

# NiemanReports

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April, 1961

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## Test of Educators

By John M. Harrison

In the wake of indictments on the performance of the press by Harry Ashmore, Carl Lindstrom, and Gordon Gray, there already have been many apologies and many proposals for improving the conditions complained of. There is at least a new excuse, then, for dusting off a suggestion that schools of journalism make criticism and evaluation of the performance of the press a principal order of their not too clearly defined business.

There are limitations. One is that most journalism schools haven't yet earned the measure of respect and authority which would make them immediately effective in this role. But if they ever showed themselves ready to assume this admittedly important and admittedly thorny function, respect would grow. And if they achieved even half what colleges of law and medicine have accomplished in this direction, they would indeed rise to new stature among both journalists and educators.

How little journalism schools have been willing to do to this end already has been deplored. Dean Theodore Peterson, of the University of Illinois, has called attention of educators in journalism to the fact that most schools apparently are afraid to criticize press performance lest they lose the good will and endowments bestowed on them by owners of newspapers, television and radio stations. In these circumstances, journalism schools make toothless and amiable guardians of the integrity of the press. No wonder

practicing journalists laugh at the pretensions of schools of journalism as defenders of professional standards.

It is true that criticism of the press—from whatever source—elicits wounded howls. When the *Iowa Publisher*, monthly magazine issued by the University of Iowa's School of Journalism, deplored practices amounting to double pay to newspapers for printing the proceedings of county boards of supervisors, the protest was noisy. Its substance was not that the practice was ethically defensible, but that to change it would cost single ownership operations known as "twin weeklies" several hundred thousand dollars annually. That this was a subsidy of several hundred thousand dollars from the tax funds of already hard-pressed county governments was ticked off as unimportant.

When criticism is on less tangible ground—performance of the press in relation to any major news development, ratio of lightweight features to hard news, what Harry Ashmore refers to as "sins of omission"—the resulting howls surely would be louder. Then it would take real courage for journalism schools to stand up to complaints that they had better stick to their theoretical knitting. Perhaps it would demand even greater courage to stand up to implied threats of withdrawal of financial favors and, in the case of state-supported institutions, of political pressure.

But if our journalism schools have no more guts than to yield to these pressures, they had better go out of business anyhow. For no matter how high the ideals they instill in their students, no matter what standards of responsibility they set, their graduates never will have a chance to put them into practice until somebody holds the press itself accountable to standards and ideals that at least approach those taught to students. And let no one believe students don't see through this kind of hypocrisy.

Here is an area where journalism schools could function usefully and with greater likelihood of success than the self-policing commissions so often proposed. Most schools have recruited their faculties largely from the press. Some of the distinguished names in journalism are to be found in these schools today. Yet there is a measure of detachment from the day-to-day operation of a newspaper or a television station which permits the educator in journalism to measure performance with an understanding and objectivity not available elsewhere.

Journalism schools must provide the initiative in this matter. Proposals might be made on a local or regional basis. Preferable, perhaps, would be the organization of a group to make a continuing study of performance on a nationwide basis, this group to be composed of individuals selected from journalism schools. If the Association for Education in Journalism were to formulate and present

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# Strike News-Why the Panic Button?

By Joseph A. Loftus

Editors and reporters—but particularly editors—who deal in strike stories may want to take a sharp, professional look at themselves in the glare of recent findings about the impact of steel strikes.

A study group, commissioned by former U.S. Secretary of Labor Mitchell, devoted more than a year to an analysis of steel's labor-management record since the war. The project director was E. Robert Livernash, professor of Business Administration, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University; so the report he made will henceforth be known as the Livernash report.

The conclusions of this report include the following statement:

It is significant that the public interest has not been seriously harmed by strikes in steel, or by steel collective bargaining agreements, despite common public opinion to the contrary.

This is a qualified statement, and the qualifications will be taken up later, but if the statement is generally true, journalists have to ask themselves some questions:

What was all the newspaper shooting about in the 116-day steel strike of 1959-60?

Why were front pages plastered with steel strike stories day after day, even when little or no hard news was breaking?

Do newspapers, despite all the improvements in labor news coverage, still overdramatize strikes?

Years ago, the story runs, city editors assigned the police reporter to cover strikes. An appropriate choice it was, too, in most instances because strikes often meant violence, police, and arrests. Industrial conflict is now waged on levels that are slightly more civilized, scientific, and legal. The larger newspapers, at least, pride themselves on the employment of labor reporters. The question remains, though, whether editors still harbor the notion that all strikes are social and economic evils *per se*.

Long after coal strikes ceased to be violent affairs, newspapers continued to give them the calamity treatment on Page One and on the editorial page. Who was getting

hurt by these coal strikes, editors didn't stop to ask. The fact that, in most cases, coal reserves were piled sky high did not impress them. It was assumed, and usually written, that the miners on strike were losing working time and earnings. To put this another way, it was assumed that if miners were not striking they would be working. The assumption was false. It has long been established that the miners' annual contract strikes, with few exceptions, simply consolidated into one period the idle time that the miners would have "enjoyed" throughout the year at the rate of two or three days a week. The difference was that in one example the union chose the shutdown period—the strike. In the alternative, the coal operator chose the shutdown period—short work weeks or sporadic operation. The coal operator undoubtedly preferred it his way, if only to exercise what he considered a managerial prerogative.

In these coal strikes it was also assumed, and sometimes so written, that the miners probably would get a raise and that would boost the price of coal. The price conclusion was true only in the short run, when the miners' earnings were at the subsistence level, or a little above it. In the long run, the price rise assumption has proved false. The price of coal at the mine has scarcely risen at all since the war, thanks to a vast capital investment in machinery by the operators, and a cooperative, share-the-wealth philosophy held by John L. Lewis.

Returning to steel strikes, one finds similar assumptions. Editors love the simple statement that if steel workers earn an average of \$20 a day, and there are 1,000,000 steel workers who were on strike 116 days, the wage loss was \$2,320,000,000. This is brilliant arithmetic. It is also ivory tower economics. It is based on the assumption that if the mills were not closed by a strike they would be operating full time. This ignores the fact that, in anticipation of a strike, the mills turned out vast quantities of stuff for inventory. It ignores the fact that, after a strike, depleted inventories can be built up.

To quote the Livernash report:

It is clearly not correct to measure the loss of steel production by examining only the strike period itself.

These observations apply only to strikes where the product involved can be stored, where inventory can be drawn on, or substitutes for strikers can be found. Granted that today's newspaper has to come out today or it isn't much

Joseph A. Loftus, veteran labor reporter of the New York Times, is on leave from the Times Washington Bureau, as the first Louis Stark Fellow in labor-management reporting at Harvard.

good. An electric power strike that cuts off current immediately differs from a steel strike, but this kind of strike is rare. Anyway, not all utility strikes are necessarily damaging to the public. Telephone companies, for example, have found ways of operating for limited periods by putting supervisory personnel in operating spots and deferring maintenance and routine chores. When a trainmen's strike shut down the Long Island Railroad for several days in 1960, thousands of commuters were inconvenienced, but they managed to find alternate means of transportation, as the New York newspapers found and reported. The city's economy was not wrecked. The point, then, is to look separately and thoroughly at each strike and not confuse a manufacturing or mining strike with, say, a power blackout.

The 1959-60 steel strike provoked another report, which was quite independent of, and different from, the Livernash report. A special committee of the National Council of Churches found fault with steel management, the union, the Labor Department, and the press, with an exemption for certain newspapers that employ specialists. The complaint against the Labor Department and the press was that they failed to give the public any real guidance about the rights and wrongs of the dispute.

The Council appears to have accepted without careful, independent examination the premise that the strike was necessarily an evil thing and that the economy was being damaged. The Council thus appears to start from the same premise, or predilection, that the press does. It is a questionable premise, as the Livernash report shows.

Even if we accept that premise, how much guidance should the press provide? In a sense, the criticism is a compliment. The press has long been suspected of a bias in labor-management disputes. Now it is in trouble with the National Council of Churches for excessive objectivity.

No doubt the average reader of steel strike news, anxious to know where to throw his weight and hasten a settlement in the dispute, felt overwhelmed and helpless in the face of a mass of unevaluated facts, to say nothing of the claims and propaganda spilled on him. Unfortunately, however, independent interpretation of the statistical morass in the steel strike was beyond the competence of any reporter then living. It may be that newspapers will have to hire consulting economists and statisticians to deal with these increasingly complex issues. The Church Council, however, missed a point. If expert guidance for the reader was a felt need, why not blame those who blocked such guidance? Secretary Mitchell proposed that a board of experts make objective evaluations and recommendations to the quarreling parties. One party agreed to this, the other refused.

Now for the qualifications of the Livernash report. It is

not contended that the impact of steel strikes is zero. The impacts are mentioned and evaluated. For instance:

One of the more serious effects of steel strikes is secondary unemployment in closely related industries, such as transportation and mining. As the strikes are prolonged and steel inventories depleted, there is no way by which the net amount of secondary unemployment can be measured because there usually are offsetting gains in secondary employment prior to and after steel strikes. In general, the extent of secondary unemployment due to steel strikes is believed to have been exaggerated.

Here, in one paragraph, are a few more important points:

Aggregate data do not prove that there were no shortages of particular products during the longer steel strikes. The 1952 and 1959 strikes unquestionably caused some construction delays and product shortages. For this and other reasons, national defense is discussed subsequently. But economic data do not indicate any serious general effects stemming from the strikes.

Finally, it is not contended that the parties themselves suffer no impact:

The companies have special shutdown and start-up costs. There are various service, material, and overhead costs which continue during the strike. Production at a fairly constant level over a period of time is more efficient and less costly than the fluctuating production related to the strike. . . .

For the employees, there is no necessary balancing of income, even if total production requirements over a period of time were identical with or without a strike. Some particular employees might gain in income because of the strike and some might lose. Layoff also can involve unemployment and Supplemental Unemployment Benefits compensation. In addition, employees can to some extent offset strike loss of pay with vacation pay.

In sum, a strike has certain impacts which we must measure and report and edit with a good deal more sophistication than we have been doing. The surface aspect of a million men out on strike for a given period is reported and displayed day after day with the implied, or expressed, notion that this is a calamity and why doesn't somebody do something about it before we all go to hell in Khrushchev's handbasket. We continue to report and display reams of empty paragraphs about negotiations as though the parties were right in there every minute struggling to make a deal. We continue to dignify excessively the naive



statement of a President who suggests that the solution may lie in negotiating "around the clock." Every sophisticated labor reporter knew that when the 1959 steel strike started it was going to be a long one; he knew from day to day when the parties were negotiating in dead earnest, and when they were meeting just so one side could not make public relations capital out of the other side's refusal to meet. He knows that the prospect, or imminence, of a deal inspires 'round-the-clock bargaining, and that the reverse of this sequence is nonsense.

Editors will be skeptical. They will find it hard to accept because it will mean breaking with the past, violating old patterns of thinking. Besides, can those polished gems laid down by the AP and UPI be off center? Indeed!

A principal figure in the 1959 steel negotiations, speaking one day of the newspapers and their emphasis of the story in its most vapid stages, remarked: "I don't think they have the guts to leave it off the front page."

I am not sure that I know what he meant by "guts," but he was sure that the newspapers were igniting candles on a non-cake.

In the continuing controversy over objectivity versus interpretive writing, we must avoid getting stuck on such simple points as which words and phrases are bland and pure and which are emotionally-loaded. That's kid stuff. The big issue is perspective. Are we going to be sired into absurdity by surface symptoms which may look dramatic but aren't really? Wouldn't it be refreshing for a reader, on the 86th day of a strike, to pick up his newspaper and read:

"X union and Y management met again yesterday for four hours. Nothing happened."

I exaggerate, of course, but something like that is closer to reality and true perspective than the columns of empty paragraphs we sometimes print. This is a problem for editors, not reporters, who generally aim to please the man on the desk.

Responsible editors and publishers need no reminders that they carry awesome responsibilities, but suggestions of effective ways to exercise, and not exercise, that responsibility may not be amiss. Some reminders will be found in the Livernash report, to wit:

The exaggerated national emergency interpretation of steel strikes, with consequent Government intervention, has tended to reduce the compulsions for avoiding strikes. . . . The problems involved do not seem to indicate the necessity for the more drastic forms of governmental intervention that are sometimes proposed. In the light of these conclusions it is hoped that the public and its representatives will be very

cautious in approving legislative changes affecting the existing collective bargaining system.

That is to say, if we don't quit yapping about six-alarm fires every time some joker strikes a match we may jam the joint with fire engines so nobody can move without a bureaucrat's permission.

## The Disappearing Cuban Daily

By Marvin Alisky

On January 1, 1956, there were 21 daily newspapers in Havana. After Fidel Castro came to power in January 1959, there were 16 dailies in Havana. By the autumn of 1960, only eight remained. The number shrank as Castro's intolerance of criticism grew, though at first, in early 1959, the number dwindled because the bribes and subsidies of the Batista regime had stopped. By late 1959, the shrinkage was no longer linked to subsidies but to Castro's enforced conformity. In December 1960, *Avance* and *Información* disappeared.

*Avance*, under Jorge Zayas, had 20,000 circulation, but under Castroite Carlos Franqui only 5,000. Finally the government decided that needed newsprint could be utilized better by the remaining dailies.

*Información* presented a different problem. It was the last Havana daily not under direct governmental control, and the only one which did not subscribe to Prensa Latina, the Castro wire service. Only by not having an editorial page and remaining silent on significant political matters was *Información* able to survive almost through 1960. In a speech at Arizona State University September 19, 1960, Martin Houseman, UPI reporter in Havana, predicted that even the lack of an editorial page could not keep this last free daily going indefinitely.

Castro leaders within the ranks of the paper's workers praised the confiscation of the *Información* plant by the government, broadcasting a statement that the independent paper was "the instrument of the most rapacious mercantilism," i.e., a private enterprise. Apparently these enthusiastic supporters of confiscation did not realize that they were cheering the end of their own jobs. For a subsequent broadcast, by the same 19-meter shortwave band commentator, announced that the daily would not be revived, that Havana had sufficient dailies already.

With the basic economics that Havana should really only support a half dozen dailies one could scarcely quarrel. Many of the old Batista papers were kept alive artificially through subsidies. But in any nation with real freedom, a publisher should be allowed to publish as best he can.

This point distinguishes pro-communist and totalitarian dictatorships from the traditional Latin American dictatorships. Batista was a tyrant, true. But at least under his rule there was room for a person not interested in politics to be apathetic. A newspaper which chose not to be political could be neutral and dull, could concentrate on sports and social news. Not so under Castro, for a Cuban must either be for the revolutionary regime or automatically he is against it. Middle ground cannot be tolerated politically or journalistically. In this sense, Castro on the left resembles a few persons on the right, ranging from Franco's Spain to some inside the United States, who assume that anyone who is not in agreement with them is a communist, a traitor, and somehow does not really deserve protection of the law.

A Cuban newspaper which did not subscribe to "the" news service, Prensa Latina, naturally was doomed, notwithstanding a lack of an editorial page or editorial stand. From Castro's point of view, *Información* had to go.

As further illustration of the importance the Cuban government places on its wire service, UPI discovered on January 10 that the Red Chinese and Prensa Latina news agencies had been coordinating their reports received from an agent in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Cuban government sentenced three Americans to 10-year jail terms for listening to a conversation between that agent in Puerto Rico and an official of Hsihua, the Red Chinese news service. Later the same material appeared on the Cuban wire service teletypes.

Last November, William Giandoni, Latin American editor of the Copley News Service, while surveying news facilities in various Latin American republics, reported that Prensa Latina was being given away to any radio station willing to accept it. Among some of the poorer broadcasting companies, PL was accepted not so much on ideological grounds as on financial ones. Here is daily world news coverage, free.

Some station managers do not realize that PL copy often is rewritten from Castro's *Revolución* and the communist daily in Havana, *Hoy*.

Giandoni found that in Caracas, Venezuelan listeners to one station were getting results of a track and field meet between North Korean and Russian athletes, courtesy of PL news service. And in Panama, he found listeners being told that an American company allegedly has prevented its Central American employees from forming a trade union, another PL item.

In Bogotá, Giandoni discovered a radio station using PL copy. The announcer, without a news background, merely read whatever major items PL sent, without question.

As Giandoni points out, PL copy has been rejected by

almost all the Latin American newspapers away from Cuba, except for the few with communist sympathies. But the radio stations, including those not necessarily sympathetic to the Cuban regime, have been more receptive to PL copy. After all, it represents what seems to be something for nothing.

The lesson of *Información* should be driven home to these broadcasters. This last independent daily died not because it took a stand. It was "neutral." But because it did not subscribe to Prensa Latina.

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## Making Journalism Interesting

By Will Lindley

To newsmen who have covered such exciting events as the sinking of the *Titanic*, Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, the first atomic explosions and two world wars, this may be a surprising question, but:

How are we going to make journalism interesting enough so that outstanding young men and women will choose it as a career, now and in the future?

Those who have devoted their lives to journalism may find it difficult to realize that many factors are discouraging would-be newspapermen. These include:

1. Journalism's loss of glamor to public relations and other business fields. Glorification of Madison Avenue and The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit are cases in point.

2. Lack of the spectacular in newspaper work today. The decline of competition has reduced the amount of fast-paced reporting by daring individuals, such as once caught the public fancy.

3. The decline of lively writing. This is related to the diminishing of competition, and to a shrinking attitude toward techniques courses at journalism schools. Dull newspapers, which inspire no one, are often the result.

4. Lack of interest on the part of newspaper executives in recruiting top-notch men. Too many editors wait until they have a job open before lining up prospects. Then they hire the first news hack who comes along.

Fifteen years ago, when I first enrolled in a journalism school, my enthusiasm was fired by magazine stories and movies which glorified the scoop-happy reporter. The same enthusiasm caught hold of many of my fellow students. The war brought excited talk about the glories of being a foreign correspondent. Here was a field for young men which promised them a zestful life. For the sake of such

pleasures, the drawbacks of comparatively low pay, irregular hours, and so forth, could be endured gladly.

Today much of this spirit seems to be gone from newspapering. Reporters and editors, trying to straighten out the exaggerations, banished a good deal of it themselves. John L. Hulteng, professor of journalism at the University of Oregon, believes newspapermen have overdone the business of debunking the Hollywood and literary stereotypes of newsmen.

"In erasing the stereotypes, we have also depreciated some of the legitimate glamor of the newspaper business," he says. "And as a result we are failing to attract into the business some of the young blood that has always been and should always continue to be an essential force in American journalism." (*Nieman Reports*, July, 1957).

Ralph D. Casey, retired director of the School of Journalism at the University of Minnesota, holds that newspapering "can't be glamorized in the sense of thrills, investigating homicides, and running after sensational occurrences. The values of public service and satisfaction are more important than glamor."

He said the problems newspapers face are inadequate salaries and lack of challenging opportunities. Generally, he said, newspapers have not made it clear that to be a journalist is an interesting career, with satisfactions not obtained from working for a specialized industrial or commercial publication.

Of course there is satisfaction in writing a story carefully, and in getting it right, and especially if the story does a public service. But these more intellectual satisfactions are difficult to sell to young people, who crave excitement. And, in comparing notes with reporters who have worked in competitive and monopoly cities, I find agreement that there's nothing to compare with the satisfaction of beating the opposition.

Competition among newspaper reporters has been lessened greatly by consolidations. True, there is lukewarm local competition from radio and TV. But in many cities these stations operate with one newsmen to cover everything, particularly sensational occurrences. In many of the smaller towns, there is no local radio or TV news reporter. All the news comes from the AP or UPI wire, with the exception of an occasional news release from the county agricultural agent or the publicity chairman of the garden club. This sort of competition is scarcely worthy of the name.

Where can the young journalism student make contact with some of the excitement of newspapering? The libraries contain the lively reminiscences of noted reporters and editors—Grantland Rice, Stanley Walker, Gene Fowler, H. L. Mencken and a host of others, including many World War II correspondents. But those names do not pack the

punch they did 10, 20 or 30 years ago. The books by these writers may be gaining in historical value, but they have little interest for the young writer of today.

Well, don't newspapermen do exciting things today? Certainly. Consider the exciting story of the star reporter who crammed for months to pass a teacher's examination and then taught school where delinquency had been a problem. After several months as a teacher, he resigned to return to the city room to write his story. More recently, reporters in the Congo and Cuba have had their share of thrills. But what can the hometown newspaper promise of a comparable nature?

Of course there are many jobs in this wide, wide world which attract young people without being very exciting, as far as the duties involved are concerned. But the pay is exciting.

Not long ago I made a survey of friends of mine who had left journalism for public relations. Why had they left the newsrooms, where they had been rated as top performers? Money was the answer, primarily. Nobody asserted that public relations was more interesting than reporting or editing.

Here is what one man said:

"Good men leave the business because they feel they're worth more money. By and large, the working newspaperman must have extra sources of income to have that little extra he's entitled to."

And another said:

"If considered in relation to the average wage scale in the U.S., these men are paid well. If you consider educational and training requirements, they are grossly underpaid in relation to the class of man needed to do the job right. I don't believe this can be geared directly to the cost of living, but it can be to the standard of living necessary for men of equal ability in other professions."

But this answer seemed to pack the most punch:

"One veteran reporter, generally recognized as among the best in the state, has made the statement that being a newspaperman is a luxury not many of us can afford. I think he summed it up. If he or his family is not independently wealthy, then someone is subsidizing the situation or sacrificing, and very often it is the family, his wife and children."

One point another newsmen mentioned was that, as a reporter, he had been rushed so much of the time he hadn't been able to turn out copy in which he could take pride.

These men indicated that the pleasure a reporter gets from writing has a lot to do with the satisfaction he gets from his job. Writing is one of the satisfying creative arts. And while newspaper writing may not be art in the classic sense, at the very least it is art in the craft sense.

What is being done these days to cultivate the satisfaction which comes from writing news stories well? Well, there is room for suspicion that the journalism schools, long under fire from the simon-pure supporters of the liberal arts colleges, are de-emphasizing the techniques of newspapering. There is much talk of communicating, of analyzing public opinion and attitudes. Researchers sometimes seem bent on reducing people to statistics, reducing words to statistics, and then putting the two together in a neat formula. But journalistic techniques are the real key to communication.

Webster defines technique as "expert method in execution of the technical details of accomplishing something..." My reference here is to the writing and editing methods which have been found valuable in newspaper practice or developed in newspaper practice.

Now the liberal arts courses, to which today's journalism majors devote so much time, are necessary to give the student an adequate background. But that is no reason to brush off techniques courses as necessary evils. The surgeon does not apologize for having studied and perfected his operating room techniques. The painter, the musician and the sculptor do not minimize the importance of techniques, either. Yet the haughty attitudes of some of the "pure" colleges or departments of higher learning have made some journalism professors almost apologetic about teaching reporting, copy editing and typography. Actually, the time to start apologizing for the teaching of journalistic techniques in college will be when we have a surplus of highly skilled reporters, copy editors and typographers.

The purists wave away such statements with the remark that, "A good man can pick up all he needs to know about journalism in a city room in a few months." And that favorite reply shows in itself a lack of appreciation of the difference between dull, stenographic prose and carefully crafted stories. It also presumes that city staff men, particularly city editors: a) are just naturally good teachers; b) have all the time in the world to help confused young writers, and c) are just dying to spend time teaching confused young writers. But good city editors are usually too rushed to teach anybody and expect their young reporters to know quite a bit about newspapering, particularly writing techniques. The young man who isn't well grounded in techniques is liable to become discouraged, or fired, or both.

Well, you say, so journalism has changed. It isn't as razzle-dazzle a field as it once was. Yet, under the right circumstances, it can be a satisfying field. True, but that story is being told to potential newspapermen of the future only on a limited basis.

As a graduate student in journalism at the University of Oregon, I made a survey of newspaper personnel practices. Replies were received from executives of 110 news-

papers in 36 states and Washington, D.C. The replies showed that a great many newspapers have a decidedly casual attitude toward personnel recruiting.

For instance, a majority of these executives listed as their favorite recruiting practice: "Choosing from applications volunteered without action on our part."

Also, a heavy majority of executives replying said it was their policy to fill vacancies as they occurred. Only a few would hire a promising applicant when he was not needed immediately, an approach which is common in industry. There apparently is little concern about the growth of campus recruiting by industry, a procedure which is siphoning off the top seniors before they get near an off-campus personnel office.

In replying to another question, more than half the editors and personnel men answering the survey said they felt no changes were needed in procedures for hiring for the editorial department. More than two-thirds of the newspapers represented in replies had no formally organized personnel department.

The matter of training young journalists on the practical level is also widely ignored. Such a program might enable a college graduate without journalism training to learn newsroom techniques. But such organized in-service training arrangements are few and far between.

There is no simple solution. The problem must be solved in many phases. But the future of our free press will depend upon the success of that venture.

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Will Lindley has worked on the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*. He now teaches journalism at the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma.

### Test of Educators

(Continued from page 2)

such a plan, it would put the issue squarely to the press of the nation.

Given the timidity most schools of journalism have shown, the chance of action probably is slight. But it is a test of educators in journalism, as much as of practicing journalists, that the need exists to provide for review of press performance. The question would seem to be whether or not schools of journalism feel they have just as much of a vested interest in protecting the status quo as the owners of the communications media always have felt they had.

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John M. Harrison teaches journalism at the University of Iowa and publishes the *Iowa Publisher*. A Nieman Fellow in 1952, he was then an editorial writer on the *Toledo Blade*.



# The Growing Responsibility of the Small Town Press

By Tom Dearmore

All of us here are small town newspapermen in a small population state. Sitting in our unelegant offices, looking out at the pickups going by or at the whittlers on the courthouse steps, we may sometimes lapse into thinking we have small jobs. And when we meet in convention, we usually concentrate on discussing the mechanics rather than the mission of the press in Arkansas. We do not usually dwell at length upon exalted concepts. This is due in part to the fact that, considering the nature of our tasks, we do not have time, and to the fact that much of it has been said before.

But perhaps we should think today about the responsibility of the small town newspaper in Arkansas, not just about the ink-and-metal processes of getting it out and making it turn a profit. We need to get ourselves and our vocation into historical perspective now and then.

First, it should be said that we have in this state some editors and writers with courage and ability and with a fine sense of the functions for which a newspaper exists. Into all of our minds comes the question on many occasions, "Is responsibility practical. . . . Can I afford to print this?" In Arkansas there are newsmen who have explored issues, who have wrestled with decisions on delicate and volatile questions, and have decided in favor of responsibility. They have not, on every occasion, printed exactly what the readers wanted to be told in regard to state and local issues. They have offended some people. But I believe that in about every case they have found that it has been practical to be responsible.

On the other hand, there have been many mute editorial pages, and some newspapers in which there was no commentary at all, even in defense of motherhood. There are undoubtedly still some consequential news stories under the official sod in all of our localities—especially in our court-houses and city halls. Few if any of us can claim we have done the total job in this area.

Just what is our obligation? There is a division of opinion on this question in the profession, and especially, I think, among weekly editors. Is the weekly paper in a town of 2,000 people really much different as a busi-

ness from the feed mill or the telephone company? Is the customer always right, as he is at the dime store or supermarket? I have some friends in the newspaper trade who believe that the weekly or small daily is just another place of business selling a commodity—satisfaction—and that it has no mandate to ruffle the waters of community life under any condition. I disagree with this idea, and I believe that the public, over the long haul, disagrees with it. The publisher is and should be a businessman, but he should also be something else.

There is no oath that a man must take when he gains control of a newspaper. He does not have to swear to operate it according to any particular standards. He does not have to pledge that he will print the news impartially or that he will turn out an editorial page of distinction, and for this we are thankful.

But over him hangs the First Amendment to the Constitution—the difference between his place of business and the telephone company. His is the only business in town that is singled out for protection under the federal Constitution. The founders had him in mind 173 years ago.

There is no franchise payment he must remit annually for this shelter of law, no federal agency to regulate his policies. The only price he must pay is responsibility. This seems to me implicit in the amendment itself, and from the example of great newspapers which have worthily borne the tradition down to us.

There are some who believe the responsibility ends with presentation of the news—the bare facts. A fellow-editor told me: "I don't feel like I'm qualified to tell my people what they should do. . . . I figure that all of them put together are smarter than I am." And so they may be, and certainly no one should "tell" the public what it must do. If that line of thought were developed to its fullest, though, there might not be any editorial pages or any interpretive reporting.

The facts are not enough. They must be put into relation to other facts and events, perhaps long-past, and to the possible result of the facts in the future. Walter Lippmann, dean of American journalists, gave us a cogent insight into our obligation 40 years ago when he wrote that it is "to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and to make a picture of reality on which men can act."

Last year, Lippmann was honored on his 70th birthday with an unprecedented tribute at the National Press Club

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Tom Dearmore is co-editor of the *Baxter Bulletin*, Mountain Home, Arkansas. He was a Nieman Fellow last year.

This was a talk to the Arkansas Press Association, Jan. 6, at Little Rock.



in Washington, and once again spelled out the measurements of the obligation. He said:

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 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.

Walter Lippmann is a maker of yardsticks for the American press, whether the press wants to use them or not. His estimate of the role is no less meaningful for the country editor than for the Washington press corps to which he spoke. In a speech at Minneapolis last October, Louis M. Lyons, curator of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard, analyzed Lippmann's viewpoint as follows:

Lippmann holds 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 of our publicly-supported universities."

The Nieman Foundation's main contributions have been to propagate the gospel of newspaper responsibility and to better equip young newsmen for today's exacting requirements.

Jefferson, who wrote our national profession of faith, made plain his concern for the press—his belief that it should be a primary instrument for that public enlightenment upon which he was convinced the democratic experiment must be based. Implicit was the belief that, without that enlightenment, without that medium of communication and debate, the experiment would founder. Was Jefferson thinking only about transmission of the bare facts? Here is his famous statement on the press, the last part of which embellishes many flag heads:

The basis of our government being the *opinion* of

the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.

So not only information, but opinion, came into the picture. It seems clear that the "right opinion" of which he spoke can only be achieved when the facts are presented, when they are put into relation to each other, and when the reading public is made aware of the great debates and discussions of the time. This requires skill and understanding and dedication on the part of our profession, especially in a time of such complexity that there are very few "experts" on more than one subject. As our democracy has matured and assumed the leadership of the democratic sector of the world, the challenge of our task has grown to enormous proportions.

The press—the whole press—has a key role in the struggle for western civilization in this generation. The American public—the Arkansas public—have some portentous decisions to make in this mortal conflict, and they cannot make them unless the press does the job which was set before it almost two centuries ago. It is easier to realize what the founders had in mind when we consider that the experiment itself—the Revolution—was sparked by pamphleteers and editors who not only printed facts but who defined the issues and took stands. It has been an inspiring experience, during the past year, to attend classes in rooms where Washington's soldiers slept before Bunker Hill, and to know that under the trees outside they gathered to hear the reading of Tom Paine's "Common Sense." It was second only to the Declaration of Independence in creating the spirit of the Revolution.

And we should never forget that the constitutional heritage we enjoy today came out of a history of smashed presses and jailed editors.

So we have a heritage of freedom of the press, and we have an obligation to present our readers with some definitive news, "news in depth," and editorial commentary. Most of us will agree to that. But how does all this theory relate to the small town weekly or daily in Arkansas?

I believe that a thoroughly despised term for about all of us is "crusading editor." Few if any of us want to be known as habitual crusaders. True, many a young newsman goes through the stage when he feels compelled every day to unsheath the bright Excalibur of truth, and lay about him, but this fades somewhat after a few years of routine. The most satisfying articles we write—at least in the weekly field—are those that make people glad, that are filed

away by our readers in cedar boxes and treasured through the years. I've visited homes where the yellowing clips from our paper are pasted in scrapbooks—the stories of families and occasions which give richness to the life of a community. These are the ones that give satisfaction. I could write about the beauties of the Ozarks for the next 40 years.

However, I do not believe that we can confine ourselves to pastoral meanderings and the recording of anniversaries and say at the end that we have been newspapermen. There are, and always have been, forces of ambition and interest, in our state and elsewhere, which must have the victory and the power no matter what the cost and no matter what damage to the public interest. It is to these that we must address ourselves if we are to be more than just setters of type and sellers of merchandise.

The question arises, "Are we competent." There would undoubtedly be a difference of opinion in this room on what is in the public interest on any single major issue confronting us. Who is qualified to say? The most important point seems to me, however, that, qualified or not (and none of us are, completely) we are in a position where we have to act. We have an obligation on every Thursday or on every day, as the case may be, and we must strive to increase our qualifications every day through whatever study time will permit. Not for us Polonius's advice, "Give every man thine ear but few thy voice," nor even the admonition, "Judge not." We give our voice to hundreds or thousands of people every time the press rolls and we also make judgments, whether we admit it or not.

Our opinions enter every issue, even the news, because we can't possibly print all the news and we are forced to be selective. We can't achieve complete objectivity, or at least if we think we have it is only our opinion. We cover a meeting of the quorum court and there are 70 facts regarding it. We must condense the story to 20 "most important" facts because of space requirements. We're rendering judgment. We're saying what is "most important" for the people to read. We are required to render judgment, through selectivity, in about every major story.

When this judgment is extended to the editorial page the job becomes harder, because here we are trying to achieve objectivity in some degree, but also fairness and insight; so the moral factor has been added. And who among us ever believes he can totally measure up to the task?

Whether we are qualified or not, we are appointed. We have an obligation and all we can do is try to fulfill it to the best of our abilities, insufficient though they may be. We're aware that the public has a right to know—even an

obligation to know whether it wants to or not—and that we have the responsibility for disseminating much of the knowledge which is the fuel of democracy.

Sometimes we encounter roadblocks. Sometimes we're so selective in a small town that we don't print any of a "hot" article.

In an address at the University of Minnesota, J. Russell Wiggins, executive editor of the *Washington Post*, gave this estimate which is relevant to our situations:

. . . It is in the practical, day to day tasks of news gathering that the challenges to press freedom are encountered. And it is the response of individual editors to every such challenge that helps fix the real freedom the press enjoys. It is our conduct in gathering news about legislatures, councils, county boards, and courts that gives reality to the abstract principles and the fundamental guaranties of the Constitution. We have duties here in which our private interests and the public's interest are happily the same. If we discharge them with credit, freedom of the press will be secure in the United States, the people will be informed, and democratic government will have the benefit of enlightened public opinion.

Most small town editors have faced the minor crises which are the tests of devotion to responsibility; the sheriff who says he doesn't want the names divulged, the prominent citizen who gets into a major, embarrassing predicament, the official scandal which someone wants hushed up, the influential group which does not want a bond issue passed.

So we get back to the old question, "Is responsibility practical?" I firmly believe that it is, but there are some "ifs."

If the small town editor is competent, if he is capable of publishing an adequate or even a superior type of newspaper, he earns the right to speak his mind in the community. He earns respect, even though it may be grudging respect from some. If he earns a reputation for covering the news thoroughly, it will finally be expected that he will print the unpleasant as well as the pleasant news. If he does an exceptional job, and publishes a paper in which the community may take pride, the community will realize that it needs him. But he must give all interests full coverage and be known for fairness.

A small newspaper which really covers the life of the community with articles and photos and imagination will build circulation, because people appreciate this type of publication. And with the circulation will inevitably, as the night follows the day, come the advertising. I'm also convinced that a strong editorial page is a prime factor in building circulation, even when there is occasional antagon-

ism to the editor. People are curious enough to buy a paper that speaks for something, and they want a paper that is alive. Circulation is the key to advertising if a town has advertising potential, and it is the key to more freedom from pressures on news and editorial policy.

This idea has never been stated better than by Mark Ethridge, publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, in a speech last May at Columbia University.

Give me a newspaper that prints the news fully, fairly and fearlessly, interprets it intelligently and comments upon it vigorously, and I will take my chances that those other things for which publishers are responsible—fiscal soundness, economic independence and public acceptance—will be added in satisfactory measure.

The small town newspaper can exert tremendous leadership within its circulation area. It can be a spark plug for progressive endeavor in its area. Where a bond issue for a needed school or utility expansion is voted down, you can usually count upon finding a newspaper vacuum—an editor who would not take sides because of the fear of economic or social pressures. We all know there are subtle, economic pressures upon the publisher. It's hard to lock the quinos around some stories and editorials.

And, of course, we can't comment on everything that seems wrong or questionable, nor plug for all the improvements that are needed at the same time. There are many controversial areas which we advance at peril, and the question every editor must decide for himself is how far and how fast he will advance, if at all.

I think most of us continually ponder the questions that affect our communities. Consider, for instance, an article in a recent *Look* magazine by Dr. James Bryant Conant, author of books on the American high schools and considered about the foremost authority on the subject. The title of the article is "Athletics—The Poison Ivy in Our Schools." It is a sobering article, to me at least, and it may be pertinent to our towns and our children. Commenting on this subject might bring more damnation down upon the head of an editor in this part of the country than proposing to change the name of Arkansas. The whole discussion of American education is one to which we might apply ourselves, and should, but to challenge the primacy of the football team would require the courage of Stonewall Jackson. Ours won the conference this year, incidentally. We have to live in this town, we say, and we don't want to stir up turmoil, and that's understandable.

But if we find, 25 years from now, that our tireless and ruthless adversaries in the Soviet Union are becoming the primary power in the world, maybe we will have to carry our share of the blame for not sounding the alarm bell in

every town. And if we're not happy today for some of the things for which Arkansas is distinguished, we must take some of that on our shoulders, too.

It's hard to speak out on some issues, but it's encouraging that a great many small papers in Arkansas are speaking out, and, I believe, with increasing effectiveness. If we do not have the expertise to jump into every debate going, at least we may be able to define the major debates, to make our readers aware of the issues and start them thinking.

I believe our readers are interested in knowing how much their county government takes in and spends each year. We are certainly capable of whipping together an analysis of this, but often it is not brought to the public's attention.

Time, of course, is the villain for the small town editor. The organization of time becomes his major problem when he tries to fulfill his myriad responsibilities, and it usually becomes his main frustration. In a good many instances he must be a combination reporter, bookkeeper, copy editor, ad writer, printing salesman, bill collector, mechanic, typesetter, pressman, makeup man, civic worker and repository of general information about the town, along with being public relations man of sorts. Keeping abreast of the times in general so that he may comment intelligently becomes a chore that is easily neglected because of sheer exhaustion.

It usually develops that, if he is to "do his homework" of reading and serious writing, a seven-day week and some night work are required. I don't have to tell you that delegation of tasks is difficult in a plant which cannot afford trained editorial employees and in which the whole writing operation depends upon two or three people. It all boils down to hard work and extra hours if an adequate small town paper is to be published—harder work than our contemporaries on the metropolitan dailies usually experience, I believe. In the case of our paper, editorials and articles requiring research are usually turned out on Sundays, or at night.

My topic is "The Growing Responsibility of the Small Town Press," and I have been a long time getting around to it. Why is the responsibility growing?

It is growing because, I believe, the weekly and the small town daily are coming into a resurgence throughout the country. The newspaper in the relatively prosperous small town has about the brightest future of any small business. It is not faced with the staggering dilemmas with which most of the big dailies are beset, especially the dilemma of competition from new media. In fact, television may be helping the small town newspaper, at the expense of the metropolitan dailies. Television news programs have ap-

parently cut into the circulation of big dailies in some cities, but suburban weeklies have sprung up in profusion and are prospering.

It's true that in very small rural towns many weeklies have gone out of business in the past 20 years because they simply did not have the local advertising market to sustain them in a period of technological change, rising costs and population shifts. But most of the remaining weeklies, especially in county seat towns of 1,000 or more, have the best prospect in history, and the new suburban papers will continue to expand.

The problem of mechanical obsolescence continues to drag down the older, larger dailies in cities with multiple-newspaper competition, and they, not the weeklies, are bearing most of the brunt of competition from the air waves media.

Mark Ethridge reported that the country's 11 largest Sunday papers lost almost 2,600,000 circulation between 1949 and 1959. From 1950 through 1959, dailies in New York lost almost 700,000 subscribers and that city's Sunday papers lost more than 1,800,000.

In 43 cities, he pointed out, newspaper circulation grew at only about half the rate of the population gain. Today, 94 per cent of the cities have a non-competitive newspaper situation, while in 1910 only 42.9 per cent of the cities were non-competitive. Since 1957, 48 dailies have disappeared. The trend is toward big newspaper monopoly and fewer big newspapers. This is because innovations which would reduce production costs have not come fast enough.

The small paper has this problem, too, but not to the same degree. In the first place, it already has a monopoly in its town in most cases, and it is a local paper with local news which the TV networks cannot duplicate.

It boils down to this: Even if the householder is satisfied with the "top of the news" which he gleans from television, he still wants to buy a paper in which he will see the names and pictures of people he knows, the names of his children, perhaps, the news of the schools, and the clubs to which he belongs, and the news of that plot of geography in which he votes and pays taxes.

The community paper gives him an identity which he needs and which the large papers and TV cannot provide, and that is why the suburban weeklies are ringing the big

cities at the expense of the dailies. That is also why the present established weeklies and dailies in good inland towns can face the future with confidence if they turn out a creditable product.

I firmly believe that the demand for the community paper will grow, rather than diminish. The circulations of some of our weeklies in Arkansas have been growing, even in the face of declining populations. In many ways we have a favored position as we enter the 1960's.

With this comes, however, the horrifying knowledge that our little newspapers are about all that many of our subscribers read, and with our prospect for expansion comes the realization of added responsibility. The future holds some sticky problems for our state, our counties and our localities that need to be outlined. Everything has not been "coming up roses" in Arkansas, and we need constructive candor in this state. We also need to transmit something of what is transpiring in the nation and the world and relate it, when possible, to the local scene. This is no longer an isolated part of the world.

A Minnesota publisher, Alan C. McIntosh, said at the NEA Convention in November that "The hometown newspaper is the last frontier of personal journalism" and that it has never reached its full potential. But an article by Robert Shaw in *The American Press* magazine tells us: "There exists, in fact, a type of 'anti-journalistic' behavior among weekly publishers. . . ." We may ignore our responsibility, but it will not go away.

In Arkansas the weeklies alone have a combined circulation of more than 230,000. That's almost a quarter of a million small town papers rolling off the presses every week. Many of them are a credit to the best traditions of newspapering; many others have never flexed their muscles in any serious journalistic effort.

We all know that our capacities are limited by our size and we cannot be shrill dragon-chasers in small towns. But we also know that we have the obligation, stated by Lippmann, to "make a picture of reality on which men can act," to report fully but also to advocate and to stimulate. If we cannot be persistent critics, we can be persistent persuaders. We have with our combined circulations the power to make a splendid contribution toward building the kind of an Arkansas that will be a fitting legacy for our children.



# Harrowing Tale of the Blizzard

## *Adventures of Man Lying in Bed on Sunday Morning, February 5, Reading About Storm in Boston Globe*

By Max Hall

The first difficulty was to dig down past the comics, the features, and several miscellaneous sections of the paper, in search of what may whimsically be called the "front page." Having laid this bare, the Reader spread it out and perceived that the entire page, except for one story, was given over to the big snowstorm. He settled contentedly back against the pillows and began reading.

New England, he learned, had been "staggered," "knocked flat," "lashed," "whipped," "paralyzed," "blanketed," and "buried" by the "howling northeaster," which was "powered by gale-force winds." By the seaside these were "full-blown gale winds" (that is, blown as well as blowing) and naturally they "pounded homes and lashed at power lines." Our Reader already knew these things; he had read (and written) enough newspaper stories to know that gales lash, just as fires gut, rains are torrential, and football games are played in a sea of mud. But when he began looking for specific information, such as the temperature, the real trouble began.

The main story allotted only six of its sentences to page one and then directed the reader to "STORM Page Forty-eight." The story on the lashing of the seacoast went to "HULL Page Forty-seven." The New England roundup story went to "FIRE Page Forty-nine." Clearly, there was nothing to do but turn to pages 47, 48, and 49.

The Reader now discovered that the section he was already clutching had only 24 pages. The next section that came to his hand started with A-1, the next with A-25, the next with A-33, and the next with just plain 33. This last one brought him to the end of his journey—or rather the end of *that* journey. Page after page of storm coverage dazzled his eye.

On page 48, he wasted time searching for exact information on the depth of the snowfall in Boston and on the cumulative depth of all the recent snows. He never did find the cumulative figures, but after wandering in a circle he came upon an inconspicuous statement on page one to the effect that Boston had been buried under a 15-inch snow cover. He could not justly blame the newspaper for his having skipped this item while being lashed and whipped from one section to another. But, perversely, he blamed it anyhow.

He then blew on his hands and tackled the job of discovering how cold Saturday had been. Only two days earlier the thermometer had registered 4 below. Each morning he had been studying the hour-by-hour temperatures. He was anxious to know whether the temperature had stayed below freezing on Saturday and thus broken an all-time Boston "freeze" record of sixteen days. Today he could see no clue on page one. The weather prediction in the upper corner directed him to the official weather data on page 3. But when he got there the cupboard was bare. Today, of all days of the year, the hour-by-hour temperatures were missing, as though whipped away by the full-blown gale. The nationwide city-by-city "highs" and "lows" were there, and it seems that in Boston, during the 24 hours ending at 7 p.m. Saturday night, the temperature had ranged between 25 and 32. Did this mean that the record had not been broken? Somewhere in that unwieldy pile of newspaper, there may have been a temperature story. But the Reader, after plowing all through the first section and several other pages of other sections, was getting weary and numb, and he did not find it.

The saddest experience of all, however, was the one about the flowers and the trees. On page one was a story headed "What Freeze Did for Us." To be exact, three sentences of it were there. Our Reader excitedly signaled his wife and read aloud: "For one thing the usual flowery harbingers of Spring will be missing this year in most places. The forsythia and dogwood probably will not bloom because of being subjected to the below-zero cold." At that moment came the inevitable line: "COLD Page A-Fifty."

The Reader, in his haste to find out whether or not the cherry trees in his own front yard were going to bloom, mistakenly saw this line as "Page Fifty." The mistake was even more excusable, because all the other weather stories had jumped to pages 47, 48, or 49. But he couldn't find anything about flowering trees on Page Fifty. So he looked back to page one, and now noticed that it said "*A-Fifty*." Back again he went through the section beginning A-1, the section beginning A-25, and the section beginning A-33. At last he reached A-50. Did this solve the problem? No, the story wasn't there either. Page A-50 turned out to be the movie page. So he shuffled back to just *plain* 50 for a closer



look. But it seemed that this page was also a movie page, of sorts. He got interested in an AP feature headed "The Human Tides That Throw Hollywood Marriages on Rocks."

This story did nothing to elevate the Reader's spirits, and he was almost ready to give up and allow himself to drift numbly into sleep, but the thought of those cherry trees tortured him into renewed struggles. This time he determined to examine every single page of the full-blown newspaper, even the comics if necessary, and he lashed himself into the task like a howling northeaster. By this means he found the rest of the story he was looking for. It was on page A-45. He resumed reading aloud, but soon realized he had no audience. His wife was downstairs giving hot chocolate to the little boy she had hired to shovel snow from the front walk.

**Max Hall**, who now stays snugly in bed while blizzards rage, used to be exposed to them as a reporter (*Atlanta Georgian*, *New York Mirror*, Associated Press Washington Bureau.) Now when he gets through reading his newspaper, he edits books for the Harvard Press and the Center for International Studies at Harvard. A Nieman Fellow in 1950, he was chief editor of "Reading, Writing and Newspapers," a symposium by the Fellows of 1950 that went through three printings and 7,000 copies to meet the demand for it.

## Searching Behind Mirrors

By Lowell Brandle

When I was a kid back during the Great Depression our family sometimes sought its entertainment at the zoo. It was free and it was fun, and the monkey with a mirror was the funniest animal of all. Have you seen it? When the monkey is given a mirror, he studies his reflection seriously for a while and then peeks behind the mirror. When he finds no monkey there his face takes on a wonderfully ludicrous expression of bewilderment and consternation. He turns the mirror over and over in a long and futile search.

There seems to be something of this same thing, this searching behind the mirror, in recent years as journalists turn a question over and over, "What's gone wrong with newspapers?"

All of us have heard speeches and read many articles on the subject, and we have heard the wrongs outlined ad nauseum. We have seen the blame for all these wrongs

dropped on various doorsteps: of publishers, editors, reporters, journalism schools, wire services, television, mergers, a nearly-illiterate public, organized labor, high costs, irresponsibility, government secrecy, low wages, deadline pressure, competition and lack of competition, and so on. I do not recall a publisher blaming publishers, an editor blaming editors, or a reporter blaming reporters. Perhaps that is where the mirror trick comes in. Anyway, I for one am weary of all this safe, once-removed self examination. So please allow me to hold my mirror still, to look into it and not behind it, not Narcissus but a reporter discussing reporting, leaving publishers and editors and the rest to their own cages.

I may as well be blunt. I think our reporting today, from Washington to Podunk, is terrible. There are exceptions, of course, but only a very rare few. Frankly, I am ashamed of the quality of reporting being done in the American press today. Don't interpret that to mean I think better reporting is being done in other countries, or that American reporting once was better. All I am saying is that our nation now deserves better reporting than it is getting.

This personal attitude started eighteen years ago when a reporter interviewed me at length, and then published a story about me that was almost pure fiction. He not only had facts wrong and quotations wrong, he had me saying things he thought I should have said, to brighten his piece. The character he created embarrassed hell out of me. It was a mildly traumatic experience, and it left scars on my journalistic id. Perhaps it was fortunate it happened because it gave me some insight to the personal damage that is done by newspaper inaccuracy. It's no exaggeration to say that the inaccurate reporter hurts us all, that he can blight a man's career, destroy his reputation among his colleagues and make him a laughing stock in his community. Not least, the inaccurate reporter's victims often despise and distrust every other newspaperman and newspaper they come across until the day they die.

Ever since that unpleasant experience of mine I've learned that inaccurate reporting is a very widespread disease. Some of it is deliberate. Some of it is unavoidable. But a large part of it is just plain incompetence which can be treated and cured. How?

How many reporters know shorthand? This is an elementary tool of our profession, as much as a typewriter, but comparatively few reporters have taken the time to learn it. This inability to record a man's exact words is one reason so many reporters use that old dodge, the paraphrase. Just mention shorthand to an old reporter and his reaction usually is a mixture of horror and contempt. It's about the same reaction to a suggestion that modern mechanical devices (even the ballpoint pen) might improve our work, by making us more accurate. "Short-

hand?" he says, "I don't want the **WHOLE** speech!" or "I take too many notes now!" That's fine and dandy, but the reader (and the speaker) deserves a correct quotation even if it's only one paragraph. It seems to me we have become inexcusably arrogant—and inaccurate—to assume the right to change a man's own words.

Don't get me wrong. There is no halo hanging around my ears. I've committed about all the sins of reporting there are, I suppose. At my typewriter, I've jazzed up a man's words, put them in more orderly sequence, and paraphrased them, and I've been inaccurate now and then. But more and more I've become aware of the great responsibility we have for accuracy. A few years ago, as I visited the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, a question grabbed me pretty rudely and it's still leading me around by the ear:

What if I had been there in Gettysburg that day, the only reporter covering Lincoln's speech? What if there had been no text, and mankind had depended on me to record and report those immense thoughts and shining words? Would history have been satisfied with my memory and my paraphrasing? Would my own private and rather haphazard shorthand have been adequate to this great task?

Not long after this Washington visit I began to use a tape recorder in my work, wherever possible, and I took a night course in a simple new system of shorthand.

This train of thought about the Gettysburg Address carried me into another worrisome area. Apart from the technical ability to get Lincoln's words down accurately, would I have had the wisdom to recognize them for what they were? And here lies my second main dispute with today's reporters.

Few reporters (and fewer publishers, I fear) realize they are first editors and then second are they reporters. A reporter can report only a tiny fraction of the total news. This means that, of what he sees as news, he must edit out what he thinks is unimportant. He does this whether he is writing obits or covering presidents. He cannot report what he does not recognize as news. With this power of original omission or emphasis, the reporter becomes a most important editor on a newspaper.

Obviously this is a tremendous responsibility, yet how well do we equip ourselves for this task of seeing and understanding the news that lies below the surface, beyond the plane wreck and the big fire, the election and the canned speech? How much history do we read, how much

economics, how much law, how much political science and international affairs, how much psychology and how much sociology? Without this deeper understanding, how can we report adequately on slums, or a mob on a Southern campus, or a labor strike in a little New England town? Without this deeper understanding, there is nothing that can save us from being supplanted by a camera lens and a microphone.

Accuracy and wisdom of the degree I suggest may be a lot to ask of a reporter but they must be asked of him as goals, no matter what his pay scale, no matter how small his job or his newspaper. We must ask them of ourselves. These are unattainable goals, in a sense. There is no such thing as complete accuracy in reporting, for every news event is lifted out of context to some extent when it is reported. And wisdom, what mortal ever grasps all the invisible threads of ambition and dedication, of avarice and ignorance, of love and hate and fear, that motivate men upon this grand stage? But let us recognize these two values as goals, as vital to us as long as we call ourselves reporters.

Sure, there are a lot of other things that can improve our work and our newspapers: more integrity, more courage, more dedication, more compassion, to name a few. These great words are easy to say, of course, but I suspect that most reporters have within them the healthy seeds of these qualities. There are many things we can do or try to do, to make it easier to boast about our work to our grandchildren. For instance, we can resign from the carnivorous wolf packs which scavenge on the fringe of most large news events today—ostensibly to gather news. Thus we might escape being bombarded with corn cobs by a furious farmer in Iowa, when we trespass en masse and by our presence change the news event. Thus we might escape encouraging exhibitionist demagogues, whether they are in New Orleans streets or the United States Senate. Our wolf pack doesn't get the news, it makes and molds the news in its own humiliating matrix. Surely it is significant that the great reporters of our time do not join the pack.

Much that is wrong with newspapering we newspapermen can cure. As our own contribution, we reporters can make an effort to become better equipped. Certainly the world around us is a challenge to better reporting.

And if in honesty we do not search behind the mirror, our own consciences will be an even greater challenge.

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**Lowell Brandle**, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, is on leave from the *St. Petersburg Times*.

## Perspective on America

By Desmond Stone

AMERICA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, by Frank Freidel, Harvard University; Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., 593 pp; \$9.

Among the day-to-day doubting and soul-searching that accompany America's involvement in an unpeaceful world, Frank Freidel's new contemporary history of the nation comes as a welcome antidote to gloom. Reading it is a little like taking a deep breath of fresh air. For though Harvard's Professor of History doesn't dissipate all the doubts—there's still U-2 pilot Powers—he does allow us to be encouraged by the twentieth century reality of America.

And the overriding reality has been the assumption by the United States of world leadership, moral and physical. As Professor Freidel shows us, it's been a slow, uneven, often painful process. Sometimes we have seemed to take two steps back for every one forward. American troops tipped the scales for democracy in World War I. And then the people turned their backs on the League of Nations. Writes Professor Freidel: "Wilson had declared when he submitted the Versailles treaty to the Senate, 'our isolation was ended twenty years ago. There can be no question of our ceasing to be a world power. The only question is whether we can refuse the moral leadership that is offered.' The United States did refuse, until another quarter century had elapsed. . . ."

And even when the quarter-century had gone, and the reins had been grasped, the country was still unsure in its attitudes to the rest of the world. It turned from FDR's trust in Stalin in World War II to the blind hatred of communism that produced the postwar excesses of McCarthyism. The swing was violent, though it was slow in coming. ". . . Truman faced a peculiarly difficult task in trying to persuade the American public that a truly deep and serious rift was developing between Russia and the West. . . . Many had come to imagine Stalin as a benign, pipe-smoking sage, 'good old Uncle Joe.'"

It was possible in 1943 for Secretary of War, Cordell Hull, to declare of the future: ". . . There will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security. . . ." Yet before many years were gone, the Iron Curtain had become part of the daily vocabulary.

America had to learn to temper idealism with realism and to put isolationism once and for all aside before it could look with steady clear eyes at the rest of the world. And before she could do this, she had herself to grow to maturity as a people. This, really, is the underlying theme of the history. Theodore Roosevelt pointed the way to social justice when he said in 1910 that men thinking primarily of property rights and personal profits "must now give way to the advocate of human welfare. . . ." Again, it took time. It was still possible for a Secretary of War in the early in 1930s, in the great depression, to recommend that restaurants should scrape leftovers from diners' plates into clean five-gallon containers that could be given to the worthy poor.

Time was needed also for the subsidence of irrational fears and prejudices. Americans did a lot of their growing up in World War II. "On the whole," writes Professor Freidel, "the war produced less hatred and vindictiveness at home than had the First World War. The energy that had gone into crude vigilantism in the earlier war went in the Second World War into serving as air raid wardens. . . . People continued to eat hamburgers and sauerkraut and listen to Wagner." There were to be relapses—notably the loyalty purges, the rise of McCarthy, the abuses of civil liberties.

But it is the great merit of Professor Freidel's book that he is able to show these witchhunts, so puzzling and so distressing at the time to the watching world, for what they were—not the rotting of the fabric of American society but the last convulsive threshing of dying causes.

*America in the Twentieth Century* doesn't follow any radically new paths of historical interpretation. But it's a very sane work, well proportioned and well organized. Professor Freidel doesn't wave

any cutlasses, or yield to any rhetoric. Restraint and reason were his fashioning tools. And the principal benefit to his readers is the good clear perspective we get of the century we live in.

## Camus as Journalist

By John D. Pomfret

RESISTANCE, REBELLION, AND DEATH. By Albert Camus. Translated by Justin O'Brien. Alfred A. Knopf. 272 pp. \$4.

An explanation should be offered for mention in these columns of a book that already has been reviewed widely in more general publications. First, Albert Camus was one of us. He is known in this country in translation as a novelist, short story writer, philosophical essayist and playwright. He was highly regarded in France also as a journalist. He helped found the wartime resistance paper *Combat* and, through his tragically short life, repeatedly returned to journalism to defend the liberties he saw as savagely oppressed and to exorcise the violence that everywhere so horrified him.

The present book is a selection of 23 pieces in the journalistic vein—editorials from *Combat*, essays, speeches and so forth. Camus picked them for translation into English before he was killed last year at 46 in an automobile accident.

Here we have Camus on Nazism, the function of the artist, Spain, Algeria, Hungary and other topics. The longest piece is his famous and vivid denunciation of capital punishment, "Reflections on the Guillotine."

The writing is afire with his twin commitment to liberty and intelligence. It is powerful and lucid. And, it is (as he, himself, felt) by no means the least of his work.

Beyond fraternity, there is another reason for drawing attention to this book here. One of the selections is about freedom, the free press and their indivisibility. The context is a speech by Camus in homage to Eduardo Santos, a former president of Colombia and owner *El Tiempo*, Colombia's leading morning newspaper. *El Tiempo* had been closed in 1955 after it had refused to print a retraction

dictated by the government, and Santos was in exile in France. *El Tiempo* reappeared under its own name in 1957 with the downfall of the Rojas regime and the return of Santos.

"Freedom of the press," Camus said in his tribute to Santos, "is perhaps the freedom that has suffered the most from the gradual degradation of the idea of liberty."

Camus was not unaware of the deficiencies of the press: "The press has its pimps as it has its policemen."

Nor did he feel that "the press in itself is an absolute good."

"Victor Hugo said in a speech that it (the press) was intelligence, progress, and I know not what else," Camus remarked. "The already old journalist that I am knows that it is nothing of the sort and that reality is less consoling."

But in another sense the press is better than intelligence or progress; it is the possibility of all that and of other things as well. A free press can of course be good or bad, but, most certainly, without freedom it will never be anything but bad. . . . Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better, whereas enslavement is a certainty of the worse. . . .

With freedom of the press, nations are not sure of going toward justice and peace. But without it, they are sure of not going there. For justice is done to people only when their rights are recognized, and there is no right without expression of that right. . . .

Censorship and oppression prove that the word is enough to make the tyrant tremble—but only if the word is backed up by sacrifice. For only the word fed by blood and heart can unite man, whereas the silence of tyrannies separates them. Tyrants indulge in monologues over millions of solitudes.

#### OUR REVIEWERS:

John D. Pomfret of the *Milwaukee Journal*, now on a Nieman Fellowship;

Desmond Stone an Associate Nieman Fellow from New Zealand in 1955-56, now on the *Rochester Times-Union*;

John W. Lyons, Harvard '52, now a research chemist with the Monsanto Company in St. Louis.

## Asa Gray and His Times

By John W. Lyons

ASA GRAY, by A. Hunter Dupree. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1959. 505 pps. \$7.50.

Over a decade in the writing, this saga of the great botanist and his era has been painstakingly assembled by a first-rate scholar. Mr. Dupree has explored with infectious enthusiasm the excitements of that germinal period of science in which Gray himself played so creative a role. We get a lively and sharp view of Asa Gray himself, pioneer in botany in a time when no major college in America had a chair in the subject. Later he was long-time professor in botany (Harvard's first), keeper of the botanical garden at Cambridge, and, of course, founder and steward of the Gray Herbarium. Fascinating are the views of Gray as representative of the generation which made the transition from physician-naturalists to true scientists—of Gray in the midst of the great upheaval over evolutionary theories—of Gray and his fellow botanists in the opening of the American West. Each of these is worthy of a treatise of its own. Yet Dupree brings them all together and so broadens the significance of the work immeasurably.

When young Asa Gray decided to pursue his scientific bent he took the only way then open to him (1828)—medical training. Science was then indulged as a hobby by practising medical men. Not so Asa Gray. Almost immediately after taking his medical degree he devoted full time to botanical study. How he survived for a decade and more without a formal occupation or independent means is a measure of the toughness and dedication of the man. His subsequent founding of the chair in botany at Harvard and long struggle to raise the science to the status it deserved is a story typical of many such around the world at that dynamic time in the history of science.

Due to his early realization of the value of world-wide contacts in his field, Gray

knew intimately Darwin, Hooker, Huxley and others. At home, he had the genius of Agassiz to draw upon and, as it turned out, to contend with at some length. When Darwin (and Wallace) threw the bombshell, Gray had the satisfaction not only of having been privy to the coming event for some years, but also of having contributed a key piece to the solution of the puzzle taken from his studies of North American and Far Eastern flora. The titanic battle between Gray and Agassiz over Darwin's theory held the center of the stage in Boston and, indeed, the world scientific community. The great zoologist came off a poor second. Gray's strength in this period was his ability to synthesize a strong scientific appreciation of the facts in the Darwin theory with his overall philosophy as a devout Christian. He proved uncannily prophetic in assuming a middle ground. He anticipated the science of genetics. Today most scientists can still agree with the broad outlines of Gray's position of a century ago. This section of the book will be the high point for many readers.

One cannot ignore, however, Gray's part in surveying the West. He and his colleagues succeeded in classifying the flora of the region through the Army expeditions of the period. Imagine tough Army officers collecting specimens along the route amidst all sorts of trials and methodically drying and pressing them for shipment to Gray for classification. Gray was a master at organizing networks of collectors to cover the expanding frontiers. The resultant knowledge was of great benefit in subsequent settling of the new territories. Parallel developments in other disciplines—geology, for example—were of no little consequence in our expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Basically a non-technical account, the book is of a vast scope—a thoroughly enjoyable experience well up to the caliber of the Belknap Press series.



## President and Press

The President will have to find ways of communicating his own convictions to a working majority of the people. Is he not doing that? Not adequately, so it seems to me. There is a missing element in his press conferences, his speeches, and his public appearances, and for lack of it he receives much approval without creating sufficient conviction.

His press conferences illustrate what I am trying to say. They are conceived on the assumption that the use of a presidential press conference is to provide spot news. The President makes announcements and the correspondents ask him questions in order to get stories, perhaps even scoops, that have not yet been published.

This is, I believe, a basically false conception of why it is worth while to have the President submit himself to questions from the press. It adds nothing to the spot news to have the President rather than Mr. Salinger announcing it. As for the hidden stories and scoops, there is never enough time to go deeply into any of the back-ground which might make them significant. As compared with what might be done with the President's brief time before the television cameras, a very large number of the questions are a waste of time. Moreover, unless I am greatly mistaken, the use of the time to dig out hidden news and to reach for scoops is not endearing the American press to the American public.

The real use of the presidential press conference is to enable the President to explain his policies and, if necessary, to compel him to explain them. In any event, explanation, not announcements or scoops, is wanted in this extremely public but also very intimate encounter between the President and the public.

How the President's press conference can be reformed or transformed, or whether it should be supplemented, are questions which can be answered only after some experimentation. But these questions need to be answered. For President Kennedy with all his political genius is not yet in full effective communication with the American people.

—Walter Lippmann,  
March 7

## Chicago

The Middle West knows what is happening in the world. . . .

There is, however, an important qualification about all this. The new awareness of the world in the Middle West is not expressing itself in political terms. In their work and in their private lives they are changing, but their political habits and allegiances remain very much the same, as if politics had very little to do with the changing world.

This explains the most interesting political paradox in America today,—namely, that while President Kennedy's personal popularity is rising, the opposition to his legislative programs is rising too. The mind of the region is running ahead of its political action. The organized are overwhelming the unorganized. The private conversation of the region is strikingly more sympathetic to change, and to Kennedy as a symbol of change, than the press of the region, with, of course, a few notable exceptions.

Television is clearly a large factor in this contrast. For while many of the most powerful organs of the press continue longing wistfully for a past they know will never come again, the television is showing the revolution in Africa, the revolution of the cities and races of America, the revolution of automation in the big industries.

James Reston column  
New York Times, March 8

## Press Conference

Question (Merriman Smith)

Mr. President, I'm sure you're aware, sir, of the tremendous mail response that your news conferences on television and radio have produced. There are many Americans who believe that in our manner of questioning or seeking your attention that we're subjecting you to some abuse or a lack of respect. I wonder, sir, in this light could you tell us generally your feelings about your press conferences to date and your feelings about how they are conducted?

Answer (President Kennedy)  
Well, you subject me to some abuse but

not to any lack of respect. I must say that I do know that there are difficulties, and I know that it places burdens on members of the press to have to stand up, particularly when I'm not able to recognize them.

On the other hand, if it were changed, and one member stood up, then, perhaps, that would not be a satisfactory device. So I think that along with the old saying about 'Don't take down the fence until you know why it was put up,' I would say that we should stay with what we now have.

—President's press conference, March 8.

## Not Necessarily So

This is the period of the aftermath in which journalists and others thruout the country debate the matter of newspaper "fairness" and "objectivity" during the recent presidential campaign.

And it's all very juvenile and superficial.

Newspapers, under our unique system, are private property. Like most private property, they are subject to and the responsibility of their owners.

Tell me who or what owns a newspaper, and I'll tell you with exactness, that surprises no informed person, what kind of a newspaper it is and who it supported for president, governor, congress, the town council and dog catcher.

Character in a newspaper sticks out all over in many ways. There is no mystery and no secret about it.

What brought this on is the same old tired quarreling about the number of inches of publicity space given by this or that newspaper to the candidates, suggesting that equal space means equal treatment. This simply doesn't follow and to say that it does is to insult average intelligence.

It was never our aim to be "fair" to Richard Nixon. We wanted him defeated. We behaved accordingly. And now we have Kennedy. Only time will tell how pleased we are with our bargain. Let's stop kidding ourselves about "fairness" and "objectivity." These are for the gods. Are there gods among us? . . .

Cervi's Journal, Denver,  
Dec. 28, 1960



## Judge Rebukes Double Standard in Business

The double standard of conduct so widespread in American business life, among both corporations and individuals, is on shocking display in the disclosure of antitrust law violation that has pervaded the electrical equipment industry.

In the pleas before sentence, man after man was plaintively represented to the judge as one who loves his family, works for his church, leads Boy Scouts, devotes himself to civic and charitable endeavors. No doubt it was mostly true. They simply parked their ideals with their cars when it came to doing business.

\* \* \*

Complacency of our society toward this double standard was typified when one man's home parish (Episcopal) publicly condoned it. The vestry proclaimed its unshaken confidence in his integrity, even as he headed for jail, and the rector avowed undiminished respect for him.

If they were still protesting his actual innocence, it might be understood. Or if they were expressing continued belief in his redemptibility, that is indeed what a church should do. But imagine church leaders simply denying, in effect, that confessed and aggravated lawbreaking has anything to do with personal integrity!

One defense lawyer even argued the double standard openly to the court, in explicit terms. The crime was "a statutory business offense only," not involving "moral turpitude." That is to say, in contrast to outright stealing, for instance, mere cheating against law and government and customers in behalf of an otherwise legitimate business is not immoral. It is "a way of life," another lawyer said.

Is this indeed an approved American, and Christian, way of life? The sentencing judge, J. Cullen Ganey of Philadelphia, thought not, and the more he heard of this stuff the angrier he got. He accused the defendant companies and individuals of "flagrantly mocking the image of that economic system which we profess, and destroying the model which we offer" to the world.

\* \* \*

The guilty corporations were caught

with the double standard, too. Many of them, as we know in Milwaukee, are "good citizens," civic minded and philanthropic. Yet the claims by some, at least, to have been unaware of all the cloak and dagger price fixing, bid rigging and job allocation by their representatives, involving hundreds of millions over a period of years, are simply incredible, as Judge Ganey said.

His sentencing of the individuals, whether to jail or not, made a distinction between those who were themselves responsible for corporate conduct and those merely too weak of conscience to resist the "system." Here he put his finger on the "organization or company man"—the churchgoer and scout leader, perhaps—who "finds balm for his conscience" in serving his employer, and thus his own hope of preferment, in wrongdoing.

The nation's "respectable" businessmen have here a stunning lesson, costly but needful to the country, that ethics are ethics as much at the office desk as at the Communion rail.

Milwaukee Journal, Feb. 9.

## Sex and the Press

By Rebecca Gross

Editor, Lock Haven Express

Most critics of the press blithely ignore the fact that the newspaper press in this country consists of more than 1500 daily papers and some 10,000 weeklies. Only a few of these sensationalize sex as some of the early tabloids did in the "Peaches Browning" era. That era, however, has bequeathed a stereotype which press critics will not give up, even though they cannot possibly be familiar with more than a tiny sampling of today's newspapers. They do not hesitate to blame 11,500 newspapers for the sins of less than half a hundred.

Some of the newspapers which still play up the sex angle out of proportion, are among the largest in the nation. They dominate the newsstands in some big cities. They do not represent the entire American press, however.

In their handling of the sex side of the news, American daily newspapers fall into three categories. Some overdo it all the time, and some go overboard with some-

thing like the first Finch trial in California. They constitute one group, in my opinion, the smallest group, but including some of the largest circulation newspapers. The second group, including most of the papers in communities of less than metropolitan size, underplay the sex angle to the point of presenting an incomplete reflection of life in their communities. The third group, which is growing larger, includes the newspapers of every size, which publish the news in which sex is an inevitable element, without over-emphasis or titivation, and also without nice-Nelly prudishness.

In undertaking to report accurately some of the less appetizing facets of community life, these papers recognize the responsibility to see that a great moral crisis is in process, with repercussions and results which affect their readers right where they live.

Complacent people in every American community do not realize what is going on around them, largely because their newspapers do not report the illegitimacies, the High School pregnancies, the increase of divorce, the deserting fathers who refuse to pay court orders to support their children and are not pursued by bench warrants, the shotgun marriages of sexually adventurous kids who have no notion of how to meet family responsibilities.

Failure of the press to give adequate reports on the moral conflict is due, in part, to past excessive criticism of so-called sensationalism in the press. Few editors in the smaller communities wish to court the charge that they are always looking for sex angles. In addition, however, there is an almost solid opposition from educators, courts, social workers and public officials. These people often cling, for various reasons, to the belief that the newspapers should not report certain types of news, although they should eradicate the evils such news reflects by thunderingly effective editorial assaults.

The public does not clamor for this news, either. Most people prefer not to hear too much about a condition for which they may feel partly responsible, and which they may be urged to help correct.

A.S.N.E. Bulletin, March

(This is part of an article by Miss Gross)

# The Press and the Public Bigger and Worse

*"A newspaper has two sides to it. It is a business, like any other, and has to pay in the material sense in order to live. But it is much more than a business; it is an institution; it reflects and it influences the life of a whole community; it may even affect wider destinies. It is, in its way, an instrument of government. It plays on the minds and consciences of men. It may educate, stimulate or assist or it may do the opposite. It has therefore a moral as well as a material existence, and its character and influence are in the main determined by the balance of these two forces. It may make profit or power its first object, or it may conceive itself as fulfilling a higher and more exacting function."*—C. P. SCOTT.

Today this classic definition of the function of a newspaper is no longer recognised as valid by the most powerful members of the Press. To Mr. Thomson and Mr. King, who are competing for Odhams, a newspaper has not two sides to it. It is a business and only a business—to be bought and sold with its editor, staff and readers as a nineteenth-century Russian estate was bought and sold with all its "souls." Once bought, it can be streamlined, rationalised or simply closed down. The only criterion is the profit which it makes.

This is not an entirely new development. Newspaper tycoons have been devouring one another for over forty years, and Mr. King's attempt to take over Odhams Press, regardless of what he plans for the *Daily Herald*, is not essentially different from the *Daily Mail's* purchase of the *News Chronicle* and *Star*. It is part of a long process which had been brought about by rising costs, by changes in the habits of readers, by the development of big business, by special factors affecting the newspaper industry. But in any such process, a time may come when the social or political dangers in what is happening are so obvious that society feels obliged to intervene. In the opinion of this paper, that time has come now.

## Question of Method

That society has a right to intervene through Parliament surely does not require argument. Both Conservative and Labour Governments have repeatedly interfered with the workings of capitalism when they thought that it was in the national interest to do so. If they had not, we might not now have a railway system or an aircraft industry. In the case of the Press, one can no longer pretend that the forces of the market must benefit the consumer: bigger and bigger newspaper companies do not necessarily produce better and better newspapers.

The question, therefore, is not whether Parliament has a right to intervene but *how* it can intervene to stop the concentration of ownership of newspapers and magazines in fewer and fewer hands and the destruction of more and more small and independent organs of opinion, without at the same time weakening the freedom or the self-reliance of the Press itself. No one pretends that this is a simple problem. It is one to which neither socialists nor capitalists have a ready answer. But the fact that no convincing solution has yet been suggested does not mean that none exists. *The Observer* believes that something could be done on two quite different lines, one positive and one negative.

## For Monopolies Commission?

The negative action is to try to break up those giant combines which already exist and to stop the formation of others which may come into being. The Prime Minister has already suggested that, if Mr. King's *Daily Mirror* group takes over Odhams Press, their combined ownership of magazines may bring them within the jurisdiction of the Monopolies Commission. This is fair enough so far as it goes, but it does not go very far. The Monopolies Commission can intervene only when a company controls one-third of the total goods concerned. Even then it can only recommend. It has no power to act. Even if it could do some-

thing about magazines, it could not touch newspapers, where no monopoly in that sense is yet in sight.

But it is absurd to say that, because the Monopolies Commission is inadequate, no legislation can be drafted and no court created to deal with this situation. It would no doubt be extremely difficult to draft a law which would limit the number of papers or magazines to be controlled by one company without injuring such useful chains as the Westminster Press; but it is not impossible. Some lawyers believe that, if this country had even the Anti-Trust Laws now in force in the United States, neither the Thomson-Odhams merger nor the *Daily Mirror* take-over would be legal.

The positive line of action is for the Government to try to create conditions under which small and "middle"-sized papers could continue to flourish and new papers could be started. Here the root of the problem is costs. The plain truth is that the newspaper industry in this country is appallingly inefficient and out of date. Technical innovations have been steadily resisted by the printing unions, which in turn have been ingloriously mismanaged by the newspaper proprietors over the last fifty years.

During this century, our production methods have advanced scarcely at all. It would be possible to cut production costs by *one-third* if the new methods and machines available to our industry could be introduced. That they are not introduced is partly the fault of the unions and partly the fault of the big groups which benefit from the high costs that destroy their smaller and weaker rivals.

## Watching the Whole Field

The Government could help immediately by holding an inquiry into the restrictive practices of both employers and unions in this industry. This, perhaps, is what the Prime Minister has in mind. But what is really wanted is a continuing body, a permanent commission—something like the Transport Commission or the University Grants Commission—which would watch over the whole field of mass communications, including broadcasting and television as well as newspapers and magazines. For these different media can no longer be regarded separately any more

than road and rail transport can be considered separately. (For instance, it can now be seen that it was a dangerous mistake to allow newspapers to acquire an interest in television. It might be even more disastrous to permit local commercial broadcasting without first considering the possible effects on provincial newspapers.)

*Such a body should not have executive powers.* It must not become a licensing authority for the Press. It should not be asked to decide which paper must be preserved or which allowed to perish. ("Free speech," as Sir Winston Churchill once said, "carries with it the evil of all foolish, unpleasant and venomous things that are said.") It certainly should not subsidise the inefficient or protect the industry from change and competition. But it could inquire and publicise. Its chief function would be to watch over developments and to advise Parliament. It might also encourage research into cheaper methods of production and help to get them introduced. And it might even grant loans on favourable terms to those who wished to start new newspapers.

What funds such a commission should have and how it should be financed are matters for discussion. (We would not rule out a small tax on advertising or a large tax on the profits of commercial television.) What is plain is that the present situation, in which almost all the means by which the British people are informed are left to the vagaries of an unrestricted market economy, cannot be allowed to continue.

### Why Newspapers Matter

It is a sad comment on the Press as it is to-day that it should be necessary to end an article like this by explaining why newspapers matter. (Even Mr. Macmillan seemed to regard them chiefly as a danger which had fortunately been removed by broadcasting and television.) Yet even to-day it is from newspapers that most men and women learn the decisions of Governments and the judgments of the courts. Only in newspapers can they easily discover what books have been published and what plays produced, the latest inventions of scientists and the movements of trade and commerce. Only by reading a newspaper can a citizen hope to be well-in-

formed about the many things which affect the lives of himself and his children.

The B.B.C. has proved the most valuable addition to, and corrective of, the Press. Such programmes as "Panorama" have disproved the old belief that a public corporation cannot show political courage. But its technical and constitutional limitations are such that it can never hope to do more than a small part of what the Press does, well or badly, every day of the year.

### To Express All Main Views

Moreover it is the whole basis of democracy that the judgment of many is safer than the judgment of one. How many papers a nation of this size should have it is impossible to say. But the minimum required is that they should together express all the main political opinions (including Communist) and should cater for all important local interests and minorities. There should be "popular" and "middle papers" as well as "quality." Perhaps the ideal society is one where new newspapers can be started fairly easily with some hope of success; and it is for that reason we welcome to-day the appearance of the *Sunday Telegraph* even though it will be a direct rival and competitor of *The Observer*. Amid so much that is gloomy in the present picture of the Press, this event is an encouraging exception. But need we stop there? It is absurd that London should have only two evening papers. It would be disastrous if the *Daily Herald* were to fail and leave Labour opinion without a paper at all.

THE OBSERVER, [London] Sunday,  
February 5.

## Newspaper Economics

The Prime Minister, despairing of an inquiry by the newspaper industry itself into its own problems, has asked for a Royal Commission. It is to examine the economic and financial aspects of newspaper and magazine production. It is to consider whether these factors tend to diminish diversity of ownership and control, and it is "to report." It is not specifically asked to recommend action. But if it does so nobody ought to object. The newspaper industry, having failed to take the oppor-

tunity to carry out the inquiry itself, should help those to whom the task now falls. The Prime Minister thought a Royal Commission, because of its powers, more suitable than a departmental inquiry. He may be right. It seems unlikely, however, that the commission will have to invoke its authority to call reluctant persons before it, to have access to such documents and records as it wishes to see, and personally to inspect such places as it deems expedient. It will probably be welcomed everywhere.

Most of the facts that the commission has to collect are easy to obtain. The one perhaps obscure area is on relations between management and printing unions, particularly on recruitment and on the introduction of new machinery. On these topics, much has to be said by each side. Unions have at times resisted change because their members feel insecure. That is also partly why they have restricted entry to their membership. It may be true that they have sometimes carried resistance to unreasonable lengths. But it also appears true that often individual managements—and, in London, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association—have done too little to build up trust between themselves and their staffs. Redundancy is a key question. A more generous attitude to compensation, with consultation of the unions well in advance, could have prevented much bitterness on this score.

Last week's meeting between Mr. Cecil King, of the *Mirror* group, and the general secretaries of the leading unions is an example of the right way to proceed. Mr. King has done what every employer should do. He has called the unions into consultation, and he has given welcome undertakings without waiting to be pressed for them. He has promised to keep the *Daily Herald* going for a further seven years if the *Mirror* group acquires it, and, should he acquire the paper and then resell it, continued publication for that period will be a condition of the sale. He has also promised to keep redundancy among all his employees to a minimum and to consult the unions as far in advance as possible. In this Mr. King has set an excellent example.

—Manchester *Guardian Weekly*,  
Feb. 16.



## Are We Losing The Bill of Rights?

*"If the present trend continues . . . government by consent will disappear to be replaced by government by intimidation, because some people are afraid that this country cannot survive unless Congress has the power to set aside the freedoms of the First Amendment at will.*

*"I can only reiterate my conviction that these people are tragically wrong. This country was not built by men who were afraid, and it cannot be preserved by such men."*

These grave and disturbing words were not the campaign oratory of an office-seeking politician. They were written by the senior member of the United States Supreme Court, Justice Hugo Black.

They are a part of a dissenting opinion of Justice Black's published last week which, in its eloquence and devotion to individual liberty, is strikingly reminiscent of the great dissents of 25 years ago written by Justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis D. Brandeis.

It was not merely the case at hand which moved Justice Black to such passionate words. It was a whole series of recent decisions of the Supreme Court—mostly by 5-4 votes—which Justice Black said are "offspring of a constitutional doctrine that is steadily sacrificing individual freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly aid petition to governmental control."

These decisions have done the following:

Justified the use in state courts of evidence obtained by illegal wire-tapping.

Upheld the pre-censorship of motion pictures, establishing a dangerous precedent which might be applied in the future to radio, television, newspapers, magazines and books.

Denied the protection of the First Amendment to two critics of the House Un-American Activities Committee, sending them to jail for contempt of Congress.

Although it was the later cases which spurred Justice Black to the vigorous language above, it was the cumulative effect of all of them which obviously most perturbed him.

Coupled with the earlier cases, and with the astonishing vote of 412-6 by which the House gave the Un-American Activi-

ties Committee every cent of the huge budget it demanded, Justice Black's "government by intimidation" becomes ominously real.

There are at least 100-150 members of the House who have often denounced tactics of the Un-American Activities Committee. Yet only six of them had the courage to vote against the appropriation.

True, Rep. James Roosevelt, who led the opposition to the Committee, is quite unpopular among his colleagues. Chairman Francis Walter, on the other hand, is well-liked and had just announced that, due to ill health, he would not run again.

Thus there are some complicating factors. But it is reasonably certain that the main reason for the big majority was the fact that almost no Representatives dare have it appear on the record that they voted against the Committee.

Unfortunately, it is almost impossible for most persons to discuss the Un-American Activities Committee calmly, objectively and rationally.

Since the Committee has chosen to behave as though communism were the only un-American activity which exists, there has developed the delusion that anyone who is against the Committee is, perforce, a Communist or a fellow-traveler.

There are a great many loyal Americans who regard denial of a person's right to vote because of race or color as un-American.

Many consider it un-American to permit the unemployed or the elderly to go hungry or in need of medical care they cannot afford.

Maintenance of slum dwellings, denial of entry into schools or other tax-supported institutions because of color, race or creed, denial of the right of assembly or petition, illegal search and seizure proceedings (including wire-tapping) and abrogation of the protection of the Bill of Rights are also among the things which millions consider un-American.

Yet not only does the House Un-American Activities Committee totally ignore such aspects of un-Americanism but, by a monstrous distortion of logic, those who do oppose such things are often branded as Reds.

This is because, for their own purposes, Communists and Communist-frontiers have also denounced these practices. Therefore, by a strained "guilt by association of ideas," anyone else who agrees with this position has to be at least a Communist-sympathizer!

Justice Black pointed out that since the Un-American Activities Committee had produced no evidence, other than its own accusation, that either Frank Wilkinson or Carl Braden, the two charged with contempt, was a Communist or a fellow-traveler, the 5-4 vote of the Court in effect lends legal sanction to the idea that anyone who criticizes the Committee is subject to be summoned before it, excommunicated, questioned without limit, and branded as a subversive and disloyal.

This idea also was echoed by Justice William O. Douglas in a separate dissent. Under this doctrine, Justice Douglas wrote, "I see no reason why editors are immune. The list of editors will be long, as evident from the editorial protests against the Committee's activities, including its recent film 'Operation Abolition.'"

This is the edited and patched together motion picture, currently being widely shown around St. Petersburg, purporting to prove that the student march against the Un-American Activities Committee, then sitting in San Francisco, was Communist inspired and directed.

In fact the march was sponsored by a group of religious, educational, professional and labor organizations of unimpeachable integrity, none even remotely connected with communism.

Although the National Council of Churches—and the St. Petersburg United Churches—have presented evidence to the fact that "Operation Abolition" has been so edited and spliced, by a private firm, but with HUAC's blessing, as to present a totally false picture, so insidiously powerful is "government by intimidation" already that the film has even been high-pressured right into our school system.

What we are actually undergoing is a neo-mccarthyism in some ways worse than the original. Senator McCarthy finally revealed himself as so despicable and evil that he ultimately destroyed himself and largely brought his movement down around him.

But now there is no central "villain." Chairman Walter of HUAC is no man to be hated. So the current movement is amorphous, hard to come to grips with.

Yet what its climate has done to Congress and the Supreme Court in eroding away the Bill of Rights shows how dangerous it is. And, as Justice Black wrote:

"Liberty, to be secure for any, must be secure for all—even for the most miserable merchants of hated and unpopular ideas."

All who hold to this basic tenet of

freedom must fight to save it. The church outstandingly is doing its part. Those of us in the press and of the legal profession—each with major stakes in preserving the Bill of Rights—and the public generally, need to do far more while there is yet time.

If, in thinking to fight communism, we should throw away the freedoms which the Communists seek to destroy, it would be history's most tragic irony.

—St. Petersburg *Times*,  
March 5

## The John Birch Society

**EDITORIAL—Feb. 26 Santa Barbara News-Press**

During recent weeks, the *News-Press* has sought to enlighten its readers about a semi-secret organization called the John Birch Society.

We believe that the *News-Press* has performed a public service by bringing the activities of the society to the attention of the community. Hundreds of our readers have agreed. But a newspaper would be derelict in its duty if it did not express its opinion of the way the society is organized and the tactics it employs.

First, let there be no mistake about this: Communism must be opposed vigorously. Its gains throughout vast areas of the world are shocking. Every American must be alert for Red infiltration. But that does not lead logically to the conclusion that to fight Communism at home we must throw democratic principles and methods into the ashcan and adopt the techniques of the Communists themselves, as the John Birch leaders would have us do.

The *News-Press* condemns the destructive campaign of hate and vilification that the John Birch Society is waging against national leaders who deserve our respect and confidence.

How can anyone follow a leader absurd enough to call former President Eisenhower "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy?" Those are the words of the national leader of the John Birch Society, Robert Welch, in a manuscript entitled "The Politician," of which photostatic copies are available.

The *News-Press* condemns the dictator-

al, undemocratic structure of the society.

The *News-Press* condemns the tactics that have brought anonymous telephone calls of denunciation to Santa Barbarans in recent weeks from members of the John Birch Society or their sympathizers. Among victims of such cowardly diatribes have been educational leaders, including faculty members of the University of California at Santa Barbara, and even ministers of the Gospel.

The *News-Press* condemns the pressures on wealthy residents, who fear and abhor Communism, to contribute money to an organization whose leader said that "for reasons you will understand, there can be accounting of funds."

In the Blue Book, the society's "Bible," leader Welch said that the organization needed one million members. He also said that the dues are "whatever the member wants to make them, with a minimum of \$24 per year for men and \$12 for women."

One million members, divided equally between men and women, would bring him 18 million dollars a year. Quite a sum to play with without accountability!

The *News-Press* challenges members of the society to come into the open and admit membership. A local enrollment "in the hundreds" is claimed, but so far only a few of those who have joined the organization have been unashamed enough to admit it.

The John Birch Society already has done a grave disservice to Santa Barbara by arousing suspicions and mutual distrust among men of good will. The organization's adherents, sincere in their opposition to Communism, do not seem to understand the dangers of the totalitarian dynamite

with which they were tampering.

The *News-Press* challenges them: Come up from underground.

And if they believe that in being challenged they have grounds for suit—let them sue. The *News-Press* would welcome a suit as a means of shedding more light on the John Birch Society.

## His Eminence

To the Editor:

Perhaps Max Hall would like to add this to his collection of typographical mishaps: on the morning (Jan. 18) *Nieman Reports* arrived at my desk, the International Edition of the *New York Times*, in a London piece by my colleague Seth King, converted a reference to the Archbishop of Canterbury from "the red-robed Archbishop. . ." to "the red-nosed Archbishop."

We hope it didn't get in the home edition like that; over here it's a subject of lively conversation.

WALTER WAGGONER,  
New York *Times* Bureau, London.

## No Place to Hide

To the Editor:

What it all boils down to is that practitioners of the other arts and professions can hide their mistakes by burial, filing or other means; we print ours.

I say "we" as Schoharie County reporter for the *Schenectady Gazette*.

This refers of course to Max Hall's piece in January *Nieman Reports*.

KARL M. ELISH  
Middleburgh, N. Y.

To the Editor:

Max Hall's delightful article (*Nieman Reports* for January) on typographical howlers recalls the worst blooper we pulled on the *Gainesville Times*. This was when the paper was very young and it darn near killed us for good.

We had a prominent wedding and an affair at the Legion home scheduled the same night. A line was dropped in our "Datebook" and the list of events came out like this:

8 p m Nimocks-Overby wedding, First Methodist Church followed by bingo in the Annex.

SYLVAN MEYER.



# Some Questions for the Future of Newspapers

By John L. Hulteng

If you were confronted by a life-size, full-length photograph of Brigitte Bardot, you could come away with two quite different impressions. If you chose to stand very close to the photograph, you might notice skin texture, pores, moles, maybe even caked makeup. But if you stood off a little way, you would be conscious chiefly of certain remarkable curves.

By the same token, if you stand very close to the record of journalism for the last 25 years you may be able to pick out a good many changes that have taken place during this period. But if you stand off a bit, to get some perspective, your eye is caught by two arresting trends.

One of these is the tendency to shrinkage that the newspaper field has exhibited over the last quarter century. In 1935 there were more than 2,000 dailies being published in this country; today there are a few more than 1750. More than 40 dailies have disappeared during the last four years alone. Nearly 400 of the remaining dailies are operated by absentee owners. Ten years ago there were 76 newspaper chains; today there are 95, and they control nearly half the total daily newspaper circulation.

The list of great newspaper names that have been erased from the rolls altogether or swallowed up in merger is long and depressing. The increasing number of papers operated by absentee or chain ownership and the even more striking increase in the number of monopoly or one-ownership communities are a cause for sober concern to anyone who values the concept of competition as an assurance of responsible press performance.

To be sure, there is nothing wrong *per se* with the decrease in the number of press communication channels, or in the growth of chain ownership. In fact, a persuasive argument can be made that the monopoly paper is the one best able to afford to be a good newspaper. But anyone, layman or newsman, can recognize at once that a newspaper monopoly creates the *occasion* for abuse.

With only one daily newspaper available to the readers of a community, the opportunity is open to unscrupulous ownership to tamper undetected with the flow of news and

thus to influence the community's attitudes toward personalities and issues.

It is no answer to say that the electronic media, outside newspapers or news magazines, provide a substitute for the lost newspaper competition. This is an apples-and-pears comparison. The electronic media are significant elements in the communications field, but they do not compete on the same terms with newspapers. Outside papers reach only a relatively few persons in any community, and news magazines enter only seven per cent of our households.

There is no getting around the fact that the existence of a newspaper monopoly in a community makes it possible for owners and editors to shape the pattern of the news, and the news itself, to specific ends—if this is what they want to do.

So the trend to consolidation and merger during the last 25 years cannot be viewed only in terms of economics. It has, bit by bit, fashioned an emerging and formidable challenge to the newspapermen of today and of the future—a challenge to maintain a sense of responsibility and service despite the gradual erosion of checks and balances that helped maintain this sense in an earlier era.

But before turning fully around to look to the future, let me note the second trend that has seemed to me to stand out in the record of journalism during the last 25 years.

Editors and reporters alike during this period have been turning further and further away from the ideal of objectivity that dominated American journalism during the first three or four decades of this century.

More and more, newspapermen have stressed the notion that simply reporting the bones of the news was not enough. The Hutchins Commission warned us that it was no longer sufficient to tell the facts—we must now tell the truth about the facts. Elmer Davis argued that it was false objectivity to report deadpan every senatorial essay into character assassination, even when the reporter knew that the facts were being misrepresented. Instead, we were told to put the facts in perspective, to provide interpretation in the news columns, not just on the editorial pages.

The increasing complexity of news made this emphasis on interpretation inevitable. There is simply too much going on, and going on in too many complex ways, for that mythical

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John L. Hulteng, professor of journalism at the University of Oregon, was formerly chief editorial writer of the *Providence Journal*. This was a talk to the Allied Daily Newspapers, in Seattle, Jan. 5.

being, the average reader, to make head or tail of it without some help. As George Kennan observed in a speech at Boston recently, the enormous expansion of the body of information has obliged us "to content ourselves with opening small peepholes into this or that portion of the natural process, rather than trying to show it in its entirety." And those who urged the idea of interpretation in the news were asking that these peepholes be fitted with expertly ground lenses that would make everything in view clearer and more understandable.

There was a somewhat more practical reason, too, for the newspapers' growing concern about interpretation. Editors came to recognize during the last quarter century that the growth of the news magazines was a pointed reflection on the failure of the newspapers to provide what *Time*, *Newsweek* and the others came on the scene to offer. Belatedly, the newspapers tried to catch up, to retrieve lost leadership by experimenting tentatively with some of the news magazines' successful gimmicks—condensation, interpretation and departmentalization.

So far, the trend to interpretation in news reporting has not served to recover for the newspapers the ground that was lost to the news magazines in the 30's and 40's. But its growing popularity with newsmen constitutes a challenge as formidable as that presented by the monopoly trend.

Again, there is nothing alarming about news column interpretation *per se*. In the hands of a skillful, informed and dedicated reporter it becomes an invaluable aid to news communication. But in less skillful, less informed or less highly-motivated hands it can be a menacing instrument of editorializing and distortion.

Admittedly, the ideal of objectivity has never been achieved by any reporter, however well suited for the job. But the consciousness of striving for that ideal has been a powerful stabilizing force in American journalism. James Pope, the able and plain-spoken executive editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, puts it this way:

"Objectivity is a compass for fair reporting, a gyroscope, a little secret radar beam that stabs you when you start twisting news to your own fancy; news-column interpretation, as interpreted by far too many of its practitioners, is a license to become a propagandist, an evangel, a Crusader under a false flag."

It is one thing for a Scotty Reston, drawing on a quarter century of rich experience and a filing case full of the most productive contacts in Washington, to offer some insight into the meaning of a Cabinet shift or a Congressional maneuver. It is an altogether different matter for every Tom, Dick and Harry in every newsroom from Olympia to Miami to try his unsure hand at explaining what the news means.

And even greater damage to the flow of the news can be done when newsmen with atrophied ethics use "interpretation" as a cover for the introduction of deliberate bias into the news report.

I agree with James Pope that when reporters and editors lose touch with the compass and gyroscope of objectivity they are embarked on reckless waters—and the danger is not to them but to their readers.

These two challenges—to preserve the concept of responsible journalism despite the extension of monopoly ownership, and to safeguard the honesty of the news columns despite the vogue for interpretation—are large in the foreground as we look to the next quarter century.

What will those years bring for America's newspapers? For a former editorial writer, crystal gazing ought to be a familiar occupation. But I've been out of practice for five years, and the view is a little cloudy.

However, mindful both of the hazards and of my own lack of practice, I'll make a hopeful stab at it.

To begin with, it's possible to say with some confidence that the two major trends of the last 25 years are likely to continue. There will be fewer and fewer large metropolitan papers—and those that survive will be larger and stronger. There will be more and more attention paid to interpreting all facets of the news in the news columns as well as on the editorial pages and in the survey sections.

And there will, as a consequence of this second trend, be increasing emphasis on the role of the specialist in news reporting. As Louis Lyons has pointed out, the news-writing specialist first came on the scene in numbers only during the last quarter century. This was a logical development, and it will as logically be extended. The news is growing more and more complicated, not less so, and the need for background knowledge to cover science, government, medicine, economics and international affairs becomes more acute each year.

The years to come may well see increasing departmentalization of the news columns of the newspaper, somewhat on the news magazine pattern. We've come a long way in this direction already, with sports, business, women's news and local news segregated in varying degrees. Individual papers—notably the St. Petersburg, Florida, *Times*—have experimented with a policy of complete departmentalization, and the reactions they report from their readers are enthusiastic.

Looking to another aspect of journalism of the future, it seems to me likely that there will be some important changes in the coverage of the news. Certainly the electronic media should grow more expert and more versatile in their reporting of spot news as the years go by. This

will oblige the newspapers to tailor their reports to satisfy those needs of the public that are unmet by radio and television.

We may then see in the newspapers' handling of all news the same changes that have already taken place on the sports pages. With the intensive sports coverage offered by radio and TV, newspaper sports editors have recognized that the old play-by-play formula of ten or twenty years ago is outmoded. The reader has very likely seen or heard the sports event as it happened. He turns to his newspaper not so much for a chronological rehearsal of each play or punch as for the background, explanatory information not available to him in the spot news coverage provided by the electronic media. The post-game analysis, the locker room interview, the story behind the goat play or the brilliant stroke of field generalship—these are the things today's sports pages are emphasizing.

It may well be that nearly all newspaper stories of the future—not just sports stories—will be of this sort, providing the background and detail that make the skeleton report of the radio and TV newscaster meaningful. It seems to me that this sort of counter to the challenge of the electronic media makes far better sense for the newspapers than for them to engage in a ruinous competition with radio and TV in terms of entertainment.

There are other guesses that could be made about the pattern of newspaper journalism during the next quarter century—guesses about the likely growth of small town and suburban papers, about advances in production techniques, about the role of newspapers in politics—but I haven't the time here to make them. And, besides, those already suggested raise some pretty pointed questions about how the newspapers ought to be preparing for the changes ahead.

Two of these questions are particularly urgent.

**How are the newspapers going to get and retain the manpower to do the increasingly demanding job of interpreting the news expertly and responsibly? And how are newspapers going to meet the inevitable cries for government controls on the press to offset the effects of the trend to monopoly ownership?**

The wonders of automation and mechanical advance that other forecasters promise will not help to meet the manpower need. Some things in this communications field of ours will always have to be done by hand—by informed, intelligent, dedicated hands.

Getting and keeping human resources of this quality in the newspaper business isn't solely a matter of money.

Salaries are far better than they used to be and very probably will get even more competitive in the years to come. This is only right.

But the ultimate lure that will attract and hold fine minds is the same lure that helped to make newspapers great throughout the history of journalism—the sense of purpose and service that comes from knowing that you are helping to keep the people informed and the machinery of democracy functioning.

This sense of purpose will be generated and sustained if the men who staff newspapers have a role they can respect, and if they also enjoy the respect of their publishers and the respect of the public as essential, valued and expert members of the staff. This is fully as important as money, and in my judgment a good deal more important. And establishing this sense of purpose in the staff of a great, impersonal corporate newspaper of today calls for sincere and extraordinarily gifted leadership on the part of editors and publishers.

Given that brand of leadership, and given the continuing supply of the fine minds to meet the demands of interpretation, there may be no need to worry too much about the second question noted earlier. For the demand for government controls, or a federal commission on the press, will rise chiefly when abuses of newspaper power are evident. They will die down in the face of a truly responsible press, alive to its role and performing it with honest vigor.

If our newspapers default on this obligation, we can expect to hear more and more of such proposals as that advanced in the Hutchins Commission report of 1947 and echoed again more recently by such men as Gordon Gray, Harry Ashmore and Carl Lindstrom.

The way to counter such criticism is not to bridle in hurt indignation. If America's editors and reporters—and publishers—prove themselves able to meet the demands laid on them by the complexity of our age, if they provide the people with a full and honest report of what's happening in the community and the world, the best possible answer will be provided to those who advocate government controls.

These are among the problems the publishers of Washington, and the publishers of America, will be facing in the next quarter century. The challenges I have been discussing are not so tangible, perhaps, as the economic problems. But I submit that they are as fundamental to the continued good health of American journalism as any others. I hope most earnestly that we can find the able men and the strong sense of institutional purpose that will enable us to meet them triumphantly.

# The Newspaper Has a Future If....

By Lester Markel

Recently I have been reading a good deal about mass communication in general and the newspaper in particular. As a result, I wonder whether I am qualified for this subject. Because I am basically a one or two-syllable and only occasionally a three-syllable man and I gather that, unless I am predominantly a polysyllabic fellow, I am not fit to print or to be read or even heard.

For example, I have just made contact with—excuse it please, contacted—a volume on mass media. I was stopped frigid right at the start, at the table of contents; a feeling of utter inadequacy enveloped me. Here are, among others, five chapter headings: “The Phenomenistic Approach”; “The Resistance To Change of ‘Ego-Involved’ Attitudes”; “Selective Exposure, Perceptions and Retention”; “The Question of Social Wholesomeness and The Question of Causality”; “The Relative Incidence of Reinforcement, Minor Change and Conservation”.

And so forth. I do not understand these headings; in fact, I can scarcely pronounce them. I shrink over this assignment because of the simplicity of my formula, namely:

A newspaper's job is to print the news.

But I am far ahead of myself. Before proceeding into orbit with a global solution, I shall try to explore two prime questions: Has the newspaper a future? Can that future be realized?

The answer to both queries is: “Yes, if—” But it is a 96-point if.

\* \* \*

Now these may seem to be trade questions, that concern only the editorial us and require discussion only at journalistic convocations. This is a narrow and a dangerous assumption. In repudiation, I put these propositions:

- 1) The great problem of the world today is an informed public opinion.
- 2) Because the world looks to us for leadership, the important aspect of that problem is American public opinion.
- 3) An informed public opinion depends in great degree on the job done by the mass media.
- 4) Of the mass media the most important is—or surely should be—the newspaper.

If the electorate is well-informed, we shall have a sound opinion and our course is likely to be a wise one. If the electorate is uninformed or badly informed, then our course may well be disastrous.

We are embarked on a difficult voyage toward new frontiers. Our vessel may be staunch with tradition and sturdy of construction; our pilot may be both courageous and wise. Yet we shall not reach our goal unless the crew—meaning “we the people”—does its part. A leader without a following cannot lead. He will not have a following unless the people understand. The road to catastrophe is paved with good but ignorant intentions.

\* \* \*

We face great decisions. What shall we do about Russia? About a summit conference? What about China, constantly hovering over us like a huge red cloud? What about Africa and South America—name any continent? What about our domestic concerns—our economy, integration, the very nature of our system?

Unless we are informed, we cannot cope with these tremendous issues.

Especially we must understand world affairs. We must recognize that there is no longer such a thing as “foreign news.” This is increasingly one world. What happens in the Congo affects Cincinnati; an event in Indonesia will have repercussions in Indiana; what happens about the “six” and the “seven” in Europe or in the workshops of Japan surely affects the factory at Fourth and Main Streets. Korea was “foreign news,” yet 54,246 Americans lives were lost there. The boulevards and the broad ways of the world all converge into one global avenue.

No, there is no longer “foreign news”; this is immediate, insistent, local news.

So with national news. The day of the isolated community is over. Village meetings, county forums still have their places but their agenda must extend far beyond the town limits, because swift transportation and swift communication have made the old mile-post obsolete.

We cannot be complacent about the state of our information. There are most disturbing reports. It is said that three out of ten voters are unaware of almost every major problem in foreign affairs; that only twenty out of every hundred voters can be considered reasonably well-informed. Elmo Roper reports that last September, only a month after the conventions, 28 per cent of the public could not name the Democratic Vice Presidential nominee and 33 per cent could not name the Republican. When these pollees were asked what issues concerned them, 32 per cent could think of none.

What we do not know will surely hurt us.



Before considering what can be done by way of remedy, it may be useful to survey how opinion is formed. There are, as I see it, four main instruments:

First there are mass media—1,761 daily newspapers and 8,979 weekly newspapers; 3,557 radio stations and 531 television stations; the great output of the magazine and book publishers; the 211 pictures produced each year by Hollywood.

Second, there is the government, the President who can influence opinion greatly through press conferences and fireside chats, and, of course, the Congress and other officials.

Third, there are our educational institutions, which provide, or should provide, a general education, technical training and, in addition, a knowledge of current affairs.

Finally, there are the public groups, the various associations for foreign policy, for national purposes, for municipal affairs and the like.

Of these four the newspaper is of paramount importance. And so, after this prolonged prologue I arrive at my theme: that the newspaper has a large future if it will fulfill its assignment.

Why are there doubts expressed about this future? There is uncertainty on two main sources: that the newspaper cannot meet the competition; and that the newspaper is not doing its job.

\*   \*   \*

Consider the competition—mainly television and, in a lesser way, the news weeklies and other magazines that deal with current affairs.

Many editors are suffering from the DTV's, believing that they are doomed by the not-so-silver screen. Certainly there is a contest in entertainment. But the newspaper can meet this competition without flinching and without loss of circulation or kudos if it will do its job.

Television has advantages: in visual presentation, in offering variety and vaudeville, in video gimmicks. But the newspaper has important assets which television can never acquire, such as these:

1) The newspaper is there when you want to read it and at the speed you want to read it. You are not required to tune in at a definite hour, when you may have other beck and calls. Also, you are not required to proceed at the pace set by the broadcaster, who may be either too breath-taking or too snore-inducing.

2) The newspaper does not thrust at you the constant commercial. To be sure we do have advertising, but it is set off in separate compartments and it does not spring suddenly at you and assault your eardrums.

3) The newspaper can supply the kind of perspective which TV cannot provide. On television every page is

a front page, every item gets the same emphasis from the commentator, whether it be a nuclear blast or the latest zyrations of Zsa Zsa. It is handicapped by its time limitation and its need for "hot" copy.

4) Above all, the newspaper can supply the written word, in contrast with the spoken word. The written word carries more—much more—potential authority. It is set down (or should be set down) with deliberation and discrimination. It is there to be seen and pondered rather than snatched, lest it be swiftly lost, from the air waves.

It is said: "One picture is worth ten thousand words." Nonsense. What picture can equal, to select only four, phrases such as these: Churchill: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." Or Benjamin Franklin: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Or Socrates: "I am a citizen not of Athens or of Greece but of the world." Or Voltaire: "I disapprove of what you say but I defend to the death your right to say it."

An inauguration, a storm or a wreck, a championship fight—happenings such as these are done dramatically on television; in this graphic area the newspaper cannot compete. But the fact remains that, having witnessed these events, people will want to read about them, to check their impressions against those of the reporter; above all, they want background and explanation.

Television, in short, is or should be a stimulus rather than a substitute for the newspaper.

As for the news weeklies and the current events magazines, they cannot compete with the real newspaper, because of time lag, because of slant, because of lack of newspaper facilities. This is the definitive fact; in areas where newspapers are weak, news weekly circulation is strong; in areas where newspapers are strong, news weekly circulation lags.

The gathering and proper dissemination of news is still properly, and by its very nature, a newspaper assignment.

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So much for competition. What about the second reservation: that the newspaper is not doing its job.

I am disturbed about the present state of American newspapers. Granted that they are better than they were, they still do not measure up to the task that is required of them in these momentous times. Too many of them are devoted primarily to entertainment rather than to information. Too many suffer from tabloidemia—a plague that causes them to break out in yellow rashes and to play up the sensational rather than the significant news. Too many suffer from

Triviallergies—cavalcades of non-comic comics, low-downs for the love-lorn, high jinks for home bodies.

When non-news features of this kind overwhelm a so-called newspaper, the sheet has lost its claim to the title, it has become a member of what I have called the Froth Estate.

Where should the fault be placed for these transgressions? With three groups: the publisher, the editor, and the reader.

\* \* \*

Publishers and editors have one common concern, the kind of newspaper they decide to make. Too many publishers—aided and abetted or, in any case, not prevented, by their editors—seem to feel that their function is almost solely to sell newspapers, regardless. I shall never concede that the newspaper business is like the plumbing business or grocery business or even the Hollywood business. I insist that there is about every newspaper a public responsibility that must be fulfilled.

Too many publishers and editors have been abdicating their true function to other media. Moreover, when the newspaper tries to compete in the field of entertainment, it cannot win against television and the highly colored magazines. Thus it is good business as well as good ethics for the newspaper to stick to its last and its first: the news.

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Certainly publishers have improved greatly since the days, around 1925, when William Allen White wrote this epitaph for the late Frank Munsey:

"Frank Munsey contributed to the journalism of his day the talent of a meat packer, the morals of a money changer, and the manners of an undertaker. He and his kind about succeeded in transforming a once-noble profession into an eight per cent security. May he rest in trust."

Yes, publishers have improved considerably—but there is a long way to go. Many of them insist that the publisher and the editor live and should live in separate areas with an ironic curtain between. It is true that some editors are publishers and some publishers are editors—you can't tell which came first, the chicken or the egg-head. But for the most part they are neither identical nor twins.

When publishers meet, the problems they discuss are, in the main, business or mechanical rather than editorial problems. Money given by publishers for research is, almost to the last penny, given for mechanical research and hardly a ruble goes for editorial surveys.

I have argued this with certain American publishers. They say, when I suggest funds for editorial research: "You know we would not think of invading the editorial sanctum. God and Horace Greeley forbid!"

The answer is, of course, that they do and they should deal with editorial matters. Theirs is the over-all responsibility and the over-all direction. They should be vitally concerned with what is their chief item of merchandise—the editorial content. I agree with them that newsprint is important but I contend that what goes onto newsprint is also important.

Therefore I hope that the relationship between publisher and editor will become increasingly closer and that the understanding of each other's problems and goals will likewise grow. Mind you, I am not advocating togetherness but only peaceful co-existence.

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As for the editor, his primary task is to present and to explain the news, to carry on without pause the job of informing the reader.

This assignment requires greater effort in these areas, among others, more and sounder interpretation of the news; more objective and better writing; a rebirth of the editorial page.

Of these aims the most urgent is to obtain for the important news a readership comparable to that of the sensational news. The word "news" obviously denotes the reporting of immediate events. But it should also encompass the broader trend of events, the recording and appraisal of the currents discernible in the far-from-pacific ocean that is the world today. The news must be interpreted, the large questions that confront the reader answered in depth. A statement of facts without a statement of the meaning of facts is empty journalism.

Now there is a great to-do in newspaper circles about "interpretation." Many see in it Great Peril, many others see in it Great Promise. The debate takes place in an atmosphere of confusion; there is no agreement on terms, little meeting of the minds; most of all, a dismaying failure to differentiate between interpretation and opinion.

Interpretation is an objective judgment based on background, knowledge of a situation, appraisal of an event. Editorial judgment, on the other hand, is a subjective judgment. Opinion should be confined, almost religiously, to the editorial page; interpretation is an essential part of the news.

Interpretation is the deeper sense of the news. It provides setting, sequence and, above all, significance. Especially is it important in the reporting of national and international news—fields which are in most newspapers underdeveloped areas.

The critics say: "Let us stick to the facts; let us be completely objective." I ask: "What facts?" The reporter and the editor decide out of many facts which shall be printed.

Thus there is even more judgment involved in the selection of the facts than in the interpretation of them.

Let us then not hesitate about interpretation. At the same time, despite the difficulty of attaining it, let objectivity still be our goal. There is still a tendency to allow editorial judgment to determine news play, to permit opinion to intrude into the news column in the form of "special correspondence," "exclusive stories"—and, especially, in the manifold columns.

Many campaigns are waged on page one in the guise of news stories. If there is to be crusading—and I am all for it—let it be done by the knights of the editorial round table.

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The columnists, who grow by leaps and without bounds, deserve special attention. They are of three main types:

There are the Key-hole Kops; they need and should have no introduction. They garner gossip, the most gossamer of gossip; it should be left to the confidential magazines.

There are the Classified Communique Commentators who supply the inside dope. It is more often dope—opium for the masses—than inside.

There are, third, the Ex-Cathedra Editorialists. Sometimes these ponderers are ponderous, but on the whole they do a most useful job. My reservation is that they are taking the place of the editorial page.

With too few exceptions, readers of many newspapers are looking for light and leading from the columnists rather than from the editorials. This is wrong. A newspaper should have an arena of opinion, if only to keep that opinion out of the news columns. Moreover, these columns are written for a widely dispersed and varied readership and do not make clear the local significance of global affairs. I am not arguing that columns should be dropped; I am only urging that they be accompanied by home-grown, grass-root editorials.

\* \* \*

We come then to the problem of better writing. The search for good writing is becoming a more and more jungled safari and often the editor wonders whether he is Horace Greeley or Frank Buck.

On the one hand there are the Purple Prose boys. They overwhelm the reader with lush adverbs and even lusher adjectives. They try to be Lawrence Durrell, Oscar Wilde and David Susskind all at once. They never use a monosyllable unless they fail, after sweat (theirs) and tears (the readers') to find a polysyllable.

Soon you discover that these would-be emperors have, not "no clothes" on, but too many, and underneath all the gilt and the brocade there is nothing. I have learned that

clear writing denotes clear thinking and when the mind is cluttered it will try to hide its confusions in a masquerade of fancy language. But fog does not dispel fog.

Then, on the other, there are the Simple Simon fellows, who are an even greater danger because at the moment they are more numerous and the cult grows, by leaps and without bounds. They insist that you shall write as you talk—write colloquially, write idiomatically, write without reverence for grammar or rhetoric or even punctuation. No sentence, they insist, shall consist of more than eight words and no more than two of the eight shall contain more than two syllables. This is the I-see-a-cat-do-you-see-a-cat-this-kind-of-writing-is-the-cat's-whiskers school of journalism.

There are two things wrong with this Simple Simon formula. Many of these writers who insist that you shall write as you talk should not even talk as they talk. In the second place, writing is intended to be read and contemplated, not directed toward one ear in the hopeless hope that it will not come out of the other.

The high priest of this Typewriter Temple has been Dr. Rudolf Flesch. He has performed a kind of service in directing attention to the blight of stilted writing, the crop of the Purple Reapers; if he has helped to eliminate some of the fancy panties that are applied to too many vocabular lambchops, he deserves at least a semi-Pulitzer-Prize.

But his prescription for cure of this polysyllabic disease is, to my mind, worse than the illness itself. His formula has led to a pattern of loose style just as rigid in its insistence on conformity to non-conformity as the style he indicts. So I say: first, there was Flesch and now there is the devil to pay.

Save us, please, from both the Purple Prose and the Simple Simon chaps. Good writing is not a matter of multi-colors or of mathematics or mechanics. You cannot legislate any rules for good writing. It is a rare process, marked by individuality, by sensitivity, by perception. It arises, as T.S. Eliot said, out of the "agonizing ecstasy" of creation. This is something that is deeply felt; it cannot be measured.

So much—for the present at least—for the editor and publisher. There remains the problem of the reader.

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If there are bad newspapers it is largely, I believe, because there are bad readers. If the reader will withhold his support from an unworthy journal, it will shrivel away like the weed that it is.

We are likely to under-estimate the reader. I have no Gallup Globe and no I.B.M. machine and this is sheer guess, but I would venture this estimate: that twenty per cent of the public is moronic and therefore helpless so far as it is susceptible to information; that another twenty per cent

has no desire to know; that forty per cent could be interested if the job of knowing were made easier; and that only twenty per cent are really well informed.

We can and must operate on this middle forty per cent and awaken them to the need, as good citizens, of being informed.

The reader must in turn fulfill his role. He must try to influence his editor, where such steering is indicated—and there are many wayward hands on the editorial tillers. He must recognize the need of an informed opinion and do what he can to extend the crusade. He must have a kind of loyalty to the good newspaper. The reader must make allowance for our difficulties and occasional gaffs and applaud the real newspaper for its over-all achievement.

Finally, the reader must be free of bias. Every newspaper hears numerous complaints about bias. But there is a strange flavor about this criticism. In long experience I have discovered that the complaints in large part are not that the newspaper is slanted—which should be a legitimate indictment if it were true—but that it is slanted in the wrong direction, meaning that it is not angled in the direction of the critic.

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I have been speaking thus far of the newspaper's national role. The press has also an international role.

We must do what we can to improve the flow of the news among nations. We cannot have understanding and thus peace among the peoples of the world unless they come to know one another better, unless they have truer information about one another.

Freedom of the press is an internal question, but it is also an international one. If the truth is concealed from a people, they may be stampeded into following a leader who will falsely lead them into a war involving a huge segment of mankind.

There is, immediately and notoriously, the case of Russia. Until the Iron Curtain comes down—and the most vital component of that curtain is the unfree press—we cannot really hope for the end of cold war or hot war or even tepid war. If all the Communist people know is what they read in their papers—and this is largely true—we must prepare for a long period of tension and turbulence.

We must strive to learn the truth about the blacked-out areas and to bring the truth into them. Especially now, when we stand uncertainly at a cross-roads of history, that responsibility is most grave. There are clouds at home and there is smog abroad. Amid these fogs, there proceeds, with accelerating tempo, a huge propaganda drive, designed to bemuse us, to confuse others and thus to achieve victory for the Kremlin.

The counter to deeds is a job for government. Yet

words—our basic commodity—are just as vital, because they make deeds known to the world. This is the fundamental cold war. And this is where we come in—or should come in.

The only real counter to Untruth is Truth. As Mark Twain said: "Always do right. This will gratify some people and astound the rest."

A good part of the world is not getting the important facts; many nations in the world do not have true pictures of other nations. We must realize the distortions are not confined to the black, the censored areas. They exist, in disturbing degree, in our presumably white areas.

Do we have accurate pictures of other countries, even of our allies? Do we not overplay palace photographs and monumental movie stars? Do we not still indulge in stereotypes when we present national images?

Do other countries have accurate pictures of us? Do not Hollywood and the Not-So-Great, Not-So-White Way get more of a play in many foreign papers than the really significant news? Are our national aims and international programs adequately interpreted to readers abroad?

We must then examine the flow of the news, to make certain that it is an unsullied and significant flow. We cannot silence Radio Moscow or Radio Peiping but we can greatly augment the voice of the free press.

Such are the gigantic problems that confront American journalism. What is there to be done?

There are those who would seek remedy through government. But censorship is ruled out; it is alien to our tradition as well as our Constitution. Others propose committees to survey and comment on the performance of the press. There is no genuine answer here either. Such commissions as the British Press Council have some slight influence through the mobilization of public opinion, but the basic faults are not cured and on the whole the British tabloid press is much worse than ours.

No, the remedy lies elsewhere. The reader can censor bad newspapers by refusing to buy them. Publishers and editors must realize that the press must be more than free—it must also be responsible.

Some self-analysis could be of great service. No profession I know, with the possible exception of psychiatry, is so sensitive to criticism as the newspaper business. We feel that we must give the impression of omniscience—that we see all evil, hear all evil, speak no evil. Therefore, we may make a heinous error on page one, but we print the correction (unless, of course, a libel suit is involved) on the ship news page or among the comics. Let us admit we are human; we shall thereby gain, not lose, respect and revenue.

As for analysis of newspapers, I have always been concerned about the gentleman's agreement among newspap-



ers that they shall not print anything, however urgent or in the public interest, that reflects on another newspaper. Thus the sins of some of the brothers are visited on all of the brothers.

Self-examination and self-analysis—I do not mean market research or scientific samplings to help the advertising departments—are badly needed. And research on editorial problems is an urgent requirement.

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So, we return to the basic question: Has the newspaper a future? The answer, as I have tried to indicate, is yes—if the publisher, the editor and the reader will do their parts.

As a nation, we must fulfill, wisely and with courage, the role to which history has assigned us. We may dislike that responsibility; we may try—through a new isolationism, through an insistence that foreign aid is money down the drain, through international blindness—we may try to disavow that role, but we cannot escape our fate.

But we shall not be able to reach the sound judgments that are so urgent for us unless we have an informed and

alert public opinion, unless our information is good.

There must be a new dedication to the coverage of the news. We of journalism must find our circulation in reporting and explaining the great events of the day rather than seeking it frantically in comics and contests and circuses. Our basic job, our very reason for being, is the news. It is a huge and challenging assignment.

I am certain that the reader will respond if we do our part. As Raymond Clapper put it: "Never overestimate the people's knowledge or underestimate its wisdom."

These are bleak days in the world and at times the summits seem unattainable. Yet I am hopeful for the future, for there is a basic strength, a rock-bottom unity in the nation. We have always come through in the crises.

Let all of us get on with the prime job; to do our best to inform all of the people at least some of the time and at least some of the people all the time, in the hope that no one will be able to fool all of the people all of the time.

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Lester Markel is editor of the Sunday New York *Times*. This is his Maxwell Memorial Lecture at Ohio State University, Feb. 23.

## Human Interest vs. Special Interest

By Alex Edelstein

This is an essay that touches upon Flesch and the Devil. Flesch (Rudolf variety) is that hard-nosed advocate of simplified writing and mass appeal, while the Devil, in this case, is a public opinion poll. For those of our readers who are left somewhere between Flesch and the Devil, we can only plead that this is intended to be in the reader interest.

It is this writer's contention that in the increasing emphasis being placed in news stories upon *human interest* and *mass appeal* the vast majority of American newspapers have forgotten that their audience is made up of *special interest* groups, *not of a mass audience*, and that these special interest groups shade in prejudice, preference and point of view from one radical extreme to another on almost any public event or issue. While everyone can lay some claim to being *human interest* is very much another matter. The nebulous phrase at best, human interest, has outlived its disusefulness. It is being misused to justify content and writing which only by "prescription" has *mass* appeal. Altogether,

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too much newspaper content is aimed broadside. We need to trade our shotgun concept of news for a rifle.

On the broad scene, repeated public opinion polls in the past 20 years have afforded conclusive evidence in support of the *special* interest vs. the *human* interest approach to political news. The traditional laissez-faire concept of the free marketplace of ideas has given way to the undeniable fact that the educated and uneducated, the informed and uninformed, the disposed and the predisposed all have a distinctive set of attitudes and opinions that color their approach to almost any problem—and this includes the reading of political news in newspapers.

Republicans read newspaper content that reinforces their particular views, and Democrats do likewise. The Independent is actually a political "man in motion," responding to a variety of cross pressures and appeals, often confused by what he reads and discusses on the many sides of the issues. And finally, there are the politically inert, who make up at least one half of our voting-age population. Like the legendary monkey, they read no politics, speak no politics and hear no politics. Only the latter can be viewed as a *mass*. Each of the others is a special audience for a special kind of content.

If one recognizes and accepts this distinction between *human* interest and *special* (individual or group) interest, it is not difficult to understand the inefficacy of our "One Party Press," as it is less than appreciatively described. The fact is that in an open communication system such as ours we can never have a "One Party Press" more than in *intent*, for the responses of the audience to "One Party Press" content cannot help but produce an entirely different set of statistics. It seems almost too obvious to assert that the Franklin Delano Roosevelt voters read only what they wanted to read about their beloved FDR. They set their own quota of exposure to praise and censure of him and in the latter circumstance they were far more curious than believing.

The point is well illustrated by a post-election public opinion poll (a kind of Devil's advocate) conducted by the writer in Seattle, Wash., about a year ago. The occasion was a referendum submitted to the electorate by the City Council. Three years earlier, the voters had approved a Council proposal for a substantial bond issue which was to provide, among other things, the construction of a new concert-convention hall. There was some disappointment and surprise, therefore, when the Council announced that costs of land acquisition had greatly exceeded expectations, and offered as a substitute proposal a previously discarded plan to convert the existing Civic Auditorium into a concert-convention hall. This could be done, the Council explained, with remaining funds. When this suggestion was attacked in the courts by a vigorous minority as violating the public mandate, the Council moved to get a new mandate from the voters in the form of the referendum.

A blitz publicity program supported the referendum measure. The two daily newspapers in Seattle supported the Council decision editorially and in the generous use of their news columns. One television station carried a highly publicized debate between two prominent attorneys. A second television station produced a comprehensive documentary. A top-rated advertising agency prepared newspaper advertisements and launched a spot-announcement, get-out-the-vote campaign on radio. A women's group manned telephones. Pamphlets were distributed on street corners and speakers invaded the businessmen's luncheon groups and women's clubs. The object of the blitz was to get out 40 per cent of the vote recorded at the last general election, the figure required by state law to validate a special election.

To achieve the 40 per cent turnout, some 87,964 votes were needed. When the balloting was over, only 74,777 persons had voted, some 13,000 votes short of the objective. But five of six persons who had voted had marked their X in favor of the proposal of the City Council—the position which had been vigorously endorsed by the newspapers.

Inasmuch as a single-issue, special ballot proposal on a new concert-convention hall was a somewhat esoteric issue, it could be said that the media had done a spanking job. The referendum was carried by far more than the 60 per cent majority that was required. As for the missing 13,000 votes, the Council moved immediately to contend that the 40 per cent requirement did not apply in this case (as it had on selected occasions implied earlier in *sotto voce*), and it attempted to go ahead with its plans. Unfortunately, from the Council viewpoint, the opposition went back to the court. The decision at the time of this writing rested in the hands of the State Supreme Court. (Just returned, in favor of the Council.)

Enough discussion and controversy developed over the outcome of the referendum to stimulate the newspapers and television stations to seek some insight into the part the media had played. Why had more persons not voted? Could the media have played a more effective role? There was the persistent rumor of a voter boycott. Had there been, in fact, an organized and deliberate effort to keep the voting below the 40 per cent minimum? It took some courage on the part of the media to undertake this inquiry.

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In the answers to the questions that had been posed might well be found the justification of either Flesch or the Devil—the proposition of whether newspapers should be unswervingly dedicated to getting out the vote, no matter *when* and *for what*, or recognition of the variability of public sentiment and public issues—not the least of which was the serious question of whether to-vote-or-not-to-vote in the case at hand.

Some of our statistics testify as to the effectiveness of the "buckshot" approach, irrespective of its justification in other terms. Voting was clearly related to newspaper reading. Of those who paid the *most* attention to news about the election, two out of three turned out to vote. Of those who paid the *least* attention to news about the election, only one of ten voted.

But the figures conceal an interesting paradox which itself requires explanation. Of those who read the *most* about the election, and discussed it the *most* (with neighbors, family, friends, co-workers), more tended to vote *no* or deliberately *withheld* a *no* vote than those who had read and discussed the election news the *least*. In these terms, it could be said that the more the person read the predominantly favorable press content, the more he tended to vote *contrary* to the newspapers' position. This is what the statistics revealed. But as suggested earlier, the explanation is somewhat less damaging.

The so-called "high media" group—those who were most

informed and conversant with the issue—also tended to be members of the highest *status* groups. They were the better educated, higher income reader. They were deeply concerned with the proposed change in concert hall planning, a change which clearly meant an inferior facility. While they *read* the arguments advanced in favor of the second proposal, they were *predisposed* toward the original proposal. They *read*, but they *rejected* what they read. *They were far more curious than believing.*

There is evidence that this dissatisfaction with what was read transferred itself into dissatisfaction with the newspaper itself. For an example, of those who were satisfied with the Council proposal, a large majority expressed satisfaction also with the way the media had handled the issue. But of those who were dissatisfied with the Council proposal less than half were satisfied with the media. About one fourth of those questioned were not satisfied with detailed aspects of presentation and almost as many gave *qualified* responses on these items. There is a great danger implicit here in newspapers identifying with *positions* on issues rather than with *clarifying* them. While the media may reinforce the beliefs of supporters of an issue, it may also alienate the opposition and neglect those on the fringe of the debate.

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It is interesting also to consider the behavior of the “least interested”—the “low media” group. They had not given thoughtful consideration to the City Council’s proposal in terms of their own participation, but rather as another “civic project” with which they had vague feelings of community identification. They had not discussed the issue with anyone and obviously did not feel that they were intimately affected by the outcome. Lacking, therefore, real knowledge of the matter, compelling identification, or any strong sense of conviction, they could be easily persuaded to accept the Council’s and the media view *if they could be reached*.

There is a principle of “least effort” in mass media habits of reading, viewing and listening just as there is in any other kind of behavior. Those *least interested* can be reached most effectively by the medium that requires *their least effort*. In this political campaign, it was AM-radio listening. Of those persons who read newspapers the *least* and listened to radio the *most*, an overwhelming majority (97 per cent) said they voted “yes” on the referendum. It should be remembered that a saturation, spot announcement campaign had been carried on radio on the day of the election and the day prior to it urging the public (1) To vote, and (2) To vote “yes.” Newspapers here proved to be less a *mass* medium than radio. That is just as well.

The alignment of the media on the side of the City Coun-

cil and in its urgings to “get out the vote” seem to this writer to be a product of oversimplification of the news and the *mass* concept. In this kind of preoccupation with issues and partisans of issues the newspaper is increasingly identifying itself with the sources of news and taking less cognizance of how these issues affect their readers’ special interests. In doing this, the newspapers may well lose faith with their readers and lose credibility as a source.

Newspapers are a powerful instrument for social and political control, and movements and parties have always sought to bend them to this purpose. There was a day, early in our journalism history, when most readers could count on a partisan newspaper to express for them their “special interest.” Today there are few cities where there is daily newspaper *economic* competition, and there are even fewer where there is editorial diversity. The newspapers which survive possess therefore a greater opportunity than ever before—the opportunity to satisfy a diversity of interests rather than single parties or interests. If we meet the needs of the *interested*, they will arouse the *inert*.

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## Re-enactment of Reality

By Ken Macrorie

Some years ago on the steps outside City Hall in Manhattan, I saw several news photographers loading cameras and other men looking down the street to the right. Pretending to be attached officially to the moment, I witnessed what I now call the *reenactment of reality*.

As I moved from the curb away from the milling reporters and toward the steps, I noticed Mayor Wagner come out of one of the large front doors of the Hall, look down the street, pop back into the building again. Up the block, a black open limousine pulled around the corner and stopped. On the porch of City Hall, the Mayor stepped out again. He was waiting for a cue. On signal, the car moved slowly toward us and the Mayor started his descent of the long flight of stairs. The Prime Minister of Japan and he met at the curb, the Mayor arriving three seconds before the limousine, to be photographed waiting, graciously greeting. The public was not present for this most public of events. No one had showed except a few policemen and a handful of City Hall’s blasé white-collar workers. The swirling cameramen and reporters quickly clustered at the car. One, the self-appointed leader of the moment, called, “Hey, Mayor! Over here between the

flags!" pointing to the front of the limousine where stood tiny American and Japanese flags attached to two chromium staffs rising from the bumper. He pushed the Mayor into position. "Point out the city," he ordered. The Mayor's hand went up, finger extended as if pointing out a particular sight. The Prime Minister assumed the required curious look. He had been shown the city. You could almost hear the TV voice of authority later that evening: "This afternoon, Mayor Wagner welcomed Prime Minister Kishi of Japan at City Hall and showed him the city."

This kind of reenactment of reality is commonly practiced by first-rate, responsible newspaper and television reporters, sometimes with good reason, because the truth often has a way of becoming unrepresentable at the required moment. I found this showing of the city to Prime Minister Kishi inexcusable fraud—a pitiful cliché on the part of both newsmen and the city administration. But at other times, a reenactment has seemed excusable, even mandatory.

Earlier that day in New York City, the Prime Minister had held a press conference at the Waldorf-Astoria. Television cameramen shot pictures of the crowd reacting to the speech before it was made. That was because the heavy floodlights erected in the audience area would be shining in the Prime Minister's face as he spoke, preventing any photographer from shooting at the audience to get a picture of the crowd. I watched a cameraman try to persuade a few early arrivers to sit in the front two rows and appear to be smiling and looking up at a speaker. The cameraman later told me of the need in television news reporting to give the viewers cues to "where they are" at the beginning of any filming of an event.

Few critics of news reporting today believe that the reporter can neatly detach himself from the events he observes. Few argue for objectivity or ask that all opinion or interpretation be avoided in reporting. Yet some complain about the staging of news events before they know the circumstances. A magazine editor recently wrote me that "there is a case to be made that staging news is deceitful in intention (though the deceit is not what is important to producers) and misleading, boring, and entirely wasteful in its result." Well, yes and no.

As newsmen get in the habit of setting up the acts they photograph, they may distort the truth and damage the very human relations they are trying to report. For example, in the television coverage of Premier Khrushchev's 1959 trip to the United States I saw one newsman's pictures of another newsman's staging of Khrushchev shaking hands with Adlai Stevenson. The two men agreed to oblige the reporter. But several other cameramen also wanted their shots—not the same handshake and smile their competitor got. Stevenson and Khrushchev obliged again, and

again. This kind of puppet show leaves the principals with not one smile for each other. In a "Talk of the Town" item of December 31, 1949, the editors of *The New Yorker* magazine charged that *Life* magazine editors operated under four illusions: (1) "that the photographer is not present at the scene, (2) "that a picture in a national magazine doesn't alter the situation or change the life or condition of the subject," (3) "that a magazine can expose press agency at the very moment it is making use of it," (4) "that a magazine can introduce its readers to some cruel or loathsome prank without in any way associating itself with the deed."

On the other hand, the staging of an event may demonstrate a sense of the reporter's responsibility toward the subject in the news. I have often heard professors condemn the radio or television reporter's practice of telling his subject the nature or text of the questions he will ask him in a subsequent interview. They say that this practice not only deceives the listener but also takes the spontaneity out of the report, the very quality radio and television are especially equipped to capture. The next time I am faced with such an outraged professor, I will ask him to be the subject of a sample television interview, which might go like this:

"I'll be the reporter, you the man interviewed," I say.

"All right," says the professor.

"I understand that you have worked at Howells University for ten years."

"That's true, in the English department."

"I understand that the doors in the men's toilets have been removed by the campus police to combat suspected homosexual practices at the University. What do you think of that?"

"I think it is the stupidest thing I have ever heard of. If this is an example of the enlightened way a university deals with a major social problem, then I think I am against enlightenment."

"Thank you professor, that's all we have time for."

"Hey wait! You mean that's the only question they would use on the TV news program?"

"You mean you don't like our unrehearsed question and answer session? You gave a good spontaneous answer. I like it and the way you said it. It was what you really felt, wasn't it?"

"Yes, but my God, I can't—"

"You mean you would like to reconsider your remarks?"

"Yes, I would. In that situation, I would like to soften my words a little and add some more explanation to show the public I'm not defending homosexuality but suggesting that we have to understand it rather than play detective games with it."



"That's my point, Professor. Most real events do involve talk. If it's unrehearsed talk there are some inconveniences and dangers. Perhaps there are some misrepresentations just as false as those you point out in the reenactment of reality."

What counts in any reported interview is not whether the news is staged or reenacted but whether the report is representative of the man and the moment. No formula will ever be devised for easily determining or achieving that representativeness. During the Kennedy-Nixon campaign of 1960, television reporters on several hour-long interview shows announced they were withholding their questions from the candidates until the actual interview took place, at least so they said to television viewers. Walter Cronkite, one interviewer, asked Mr. Nixon some strong opening questions about past accusations of dirty politics and unethically obtained campaign funds. But he had chosen other questions to balance: they allowed the vice-president to bring out his strengths as well as faced him with his weaknesses (or, if you will, the charges of his opponents). Mr. Cronkite in tone and manner showed Mr. Nixon the respect due a man running for high office under the attendant strains of the campaign.

I realize that the strongest reporters of our time, men like Edward R. Murrow, James Reston, and Howard K. Smith, usually work within the limits of time, space, and electronic machine without twisting the news or wringing the significance out of it because of their fear of the warping power in the medium. Yet I am increasingly distressed by the response of many critics and newsmen to the problems inherent in the reenactment of reality. Academic critics too often condemn any reenactment out of hand, and professional newsmen too often profess to see no problem at all in this "routine necessity."

We are told these days that Courier IB and Satellite Echo and their descendants may soon be used for bouncing teletype, television, and telephone messages into a vast space network that will render obsolete underground and ground cable systems. Whether reporters in the future will be able to make machines do their bidding is a real question. As we move into more reporting by sound and picture and less by print, newsmen must become aware of the dangers of distortion inherent in their processes. They must push for new tools, like smaller mobile cameras which do not require cumbersome lighting equipment. They must study more deeply the language of pictures, its devices of blur and clarity, the dangling modifiers and active and passive verbs of its grammar.

In "The Poet and the Press" (*Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1959) Archibald MacLeish asserted that poetry and journal-

ism are not "two poles of the world of words in our time." He said that journalism is not the opposite of art: it, too, involves discipline, commitment, selection, ordering, and dependence on human experience of the actual world. He was talking, of course, of first-rate poetry, not of the kind marked by dependence on stereotype and vagueness, divorced from true human experience on the sensuous level.

The writer of imaginative literature, poet or novelist, struggles daily with the truth and representativeness of his reenactment of reality. Men unread in imaginative literature often divide it into gross categories—realistic or fanciful. For them, the former is "true," and therefore to be tested against actual life; the latter is "made up" and need not be tested against anything. A second thought would show them the error of such categorizing. They know that Shakespeare and Arthur Miller, for example, are read because of their truth—yet both "made up" their characters. Aristotle in his little volume of dramatic and literary analysis, called *The Poetics*, asserted that the characters of great drama remain throughout the drama true to life, to type, and to themselves. And so with any great literature. As adults we turn to *Alice in Wonderland* or *Gulliver's Travels* again and again because their characters and events, though highly fanciful, are deeply true to life, to type, and to themselves. Every writer of imaginative literature faces this challenge when he picks up his pen: will he be able to create a world of his own that is greatly true to the world of all men? Modern-day painters and sculptors, also involved in the struggle, frequently refer to their works of art as *statements*. They mean to say that the work they have created is their statement of the way the world looks or feels to them. Naturally enough, they talk of the truth or falsity of these artistic statements. My point is that newsmen must talk of the truth or falsity of their journalistic statements—and with the same desperate, agonizing uncertainty as the artist.

No newsmen is going to capture truth in the sense that he succeeds in *reproducing* reality, even if he has three mobile television cameras at the scene of action. He can only report or reenact reality. Perhaps Archibald MacLeish, speaking in "Ars Poetica" of what a poem should be, said for me what I have been trying to say throughout this essay. (For the word *poem* in the following lines, read *news report*):

A poem should be equal to:  
Not true.

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Ken Macrorie, associate professor at San Francisco State College, teaches a course on "Mass Media of Communication" in the English Department. He is author of a textbook, *The Perceptive Writer, Reader and Speaker*.

# NIEMAN NOTES

1939

In the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* Sunday magazine for Feb. 16, **Irving Dilliard** wrote the story of the struggle for Missouri in the beginning days of the Civil War along the Mississippi. Dilliard was guest lecturer at Rhode Island State University for a week in March and speaker at a Nieman dinner, March 9.

1940-41

On Sunday morning, Feb. 19, **Volta Torrey**, editor of the *Technology Review*, and **William M. Pinkerton**, Harvard news director, woke up to find the airlines strike had cancelled their flight to Florida where they were scheduled to speak to the Southern Regional Science Seminar for university information officers at Gainesville, on science writing. But these two old AP newshawks beat their way to Florida in time to make their speeches and were back at their desks on schedule Wednesday morning, with the strike still on.

1943

**John Day**, after six years as director of news at CBS, resigned, along with his chief, Sig Mickelson, in protest at a reorganization.

Former managing editor in Dayton, Louisville and Newark, he planned to go back to newspapering.

1945

**Robert Bordner** of the Cleveland *Press* reports his marriage to Eunice Metron, landscape consultant and columnist. He is the new president of the Peninsula Library and Historical Society in his home town and has started a campaign for \$150,000 to build it a new library building. He helped found it 20 years ago.

**Houstoun Waring**, editor of the Littleton (Colo.) *Independent*, writes on the letterhead of the *Dega District News*, New South Wales, of a stop-over in Hawaii and a meeting with Ethel and Bill Lederer (*Reader's Digest*) and Esther

and George Chaplin (editor, Honolulu *Advertiser*). The Warings are going to England April 25 on a month's trip under the auspices of the English Speaking Union. "We expect to get acquainted with the British small town press."

1948

**George Weller**, Chicago *Daily News* correspondent, has been transferred back to Rome, after basing for some time on Cyprus. His beat is the same, reaching to the Middle East. He exploited his Cyprus stay in a play "Second Saint on Cyprus," which ran in February at the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, England, and won the theatre's international drama contest among 155 entries.

1949

**Grady Clay**, real estate editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, has been elected to honorary membership in the American Institute of Architects. He earlier received several awards from the Institute including its 1959 first prize for architectural journalism for an article "Metropolis Regained" in *Horizon*. He is now on leave of absence, with a Ford Foundation grant for research in urban renewal and affiliated with the Joint Center for Urban Studies of Harvard and M.I.T.

1950

**John McCormally** reports an exciting year as associate editor of the Hutchinson *News*, "the only paper in the State of Kansas to back Kennedy." He and his wife escorted a group of readers to Europe on a project of the paper to promote international understanding, "tagged along with Murrey Marder (*Washington Post*) to the Summit meeting in Paris—went to the Democratic convention and ran into Bob Fleming (ABC, Washington)—got a part-time job at the convention helping Ken Galbraith keep track of the Kansas delegation for Kennedy, at which I did very badly. Our little boy who took his first steps in Harvard Yard had his 12th birthday and is talking about going to

Harvard. Ye gods, only five years away."

**Clark Mollenhoff**, on leave from the Cowles Publications on an Eisenhower Fellowship, has been all over Africa and the Middle East and plans to visit Soviet Russia and most of Europe before returning. He and his wife were in Addis Ababa during the abortive revolution. Clark got out several exclusive stories to the Des Moines *Register* and *Tribune* and rounded up pictures, one of them worth an 8-column play. Georgia wrote an account of their Ethiopian experience that made a page one story in Des Moines.

1951

Besides being managing editor of the St. Paul *Dispatch*, **Bob Eddy** judged the Iowa AP writing contest, taught a class in magazine writing last term at the University of Minnesota, wrote an article on John Cowles for the New York *Herald Tribune's* series on distinguished American journalists, took his wife and five children to Mexico for a month's trip over Christmas, and worked on setting up an alumni scholarship in journalism at the University of Minnesota. He was elected to the APME board of directors.

1952

**Pete Ivey**, director of the University of North Carolina news office, explains:

As you may not know (and this may be denied) the University of North Carolina is runnerup to Harvard in the number of people in high positions in the Kennedy Administration. To be sure we are rather remote runners up, but by counting everybody, including Dr. Jack Powell (who is Dr. Travell's husband—she is the White House physician) we score better than most of the also rans.

1953

**Melvin Mencher**, professor of journalism at the University of Kansas, writes of a Nieman reunion, with Hodding Carter, there to receive the national citation for journalistic merit from the William Allen White Foundation, and John McCormally, who went over from Hutchinson for the event.

The **William Steifs** (San Francisco

*News*) report a baby, Ruth Hilda, born the last day of 1960.

## 1954

**Lionel Hudson**, news director of the Australian Broadcasting Commission, is spending three months in North America on an assignment to produce a program on U.S.-Canadian relations. This is for world-wide distribution by the new International Television Federation, known as Intertel.

**Douglas Leiterman**, pursuing a global beat for interviews and documentaries for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, reports meeting Prof. Merle Fainsod in a hotel in New Delhi and getting Robert Hoyt ('53) of the Knight papers Washington bureau, "to do an interview for us with Jimmy Hoffa that was a real gem."

## 1957

**Fred Pillsbury**, getting acclimated to Philadelphia on the *Bulletin*, reports it isn't true that Boston's winters are the worst. He tested the local climate and "caught a heavy cold looking over a sailboat (in January) parked in a meadow, surrounded by three feet of snow."

## 1959

*Time*, Inc. for March 18 has a story on **Stanley Karnow**, their Hongkong bureau chief, crediting him with the basic reporting for cover stories all over the globe (most recently Ferhat Abbas, Liu Shao-chi, Robert Menzies, Hongkong and, in that issue, the king of Laos.)

Karnow calls the Laos piece "undoubtedly the most difficult. Trying to put Laos into intelligible language is trying to rationalize the irrational."

**T. V. Parasuram** has been elected secretary of the United Nations Correspondents Association. He represents the Press Trust of India. "U. S. prestige is very high here following Adlai Stevenson's appointment, particularly among the undeveloped countries. Stevenson has proved a good mixer and is very active."

## 1960

Reba and Tom Dearnore (*Baxter Bul-*

*letin*, Mountain Home, Ark.) have adopted a baby girl, Diana Ruth, from Little Rock.

**V. V. Eswaran** writes from New Delhi that he is posted in the capital as special correspondent for the *Hindustan Times* covering four government departments: Railways, Transport and Communications, Irrigation and Power, and Food and Agriculture. He had been posted for five months in West Bengal. "I am happy over my new assignment. What has given me satisfaction is that my competence, after my Nieman Fellowship, has been recognized both in respect of emoluments and status."

**Reg Murphy** moved from the Macon *Telegraph* to become political editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* the first of the year. He was chief of the Atlanta bureau for the *Telegraph* during the past six legislative sessions.

**Ralph Otwell** was promoted to news editor on the Chicago *Sun-Times*, the first of the year. His new assignment is to section two of the Sunday paper, "the dignity section." "I've long felt this section the best journalistic product in Chicago and I'm happy to be associated with it." The big news in the Otwell family was a new baby in February, Douglas Keith, which by Ralph's statistics is the fourth such product of the last Nieman year, a fertile year at Harvard.

**Edmund Rooney**, back at the Chicago *Daily News*, has been stirring things up on his beat, covering the Cook County district attorney's office. The D. A. changed his schedule to see the press daily soon after Rooney took over the job.

The **Jack Samsons** report from Albuquerque a new son, James Lyon, born in December.

Back on the *China News* in Taipei, **Shen Shan** was promoted from city editor to assistant managing editor in charge of special projects. "I edit a weekly and plan stories requiring a lot of research by someone else."

## Frontier Niemans

Among the rugged individualists who have been recruited by New Frontiersman Jack Kennedy to join his administration are three tough crusading newspapermen

who have been Nieman Fellows.

**John Seigenthaler** on the Nashville *Tennessean* and **Wallace Turner** on the Portland *Oregonian* had been digging into abuses in the teamsters union before the Senate Committee put Robert Kennedy on it. Turner won a Pulitzer prize for this. Seigenthaler collaborated with Robert Kennedy on his book about it and is now the attorney general's special assistant.

Turner is press officer for Gov. Ribicoff's Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

**Edwin O. Guthman** won a Pulitzer prize for his work a dozen years ago on the Seattle *Times* in digging out the facts that vindicated a University of Washington professor who had been fired on false charges of subversive activity. Guthman is press officer for the Justice Department.

Guthman was a Nieman Fellow in 1951, Seigenthaler and Turner in 1959.

They bring the number of Nieman Fellows in Washington to 47, representing 15 bureaus, five of them chiefs of bureaus, five with the *New York Times*, five with the *Washington Post*. The Washington Nieman group plan to resume monthly dinner meetings.

## New Fellowship for Science Writer

An additional Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, for a science writer, will be awarded this spring, through a gift of the ADL Foundation. It will be called the Arthur D. Little Fellowship, in honor of the founder of the industrial consulting and research organization which bears his name.

The ADL Foundation has provided the full cost of a fellowship, tuition and stipend, for three years, starting with the college year opening this September.

Selection from applications will be made by the Nieman Fellowship Selecting Committee on the same terms as the other Nieman Fellowships, which provide one year of study at Harvard University for newspapermen on leave of absence for the period of study.

Applications will be received by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard up to April 15.

## William McDowell Stuckey 1916-1961

William McDowell Stuckey died of a heart attack on New Year's Day. He was associate director of the American Press Institute at Columbia where in the past five years he had conducted seminars for newspapermen. Few men had so wide an acquaintance among newspapermen or stood higher in their respect. Native of Lexington, Ky., he began his newspaper career there on the *Lexington Leader* under A. B. Guthrie, then city editor. Stuckey became city editor and executive editor of the *Leader*, then joined the staff of the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and served there until his appointment to the API.

He was educated at Exeter Academy and Yale where he was graduated with a degree in drama in 1940. The playwriting he started in college continued through his newspaper career. One was produced on Broadway in 1953. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1950 and one of the group who brought out that year the symposium, "Reading, Writing and Newspapers," that required three editions in 7,000 copies to meet the demand of newspapers and journalism schools. He served three years in the second World War as a naval officer.

His wife, Robyn, and their two sons continue their residence in Tenaflly, N. J.

President Grayson Kirk of Columbia University, in a statement on Bill Stuckey's sudden death, said:

"To his outstanding abilities in journalism, Bill Stuckey added a breath of scholarly interest and articulate expression which made him a valued member of the university community."

The William McDowell Stuckey Memorial Scholarship was established at Exeter Academy by his many friends from Exeter, Yale and Kentucky days and associates at Columbia and Harvard.

Something of the quality that won Bill Stuckey affection and admiration is described in a letter from his oldest journalistic associate and long-time friend, A. B. (Bud) Guthrie:

Bill was a boy of mine, a protegee. I think I was the first to give him a

newspaper job. Bill was such a man as one seldom encounters, honest, perceptive, courageous, dedicated. Often in his presence I felt unworthy, though, God knows, not because he felt superior. It was just that he was so stalwart and so good.

For more years than I care to tally, we were dear friends of the Stuckys, of Bill and his wife, Robbie, whom we loved, and love, as much. Just a day or two before his death they had entertained my daughter and her friends, who are Montanans, too, and felt strange and needed warm and helpful hospitality on the eastern shore. Of course they got it in abundance.

While I was trying to think of a word for Bill, while I was cursing the blind evil in life, the word came, not from me but from our friend, Ted Morrison. The word was "gallant."

## Robert Lee McCary 1923-1961

Robert Lee McCary, a brilliant young newspaperman who was telegraph editor of the *Chronicle*, died yesterday in Peter Bent Brigham Hospital at Boston, Mass. He was 37.

He was stricken with cancer last autumn. Surgery, radiation, and the most advanced therapeutic techniques were unavailing.

Mr. McCary had been on leave from this newspaper for a year of special study at Harvard University under a fellowship from the Nieman Foundation, which grants the awards each year to 12 of the nation's outstanding newspaper reporters and editors.

A man with a restless, critical mind, Mr. McCary was gifted as well with taste, an immense fund of knowledge, and a sense of humor that was warm and yet incisive.

These gifts made working with him a pleasure. But even more, they enriched the pages of the *Chronicle* through his literate sense and sound news judgment.

It was Mr. McCary's pencil, wielded with respect for style and the facts, that sharpened features and trimmed news stories to meet the exigencies of daily publishing. He loved the anecdote that revealed, and the fact that offered insight. But he scorned the verbose, and punctured pomposity. He often could sum up news more pithily in a picture caption than many reporters can in a column.

If Mr. McCary was respected for his editorial craftsmanship, he was also a creative writer of talent and grace in his own right. He contributed many special articles to the *Chronicle*, including reviews of jazz and books, and background interpretations of developments in science and international affairs.

All his own writings bore a unique quality that also marked his personal life: they were lucid; they stemmed from an active and penetrating curiosity about the world and its people; and above all they were humorous—with a wit born out of wisdom.

At the *Chronicle*, where he started as a copy boy immediately after World War II, Mr. McCary worked successively on the copy desk and the news and telegraph desks. Before he left for Harvard he successfully undertook a special assignment to develop and sharpen the wire news report.

Mr. McCary was a native of San Antonio, Texas, and grew up in Florence, Alabama. During World War II he served in the Army Air Force from April, 1941, to October, 1945, and spent two years in the Aleutians.

He studied at the University of California while working on the *Oakland Post-Enquirer*, and joined the *Chronicle* in 1946.

In 1953 he returned to his home town as news editor of the Florence (Ala.) *Times*, and the following year he went to Tokyo as news editor of the *Pacific Stars and Stripes*. In 1956 he rejoined the *Chronicle*, and remained here until he was awarded his Harvard fellowship last fall.

Mr. McCary is survived by his wife, the former Hiroko Fujiwara of Kobe, Japan, and their daughter, Shirley, 2.

San Francisco *Chronicle*,  
Jan. 14.



## A Canadian Fellowship

A Nieman Fellowship for a Canadian-journalist has been established by the *Reader's Digest* Association of Canada for a five-year period, starting this year. This revives the Canadian Fellowship which was supported from 1951-56 by the Carnegie Corporation.

A selecting committee of five Canadian journalists meets April 22 to review applications. They have a large number according to Shane MacKay executive editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, a member of the committee. MacKay was the first Nieman Fellow from Canada, in 1951. The rest of the committee are: Gillis Purcell, general manager, Canadian Press; Robert Southam, publisher, *Ottawa Citizen*; Gerard Filion, publisher *Le Devoir*, Montreal; and Douglas How, managing editor of the *Reader's Digest* in Canada.

Announcement of the fellowship gave this report of the five former Nieman Fellows from Canada:

Significantly, the revival of the Canadian Fellowship was greeted enthusiastically by the five newsmen who have already gone to Harvard as Canadian Nieman Fellows. They are:

Shane MacKay (1951-52), then a legislative reporter with the *Winnipeg Free Press* and now its executive editor.

Robert Nielsen (1952-53), then a *Toronto Daily Star* reporter and now a *Star* associate editor.

Douglas Leiterman (1953-54), then a political reporter with the *Vancouver Province* and now an editor-producer with the popular CBC program, "Close-Up."

William French (1954-55), then a city hall reporter with the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, now literary editor of the same newspaper.

Patrick Whealen (1955-56), then a Parliamentary Press Gallery reporter with the *Windsor Star*, now editor of its page of commentary.

They spent their year studying everything from Russian life and politics to economics with excursions into such fields as music, the modern novel and French conversation. But much of the benefit came

from the opportunity to talk informally with members of the Harvard faculty, with outstanding journalists who came to address them, and with other Nieman Fellows. As Robert Nielsen put it, "I don't know quite how you assess the value of, say, a dinner at which you can sit around and talk for hours with people like Professors Galbraith and Schlesinger. But it was a honey of a year." William French called the revival of the Canadian Fellowship "a wonderful idea."

Douglas Leiterman said "the Nieman Fellowship seems to me to be the single most useful opportunity ever devised for a working newspaperman. It allows him to stop for a year and think. It gives him a new and deeper perspective on news and events . . . I came away from Harvard with both an urge to get away from conventional ideas about news coverage and an awareness of the increasing dangers of the interpretive type of story which is coming into wider and wider use."

## Notes

### Local Story

The *New Republic* and a few others have very properly called attention to the newspaper lapse in reporting the scandal of bid-rigging and price-fixing by the electrical industry. The confessions of the federal charges went unnoted in many papers, and in many more the names of the guilty companies were cut out of the wire service reports. Even the sensational story of the unprecedented sentencing of a big batch of vice-presidents was played down in most papers and given full front page treatment only in a few papers distinguished for their independence.

But there was a reporter and a newspaper whose enterprise was a factor in

initiating this case. Julian Granger was the reporter and the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* the paper. They had an important assist from the TVA, but unlike others elsewhere, they picked up the cue and went after it.

TVA had long been disturbed at the number and frequency of identical bids from electrical suppliers. For years they had been prodding them to make competitive offerings without result. The pattern would be five or six identical bids, and one somewhat lower.

Finally, to call the matter to public attention, the TVA began to list the identical bids along with the contract awards in their monthly news letter. Julian Granger spotted the identical bids, thought this was funny, inquired about it, and began printing stories about it in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*. This was back in the spring of 1959. The paper made a point of calling them to the attention of Senator Kefauver, chairman of the Senate anti-monopoly sub-committee, who held hearings on the situation. TVA meantime had called the attention of the Justice Department to the situation which started action. This seems to have been regarded by the press generally as a purely local phenomenon, which, insofar as any newspaper enterprise is concerned, it was. LML.

## Good News Today

Republican resistance to doing anything about rising unemployment this winter was reflected in newspapers in a good many places. In Denver readers were made conscious of this by the practice of the *Denver Post* of running a daily front page story with the headline "kicker"—*Good News Today*. This naturally made them more conscious of the fact that such a story as "Unemployment Pay Rises to a New High" was put on an inside page (Feb. 19, page 5.) But this is in contrast to the practice of leading papers in many cities which have learned, since the thirties, to take recession news in stride. With television, including the President's press conference, and other media, reflecting the economic climate, newspapers that have tried to ignore it have suffered in reader confidence and fed suspicion of advertiser influence on news. LML.

# Responsibility of the Press

By Gale Waldrop

We can agree, I hope, that American newspapers are, by and large, the best in the world, and agree too, that this is not enough. The New York *Times*, first in our quality press, is better than the *Times* of London. The worst of our popular press is not as cheap and sensational as the worst of the British popular press. We can agree too that our newspapers have come a long way in our own time. However threatening the predictions of some professionals, such as that the newspaper will become as obsolete as the street car, there are encouraging signs. One of these is that we are finding an editorial page can be human and still make sense. Another is that able newspapermen are diagnosing the ills of newspapers and prescribing for them.

This self examination in public is a comparatively recent development, stimulated in some measure by such leaders in journalism education as the late Ralph L. Crosman of the University of Colorado. Acceptance of criticism has not kept pace with its production. But acceptance is increasing.

One of the responsibilities of the press is to learn from criticism without showing its quills like a porcupine.

Consider briefly criticism of newspaper men themselves. Let's start with William Allen White of the *Emporia Gazette*:

A newspaper has one obligation and one only, to print the truth as far as it is humanly possible, and to comment upon the truth as candidly and as kindly as is humanly possible, never forgetting to be merry the while, for after all the liar and the cheat and the panderer are smaller offenders than the solemn ass.

At least nine of 22 Colorado daily newspapers do not comment on the news at all. Some that do palm off canned editorials sent free to them, or canned editorials bought by them, as their own. Of 126 Colorado weekly newspapers, perhaps 30 comment on the news. Colorado is representative in this.

Do we readers pressure newspapers not to print certain news and not to express certain opinions? Do we cause them to omit news of recession now as of depression in the early 1930's? And condemn them to use contagious magic — to play up on page one, Good News Today, as the *Denver Post* has recently?

Gayle Waldrop, recently retired as director of the University of Colorado School of Journalism, discussed the responsibility of the press to the Town and Gown Club of Boulder, Colorado, Feb. 13.

Newspaper silence was notable in December on a story that *Time* magazine headed "\$7 Billion Conspiracy" the sixth item in its Business section — the history-making pleas of guilty and nolo contendere by General Electric, Westinghouse, and others. The New York *Times* in December had this on page one; so did the *Washington Post*, but many papers buried it under small heads on financial pages, and some omitted it. The story demanded attention on February 6, when prison sentences as well as large fines, and impending civil suits, made it impossible to ignore any longer what was important news in December.

Would the newspapers have played down, in the same way, guilty and nolo contendere pleas if they had been made by labor leaders?

On January 18 the lead story on page one of the New York *Times* had this three-column headline: "Eisenhower's Farewell Sees Threat to Liberties In Vast Defense Machine." The second paragraph of the story warned of a second threat, the domination of the nation's scholars by Federal employment, project allocations and the power of money.

Neither of these warnings got through in headlines to readers of the *Denver Post* and the *Greeley Tribune* — nor in the stories themselves in Boulder, Grand Junction and Pueblo papers. The warnings were submerged by the President's final press conference that morning, news with little significance compared to his farewell message to the nation the night before.

The news was downgraded because of the craze for the latest, for the timely — and by pressure.

Examples of the effect of routine — or of pressures felt if not overtly expressed — are the headlines on President Kennedy's State of the Union message, January 30:

Lamar *Daily News* —

## Kennedy Reports on State of the Union

(This over UPI lead: American economy is in trouble, news from abroad will be worse before it is better.)

Greeley *Tribune* —

## JFK Outlines Steps to Bolster Defense

Pueblo *Star-Journal* —

## Swift U.S. Defense Bolster Order Revealed by Kennedy

Denver *Post* —

## JFK Orders Building Up of Defense—Message Warns of Red Tide

(The preceding three over AP story that did not get to home front until the seventh paragraph.)

Compare those headlines with these:

Chicago *Daily News* —

**Kennedy Vows Bold Action  
Pledges to Bolster Economy, Curb Com-  
mies**

New York *Times*, January 31,

**Kennedy Challenges Congress  
To Meet Grave Perils Abroad  
And Worsening Slump at Home**

Both the Chicago *Daily News* and New York *Times* lead paragraphs included home and foreign fronts.

From the specific back to the general. A formal statement of responsibility was produced, in 1923, by the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This is the preamble:

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

Sound practices and just aspirations, but let's to reality:

Six experts talking last semester to our juniors in Reporting Public Affairs — city manager, county judge, Democratic county chairman, president of Colorado Labor Council, scientist of National Bureau of Standards, and police detective — sang the same theme song: Reporters generally do not have a wide range of intelligence, knowledge, experience, and powers of observation and reasoning.

In 1908, Graham Wallas observed:

"The press presents us with the most insoluble problem in democracy. Individuals who own newspapers have acquired a power which they cannot be prevented from harnessing in the service of personal ambition rather than of the community from which their strength flows." This problem has been intensified by economic factors since 1908. Today instead of individuals we have corporate ownership — and the corporate conscience is not always as responsive to public welfare as is the conscience of the individual. And the newspaper has become big business. The custodians, the hired men, cannot speak out as a White, or a Pulitzer, or a McCormick. They speak for investments of \$1 million to many millions.

With counting house control goes primary concern as to costs and disbursements and balance sheets. Syndicated columnists are cheaper than comparable staff writers and so columnists are bought to provide some measure of inspiration and leadership. But since the columnists must

write for national audiences, local leadership declines and the newspaper loses force as a community influence.

One editor-publisher has said that to survive a newspaper must perform so that it will be loved; if not loved, then respected, if not respected, then feared. I wonder if it is an either/or proposition. Are not the good and the great newspapers loved by some, respected by some, and feared by others?

It is not easy, today, for newspapers to survive. They have faced narrowing profit margins for some years. The cost of labor and materials climbs. Revenues from advertising and circulation seem to have limits. They do not rise as fast as costs. Sale of stock in the Denver *Post* last year led to speculation that the net return was about 3 per cent.

Now, to be specific about the responsibilities of newspapers—remembering that newspapers are of many kinds:

First, looking at the economic problem:

The responsibility to close the research gap. The newspaper is at least one generation behind in research. No major improvement in the process of printing newspapers has been developed since 1900. And, a piddling amount is being spent on research—about 1/100 of one per cent on mechanics—and an infinitesimal amount on news-editorial problems.

Two, looking at the product:

The responsibility to cut back in competing in the entertainment field. Newspapers can't compete with TV in entertaining people—nor can TV satisfy the hunger of people to know about local government and school problems.

Three, the responsibility of re-defining news and of better selection of news. One editor summed it up: 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 that is radio and TV, while we return to the news itself.

Polls reveal that newspapers aren't publishing a lot of things that readers are most interested in: health and related matters of medical science and practice; education; religion; financial problems of people; what people think; and people in the news.

Small-city dailies as well as metropolitan have stimulated community concern and found readers interested in health and housing, urban renewal, delinquency, rising county welfare costs, city planning, traffic congestion, poverty and prejudice.

Newspapers can make space for such news by printing less of the news whose only virtue is its meaningless immediacy; less of crime and catastrophe when it is like all other crime and catastrophe, and is far away.

Newspapers can print less of the copy that's brought or

sent in by space grabbers, the publicity puffs for civic, educational and welfare groups.

Four, the responsibility for reporting in depth, for presenting background and causes for news, for anticipating what's to come. Newspapers may thank radio for driving them to fill this need of their readers—for night after night it can be boring to see stories that add little or nothing to what the radio provided.

Five, the responsibility for better writing. The traditional way of writing news stories takes the drama and life out of events. The traditional lead is a straight jacket. Newspapers have learned from *Time* magazine, and can learn more.

Six, the responsibility to remember that everything depends on what news is presented and how the news is presented.

A great editor of the Manchester *Guardian* has written: "The important may be shown as unimportant, and the unimportant as important, by devices so simple and innocent as type, headlines, or position on the page." Lester Markel of the New York *Times* has written that the judgment as to what stories shall go on page one is as editorial a judgment as can be made.

The values by which people appraise individuals and issues are immeasurably affected by the values which their newspapers set before them—on news pages even more than on editorial pages. The public's emotional temperature may be governed by the heat of the headlines.

Lloyd George wrote of Lord Northcliffe who came into control of *The Times*: "He influenced opinion by selection of news, choice of its page, spacing, and headlines. This method was often unfair and suggestive of something which was contrary to the truth."

"Without a change in social values which will permit a better use of our productive resources," writes Harvard's Alvin Hansen in his new book, *Economic Issues of the 1960s*, "an optimum rate of growth cannot be reached." Are the cards stacked against such a change in social values? Against the presentation of his thesis in news and editorial pages? Will partisanship and commercial interests, and the interests of newspapers as part of the big business community, hamper discussion and possible change? Hansen says that under advertising stimulus we are squandering our productive capacity on artificially created wants that have little or no inherent value. We have reached the point where enormous uninhibited private spending, plus necessary federal outlays for defense, are starving public investment in research, education, housing, resource development. Our plant is deteriorating because of inadequate public investment.

Seven, with eyes on government, at all levels:

The responsibility not to be manipulated or to manipu-

late news. Elmer Davis deplored the practice of reporting what everybody said and letting the reader make up his own mind. Admirable theory, but the reader didn't have the information to enable him to judge, or the time to look for it, and his newspaper gave him little help.

Eight, the responsibility to recognize the press as a public institution: as the No. 1 public utility of a self-governing people.

In his annual sermon in the Columbia University chapel, Talcott Williams, first director of the School of Journalism, read verses from Ezekiel, about the watchman on the tower, and said that this was his symbol for the journalist.

Such a watchman was Julian Granger, a reporter for a Scripps-Howard newspaper, the Knoxville *News-Sentinel*, who dug out the facts that the Tennessee Valley Authority had received 24 identical bids from 47 electrical manufacturers over a period of two and one-half years. This set in motion actions that led to exposure of a \$7 billion conspiracy, the one we read much about recently.

We have not read much about identical bids, nearer home, in Denver—unless we see *Cervi's Journal*. It reported Feb. 8 that the city had reluctantly agreed to buy \$31,000 worth of disposable hypodermic needles for Denver General Hospital despite the fact that the prices from all seven companies were identical. Bids from eight firms Dec. 29 were identical. These were rejected and the US Justice Dept. notified. Urgent need caused acceptance of bids now.

Nine—the responsibility of ownership to raise the quality of their manpower. Newspapers are losing far too many men to TV, radio, press agency, industrial publications.

A large part of this is due to money, but an equally large part of the failure of most newspapers to provide either emotional stimulus or the opportunity for journalistic service.

Where is quality manpower to come from? From professional, not trade schools. Most of our journalism schools are trade schools, I regret to say. For fifty years cheap graduates have been turned out by many departments and colleges and schools of journalism. There's a responsibility here—which the newspapers may share.

In the words of J. N. Heiskell, courageous editor and president of the Arkansas *Gazette*,

"Every newspaper must come to judgment and accounting for the course that forms its image and its character. If it is to be more than a mechanical recorder of news; if it is to be a moral and intellectual institution rather than an industry or a property, it must fulfill the measure of its obligation, even though, in the words of St. Paul, it has to endure affliction. It must have a creed and a mission. It must have dedication. It must fight the good fight. Above all else it must keep the faith."



## Florida's Educational TV

By James Etheridge, Jr.

Florida is more than half way toward its statutory goal of interconnecting the state's four universities, twenty-four junior colleges and community ETV stations in a state-wide educational television network for the transmission of credit courses.

Five ETV stations—more than in any other state—are on the air. Thus, all of the VHF educational channels in Florida, as reserved by the Federal Communications Commission, have been activated.

These stations are broadcasting classroom instruction to more than 250,000 students at all levels, a "TV enrollment" that is expected to more than double at the beginning of the next fall term.

More than three million citizens, approximately 80 per cent of the state's population, are able to view these credit courses, as well as other educational programs, in their homes. The range of courses and programs runs through all age levels—from programs for pre-school-age children through adult education courses, cultural programs and public affairs discussions.

Within range of the ETV stations are all three existing state universities and one under construction; twelve community junior college centers and all classrooms and homes in more than half of the state's sixty-seven counties.

Plans for extended coverage now being considered by the Florida Educational Television Commission will eventually make possible the extension of ETV service to twenty-four junior colleges and virtually the total population and public school enrollment of the state.

The 1957 legislative act creating the commission was initiated and strongly sponsored by Governor LeRoy Collins who, in these days of sky-rocketing school enrollment pressures and problems, sees television as a means of helping teachers maintain and improve quality standards in public education.

The act provided an appropriation of \$600,000, to which the 1959 legislature added \$720,000. In addition, foundations, civic, educational and business organizations, including commercial TV stations, teachers, students and other private citizens, have donated more than \$2 million.

Stations at Gainesville and Tallahassee are operated by to establish and operate ETV stations.

Florida leads the Nation in the development of educational television. **James Etheridge Jr.** is executive secretary of the Florida Educational Television Commission. A Nieman Fellow of 1943, he has spent most of his life on newspapers of Florida. His article is reprinted from the quarterly, *State Government*, Summer 1960.

state universities, the Miami station by the Dade County Board of Public Instruction, and the Tampa-St. Petersburg and Jacksonville stations by non-profit community corporations.

In providing facilities by which the latter two can serve the state network, the commission has agreements under which these stations make available to the commission, on request, up to one-third of their on-the-air broadcasting time for the transmission of college level instruction for credit.

Although the commission operates two microwave links—one a duplex system interconnecting the university station at Gainesville with the community station at Jacksonville, and another connecting St. Petersburg Junior College studios with the Tampa ETV station transmitter—full "network" service is achieved by the exchange of video taped courses among the stations.

The following courses are now being broadcast and recorded by three production centers: at the University of Florida—first year French, Humanities, Communications, and Salesmanship; at St. Petersburg Junior College—Biological Science; at Florida State University—first year English, Mathematics and Geology.

These and several other courses will be produced and recorded at these studio centers, as well as in new studios at Miami, beginning next fall.

Recommendations regarding what courses are most needed, what institutions should produce them, and to what other institutions they should be available, are made by a "Task Force" of educators who represent all levels of public school instruction in the state.

The objective of the network programming is to make it possible for specific telecourses to be produced by the institution or institutions having available the best facilities, resources and personnel in a given subject field, and to be transmitted to all institutions for use by resident instructors, who will follow up with in-classroom discussion, answers to questions, experiments, demonstrations and tests.

Putting together reports from some of the more than 300 colleges and school systems in the nation using television in their instructional programs, the Florida Commission finds that Dade County results are some of the most significant in the country. School officials there report that daily instruction broadcast by the Channel 2 ETV station at Miami, used in connection with an "extended day" schedule, enables school plants to house enrollments one-third larger than they normally could handle.

Dr. Joe Hall, Superintendent of Dade Schools, says that the use of television has eliminated the need for about \$3 million worth of classroom construction—although more classrooms are still needed.

No pupil receives more than 50 minutes of TV instruction daily. Research reports say there is substantial evidence that TV has improved the quality of instruction in both traditional classrooms and TV classrooms, some seating from 300 to 500 pupils for 25-minute periods, with smaller group follow-ups.

With the TV teachers relieving the classroom teachers of routine preparation and delivery of expository material, while assistants handle the roll checking and "housekeeping" chores, the classroom teachers have more time to give individual attention to those who need it.

"I've been able to quit talking and lecturing all the time—and can now concentrate on some real teaching for the first time," one classroom teacher expressed it.

Maintaining and perhaps even improving the *quality* of instruction, in this era of vastly increased enrollments, of demands for a broadly educated citizenry, and mounting budget problems, is the primary objective of the educators and administrators who are developing Florida's use of educational television.

There is mounting evidence that substantial savings can be effected while the quality of instruction is actually improved, and the profession of teaching further raised in public recognition and tangible remuneration. These are objectives which just about everyone agrees should be accomplished.

As the educators and administrators point out, in the light of increasing enrollments in Florida colleges and universities, even if it were possible to train and employ twice as many teachers as now, the enormous educational task required could not be done adequately without the aid of television.

So, any previous concern about "technological unemployment" has been cleared away by the hard statistical facts—and by the increasing number of students in classrooms. One educator has summarized:

"We can use all the teachers we can possibly train—and still not do the job confronting us unless we make effective use of television.

"We are *not* saying that television can make possible the employment of fewer teachers than we now have; it cannot. We are saying it may help us to do a sound—and even superior—job in the future with fewer teachers than would be required, or could even be obtained, if we restricted ourselves to old traditional methods in trying to meet the challenges of vastly increased enrollments."

How a "finer kind of teaching" can come about through television was succinctly put in a report published in the May, 1958, issue of the *NEA Journal*, published by the National Education Association:

"TV has the potential, as yet almost untouched, for dis-

seminating the skill of the especially gifted teacher beyond the walls of a single classroom . . . .

The Florida Educational Television Commission is a seven-member body, all of whom are appointed by the Governor. One member must be a representative of the State Board of Control, which supervises the state universities, one a representative of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, one a county school superintendent, and four are members from the public at large.

The statute of 1957 which created the commission summarizes: "The purpose of this Act is to provide through educational television a means of extending the powers of teaching in public education and of raising living and educational standards of the citizens and residents of the state."

Functions of the commission are spelled out in the act as follows:

"The Commission is authorized and empowered to establish a television network connecting such communities or stations as may be designated by the (State) Board (of Education) . . . ." The commission "may lease from communications common carriers and use such transmission channels as may be necessary; provided however, that should the commission decide, upon investigation, that it could more economically construct and maintain such transmission channels, it is authorized and empowered to design, construct, operate and maintain the same. . . .

"Said network shall be utilized primarily for the instruction of students at existing and future colleges and universities, including community or junior colleges. . . .

"The origination and transmission of all programs over such network shall be as directed and authorized by the commission under plans approved by the Board and by the Board of Control as such pertain to operations of the institutions under the supervision of the Board of Control.

"The commission is authorized to encourage:

"1. The activation of unused reserved educational television channels;

"2. The extension of educational television network facilities;

"3. The coordination of Florida's educational television system with those of other states; and

"4. The further development of educational television within the state.

"The commission may cooperate with and assist all local and state educational agencies in making surveys pertaining to the use and economics of educational television in the fields of primary, elementary, secondary or college level education, and in the field of adult education. . . .

Till Durdin

## Old China Hand Comes Home to Ivory Tower

One New York *Times* correspondent whose neck all other Far Eastern correspondents will be glad to see the back of is Frank Tillman Durdin. The so-and-so always turned in honest expense accounts.

\* \* \*

All members of the Far East Correspondents Corps (a euphemism for reporters with dysentery) will be sorry for other reasons to say good-bye to Till in January when he moves from The Peak in Hong Kong to the air-conditioned broadloomed, dysentery-free quiet of the tenth floor at 229 West Forty-third Street. Till will take over, sometime after New Year's, the seat on the editorial board of Robert Aura Smith.

One reason is that the Confucius of the correspondents was the most obliging walking cyclopedia on the Orient that his woolly-headed contemporaries could have wished for.

He had been there since 1931 (stopped off in Shanghai that year on his way to Paris and never did get going again), and if there was a place or prominent name he didn't know how to spell—from the Thirty-eighth Parallel to the Tasmanian Strait—no one ever was able to catch him out.

The byline (minus the "F" the last few years) has been a familiar one to two generations of *Times* readers.

Till joined the *Times* in China in 1937 during what the Japanese called the "China Incident," wrote one of the great stories of that war—the Rape of Nanking by the Japanese Army. It has been included in many anthologies of Far East reporting.

Before that he had been a reporter on the Shanghai *Evening Post* and on the *China Press*, where he eventually became managing editor.

\* \* \*

No other New York *Times* reporter, and probably none from any other newspaper, has seen so much of war and of killing as Durdin. He and his wife, Peggy (whose byline is almost as well known as Till's), lived first through the Chinese-Japanese War, much of the time in the inland capital of Chungking under almost daily Japanese bombing attack.

Till was on one of the last ships to get safely out of Singapore ahead of the Japanese in early 1942 after the start of World War II in the Pacific. He was the first New York *Times* correspondent on Guadalcanal after the Marines landed there in July and moved from there to

New Guinea when Barney Darnton was bombed to death by one of our own planes.

The rest of the war Till spent in the China-Burma-India theatre, where living was the toughest and the chance of death or capture probably greater than in any other.

\* \* \*

Till and Peggy have been home only twice for longer than home leave since 1937. The first time was in 1948 when he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. The age limit was waived to let him in—the Harvard professors wanted to pick *his* brains on China.

The second time was five years ago when decades of living without proper food or medicine, and exposure to all the filth diseases of the East, finally caught up with Peggy. They had to come home while she regained her health.

The Durdins went back to Hong Kong in 1957 and Till has been roaming the Far East since, wherever news happened to be breaking. They were on home leave when the editorial board post was accepted.

An office on the tenth floor is going to be a lot quieter than any place Till has known for the last thirty years.

FOSTER HAILEY  
—*Times Talk*, Nov.

## Our Bulkier Newspapers

Newspaper readers who grumble about the bulkiness of their daily newspapers, that often go to 80-100 pages in the pre-Easter and pre-Christmas seasons, are not just imagining that papers are heavier than they used to be.

The American Association of Newspaper Representatives reports that since 1940 daily newspapers have increased in bulk 50 per cent, from an average of 24½ pages in 1940 to an average of 38 pages in 1959. (New York *Times* Feb. 24.)

But this is not because they publish that much more news. The additional 13½ pages is all advertising except for less than a page.

The 1940 daily newspaper had more news pages than advertising, 13¾ pages of news to 10½ pages of advertising.

But the 1959 paper had under 14½ pages of news to more than 23 pages of advertising.

The advertising pages more than doubled while news increased less than a page.

The ratio of news to advertising has shrunk notably. In 1940 it was 14 to 10 in favor of news. By 1959 it was 23 to 14 in favor of advertising. In short with rising costs it takes twice as much advertising to carry the same amount of news, because advertising rates have not risen to meet the costs.

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