p. 28)

*Illegitimate children.* Children should not be identified as illegitimate except by a court order. (Bennett v. Sunday Pictorial, 1956, p. 33)

*Correction of error.* An accurate report is the primary obligation of journalists. It should be accepted as a journalistic principle that where a misstatement of fact is made and a person or group of persons likely to suffer by it calls the editor's attention to it, there should be a frank correction and apology on a page where the correction and apology are likely to be seen by those who read the original. (Educational Institute of Scotland v. Sunday Post, 1955, p. 23; Board of Deputies of British Jews v. South London Advertiser, 1956, p. 29; Relatives of Caroline Simey v. Daily Herald, 1958, p. 29; at the relation of Green v. News of the World, Sunday Express and Sunday Dispatch, 1954, p. 25; in the matter of police housing in Surrey, 1958, p. 25; Bellenger v. Sunday Express, 1958, p. 28)

*Rights of authors.* A person should not be identified with the authorship of a story which has been altered substantially without consultation with him or his agent. (Hopkinson v. Daily Sketch, 1954, p. 22)

*Disputes as to the facts.* It is not unethical for a publication, after conducting an examination, to back its own reporter's veracity in a dispute with a news source. (Murray v. the Scotsman, 1955, p. 28)

*Prostitutes.* If necessary in order to make exposure fully effective, the names and addresses of prostitutes may be published. (Linton v. The People, 1955, p. 28)

*Fiction mixed with fact.* When an editor learns that his reporter has filled in details of a story from his imagination rather than from fact he should publish a correction and apology. (In re Daily Sketch, 1956, p. 30)

*Criticism of a professional group.* A criticism of a whole profession and aspects of its relationship with the public, if based on fact, is protected by freedom of the press. (Council of the Law Society v. Sunday Express, 1956, p. 32)

*Children and alcohol.* It is illegal for children to drink alcoholic beverages and photographers should not take, and papers should not print, pictures of such an incident. (Salvation Army v. Daily Sketch, 1956, p. 35)

*Victimization of news source.* A reporter who takes a mother to church to stop her daughter's wedding, but delays so that she cannot talk to the minister beforehand and must stop the ceremony itself, is showing a callous and unprofessional disregard for her feelings. (Watson and Gallagher v. Sunday Pictorial, 1957, p. 35)

*Non-journalist doing the work of journalists.* Despite the objections of the journalists' trade union, a paper may send an expert to a technical meeting as its representative if it is made clear that he is not a staff reporter. (National Union of Journalists v. Daily Express, 1957, p. 27)

*Police posing as journalists.* Policemen should not use press cards and pose as journalists in making investigations for the reason that the system of accreditation of journalists



is brought under suspicion. (In re Chief Commissioner of Police, 1958, p. 26)

*Use of the term "chemist."* The term "chemist" may be used only by merchants listed in the statutory register of the trade. (Pharmaceutical Society, v. Swindon Advertiser, 1957, p. 28)

#### D. Access to News

*Private and confidential.* It is not for the editor to suppress what the public ought to know merely because an official or a public authority finds it far more convenient if the press keeps quiet about it. Merely stamping a document "private and confidential" does not obligate the press if hushing up the matter is against the public interest. (Dicta, 1955, pp. 6-8)

*Inducing a breach of contract.* The press should not tempt employees of the Royal household to break the employment contracts forbidding them to give information to the press or to write for the press. (Jackson v. Sunday Pictorial, as restated in Colville's complaint, 1954, p. 21, which see)

*Privacy of the Royal family.* The Queen is entitled to ask for her family the privacy at home enjoyed by other families, but the Royal household is not an ordinary household. The Queen's press secretariat ought to fulfill an obligation to keep the public adequately informed. (Colville's complaint, 1954, p. 21; 1956, p. 9)

*News that is bad for business.* A city council is not entitled to protest publication of news about local juvenile gangs merely because publicity is bad for business. (Whitley Bay v. Evening Chronicle, 1958, p. 42)

*Examination of wills.* Wills should be open to public inspection after probate. (In re Mott-Radclyffe's bill, 1955, p. 13)

*Telephone calls to officials not on duty.* A chief constable is not entitled to complain because a journalist telephones him at home about official business, but is entitled to prompt correction of erroneous reports about conditions under his administrative control. (Constable v. News Chronicle; the same v. Daily Mail, 1957, p. 25)

*Hospital news.* Press access to hospital news should be governed by the wishes of patients, or by next of kin in the event the patient cannot speak for himself. In cases of multiple admissions in accident and disaster cases, the hospital should try to notify relatives before giving names of patients to the press, but such effort failing the information may be given to the press with notice that next of kin have not been reached. Hospitals should delegate a competent officer to deal with the press at all times. (British Medical Association code, 1956, p. 52)

#### E. Sex in the News

*Revivals of past crime stories.* Revivals of past crime stories are not wrong in themselves if the public is interested, but the articles are subject to criticism if they distort

the truth. (Robinson v. Sunday Pictorial, 1956, p. 34)

*Allusions to sex.* Let the press avoid those sex allusions that may initiate reckless imitation of wrong conduct. A newspaper would be of little use as a moral guide, however, if it gave only an idealized picture of life. (Dicta, 1954, p. 8)

*Publicity and rehabilitation.* Publicity for released women prisoners usually has an adverse effect on rehabilitation. (The archbishop's complaint, 1954, p. 45)

*Settlements for unwed mothers.* The judgment of editors, after consideration of the views of social workers and others, should be allowed to prevail in deciding whether to print names of parties to affiliation agreements. (Ann Campbell's complaint, 1956, p. 26)

*Names of homosexuals.* The Press Council cannot agree to a flat ban on publishing names of persons under 30 years of age in homosexual cases. (Complaint of the Magistrates' Association, 1956, p. 26)

#### SUMMARY AND COMMENT

In its first five years the Press Council has been accepted by the profession and the public alike as entitled and qualified to perform its role of arbiter between press and public. In this capacity it has drawn the lines of argument over press content quite clearly. It has admitted that some criticism, particularly that having to do with exploitation of sex and crime, is just and has been asked that abuses be corrected. Its case decisions with reference to intrusion into private grief, to correction of error, and to substitutions of fiction for fact in news material have made it more difficult for the unethical journal to repeat its performances and made life a bit easier for competing publications. It has urged journalists to remember that they do not deal with names and words on pieces of paper but with human beings who can be damaged, as well as helped, by the tinsel touches they apply to the human story.

In the matter of access to news, the Council joined with the British Medical Association in working out a code for access to patients in hospitals, and worked hard to secure open meetings of municipal councils, committees, and boards. It advised journalists to put the public interest ahead of "private and confidential" labels on public documents. In this respect its action has obliged public officials to consider whether they deny access to news for reasons of personal comfort or of the public interest.

In dealing respectfully with complaints, the Council has shown up persons who try to use the press to punish enemies or to gain other selfish advantages; it has demonstrated that some well-intentioned individuals were excitable and in error. Its work should gain for the press a fairer hearing on its performance than it has had in the past.

# The Australian Journalists' Association

By W. Sprague Holden

The letter was terse and to the point. It was dated at Melbourne, December 1, 1910. It read:

Dear Sir, —

A Meeting of Journalists, i.e. persons professionally and habitually engaged upon the staffs of newspapers or periodicals will be held at the Cafe in the basement of the Empire Buildings, Flinders Street, Melbourne, on Saturday, December 10, 1910, at 8 p.m. sharp, for the purpose of considering the question of forming an Organization to secure registration under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

You are invited to be present and to extend an invitation to any other qualified person with whom you are acquainted.

Yours sincerely,  
B. S. B. Cook,  
(Melbourne 'Herald')  
On Behalf of the Conveners.

That was the beginning.

The background was important. Australia's system of conciliation and arbitration, supervised by special federal and state courts, grew out of a long series of bitter industrial disputes beginning about 1890. By the end of the 20th century's first decade, remarkable progress had been made in establishing and effectively using legal machinery to prevent or settle the type of fierce labor-employer warfare that had been enervating Australia.

In the 21st Birthday Number of *The Journalist*, A.J.A.'s official newspaper (issue of April 24, 1931), the reason for the conveners' letter was set down this way:

"Bootmakers, bricklayers, miners, sea captains and officers, and other employees in widely varied avocations (sic), had taken full advantage of the new industrial legislation, and had been granted by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court substantial increases in pay and a

For nearly 50 years the Australian Journalists' Association, a trade union including nearly all the working newspapermen of Australia, has been a powerful force in that country. This report on it is from a longer report of a study of metropolitan journalism the author made of the 14 dailies of Australia's six capital cities. Prof. Holden is chairman of the Department of Journalism at Wayne State University in Detroit. He spent 13 months on a Fulbright grant in Australia in 1956-7.

shortening of hours. By collective bargaining the employees in the mechanical departments of newspapers had secured big improvements in their working conditions, and in many instances the salaries of journalists were less than those of other employees in the industry.

"Such was the state of affairs when Melbourne journalists decided that an effort should be made to improve the status of journalists by collective action."

About 100 journalists attended the meeting called by B. S. B. Cook, Federal roundsman (beat reporter) for the *Herald*—Melbourne was then the Federal capital. A motion that an organization be formed and registered "under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act" was carried 78 to 9.

An eight-man committee was named to draft a constitution and rules. In the course of its work, the committee came up with a proposed name, which was quickly approved.

The new-born "Australian Journalists' Association" applied at once for registration under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act. The application date was December 23, 1910. Notice thereof was printed in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of December 31, and registration was formally granted on May 23, 1911.

One of the Act's requirements was that a Log of Claims—a list of demands—for each disputant group be filed with the Court as a basis for collective bargaining or for Court decision if bargaining failed. The A. J. A. served its first Log on about 50 newspapers outside, and 12 within, the State of Victoria, on Nov. 4, 1911. A month later a conference between A.J.A. officials and representatives of daily newspapers in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane was held in Melbourne. From this series of meetings came the first agreement—known as the Journalists' Award—as to wages, hours and working conditions between the proprietors and the A. J. A.

The Award ran for a year. It added an approximate £15,000 to the income of A.J.A. members and, the 21st anniversary issue of *The Journalist* recalled, "for the first time in the history of Australian journalism, the principle that there should be some limit to the hours worked by journalists was recognized."

A.J.A. grew steadily with the new century. From the first meeting of about 100 founders, it increased in this fashion: 1911—593 members; 1920—1017; 1930—1817; 1940—2295; 1950—3920.

Of A.J.A.'s nine districts, New South Wales and Victoria have by far the largest memberships. Recent totals were:

New South Wales	1,571
Victoria	1,201
Queensland	420
South Australia	307
Western Australia	287
N. S. W. Provincial	190
Tasmania	143
Canberra (National Capital)	95
Total	4,214

Most of the time since the founding year, the A.J.A. and the proprietors have reached agreement without benefit of Court decision.

The first time it became necessary was in 1917. In that year, Mr. Justice Isaacs (later Sir Isaac Isaacs, who became Australia's first native-born Governor General), ordered an Award which the late Arthur Norman Smith, A.J.A. General President in 1911, described as "the celebrated blue log, so-called because it was printed on somewhat official-looking blue foolscap . . . (and) was the Magna Charta and Bill of Rights of the Association in one."

This Award prescribed a format that is still followed. It set up a grading system, under which a journalist was advanced in salary as his experience and skill, therefore his value to his newspaper, increased. It ordered an apportionment of jobs according to grade, so that a substantial majority of employees would be in the best-paying brackets. It set forth working hours and working conditions in meticulous detail for all editorial department employees. It provided for holidays. By raising wage and salary minimums, Smith declared, it raised "the professional status of journalists to something like what it should be."

In 1927, certain issues which the A.J.A. and employers could not agree upon were arbitrated by Robert G. Menzies, then practising law, and now Prime Minister of Australia.

A more recent major Court intercession—and the worst, from the standpoint of time lost, energy and money expended—came as a result of a deadlock, in January 1954, over Logs of Claims filed the previous June. Eighteen months of hearings preceded the final decision.

The metropolitan newspaper Award is the basis for others in different media. Variations in schedules of work and pay rates are determined by such factors as cost of living, local working conditions, competitive strain and economics. Generally, minimum wages are higher in the Metropolitan Awards than in the others. These latter cover Newcastle (New South Wales) dailies, the Australian Broadcasting Commission, public service, Australian Associated Press, Herald Gravure (Melbourne), press agencies,

provincial dailies, provincial non-dailies, commercial broadcasting stations that operate independent news services.

In the Metropolitan Awards, rates of pay and certain other matters are often fixed lower or differently in Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart than in Sydney and Melbourne, the two biggest capitals. Also, a wage differential is given morning paper employees when night work is required of them.

The grading schedule, like so many other phases of the Australian system, has no counterpart in U. S. journalism. The Award sets up five grades or wage categories of journalists, the lowest being D grade. They progress upward through C, B and A and culminate in Special A grade. Special A minimum pay rates may be more than twice as much as D grade minimums.

A comparison of the literary staff rates for all grades in the last three Awards for Sydney and Melbourne Metropolitan Morning Dailies suggests the pay pattern for all classifications:

GRADE	1950-55	1955-58**	1958-61***
Sp. A	£27/11/0*	£39/15/0	£41/15/0
A	25/06/0	34/15/0	36/15/0
B	22/06/6	29/15/0	32/05/0
C	20/02/0	23/15/0	26/10/0
D	16/12/6	18/05/0	21/10/0

The section of the Award dealing with staff pay rates also covers miscellaneous related matters—pay rates for correspondents and bureau members who work outside the home state; rates for journalists employed on the company's periodicals, and so on.

Under "Classification of Members" the award prescribes these proportions for journalists by grade on metropolitan papers:

"Not less than 15 per cent in A grade."

"Not less than 50 per cent in B grade."

"Not less than 17½ per cent in C grade."

"Not less than 17½ per cent in D grade."

Grades A and B together thus account for 65 per cent of all staffers. In point of fact, most newspapers exceed minimum requirements in the top grades, keeping their best journalists on "margins"—pay rates in excess of the minimum for the pertinent grade.

Grading—the prerogative of the proprietor and exercised by the top editorial management—is not done according to the nature of the job. Covering the courts, for example, is not A grade work *per se* and police rounds B grade, or vice versa. Grading is done according to the proficiency of the individual journalist and his value to the paper. Merit is declared to be the sole basis of upgrading; but it is not unusual for a C grade journalist, offered more pay by a

rival proprietor, to find himself suddenly in B grade if he promises not to switch jobs.

The time immediately after the signing of a new Award is a period of some anxiety; for proprietors can downgrade as well as upgrade; and the increased cost of higher pay under a new Award may be the gauge of how much a proprietor may wish to downgrade and to whittle margins.

However, the A.J.A. has effective weapons against such practices, beyond the built-in percentage minimums for each grade; and adjudication generally takes care of readjustments equitably.

Certain individuals are exempted from the Award's pay provisions; notably, top editors and their deputies, chiefs of staff, news editors, chief sub-editors (head copyreaders) and editors of other publications issued by the same proprietor; also casual employes, district and country correspondents and members employed outside the Commonwealth.

Cadets (beginners) rate a special section in the Award. Cadets are required to undergo a four-year training program during which they learn all journalistic routines from veterans.

Expense money for working journalists, travel fares, transport facilities and typewriter maintenance are prescribed by the Award.

Day Work and Night Work differentials are spelled out. Definitions of time worked are laid down; so are rules covering distant engagements, overtime, time off and special overtime. Use of the Duty Book, which lists assignments, and of the Time Book, for hours worked, is described. The rights, responsibilities, duties and pay of district correspondents, casuals, contributors, and country correspondents are specified.

The Award directs how up-to-date records of staffers' grades, cadets' status and exemptions shall be kept. It details illness and accident compensation, death benefits, holiday leaves (four consecutive weeks at full pay for all graded journalists and cadets), notice for termination of services, employment at Darwin and Canberra, extra pay for duplication of work, rules about journalists who do photographic work and who broadcast, working accommodations in newspaper offices, the keeping of proper files of newspapers, making available copies of the current Award to employers and employes, and the use of notice-boards for the A.J.A. in reporters' rooms. The Award specifies a closed shop, but permits certain exemptions.

One of the most significant of the provisions is also one of the shortest:

#### "MALE AND FEMALE MEMBERS"

"All provisions of this Award shall apply equally to male and female members."

This includes, of course, rates of pay.

All the foregoing is covered by one section of the Award. Another deals in similar fashion with "Cartoonists, Creative Artists, Press Artists and Press Photographers."

A third and final section specifies the machinery for adjustment of wage rates and provides for a "Board of Reference" composed of three A.J.A. and three employer representatives to deal with any matters that arise in connection with the administration of the Award.

Each of the six states of Australia is a District of A.J.A. In addition there is a New South Wales Provincial District and a Canberra Division.

Every A.J.A. member is affiliated with one of these eight units, each of which is autonomous. Ultimate authority is vested in popular vote of the membership. The governing body on the national level is the Federal Council (General President, two General Vice Presidents, General Treasurer, General Secretary; two delegates from each District, one from each sub-District or Division).

Federal Council holds annual and special meetings. When Federal Council is not in session, the Federal Executive administers A.J.A. This second body consists of the same General officers listed above, plus one representative from each District, one from the Canberra Division, one photographer representative and one artist-author representative. The practice is to designate Melbourne members as deputies for distant districts.

Melbourne has been A.J.A. headquarters ever since the Association's inception, although repeated attempts have been made to have them removed to Sydney. A number of membership plebiscites have turned down the proposition—the latest, in 1958, by the almost irreducible margin of three votes—presumably because Melbourne is a city of less journalistic *sturm und drang* than Sydney.

Federal Council has complete authority over policy, management and all A.J.A. affairs. Federal Executive carries out general administration. Only three A.J.A. officials are paid—the General Secretary, the Victorian District and the New South Wales District secretaries. The first General Secretary, S. E. Pratt, served 37 years, bringing the organization through its adolescence and into maturity. His successor, Sydney Crosland, took over the office in February 1955.

District units of the A.J.A. present Logs of Claims for employes of various publishing units of their respective states. They help to administer sub-districts' affairs, hold membership meetings, keep books, collect dues, conduct social activities and do all other things necessary at the state level.

Each District publishes an "Annual Report and Balance Sheet," as of each June 30, which spreads upon the record all phases of A.J.A.'s activities for the year. It is prepared in time for the District's annual meeting, for which it serves



as agenda and an accounting of stewardship. The policing of the Award is reported therein; also the report of the Ethics Committee, which has the power to reprimand or penalize an offending member. It includes, in black ink on white paper, the dues standing of every member in pounds, shillings and unto the last pence. Few members are in arrears; many are not only "financial" (dues paid up) but are paid up in advance.

A relatively new objective is A.J.A.'s desire to create a "General Council of the Press" within each state. The annual meeting of the A.J.A. Federal Council in 1955, in Perth, endorsed the principle and the New South Wales District since then has taken leadership in seeking its establishment.

The A.J.A. argues that there are numerous abuses short of actionable libel committed by newspapers, and that the proprietors and editors should not be the sole judges of whether mistakes should be corrected, erroneous implications set right and their other wrongful actions redressed. The Press Council would have some of the attributes of a court, a public letter box and an avuncular counsellor. Its chief means of granting relief to complainants and of rebuking offenders would be publicity and regular reports to the public.

In the 21st Birthday number of *The Journalist*, Founder B. S. B. Cook wrote this brief wish:

"If only a portion of the original edifice endures and something more substantial is hereafter erected on its base, the conveners trust that it may be regarded as a monument to their labors to uplift journalism to that honored place in the professions which is its right and title to occupy."

The original edifice has endured. Decades later, as the A.J.A. approaches its golden jubilee year, it must be regarded as one of organized labor's most remarkable organiza-

tions. Among working Australian journalists it holds more than a 90 per cent membership. Only persons with religious scruples against unions, and certain others, are not members. In 1956, of Australia's approximately 4,500 journalists, 4,214 were A.J.A. members; and 3,694 of these were "financial."

Since its inception, A.J.A. has been remarkably strike-free, although in recent years it became embroiled in two Sydney shutdowns which were not of its own making. One occurred in 1944; the other in 1955. Both left wounds and bitterness. Sydney, however, is the exception. Relations with employers are generally good throughout the Commonwealth.

The remarkable record in amity which A.J.A. and Australia's newspaper proprietors have made is not the least impressive part of Australia's newspaper story. To this, in some degree, the background of most of Australia's top newspaper executives has contributed. Practically all of them began as members of A.J.A. Many of the most powerful of today's press potentates were working journalists, and some were state or federal A.J.A. officers, in their earlier years.

One group respects the other. There is rancour, particularly at Award-expiration time. But the absence of disastrous strikes, of vendettas by proprietors against the A.J.A., and vice versa, and the mutual respect that prevails are components of a situation that could profitably inspire close study by newspaper employers and employees in other lands, including the United States.

- \* The Australian pound is worth about \$2.25, but its equivalent purchasing power is greater than that.
- \*\* Includes an increase of £1/05/0 ordered by the Federal Arbitration Court in the national Basic Wage in a 1956 decision.
- \*\*\* For only Melbourne morning dailies. Three Sunday papers chose not to sign the negotiated agreement—the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the *Sun*, and the *Daily Mirror*. Management of the *Daily Telegraph* reserved the right to re-open proceedings after a decision was reached in the case filed by its competitors.

## The Quality of Ralph McGill

By Tom Dearmore

A CHURCH, A SCHOOL. By Ralph McGill. Abingdon Press, New York-Nashville, 92 pages, \$2.

Unpretentious Ralph McGill, it seems safe to assume, would rather be writing about pleasant things, would rather not be turning out copy which causes the blood to boil in many quarters and which makes his name an epithet to some subscribers when the morning *Atlanta Constitution* arrives in Georgia towns.

How satisfying it is when an editor can write commentary about topics dear to the hearts of his readers—when he can, with honesty, predict a bright and wholesome future for his area, praise the general course of public action and editorialize about the salubrious regional climate.

As a combatant of extremist groups, soft-spoken and hospitable Ralph Emerson McGill does not look the part. There is nothing of the reform zealot in his manner.

But McGill, despite his easy-going exterior, has a core of stubborn purpose which makes it impossible for him to trade the discharge of professional duty for universal local esteem.

This quality has led him to face head-on the tangled dilemma of the South, with all its passionate alarms and resort to extreme processes—to take an unswerving stand for the minority viewpoint in his state in the face of certain opprobrium.

It also led him last year to receive a Pulitzer Prize for "courageous and effective editorial leadership in the midst of troubled times."

In this book are 29 of his plain-spoken editorial columns, starting with the one, "A Church, A School," which brought him nationwide acclaim and the Pulitzer award. This opening column was written shortly after the dynamiting of a Jewish temple in Atlanta and a high school in Clinton, Tenn. It ends with this admonition:

For a long time now it has been needful for all Americans to stand up and be counted on the side of law and the due process of law—even when to

do so goes against personal beliefs and emotions. It is late. But there is yet time.

Needless to say, this Georgia editor was among the first, years ago, who stood and were counted. He was among those who warned Southern political leaders what the cumulative result of vociferous assaults upon legal process might be, and there was a reminder of this in his column about the dynamitings:

Let us face the facts. This is a harvest. It is the crop of things sown. It is the harvest of defiance of courts and the encouragement of citizens to defy law on the part of many Southern politicians. . . It is not possible to preach lawlessness and restrict it. . . To be sure, none said go bomb a Jewish temple or a school. But let it be understood that when leadership in high places in any degree fails to support constituted authority, it opens the gates to all those who wish to take the law into their own hands.

McGill's capacity for using simple language is what makes his writing different. This is the outstanding ingredient of his incisive columns. Cleverly turned phrases are not his specialty; his work is set apart by short and meaningful sentences.

He writes for the people of Georgia, and, in his syndicated newspaper column and magazine articles, of all the nation. Profuse terminology with which writers impress other writers is missing. His style is his own and gives a feeling of the man—of a keen sensitivity to the effects of this Southern turbulence upon people who are caught up in it, especially children.

McGill is a native of East Tennessee, and there is still something of the mountains in his speech even though he has been with the *Constitution* since 1929. His birthplace is only the second county east of where another famous Southern newspaperman, Henry Watterson, grew up in the Tennessee hills and later measured written with such directness that every-

up to his stormy times as editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.

Watterson fought a courageous battle for human rights and restoration of the Union, and, at an advanced age, could look back with pride upon the "evil days when the *Courier-Journal* stood alone." Perhaps McGill may one day have something akin to that satisfaction.

The Atlanta editor's articles have appeared in *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *New York Times Magazine*, and he is the author of another book, *The Fleas Come With the Dog*, based on his experiences as a column writer.

McGill's commentary is front page material in the *Constitution*. It is displayed so that every subscriber sees it and is one can understand it. There is no hedging—no hesitancy about joining the battle with staggering issues, yet neither is there any know-it-all presumptuousness.

Most newspapermen in the South who oppose extremism and speak up for orderly process do not argue the merits of the basic Supreme Court decision on desegregation, but McGill has written:

In the last half of the twentieth century it was no longer possible for the courts of this land to say it was constitutional to discriminate against any American citizen.

And again:

The states utterly failed to carry out the separate but equal decision. State failure to meet this responsibility, plus the march of history and other developments in the field of human rights, produced a constitutional construction "to vest the power where it will be exercised."

In a region where countless voices give interpretations geared to the impulse of the hour, McGill has written many studied observations about the nature of the federal-state relationship, about the delegation of powers, about the alternatives available to the South. He has discussed the *Constitution*. These are all areas in which there is confusion and misunderstanding, compounded by exhortations of politicians with homebrewed versions tailored to fit the public temperament

which they have, in large measure, created and nurtured.

He solemnly reminds his readers that "the government of the United States and its institutions of law are still in force," but also points out that the people of the Southern states have a legal alternative—the abolition of public schools. The perils of this course and the problems and inequities which would accompany a large-scale private school setup are outlined, and this estimate is given:

Out of the chaos of no schools and the attempt to establish a private system will emerge a public school system. A period of years may well intervene. The new system may even be a federally supported one born of necessity. There will, in time, be public schools. . . We cannot escape from the twentieth century.

He analyzes Southern "states rights" arguments, the impact of his area's troubles in the realm of foreign relations (including church missionary activities), and the performance of President Eisenhower in the school integration dilemma.

This little book will prove valuable to anyone interested in what is at stake in the Southern school tumult. It reflects the writer's peculiar brand of intellectual ruggedness and is a confession of faith in the federal system.

Time alone will tell whether McGill's writing has made a fissure of any consequence in the wall of resistance to federal law. Georgia is now running the gamut of federal court decrees and its citizenry may soon have to make an important decision regarding the future of public education in that state.

John N. Heiskell, editor of the embattled *Arkansas Gazette*, has set an exacting standard for the profession:

Every newspaper must come to judgment and accounting for the course that forms its image and its character. . . . It must fulfill the measure of its obligation, even though, in the words of St. Paul, it has to endure affliction. . .

Ralph McGill has tried, against towering odds, to prepare his readers for the decision-making process. The result will be of great significance not only to them, but to the nation.

But, whatever the outcome, there can be no doubt that McGill has met the most rigid standards of professional obligation.

## One Side On Algeria

By Peter Braestrup

ALGERIA IN TURMOIL. A History of the Rebellion. By Michael K. Clark. Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York. 452 pp. \$6.

In the chill early hours of November 1, 1954—All Saints' Day—surprise attacks came out of the night against some 70 French barracks and public buildings from the Aures Mountains to the Sahara. Armed with shotguns and Molotov cocktails, scattered bands of Algerian Moslem nationalists had that day launched a bitter "war of liberation" that was, by 1960, to cost France over 13,000 military dead, a hefty slice of her national budget, and what little remained,—after Dienbienphu and other colonial crises—of her political stability.

France's failure to meet the rebel challenge led directly to the collapse of the Fourth Republic and the 1958 return to power of Gen. Charles De Gaulle. Internationally, "independence for Algeria" has become a favorite anti-Western slogan of the Afro-Asian bloc; the Algerian issue has annually embarrassed the fence-straddling United States in the U.N. Only now, with both the rebel National Liberation Front (F.L.N.) and De Gaulle edging toward negotiations, does an Algerian cease-fire seem possible. Meanwhile, the war goes on—a guerrilla war of skirmishes, sabotage, reprisals, and propaganda.

The controversial Algerian story remains virtually unreported in the U. S. press, except for the *New York Times* and *Time*. And, although several French journalists have written good books on the conflict, none of the half-dozen American newsmen on the scene has produced a full-length portrait. That is, except for Michael K. Clark, who covered North Africa for the *Times* from 1953 until mid-1957.

Clark's rambling, detailed 452-page

*Turmoil in Algeria*, replete with maps and statistics, is a primer on the revolution, the first available to American newsmen and scholars who don't read French.

Clark has done more than merely describe the Moslem rebellion; he gives the reader a quick rundown on the haphazard course of French rule (since 1830), sketches the zigzags of Algerian Moslem nationalism, and in describing the revolt, keeps the action in Algeria tied to the concurrent politics in Paris, Cairo, and the U.N. His treatment of the Algiers Army coup that brought De Gaulle to power in May 1958 is beautifully done; his appraisals of the weaknesses of Arab nationalism and Western counter-policy are original, and, perhaps, corrective.

As he freely states, Clark has a bias, and it shows through all 53 chapters: Algeria can only prosper under French rule. The five-year-old revolt is supported by only a small terror-ridden minority of Algeria's 9,000,000 Moslems (how, then, can the F.L.N. stalemate 450,000 French troops?). F.L.N. atrocities are "crimes," French counter-terror is excusable. France's failures have been political vacillation and unwillingness to apply sufficient force (not in long denying the Moslem majority *liberté, égalité, fraternité*). American newsmen have slanted their stories out of "anti-colonial" bias.

In relying primarily on French sources, Clark, in effect, sees "only one side of the hill." He leaves much accessible ground unexplored. While he dwells exhaustingly on the minor squabbles of politicians, he passes over some of the war's key military factors: French army morale; the evolution of French and rebel tactics; the effect of the vast—and seemingly fruitful—French investment in the "Morice Line" blocking off the rebels' vital Tunisian sanctuary; the slow upgrading of rebel arms and equipment.

Despite these defects, *Turmoil* is a background must for newspapermen. It is to be hoped, however, that from among the other able American veterans familiar with both sides—including Ed Behr and Stanley Karnow of *Time*, Henry Tanner and Thomas Brady of the *Times*, and free-lancer Joseph Kraft—another broader long look at Algeria will soon be forthcoming.

## Truman and MacArthur

By William Lambert

THE TRUMAN-MACARTHUR CONTROVERSY AND THE KOREAN WAR. By John W. Spanier. Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard. 311 pp. \$6.50.

The noisy debate that raged up and down and across the United States after President Truman fired General MacArthur generated a tremendous outpouring of fact and argument concerning American foreign policy and military strategy, a flood of information that laid bare all but the most vital secrets of the nation then in the midst of international crisis.

Just how valuable this diplomatic and strategic linen washing was to the American people and its friends and enemies abroad at that critical time is subject to argument but it certainly provided a running head start for historians. They didn't have to wait until the fires of war cooled to peek into the files.

By the time the Great Debate tapered to a whisper after the 1952 elections, some historians already had sifted the material and were recording their views. Unfortunately, many of these early analyses of the Truman-MacArthur dispute were tainted with the strong political partisanship and Fourth of July emotionalism that characterized much of the debate itself. But now, only eight years after MacArthur's relief from command, a scholarly political scientist has produced an intelligent and studied analysis of the situation which led to, and followed, America's most notable clash between civilian and military control of the force of arms.

Mr. Spanier's introductory chapter quickly points up the problem as he sees it: Americans tend to reject the Clausewitzian concept of war as an extension of diplomacy and view it instead as an ideological crusade that can best be conducted by the professionals trained for battle—the military.

He resumes his argument and draws some well considered conclusions in his final chapter. They can be disputed, of course, and will be. But few will quarrel with his excellently documented account of the factual situation that was climaxed when the stubborn little president with an acute sense of his constitutional responsibility fired the proud and arrogant military hero.

The wealth of Spanier's book lies in the 250-odd pages between its introductory chapter and its last few concluding pages. Here, without pausing to argue his thesis on the logic of limited war, he sets forth a most readable account of the Korean War, the political situation surrounding Formosa, the MacArthur-Taft alliance, complications with allies, the dismissal, and the uproar which followed. He interprets as he spins out the story, but his careful presentation of all facets of the controversy and the arguments of its protagonists is impressive in its fairness.

He concludes early that Truman was correct in relieving MacArthur of his command, a conclusion with which most Americans, even many MacArthur partisans, will agree. But his portrayal of MacArthur's role in the events that provoked Truman to remove the general will not be appreciated by MacArthur supporters. Nor will the pro-Truman forces like the wrist slap he gives the Administration for its failure to maintain effective political control over MacArthur as he advanced into North Korea.

Spanier takes for granted the necessity for maintaining civilian control over the military, hence his account of the controversy tends to give better marks to the Administration side of the debate. He is critical of the Taft-led Republican faction which attacked the Administration (with strong public support, he adds), and recites how this partisan battle severely limited President Truman's diplomatic

field of maneuver. But he is fair and accurate in his account of the partisan warfare touched off by MacArthur's dismissal.

Although he refers to MacArthur as the "many-splendored" general and the "Republican" soldier, he gives full credit to MacArthur's military genius. In the same paragraph in which he commends Truman for "the courage for forthright action that never seemed to fail him in a crisis," he goes on to relate of the just dismissed general:

"A great soldier-statesman's service to his country had come to an end. That he should have insisted on challenging his country's civilian and military leadership, rather than quietly carrying out its orders, was, as the *Economist* remarked, a true measure of MacArthur's self-assurance and self-confidence."

His sympathy for the Administration's position in the controversy is reflected in his defense of Dean Acheson, who as Truman's secretary of state was under fire. After recounting Acheson's foreign policy achievements, he comments: "This record might well support Elmer Davis' prediction that historians will one day rate Acheson as the third greatest secretary of state, directly behind John Quincy Adams and William Seward."

Mr. Spanier first tackled the Truman-MacArthur conflict in a doctoral dissertation at Yale, then expanded his essay to book length. The result is a welcome addition to the growing library of writings on this most vital chapter in American history.

## Our Reviewers

Reviews in this issue are by the following Nieman Fellows of this year:

Peter Braestrup, New York *Herald Tribune*; William Lambert, Portland *Oregonian*; Tom Dearmore, *Baxter Bulletin*, Ark.; and Louis M. Lyons, curator, Nieman Fellowships.



# One Day of News

By Louis M. Lyons

## ONE DAY IN THE WORLD'S PRESS.

Fourteen Great Newspapers on a Day in Crisis. Edited and commentary by Wilbur Schramm. Stanford University Press. 139 pp., 12" x 18". \$6.95.

An extraordinary publishing enterprise has brought together in one cover 14 of the leading newspapers of the world for the same day. It was a day of historic news, and here the world's news is exhibited just as it was read by the readers of five continents on that same day. By a tour de force of translation and typography, these many diverse newspapers are exhibited in their own format, type and make-up, even to the German script of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The only change is to translate their text to English. Only in Japan's *Asahi* was it necessary to turn the columns vertical, for reading in English. Except for the three English language papers, the editions are published complete, or nearly so. The three *Timeses*, New York, London and India, are shown only as to front news page and the editorial page. Of them all, the London *Times* looks most different from the rest. As its front page is all advertising, the news on page eight is presented.

This was an immense undertaking of the International Communications Project at Stanford University, aided by the Ford Foundation. Its director, Wilbur Schramm, guides this journalistic world tour with a few pages of notes on the events of the day and the essential facts about the 14 newspapers. He poses a provocative series of riddles about these diverse newspapers, as to who is telling what to whom, under what conditions of ownership, influence, resources and point of view in handling the news. These are fascinating in themselves.

"A country can act only on what it knows" Schramm sums up. "In a very real sense a country is only what it knows."

Yet the first impression is of the universality of what makes news and the

nearly universal processes of journalism. Communication has made our world so small that the top news is the same almost everywhere, and the inside pages, too, share a common interest in sports, music, plays, books, government programs, business, disaster and politics.

Twelve of these 14 papers in 14 countries led with the same story. Nearly all of them agreed on the five top stories.

It was of course an extraordinary day, Nov. 2, 1956. The separate crises of Suez and Hungary came to climax in the news of that day. British and French planes bombed Egypt. Israeli troops drove the Egyptians into the desert, Nehru protested, and Eisenhower. Eden faced bitter opposition in a turbulent House of Commons. The U.N. voted a cease-fire resolution.

It was also the last week of the American Presidential campaign. The Nobel prizes were announced. Algeria remained a constant in the headlines.

"It was one of those days when history seems to balance on a knife edge" Schramm says of the day chosen.

The knife edge cut through the front pages of the world press. The attack on Suez dominated the world headlines, as it focused attention of the world statesmen on the U.N. debate. But in Hungary, where revolt had been reported in triumph the day before, tragic anti-climax brought Soviet tanks rumbling back through the streets of Budapest. Nagy's desperate appeal to the U.N. found it preoccupied with Egypt. This preoccupation was reflected in the world's front pages.

Schramm in his notes gives primary attention to these two historic events that competed unevenly for top attention that day. In his view the key questions on that day were: Who was being told what about Suez? About Hungary?

What readers in the Communist countries read about Hungary was indeed very different from the story in the rest of the world. But with this key exception, the similarities in these newspapers around the world, and around the clock of press deadlines, are much more striking than their differences, both in appearance and content. The definition of news is surprisingly similar throughout the world's leading

papers, and the techniques of journalism amazingly alike.

The differences among these newspapers in format and content are, in fact, less than the difference between each of them and other papers in its own land. For these 14 newspapers are the leading papers in their countries, the "prestige" papers in Schramm's terms, read by influential groups in each country, and mutually influencing and influenced by them.

The papers are chosen in part to present political balance, four Communist papers of Europe and four non-Communist; and in part for geographical distribution.

The European Communist papers are *Pravda*, Moscow, *Trybuna Lud*a, Warsaw, *Rude Pravo*, Prague and *Borba*, Belgrade.

The other European papers are *Times* of London, *Le Monde* of Paris, *Frankfurter Zeitung* of Germany, *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm.

The other continents are represented by the New York *Times*, *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires, *Asahi* of Tokyo, *Times of India*, *Jen-Min Jih-Pao* of Communist China, and *Al Ahram* of Cairo, where the bombs were dropping.

In brief, the Suez news overshadowed the news from Hungary that day by six to one in the world average, eight to one in the New York *Times*, 12 to one in London, 34 to one in India, 44 to one in *Pravda*, 94 to one in Egypt.

"Newspapers cover the foreign news they feel their readers will consider important and interesting," comments Schramm. But news judgment and news enterprise also has something to do with it. One of the world prestige newspapers gave equal treatment to Suez and Hungary that day. It was Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter*.

Of course there are explanations. *Al Ahram* was under the bombs. London and Paris were committed to war. Nehru was protesting the Suez invasion. The U.N. was in extraordinary night session in New York. But in distant and detached *Asahi*, Suez still commanded seven times the space of Hungary that day. It was the way the news ran.

One looks first for the Communist slant. *Pravda* buries Hungary in an obscure item on the back page that starts: All was quiet in Budapest. In Moscow, Prague and

Peking the top front page headline is an editorial "Hands Off Egypt," so similar it reads like a cracked record. But on Hungary the Communist papers are very individual. In Warsaw, where the dust has just settled on their own milder revolt, the top head is "New Soviet Army Units Enter Hungary," and in Tito's capital, their independence from the Moscow line is vividly expressed in straight news headlines on Egypt and realistic discussion of Hungary, both in news and editorial.

The German paper, stodgiest looking of any but *Pravda*, headlines the top news on Egypt and Hungary but focuses its editorial attention on its own economic issues. *Le Monde* has to find front page space for Algeria even on that day of global explosions. But both *Le Monde* and the London *Times*, with their governments committed to war, exhibit extraordinary objectivity in reporting their own governments' decisions and the turbulent division over it that day in the British House of Commons.

The New York *Times* that day, as every day, covered the world like a blanket, 14 stories, all by its own correspondents, on page one: seven on the Suez crisis, one on Hungary, four on the presidential campaign; one on local New York politics; and one on the Nobel Prizes. The *Times* had more column inches on Suez than all four of the West European papers. Its news proportion between Suez and Hungary was eight to one, close to the world average of six to one. Editor Schramm underscores this disproportion as a journalistic blind spot that day, although he concedes that the world statesmen were seeing history's glass just as darkly. I think he loses something of journalistic perspective in this emphasis on a single day's news ratio. He himself sums up the developments to show us that in the preceding two weeks the Hungarian crisis had first overshadowed the danger in the Middle East, and then, in turn, the outbreak of war against Egypt had buried the news from Hungary. Schramm aptly suggests this shows a characteristic tendency of the press to focus on one series of events at a time. It was Moberley Bell, manager of the London *Times*, who 65 years ago warned their Balkan correspondent that "the British public only care for one thing

at once, and two things on the Balkans would be more than they could stand."

But, as the news ran, the story from Hungary had seemed to pass its climax the day before and the triumph of the revolt had then been reported.

The New York *Times*' editorial shows that it, like most of the world press, had not yet perceived that triumph had already passed to tragedy in Hungary. But there was a paper that did fully appreciate it. Though Stockholm's *Dygens Nyheter* had to go to press against a clock a full seven hours earlier than the New York *Times* clock that night, they chronicled the tragic reversal in Hungary in full first person descriptions by their own correspondents in the streets of Budapest. The full impact of Hungary was in the banner head that swept the front page,

**700,000 Russians Invade Hungary  
"Long Live Freedom" Battle Cry in the Capital.**

And their editorials that day denounced "The Incredible Crime" in Hungary and also bemoaned "The Tragic Split" in the U.N. that had cost, they said, the freedom of Hungary. Schramm agrees with that appraisal. "The chance to mobilize world opinion on Hungary was lost in the outcry over Suez."

But the outcry was of the world statesmen, whose words and actions made news. Even had every leading paper given the sudden anticlimax in Hungary the full treatment of *Dygens Nyheter*, this news would have come out only after the fact of the "tragic split" in the U.N.

In the hindsight of history, what *Dygens Nyheter* said that day makes the editorials of the London *Times* and the New York *Times* look fairly parochial. The two *Times* were most concerned with what the Suez venture would do to the mutual relations of their two countries. The London *Times* sharply criticized Eden for "a lack of candor" toward Eisenhower. The New York *Times* is anxious that Britain and France do not bear all the blame for Suez.

The Swedish newspaper takes top honors for that day, and not only on Hungary, but in its lively sense of participation in the day's high drama, and in its broad sweep of coverage. It interviewed every

one of the five Nobel Prize winners and had a scientist's article describing their achievements. It has a whole page on the American presidential campaign.

The only approach to the prescience of *Dygens Nyheter* shown in the world press that day was in far off Tokyo, where *Asahi* said, "It may well be that the government that will collapse is not Nasser's but Eden's."

The precision reporting of *Asahi* in its detachment stands out. The biggest surprise is the Chinese Communist *Jen-Min Jih-pao*. It says just what *Pravda* does about Suez. But where *Pravda* looks like a court calendar of official statements, most of them repeating the full personnel of a delegation from Syria on a round of ministerial receptions, the Chinese paper has news heads and a make-up like the Western papers. Its news looks alive. One headline about the mystery of the death of a sub-official "illegally discharged" is

**Why Did Mao-Chiang-Hsiu Commit Suicide?**

An inescapable difficulty in comparing coverage of the swift anti-climax in Hungary is the time difference. Deadlines were seven, eight, ten hours earlier in Frankfurt, Moscow and India than New York, 14 hours earlier in Japan. A newspaperman quickly spots the fact that only the New York *Times* in its final 5 a.m. edition could catch the Suez vote of the U.N. from its dawn session. He then notes the different stages of development of the Hungary story in different countries. When the Communist papers look about a day behind the news from Budapest, he may suspect the time gap is taken up by official clearance of what goes in. But the time differential is a factor with others which Professor Schramm ignores. It makes the enterprise in Stockholm to overcome it all the more extraordinary.

Even on that day, these leading papers devoted three-fifths of their space, on average, to domestic news—the English language papers most of all. Innumerable byways of analysis of these different papers suggest themselves. But the chief impression from this universal news day is that news is so much alike the world over.

It is a fascinating exhibit.

# NIEMAN NOTES

1939

The first Nieman dinner of the 1958-59 season had as speaker **Edwin A. Lahey**, chief Washington correspondent of the Knight papers.

**Louis M. Lyons** delivered the annual Guild lecture at the University of Minnesota October 22, and the dedication address of Colby College's new Lovejoy Building, December 3.

1942

**Harry S. Ashmore** addressed the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools at their 74th annual meeting in Boston, December 3.

1943

Patricia, daughter of Ted and Ed Donohoe, will graduate next June from St. Joseph College, Emmitsburg, Md., where she is president of her class and editor of the college newspaper. She has been selected for *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*, and is the winner of several national competitions in creative writing. She is an English major. During Donohoe's Nieman year Patricia attended kindergarten in Cambridge.

1943

**James Etheridge, Jr.**, is executive secretary of the Florida Educational Television Commission, which is developing a TV network connecting the state's colleges and seeking to activate other channels reserved by the FCC for educational use. Four Florida colleges now operate TV stations, and application for another at the State University at Tallahassee is pending. The commission has charted a program to cover the whole State of Florida with educational television.

**Fred Warner Neal**, professor of government at Claremont Graduate School in California, had an article on Bulgaria in the *Saturday Evening Post* of December 5. His book, *Titoism in Action*, published last year by the University of California Press, is in wide use in university courses on the Balkans.

1945

**Ed. Edstrom**, Washington correspondent for the Hearst papers, is the new president of the National Press Club.

Sigma Delta Chi, journalistic fraternity, at its recent 50th anniversary convention, conferred on **Houstoun Waring** the rare distinction of election as a Fellow of the fraternity. This was "in recognition of your many outstanding achievements in the profession of journalism." Waring is editor of the Littleton (Colo.) *Independent*, which has become perhaps the most famous weekly in America through the many awards and recognitions that have come to its editor.

1948

**Tillman Durdin**, Far East correspondent of the New York Times, did the lead article in the *Atlantic Monthly's* special edition on the first ten years of China under Communism, in December. Durdin's piece was on "The Communist Record."

**Charles Gilmore** has been appointed editor of the Toledo Times, succeeding the late George A. Benson. Gilmore has been on the staff of the paper since 1948. Before that he was State capital correspondent of the Associated Press in Atlanta. Graduate of the University of North Carolina, he began newspaper work with the Charlotte News.

1949

The Birmingham News has announced appointment of **E. L. (Red) Holland Jr.** as editor, upon the retirement of McClellan Van der Veer, Jan. 1. Holland has been with the paper since 1941 and associate editor since 1955.

The Denver Post has **Lawrence C. Weiss** working on the development of their Sunday section, when he isn't writing editorials. Weiss served a hitch on Sunday New York Times "News of the Week in Review" under the Spartan tutelage of Lester Markel.

1950

**John McCormally** reports realizing a

happy compromise between his early ambition to be a country editor and his actual job as editorial chief of the Hutchinson News, Kansas. John observed the ninth anniversary of his connection with the News in a new home five miles out of town, where it's real country. He reports also a new daughter, Mary Ann, after five boys. He began his newspaper career on William Allen White's Emporia Gazette.

**Clark Mollenhoff**, Washington correspondent of the Cowles publications, received an honorary LL.D. at Colby College December 3, when he delivered the annual Lovejoy Lecture there. With Mrs. Mollenhoff, he visited Harvard on the way to Maine and was speaker at a Nieman dinner, December 2.

Books of the New York Metropolitan Regional Study are pouring off the Harvard University Press, edited by **Max Hall**. Now in New York, Hall is moving to Cambridge this summer to serve the dual role of social science editor for the Harvard University Press and general editor for the Center for International Affairs at Harvard.

1951

**Bob Eddy**, managing editor of the St. Paul Dispatch and Pioneer Press is serving as president of the University of Minnesota School of Journalism alumni. His papers sent him to the American Press Institute seminar for managing editors.

1952

**Robert P. (Pepper) Martin**, who ranges around Asia from a Tokyo base for U. S. News & World Reports, recently explored Afghanistan, to take soundings on the extent of Soviet economic penetration.

1953

**Keyes Beech**, Chicago Daily News correspondent in Tokyo, went to India to cover the China border quarrel and dug into other Indian issues for stories on the trip.

The United States Information Agency has appointed **William Gordon** to its foreign service staff, to be public affairs officer in Nigeria.

Gordon had been city editor and managing editor of the Atlanta Daily World. He spent a year of travel in Africa on a



1958

Reid Fellowship in 1958, and covered the All-Africa Peoples Conference in Ghana for the Associated Press and the *Daily World*. He wrote about Africa for *Look Magazine*, the *New Leader*, the *Antioch Review*, *Africa Special Report*, and *Nieman Reports* (July, 1959). Last Fall Gordon was appointed professor of journalism at Morris Brown College, Atlanta.

Watson S. Sims, AP correspondent in New Delhi, was reinforced for Eisenhower's visit by two more AP correspondents, dispatched from Hong Kong. He made a trip to Ceylon at the time of the Bandaranaike assassination.

1954

Robert Hoyt has been seeing the world for the Knight papers this past year. He went on a month's tour of NATO installations in Europe in the summer, flying over on the maiden voyage of the new Boeing Jet 707. He was one of a few correspondents to fly up 44,000 feet at 1,400 miles an hour in the Air Force F106 Jet. His wife Betty reports on her wandering husband, surrounded as she writes, she says, by their five children, youngest, Victoria, a year and a half. Address: 1712 Chesterfield Ave., McLean, Va.

1955

A Christmas card from Henry Shapiro, UPI correspondent in Moscow, carries a colorful array of stamps on the envelope. One stamp shows the Soviet red flag on the moon; another shows the Soviet flag at Antarctica in commemoration of a Soviet expedition there in 1956.

1957

Hale Champion, press secretary to Gov. Brown of California, came to Boston and New York with the governor in early December, and arranged a meeting for the Nieman Fellows with Gov. Brown. Two weeks earlier the fellows had a similar session with Gov. Rockefeller in Providence.

Marvin Wall has left the city editorship of the Columbus (Ga.) *Ledger* to become assistant to the executive editor of the Southern Education Reporting Service, with headquarters in Nashville.

*Shalom*, the second novel by Dean Brelis, which Atlantic-Little, Brown published in October, will come out serially in several American and Canadian newspapers this winter.

1958

William F. McIlwain produces a column for *Newsday* that, he says, is about mothers, children, commuters, suburbs, etc. He also produced a book recently and is looking for a publisher. A sample of his columning in this issue, space permitting?

1959

T. V. Parasuram writes that his office (Press Trust of India) has confirmed his post as United Nations correspondent for a period of three years. He started in that position July 1, after his Nieman year.

Daphne Whittam, associate editor of the *Nation* of Rangoon, is spending this year as a teaching assistant in the Southeast Asia program at Cornell and is doing graduate work in the government department there. Her address: 512 Stewart Avenue, Ithaca, N.Y.

## Double Blow to Oaths

The Federal Government's student loan loyalty oath has now been repudiated by the two oldest of American universities, Harvard and Yale. This joint blow at the special affidavit of loyalty surely will have an impact on the oath's supporters who narrowly beat back the bill of Senators Clark of Pennsylvania and Kennedy of Massachusetts to take the oath out of the student loan legislation in the last session of Congress.

The statements of the presidents of these two great universities deserve wide repetition. Withdrawing Yale from the program, President A. Whitney Griswold says that the oath "partakes of the nature of the oppressive religious and political

test oaths of history which were used as a means of exercising control over the educational process by church or state."

Harvard's President Nathan Marsh Pusey objects to the discrimination in this oath "since it singles out students in our population—and, among students, the neediest—as subjects for special distrust." Dr. Pusey finds the oath "counter to the principles on which our national strength has been built" and ineffective as well inasmuch as disloyal persons would readily sign the affidavit while many loyal persons would resent the "affront to freedom of belief and conscience."

Financially this is no inconsequential stand that Harvard and Yale are taking. Harvard is turning back to Washington more than \$357,000 in loan funds. Yale has had \$160,000 and is entitled to \$50,000 more. Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr and Haverford have had no part of the program because they objected to the oath at the outset. Among other colleges that have announced their withdrawal are Grinnell, Goucher, St. John's (Maryland), Antioch, Oberlin, Wilmington, Reed and Sarah Lawrence. All deserve commendation.

How the pendulum is swinging away from special oaths is indicated in California. A few years ago all state educational institutions in California were requiring loyalty oaths of their faculty members. Patriotic and loyal faculty members who refused to sign the affidavit were punished by the regents, thus giving rise to ugly cases in the courts. In the end the special loyalty oath was declared unconstitutional. The separated teachers were restored to full pension, seniority, and leave rights. They were also awarded \$162,000 in pay for the two and one-half years they were off the California faculty.

Now Harold M. Hyman, history teacher at the University of California, Los Angeles, has written a book on the sorry history of test oaths in the United States. He calls it "To Try Men's Souls" and, almost as if to atone for its participation in the "year of the oath," the University of California has published the book at its press at Berkeley.

Why not recognize once and for all that loyalty cannot be compelled or coerced, that it is voluntary and must be won?

—St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, Nov. 19.