

# Nieman Reports

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## "NO OTHER ALLEGIANCE"

### THE IMPOSSIBLE ROLE OF THE PRESS

by Robert Lasseter

No institution of our society is assigned a task more nearly impossible of complete attainment than the press. Essentially it is to furnish the people with information upon which they can base their decisions in governing themselves and conducting their daily relationships. The newspaper that perfectly performed this function would mirror the world aloft, for all to see, with no other regard than the fidelity of the image. With this as a criterion, the shortcomings of American newspapers today are apparent.

There is nothing innately wrong with the American system of newspaper publication—that is, nothing that cannot feasibly be corrected or in large part mellorated by public influence within the present limits of the constitution. The founders of our nation, who had a closer and more personal acquaintances with the evil of restraint on expression than is possible for us today, held a considered belief that, if the people were left free to print whatever they wished, the chemistry of popular democracy would provide a compensatory reaction to any abuse of the privilege. They saw newspapers operating by a rule of democratic principles: just as the government would be kept in line with the popular will by the votes of the citizens, so newspapers, legally unrestrained, would be persuaded to keep a position within the limits of public sanction by their need of the support and patronage of the people to survive. But the men who made our constitution, although they did detect an inherent danger in the growing commercialism of their young new land, did not foresee modern advertising, the connective by which newspapers would come to depend for their existence more upon the support of commercial interests than upon the people at large. Nevertheless, the logic upon which our forefathers reason-

ed, that newspapers can be expected generally to show an allegiance to that group upon which they are most dependent, was valid. It is reaffirmed in today's situation where newspapers tend to reflect the way of thinking of business, of property and privilege, rather than the viewpoint of the democratic community as a whole.

Briefly stated, the major defect of our American press system today is this: as a result of changes, economic, social and technological, the base of support of our machinery of public information has shifted until today most of its burden bears upon one segment of our society instead of upon society as a whole. Business today pays three-fourths of the cost of maintaining our newspapers; the public pays, directly, one-fourth. It is inevitable, in this situation, that newspapers should tend to see from the business viewpoint. And the evil of this is that too often the public welfare, looked at from the privileged position of profit and property, does not have quite the same shape as when seen from the common level.

It is a serious error to assume that the

peccancies of American newspapers are in any large sense the result of the deliberate intent of the men who control the press to misemploy their powers for their own personal interests. There are publishers, of course, who do not hesitate to deceive, conceal and otherwise manipulate the news, even to lie, for their own purpose. And there could be cited many instances of the prostitution of newspapers to mercenary ends. But projected against the broad general background of the American press, these instances are exceptional. For every newspaper that deliberately abuses its moral responsibility to the public, scores can be named that have consistently shown their consciousness of a public trust.

The main valid general criticism that can be made of American newspaper publishers today is, not that they are morally irresponsible, but that they are primarily profit-seekers, and newspapermen only incidentally and secondarily. They think first of survival, and then of their public responsibilities, and too often the terms are not synonymous. Yet, it is pointless to sort out newspaper publishers by this criticism, which can just as correctly be laid against every other class of business or professional men in American life. Rightly or wrongly, our American system of society assumes self-interest, profit, as the prime individual motivation; indeed, a great theoretical strength of democratic capitalism is that it is a method of controlling and marshalling to good purpose the selfish instincts of man. So, in our society, with man as he is, and with our newspaper system such as it is, newspaper publishers are results, not causes. What they do, most other men would do in their places. It is no mere accident that newspaper publishers tend to be liberal, crusaders, exponents of democracy's need for dynamic forward change, while they are struggling for a start, and tend to acquire a conservative laissez-faire attitude when they become established and secure. It is no accident; it is human nature.

The second sound indictment that can be returned against the newspapers of America is their low intellectual level. The truth of this charge cannot be denied;

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Robert Lasseter is editor of the Rutherford Courier in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1943-44. This article was in the office of Nieman Reports some time before the issuance of the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press. It owes nothing to that report. But it deals with the same problem with very practical, original and provocative suggestions that make a very useful addition to the discussion the Hutchins Report opened.

yet, studied in the panorama of all its causes, this criticism, too, is largely a criticism of our whole American society. The rule that any publication seeking general distribution must adapt itself to general standards needs no exposition, and newspapers, by nature and practical definition, are publications seeking general distribution. People read things that they understand, that deal with what they are interested in; newspapers, needing readers to survive, attract them with whatever experience shows them the people respond to the most. The sad consequence of this, of course, is that readers above the average intellectual level must take the common fare.

Yet, the more intelligent persons are not wholly ignored. An increasing number of American newspapers do publish editorials and features of fairly high content. And there are publications other than general newspapers edited especially for the more literate readers; they fill the demand, and the extent of their circulations may be taken as the measure of the demand. The American public, despite our educational extravagance, has shown little eagerness to leave rather narrow intellectual confines. Raymond Daniell of the New York Times, probing for the causes of this national mental languor, once described it as the result of a folkway of indifference stronger than our educational efforts, a folkway springing from our pioneer background, our geographical isolation and all the other inherent influences that molded us as a nation. If and when Americans reach the state where they demand general reading matter of higher quality, it is reasonable to assume that American newspapers will supply them; certainly it is unreasonable to assume that the newspapers will refuse to provide more erudite reading matter if demand is shown.

But some critics see newspapers as the source-spring of all culture, and, assuming that it is a primary function of democracy's newspaper to lead the people into the paths of intellectual and social righteousness, proceed to the easy fallacy of blaming national imperfections on the newspapers. The premise is wrong, and the whole idea fallacious, for two reasons. One, we cannot charge the press with the responsibility of making public opinion without granting someone—and who but the newspaper publishers?—the right of deciding what public opinion should be, a right which the democratic idea inherently denies to any one. And two, the assumption credits the press with more power over public opinion than it, functioning legitimately and ethically, possesses.

There can be no doubt that broad thought patterns, what Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead has called the public's

"tone of mind," are established largely on a basis of what the people read in the newspapers. But his influence is in the news itself, in the event, rather than the newspaper; the newspaper is merely the reporting agency, the mode of communication. Broadly, a newspaper's influence is like a law's influence; in a democracy like ours, as prohibition has shown, a law is effective in the degree that it is understood and its essential purpose approved by the mass of the people. A newspaper can crystallize, consolidate existing public opinion, can bring dormant opinion into life, but it cannot autocratically make or mold public opinion as desired, except as it interrupts the stream of news, distorts the image, by concealment, falsification, calculated selection or misinterpretation. Not even can public opinion be influenced in arbitrary "good" directions except by handling of the news—in short, a controlled press. And to accomplish any planned effect on public opinion to any marked degree even by such unethical means would require a more or less complete control of all the people's sources of information, a power which certainly no newspaper or group of newspapers could be said to possess today in the United States. It is only in the unanimity of newspaper publishers in their attitudes towards business—they are all necessarily business men, no matter how they disagree otherwise—that they have been able to impose these attitudes on the public mind.

Also contributing to the desultory texture of America's newspapers, their dullness, their shallowness, their incoherence, is the low state of journalism as a means of livelihood. News is a nebulous, tricky, elusive material; handling it with precision and probity is one of the most difficult of all modern jobs, requiring instant acute perceptions and immediate decisions, and also a great resource of general knowledge. Yet journalism, the reporting and editing of the news, has been one of the least rewarding endeavors of American life. Good newspapermen in New York and Chicago may make \$125 a week, but the national average must be nearer \$50 or \$75 a week.

This picture, it may be claimed, does not present an extraordinarily low standard compared with the rewards of some other callings in the United States. And literally, this is true. But by the measure of the importance to the public welfare of competent and trustworthy news reporting and editing, the standard is low. It is low because it is not sufficient to justify the education and training necessary to proper execution of the job, not sufficient to attract the men who by talent and discipline are best fitted for the work. As a result,

newspapermen have been too generally men striving beyond their capabilities. Every newspaper office knows the boy who practices typing in his spare time, learns the word formula and a few other tricks of the trade, and eventually becomes a fairly proficient reporter, able to do a slick job on any assignment. But despite the sympathetic appeal of this Horatio Alger picture, more than native intelligence and a slick way with words are required to do a proper job of reporting; it needs also a background of knowledge, of liberal enlightenment, to interpret events and analyze their significance in the broad lights of wisdom. There are too many miniature Westbrooks in the newspaper offices of the land: keen, eager youngsters and men, sincere and honest perhaps, but doing a job simply beyond the scope of their knowledge.

There is little criticism that can be cast at the social viewpoint of working newspapermen as a class. They probably tend more than any other occupational group in the country to be democrats at heart. News judgment requires constant thinking in terms of the many, and this is certainly an attribute of all good democrats. And the duties of reporting tend to expose them to all strata of our society, an experience which is usually conducive to the development of a sense of man's human dignity and of a realization, no matter how cynical, of the broad reaches into which our society has yet failed to carry the blessings of the community.

But perhaps the clearest and most present danger to the public welfare in the American press today is in the unmistakable trend towards newspaper monopoly. For the rule of democratic principle to apply to newspapers, it is necessary that there be competitive newspapers. The court of public opinion, rendering daily judgments on the press, can enforce its decrees only if there is a choice of newspapers. A study of newspaper statistics reveals some rather startling things in this respect.

The 1946 Editor and Publisher Yearbook listed 1366 cities in which daily newspapers are published. But in only 111 of these cities is there bona fide local daily newspaper competition; in each of the remaining 1,255 cities there is a daily newspaper monopoly. The situation, however, is not quite so severe as the bare figures would indicate. Most of the largest cities have competing newspapers; of the 111 cities where there is competition, 84 are over 25,000 population. Yet, the figures indicate that at least half of the people of the United States, perhaps nearer two-thirds, are subject to a daily newspaper monopoly. And the starkness of this is

## A Nieman Ponders the Harvard Endowments

Thus interest outstrips the cost;  
The diamond Charles sings April airs,  
Silver semantic swords are crossed  
With James and Perry by Emerson's  
stairs.

Deep go the golden leaves of the Yard  
Into the centuries, there by Sever;  
And memory endows the hapless bard  
With Harvard Corporation fever!

—Charles A. Wagner, N. F. '45

low state of the Fourth Estate. Instead it is the sad example of New York's PM, which now has failed its design to build a mold for the adless newspaper.

Here, in PM, it appeared that the dream of all good newspapermen, for a paper free to practice the art of pure reporting, with no axes to grind, no cows to nurse, was to come true. Here, by a rich man's indulgence, newspapermen, who have always salvaged their professional frustrations with boasts of what they could do if unrestrained, were to get their chance. Here America, growing testy at a press that paid first deference to business, was to be shown that advertising is not essential to a newspaper, that a newspaper wholly dependent upon its readers could justify its existence. Here, in PM, was to be cut the pattern of a new American journalism.

But the art of pure reporting found no place of expression in PM. Instead of calm, unbiased, dispassionate reporting, PM was dedicated to a type of dogmatic, bigoted, intolerant journalism. Instead of attempting to fulfill the newspaper's democratic function of supplying the people, not with truth, but with the raw material of truth, PM became a masticator of the news, chewing it up in its editorial maw and handing forth to its readers daily measures of predigested opinion, requiring no thought, ready to be swallowed. And worse, perhaps under the influence of the metropolitan premium of newness in the news rather than thoroughness or perspicuity, PM adopted a sort of howling jackal news policy, specializing in the news leavings of other papers, often interestingly and valuably enough, but at the expense of the staple run of the news. As a result, PM became not a medium of information, but a mere complement to the conventional press, and a press playing Monday morning quarterback to the world, showing more interest in what it thought should happen than in what did happen.

It was the colossal arrogance of opinionated journalism that was PM's weakness. Every day PM undertook to answer the question that wise men have ever posed as unanswerable. What is truth? The late

Raymond Clapper, for our purposes, made the best reply to that question, and he did it merely with more questions. Said Clapper: "What is truth? Is the truth what William Green thinks, or what John L. Lewis thinks? Is it what Mr. Roosevelt says, or what Mr. Hoover says? Is the truth what four justice of the Supreme Court say, or what five justices say?"

The adless PM failed for the simple reason that it performed the democratic function of a newspaper even less efficiently than its worst ad-carrying competitors. Readers could get at least a hint of both sides from the standard press; PM let not a drop leak through of the opposite view.

But although PM muffed its unique chance—unique in that Marshall Fields come only once—nevertheless adless newspapers still seem theoretically to offer an avenue towards the responsible and responsive journalism that democracy demands. And there are substantial reasons for hope that an ad-free press may yet develop in America.

Newspaper endowments may be one product of the growing national interest in the press and its functions as a democratic institution, as evidenced in the debates, polls, symposiums and surveys of recent years. And an endowed press quite logically could be adless. The trend towards cooperative ownership and control of enterprises with public and semi-public functions has not yet reached the press, but possibly it will; it may be that the form of America's future journalism is an adless press owned cooperatively by its readers. Newspaper subscription prices have been rising steadily; the public now is becoming seasoned to a subscription price level that can support newspapers depending wholly upon circulation for their income. The government has a great potential weapon for encouraging ad-free newspapers in its control of the mailing privilege, a power already upheld by the Supreme Court; with public sanction, however tacit, this power might be put to use.

With even a small start, a trend towards adless newspapers could be expected to gather momentum. Special news and feature services would be likely to appear, once there was sufficient demand, and with their availability establishing adless papers would be still easier. A general access to the standard big news services, now that the government anti-monopoly suits have been finally won, should be an encouragement. And ad-free newspapers have certain natural advantages, anyway, making them easier to establish than conventional advertising papers: they need only half the shop and press capacity to

little relieved by the possible rebuttal that many of the monopoly dailies have competition from weeklies and semi-weeklies, and from other dailies in nearby cities. In few cases are weeklies and semi-weeklies on an actual competitive basis with dailies. And the competition of neighboring dailies can be dismissed as of virtually no consequence; there is no true competitive choice in being able to buy outside newspapers on the newsstand, and the overlapping of circulation areas is immaterial.

It is astonishing to find these familiar names among the cities of the United States today where daily newspaper monopolies exist: Mobile, San Bernardino, Peoria, Evansville, South Bend, Des Moines, Topeka, Louisville, Springfield, Mass., Worcester, Lansing, Duluth, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Jackson, Miss., Kansas City, Butte, Omaha, Reno, Manchester, N. H., Camden, Rochester, Utica, Asheville, Winston-Salem, Akron, Springfield, Ohio, Youngstown, Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Allentown, Reading, Wilkes-Barre, Charleston, Chattanooga, Nashville, Memphis, Wichita Falls, Norfolk, Richmond, Spokane, Huntington, Wheeling, Waterbury, Pensacola, El Paso and Providence.

In 170-odd cities, one firm publishes both morning and evening papers, and in all but a handful of cases these papers appear under different names and in different makeup. And in 49 of these cities the morning and evening papers, although having the same owners, brazenly claim to espouse different political beliefs.

The newest device of newspaper monopoly is the "common law" merger, now in use in about half a dozen cities—Peoria, Topeka, Tulsa, Tucson, El Paso, Nashville, Chattanooga. By this method, competing newspapers combine their production, advertising and circulating departments, but attempt, at least outwardly, to maintain a competitive relationship editorially. The "common law" name was inspired by the comment of a Tennessee country editor following the announcement of such a merger in a nearby city. "The way we see it," said the country editor, "they admit they are living together but deny they are married."

Ownership of radio stations contributes to the monopoly hold on the news of daily newspapers in many cities. A recent report of the Federal Communications Commission showed that 285 newspapers owned interests in radio stations, over 200 of them holding majority and controlling interests.

### II.

The current tragedy of American journalism, however, is not the warped vision of a business-dominated press, nor the venality of a few newspaper publishers, nor the tightening news control, nor the

carry the same amount of news, use only half the paper and ink, require no advertising sales staff, and are a much less complex managerial problem all around.

What is needed now is a practical demonstration that a standard, serviceable, workaday ad-free newspaper can make its way in an average community; with that once shown, other ad-free papers will appear. And even though it is unlikely that the advertising press of America ever will disappear—advertising performs a valuable economic function—yet it is certain that an ad-free press, scattered over America, would be a valuable gauge and guardian of the responsibility of the advertising press.

And public pressure upon the government for legal reforms touching the press undoubtedly would have great effect. Laws respecting newspapers that now seem both feasible and advisable include one requiring newspapers to accept advertisements, within certain limits; this would at least guarantee minority groups their chance to be heard. A law requiring equal space and position to correct libels would seem only fair. While they would be difficult of enactment under present conditions, it is conceivable that laws establishing some professional licensing standards for newspapermen could be constitutionally upheld; if compulsory Guild membership is constitutional certainly professional licensing standards should be. Government competitive scholarships for newsmen, administered by educational authorities and with a free choice of institution, would elevate journalistic standards, as would the inauguration of a custom of sabbatical leaves for study for newsmen.

A proposal that the government could constitutionally place some limitations on newspaper ownership at least deserves consideration. A law prohibiting any individual from having an ownership interest in more than one newspaper could possibly be construed as not abridging freedom of the press, as long as no restrictions were put upon what a man could say in whatever newspaper he did own. There seem at least some grounds for a belief that newspaper ownership of radio stations is not in the public interest. Laws prohibiting newspaper ownership by individuals holding public office would certainly seem ethically advisable. And there could be legal restrictions tending to discourage absentee ownership, and to encourage local proprietorship and control.

The most immediately practical way of making American newspapers better, is by improving the status of journalists, and thereby the standards of journalism. Ideally, newspapermen should be a group set apart, free from all influences except

that of broad public opinion as expressed upon and through the newspaper. Short of this, however, there are quite definite things that can be done. Newspapering has made some strides as a means of livelihood in the past decade; newsmen are better paid today, more secure, and generally more capable, than they were before 1930. Much of this advance can be credited to the influence of the Newspaper Guild, and it is difficult to deny that the Guild has been, and is, in general, an influence tending to make better newspapers. But from the standpoint of broad democratic policy, there are questions as to the extent and type of union organization of newspapermen that would be most compatible with the best interests of the public.

Since newspapermen should be, ideally, a group set apart, it follows that a newspapermen's union should be an editorial craft union, and independent of any national union group other than its own. General laws and policies cannot always be applied, with full reason, to newspapers and newspapermen; what an iron-worker thinks affects only himself, but what a newspaperman thinks is extended to all who read his newspaper. And it is the legitimate concern of the community to see that there is a minimum of unequable pressure upon a newspaperman's way of thinking, and also that newspapermen are not generally committed to any one viewpoint. The viewpoint of newspapermen is important in determining the verity of the image which is projected through them for the edification of the people; newspapermen who assert an allegiance to labor groups are not likely to present a wholly unbiased picture of, say, an agriculture-labor dispute. And union spokesmen who deny this can be asked what reasons they have to believe that Guild members, any more than publishers, will be able to see objectively where their own interests are involved.

So there is at least some validity, ethically, to the contention—usually made by publishers and not for ethical reasons—that contracts requiring all editorial employees of a newspaper to be members of a union are inimical to the public interest. Such contracts insure a screening of the news through labor's lenses, and also give the union, through its power of expulsion, power over the job, and therefore, to all practical purposes, over the newspaperman himself. Ethically, it seems desirable that the non-union viewpoint should have at least some representation among newspapermen.

Somewhere there must be determined a balance between the newspaperman's interests, as represented in the union question, and the public interest. Possibly

much of this question will dissolve as the principle of worker organization becomes more established and is fused into our social pattern; leveling laws, such as statutes defining and protecting a worker's right to membership in his union, would dissipate at least part of this problem.

Schools of journalism are, increasingly, stocking newsrooms with men who have at least some degree of formal preparation for their calling. But there perhaps is a just complaint that too generally courses of journalism, by training men pointedly for practical ends, tend to perpetuate the existing patterns of journalism rather than to improve it. Journalism perhaps should be a graduate study, based on a liberal education; of the two, the liberal education is certainly more important, judged by the interests of democracy itself. Specialization in preparation for careers of journalism probably should be encouraged; master's degrees in journalism, after bachelor's degrees in concentrated liberal fields, should produce newspapermen well qualified to serve as the eyes and ears of the public, at least in respect to their subjects.

Whatever the practical possibilities of inaugurating changes in our newspaper system such as have been considered above, certain it is that widespread discussion of possible reforms, legal and otherwise, should have a salutary effect in itself. As newspaper publishers detect a possibility that the public is taking seriously suggestions for such reforms, the result probably will be critical self-examination by the press itself, and perhaps even assistance from the press, or some parts of it, in instituting some changes as a compromise. This perhaps is, all things considered, the most desirable development.

### III.

Slowly but inevitably the time is approaching—the portents are already here—when the people of the United States must sit down and re-evaluate both their press and their principle of freedom of the press. There are, in summary, at least three important points that should serve as guiding considerations in this appraisal.

First, there must be a clear and stressed differentiation between Freedom of the Press, the individual's right, and State of the Press, the qualitative condition of our journalism. Blending of the two concepts dilutes the strength and clear significance of each. Unless the line between the two ideas is kept plain and unmistakable there is danger that we may, in our efforts to improve our newspapers, undermine a basic right. We would be stupid to deprive the people of the right to free expression, or to abridge this right, merely because of the failure of the press to be

perfect, or the sins of a few publishers.

Second, our ideal must be a press that, while unrestrained in its expression, is both responsible and responsive to the people. In an important sense, America does not want a free press: it does not want a press free from the people, which is the sort of press that Germany had. America wants a press bound to the people, bound so tightly that the people cannot stir, however slightly, without that movement becoming visible in the newspapers. America wants a press that owes no other allegiance than to the whole community, and so established that any digression from the true course of that allegiance will bring its immediate corrective penalty. America wants a press so situated that the public interest is not only

the moral course, but also the only profitable course. Such a press, it is true, would not be absolved of all the sins of today's press; indeed, such a press possibly would be more bound to the common level, more susceptible to public ailments. But America can better put up with a press that is limited by the common quality than it can risk a press independent of the people's touch.

And to obtain a truly responsive and responsible press, there are two requisites: one, its burden must be distributed generally, and not borne unequally by any class or group; and two, the people must have a choice of competitive papers.

Lastly, if we are to have better newspapers, we must have better newspapermen. The rewards of journalism must be such

that the calling will attract to it the men best suited to perform its vital functions. And newspapermen must be, insofar as possible, free of any influences that may tend to distort the news image which they pass along to the public.

But whatever is the outcome of our new assessment of the press, whatever is done, one thing is certain: the press will not then be perfect. We can only hope that as our society grows and changes there will be a progressive adjustment of this machinery of public information to meet the new demands and needs. Else there is likelihood that the entire concept of a free press will be endangered. And to all practical purposes, the free press and democracy are synonymous. When the free press dies, so does democracy.

## NEWS ON THE WING

### CARRIER PIGEONS WON SCOOPS FOR SALT LAKE CITY REPORTER

by W. H. McDougall, Jr.

If I ever own a newspaper it will have a loft of carrier pigeons on the roof. The birds will be a nuisance. They may be used only once a year; but when that one story breaks and my newspaper blankets the Opposition they will be justified.

My experience with carrier—or homing—pigeons was while on the Salt Lake Telegram in the nineteen thirties. They sold themselves to me on their value as transmitters of news and pictures, especially pictures. Time and again the Telegram scored major beats because the birds arrived with capsule loads of stories and negatives from scenes of major news breaks, such as airplane crashes, in isolated areas.

Pigeons even were used to fly pictures from football games—because they did not get snarled up in traffic; from automobile speed runs on the Utah salt flats—because they covered the 120 miles to the city desk faster than automobiles; and once from a mine labor strike because reporters temporarily were marooned inside picket battle lines.

Ever since those days carrier pigeons have had a special place in my affections

because (a) using them was so much fun, (b) the beats were so numerous, (c) the by-lines so terrific.

What sweeter music to a reporter's soul than this three column spread: By Bill McDougall Via Carrier Pigeon. Copyright Salt Lake Telegram, 1937 (and the date line) On Chipman Peak, June 2, 2 p.m.

The most fun, beats and by-lines on any story where pigeons were used was the search for a passenger plane which disappeared in December, 1936, while enroute from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City and was not found until mountain snows melted in the following June. The mystery of its disappearance, the extensiveness of the search and colorful circumstances of its discovery made a running page one story in most U. S. newspapers of the time.

Wherever clues developed I took the pigeons and sent back stories and pictures when other means of communication were lacking. The pigeon which carried the most stories the quickest was christened "News Flight" and had his picture in the news reels.

When the plane finally was found and reached it was among ten thousand foot peaks at the end of a five hour journey by foot and pack horses from the nearest road. But by pigeon-line it was less than 30 miles and about as many minutes from the Telegram roof. My stories and pictures were in print and on the street before rival reporters even had reached the highway.

Mothering a flock of carrier pigeons on the road between stories had its drawbacks. Hotel chamber maids resented my freeing the birds in the bathroom for exercise. They would go stale and not fly if caged up too long. Sometimes I had to stay awake nights to prevent rival reporters from releasing the birds. They had to be fed, watered and generally watched over with loving care. They were headaches but they paid off.

While traveling I carried the pigeons in a wicker hamper large enough to hold a dozen birds. When hiking on foot, which was frequently necessary, I could carry four birds—one day's supply—in a fishing creel slung over my shoulder.

The first bird would be released so he could reach the paper in time for the noon edition, the second and third in time for later editions. The fourth bird served as a back stop in case of emergency. On a major news break, in order to play safe, I would send duplicate sets of stories and pictures by two different birds.

The paper worked out a delivery system to keep me supplied with pigeons—there were about 50 in the home loft—when I was away for more than three days at a time. One expedition lasted nearly four weeks. On that occasion birds were relayed first by automobile then by pack horse to a base camp in the mountains which served as search headquarters.

Photographic equipment included a miniature camera producing a 1 1/4 by 1 5/8 negative and a light proof, rubberized

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W. H. McDougall, Jr., was using carrier pigeons on airplane crash stories when he was on the Salt Lake City Telegram in the 30's. Later in Japan and China, he was a correspondent for United Press, and was torpedoed and captured off Java where for three years he was a prisoner of the Japs. He has been on a Nieman Fellowship in 1946-47.

"changing bag" in which to process the film for transportation. The amount of film was limited by the size of the aluminum capsule which fitted on the pigeon's back. A still smaller capsule was fastened to one leg and carried the story, written on a six inch by eight inch sheet of rice paper. The picture capsule would hold only one half of a 127 size roll from which the spool and protective paper had been removed and the negative cut to size. The changing bag served as a portable dark room in which the stripping, cutting and capsuling was done. The bag, specially made for the purpose, had sleeves into which the user inserted his arms to the elbow and worked on the film by the sense of touch.

Practice reduced the operation time to only a few minutes. The next crucial steps were: extracting one bird from the creel without allowing the others to escape, holding the bird with one hand while loading him with the other; arranging the bands holding the capsule on his back so they neither choked him nor interfered with his tail assembly; finally, keeping him calm so that when released he would fly away instead of roosting and sulking just out of reach.

I got so I could almost look a pigeon in the eye and tell whether he was going to fly or roost. If he appeared belligerent I would choose another bird—if I still had another bird. A well disposed pigeon would flutter aloft, rise in ever widening circles then head for home. A stubborn one would light nearby, ruffling his feathers, gurgling angrily and keeping just out of reach. I chased one recalcitrant bird for an hour before he took off. Incidentally, only poorly trained or young birds proved balky. Every one which had been thoroughly trained fulfilled its mission.

If a pigeon never arrived home we suspected it had either been killed by hawks while tarrying along the way, or had been lured by a lady pigeon into some one else's loft. Our later suspicions sometimes were borne out by reports from pigeon fanciers.

News Flight was impervious both to hawks and blandishments.

Notice of a bird's arrival was flashed from roof to city room by a Rube Goldberg arrangement. Small, moveable metal bars partially obstructed the entrance to the bird loft. When the pigeon pushed his way between the bars he closed a switch and a light blinked on the city desk. The

next job was getting film from the capsule and deciphering what I had written on the rice paper.

Although I had the fun and got the by-lines and credit for using the birds, the real credit, I think, should go to the men who had the foresight to develop and train them.

A. L. Fish, Telegram general manager, got the idea from the ship-to-shore picture service used by New York papers. Kenneth Conn, William Bowman, and Arthur C. Deck, managing editors during those years, worked on the project. L. D. Simmons, the newspaper promotion manager, and an assistant, Frank Snow, experimented with and trained the birds for nearly a year before they were first used. Trustworthy carriers have to be born in the home loft and trained from the time they leave the nest. Training consists in releasing them first from nearby, then increasing the distance block by block, mile by mile and over varying terrains until they fly home unerringly from great distances.

Heydays for the pigeons were in 1936, '37 and '38. I went to the Far East in 1939 and haven't seen a pigeon since. But after my departure the birds were used twice by the Telegram; both times in 1941—on a plane crash and to fly back pictures and stories of an expedition down the Green and Colorado rivers in the wilds of eastern Utah. When Simmons and Snow who trained and cared for the birds went to war the loft was discontinued.

On the debit side of pigeon coverage must be set; first, the maintenance of the birds—they must be kept in training by frequent practice flights; second, their inability to fly at night; third, smallness of the picture negative—only miniature film will fit into a capsule.

A memorable experience with birds was on Christmas eve, 1936. The scene was the lobby of a hotel in a small, desert town 200 miles south of Salt Lake City. Reporters and crew members of planes searching for the lost passenger airliner were quartered in the hotel. The time was shortly after seven p.m. Reporters and pilots were eating dinner in a beanery across the street. In the hotel lobby were:

(1) The pigeons in their hamper.

(2) Several escape proof boxes of rattle snakes belonging to a visiting herpatologist.

(3) A large shepherd dog sleeping in a corner.

(4) Various guests dozing or gazing out the lobby window..

Some wag, whose identity has never been discovered, raised the hamper lid, opened one of the boxes, and stirred up the dog.

Only one thing was needed to make perfect the resulting pandemonium—a fire. Sure enough a fire broke out on the second floor.

P. S. No one was hurt and the hotel did not burn down.

## Most Clevelanders Trust Papers

Most of the people in Cleveland polled on the question by the Cleveland Press trust the news in the Cleveland papers. Two thirds or better think their local papers are fair in news of crime, business, foreign affairs and race relations. Just over half call them fair on politics and labor news. The questions and the returns by classes of news as reported in the Cleveland Press for Jan. 27 ran as follows:

Do you believe Cleveland newspapers are fair-minded in reporting news about:

Crime?	Percent
Yes	71
No	21
Don't know	8
<b>Business?</b>	
Yes	80
No	7
Don't know	13
<b>Labor Unions?</b>	
Yes	56.5
No	27.5
Don't know	16
<b>Politics?</b>	
Yes	55.5
No	30
Don't know	14.5
<b>Race relations?</b>	
Yes	68
No	18.5
Don't know	13.5
<b>International relations?</b>	
Yes	69.5
No	19.5
Don't know	11

# A REAL THREAT TO FREEDOM

IF AP DECISION IS UNDONE BY H. R. 110, PROTECTION  
FROM PRESS MONOPOLY IS REMOVED

by Robert Lasch

To identify myself, let me say that I am chief editorial writer of The Chicago Sun and have been a member of that newspaper's staff for the past five years. I am a member of the governing council of the Society of Nieman Fellows, an organization of newspapermen who have been granted fellowships at Harvard University for the advancement of the standards of journalism.

I have two reasons for opposing H. R. 110. One is what it involves for our system generally. The other is what it involves for the newspaper business.

H. R. 110 is avowedly a bill to set aside the Supreme Court decision in the Associated Press case. It would give the A. P. and other news agencies full discretion to select the customers they serve. It would give news agencies full discretion to offer their services exclusively to one paper and not to others in the same community.

The key word of the bill is this word "discretion." The news agencies now enjoy a high degree of discretion in choosing their customers provided the choice is not made for the purpose or with the effect of limiting competition. Why should a bill be passed to broaden the area of discretion beyond this? What is the purpose of the bill, if not to give news agencies discretion to limit competition if they choose?

It seems to me that newspapers in their commercial relationships should be subject to the same anti-trust laws which affect business generally. They are now subject to those laws. They would not be so if H. R. 110 were passed. A special exemption for the newspaper business would encourage similar exemptions in other fields, and tend to break down the principle of the anti-trust laws, which is the principle of free competition.

There is no doubt that the newspaper is a special kind of business and that it enjoys a special freedom from certain

types of government interference under the First Amendment. But the newspaper is nevertheless a business, and as such cannot legitimately claim exemption from the anti-trust laws so long as those laws do not impair its freedom to print and discuss, as they do not.

If newspapers can successfully demand a special commercial position under the anti-trust laws, then other businesses can do the same. And if one exemption after another is granted, the anti-trust laws and the competitive ideal they express will ultimately disappear.

I am sure that members of the committee are familiar with the story of what has been happening to newspapers over the past 40 years. There are now 1,280 cities in which only one newspaper is published. Only one out of 12 communities has a competitive press.

Obviously many factors have gone into this trend toward monopoly and concentration of control. Not all of them can be dealt with under the anti-trust law or any other laws. Certainly the government should not undertake, as a remedy, any form of regulation of the press which would in any way impair its freedom of expression.

All of us would agree, I think, that in this field the answer to private monopoly definitely is not public monopoly.

And maybe there isn't any answer. Perhaps the economic forces at work, including the competition of radio and other means of communication, make it inevitable that, except in a few large centers, the market for printed news and pictures will be served by one medium. I don't know. But I would hate to see the door finally closed. There is always a chance that technical advances which we cannot foresee might change the picture, and permit a competitive press to be reborn. If you accept the premise that competition among newspapers is a good thing, that it preserves freedom of expression, that it keeps the papers alive to their responsibilities, then I think you must agree that at the very least the government should pass no laws which may encourage monopoly and accelerate the decline of competition.

There is no question here of construing the anti-trust laws in such a way as to invalidate all exclusive contracts between

newspapers and news agencies. The decision in the A. P. case did not so construe them. The decision did say, however, that exclusive contracts taken in connection with limitations on membership would be invalid if they tended to discourage the free play of competition among newspapers.

The important thing is the purpose and effect of such contracts. H.R. 110, it seems to me, would remove them from the scope of the anti-trust laws no matter what their purpose or effect.

It has been argued that H.R. 110 is needed to validate exclusive contracts commonly entered into by many agencies and feature syndicates. But such contracts are already valid. They do not need a law to make them so. A commercial news agency or syndicate or an individual newspaper can make all the exclusive contracts with customers it cares to make. For example the New York Times sells its news service to the Chicago Tribune exclusively, while the New York Herald Tribune sells its service to the Chicago Sun exclusively, and no question is raised about the legality of such arrangements.

It was not the action of individual commercial agencies that was brought into question by the A.P. suit, but the action of an overwhelming majority of the country's newspaper publishers in combining against potential competitors. The A.P. is unique. It is not only a news agency. It is also the collective arm of the organized, established newspaper industry. In the morning field, A.P. member papers represent more than 90 per cent of the total. If the established industry has power to withhold a basic and comprehensive news service from potential competitors, then it has power to discourage the growth of such new enterprises as can surmount all the other formidable obstacles to their success.

What A. P. does, in effect, is to put at the service of each member paper all the news-gathering resources of the 1,237 other members, each of which is a major if not exclusive source of news in its community. This is something that cannot be duplicated. The New York Times, which has the most comprehensive news coverage of its own, does not try to get along without A. P.

It is, of course, theoretically possible to publish a newspaper without A.P. service

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Robert Lasch, chief editorial writer on The Chicago Sun, presented this statement in opposition to H. R. 110 before the House Judiciary Committee May 1. A Nieman Fellow and Rhodes Scholar, author of "Breaking the Building Blockade," 1946, and of the Atlantic Monthly prize essay "For a Free Press" in 1944, Mr. Lasch is a newspaperman of 16 years experience in Omaha and Chicago.

—but only if you can stand the astronomical expense of a collection of substitute services and only if you are willing to forego the unique coverage which A.P. provides.

It is also true that the mere possession of A.P. service or any other does not guarantee successful competition. Nothing can do that. Nobody is asking for such a guarantee. But fair play and the public interest alike demand that no existing paper shall be in a position to withhold from a competitor the basic raw material out of which successful competition can be fashioned.

I formerly worked for a newspaper

which attained a monopoly position while I was on the staff. I cannot say that any of us did poorer work after monopoly than before. But I do know that we all keenly felt the absence of the competition. We had to work against an ideal instead of a reality. We made solemn resolutions not to take advantage of our monopoly position, and they were sincere resolutions which in most cases were sincerely carried out, but all the same the healthy restraint of having a competitor down the street going through your paper with a fine-toothed comb, was gone.

There are notable examples of monopoly newspapers which have admirably dis-

charged their public responsibility. But the possibilities of abusing the power conferred on such a monopoly are so great that the anti-trust laws should be kept alive.

No paper's freedom has actually been impaired by the supreme court decision in the A.P. case. No news agency's competitive position has actually been injured by that decision.

But freedom can be threatened by private monopoly as well as by government. It can be threatened by regulation of a private monopoly. Passage of H. R. 110 in my opinion would open the gates for a real threat to freedom.

## The Patented Concentrator

### A FANTASY OF MAKE-UP

by William W. Vosburgh, Jr.

Augustin J. Fothergill, publisher of The Sentinel-Standard, shook his gray thatched head. "We seem to please our readers," he mourned, but do we influence them? Look what happened to Hartwig!"

"I know," replied his managing editor uncomfortably.

"Strongest candidate in the field," declared Fothergill, "and our plumping for him should have clinched it. Yet he was defeated practically by acclamation."

"It was incredible."

"Only it happened. Same thing with that bond issue for the sewage disposal plant. And that's not all. You know my wife's interest in the annual milk fund and after we give it reams of space, it's a floperoo!"

"We go into the very best homes," argued the M. E.

"Then what do the very best people do with the paper? Use it to cut paper dolls?" The exasperated publisher looked almost fit for that occupation himself. "Sometimes," he muttered bitterly, "I blame Willoughby."

"Oh now, Chief——"

The painful interview over, the managing editor sat with his bowed head in his hands. He had long sensed what was wrong with the paper and now Fothergill's slower mind was fumbling with the key to the mystery. For as uncanny as the problem itself was the publisher's unerring aim in laying the blame at Willoughby's door.

How long before some blazing moment of astounded insight would make clear even to his tardy perceptions the subtle process whereby his newspaper was being betrayed by the unbelievable circumstance of its own perfection?

Short shrift for Willoughby then, yet there was no reasoning with that inspired make-up editor. Willoughby was a genius and not calculated but intuitive was that incredible talent of his. No, as long as he was on the job, the front page of The Sentinel-Standard would daily present that delicate counterpoise of news display which summed up to the artistic ultimate—and to journalistic confusion.

A newspaper make-up man must of course have just a tiny bit of the feeling for composition values possessed by the musician, the poet or the painter. The front page is his canvas, the separate items of the day's news his highlights and subordinate themes. His is the task of balancing the black headlines and compensating for any marked disparity in their clamor for reader attention with cunning arrangement of photos or boxed human interest items, so to achieve a sum total impression which is roughly unified and pleasing to the eye.

But there was only one Willoughby, whose virtuoso touch regularly imparted an almost lyrical quality to the front page of The Sentinel-Standard, holding that newspaper's rapt readers in a deep and subtle enchantment. With him, a front page was always that absolute of even, balanced arrangement which defied the reader

to pick any special story and pursue it. Instead, no more was the reader momentarily drawn toward one item than there came that tug at his attention from the other side of the page until, caught irresolute between two objects of equal and opposite attraction, he sank into a state of trance.

It mattered not if war declaration was the lead story of the day and an insignificant brawl its closest runner up. Without slighting the major motif or inflating the minor, Willoughby would nevertheless produce out of these and such sundry overtones and dissonances as the day's news contained, a typographic and photographic orchestration which would blend all into one delicately cohesive and coordinated impact on reader attention. And all details were lost in the sorcery contrived by mass impression so that market reports, presidential messages, Cat-Mothers-Mongoose and Cops-Capture-Axe-Slayer were not important in themselves but only as integrated parts of a singing harmony.

The effect was mesmeric and what if the newspaper didn't either influence or inform its readers so long as it stirred in them a profound spiritual ecstasy? Their feeling toward The Sentinel-Standard was strong and true. Indeed it was a passion and a rapture, to be likened to the generous emotion experienced by the Poet Keats upon first looking into Chapman's Homer.

For this spectacular result Fothergill had Willoughby to thank, but would he? Knowing the publisher's delight in sponsoring proteges and promoting good causes, the M.E. saw excellent reason to doubt it. No, if the truth came out, Willoughby

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William W. Vosburgh, Jr., one of New England's most effective journalists, a former Pulitzer prize winner, is managing editor of the Waterbury Republican.

would be most ungratefully treated. And it wasn't only that the poor man had deserved so much better. It also happened that he was the husband of the M.E.'s only sister and father of a large brood who called the M.E. uncle and would look to him for support if anything happened to the family's regular income.

It was this final, personal aspect of the whole wretched affair which gave it its deepest poignancy. The M.E. could detect no gleam of hope and just then he was startled from his dismal reverie by a low, apologetic cough at his elbow.

Having Simpkins, The Sentinel-Standard's circulation manager drop in on him at this time was really rubbing it in. This concocter of puerile promotion schemes and dispenser of prizes and premiums, who freely accepted full credit for every new subscriber won by the newspaper's editorial excellence, was looking, if possible, more smug and owlish than usual. And when he shouted, "Behold!"——and triumphantly produced from behind his back a head band flanked by things which looked for all the world like old-fashioned horse blinders, the room seemed to reel.

"You fellows in the editorial department think I fall for every circulation building gadget that comes along," the creature was babbling, "but you'd be surprised at the ones I turn down. Now this for instance——"

He donned the contraption which gave him the look of a skittish old Dobbin. "This is the craziest yet."

"What is it?" asked the M.E. and was

mightily relieved when the familiar sound of his own voice broke in on this nightmarish scene.

"Well, it's a patented 'concentrator.' The idea seems to be that if you wear it when you're reading, it will help keep your eyes riveted on the book page or newspaper column."

"Huh?" The word exploded from the M.E. and he sprang excitedly to his feet, a great vision of rescue welling up within him.

"Yes," laughed Simpkins, "can you imagine any guy thinking up a thing like this. Why, it's——"

"It's stupendous!" shouted the M.E.

"Eh?" asked Simpkins doubtfully.

"You mustn't lose a moment, old man. And old subscribers must get them too as a special good will gesture."

"You think so?"

"Of course. Readers must be educated in full appreciation of our newspaper," went on the M.E. his eyes shining. "They must be told first to look at the front page as a whole, studying the complete effect of it. Then to don those horse-blinders and start at one side and so across the page for the second, detailed phase of their reading."

"Well, if you're sure it will be worthwhile."

"How can you doubt it?"

"Oh, I don't really," said Simpkins, to whom another's enthusiasm was catching. "Not at all. I was completely sold on the thing from the start. It was just that I

wanted to get your unprejudiced reaction."

Everything is serene now in The Sentinel-Standard office. And at peace with the world is Augustin J. Fothergill, who, the other night, laid aside his newspaper, took off his 'concentrator,' and said to his wife, "I was talking to Mayor Hartwig today, my dear. He wants me to serve on the finance board."

"That's nice," she replied.

"There will be several problems coming up in connection with the bond issue to finance the sewage disposal plant," said the publisher, "and he seems to think my advice will be helpful."

"I'm sure it will."

"The Mayor, by the way, was only too happy to endorse your milk fund appeal. You saw his front page statement?"

"Why, no," said Mrs. Fothergill, "and I looked for it especially."

"You could hardly have missed it. Here"——as she took up the paper——"put on this 'concentrator.'"

"Oh but, Gussie. I always feel so silly with that outlandish thing on my head."

"Nonsense, my dear. Invaluable, that thing——as you call it. Indispensable. And to think that Simpkins was the only circulation manager in the country who sensed its possibilities."

"That was clever of him, wasn't it?"

"A very useful man," replied Fothergill, "and I'm glad that I raised his pay even if I did have to take it out of the editorial department budget."

## Theory of the 'Frustrated' Journalist

by John H. Crider

My good friend, Louis Lyons, worries me because of his apparent complex on 'frustration' in our profession. Those Niemans who were present at the reunion a year ago will remember that Louis and I exchanged a few words on this subject at the Faculty Club one day. I have kept my peace since then, but I note that his concern for our 'frustrated' brethren has increased with the passing months, and in the last issue of Nieman Reports he concluded his review of the Report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press by again sounding off on this note. I feel

that the subject needs a little more airing and that somebody should come to the defense of our profession to clear it of the charge that we are a bunch of 'frustrated' neurotics whose lifetimes, one might think, are spent in sheer drudgery.

Louis quotes the following from the Report of the Commission:

"The Commission was disturbed by finding that many able reporters and editorial writers displayed frustration——the feeling that they were not allowed to do the kind of work which their professional ideals demanded. A continuation of this disturbing situation will prevent the press from assuming effective responsibility toward society."

Then Louis adds:

"Can the Commission imagine a journalist being 'independent' and working for Hearst, McCormick, or the paper con-

trolled by the First National Bank? . . . It is a very insidious thing. The Commission has sensed it, explored it, been revolted by it, but never quite come to grips with it. The Commission realizes that a profession has been taken over and exploited. There is no parallel for that in other professions."

Now what perplexes me about Louis' concern over this so-called 'frustration' is his criteria for the judgment he pronounces. I don't think there is any question that there is a great deal of 'frustration' in the editorial offices of newspapers, but not of the kind that Louis suggests. As in other professions, it is largely a question of economic frustration or professional frustration in the sense of not being given sufficient opportunity to exercise one's skills. In the latter connection, I have in mind the frequent situation where

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a reporter is given poor assignments, or when he gets good ones, finds that his stories are cut to the bone or not even printed at all. Then, there is the matter of by-lines and no by-lines which sometimes results in the 'frustration' of a reporter's ego.

But Louis seems to be thinking about 'frustration' in the sense that a reporter or editorial writer is prevented from saying the things, and being the power he would be, to correct social or political evils through the power of the press. This premise seems to assume, somehow, that every newspaperman, whether reporter or editorial writer, is at heart a zealot, perhaps even a perfectionist, who constantly squirms under the necessity of not being able to harp on the subjects uppermost in his mind at any given moment, and in his own way. He seems to suggest that every reporter should be at liberty to crusade for whatever he likes or at any rate, for a great deal more than he is permitted to crusade for, and that every editorial writer has a lot of social reforms in mind that he is constantly prohibited from expressing.

I think this is a wholly faulty premise. In the first place, it is a very serious question, professionally, whether a reporter should be a zealot, or if he is, whether he should permit his zeal for any cause to enter into his reportorial duties. Now, if as a reporter he is 'frustrated' because he is unable to state his opinions about certain situations in his news stories, which he certainly should not be permitted to do, then perhaps his liberation would come by moving from the city room to the editorial offices where he would be enabled, at least once in a while, to express his opinions in editorials on these subjects, provided they did not clash with the particular newspaper's editorial policies.

Here we come up to another aspect of the 'frustration' which is difficult to understand. It goes without saying that every newspaper worth its salt must have an editorial policy and it follows quite logically that the editorial policies must be approved by the owners of the paper. I hope no one is arguing seriously that editors and reporters do not work for the owners of a newspaper, or is denying that the owners should have something to say about editorial policies.

All right, then, assuming our 'frustrated' reporter becomes an editorial writer and finds that his particular passion of the moment runs contrary to the well-known editorial policies of the paper or are, for some reason or another, opposed by the owner. It seems to me that the only thing he can do is to look for a publisher with whose views he is in harmony. Perhaps

this suggests the real problem to which Louis is addressing himself: namely, that there are too many publishers in the United States with what some reporters and editorial writers would regard as reactionary or too conservative views, and far too few with views of the 'liberal' kind, which would be more palatable to these particular news and editorial writers. If this is the issue, it seems to me that it should be clearly stated and the issue faced as such. Moreover, I do not see why reporters cannot do wholly satisfying and effective work as reporters, and editorial writers do equally well even if the publisher might happen to have some differing views on important subjects.

Louis says that the 'frustration' that he speaks of does not occur in the professions of law, education, religion, science, and philosophy, but again, it seems to me that the members of those professions are confronted with restrictions of a highly similar nature to those which have always been part of the environment of our own profession. There are, however, very important differences which render the analogy hardly pertinent. The restrictions of these other professions are largely self-imposed through professional societies such as do not exist in our own profession. A greater difference between these other professions and our own is that we operate within a proprietary industry which requires that members of our craft must conform to the views of the proprietors. If some members of our profession are 'frustrated' because they cannot like the proprietors, the only solution for them is to get other proprietors. One strongly suspects that many of our more 'liberal' colleagues would solve this problem by the simple but dubious expedient of turning to public ownership. I think it hardly needs be argued that this would be the most self-defeating solution of the problem, as the Commission so well stated. Another way would be to get more Marshall Fields, in other words, rich men with 'liberal' ideas, interested in the publishing business, for there is no blinking the fact that it takes plenty of capital to publish a daily newspaper these days.

If it is a fact, as Louis implies, that most of our reporters and editorial writers are fellows with strong 'ideals' in terms of social and political reform, who would feel 'frustrated' unless they could have their own way fully in their pursuit of journalism, the only complete solution for such rampant individualism would be a return to the press of early America, when it was possible for almost anybody with a hand press to turn out an extremely personal kind of journalism. There were hundreds of such sheets in the early days of our republic and even in the colonial

period before, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that technological progress may make it possible within a very short time for individuals of similar bent to produce at low cost small newspapers comparable to those of the early period. But I do not see that having a thousand or more individualistic voices shrieking up and down the nation would help the situation to any great extent.

Obviously, any newspaperman's attitude toward this matter of 'frustration' must be based largely on his own experience. Necessarily, therefore, I have to rely somewhat on my own experience, which has been exceedingly blessed and is, perhaps, somewhat unusual. Even so, I think I am familiar with the more common forms of 'frustration' in our profession.

For the first nine years of my reportorial career, despite the fact that I was married and had started to rear a family during that period, my newspaper salary never exceeded \$50 a week. I was, therefore, exceedingly 'frustrated' in an economic way, which necessitated my striking out in every possible direction, within the bounds of legitimacy, to earn what I could by outside writing. It was in this period that I collected what I am sure is one of the most diversified collections of rejection slips from magazines on record. Again, there were times during my nineteen years as a reporter when I felt that there were things to be said about important matters which I could not say as a reporter but possibly could say in a magazine article. Occasionally, I was able to sell articles which presented facts or made arguments which I thought had been inadequately treated by my own paper and others. But even now, I question the right of a reporter to take it upon himself to carry a cross for special causes while he is employed by a daily newspaper. I think it can be argued convincingly that it affects his objectivity in his professional duties.

Having become an editor, I am now 'frustrated' insofar as I am unable to do some of the reporting which I enjoyed so much in years past. In other words, if a reporter is 'frustrated' because he wants to express opinions, and then gets a job as an editor or editorial writer where he is so busy in the field of opinion writing that he cannot get around and write as he did as a reporter, it is then quite possible that he is 'frustrated' in another way. That brings up the question whether man was made in the first place to be a creature on the order of that "contented cow" we hear about on the radio.

This leads to the possibility of perhaps the only criticism that could be made of the Nieman Fellowship idea. If reporters are supposed to be well-informed but objective fellows who do not take strong

positions regarding current situations, then one might ask whether it is a good thing to get them away from the trees for a year into the ivory tower at Cambridge, where they can contemplate the forest, subjectively. It is quite possible that reporters who loved reporting for reporting's

sake could, in the highly charged intellectual environment of Cambridge, come away from there so full of zeal for certain reforms, social or otherwise, that their value as objective reporters might be somewhat impaired. I am simply throwing this up as something to talk about and

would like to hear what others have to say about it.

Frankly, I am a bit burned up at all this talk about the 'frustration' in a profession which has been a very happy one to me, and to many other newspapermen of my acquaintance.

## A POPGUN FOR THE PRESS

### HOW TO MAKE A BOMB OUT OF THE FREE PRESS REPORT?

by Volta Torrey

The atomic revolution began beneath the University of Chicago's stadium in December 1942. That same month, Henry R. Luce of Time, Inc., suggested to Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins that a group of distinguished citizens and scholars investigate freedom of the press. While their brethren, the physical scientists were spending \$2,000,000,000 and producing the atomic bomb, the social scientists spent \$200,000 and produced a popgun.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press found that this freedom is in danger because the press has become a mass-communication instrument that does not permit enough people to express their opinions, that does not meet society's needs adequately, and that sometimes behaves in ways which society condemns. The Commission's report, "A Free and Responsible Press," does not identify the rotten apples, but the worst ones can be recognized quickly when thus described. The *Chicago Tribune* is obviously the type of newspaper that is the world's greatest menace to freedom of the press by this definition of the danger.

The *Daily Worker* is smaller, but no better.

A free society, the Commission contends, requires a press that offers its citizens full access to "a truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning." That press also should depict constituent groups within the society accurately, clarify the society's goals and values, and be a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism. Many American newspapers try to meet these specifications. Some papers, such as *The New York Herald Tribune*, are quite successful.

Unfortunately, the Commission did not

cite examples. If its members had focused their attention on actual publications, they might have seen the way to safeguard freedom of the press more clearly. The surest, simplest way to minimize the menace would be to assure the competitive victory of papers which meet society's requirements reasonably well over those which jeopardize their own and the whole society's freedom. How can papers with the professional standards of *The New York Herald Tribune* be made more popular and profitable than those in the category represented by *The Chicago Tribune*? This is the real problem, and a civilization capable of turning an algebraic equation into an atomic bomb should not find it too difficult.

The educators, lawyers and authorities in other branches of learning who constituted Chancellor Hutchins' commission have made 13 recommendations. Five are addressed to the government, five to the press itself, and three to the public. All 13 are worth thinking about, but not one of them is likely to deprive Col. Robert R. McCormick of a wink of sleep. His editorial page may thunder against several of them, but his profits will not be affected for a long time. If you doubt this, consider the recommendations, one by one.

The government is advised (1) to give radio and motion pictures the same guarantees of freedom that newspapers enjoy; (2) to encourage new ventures and competition in the communications industry but use the anti-trust laws sparingly; (3) to enable an injured party to make a publication retract a false statement without suing it for libel; (4) to repeal legislation forbidding the advocacy of revolutionary changes when there is no danger that violence will ensue; and (5) to disseminate directly, at home and abroad, information regarding the government's policies and purposes that is not distributed adequately by private agencies.

Would such measures lure anyone away from Col. McCormick's columns? Or cost

him an agate line of advertising? Would they change the slant given to the news by his reporters and copyreaders? Would they sway the judgment of the men who lay out his front page? Would they dilute the poison in the typewriter ribbons of his editorial writers? Would they lessen one iota the fascination of his comics, the usefulness of his women's features, or the appeal of his sports pages? Even dear little Sad Sack should know better than to indulge in such extravagantly wishful thinking. When these recommendations were drafted, the Commission apparently had minor menaces in mind, rather than the major one.

Five more steps to protect freedom of the press, the report continues, could be taken by the press itself. (1) It could "accept the responsibilities of common carriers of information and discussion." (2) It could finance new, experimental ventures. (3) It could engage in "vigorous mutual criticism." (4) It could increase the competence, independence and effectiveness of its staffs. (5) The radio industry could take control of its programs and treat advertising as it is treated by good newspapers.

These are fine resolutions, but even Col. McCormick might second them with pleasure. He takes his responsibilities so seriously that he sometimes seems ludicrous. He is noted for financing innovations such as four-color cartoons. By abusing other publishers, he has done more than should be expected from any individual to provoke "vigorous mutual criticism." He pays his employees well, which is the best way ever devised, according to the working press, to increase the competence, independence and effectiveness of a staff. And he is so interested in radio that he steps up to the microphone himself, not to sing plugs for his product, but to lecture on American history. The *Daily Worker's* editor would do likewise, no doubt, if he had the money. Hence, when the Commission wrote its admonitions to the press,

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Volta Torrey was Sunday editor of the Omaha Telegram before he was feature editor of the Associated Press. He is now managing editor of Popular Science Monthly. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41.

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its attention must have wandered from the performances and aspirations of these artists to the shenanigans of some of the juvenile delinquents in the press gallery.

The Commission's last three suggestions, addressed to the public, are better answers than the first ten to the question: What can be done about papers like *The Chicago Tribune*? (1) Non-profit institutions might help supply "the variety, quantity and quality of press service required by the American people." (2) Academic-professional centers of advanced study and research could be created, and existing schools of journalism could give their students broader, more liberal training. (3) A new and independent agency might be established "to appraise and report annually upon the performance of the press."

The services of the press in many areas are poor because the people who support the press in those areas are poor. Non-profit institutions could help. Chicago, however, is a great city in a prosperous region, and Col. McCormick stages a show which more than a million people have decided is worth the price of admission. Many of them would continue to buy and read his paper even if Marshall Field offered *The Chicago Sun* to them for nothing.

Further research in the communications industry might be extremely helpful. Why are some of the worst newspapers more successful than the best papers? Which is the better news magazine, *Time* or *Newsweek*? Can a city of 200,000 be served better by one strong paper than by two weak papers? Many people have opinions, but the facts needed to answer such questions as these have not all been found. Techniques are being developed by which more of the facts may be ascertained. Editors are still flying by the seats of their pants because the instruments now available to them are not sufficiently reliable, but those instruments probably could be improved. Who knows but what more research might turn up a bit of knowledge as useful to the editors of *The New York Times* as the discovery of the k-value for neutron multiplication in a uranium pile was to the nuclear physicists?

Many existing journalism schools are mere trade schools; some are scarcely anything save publicity bureaus for the universities that support them. None is as highly regarded by newspapermen as the Harvard Law School, for example, is by

lawyers. One trouble is that teaching journalism is frequently even less remunerative than covering a police court. Sunday feature writers are sometimes paid better than the deans of journalism schools. The Commission wisely points out that these schools would be better if they exploited the total resources of their universities to broaden the training given to the students. This certainly would be done if there were more first-rate newspapermen on the journalism faculties. And, if the schools were to produce a better-educated generation of journalists, Col. McCormick's heirs might find it more difficult to recruit competent staffs. A liberal education tends, at least, to make men and women more particular about where they work.

An independent agency to proclaim the faults and virtues of the press could be helpful, too. Some people in downstate Illinois might be persuaded that they should read *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* instead of *The Chicago Tribune*. Advertisers, moreover, might choose to be seen in the company of honest journalists rather than that of demagogues. The staffs of all newspapers might seek the truth more diligently, and report their findings more scrupulously, if representatives of the public, as well as publishers, looked over their shoulders and reviewed their work critically.

There is a hitch, however, in these recommendations which the Colonel probably espied instantly: They are addressed to the public and making them effective would take a mint of money. "The public" has no street address. Some of its members, such as Mr. Luce, may not be startled by a request for millions of dollars, but most of us are likely to reply: "Who, me?"

"Yes, you," the Commission could have said, "through your government." Is there any other nonprofit institution which could afford to fill the gaps in the service rendered by the American press, support research centers, reform journalism schools, and keep tab on all of the pranks and achievements of the profession? Could enough money for so tremendous an undertaking be raised by selling Christmas seals or arranging for an annual March of Dimes for Freedom of the Press? Or would the random generosity of random millionaires like Mr. Luce suffice? The Commission's report is an exhibit of what \$200,000 will

buy. It will not eliminate the danger which it emphasizes. This Commission has not even estimated the cost of building the ramparts which it has proposed. Another commission, to seek a powerful weapon against the enemies of freedom of the press, is needed.

The mere suggestion of a governmental invasion of such a proper field for private enterprise as newspaper publishing is horrible to those of us who have grown up with due reverence for the remarks of Thomas Jefferson. The Commission should not be censured too severely for turning its face the other way, but it can fairly be asked: Is there an alternative? How else can the public heed your warning and act on your advice?

The poisonous pillars that stood briefly over Hiroshima, Nagasaki and our fleet at Bikini were frightening, too. They have become even more horrible in retrospect, but we are not turning our backs on the problem posed by them. A way has been found, and even Congress has been convinced that it is sound, to deal with this unprecedented peril. We have created an Atomic Energy Commission to continue nuclear research, train young scientists, and advise those who propose to produce and use atomic power. The President's budget for the next fiscal year calls for the expenditure of \$500,000,000 on this program.

Conceivably, it might cost even more to make the press so free that no one would ever have to worry about it again. We know less about how to do this than we know about how to disrupt the insides of atoms which we have never seen. But it should be no more difficult to find a way to grapple with this problem than it was to make a plowshare out of the Manhattan Project. A Press Freedom Commission would not have to fret about military secrets.

The need for some solution to the problem of press freedom is no less urgent than our need for more knowledge of atoms. The freedom of *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Daily Worker*, and their cousins and their sisters and their aunts to distort news, suppress opinions that conflict with their prejudices, and arouse evil passions is far more likely to generate a war than any chain reaction in inanimate matter. Wars are made by men, not neutrons. The physicists have simply made it imperative that men stop making war. But men cannot do that on a diet of half-truths and lies.



## Burial Detail

by Fletcher Martin

"Here they are, Sarge."

Dave Seller, civilian-soldier, technician fifth-grade, grave registration unit, United States Army, was leaning over what remained of two guys, formerly of the same army. One had the right side of the face blown off. What remained was being hulled by maggots. The other soldier lay about two feet away. His swollen left hand clutched his swollen stomach, which seemed to have been laid open by an ax. The blood had long since clotted on the hand holding the stomach together.

The sergeant looked and breathed a soft "damn." He tried to spit; it didn't come freely; it was that variety that clings to the lips like dust and must be blown out. "Those damn mortars," he said. Dave was staring at the half-head.

Bougainville was proving no child's play. The U. S. American and 37th Infantry divisions had secured a beachhead which was relative in size to that of a dime on a pool table. The Japanese Sixth Division kept poking our line in the side, hard punches that hurt. The fighting had moved south of Empress Augusta bay, back in the jungles where a man had to fight the terrain and foliage as well as a stubborn and competent enemy. Back there were ugly banyan trees with roots running along the ground like veins in a skinny arm; vines with nettles that left an ugly welt on a man's body; tall, tough grass where centipedes played; foliage so thick you could hardly see 20 yards ahead; pretty birds that sang pretty songs amidst dying men and wild orchids. The crisp crack of a rifle could be heard.

"Lookit the look on this fellow's face," Dave said, pointing to the body with the split stomach "He looks like the thought just struck him that he's dead."

"That's the trouble with dead soldiers, they look so damn dead," the sarge said.

"And they smell so damn dead," Dave added.

"I bet this guy never knew what hit 'im," the sarge said, lighting a cigarette. He fingered the dogtag, took it off. "Henry Grady—100985." He moved over to the half-face soldier and with a pair of pliers

snapped the chain holding the tags. With his left hand he jabbed at big blow flies that ducked each punch gracefully and refused to abandon Henry Grady. "You, dirty, stinking bastards," the sarge said, underscoring each word.

Dave walked to the truck and pulled out two sheet covers. He split one down the seam with a razor blade, opening it out to the size of a regulation blanket.

"Say Sarge, there's something I've been meaning to ask you. Do you believe in God?"

"I don't know."

"Do you ever pray?"

"If you mean if I get down on my knees, no."

They worked in silence for several moments. Dave spread the sheet beside Henry Grady. They carefully lifted the body, Dave by the shoes; the sarge had the shoulders. When the body was on the sheet, the sarge went through the pockets.

"Sarge, your mother living?"

"Yeah."

"Mine too."

Henry Grady's pockets gave up a few silver coins and a partial pack of Luckies.

"Every time my mother writes, she always asks if I pray," Dave said.

The sarge smoked in silence.

"I was just thinking that suppose this guy's mother could see him now. Suppose they all could see what we see."

"Why don't you close your goddam lips?" the sarge asked, flicking his cigarette toward the water's edge.

"You know," Dave went on, disregarding the suggestion, "if I get killed over here, it'll kill my mother just as sure as I'm standing here. That's one reason I pray."

"I guess these guys prayed too," the sarge said. "And the Japs pray, the Germans pray, every damn body prays. This is the damn prayingest war there ever was. Still guys get their guts shot out."

"You shouldn't talk like that."

"Talk hell, you come over here to kill or get killed. That's what war is all about. People know that, know it before wars start. Then why all this praying? What is needed is for somebody to kill off the bastards that start all this. No, they won't do that, they start playing a lot of military music and writing slogans and telling you what a bunch of sonsabitches the Japs are—and then pray that you won't get killed while killing 'em off."

Henry Grady was packaged as neatly

as a Christmas bundle, all six feet of him, wearing his muddy shoes and needing a shave and haircut. They placed the body in the truck.

"Come on, let's get this other guy fixed up and get him out of here," the sarge said, lighting another cigarette.

"Damn what you say, I figure a man ought to keep praying," Dave said softly as though the words were directed for his ears alone.

"All right, all right, keep praying!"

"I believe in God and I believe He'll let me get home." Dave's voice was soft again—as if talking to himself, saying it over and over again in his mind, "He'll let me get home!"

The sarge cut a corner off the sheet cover and wrapped it around the half face. He then searched the pockets and found a small black comb, an Australian penny and a bottle opener. He placed these articles in his own pocket.

"You know we're having fresh meat tonight?" the sarge asked. "It's been so damn long since I've tasted what a piece of real beef tastes like." Dave didn't answer; he was loosening one of the laces of the corpse's shoes.

"What in hell are you doing?"

"The shoe seems too tight."

"A hell of a lot of good that will do him," the sarge said.

Dave had loosened the right shoe lace and retied the knot. He looked out at sea, then at the sky. An underslung grey sky touched the grey waters at the horizon. Two LSTs lay off shore. Except for an occasional rifle shot and the buzz of blow flies, the day was as quiet as Henry Grady.

"How long do you think it'll last, Sarge?"

"It won't be too long. The next move is the Philippines, then Japan."

"And we'll go along burying the dead," Dave put in.

"Yep, we'll go along burying the dead."

The two soldiers placed the second body in the truck. The sarge lit another cigarette. Dave looked at the grey sands along the water line.

"Now, let's get the hell out of here before some mother's son finds us all sprawled out and the maggots makin' a meal," the sarge said, crawling behind the steering wheel. "Those little bastards don't care what they eat."

Dave slowly got in the cab, the motor roared and the truck plowed through the heavy sands.

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Fletcher Martin, city editor of the Louisville Defender, was with troops on Bougainville as a war correspondent for the combined Negro press. He wrote this story as an exercise in composition during his Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, 1946-47.

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# PRESS REACTION TO FREE PRESS REPORT

All three press services carried a concise summary of the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press. That of the AP ran about a column and a half. But very many of their clients saw no news in it, and most of those that did used very little of it and used it under a headline that held little interest for their readers. The Hearst papers kept the news from their readers. Instead of the news of the report, the Gannett papers carried a long piece by Frank Gannett deriding it.

It was not news in any Boston paper but the Christian Science Monitor which gave it a whole page. Two days later the editor of the Boston Herald wrote an editorial page article criticising the report, on which his readers had had no news. This was the only thing written on the report in Boston outside the Monitor. The Globe would have had nothing if Walter Lippmann's column had not happened to be on one aspect of it.

Such leading papers as the New York Times, Herald Tribune, Washington Post, Louisville Courier-Journal, Portland Oregonian and San Francisco Chronicle took it in stride with full news stories, editorials and reviews. Most other papers ran only a few inches of the AP report under the headline "Free Press in Danger" with nothing in the head to show the reader that the danger diagnosed was internal to the press itself, nothing at all to suggest that the performance of the press was indicted.

Exceptions were such headlines as that of the Spartanburg Herald:

Press Must be Responsible,  
Commission Finds

or that of the Cleveland Plain Dealer:

Press Held Endangering  
Its Freedom by Abusing it

The New York Times in its second bank ran:

Commission Led by Hutchins  
Lays Danger to Failure to  
Meet Needs of Society

Such headlines keyed the story for the reader, but they were exceptional. Headings on most such editorials as appeared were similarly evasive of the issue. The Christian Science Monitor had space over its editorial to head it "A Free Responsible Press." But there was a peculiarly persistent avoidance of the word "Responsible" in the run of the press. Yet this

was the key and the core of the report, as the most responsible papers acknowledged. Barry Bingham, owner of the Louisville Courier-Journal, himself signed the review in his paper. The New York Times carried a story of about four columns and gave its Sunday book section's outside page to a treatment of the report by Robert L. Duffus of the editorial page staff. The Times, Tribune and Monitor editorially welcomed the report and accepted its basic premise that only a responsible press can remain free. These papers were joined by a few more in giving a serious editorial consideration to the report. Most papers left the responsibility for dealing with it to the few columnists who discussed it, chiefly Walter Lippmann and Marquis Childs. With the few distinguished exceptions the press comment on the report varied from brushing it off as the work of "professors" to denouncing it in moods varying from caustic to hysterical. Walter Lippmann's view that outside criticism is necessary for a press which is the critic of all other institutions, was contrary to the attitude of most editorials. The press proved highly sensitive and highly resistant to criticism. The smugness of the characteristic editorial comment gave an interesting insight to what the press chooses to think of itself.

A wide distribution of press reaction is collected here for the record:

L.M.L.

## We Welcome the Report

New York Times Editorial, April 1, 1947

The most challenging comment in the current report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, issued under the title of 'A Free and Responsible Press,' is that the dissemination of news and ideas is in danger of falling 'under the control of fewer and fewer persons'. . . . it saw danger in what it took to be the case, that the owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, which versions of facts and which ideas shall reach the public.' If this situation exists it is dangerous. We do not believe it exists to the extent that the Commission does. True, a given owner or manager may suppress or distort certain facts, but there are no signs of a general conspiracy to do so. Indeed, the competitive situation, as the Commission itself describes

it, makes it altogether probable that what is suppressed or distorted by one agency will be taken up by another. The public has a chance to judge for itself, if it will make the effort. If it will not make the effort, the blame may lie with our educational system rather than with our press. . . . If, as the Commission suggests, 'nonprofit institutions can help supply the variety, quantity and quality of press service required by the American people,' so much the better. We welcome the study made by the Commission. We applaud the title of its report, 'A Free and Responsible Press.' Freedom and responsibility must always be linked together. The public has the power to deny support to those agencies which overlook that all-important fact.

## Can't Shrug It Off

N. Y. Herald Tribune Editorial, March 27

One can challenge these findings in detail and in general; but one can scarcely challenge the basic principle that a social responsibility does attach to the freedoms of the press, or doubt that this responsibility is often neglected or flouted in the daily workings of the complex mass communications industry which has replaced the simple print shops of the late eighteenth century. . . .

But the basic recommendation, that the communications industries as a whole must give serious attention to improving their own standards of public and professional responsibility, is one which neither press nor radio nor motion pictures can afford to shrug off as mere professorial whimsy.

## Will Be Wide Agreement

Christian Science Monitor Editorial, March 27

There will be wide agreement with the problems as posed by this group. Certainly the freedom of the press is in danger, from within as much as from without. Certainly fewer and fewer people can express their divergent ideas in fewer and fewer newspapers. Certainly today's newspapers are not perfect, make mistakes, fail to live up to their responsibilities.

We hope American newspapers will not bristle at all this excellent advice from without. We hope American newspapers will augment it with self-criticism, and self-improvement. For a free press is indispensable to progress and peace.

## Press Reaction

### How Is Press To Be Criticized?

Walter Lippmann, Column, March 27

The members of the commission were appointed by the chairman, Mr. Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, and on the principle that a good critic had better not be a producer or a playwright or an actor, Mr. Hutchins appointed no one from the working press. He chose instead able and distinguished men from among lawyers, economists, philosophers, historians, authors, theologians and business men.

The value and significance of this report is that it is an effort to elucidate the axioms, to define the principles, and to mark out the field, for serious and continuing criticism of the press.

What the commission finds to criticize is quite secondary to its brave, and often brilliant, attempt to show how those who cherish freedom can equip themselves intellectually and morally to criticize a free press. The report is in the last analysis a critique of criticism in a field where criticism is as essential as in any other, but has been much neglected.

The question, then, is how the press itself, since it is a primary institution of a free country, is to be reported, reviewed, explained, and criticized? What is sauce for the goose—that is to say for public men, business men, bankers, labor leaders, artists—must be sauce for the gander, for reporters, editors, commentators, book reviewers, dramatic critics.

Yet in practice there is no regular and serious criticism of the press. A book about Russia will be reviewed as soon as it is published. The reports and comments on the Moscow conference will, on the whole, not be reviewed. Mr. Luce would not have financed this inquiry had he not recognized that criticism ought not to be so much as it is a one-way street—the uncriticized press criticizing all other institutions and activities. It is not good for the press, and it is not safe. Serious, searching, and regular criticism of the press is the ultimate safeguard of its freedom. The lack of it deprives the press itself of the benefits of the very principle of which the press is, in relation to everything else, the chief exponent.

The problem is a specially important form of the question: who polices the policeman? The commissioners are not, I think, so clear on this point as they might have been. "We recommend," they say, "that the members of the press engage in vigorous mutual criticism." There they needed, but missed, the advice of the working members of the press.

Mutual criticism, like marital criticism, if it is publicly made, is too hard for mortal man to take. The good critic should be an outsider, like Mr. Hutchins as regards the press. For personal detachment is necessary to good criticism.

While vigorous criticism of the press is most necessary to the welfare of the press, it will have to come from those who are outside the press. Those who wish to work at the criticism of the press will find this report an admirable introduction to the subject.

### Nothing Much

Lewis Gannett, New York Her. Trib. Book Review, March 27

" . . . . . a good \$150-a-week newspaper man would have been ashamed to do as little work for a three-week assignment. "Is the freedom of press in danger?" the report begins. Its prompt answer is, Yes. "What shall we do about it?" the report continues. The answer is nothing much.

Its conclusion seems to be that the only real hope is an appeal to the moral nature of publishers. Maybe it is right.

About the soundest recommendation on the professors' list is that newspapers give up their conception of their industry as a gentlemen's club and take to serious public criticism of one another.

Here and there, buried in the report, one encounters pregnant sentences which any good newspaper man would have illustrated with concrete cases. The commission soundly observes that pressure groups—religious, political and economic—are responsible for more interference with real editorial freedom today than is advertising. And it comments, in modulated tones, on the open prostitution of the radio. "Radio cannot become a responsible agency of communication as long as its programming is controlled by the advertisers," the commission says. This week's great victory of soap over the voice of William L. Shirer tragically confirms the point.

### Thank You, Dr. Hutchins

James M. Daniel, Washington Daily News, March 27

The press owes Dr. Hutchins considerable thanks for having postulated the principles on which it operates. Many of his criticisms are shared by all but a tiny minority of the press. None is radically new.

### Logical But Impatient

R. L. Duffus, N. Y. Times Book Review, March 30

The commission found that the chief danger to freedom of the press lay within the press itself. It then wrote a challenging, but not revolutionary, prescription for a cure to be effected largely by voluntary action. . . . Naturally, the results, so far as the instruments of public information take note of them, are going to be reviewed from the inside, not the outside. The reviewers must be judges in their own cases. . . . Then there is "the bias of owners." "The agencies of mass communication," the commission notices, "are big business and their owners big business men. . . . The press is connected with other big businesses." . . . It is a more serious charge than the ancient one of surrendering to advertising pressure. The commission rightly concedes that "as a newspaper becomes financially stable it becomes more independent and tends to resist" this kind of pressure. Veteran newspapermen know perfectly well what ownership bias can do. They also know that this bias, particularly when it distorts the news, has killed some newspapers, and that the broad-minded publisher actually adds to the value of his property by practicing that virtue. . . . It is hard to quarrel with the thesis that we must adapt sound old principles to a new social and technological situation. If the present reviewer has a quarrel with the commission it is possibly because it holds to standards of perfection in an evolving medium in an evolving society and is too impatient because we have not as yet caught up to those standards. . . . But the report is logical and should provoke self-examination among the practitioners of the trades affected.

### Self Restraint

Marquis Childs, Column March 27

That report points to many reasons why we as a Nation, and particularly those of us in the newspaper field, can't feel too self-satisfied.

Extremists of both left and right will be unhappy over what these thoughtful men have to say.

What the report suggests, in thoughtful language, is more awareness and more criticism by the public. Perhaps public organization, quite outside of government, is necessary to make the press and radio accountable, in the view of these conscientious Americans who want to see the free press stay free.

What it may come down to is self-restraint. Cheap sensation and, yes, false sensation, can be turned into easy money these days. But that is also an easy way

## Press Reaction

to destroy one of the freedoms that have come out of centuries of struggle and strife.

### For the Consumer

PM Editorial, John P. Lewis

As a matter of self-interest, I think newspaper readers should read the report on the American press released yesterday by the Commission of Freedom of the Press, headed by Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago.

Fortunately, it is written from the viewpoint of the ultimate consumer of news rather than the purveyor's.

The findings are more negative in this respect than most newspapers will care to admit. The Commission finds that the press does not provide service adequate to the needs of present day society, and warns that if things go on like this, the people ultimately will turn around and regulate or control the press. I believe the Commission is right on both counts.

The recommendation which needs a whole lot more study and attention is the one advocating Government facilitation of new ventures in the press. Government action to make it easier for newspapers to start and survive—especially in areas of monopoly control—is the one best hope of broadening the viewpoints available through the press and of saving the press from control. If control ever comes, a whole lot more than freedom of the press will go up the spout.

### Inherent Right

Baltimore Evening Sun Book Review,  
April 4

All the way through the report, the commission insists upon the urgency of its message. The press—always meaning the whole list—must reform itself or else. The else seems to be that otherwise the Government will step in and do the reforming. The commission gives lip support, at least, to the idea that this would not be so good. But there are indications that deep in their hearts some of the members are not convinced. In any event, their report does contain a misconception as to the assumption on which our present freedom of speech and publication—a freedom which belongs to every citizen, by the way—is based.

Their misconception finds overexpression in this passage, here somewhat contracted: . . . Government must set limits on its capacity to interfere with, regulate or suppress the voices of the press . . . because freedom of expression is a moral

right . . . This sounds fine, but the commission has got it backward. In our idea of society, the right of freedom of expression does not derive from the Government. It is inherent in the individual before Government comes into being. Hence, it is not within the right of Government to "set limits." In our society, the people set the limits. The Government, as such, has no say in the matter, except as that power is granted it by the people or their representatives. . . .

H. O.

### Pretty Harsh

John H. Crider, Boston Herald, March 29

The commission's indictment of the press is pretty harsh. Unlike some of the noisiest critics of the press, it does not find much merit in the accusation that advertisers dictate news policies. It finds pressure groups other than advertisers are a much greater threat to the objectivity of the news columns. It wants less sensationalism, more educational content to equip citizens to understand and deal with the critical problems of their times. It must be remembered that the critics are mostly professors striving for perfection. Not being journalistic technicians, they too lightly pass over the difficulties of presenting in interesting, simple, and meaningful form, the events of each day in the rush of getting out a newspaper. . . . If the commission is opposed to government ownership of the press, as it stated, then it is treading on dangerous ground when it recommends in another section that the government go into the radio or publishing business where it cannot find satisfactory private facilities for its purposes. . . . The most crying need of the press today is for better facilities for getting behind the facade of government press agents to the makers of news. . . .

### Nothing New

Indianapolis Star Editorial, March 28

Too often an erudite study of a simple subject confuses more people than it informs. That is the effect of the report published in the April issue of Fortune Magazine called "A Free and Responsible Press."

There is nothing new in this. These findings are true of the American press. They are also true of every other American institution. Any group within a democracy has public responsibilities as well as public rights, including the family group. It is the central problem of liberty in our republic and in any democracy to achieve the balance between rights and duties—in labor relations, in social welfare, in business practices and in the public informa-

tion services. Improvement can only come when the individual members recognize that public interest makes private interests possible.

The report merely restates an old problem in new and obscure language. The American press is not perfect. Neither is American democracy. But they both serve free people better than any other institutions anywhere. They will come closer to perfection only if they remain free.

### Sensible But Inconclusive

Barry Bingham, Louisville Courier-Journal  
Book Review, March 28

It is encouraging to see a really serious study of the press and its failings attempted.

It seemed a sound idea to use non-professionals to survey the press, since the purpose was not a technical study of newspaper methods but a broad consideration of how our papers are serving the American public. At best, the choice of personnel produced serious and challenging views of a basic American problem. At worst, lack of familiarity with the mores of newspaper offices resulted in a certain naivete and awkwardness in exploring unfamiliar ground.

It has sensible things to say about the gentleman's club theory which prevents publishers from criticising each other in even the most constructive way. It is sound on schools of journalism, on the duty of newspapers not only to report the fact truthfully, but to report "the truth about the fact."

Its indictment of our failures is carried out on the high line throughout. It is most unfortunate that the Commission itself has failed in one or two signal aspects of its job. For one thing, it has sought to lump newspapers, radio, magazine, motion pictures and books all under the omnibus title of "the press." In seeking to run down the faults of all these varied media of expression, it has involved itself in an intellectual rat-race. Newspapers themselves are so varied, as witness *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The New York Daily News*, that a commission of Solomons would do well to evaluate them as a group. Movies and radio merely serve to jumble up the issues.

The prime failure of the report, however, is its curious inconclusiveness. It makes a case against the press with dignity and seriousness. When it comes to describe the remedies, however, it ladles out great masses of confusion. Furthermore, the report is written in a dull and enervating style. It displays real peaks of just and high-minded criticism, but they are shrouded by a fog of murky words.

## Press Reaction

### Problem Of Bigness

Buffalo, N.Y. News Editorial, March 29

Like so many other critics, the commission is obsessed by the bigness of today's press organs—yet it is only the big that could begin to give the kind of service which the commission seems elsewhere to want. And the commission admits that "as a newspaper becomes financially stable it becomes more independent." How much is independence from the pressures that intimidate weak papers worth? The commission doesn't say.

The problem of bigness is a concern to newspapermen no less than to the commission—and for the same reason; economic concentration usually leads eventually to Government control. But surely the commission would not wish to return to the days when so much of the press, surfeited with weak sisters, was a kept, partisan, bickering babble with none of today's striving for accuracy, objectivity and public trusteeship.

### A Dangerous Document

Frank Gannett, Rochester Dem. & Chron., April 5

I believe the report to be wrongly conceived and badly executed. I think it is erroneous, inconsistent, ineffective and dangerous.

First is the misuse of the word "press." Press means, to most persons, the daily press, the newspaper. Yet the commission employs it to cover the movies, the radio, the magazines and the newspapers. The errors and sins of any or all of these agencies are charged to the press and the reader is bound to believe that all those sins are committed by the newspaper.

If the commission had set out to smear the newspapers it could not have selected its term more adroitly.

The commission skirts the idea of government control. It says it should dislike to see such controls established. Yet it favors a sort of regimentation which would amount to control.

The commission wants the newspaper to be a common carrier, meaning that it should print any and all ideas submitted to it. This suggestion grows out of its charge that only one side of a question is aired in "the press." Did no members of the commission live through the Roosevelt administration? Surely there was never a greater demonstration of the newspaper's practice of printing the opposition's views.

Did the commissioners never read the letters columns in newspapers? Did they never read the columns written by com-

mentators, men who were in opposition to the newspaper's own policies?

The report concludes with a series of recommendations for betterment of the press. Anyone with the slightest familiarity with newspapers knows those recommendations are part of the unwritten newspaper code. Those practices grew up with the newspaper, reflecting the sound common sense and decency of the men who operate them.

Many unfair charges appear in the report. Among them is the reiterated complaint against "lying" in the press. That is grave libel. Some newspapers may lie. Some newspapers may be guilty of other offenses. But the press—the newspapers as a whole—does an honest job of collecting and printing the news. It does not, as a whole, resort to the sensational and suppress the important. That fact should be clear to anyone who really studies the newspaper field.

The report is a dangerous and damaging document. By the basic carelessness in using the word "press," the commission's work goes for nothing. Its "recommendations" are plain silly. Show me a paper for instance which does not already gladly retract an accidental libel.

### A Mouse Comes Forth

Louisville Times Editorial, March 27

The mountain labored. The mouse is here (Fortune, April): The \$215,000 investigation of press freedom, made by a committee headed by college president Robert M. Hutchins, is a solemn recital of all of the well-known criticisms of newspapers, winding up, of course, with the threat that government may undertake the job if newspapers don't do better.

As a judge said of *Forever Amber*, it isn't as a whole wicked, but as a whole it is conducive to sleep. There are parts of it which will keep awake anyone who has a sense of humor.

### Readers Not From Mars

Lexington, Ky. Herald, Editorial

A commission headed by Dr. Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, has delivered a report after a three-year study to the effect that the press of the United States as an instrument of mass communication "has greatly decreased the proportion of the people who can express their opinions and ideas through the press."

Dr. Hutchins evidently doesn't read letters to the editor. Or does he?

In our own opinion, American newspaper readers, as a result of having enjoyed a free press and public education, are the

most enlightened in the world and they know how to discern what is false and true. The American newspaper suffers, however, when viewed from the impartial position a Man from Mars might assume, but American newspaper readers are not from Mars.

### Should Have Named Names

New Philadelphia, Ohio, Times, Editorial, April 2

But there is some doubt as to whether this criticism is as valuable as it is interesting. The doubt arises from the fact that the commission has made its report so generalized that it runs the risk of distortion and over-emphasis.

As for "sensationalism," that's a loose and tricky word. Many "sensational" exposures by newspapers have advanced justice and the public welfare. Furthermore, the normal is not always news. Millions of John Joneses may live uprightly, perform valuable duties, be kind to the wife and kids, and go to bed early. But people aren't going to buy newspapers to read about them.

The commission advocates mutual criticism and repeal of the "unwritten law" whereby newspapers ignore one another's errors, misrepresentations, and lies. Well, we don't think they do ignore them. If one newspaper reports the truth where another errs or lies, the shortcomings are not being ignored.

The newspaper profession is by no means perfect. It has its share of publishers and editors of low taste and low standards. But we think they are the exception.

Perhaps the commission missed a bet by not taking a tip from journalistic practice and putting a finger on specific evils. If it had named names, cited cases, and said, "Such things are an affront to the public and a neglect of duty," any dangers to press freedom might be averted more readily.

### Lacking In Evidence

Uniontown, Pa., Standard, Editorial, April 2

We also think, quite frankly, that the college professors have served no particular good to either newspapers or public in a long and nebulous report completely lacking in documented evidence.

To us, the whole report smacks too much of influence and thought long designed to undermine public confidence in the American press as an institution; an influence and thought inspired by left wingers and groups who have been working insidiously and energetically during the past few years for eventual government regulation and control.

## Press Reaction

### Dumb Professors

George Sokolsky, Tampa, Florida, Daily Times, Apr. 9

Harry Luce, who made considerable money publishing the Time-Life-Fortune trio, one day was inspired to appoint a jury of professors to determine what a "free and responsible press" is.

He might have done as well had he appointed Jack Kriendler of 21, Billy Rose of the Diamond Horseshoe, Toots Shor of his own bistro, and Rene Black of the Waldorf Astoria. In face, it strikes me that a jury of saloon-keepers to determine what is wrong with an irresponsible and amoral American educational system would be just as competent as this jury of professors for the American press.

The professors include under the word, "press," the following items in the order given, which shows what they know about it: the radio, newspapers, motion pictures, magazines and books.

The "press" is the newspaper. Radio is not a newspaper any more than vaudeville. Radio is a show. A newscaster, like a female singer, is hired for his voice. He reads stuff dished up by one of the newspaper wire services. True, the networks often hire newspapermen to report from here and abroad but this is secondary to the show business.

It just shows how dumb these professors are to put radio in front of the newspaper in a study of the press. It would be as correct for my jury of saloonkeepers to put football ahead of Anthropology and Astronomy as educational features of the American university. And maybe saloon-keepers would be more accurate.

Then these professors include motion pictures as part of the "press," which is stretching a point beyond the imagination of an atomic scientist.

### Objectivity

Tyrone, Pa., Herald by Kenneth L. Dixon distributed by INS

This is the long-awaited report of the Dixon "Commission on Freedom of Colleges, Banks and Poetry, particularly that of Archibald MacLeish."

In order to attain pure objectivity in our research, no college graduate, banker or poet was permitted on the board. In fact, we quite carefully chose commission members known to be opposed to all three institutions, that apparently being the custom of achieving objectivity.

Eventually, our meticulously-selected membership included two bricklayers, one

taxi-driver, one barber, one shoe-shine boy and a firehouse custodian.

This is our report:

Bricklayer Bill Radiownskulitz—"Colleges stink. All they try to do is win football games, or get their president's name in the papers. My boy Joe went four years and instead of learning anything, he even forgot how to spell his name. That's because they shortened it to Joe Radik, to get it on the football programs. . . Yeah, he was a fullback. They gave him a substitute to attend classes. He had a heckuva time finding the auditorium graduation day. Never been there before. . ."

Bricklayer Sam Jones—"Besides that, colleges are dominated by the profit motive. Let some rich guy give a university a new building and all his kids and grand-children will graduate with good grades ever afterward. Besides that, lots of colleges are race-prejudiced. Not all of 'em, mind you, but so many that it's up to them all to get together and stop that sort of stuff. It's their mutual responsibility."

### What Professors Missed

San Francisco News, Arthur Caylor's Column, April 8,

Personally, I think the professors missed the greatest fault of the American press. It's something I call the boring from without. It has grown and flourished for a variety of depression-wartime reasons. Some of it can't be avoided. Some of it is due to journalistic laziness.

People in high places have learned that if they make news, papers dedicated to the objective presentation of news have to print it. In this respect, F. D. R. was the old master. John L. Lewis is an expert. Rep. John Rankin is no slouch. Henry Wallace is tops.

Even on the local level, when people attain a certain position they seem automatically to get into the papers in the same way generals and Congressmen get into Who's Who. This has much to do with the phony organization racket—a device used in common by political campaign managers, Communists and people who climb socially by joining committees for causes.

### What's Wrong with the Press?

Portland Oregonian, Editorial, April 4

The thirteen philosophers, professors and scholars under the chairmanship of Robert M. Hutchins, have produced a volume almost certain to cause the casual reader to fall asleep, filled with vague warnings and conclusions reached on the

philosophical level, without much evidence of research. The one clear recommendation, as any newspaperman might have guessed, is that the press itself assume more responsibility.

### An Ivory-Tower View

Buffalo Evening News, Editorial, March 29

The long and tortuously-reasoned report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press—based on a three-year, \$215,000 study by some of the nation's loftier academic minds—is at once a disappointment and a tribute: a disappointment because it savors so strongly of the ivory tower; a tribute because its major recommendations have so little application to the average run of decent newspapers.

Like some other critics of the press, this commission headed by Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago, makes the mistake of generalizing from selected horrible examples; it makes the further mistake of matching the performance of "the press" not against reality or even against the expectations of the public, but against a philosopher's dream of perfection in public enlightenment. Unlike certain other critics, however, the commission approaches its study as a true believer in press freedom, a viewpoint which automatically rules out reform via censorship or government control.

### The Other Fellow

Ironton, Ohio, Tribune, Editorial, April 2

The Hutchins committee lumps newspapers, radio, motion pictures, magazines and books into a single classification—the press. This suggests some interesting possibilities, also some interesting questions. But for the time being it suggests chiefly that the committee has given toilers in the vineyards of each medium a chance to pick out the faults of the other fellow.

### Academic

Meriden, Conn., Journal, Editorial

The Commission was heavily over-weighted with college professors, all of its members belonging in that category. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that its views are more academic than realistic, since it has no firsthand acquaintance with newspaper work.

The committee failed to find evidence to support the charge, frequently made by laymen, that the press is controlled by its advertisers. On the positive side, it did find that the relationship between the "best newspapers" and advertisers was something that the radio industry might

## Press Reaction

well attempt to copy. It criticized severely in a separate report the domination of radio by its commercial sponsors.

It is difficult to answer a document so vague and ambiguous as the one that the professors have produced, but certain of its fallacies are all too obvious. One is that the growth of the press has stifled opportunities to reach it for the free expression of ideas. No newspaper that we know of has closed its columns to letters from readers. No editor worth his salt has refused to listen to complaints or to give space to any story which he considered worth printing. Editorial judgment, in the last analysis, must continue to be responsible for what is published. What is wrong in that?

### Alien Ideologies

Peoria (Ill.) Star Editorial, April 2

The academic mind is generally hostile to the press. Of several obvious reasons why this is true, perhaps the most significant lies in the difference in viewpoint of college professors and newspaper men. Many of our educational institutions are saturated with radicalism. The university which Mr. Hutchins heads has long been known as a sanctuary for men of all degrees of alien ideologies. National Education Association, the leading organization of educators, has been a persistent propagandist for the New Deal and in the last year has advocated that textbooks for American public schools be censored by a United Nations committee. "Liberalism," they call it, and perhaps a parallel might be drawn with Stalin's insistence on "democracy" as describing the Soviet government.

### Professors on the Press

Tampa Morning Tribune, Editorial, April 3

. . . In practical, constructive value, the report isn't worth a thin dime . . . The average college professor knows as much about editing and publishing a newspaper as a Florida alligator knows about atomic energy . . .

### Refutes Charges

Nashville Banner, Editorial, March 31

The very fact that "the press" gives prominence and liberal space to their indictments of it refutes at least some of the charges which a commission of college professors, a poet, and a banker—assigned to the task . . . bring against it.

## Fair and Constructive

Edward F. Bataille in Newark Evening News, March 27

The study upon which is based the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press was made mostly by college professors, with Beardsley Ruml furnishing the businessman's viewpoint and Archibald MacLeish the poet's perspective. Newspaper and radio men and book and magazine publishers and Hollywood are accustomed to amateur criticism. They lack the vanity of the more professionalized groups and are willing to accept an appraisal not based on actual experience or training. Thus they will probably concede that the Commission on Freedom of the Press has done a conscientious job, that its members have been fair in analysis and constructive in criticism.

It insists that "the press must be free from the menace of external compulsions from whatever source. To demand that it be free from pressures which might warp its utterance would be to demand that society should be empty of contending forces and beliefs. But persisting and distorting pressures—financial, popular, clerical, institutional—must be known and counterbalanced." The press "must know that its faults and errors have ceased to be private vagaries and have become public dangers."

### The Right Not to Read

Cleveland Plain Dealer, Editorial, March 28

The committee, composed of leaders in various fields of business and scholarship, took up old, vexing problems of freedom of speech in the light of modern communications and mass production. They included in their study also the radio and moving picture, as these have become agencies of tremendous force in the dissemination of fact and opinion. . . .

The introduction, written by Chairman Robert M. Hutchins, points to the fallacy of the prevailing notion that free press embodies the right of everybody to be heard in the press or on the air. Hutchins even denies it would be good public policy to open up the facilities "to those who have nothing to say." . . .

Of especial interest is the committee's warning against undue government regulation. It points out that "any power capable of protecting freedom is also capable of infringing" it. It places responsibility for maintaining a free, enlightened and competent press on the owners of the newspapers, radio and motion picture and on the public itself.

It is not forgotten that the "consumer" carries a big stick in the right hand not to read, not to see, not to listen.

## "News Story"

CHICAGO DAILY TRIBUNE

Thursday, March 27, 1947

# 'A FREE PRESS' (HITLER STYLE) SOUGHT FOR U.S.

## Totalitarians Tell How It Can Be Done

. . . The book apparently is a major effort in the campaign of a determined group of totalitarian thinkers led by such house-top shouters as Harold L. Ickes, Morris Ernst, George Seldes, and Archibald MacLeish, who want to discredit the free press of America or put it under a measure of government control sufficient to stop effective criticism of New Deal socialism, the one-world doctrine, and internationalism.

Its publication today is the climax of a comedy of errors which will make more interesting reading than the book. The 13 authors write under the nom de plume of "commission on freedom of the press," which might lead some people to believe it was a government commission or one appointed by the United Nations.

Actually, the "commission" is a private chowder and marching society presided over by Henry R. Luce, international publisher of Time-Life-Fortune magazines, who contributed \$200,000 to the project, and Robert M. Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, who donated another \$15,000 from the funds of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.

The "commission" is clothed with the same degree of public authority which covers any 13 patrons in a Madison Street saloon. Hutchins appointed himself as chairman and selected the other 12 members, including 10 university professors and two New Deal stalwarts, MacLeish, former poet laureate to President Roosevelt, and Beardsley Ruml, author of the income tax check-off.

. . . It is said, however, that Henry Luce became so disgruntled at the results his \$200,000 purchased that the release date was stepped up so the book could be published in part in one of Luce's magazines, along with a critical editorial about it.

## Press Reaction

The editorial complaint sounds much like the story told in a police station by an old gentleman of impeccable integrity who visited the redlight district and found he had been "rolled" for \$200,000.

The book repeats many familiar totalitarian arguments in favor of government regulation and control of America's free newspapers. At the same time, it contains a few pious contradictions affirming belief in full liberty of the press.

The 13 authors affirm belief in a world super-state: ". . . . the press can do its duty by the new world that is struggling to be born," they say. . . .

The late Adolf Hitler and the late Joseph Goebbels could not draft a more scholarly excuse for what they did with newspapers and radio in Nazi Germany than these three paragraphs, taken out of context, it is true, but compiled from a volume which scatters its shots at all the American forms of conveying intelligence—newspapers, books, magazines, movies, and radio. . . .

### Now You See What The Report Was About

Chicago Sun Editorial, March 29

Last Thursday a distinguished Commission on the Freedom of the Press, headed by Chancellor Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago, published its report. The principle conclusion was that the American press is often biased and irresponsible, and that only a responsible press can remain free.

The Chicago Tribune published the news account of the report on Page 40 under the headline: "A Free Press," (Hitler Style) Sought for U.S." The "news" story contained such gems of objectivity as these:

"The book apparently is a major effort in the campaign of a determined group of totalitarian thinkers led by such house-top shouters as Harold L. Ickes, Morris Ernst, George Seldes and Archibald MacLeish, who want to discredit the free press of America or put it under a measure of government control. . . ." (Of those mentioned only Mr. MacLeish was a member of the commission.)

"The commission is clothed with the same degree of public authority which covers any 13 patrons in a Madison St. saloon."

This "news" account is in itself a pretty conclusive documentation of the Commission's charge of bias and irresponsibility in the press. But for an equally striking

example, consider the handling of another story in the same edition of the Tribune.

On page one it streamer-headlined the charge of Senator Brooks that the Federal Government was responsible for the Centralia mine disaster. This fitted into Col. McCormick's strategy of trying to elect a Republican mayor by attacking a Democratic national administration. The diligent reader had to turn back to page eight to discover, under a cleverly obscure headline, the news that the Tribune's own Gov. Green had received warnings of unsafe conditions at the Centralia mine before the disaster and had brushed them off.

Now do you see what Dr. Hutchins' commission was talking about when it said that "the few who are able to use the machinery of the press. . . have not provided a service adequate to the needs of the society, but have engaged in practices which the society condemns and which, if continued, it will inevitably undertake to regulate or control?"

### Proofreader Joe

The best proofreader in the shop is Joe Richards, an Irish lad in his late 40s who seems to grow younger the older the liquor. Joe knows Shakespeare and Sygne, can quote the Bible and he is such a skilled reader that his union has broken a fast rule by letting him work a week and go on his liquid diet a week.

One day he appeared in the office blind drunk leading a Seeing Eye dog (rather, being led) and though this was his week "on" he managed to sober up enough to crawl into his cubicle and decorate his

galley proofs with his marks. This happened to be the day the horse Bess, leading "lady" of the Technicolor film Gallant Bess, was brought into the city room by movie press agents.

The horse had been trundled up through the back of the building in the freight elevator and, in passing through the composing room, had been decorated by the usual eye-shade and square paper cap (with her ears stuck through). Out in the city room she was posed in the stereotype with typewriter, nibbling a pencil from an editor's pocket etc.

Late that afternoon Joe Richards came over to me, somewhat shaky. He seemed to be all right, but a genuine fear-jitter possessed him. He leaned over and very seriously said: "Pardon me, Charlie, but is it really true? I know you'll tell me the truth. Did I see a horse in this office today?"

—Charles A. Wagner

### Desperate Need

Enclosed is a check for a year's subscription to Nieman Reports.

This sort of magazine has been too long overdue. If it succeeds in stimulating newspapermen and publishers, generally, to an understanding of the desperate need for thorough, dispassionate reporting of the large events happening both at home and abroad, it will have taken a long step forward in preserving freedom of the press in America.

Best of luck,

John Roderick  
AP, North China

## RADIO LOOKS AT THE PRESS

Radio may have heard Walter Lippmann when he wrote that the problem of the uncriticized press is "Who watches the watchman?" C B S announced a series "CBS Views the Press" that began on Station WCBS in New York on May 31st. This Saturday night broadcast, 6:15 to 6:30 is by Don Hollenbeck. His first one gave the New York papers a thorough going-over for their sensationalizing of the city welfare department's housing some relief families temporarily in local hotel rooms. "A kind of newspaper lynching party" he called it. Returning to the air for his second critical review June 7, Hollenbeck picked up the New Yorker's profile on Reuben Maury, editorial writer of the New York Daily News and also of Collier's. Hollenbeck made the most of the deadly parallels that John Bainbridge had exploited in his profile, showing Mr. Maury writing out of one side of his mouth in

the Daily News and the other side in Collier's.

"In the News, he's against feeding Europe; in Collier's he's for it. In Collier's he's been an internationalist; in the News, an isolationist."

On June 14 Hollenbeck explored the handling of Negroes in the news in New York to the credit of the Post, Tribune, Times, P M and World Telegram, The Daily News, Mirror and Journal American he found adopting Jim Crow attitudes in the news. He dealt also with the handling of a C I O rally by the World-Telegram in a way to raise a discriminating eyebrow and exposed distortion of facts by the Journal-American in a story seeking to discredit public housing.

This weekly ribbing of the papers by the radio promises to be very interesting to the consumers. So far CBS does it only on the New York papers. That leaves a wide field of criticism unoccupied.

## THE MUSIC CRITIC

One hundred music critics came to Harvard for a three days symposium of criticism conducted by the Harvard Music Department May 1 to 3. Abstracts of some of

the major addresses are given here. The young or amateur critic will find some practical guide-points to criticism in Virgil Thompson's paper.

### If Critic's Mind Wanders

Virgil Thomson, music critic of the New York Herald Tribune, held that, in criticism, "nobody has to be right."

"Any opinion is legitimate to act on," in his view, "provided one accepts in advance the responsibilities of that action."

"It is not the yes or no of a judgment that is valuable to other people but the methods by which these have been elaborated, defended and expressed."

"Every musician is a music critic. He is obliged to make musical judgments and to act upon them. . . Even the composer, no less than the scholar, the pedagogue, the executant and the reviewer, is constantly under the necessity of making a fair estimate, and a decently responsible one, of other people's musical work."

"The first stage of this operation does not involve fairness at all. It consists of listening to a piece, or of reading it, rather in the way that a cook tastes food. . . Any musician, faced with a new piece, will listen. . . as long as he can, as long as it holds his attention."

"The second stage is going on listening. . . When a musician can't keep his mind on a piece of music, that fact must be considered when he comes to formulating judgment."

"The final stage. . . is the after-taste, the image that the whole piece leaves in the mind for the first few moments after it ceases to be heard. . . Never does one forget hearing for the first time a work that has absorbed one from beginning to end and from which one returns to ordinary life, as it were, shaken or beautified, as from a trip to the moon or to the Grecian Isles."

"A great deal of subsequent analysis, as a matter of fact, is a search for the reasons why the piece did or did not hold one's attention on first hearing. . ."

"Making fuller acquaintance is the second operation of judgment. . . If the first impression were gained from the score, we must now hear it in execution. Many a piece looks better than it sounds, and even more of them sound better on first hearing than their design justifies. . ."

"The third operation of judgment can be

undertaken only after a period of rest. . . Here the acquisition of experience and those shifts in the center of emotional experience that come from growing older are capable of lighting up the work a new way. Sometimes they make it appear nobler and more interesting; sometimes they show up shoddy material or poor workmanship; sometimes one can't see why one ever bothered with the piece at all. . ."

"No judgment, of course, is ever final or permanent. . . The formulation of judgment can take place at any point. Reviewers describe new music from one hearing, as pedagogues criticize student compositions or performances from one reading. In nine cases out of ten, this is quite sufficient for the purpose, and no injustice is done. . ."

"In order to make a fair judgment from only the first stage of acquaintance, either from hearing or from reading, everybody is obliged to have recourse to the aid of clues and clinical signs. The clinical signs of quality are: 1) a certain strangeness in the musical texture, 2) the ability of a work to hold one's attention, 3) one's ability to remember it vividly, and 4) the presence of technical invention, such as novelty of rhythm, of contrapuntal, harmonic, melodic or instrumental device. . ."

"It is necessary to keep wary, too, for possible failure to make the cardinal distinctions. These are: 1) design vs. execution, or the piece itself as distinct from its presentation; 2) the expressive power of the work as distinguished from its formal musical interest, and 3) a convincing emotional effect vs. a meretricious one. . ."

"When one has to act quickly, one must assume that one's first impression, as far as it goes, is a true view. And it is, in fact, as true a view as any, since most of what is revealed on further acquaintance is of a descriptive nature. . ."

"The techniques of musical description are:

"1) Stylistic identification, its period or school, as recognizable from internal evidence, from the technical procedures employed. These answer the question: 'What is it like?'

"2) Expressive identification, its depiction of the cadences of speech, of bodily

movements or of feelings. . . One cannot perform, communicate or in any other way use a piece of music until one has found an answer to the question, 'What is it about?'

"3) The classical aids to memory. These are the known methods of melodic, harmonic, orchestral and formal analysis. They are of little value without stylistic and expressive identification. . . These aids answer the question 'How does it go?'

"4) Verbal formulation of the music. This is a literary rather than a musical problem; but no one escapes it, not the teachers, the conductors or the string-quartet players any more than the historians or the journalists. . ."

"You will note that I have said nothing about communicating one's passion about a work. I have not mentioned it because it presents no problem; it takes place automatically and inevitably. What is most interesting about any musical judgment is the description and analysis on which it is based, or, if you like, since the judgment is likely to precede the analysis, by which it is defended. . . The fact that one man likes or not a given piece will influence nobody. . ."

"Nobody has to be right. . . It is not the yes or no of a judgment that is valuable to other people. . . What other people get profit from following is that activity itself. . . The instinct for judging music is universal; acting on musical judgments is a privilege of the profession. The art of formulating musical judgments is chiefly the art of describing music. At this exercise it is desirable to be skillful, and, as often as possible, convincing. But it is the skill that counts, the skill or gift of understanding and explaining. . ."

### New York Dictatorship

Madame Olga Samaroff-Sokowski, pianist and writer on music, called for an exchange of critics between newspapers in various cities of the United States.

She proposed this step to counter "a psychological and commercial attitude toward musical criticism in New York."

Madame Samaroff-Stokowski said: "The decentralization of music in the United States is under way, but managers claim they cannot sell artists without favorable New York reviews. The New York critics probably have no desire to carry the burden of such a responsibility; the managers do not belittle the value of reviews in the

papers of other cities, but the buyers of artists demand the New York accolade, as they once required that of Europe.

"The only thing that could eradicate this meaningless convention would be an exchange of critics. The capable and gifted critic could stand on his own merits without reference to the power of a particular paper in a particular city.

"Guest conducting is the avenue for building a reputation in the orchestral field. The guest critic could enhance his reputation and at the same time broaden his potential service to music by taking up temporary duties in different communities. If he found fine institutions, his recognition of their status would greatly strengthen them. Above all, he could alter the status of the resident musician.

"The United States abounds in musical talent. Educational facilities of a high order are at the disposal of students, but the most gifted of our young musicians dread the fate of establishing themselves as resident musicians in communities outside of a few large cities. Most of them want to stay in New York. . . If they could hope to find a stable professional life without the stigma of a certain inferiority which attached itself to the local musician, no matter what his attainments may be, I believe they would willingly turn in a direction which is now resorted to only if everything else fails."

Speaking from her own experiences as music critic for the New York Post in the 1920s, Madame Samaroff-Stokowski declared that music criticism needs to be criticized.

"To me, a poor piece of music criticism is on a par with a poor musical performance," she said. "Why should it be sacrosanct?"

"It is a great mistake to assume that a music critic shows courage when he attacks the established composer, performer or musical institution. On the contrary, it takes considerable courage to bestow recognition of merit whenever and wherever it is due without carefully weighing the proportion of praise and blame necessary to the preservation of one's status as an effective critic. The danger of letting the proportion of praise outweigh the expected amount of blame is a very real one."

### The Minor Ground of Criticism

E. M. Forster, English novelist and critic, discussed the "fundamental difference" between the critical and the creative states of mind.

"I have been instructed to discuss the *raison d'être* of criticism in the arts gener-

ally. The case against criticism is strong, and during much of the paper I shall be acting as the devil's advocate.

"Our great difficulty is the gulf between the creative and the critical state of mind.

"The creative state is nourished by the subconscious, and often after an artist has created a work he does not know how he has done it. A good example of this in literature is Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," and there is a good description of the state in a poem of the Frenchman, Paul Claudel.

"The critical state relies not on the subconscious but on prepared apparatus, and there is consequently no spiritual parity between it and the objects it professes to explain. Moreover a work of art is, or should be, eternally fresh, and always presenting itself for the first time. Whereas criticism naturally looks all round it and reconsiders it, and thus mines its freshness. Nor is criticism helpful to the artist who desires to improve his work; it may teach him to avoid defects, it cannot help him to substitute merits; only inspiration—connected with the subconscious—can do that.

"So criticism cannot establish its *raison d'être* on major grounds. A good case can be made out for it on minor grounds, and the rest of the paper will be devoted to its rehabilitation. It is educational—it can raise cultural standards and expose fraud, and discourage crude appreciation. Even when it is off the mark it may stimulate; e.g. Walt Whitman's lovely description of the Beethoven Sextet, though worthless musically, enlarges our regard for music. It can form aesthetic theories, and—which is more important—it can analyze particular works. It can do anything except place us inside a work of art, and that step—the supremely important one in our aesthetic pilgrimage—we have to take without its aid."

### The Wilderness of Music Education

Professor Archibald T. Davison of the Harvard University Department of Music:

"The music critic must concern himself with the issue of musical taste as it exists in this country today.

"The radio and the phonograph, in particular, have in these last years incalculably increased the impact of music on the popular consciousness. For many music has become, with comparative suddenness, a source of great interest and stimulation; for others it is no more than an incitement to louder conversation; and for still others it has become a persistent and a violent abrasive. A picture you need not regard;

a book you are not obliged to read; but from music in this year of our Lord in the United States of America there is no refuge. . .

"In view of this, an enlightened musical laity is certainly desirable, but enlightenment presupposes some powers of discrimination; and it is by no means fanciful to speculate whether the sheer bulk of undistinguished and even negligible music which day after day pours forth on the air will not eventually drug us into an acceptance of all music at the level of the commonplace. If, in the future, the music critic is to command not the relatively restricted group which now reads his words, but a large and representative audience capable of understanding what he is talking about and of agreeing or disagreeing intelligently with him, then the critic must concern himself with the issue of musical taste as it exists in this country today. Many years ago President Eliot, in a pamphlet recommending needed changes in secondary education, declared music to be an essential in the life of every person who means to be—and these are his words—'cultivated, efficient and rationally happy.' If there is virtue in an effort to make generally available an imperishable resource of life; if it is really desirable that we should one day see a generation which will listen understandingly to music, which will love it for its own sake and which will have a reasonable interest in competent and knowledgeable writing about it, then it may be said that the music critic is in a most favorable position to advance that cause by raising his voice loudly and insistently in behalf of a better world in the wilderness that is music education in the public schools of America."

### The PD on Centralia

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch published April 30 a special section of 24 pages which brought together its entire coverage of the Centralia Mine Disaster. Its work on this story was one of the most effective journalistic operations in a long time. The section includes 15 editorials, three of Fitzpatrick's powerful cartoons, two pages of color photos at the mine mouth and all the news reports published in the paper on the event. It carried 100 reports from Centralia, Washington, Springfield, Ill., Chicago, Charlestown, W. Va., Pittsburg, Bend, Ill., Nashville, Ill. Pasadena, Calif., and Wattis, Utah. Signed dispatches were by Harry Wilensky, George H. Hall, Everts Graham, Jr., Donald Grant, Edwin H. Lahey, Spencer R. McCulloch, Selwyn Pepper, Fletcher Wilson, Roy J. Harris, the AP and many unsigned.

# AFRICAN ASSIGNMENT

## FESTERING RACISM AND PEONAGE PAY BREED BLACK COMMUNISM IN CECIL RHODES' GOLD COUNTRY

by Don Burke

In any discussion of Africa it must be remembered that the mass of the people, the raw, unsophisticated bush native, has no voice and no power except the potential power of numbers. Traditionally he was ruled by a chief under strict tribal laws and, in recent years, depending on which country or colony he is in, he has been ruled directly or indirectly by a European power. Yet his role is changing. The African native is becoming a make-weight. Despite distances, language difficulties and constant European vigilance which tend to keep native groups apart and unorganized, a pattern of resistance seems to be developing. This pattern can best be seen in terms of such leaders as Nnamdi Azikiwe, below, or in mass movements such as the strike last summer on South Africa's gold mines.

In Nigeria, for example, sufficient natives have become advanced enough to evolve a series of native leaders most important of whom is Nnamdi Azikiwe. "Zik" as he is called spearheads the Nigerians anti-British policy by virtue of his position as head of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and because he is able to reach a great number of literate Nigerians through his chain of newspapers (n.b. all newspapers in Nigeria, including what is generally considered to be the government organ, are native newspapers printed either in English or native languages). Zik's big objective recently has been the so-called Richards Constitution which went into effect March 1. Drawn up by Sir Arthur Richards, the Governor of Nigeria, the new constitution does mark a progressive step for the Nigerians but according to Zik it does not go far enough nor does it abolish certain existing features (e.g. the franchise which is limited to males earning £100 yearly residing in Lagos and Cala-

bar) which he considers onerous. Whatever current battles Zik fights, he must always fight against the backdrop of a country which is divided into three mutually antagonistic tribal units. When I was in Nigeria last summer Azikiwe was touring the back country in an attempt to overcome this barrier.

In other parts of Africa there are no Ziks but there are undercurrents. In such places as the Belgian Congo where the natives are rigidly controlled they are hard to pin down. But there are stories of native troops mutinying at Lulaburg in the heart of the Congo, a native strike in Matadi, the port on the lower Congo River, and incredibly, a sympathy strike by natives in the unbelievably rich Katanga mining area in support of a strike by white workers. In many places a yet incalculable catalytic agent will be the impact of the returning war veterans. In many cases the native African troops went to countries with the Allies where less stringent color bars obtained. Or no indigenous color bars at all. Although the general trend appears to be to re-submerge the veterans, there is no doubt that some impact must be registered.

Perhaps the most significant mass movement, at least to me, was the strike last summer by native mine workers on the Witwatersrand's gold mines in South Africa. The strike, which was broken in five days, had a measure of things to come in it which far overshadows the immediate victory of General Smuts and the Chamber of Mines.

The root of the strike was as old as the mines—cheap native labor. The miners, who are "squeezed" out of their Native Reserves by a high tax system to work as indentured labor on the mines, earned £3 per month, the same wage they received in Cecil Rhodes' day. They wanted 10 shillings a day and better conditions. For six years, represented by the African Mine Workers Union, they had appealed to the government and the Chamber of Mines. In 1943 "The Native Mine Wages Commission" made certain recommendations which were never fully carried out but acknowledged the necessity of maintaining the cheap labor policy. By April, 1946 the issue had come to a head. In that month the Union's annual confer-

ence demanded adequate food and, in line with U. N.'s statement of new world principles, they asked for an improved standard of living (the miners are housed in compounds). Early in May the Union got its first answer from the Chamber, a printed postcard advising them that the matter was being considered. A wildcat strike by disgruntled workers was stopped by Union leaders who stressed the need for discipline.

By August 4th enough steam had accumulated to blow the lid. At a meeting of 1,000 delegates, well attended by Chamber and police observers, rank and file pressure forced a reluctant leadership into a striking mood. Despite such obvious signs, typical rationalizing blinded the government and the Chamber. Mine officials still thought that the natives were "too raw" to strike, the Witwatersrand Native Labor Association, a recruiting agency, thought the strike impossible because of age-old tribal differences. But they were dead wrong. They got the biggest strike in South Africa's history.

When the strike began, on the late shift on August 11th, it was native led. Leader was John Marks, a native, who has had an in-and-out career with the Communist Party. Yet, despite this affiliation, there is reason to believe that the Party was not in favor of a strike at this time and, in fact, lost some prestige with the natives because the strike was such a failure. The only European (i.e. white) Communist connected directly with the strike was Michael Harmel, editor of the Party's newspaper, Guardian, who sat on the General Action Committee. Incidentally, throughout the strike one Johannesburg paper consistently printed the leader's name as Marx.

The first two days of the strike were quiet. The Chamber admitted that 15 out of 45 mines were closed down and released a figure of 50,000 strikers. Unofficial, but reliable, figures toted as high as 100,000. On August 14th General Smuts said, "I'm not unduly concerned . . . the strike was not caused by legitimate grievances but by agitators." He said also that the recommendations of the Committee had been carried out by the government and that appropriate action would be taken by the government. Immediately drastic measures were taken.

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This article is a byproduct of a trip of 40,000 miles that kept Don Burke in Africa from last June to December. As editor of Life International, he had various assignments for Time and Life that took him to Nigeria, Belgian Congo and the Union of South Africa. Two Life photographers, Nat Farbman and his wife, Pat English, were with Burke in covering a good part of the continent south of the Sahara. Don Burke was a Nieman Fellow 1941-42.

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Armed police descended a thousand feet into the dim stopes of one mine and drove up 1,000 miners level by level. Compounds were raided, Marks and other leaders were thrown into jail. Meetings were smashed under Proclamation 1425 which forbids the assembling of more than 20 natives on gold-proclaimed land. Police raided Springbok Legions offices (South Africa's progressive veterans' organization), raided Communist Party offices, jailing most of the Party's Central Committee.

Although many prominent people, ministers, lawyers, professors, protested, the bulk of the population was unsympathetic as they usually are to any black grievance. The Johannesburg Star was the more objective newspaper, blaming the government for the lack of legal machinery, while the Rand Daily Mail indulged in as bad reporting of an industrial dispute as I have ever seen. No mention of the merits or lack of merits of the strike was made. From the beginning the general reaction in the country was to regard it as a revolt which must be put down by any means at hand. From the South African's point of view the natives had no right to strike (which is true since only the employer can break the contract of indenture).

Headlines screamed of the murderous weapons carried by frenzied natives—which in a front page picture turned out to be the traditional stick carried by almost every male native. A protest march towards the offices of one of the native recruiting agencies was described as a march on Johannesburg with all that implies to an uneasy white population. When it was all over the Johannesburg Star reached way down in the barrel to come up with the following story which it ran in a front page box. By the time it appeared a number of natives were dead (figures ranged from 8 to over 100) and the hospitals were jammed with injured miners.

#### IT WAS A TOUGH JOB, AND THEY DID IT

"Yesterday I spoke to some very tired men," writes a "Rand Daily Mail" reporter. "I went to the Police Barracks to chat with the men who have been handling the emergency which has been the subject of headlines for some days now. In spite of their tiredness, all the men to whom I spoke seemed to be as cheerful as crickets, and I never heard a single squeal or grumble.

"Oh yes, there was one. A sergeant, with a twinkle in his eye, told me that he

had had his trousers badly torn yesterday. I sympathised, but he hastened to tell me that it was not done by the strikers, but by his dog, which failed to recognize him when he returned home after his long tour of duty.

"The pleasant thing about these talks was that not a single man talked big. No tales of bloodshed and violence, no swanking about deeds or heroism. As one young man with a row of ribbons on his chest said to me. 'We were given a job to do, and our business was to get it over as soon as possible.' Very few men in this work really like using physical violence, but if there is no alternative we use it to the best of our ability.

"Without exception I heard nothing but praise for the recruits who have just been posted to Johannesburg and for the young men who came across from the Training Depot.

"I thought I was fit,' said a sergeant who has his provincial Rugger colours, 'but these young fellows going up the side of a mine-dump had me beat. My calves are still aching.'

"An officer told me that he had done 113 hours of duty with only 15 hours off. In

other words, in nearly five days he had averaged three hours a day rest. He is entitled to be tired, as are all the men, but routine jobs must go on. There is no overtime in the Police Force. 'We knew we had the whip-hand,' I was told, 'and we had to show that we held it. What we were up against was a direct threat to law and order—some of the weapons we picked up or took away from strikers showed that this was not an ordinary strike. Some of the poor blighters did not know what it was all about.' I came away feeling that these fellows not only knew how to carry out their orders, but also know their business. It is no fun to do 22 hours straight, particularly in the cold nights we have been having. May I repeat that none of them seemed to take any particular pride about their efforts. It was just another job, and they did it."

This type of reporting was not the only thing the natives had to combat in addition to the Chamber of Mines and the government. In spite of the fact that the Labor Party decided to send a deputation to visit the government to protest the "brutal methods . . . the government . . . has adopted in dealing with strikes," many labor unions turned their heads the other way since they are organized along lines

which considers the native more an economic enemy than a fellow worker.

The most competent observers were aware of several things when the strike was over. First, that the natives could organize despite the traditional barriers of language and tribes and the artificial barriers of the compound system with its complement of spies and informers. Second, that the strike will probably hasten long overdue legislation which might ease the situation to a degree. At the same time, however, they are aware that the core of resentment has grown a little bigger and a little harder. And, at the same time, many native leaders are coming around to the opinion that those whites who helped or might have helped them (the ministers, the lawyers, the professors, the Party) have always been fairly ineffective. As a result many natives no longer hope to solve their problem in co-operation with progressive European help but see the whole thing as a Black versus White fight, which will have repercussions reaching far beyond the Limpopo River.

Unless the South African government takes drastic steps soon the social unrest which is near the breaking point will explode in all directions. The only other solution which has anything approaching a peaceful aspect would be if the Africans took a leaf from the country's quarter of a million Indian population which staged so successfully a passive resistance campaign that U. N. turned down General Smuts' plans last fall. If they do follow this lesson 8 million natives passively resisting 2 million whites will shake down the golden foundations of South Africa's rickety house.

#### Clean-Up

A woman worker for the American Red Cross in London, who was helping British war brides of American soldiers to make their arrangements for migration to the United States, was bowled over by one nervous young bride who appeared to be quite apprehensive over the reception she would get from her American in-laws.

"You know," she said tearfully, "I'm afraid my husband's family in America must think that I'm terribly dirty."

"What makes you think that?" the Red Cross worker asked.

"Ever since my marriage, my husband's sister has been sending me soap. And now—" and at this point she broke into sobs—"and now she writes me that as soon as I get to America she's going to give me a sh-sh-shower!"

# THE NEWSPAPERMAN

## II THE REPORTER AND HIS SHOP

by William M. Pinkerton

The particular function performed by the newspaperman in American society can be performed only as an employe of a newspaper. Although a few wealthy persons and large corporations do employ "tipsters" on a basis of personal service, it is generally true that a newspaperman can practise his craft only within the structure of a newspaper company. It is rarely possible for him to find employment at his craft on the person-to-person level at which registered nurses, accountants, lawyers and doctors work. Were it possible to do so, it is doubtful that the functions which he performed for a single individual would have any close relationship to the functions of newspapermen as generally understood. Furthermore, modern newspapers buy little material from free lance writers or others not regularly employed by the organization.

So the newspaperman is a hired hand. He works for a weekly or bi-weekly wage. His employment may be terminated on short notice. His tenure is not different from that of minor corporation employes in other industries. Only in the higher reaches of the craft—among news executives, special writers of outstanding value and columnists—does the contract system, with its assurance of work for one year or five years, prevail.

The publisher is not bound to continue a man in his service any longer than the man, by his day-to-day work, proves his value. By the same token, the newspaperman is free to leave one employer for another at will. Yet, a person in the newspaper business is constantly running into cases of editors ready to "give a man another chance" when grounds for dismissal appear. This attitude has been modified somewhat by the pressure of rising costs on newspaper management. It seems clear that some—though by no means all—of the recent lay-offs on metropolitan newspapers were directed against men whose competence did not warrant

their continued employment under an increased Guild wage scale.

A newspaperman, on his part, may be reluctant to leave a "good" newspaper for higher wages from a boss notorious for erratic hiring-and-firing. Where there are Guild contracts, capricious firings have been reduced in recent years by the economic penalty imposed by management's liability for severance pay. Such benefits may run much higher than \$1,000 in the case of an employe of long experience. Nevertheless, the management's general attitude toward editorial help affects the newspaperman's decision to go or stay. His inclination is to find an employer who offers some promise of job security, some expectation of continuous employment after a man has slowed down, and the likelihood of a pension. Newspapermen are more likely to seek and hold jobs on such papers as the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune, which offer good working conditions and high wages, than on some of the chain newspapers which have unpredictable employers.

The newspaper and the newspaperman do show signs that a greater feeling of responsibility is felt on both sides than would be expected, for instance, in the relations of a semi-skilled workman with a large industrial corporation.

Under this wage system, however, most newspapermen have had experience on more than one newspaper, in more than one city. The depression of the 1930s, which did away with a number of newspapers and tightened the economic position of the business generally, practically abolished two common features of the twenties—the wandering reporter or "tramp" who blew into town and worked a few weeks to get enough money for another leg of travel; and the "good town," where the turnover on staff positions was so constant as to make it a safe bet for a jobless newspaperman on his uppers. Still, there has been a great deal of shifting from paper to paper, especially among younger newspapermen desirous of broadened experience, since the worst of that depression passed. In most cases, these shifts were carefully planned in advance and were made in a conscious effort to better the individual's position.

I believe that newspaper hiring has stabilized a great deal in the past 15 years

as a result of economic changes. Whereas getting a newspaper job once depended largely on being nearby and ready to start work when an opening occurred, there is apt now to be more planning of personnel changes, both on the part of the men and on the part of the management. But even today young men break into the newspaper craft mainly by contributing space-rate correspondence from some outlying community, by serving a period as copy boys, or by winning the interest of some established member of the newspaper staff.

One reason for the more or less haphazard employment of newspapermen is that there are few standards—except performance—for judging a man's fitness for the work. There is no public test, such as the state licensing of doctors, lawyers and accountants. No educational standard—not even the ability to write grammatically—seems to be an adequate measure. Self-educated newspapermen like H. L. Mencken of the Baltimore Sun and Roy W. Howard of the Scripps-Howard newspapers have won outstanding success in the craft. Among younger men, it is significant that eight of the 1941 group of Nieman Fellows were not college graduates. There are still many practising newspapermen who will argue that a bright lad who comes up from the position of copy boy will make a better reporter than the best college-trained man available. Many a veteran police reporter, performing duties similar to those of a private detective, has won lasting fame in the newspaper annals of his city without himself writing as much as a paragraph of copy. The effort of Schools of Journalism to provide professional training for newspaper work has not resulted as yet in any general acceptance of such training as a prerequisite for newspaper employment.

Experience seems to show that a wide variety of talents may prove useful to the editorial management of a newspaper. There are probably few occupations in which the educational background and work-experience of members is so varied as that of newspapermen. They range from the unlettered police reporter to the Ph.D. who writes editorials. I know newspapermen who started out in life as salesmen, electrical engineers, school teachers, army officers, chemists. My

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A native of Wisconsin, William M. Pinkerton put in his first four years of newspapering in Omaha and the next five with the AP in Washington. A Nieman Fellow in 1940-41, later a lieutenant in the Navy, he was on the staff of the United States News from the end of the war until January, 1947, when he became Director of the Harvard News Office.

favorite is the chemical engineer who quit his job and hung around the local city room until he was hired as a reporter. He had been moved to this drastic action by the motion picture, "Front Page." Strangely enough, he turned out to be a very good newspaperman.

It is also typical that a large number of newspapermen drift into other lines of work before their years of employment are over—usually into such allied arts as magazine editing, advertising and public relations, but also into such callings as personnel work, administration, and teaching.

Once a man is "in"—once he has established himself as a not too inept beginner and as potentially "one of the boys"—he will find that differences of intellectual and social background are no barrier to the social life of the craft. The problem of fitting in is likely to prove more difficult for a well-dressed man with a Groton accent than for a skinny kid with a widowed mother.

While the newspaperman is popularly pictured as being constantly on the go, dashing through a mad sequence of scenery, the professional travels of the average newspaperman are not apt to exceed those of the delivery man for a department store.

Two basic factors of newspaper economics limit the reporter's range. One is the press service, which is paid to furnish the newspaper with reports of national and international events of the day, and also with news of the state. This provides the newspaper with coverage of a host of major news events which it might otherwise have to staff itself. The other factor is the "trade area," the region of farms and towns whose inhabitants may be expected to come to the city at rather frequent intervals to buy their dress goods and to see the sights. Usually, this area will not extend more than 100 miles in any direction. Within that region, the circulation of advertising is of value to local merchants. Beyond that area, a newspaper may find it unwise to encourage subscriptions by giving special coverage to news events.

This is not to say that newspapermen never range beyond the trade area. When an editor judges an event to have sufficient local interest, he may send a reporter far afield to cover it. He may send a police reporter half across the continent to track a locally-infamous criminal. A sports writer may follow the favorite local team on inter-sectional visits. A political writer may follow a presidential candidate across a tier of states. Newspapers in cities of more than 100,000 population usually have one or more re-

porters in the state capital during the legislative session. Large papers may have Washington correspondents and a few have foreign correspondents.

Such assignments are uncommon, except on large metropolitan newspapers. The bulk of the newspapermen work within their own city's limits; at best, within the trade area boundaries. Most of the reportorial staff is deployed on runs—one man on police headquarters, another on the federal building, another on the court house, another on the city hall, still another on the city's business and banking interests. In some cities, "district men" operate in various sectors of the community. The range of such workers' daily labors depends largely on the range of offices, records and other news sources to which they are assigned. A "general assignments man" will work on a more varied terrain. He may interview visiting notables, give a hand to a hard-pressed run man, cover a convention, report a parade, or dig into some special aspect of local politics or crime. He may range into the trade area to cover a murder, a picnic, an accident or a church anniversary. For days he may sit around the office performing tasks no more exciting than interviewing "cranks" and taking "rewrite" on other men's reports over the telephone.

Even in the glamorous field of foreign correspondence (in times of peace), a man may well expect to spend his entire three-year tour of duty in a single foreign capital. While most agencies in the foreign news field keep one or two "trained seals" hopping from capital to capital in a fine frenzy of "inside dope," the backbone of foreign news coverage comes from men like Louis Lochner, who was in Berlin for the Associated Press more than 15 years, and Walter Duranty, who served the New York Times for so long in Moscow, and Victor Keen, who was in Shanghai for the Herald Tribune more than a decade.

In other areas of special interest—Hollywood, Washington and Wall Street, for instance—a reporter's value to his employer increases with some years of experience in handling the special news sources and reporting techniques of the place. One Washington news executive has said that a man is not worth his salt until he has been working in the capital for at least a year.

In short, the peripatetic reporter, while not a fiction, is a sport of the newspaper craft. Traveling reporters are mainly the few "trained seals" of foreign correspondence, a few "name" writers of large metropolitan newspapers and the big-city sports writers.

The "inside man" on the desk goes as monotonously to the same desk in the same office, day after day, as any bookkeeper, banker or butcher.

Thus, while there is probably more changing from job to job and so from city to city in newspaper work than in most skilled occupations, the newspaperman on the job is apt to be no less limited in his range of action than most persons in other lines of work.

Time is a dominant factor in newspaper work. The recurrent pressure of the deadline is a daily, sometimes an hourly, demand on the working newspaperman. An observant visitor to a newspaper office soon could learn to spot the approach of a deadline by the quickening pace, the increased tension, of all the working personnel.

But time affects the newspaperman's life in far more ways. Except in the field of transportation, there is probably no skilled craft whose members are as uniformly thrown off-kilter with the life of the community by the nature of their work. With few exceptions, newspapermen work either on "the day side" or on "the night side." On morning papers—which are almost as numerous as afternoon papers in large cities—the bulk of the staff works in the hours between 5 p.m. and 2 a.m. Only in such centers as New York and Chicago can a newspaperman working those hours find persons of his own economic and social level from other lines of work willing to join with him in his hours of recreation.

To a lesser degree, the same is true of newspapermen working on afternoon papers. Although their hours of work match, in general, those of other "white collar" workers, the employes of afternoon papers usually start a little later than other office workers. When people in government and finance quit for the day, the newspaperman goes into his office to write the last batch of the day's reports.

The uncertain factor of news breaks further complicates the newspaperman's social life. If a bank is held up as the clerks are leaving for home, the clerks continue on their way; but the newspaperman may find himself on a job that not only will make him miss dinner but also may ruin his plans for the evening. Although the general acceptance of the 40-hour week has modified the traditionally long hours of newspaper work, no law or rule can completely standardize the newspaperman's working day. The chance nature of news breaks, and the occasional need for around-the-clock coverage of a given story, such as a death

watch, always will upset the regularity of hours of employment in a newspaper office.

As a result, newspapermen are apt to spend most of their after-hours time with fellows of their own craft. A run man often lunches with "the opposition." It is common to find an all-night bar and grill within a block of a newspaper office; and here members of the staff may be found together at lunch time or after hours. Bachelors on a newspaper staff not uncommonly room together; and the married men and their wives visit back and forth between families. The social cliques of newspapermen are no less strong and no less exclusive than those of lawyers, doctors, economists and professors; no less than airline pilots or officers in the armed forces.

It is a common thing to hear newspapermen say that they find the company of persons outside the craft dull. The feeling of being somehow different from other people seems to be strong. This is based, I would suppose, on the sharing of comparatively highly-charged experiences. The amount of shop talk heard in gatherings of newspapermen is an index of the continuing and absorbing nature of the bonds formed in the newspaper office.

To add that newspapermen like newspapermen, as a class, seems superfluous. But the point needs to be made that there is a definite feeling of craft solidarity. Newspapermen get great pleasure, apparently, out of sharing vicariously the experiences of other newspapermen. The admiration of a "cub" for a star reporter is a wonderful thing to see. And a talk-fest devoted to stories of great city editors and ingenious police reporters is likely to sound, to the uninitiated, like a Paul Bunyan session in a lumber camp. The legendary heroes are, with few exceptions, whiskey-drinking men with a super-human genius for cursing, a standard of morals outside the pale of ordinary society, an ever-kindled hatred for the business office and a thorough-going contempt for such symbols of authority as the police, the mayor, the governor and the clergy.

This love of the craft starts, of course, in the newspaper office. It may be that the circumstance of apprenticeship contributes to it. The newcomer enters newspaper work with no real training in the craft, and older hands are bound to get him out of many a tight scrape before he has mastered the tricks. Teamwork is important in much newspaper work, so that camaraderie is almost a necessity—

at least, until a man is well established.

At the same time, there is ample room, within the frame of teamwork, for the expression of animosities. Several more-or-less conventional conflicts provide outlet for pent-up feelings: the feud between the editorial department and the business office; the feud between news men and editorial writers; the feud between reporters and desk men; the feud between the day side and the night side.

In short, the life and work of the newspaperman is greatly affected by the special conditions under which he works. His occupation cannot be practised outside the framework of a highly-organized corporate entity. He must have an employer. He works for wages and can be fired on short notice. . . . Although many newspapermen have worked on more than one newspaper, in more than one city, their work on a particular job is definitely limited by the geographical range of the city and its trade area. The nature of newspaper publishing keeps reporters and editors at work when other white-collar workers are free for social life. This emphasizes the camaraderie which exists in the craft, and tends to set newspapermen apart from other citizens, both professionally and socially.

## "DEAF TO AN IDEA NOT SHARED"

### PRESS FOUND NO PEP IN SENATOR PEPPER

Today, class, we shall study the handling of a major news story by three metropolitan dailies, two of which are professionally regarded as the best in the country, one of which is hopefully supposed to represent something new in journalism.

The story is the Senate debate, last April, on the Truman Doctrine of military-economic aid to Greece and Turkey, an issue generally considered to be as fateful in the history of the country as the Lend-lease debate of 1941.

The major speech for the Truman Doctrine was made by Senator Vandenberg on April 8.

The New York Times played the story on Page one, column 2, under a head, "Vandenberg Calls for Soviet Deeds." The story jumped to Page 7 and totaled 24 inches. On Page 6 the Times printed a 2 column picture of Vandenberg and a condensed text of his speech running to 29 inches.

On April 10 Senator Claude Pepper made the first major speech for the opposition—a full-dress, 2½ hour address stating the case against the Truman Doctrine.

The Times carried the story of the debate on Page 13, under a head, "Senate Gives U.N. Mid-East Aid Veto." At the end of the story, buried beneath other developments, 11 inches was devoted to Pepper's speech.

Note: The Times was a strong supporter of the Truman Doctrine.

Now let's look at the New York Herald Tribune, also a supporter of the Truman Doctrine, though with one or two mild reservations which did not occur to the Times.

Vandenberg's speech got a page one story and jump with a full text running to 7 columns. Two days later, the Senate debate was again handled on Page One with a jump to Page 11, under a head "Taft Backs Policy of Mid-East Aid; U.N. is Given Veto." Buried at the bottom of the runover was exactly 3 inches devoted to Senator Pepper's opposition speech.

And now The Chicago Sun, which took an editorial position against the Truman Doctrine. Vandenberg's speech rated a 2 column picture on Page one alongside a United Press story in Column 5—"Van-

denberg Defies Reds on Greek Aid." Two days later the Senate debate had moved inside to Page 8, and the Pepper speech got exactly two inches buried at the bottom of an Associated Press dispatch.

So what is to be drawn from this?

Obviously, the conventional news judgment of the country's conventional news editors concurred in the view that Vandenberg was big stuff while Pepper ranked far down the scale of news values.

Obviously, too, conventional news judgment was in direct contradiction with the principle of presenting with approximately equal emphasis the two opposing points of view on a grave issue of national policy.

What was it the Commission on Freedom of the Press said?

"It does belong to the intention of the freedom of the press that an idea shall have its chance even if it is not shared by those who own or manage the press. The press is not free if those who operate it behave as though their position conferred on them the privilege of being deaf to ideas which the processes of free speech have brought to public attention." L. R.

## PULITZER PRIZES CRITICIZED

The Pulitzer prize awards for journalism are seldom criticized in the newspapers, although newspapermen are often vocal and sharp in their personal criticism. Believing that published criticism of awards that are given so much weight

should be welcomed and encouraged, Nieman Reports reprints this editorial of criticism from the Minneapolis Tribune, whose editor, Carroll Binder, served on one of the juries to nominate newspaper awards.

### Minneapolis Morning Tribune THE PULITZER PRIZES

Minnesotans are proud that Robert Penn Warren's novel "All the King's Men" has been awarded a Pulitzer prize. Selection of the University of Minnesota professor's best-seller adds to the growing list of achievements by Upper Midwest writers and should inspire others to greater efforts.

Prof. Warren's book, which deals with miniature dictatorship within a democracy such as Huey Long set up in Louisiana, transcends the boundaries of narrow regionalism. With the additional recognition that the Pulitzer prize provides, it now can tell the world what Minnesotans have long known—that what our writers have to say is of more than purely provincial interest.

The award of the biography prize to William Allen White's autobiography gives satisfaction to the many admirers of that great newspaperman and citizen. This modest and candid account of a life spent mainly in a small midwestern town, but which both influenced and mirrored the stirring times in which it was lived, is inspiring as well as entertaining.

#### Reaction Among Newspapermen

Newspapermen who make it their business to examine critically the work of their fellow craftsmen view the awards in their own particular fields with mixed feelings.

Having already paid tribute, in connection with the centenary of Joseph Pulitzer, to the way in which the St. Louis Post-Dispatch ably perpetuates the high journalistic ideals of its founder, the Tribune naturally is glad to see the Post-Dispatch given a special citation.

Having published the cartoons of Vaughn Shoemaker on this page for many years, the Tribune is glad to have its editorial evaluation of Shoemaker's work confirmed by a second Pulitzer award.

Edward T. Folliard's expose of the fascistic Columbians, Inc., was an able piece of investigation by a newspaper, the

Washington Post, which has grown greatly in stature and influence in recent years. The Times Tradition

Brooks Atkinson and the New York Times rendered distinguished service to the nation by giving an uncensored, candid account of contemporary life and thought in Russia. The Russian authorities admit few American newspapermen to the Soviet Union and rigidly restrict the reporting of such correspondents as they accredit.

By holding over the press associations and the newspapers represented in Moscow the threat of exclusion from further representation, Russia usually succeeds in preventing publication of the less favorable developments in Russia.

The New York Times thus showed great editorial courage in publishing Brooks Atkinson's informative articles after Atkinson left Russia. It risked being denied further representation in Russia in order to tell the truth about Russia. Soviet propagandists denounced Atkinson and the Times but the Kremlin did not expel Atkinson's successor. He is still filing informative copy—which is to Russia's as well as the Times' credit.

\* \* \*

While none will begrudge the Times this accolade for a job well done, the advisory committee which makes the awards cannot expect the prizes to mean all that they should if they are awarded year after year to the same organizations. Hardly a year has passed since the prizes were created that somebody on the Times has not received a prize. A prize to the Times would mean more if comparable work on other newspapers also received due recognition.

#### Questionable Award

The committee awarding the prizes also seems to consider its work incomplete without awarding a prize to the Associated Press. Of that great newsgathering organization The Minneapolis Tribune is proud to be a member, but it is to be doubted that Eddy Gilmore's correspond-

ence from Moscow is a particularly "distinguished example of telegraphic reporting on international affairs." To single out Gilmore for a prize in the same year in which Atkinson's work is honored is illogical, for Gilmore's correspondence has been as unrevealing as Atkinson's was revealing—as sugary and soft as Atkinson's was tart and crisp.

With a Russian wife and with the representation of his press association to safeguard in a police state, Gilmore is not to be blamed for leaving the seamy side of Russian news unreported. He should not be asked to risk reprisals on his loved ones or on his organization. But why hand out a prize for that kind of work when more independent and discerning foreign correspondents have provided their readers with really distinguished telegraphic reporting on international affairs, from Far Eastern and European areas where the going has been far from easy?

### Editorial Impasse

When its three editorial writers were unable to agree in their attitude toward Henry Wallace's overseas speeches, the Mitchell (S. D.) Daily Republic announced April 18 that it would print their conflicting views in separate editorials by each of the three writers on successive days. It invited readers' comment for its letter column.

### Law Hits Fake News Suppliers

MADISON, Wis., May 15 (UP)—Governor Oscar Rennebohm today signed into law a bill providing for fines up to \$250 and a maximum jail sentence of a year for practical jokers who "knowingly and maliciously" give false stories or advertisements to newspapers, magazines or other periodicals.

—N. Y. Herald Tribune

### Public Opinion

When the Spartanburg (S. C.) papers announced they were accepting no more whiskey advertising, the following postal card was received among several hundred congratulatory messages:

"Dears Sirs, I am only 14 years old. I would like to tell you how glad I am that you quit putting alcoholic drinks in the news paper. And I know that there is lots of people that are glad too."

# COMPLAINTS AND OTHERWISE

## Beam and Moat

The "hired reporters and editors" (Nieman Reports, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 8) must be acutely conscious of the beam in the boss's eye if they can conveniently ignore the "moat" in their own.

Mrs. Carol Koenig

Amherst, Mass.

## Lack of Diversity

Isn't it going to take a whale of a lot of popular education to get people en masse pining for the kind of paper the Hutchins commission seems to want? Meanwhile, unless the stories I've seen misinterpreted the commission report, the big trouble is one it didn't dwell on nearly enough—i.e., the lack of diversity. On that, Morris Ernst, the Murray Committee, et al. are much nearer the core of the problem.

Millard Browne

Buffalo, N. Y.

## Fallen Woman

By all means, please send me your Nieman Reports. It is the only really honest publication I have seen about newspaper work. If you keep up the standards of the first issue you may do much to save Journalism from the fate of the fallen woman. You may also help to laugh out of existence such Washington correspondents as the Hearst reporter who opened the Secretary of State's press conference by asking: "Mr. Secretary, is there any truth in that story I printed this morning?"

Good luck to you.

Emile Gauvreau

Point Pleasant, Pa.

## A Monthly?

The second issue of Nieman Reports is really superb. I've shown it to a good many people not connected with newspapers in any way, and many of them have commented: "This would be of keen interest to the general public, as well as to newspapermen." I'd like to see it distributed in every newsroom in the country. I hope you'll print 10,000 copies of the next issue. If you can get stuff as

good as the material in this issue, why not make it a monthly?

"It seems to me that Nieman Reports could become "the independent agency to appraise and report . . . upon the performance of the press," or at least an important affiliate of that agency. I certainly think the Reports have opened up tremendous possibilities in this field.

Frank Kelly

New York

## Improvement

I haven't had opportunity yet for a careful and thorough reading of the latest Reports, but I have seen enough to know that this issue is a tremendous improvement over the first.

Also I have read the review of the Free Press Report—and with great interest and admiration. It is a thoughtful, perceptive, lucid appraisal, the best by far that I have seen. My sincere and, I'm afraid, envious congratulations.

A. B. Guthrie, Jr.

Lexington, Ky.

## Kaffee-Klatch

I must thank you for the complimentary copy of Nieman Reports sent me, but cannot honestly say I care for it. In the same format and with only one-eighth the number of pages, George Seldes seems to me to be doing a great deal more in hacking away at the press-ulcers which infect the American newspaper and mag. Your report No. 2 seems to be a sort of self-congratulatory kaffee-klatch, quite without meat on its bones. Please do not put out another issue like this, or the Nieman Reports will be just another case of a good idea gone soft. . . .

Tepidly yours,

G. Legman

New York

## Crackerjack

Congratulations, many of them, for a crackerjack. The new issue was a dandy, full of meaty stuff, well scattered, nicely displayed. . . .

Paul Hughes

Louisville, Ky.

## Danger of Interpretive Reporting

The second issue of the Reports is a fine thing. If subsequent issues measure up to this one, the quarterly has bright prospects ahead.

I thought the Vincent Sheean piece which last year's Fellows selected as their idea of good reporting was the perfect example of the danger of on-the-spot interpretive writing, and about the best exhibit that could be asked to back up a case for sticking to pure objective reporting. Sheean's coverage of the Lawrenceburg trial was—like everything Sheean does—brilliant. He saw the trial as an "American tragedy," a phrase which the Reports borrowed for a title, and step by step as the trial progressed he explained how Southern justice played its stacked cards against the 25 Negro defendants. But—the jury found all but one of the defendants not guilty! And the case against the 25th defendant was dropped. Read Sheean's piece again with this knowledge that all the defendants went free, and see how it changes all the values—and the validity—of Sheean's report. God knows, I'm not trying to defend Southern justice, but in this particular case justice, I think, did triumph—after Sheean had already buried her and said his eulogy. In my own mind, I have about come to the conclusion that straight factual middle-of-the-road objective reporting is, all things considered, the best way. I'd rather do my own interpreting, and I think most newspaper readers feel the same.

And oh yes, the proof-reading was much better. The only really glaring error I found was in my own name which was misspelled.

Bob Lasseter  
Murphreesboro, Tenn.

## A Troublesome Word

Mr. Lasseter overlooks a couple of things, such as the fact that the national attention given to the trial, with Sheean and the others on hand, may have affected the verdict, and in any case the trial procedure and atmosphere was frightening enough to the Negroes so that it didn't make much difference whether they were officially convicted or not; they got a lesson anyway. That was the beauty of Sheean's piece. He made it clear that regardless of the verdict, the trial itself was the

thing that showed Negroes where they stood. Another illustration of the same thing was Bilbo's speeches. Nobody actually needed to go out and beat up a Negro to keep him from the polls; the speeches were enough.

The comment in the 1946 Nieman Fellows' book on Sheean's story is that it was somewhat more subjective than most stories a model paper would print. But objectivity is a troublesome word, and the book considers it at some length; maybe newspapermen will be interested in our discussion of it when the book comes out. It is scheduled to be published by Macmillan in the fall.

Leon Svirsky  
New York

### No Bite

I was very glad to read your report on A Free and Responsible Press. I do not see the N. Y. Herald Tribune, but a friend sent me a clipping of Lewis Gannett's review of this document in which he said that a 150-dollar-a-week-reporter could have done better in 3 weeks, or something to that effect, which struck me in the right spot after I had read some of the supporting documents in ms. I thought it flat, glittering generalities that had not the bite of concreteness about them. This is the trouble with Harvard's General Education in a Free Society. It is the trouble with a lot of Committee Reports by abstract thinkers who have little concrete experience with complex situations. Democracy, monopoly and other abstract terms are meaningless except in concrete situations and mean different things in different concrete situations.

One phase of the press which worries me is the Government Press which can be used in an effort to keep a party in power. How much of this we have in this country I do not know; there was some evidence that we had some of it under F.D.R. I suppose the Russian people get little but their government's side of the case.

I hope you and your Nieman Fellows will be a great influence in the American Press as the Society of Fellows may be in higher education. However, is it not inevitable that as we get larger units, management will become more dominating (as it indeed becomes more necessary) and that the interests of management are different from the interests of the individual workers. Frustration, on which you comment on p. 3, is certainly not limited to newspaper workers; we have seen a good deal of it in the universities.

Edwin B. Wilson

Brookline, Mass.

### Criticism Needed

Your first article ("What's Wrong with the Newspaper Reader") has already provoked the New York Herald Tribune into an editorial, which is first proof that it was worth while. I believe you can be of great service to American journalism by being critical. From everything I have been able to learn about the schools of journalism and from the publications, including the Guild Reporter, there is little criticism, constructive or healthfully destructive, now going on.

In the seven years in which I have been publishing In Fact I have received hundreds, perhaps thousands, of plans, ideas, programs and suggestions for a free press. Today the letters merely repeat what has been suggested many times. I have studied and weighed them all. The only possibility in my opinion, is one national newspaper, or a chain from coast to coast, financially backed by a large group, and the largest group for this purpose would be the labor unions.

I agree with Mr. Miller generally about the average newspaper reader. I find that in journalism there is a sort of Gresham's law, the bad drive out the good papers, just as bad money always drives out the good. The circulation figures of the N.Y. Daily News in the tabloid field and the Chicago Tribune in the standard field are part of the proof. But I also believe that American journalism ought to grow up into maturity and accept responsibility. As it is, it panders. It is one thing for Mr. Miller to say the press is pretty bad, but the public gets what it deserves. However, the Fortune poll in 1937 showed that 26% of the public was critical of the newspaper press and these 30,000,000 deserve better journalism. . George Seldes

Carter went on to collect a Litt D degree from his alma mater, Bowdoin, two days later and to become, the next week, the subject of a Saturday Evening Post article, "The South's Fighting Editor."

Harry S. Ashmore, who at 25 was the youngest newspaperman ever appointed to a Nieman fellowship, now at 30 has become one of the youngest editors of a major American newspaper. He became editor of the Charlotte (N. C.) News in April by appointment of the new publisher, Thomas L. Robinson. Ashmore's early newspaper experience was on the Greenville (S. C.) Piedmont. After four years in the Army, he joined the Charlotte News as associate editor in October, 1945.

William A. Townes, whose experience as publisher of the Spartanburg (S. C.) Herald was told in an article "I Always Wanted To Own My Own Newspaper" in the first issue of Nieman Reports, is now executive editor of the Seattle Star, recently purchased by Sheldon F. Sackett.

The Collegian, student newspaper at Massachusetts State College, has adopted as its banner "A Free and Responsible Press", taken from the title of the report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press.

The world situation is very serious . . . I think one difficulty is that the problem is one of such enormous complexity that the very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio make it exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisal of the situation."—Secretary of State George C. Marshall, in his Harvard Commencement address.

In the United Nations World for May, Vincent Sheean analyzed the techniques of the American press in dealing with international news. It is in its techniques of headlines and leads that the American press differs most from foreign journalism and is hardest for other peoples to understand, Sheean held. These techniques, with resultant emphasis on crisis and conflict and the pointing up and coloring of reports he considered the most important factors in the representation of news of world affairs. His conclusion and criticism: "Clash, split and showdown are not enough."

Farrar & Straus are publishing in September, "Heaven's Tableland" by Vance Johnson, Washington correspondent of the San Francisco Chronicle. It is a book on the Dust Bowl which Johnson started on a Nieman fellowship at Harvard in 1940-41.

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## NOTES

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"The Big Sky," best selling novel by A. B. Guthrie Jr, was begun on a Nieman fellowship in 1944-5 when Author Guthrie was at Harvard on leave from his job as city editor of the Lexington, Ky. Leader.

Hodding Carter, editor of the Delta Democrat, Greenville, Miss., received on June 5 the first honorary degree Harvard has bestowed on a Nieman Fellow. Carter's fellowship was in 1939-40, the second year of the fellowships. He won the Pulitzer prize for editorials last year. His citation by President Conant:

"Writer and publisher, forward looking interpreter of the South, we welcome back a former Nieman fellow."

## WHAT'S NEWS?

News, as Kenneth Stewart wrote a book to show, is what you make it. Some editors like to say that isn't so; that news is determined for them by events. One is tempted at times to offer them evidence to the contrary.

Here is a column by Tom Stokes on the cost of a shirt. It cost \$1.65 in 1939 and costs \$3.95 today. The labor cost in the several processes rose from 33 to 71 cents, but the processors' margins rose from 45 to 85 cents. The cost to the retailer of the \$1.65 shirt was \$1; of the \$3.95 shirt it is \$2.38. The retailer's 40 per cent mark-up gave him 65 cents of the 1939 shirt; it now gives him \$1.57 of the 1947 shirt.

This was quite interesting to a consumer. Tom Stokes got it from material furnished to Senator Taft by the research director of the Textile Workers Union, as evidence on pending labor legislation. Now this letter was presumably as available to Washington correspondents of newspapers as to Tom Stokes. Yet it was not carried in the news columns though the labor bills handled by Taft's committee made daily headlines. Why was this evidence about the cost of a shirt and who gets the increase not news? It could not have been because the textile union is a partisan. At the same time much of the "news" the papers carried on the "Newburyport Plan" came from retailers' lobbies, saying it was "unsound."

The "Newburyport Plan" for cutting retail prices 10 per cent made a flurry of news until the plan failed. One of the difficulties for the Newburyport merchants was the resistance of shoe prices. The Boston newspapers carried considerable news on the Newburyport plan and much of it was in the form of statements by various retail organizations as to why the plan was "unsound." But right in this period the Thom McAn shoe people, an important factor in the trade with its own retail outlets, announced a substantial cut in the retail price. This was not news in the Boston papers. To a consumer it would have been very interesting.

About the time the Newburyport Plan failed the Christian Science Monitor carried a front page story that a substantial part of the more than 300 shoe plants in New England were curtailing operations. A considerable part of the story had to do with costs and prices as a factor in the curtailment. One sentence was: "Finally they named the possibility that shoe prices at the factory level may be lowered in the next 30 to 60 days."

The source of the story was the executive in Boston of the New England Shoe and Leather Association. But this was not news in any Boston paper but the Monitor, though here they had the price of shoes hitting them from two directions. Shoes are next to textiles in importance in New England. Shoe factory people were being laid off because of the inflexible price situation in the trade. "Buyers cited the dropping off of retail sales for the first four months amounting to about 20 per cent."

Why was this not news in Boston? Perhaps one reason was that the Boston papers other than the Monitor were so preoccupied with a local murder trial they hardly had space for anything else. The printed testimony ran to page after page, day after day. It was the lead story in most Boston papers not only while the trial was on but the Sunday before it opened, the Monday before it opened and on Tuesday before even a jury panel had been filled. These were nothing but advance billings. But they kept from the lead position in these advance-of-news days such stories as the vote in the Legislature on the crucial question whether Boston was to be permitted to vote on its own city charter and the Supreme Court decision to increase northern freight rates, which the local news stories claimed would be a heavy economic cost to New England. The Boston Herald got out of this rut after a week and on days when there was no news in the trial found space for something else.

Sure, murder is interesting news. But not the only news. The incapacity of the Boston papers to handle other news while they were covering a murder trial illustrates a point in the report of the Hutchins' Commission: "The press is preoccupied with the sensational and the trivial to such an extent that the citizen is not supplied the information he needs. . . ."

The news is also what you make of it. What anybody can make of the financial news in most papers is a mystery to most people. The quarterly reports of A Co. and X Corporation are printed so that stockholders can see that the earnings were up over the quarter before. But if anybody tries to add up such technical statements to make them mean anything to the reader it is usually a financial writer who is writing for those who are playing the stock market.

Sylvia Porter on the New York Post

writes a financial column that makes meaning to the general reader. On April 4 the heading on her column was "Embarassing News." She referred to the National City Bank's report on the 1946 earnings of 2,600 American corporations and to the simultaneous disclosure that a new "Little Nathan Report" had been prepared to show that U. S. Steel could up raises and still make plenty. The bank report showed that income after taxes in 1946 for the average of these 2600 concerns was up 28 per cent over 1945 which was one of the best years ever. It represented an average return of 9.5 per cent on combined capital and surplus, compared to 7.7 per cent in 1945. For the 170 corporations in the trade division, income gains were up more than 100 per cent over 1945, their average return on capital was 22.3 per cent. Miss Porter's comment: "Wow!"

This was pretty interesting to consumers. Why is financial news commonly so handled that it means nothing except to the technician of the market? If finance is news hasn't the general reader a right to know what the news is, especially when the score is all added up and interpreted by the National City Bank so that all the reporter has to do is take it and print it—if his paper will take it in a form whose meaning is not reserved for the insider?

PM is evidently more convinced than most papers that the bread and butter facts of life are news. Its consumer editor recently reported on the fat increases in profits of many corporations for the last quarter of 1946, after OPA ceilings went off. First National Stores, for instance, showed last quarter profits for 1946 that were 110 per cent above the last quarter of 1945. Such facts are certainly interesting to consumers. The story was put up in PM with charts and conspicuous headlines and written in plain language so as to have meaning for the general reader. The statistics may have got into other papers, in partial form on the financial pages. But the story was not put up in most papers so as to add up the score for the consumer. PM reports that corporation dividends for December 1946 were up 24 per cent over December 1945, while wages were up 13 per cent. That is, dividends gained double on wages. This in a chart is a striking fact. It makes the absence of such informative presentations in other papers very conspicuous. If it is good newspapering to put corporation earnings on the financial pages for investors, why is it not good newspapering to print profits and cost of living figures for consumers on the consumers' pages?

L. M. L.

## Reviews

### Are Public Opinion Polls Fair To Organized Labor?

Arthur Kornhauser

(In Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter 1947, Princeton University)

Newspapermen who cover labor news are well aware that the total effect of polls on labor questions is to give the reader an unfair impression of labor. This is one of the things they most often discuss and criticize in newspaper treatment of labor. If anybody doubts it the evidence is overwhelmingly detailed in this case study by a member of the Board of Applied Social Research at Columbia.

He shows how it can be corrected if those who gather and publish polls on labor want to correct it. It is obvious that not all of them do. The same forces and pressures apply here that tend to bias reporting of labor news generally. The topic selected for polling frequently implies an anti-social attitude by labor. The phrasing of the question often suggests an unfavorable answer or fails to suggest all sides of the question. The interpretation and use of the polls commonly gives labor the short end.

All the material on labor in the seven leading opinion polls was studied for 1940 to 1945, altogether 155 questions. This is a thorough test.

Of the 155 questions, only 8 deal with favorable features of unionism, such as the protection and improvement of the lot of the working people. Of the rest 66 are neutral or doubtful, 81 are concerned with union faults or propose restrictions on unions. The questions then, to begin with, run strongly against labor.

"The polls aid and abet the process of directing public attention persistently to the negative side of organized labor. Avoidance of this bias would properly seem a special responsibility of those who ostensibly represent a scientific approach to areas of public controversy.

"Why no questions on whether unions help protect the interests of the common people, whether they serve as a useful counterweight to the power of big business?"

On the wording of questions "four disturbing types of bias" against labor are found.

1. The questions which offer a choice between a recognized evil and one particular proposed remedy, usually "a law." Any other remedy besides a law is eliminated as a possible answer.

2. Questions on technical or specific points which, for lack of particular information, are answered in terms of general sentiments.

An illustration from *Fortune*: How many labor leaders in your community do you think do a good job in representing labor? Are fair in dealing with employees? Are honest in handling union funds?

3. Questions in which biases arise from hidden assumptions and over-simplifications.

An example: Which do you think is trying harder to help national defense production—labor leaders or industrial leaders?

"Is this fair? The function of business managers is to get out production. That is not the function of the union leader. Why should questions make him appear responsible for matters over which industry gives him no authority?"

Another example: Do you think that workers should be forced to stay in a union if they want to resign or get out?

"The question leaves out everything that is important about maintenance agreements and becomes a mere caricature of these plans."

4. The use of suggested or slanted phraseology, or of wording that makes it especially easy to accept the idea asked about.

One of Dr. Gallup's, for example, asked: Would you like to see labor unions change their way of handling things?

"The implication is strong that an affirmative reply is expected."

The conclusion of the study is definite: "One cannot escape the conclusion that the labor poll material is biased. It contains many varieties of bias, but they all point in the same direction. In the choice of topics, in the wording of questions, and in the reporting of results, unionism fails to receive balanced and impartial treatment. The polls taken as a whole are clearly not fair to organized labor. Few indeed are the questions to bring out the faults of business. No dearth of questions on unions' interference with war-time production, but not one on management's hoarding of labor or its self-interested delays in accepting government contracts. Questions on unions' blame for strikes but not on employers' blame for substandard wages or for unsafe conditions in coal mines. The contrast is striking. Even when an occasional poll touches the sensitive spots of big business, the question and the report are mild and cautious in tone compared to those on labor."

This study should be provocative to those who buy polls for public consumption.

L.M.L.

### Soviet News in the New York Times

Martin Kriesberg

(In Public Opinion Quarterly, Winter 1947, Princeton University)

This study of the treatment of news about Russia in the New York Times from 1918 to 1946 finds the news tends to be weighted against Russia. The reverse was true while Russia was a war ally of the United States. This criticism of the Times would apply more sharply to most other U. S. papers. But the Times uses more news on Russia than other papers. Kriesberg, a social science research fellow at Harvard, finds the Times news about Russia "is keyed to a concept of American interests."

The manner of reporting news and the amount of attention given he describes as determined by the relationship between American and Soviet interests. His article documents this. "News that places the Soviet Union in an unfavorable light receives more attention than news that is sympathetic. . . . There is a tendency for unwarrantable headlines, loaded words and questionable sources of information, when occurring in Times reports, to be consistently unfavorable to the Soviets."

The unfavorable themes developed by the news he groups as:

1. Soviet leaders are unmoral, unethical.
2. Soviet leaders are unjust, unreasonable, arbitrary.
3. The Soviet government does not represent the Russian people.
4. The Soviet government will not succeed. (1935 and 1937)
5. The Soviet Union is a predatory state.
6. The Soviet leaders and people are enigmatic.

During the war these themes gave way to such favorable ones as:

1. The Soviet Union is cooperating with the Allies.
2. The Russian people are resolute fighters.
3. The Soviet nation is enterprising, forceful.

Kriesberg holds that news about the Soviet Union is given relatively little attention unless it suggests a crisis in Soviet affairs or in U. S.-Soviet relations.

Readers of the Times, he concludes, would tend to acquire or have reinforced an adverse opinion toward Soviet Russia. They would tend to expect conflict with Russia and feel it would be justified.

As in so many studies, the Times was evidently selected because of its conspicu-

ous position, not because its sins in departure from objective reports are greater than in most other papers. The reverse is doubtless the case. How far a newspaper is justified in selecting and weighting its news to what it conceives to be the national interest is a moot question. National interests change. In the war years, U. S. papers turned Pollyanna to change the picture of the Russians they had built up in the two preceding decades. Bias may often be unconsciousness. Kriesberg has probed for evidence of bias with more sensitivity and subtlety than is often evidenced on news desks. The cumulative weight of his evidence is impressive. His instances of loaded words, unwarranted headlines, questionable sources of information and what he aptly terms "opportunistic reporting" are well worth the attention of both reporters and desk men. Such aberrations are not confined to news on Russia.

L. M. L.

## Opinion

### Censoring Opinion

The Press's Responsibility for Political Advertising

To the New York Herald Tribune:

I must express my astonishment to find the advertisement of the Communist party, which appeared in your issue of March 31. The first thing that struck me was the fact that a paper which sponsors an organization to combat subversive influences will also publish an advertisement of the same group that it is trying to combat. To me it just does not make sense. There is no obligation on the part of the Tribune to take this kind of advertising any more than it would be its obligation to take the advertisement of some atheistic organization.

The presumption is that any good, intelligent, patriotic citizen would have no part in furthering such a movement. Almost as paradoxical is the fact that our Congress is now about to outlaw the Communist party, and you, as a good Republican newspaper, take a whole page of advertising defense from them. After all that has been said and written of the methods of these people, why you, of all others, should participate as you have, I cannot understand.

Donald C. Taggart.

Westfield, N. J., April 1.

(The issue here raised is not a simple one. A newspaper must, and ethically

should, refuse advertising which falls under the laws against libel, indelicacy, misrepresentation and sedition. But if it also assumes to censor its advertising on political or ideological grounds it is in danger of closing one important avenue to freedom of speech. Because it is impossible for the modern metropolitan press to express every shade of legitimate opinion, it is all the more important that newspaper advertising columns should remain open to views which the papers themselves do not indorse. No one would question our publication of an advertisement by the American Labor or Socialist parties, even though we were opposing them on the editorial page. There was nothing seditious or illegal in the advertisement in question, and where the people and its legislators are still in so much doubt over the proper answer to Communist propaganda this newspaper hesitates to set itself up as a censor in a field where a little censorship can quickly become dangerous. It has, moreover, the overall conviction that opposition to Communism can best be strengthened by presenting to the people full information both from and about the leaders of the Communist party.—Ed.)

### Bill of Rights and Us

On Wednesday The Herald published a full-page advertisement paid for by the Communist Party, U.S.A. Yesterday we published another advertisement answering the assertions of the Communists. This was paid for by Chambers and Wiswell, a local advertising agency. . . .

We have had a number of calls from readers who say that we should never have published the Communist ad in the first place. . . .

Although we do not believe our policy in this connection requires any defense, we do want it to be clearly understood. We think it is vitally important that those of us who believe in freedom should match words with deeds. . . .

We must do more than defend them; we must assert them with vigor and boldness. . . . The press has a large responsibility in this connection. The Commission on Freedom of the Press said in its report only last week:

" . . . The press can not and should not be expected to print everybody's ideas. But the giant units can and should assume the duty of publishing significant ideas contrary to their own, as a matter of ob-

jective reporting, distinct from their proper function of advocacy. Their control over the various ways of reaching the ear of America is such that, if they do not publish ideas which differ from their own, those ideas will never reach the ear of America. If that happens, one of the chief reasons for the freedom which these giants claim disappears . . . The individual whose views are not represented on an editorial page may reach an audience through a public statement reported as news, through a letter to the editor, through a statement printed in advertising space, or through a magazine article. . . . But all the important viewpoints and interests in the society should be represented in its agencies of mass communication. . . . Identification of source (of views) is necessary to a free society. Democracy, in time of peace, at least, has a justifiable confidence that full and free discussion will strengthen rather than weaken it. . . ."

—Boston Herald Apr. 5.

### Post Mortem on Lautier Case

The last issue of Nieman Reports carried a piece on the case of Louis R. Lautier, correspondent of the Atlanta Daily World, a Negro daily, who was refused admission to the press gallery by the correspondents' standing committee, appealed to the Senate Rules Committee and was admitted. Arthur Krock has since written a column in the New York Times on the case in which he exonerates the correspondents' committee of race prejudice and emphasizes the difficulty presented by the fact that Lautier represented a service to Negro weeklies as well as the one daily. "If he were admitted correspondents of other weeklies would have to be." The real problem, he holds, was lack of gallery facilities to include weeklies. He says of this:

"The Correspondents' Standing Committee urged that Congress provide such facilities by changing the press gallery rules it made itself so that a small quota of weekly correspondents could be admitted legally, or provide them with other space. It suggested that a mixed committee be appointed to study solutions.

"The Senate Rules Committee ignored all this and simply ordered this particular correspondent admitted. Thereby it greatly damaged an ancient system of protection of Congress and the public in the gathering and dissemination of news and took away the press self-government established at the Capitol in 1887."

# MURRAY SEASONGOOD ON CINCINNATI PAPERS

BY MURRAY SEASONGOOD

Unfavorable animadversions by me over a period of more than twenty years on the Cincinnati Enquirer and Times Star as hindrances to advancement, allies of complacency and, latterly, contributing causes to Cincinnati's civic retrocession to the "horse latitudes" have exposed a skin grown pachydermatous to their editorial quills.

These Cincinnati newspapers give weight to Ambrose Bierce's "Devil's Dictionary" definition of "luminary"; "One who throws light upon a subject; as an editor by not writing about it," and seem to sustain the cynic's averment, "An editor is one who separates the wheat from the chaff and prints the chaff."

Cincinnati needs an outstanding, independent newspaper that will present the facts on matters of public importance; will waterproof the editorial column so as to prevent infiltrating into the news columns; will prohibit those employed from receiving favors which prevent impartiality; in sum, a journal that will disinterestedly and faithfully champion good causes.

The rapid transformation of Cincinnati from the worst to the best governed city began in 1923 with the verbal shot I fired "heard round the wards" at the city's political degradation, wasteful spending and archaic mayor and large council form of government. Some fairly accurate excerpts from this philippic against the local Republican organization seeped into the papers. Thereupon, the Times Star editorial column (anonymously Hulbert Taft, editor) likened me to a Bolshevik and its censorious attitude ever since, with only occasional lapses into faint praise, has shown a consistency greater than the leaders ordinarily display. Thus, when I was elected mayor, the editor saluted me as "a person of great intolerance" and having other undesirable characteristics.

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Murray Seasongood, leader and first mayor under the reform government of Cincinnati, has practised law in his home city for 44 years. Former president of the National Municipal League, author of Local Government in the United States, Godkin Lecturer at Harvard in 1933, member of the President's Housing Conference in 1932 and of the Ohio Commission on Code Revision in 1945, he has been in continuous public service. He is a lecturer at the Harvard Law School this Summer.

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My entry into the City Hall had been preceded by frequent salvos directed by me at a grossly incompetent City Civil Service Commission, one which had distorted the merit system and used it to get in those desired by the Republican machine and to exclude all others. A member of this Commission was, and should not have been, the City Hall reporter of the Enquirer. As he and his chief learned, I checkmated his reappointment, urged by the editor. Naturally, neither was for me as a "fidus Achates."

Early in my administration, I attempted, unsuccessfully, to remove some prominent business men and close friends of the Enquirer's editor as members of a misnamed "Rapid Transit Commission", which was rapid only in expenditure and produced no transit except the passage of six and a quarter million dollars of the city's money into a hole in the ground, with no tenant and long after any plan of operation had become illusory. This inexcusable waste of public funds survives as an unused ditch to this day. As mayor, I submitted to the council a comprehensive statement of reasons for the Commissions' removal. The Enquirer did not print any part of them. So I printed, distributed and paid for upwards of 1500 copies of the statement in pamphlet form. The Enquirer then editorially quoted from the second of the deprecatory Times Star editorials above-mentioned and went on to liken me to Mussolini (even then, no compliment). At the next chance I had to speak, I opined that the only similarity between Il Duce and myself was that he had recently been shot in the nose by an assailant with a revolver and I had been peppered from the rear by a beanblower; also, that the funny page of the Enquirer was not so much where the pictures were, as where the editorials appeared. This pleasantry did not commend itself to the Enquirer. It did not endorse me the next two times I stood for office. But, perhaps, the voters were amused; since, in both elections, they gave me the highest vote of any candidate.

A recital of many of the numerous collisions between these papers and myself would be to narrate other pettinesses and small town pot shots that would seem trivial, exaggerated or incredible. But it would show that controversies an individ-

ual may wage with a press not well disposed towards him are unequal contests. They are a lot of fun, however, if the contender is not too vulnerable. A few fairly recent examples will be adduced. The Chapel Hill Press, about a year ago, published "Public Men In and Out of Office", edited by Professor J. T. Salter of the University of Wisconsin Political Science Department. The book limns various political personages in the public eye. My chapter on John W. Bricker, now a Senator from Ohio, as it is veracious and carefully documented, is not complimentary. Emphasis is given to Bricker's collaboration while Governor with the Hamilton County (Cincinnati) Republican machine. In an effort to preserve serenity, I do not read the Times Star; but articles in it are sometimes called to my attention. These are useful in raising ordinarily low blood pressure. So far as I know, there was neither book review nor mention of the book in that paper or in the Enquirer. Had the chapter been laudatory, some at least would have found space. I maintain that if any known or unknown resident of a city writes a book or substantial article about, say, a horse's pastern, that is news enough to deserve mention; and so if the writing concerns a public character and a local political machine it merits notice if newspapers are, as they contend, semi-public enterprises.

It sounds silly, but the Times Star and Enquirer (perhaps to impugn my Republicanism) credited me in considerable articles (issues of November 8 and 9, 1944) with having been the main cause, by a radio talk which was transcribed and repeated in many parts of the state, of the election of Frank J. Lausche as Governor of Ohio. In the course of the 1946 gubernatorial election, a particularly virulent Times Star reporter told me on the telephone he had had orders to ascertain whom I intended to support. He knew if he had given his name I should not have spoken with him. So he used, with the girl at the switchboard, that of a friend and client. When I informed him I had nothing to say to the Times Star, he printed a piece to the effect that both parties were fearful of getting "the kiss of death" of my endorsement. This jewel of consistency also sparkled by repetition in the Enquirer.

The Cincinnati Recreation Commission

transferred its Director, appointed as such after an open competitive civil service examination and following twelve years in the classified service, to the unclassified service for the predetermined purpose of dismissing him without the charges and opportunity to be heard, which protect a classified civil service employee: The chairman of this Commission, as a member of the School Board, had been instrumental in having one of the Enquirer's writers appointed a member of the Cincinnati Civil Service Commission. In another case, a county official whom the appointing authorities long wanted to "get", was removed by statute only for "cause" (which, in law, connotes charges and an opportunity to be heard before removal); but was dismissed under civil service procedure which allows dismissal before the hearing of charges. Not only did the Enquirer and the Times Star distort the news in these controversies, in both of which I was counsel, but the former refused opportunity to refute obfuscating misstatements. As the Enquirer is the only morning paper in Cincinnati, responsibilities for dissemination of correct recital of events is the greater. I wrote the editor:

"Referring to reference to myself, the Deering and Neal cases in your Mr. Garretson's column of April 5, 1946, headlined, 'Sauce for the Goose, etc.', this headline is appropriate, since no one but a goose or gander would ask the silly question comprising the paragraph referred to. The question submitted by Mr. Garretson in heavy type is, in substance, if the Recreation Commission personally ought to pay the expenses to which they put Deering by their illegal act of attempted removal of him without civil service charges, 'by the same reasoning' ought not Dr. Neal, in the event he should lose his suit to prevent ouster from a civil service job, pay the County's expenses incident to that suit?

"In the communication I sent you April 2, 1946, and which you did not have enough interest in fair play to print in full, I cited a case where it was held . . . that an officer who wrongfully seeks to dismiss a civil service employee without civil service charges and procedure is personally liable for damages and expenses to such employee incurred in resisting the attempted illegal dismissal.

"Mr. Garretson should have some reticence about writing articles under his own name in connection with the Deering case. It will be recalled that Mr. Becker [the chairman before referred to] and others on the School Board re-

fused to reappoint a citizen of the highest type, Cecil H. Gamble, to the City Civil Service Commission and appointed Mr. Garretson instead. The salary of this position is approximately \$2,000 a year. Mr. Garretson is, therefore, disqualified to speak impartially on this subject. No right thinking newspaper ought to permit its editor or reporters to receive favors which tend to prevent them from impartially reporting or making fair editorial comment on matters of local public concern. If your paper were to perform its function of enlightening the public, it would do so by showing that the Recreation Commission in the one case and the County Commissioners in the others are deserving of reprobation for what they have attempted to do to civil service employees.

"Kindly print this."

Not a word of it was printed. Garretson continued, however, to rave. Thus, to start off the new year auspiciously, on January 1, 1947, his column took a smash at me and also observed of the former Director:

"The last I heard of Tom Deering, he was running some sort of an expert consultation service on recreation in Washington . . . It's doubtful whether we'll hear much more about him around here again . . ."

The most recent incident is this: Charles O. Porter, a Harvard Law School student, recently spent four months in Cincinnati to prepare a thesis, which would count towards his degree, on some aspect of local government based on his experiences and observation. He chose to make a study of the administration of justice in the local courts, and submitted to his sponsor, a non-partisan organization of which I had been President, a report with conclusions buttressed by facts and containing valuable suggestions. Among the recommendations, which appeared in the Enquirer of January 26, 1947, are: reducing the number of judges, abolishing unnecessary courtroom personnel, establishing an official appraiser instead of making appointment of appraisers a political requisite, establishing a public defender's office, utilizing pretrial procedure, introducing a schedule of minimum penalties for traffic offenses and getting the nomination and election of judges out of politics. Porter is an outstanding student, with a record of four years of useful experiences in the Armed Services and as an officer abroad and is one of the originators and first editor in chief of the Harvard Law School Record. His study is of importance to the administration of justice and is receiving consideration in many localities

by responsible, interested organizations. The Times Star comment on this is headlined in 18 point type:

"Seasongood's 'Pet Peeves' In Report, GOP Leaders Say Findings of Harvard Student Fail to Rouse Interest."

Garretson's column of January 30, 1947, entitled, "An 'Expert' Reports", begins:

"Mr. Charles O. Porter, a blond, young gentleman with a crew haircut from Oregon, dropped into the office yesterday to discuss his profound findings regarding the administration of justice in Hamilton County."

Garretson fails to mention, however, that it was he who had requested Porter to drop in; or that Garretson had expressed himself to Porter as favoring substantially all of the recommendations made. Regarding the merits of the suggestions, not a word appeared in Garretson's column or in the papers. It would be difficult to match a column so full of toadyism to the judges, vindictiveness, malevolence, distortion and suppression. Porter is quoted as saying it was my suggestion he refrain from giving names because of possible libel repercussions. The fact is and Porter informed me he had told Garretson that, I had suggested to Porter names be avoided in order to make the study impersonal and of general interest and to by-pass discussion of personalities, and because, if names were used, they would mean nothing to any but local readers.

The present editor of the Enquirer holds, as his predecessor held, the sinecure with pay of trustee of the Cincinnati Southern Railroad by appointment of the Common Pleas Judges on "recommendation" of the local Republican machine. Garretson, not long ago, was appointed foreman of the local grand jury by the judges or a judge of the court whose workings Porter had surveyed. In the instance mentioned before of a much milder attack upon myself, the Enquirer refused to print any of a letter showing the absurdity of it. Obviously, then, there is no point in writing another letter to the editor either in protest, refutation or to descant informatively on a matter of supreme importance in the democratic process. Why should not the papers have supported these recommendations and have told, for example, that pretrial procedure is widely utilized elsewhere; as in Detroit, where it has resulted in settlement without trial of more than fifty per cent of the cases filed; or that in Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) it has saved in one year approximately \$25,000 of jury fees (19 Ohio Bar Association Report, p. 619, February 3, 1947).

## THE 10th GROUP OF NIEMAN FELLOWS

Two women, three foreign correspondents and three labor reporters are among the 11 newspapermen awarded Nieman Fellowships at Harvard for the college year starting in September.

They make the 10th group of Nieman Fellows appointed by the Nieman Foundation at Harvard under the will of Agnes Wahl Nieman, in honor of her husband, Lucius W. Nieman, late publisher of the Milwaukee Journal. One hundred eleven newspapermen have previously held the fellowships, opened in 1938. A Nieman Fellowship entitles the holder to a year of residence at Harvard, on leave of absence from his newspaper work, to follow studies of his own choice.

Mrs. Nieman left her bequest "to promote and elevate the standards of journalism in the United States and educate persons deemed specially qualified for journalism."

The 1947 Nieman Fellows are:

Charles W. Gilmore, 30, Associated Press reporter in Atlanta, Ga., to study political economy and labor relations.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Gilmore's newspaper service began with the Atlanta Constitution in 1938. He has been with the Associated Press since 1941 except for three years in the Navy where he was communications officer, LSM Group 35, and public information officer, First Carrier Task Force.

Robert W. Glasgow, 31, reporter New York Herald Tribune, to study labor relations and economics.

A native of Arkansas, Glasgow began newspaper work there in 1936 and served on Arkansas papers until he joined the Herald Tribune staff in 1942. He has specialized in labor reporting.

Lester H. Grant, 34, reporter New York Herald Tribune, to study medicine and science.

Grant is a graduate of the University of California and served on newspapers in California and Washington before joining the Herald Tribune in 1943. He has specialized in reporting medicine.

Rebecca F. Gross, editor of the Lock Haven (Pa.) Express, to study social relations and public opinion.

A graduate of the University of Penn-

sylvania, Miss Gross started newspaper work before she went to college and has been with the Lock Haven Express since 1928, its editor since 1931. She served as a Lieutenant in the Navy from 1943-45. Under her editorship, the Express has won numerous editorial awards, including this year the first award among small dailies in the Better Newspaper Contest of the NEA.

Carl W. Larsen, 28, rewrite man Chicago Times, to study political economy and labor relations.

Larsen was managing editor of the Paris edition of Stars & Stripes and after the war served the United Press as Scandinavian news manager in Stockholm before returning to the Chicago Times, where he worked before the war.

Justin G. McCarthy, Jr., 32, reporter Chicago Sun, to study labor relations and economics.

McCarthy began newspaper work with the Chicago Daily News in 1935, joined the Chicago Sun staff in 1943, specializing on labor since 1944.

Walter G. Rundle, 40, China manager United Press, to study political economy and international relations.

After early newspaper work in Nebraska, Rundle has been with the United Press since 1929. He served on the "war desk" in London in 1943, covered the Cairo conference and the campaigns of Chennault's Flying Tigers and Stillwell's forces in Burma. His assignment has been in China since 1944.

Lois Sager, reporter Dallas News, to study modern history and international relations.

A graduate of the University of Texas in 1939, Miss Sager has been on the Dallas News since 1943. In 1945 she spent five months on a post-war assignment in Europe, and has since spent much of her time on assignment to the United Nations.

Robert M. Shaplen, 30, chief Shanghai Bureau, Newsweek, to study China and Southeast Asia.

A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, and Columbia School of Journalism,

Shaplen was with the Herald Tribune from 1937 to 1943. He served as Pacific war correspondent for Newsweek and remained as foreign correspondent in Shanghai.

Walter H. Waggoner, 29, political writer New York Times Washington Bureau, to study history and government.

A graduate of Bard College of Columbia University, Waggoner became a Washington reporter for the Wall Street Journal in 1941 and has served the New York Times in Washington since 1944.

George Weller, 39, foreign correspondent Chicago Daily News, to study political economy, international relations and history.

A native of Boston and graduate of Harvard, Weller first became a foreign correspondent for the New York Times in the Balkans in 1932. He has served the Chicago Daily News abroad since 1940. He has seen long service both in the Balkans and in the Far East. For distinguished war correspondence he received the Pulitzer prize in 1943.

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