

# Nieman Reports

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# Lucius W. Nieman

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

by Irving Dilliard

Lucius William Nieman, (Dec. 13, 1857-Oct. 1, 1935), newspaper editor, publisher, was born in Bear Creek, Sauk County, Wis., only son and younger of the two children of Conrad and Sara Elizabeth (Delamater) Nieman, both of whom came of pioneer Wisconsin farmers. Since the father died when the boy was two and the mother lived only a few years longer, Lucius, or "Lute" as he was intimately known throughout life, grew up in the thrifty farmstead home of his maternal grandparents, William Henry Harrison and Susan (Cuppennall) Delamater, near Mukwonago. Here he did the chores and attended grade school. To satisfy his boyhood resolution to be a newspaperman, he was sent, at the age of twelve, to nearby Waukesha, where he worked as printer's devil for the weekly Freeman. Having learned to set type, he entered the composing room of the Milwaukee Sentinel two years later (1871). His pride as a workman impressed his superior, who urged him to change to "the writing side." As preparation he studied at Carroll College, Waukesha, through a winter and acted as local correspondent for the Sentinel. Returning to Milwaukee, he became first a reporter on that paper, then its enterprising legislative correspondent (1875), next city editor, and, finally, its managing editor—a post held until he went, in 1880, to the St. Paul Dispatch as managing editor and prospective owner.

In St. Paul, Nieman turned a losing newspaper into a paying one, but within a year he decided that Milwaukee should be his permanent home. After exploring the possibility of a new paper with James E. Scripps [q.v.], he purchased, Dec. 11, 1882, half interest in the Milwaukee Daily Journal, then a small, congressional campaign sheet, twenty-two days old, prepared at a single desk and printed on a flatbed

press. Thus began a journalistic stewardship which was to last more than a half century. The early years were lean; Milwaukee was still small and there were several daily newspapers. Nieman, however, combined marked business acumen with essential editorial qualities—curiosity, independence, thoroughness, and devotion to the interests of his readers. Two months after he acquired the Journal, he printed, notwithstanding efforts at suppression, the facts as to negligence underlying a hotel fire in which some seventy persons lost their lives. If the editorial page had Democratic leanings, it was in no sense a party voice; after supporting Cleveland in 1888 (in the face of opposition from those to whom the Journal owed money), it opposed Bryan's silver policy in 1896, and temporarily lost much circulation.

Nieman stood consistently for tariff reform, kept a vigilant eye on schools and courts, and favored home rule, non-partisan local tickets, and popular election of senators and even of the president of the United States. He justified the initiative, referendum, and recall as needed checks on self-serving politicians. A Journal campaign from 1893 to 1900 forced Wisconsin treasurers to return to the state more than \$500,000 in withheld interest on public funds. One of Nieman's hardest fought battles was against the Bennett law (1889), which required that English be taught in all Wisconsin schools, and the Journal helped in the defeat in 1890 of Gov. William D. Hoard [q.v.], who signed it. After the outbreak of the First World War, however, Nieman warned against foreign-language division in the United States, and, employing large type on the front page, announced that the Journal had erred in op-

posing the Bennett law. For its notable campaign for Americanism among nationalistic groups, the Journal became, in 1919, the second newspaper in the country to win the Pulitzer prize for "disinterested and meritorious public service."

Quick to adopt new ideas and devices, Nieman made a delivery of papers by airplane as early as 1912. His hobbies—horseback riding, cycling, baseball, golfing, motoring, card playing—were reflected in the wide appeal of his pages. Leaving an estate of more than \$8,000,000, he died in his hotel home of the infirmities of age in his seventy-eighth year, survived by Agnes Elizabeth Guenther (Wahl) Nieman, of a public-spirited Milwaukee family, whom he had married on Nov. 28, 1900. The body was cremated and the ashes buried in Forest Home Cemetery, Milwaukee. He had no children, and his widow, who died some six months later, bequeathed to Harvard University approximately \$1,000,000 to "promote and elevate the standards of journalism in the United States and educate persons deemed especially qualified for journalism." With this fund, Harvard established the Nieman fellowships for experienced newspapermen, first awarded in 1938 to nine reporters and editorial writers chosen from 309 applicants in forty-four states.

Irving Dilliard, editorial writer of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, was one of the first group of Nieman Fellows, 1938-9. He did this biographical sketch of Lucius W. Nieman, in whose honor the Nieman Foundation was established by bequest of Mrs. Agnes Wahl Nieman, for the Dictionary of American Biography. It is used here by special permission of Charles Scribner's Sons and the American Council of Learned Societies, by whom the article is copyrighted.

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*"What is far more important is that we find out how to lift the standards of the press faster and without waiting for the tedious processes of an economic rat race."*

## Why Worry About Newspaper Monopolies?

by Forrest W. Seymour

Every once in a while one wanders into cloistered academic halls where professors and students of the social sciences are still mumbling Ernstian shibboleths to each other about what they call "newspaper monopolies"—meaning, usually, a condition that has resulted from widespread newspaper consolidations.

Journalists surely need to value the provocative criticism of thoughtful academicians and philosophers, even when these influences betray symptoms of too much seclusion. It is, indeed, their seclusion to some degree that makes objectivity possible.

But even working newspapermen and editors seem to fall under the spell of these limited logicians sometimes, and therefore pick up this plaintive melody about "monopoly" and play it over carelessly in the same stilted chords. This is where people in the profession are warranted in demanding a practical accounting instead of generalizations.

For example:

"But perhaps the clearest and most present danger to the public welfare," writes Editor Robert Lasseter of Murfreesboro, Tenn., in the Nieman Reports, "in the American press today is in the unmistakable trend toward 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."

That is the essence of the logic. Let's examine it.

It is precisely this beloved competition which brought the "trend" that seems to worry so many. The public made its choice, and the advertisers subsequently made their choice. The "second newspaper" in town after town couldn't make the grade, and either folded up or was glad to sell out to the opposition before its assets were completely dissipated. Having

arrived at the natural result, in a free economic system, of the kind of competition that is here being advocated, the viewers with alarm do not like the consequences. They want to rub out the score and start all over again.

And what would happen if we did? The same thing, naturally.

So the logic is thin in the middle. Unless, that is, the theorists have in mind that government should step in and provide the "competition." They would not really be pleased by the inevitable ramifications of that.

If not that, then, what is it they want, in order to prevent the forces of free economic competition from coming into play? Obviously, if you are going to insist that competition shall exist, and yet forbid its results from materializing, somebody has got to subsidize the weak side in every instance. And since there are not very many Marshall Fields with several million dollars to spare, the pressure would soon be upon government to provide the "necessary" competition. Here as in certain other kinds of enterprise, government has so many of the competitive elements in its favor that the competition would soon disappear again—but leaving, this time, a monopoly which the critics really would have some cause to fume about!

So I think Mr. Lasseter and our academic friends are talking a kind of voodoo to themselves. Most responsible journalists are not oblivious to the dangers of monopoly in a free enterprise system, nor are most of them fearful of criticisms of newspapers and the press in general—of which there ought to be a lot more. But what is gained by indulging in these fantasies which completely miss the point at which the public welfare could be looked after?

If any "monopoly newspaper" is really as bad as this phobic theory implies, then it is not going to last forever. Competition by more able and socially moral enterprise will eventually undermine and supersede it. That may take a little while; for newspapers, like some other institutions, can live on sheer momentum for a decade or two—but that's about all.

There is no need to doubt, in short, that "bad," anti-social, or economically unjustified institutions among the press will be

devoured in the competitive struggle, given time. What is far more important is that we find out how to lift the standards of the press faster, and without waiting for the tedious processes of this economic rat-race.

As the Hutchins commission pointed out (however feebly) in its report on "A Free and Responsible Press," the modern daily newspaper is only one segment of today's complex media for dispensing news, information, ideas, entertainment, and advertising.

Its "monopoly" of this function anywhere is greatly diminished from what it was even a generation ago, because of the advent of radio and the emergence of mass circulation journals of general interest. With the evolution of television and facsimile and the documentary film, it may easily become a still smaller fraction of the total resources of our society for information and debate—even while growing larger in terms of circulation and capital investment itself.

It is ridiculous to assume, therefore, that newspaper consolidations—even if they went to much greater lengths than as yet they have—could create anything like a "press monopoly." The competition among different media is much too keen, continuous, and expanding. Such consolidation as has taken place in the past generations is a result of economic forces largely beyond the control even of publishers themselves. They are the same kind of forces which, in an increasingly technological society with climbing living standards, have made for "bigness" everywhere from the steel industry and communications systems to labor unions and farm organizations.

Moreover, in the very bigness of the metropolitan newspaper's resources there has been a force for dispersal of monopoly. Citizens in small rural and once-isolated communities now have access to a much wider range of news and opinion daily; they are no longer limited to the often feeble news and opinion resources of their own town or county. One daily newspaper combination, published in the capital and largest city of a Midwestern state, competes with about forty smaller but often vigorous daily newspapers throughout the state for the reader's allegiance. Out of about 365,000 combined daily circulation,

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it has less than 110,000 in the whole county where its "monopoly" is supposed to exist; the rest is in immediate competition not only with the smaller dailies but also with a half-dozen metropolitan dailies published in bordering states. Its Sunday circulation of approximately 500,000 is even more strikingly spread over "competitive" territory, with no more than 60,000 (12 per cent) of it in the county or "monopoly" area, and the rest in areas that are often closer to even larger cities and larger Sunday newspapers.

We need not worry about Nineteenth century socialists amusing themselves with this monopoly fiction if they find enjoyment in it. But we should worry about our failure, as a result, to focus attention upon the truly important elements in the newspaper's social responsibilities as a quasi-public utility. Many editors imagine they can "duck" this key issue by making a scapegoat of the "monopoly" trend.

As Professor Hocking shrewdly observed in his new "Freedom of the Press," the one legal privilege of the press to be just or unjust, partisan or non-partisan, true or false, in news column or editorial column, today "wears the aspect of social irresponsibility." That is putting it mildly indeed. He gets nearer the nail's head when he continues, "It (the press) has lost the common and ancient human liberty to be deficient in its function or to offer half truth for the whole."

Now is this fanciful condition of "monopoly" of which we have been speaking really a test of an individual newspaper's performance, in accord with acceptable standards of public interest?

Well, look about us. The large daily newspapers of the United States provide no pattern whatever of "goodness" or "badness" that coincides with their degree of competition in the home cities of publication. One of the most competitive newspaper cities in the country is Boston, which has not had (at least until very recently) a single daily of general circulation that measures up to anything like the standards of the "monopolistic" Louisville Courier-Journal or Minneapolis Star and Tribune. Did the character of the Chicago Tribune undergo any visible change because of competition even from so resourceful a capitalist as Marshall Field? The Denver Post's competitive situation has not appreciably altered in twenty-five years, and yet under the wise and thoughtful guidance of a new editor, it is rapidly undergoing transfiguration to a dignified, socially responsive, trusted journal of real integrity.

Why, then, must our critics be so blind to the obvious fact that the character, the social conscience, and the ethical standards of the newspaper as an institution are

a reflection of the individuals and groups who own and produce it—rather than of some superficial competitive condition over which the publishers and editors have little or no control?

If newspaper ownership and editorship are venal, they are apt to be so regardless of size or capital investment or competition, just as a legal or a medical scoundrel will play about the same game whether in a village or in a metropolis. There are men lacking in principle who own and edit newspapers both in one-newspaper towns and multi-newspaper towns; there are also men of integrity operating newspapers in both kinds of communities. Competition doesn't affect their character much one way or another—except that if it is too cutthroat, it may throw more temptations and obstructions in the path even of the publisher who wants to maintain the highest ethical standards!

The press of the United States as a whole has by no means achieved as yet the professional standards ideally consistent with its status as a near-public utility. It is perceptibly improving, however. The studies of such groups as the Hutchins commission are a constant goad. Even when guilty of too much generalization, therefore, they usually serve a good purpose. They force into self-analysis a lot of publishers and professional groups who would otherwise be pretty smug and irresponsible.

But this dour shaking of muddled heads about consolidation doesn't do much to speed up the process of lifting standards and performance. It merely distracts attention from the problem. It winds up seminars with that old saw, "Somebody ought to start another newspaper"—when nine times out of ten that isn't any solution. The "other newspaper" might easily be worse than none at all. And if the "monopoly" paper because of its merit has absorbed the local field once, chances are that except in the rarest circumstances a new enterpriser would simply be throwing good money after bad.

The pedagogues and other citizens interested in this field could perform a real public service, on the other hand, if they would begin appraising their local journals with a view to setting down practical standards of performance that are feasible and necessary in the public interest—and then measuring actual performance from time to time against these standards. Whether the newspaper under study is the only one in the county, or one of twenty-odd, ought not to affect the scrutinizing process at all. And it is a fair guess the researchers would soon discover that multiplicity has little if anything to do with the findings in individual cases.

## Bert Andrew's Report On a Security Case

When the most effective newspaper work of 1947 is appraised, one story that will stand out is that of Bert Andrews in the New York Herald Tribune of November 2. Under the headline, "State Department Security Case," Andrews recited the story of one of the employees dismissed from the State Department as a bad security risk, without charges or knowledge of the reasons for his summary discharge. Andrews related details of eight months' surveillance of the employee by the F.B.I. and printed the record of the hearing given him by a four-man panel of the office of control in the Department of State. This documentary presentation of the hearing showed the baffled employee without any clew of the charge against him or any suggestion of what evidence he might offer to clear his name. The published record of the hearing curled the hair of editorial writers and terrified many sensitive citizens. The Saturday Review of Literature likened it to the fantasy of Franz Kafka's weird novel, "The Trial."

It was such a shocker that it brought action. Within a week a Loyalty Review Board was appointed to which employees discharged on security grounds could appeal. Soon after, Bert Andrews had the satisfaction of reporting, November 18, that the State Department had reversed itself and permitted the seven summarily discharged employees to resign without prejudice "to avoid a possible injustice to them." Meantime Andrews had followed through with 17 questions to J. Edgar Hoover on the F.B.I. role in the loyalty checks and published his answers, which defined the function of the F.B.I., on Sunday, November 16.

Not often has a newspaperman penetrated so close to the center of strategic government policy on so delicate an issue affecting the rights of citizens with such effective results.—L. M. Lyons.

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### "F.B.I. Official Testifies"

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"I, M. Matlack, F.B.I. official, then took the stand . . .

"Mr. Matlack, who is chief of the war frauds section of the criminal division, Department of Justice . . ."—(New York Times, Nov. 15, 1947).

Apparently one of the G-men in Tom Clark's Justice Department of J. Edgar Hoover's Federal Bureau of Investigation.

# ENZYMES AND HEADLINES

## SOME PROBLEMS OF REPORTING MEDICINE

by Lester Grant

A newspaperman reporting science is likely, from time to time, to find himself attempting to answer more questions than he asks.

To the reporter—at least to this one—the fundamentally important action of, say, enzymes in the human body is a mysterious mechanism which calls for considerable explanation.

But to the scientist, the newspaper—and the way the newspaper goes about writing science—is equally bewildering and more often than not makes even less sense than many of the anomalies on the frontiers of medical research.

The scientist is likely to ask, indeed frequently does ask, these questions:

1. If it takes ten or fifteen or twenty reporters to make an acceptable and competent sports department—with some of the reporters specializing in golf, hockey, baseball, horse racing and thoroughbred dogs—how is it possible to cover science—physics, biochemistry, medicine, astronomy, among others—with no specialist or perhaps only one or two reporters assigned to the job?

2. Is there really an explanation for the affection shown by some newspapers—notably the Hearst press—for the anti-vivisection movement? On what possible grounds could a person be taken in by such nonsense? What possible motive is there behind anti-vivisection propaganda?

3. If the science writer insists on interpreting certain results of, say, medical research, is it not reasonable to expect him to ask the scientists if the interpretation is correct?

The second question—on the anti-vivisectionists—is one this reporter would not attempt to answer. It is not even clear where the answer can be found, except perhaps by writing to Mr. Hearst and hoping for the best. Presumably this has been tried before, but on the odd chance that it hasn't been tried, one can suggest the following framework for such a letter:

Dear Mr. Hearst:

"Would you be so kind as to tell me why you support the anti-vivisectionists?"

"I mean . . . would you give me the real reason? I have heard anti-vivisectionists

argue that they are humane but I am sure that a man of your practical inclination would not fall for that. Think of all the blue babies Dr. Blalock saved after first practicing his surgery on dogs. Obviously a person who would let those kids die can't turn around and argue that he is humane. Or a person who would expect a doctor to experiment on babies—instead of dogs—hardly makes sense when he shouts about his benevolence.

"So there must be another reason—one you have kept from the public—for your views on this subject, and I'm curious enough to write to you and ask what it is. I am particularly interested in your case, since I understand you are living to a ripe old age, and (as you know) many years have been added to man's life span as the result of animal experimentation showing the role of bacteria in the cause of infectious diseases and methods of preventing these diseases.

"Someone told me the other day that the reason you support the anti-vivisectionists is that you have what almost amounts to a psychopathic hatred of scientists in general, but I don't believe this—it sounds pretty silly to me—unless you have been subverted by snake charmers, astrologers and faith healers. If you have, and if you wouldn't mind saying so, I'd appreciate an answer, for it will clear up a number of points concerning the strange animosity you exhibit toward animal experimentation. Very truly yours, . . . ."

— On the third question—interpretation of results by science writers—the simplest answer is that it is reasonable to expect the reporter at least to quote his subject correctly, and, as a matter of fact, the reputable science writers—a dozen, perhaps—do just that.

The first question—the problem of specialization—reflects a continuing and in some respects lamentable drift toward specialization. When one today sets out to study zoology, he is soon confronted by a formidable host of experts: the anatomist, morphologist, histologist, cytologist, physiologist, nutritionist, embryologist, geneticist, pathologist, parasitologist, ecologist, evolutionist, just to name a few.

But stating the problem hardly solves it. The establishing among newspapers and magazines of so-called science departments, or expanding those already in existence is a problem which raises enor-

mous complications, particularly for smaller newspapers. But the frequent parallel which scientists draw between the high degree of specialization in sports writing and the virtual lack of it in science writing raises some interesting points.

For one thing, it may indicate that scientists read the sports pages, but all the evidence is not yet in as to how the public reacts to large doses of science writing, no matter how simply written. Yet when one examines some of the Monday morning football illustrations, explaining exactly what happened on Saturday, one may be led to the conclusion that the off-tackle play can get almost as complicated and certainly twice as dull. The chances are that if a newspaper reader can understand the fine points of football's T formation, the way it is explained these days, he can understand almost anything, including the biochemical importance of glycogen.

This brings up some rather complicated questions as to how the reporter, who is likely to have a bad reputation among scientists, goes about dealing with scientists and constructing stories which will be interesting, clear, and reasonably accurate (within the permissible limits of simplification), without at the same time running to so many words that their length rules them out as newspaper, if not as magazine, stories.

A year ago, Joseph Herzberg, the city editor of the Herald Tribune, and this writer set out to examine this and related questions to see if we could arrive at some constructive conclusions as to the purpose, form and other points relating to the coverage of medicine in the press.

How, for example, does the writing of medicine differ, if at all, from the writing of other stories in the popular publications? Can any satisfactory generalizations be made about medical writing without either belaboring the obvious or becoming so highly theoretical that we as newspapermen lose sight of our primary function of informing the public of news developments? Is it possible to overcome objections of many doctors about popular reporting of medicine and still write medicine so that the stories are clear and interesting to the general public? Or is the gap between what the doctor says and the way it is reported so wide that it cannot be bridged, to the mutual satisfaction of the doctor and the writer?

Out of this inquiry grew, several months later, a rather extensive memorandum to the New York Academy of Medicine, a few of the points of which will be summarized here. One runs the risk, in any such undertaking, of pontificating about problems the solutions for which are not yet clear. Certainly in many of the questions we covered, the conclusions were neither original nor startling. We were trying to state the problem so that it would make sense to doctors, as well as to ourselves. A rough breakdown of some of the points follows:

1. Medical ethics.

Some doctors protest vigorously (some protest too much) about the use of their names in stories, particularly the constant repetition of the name through the story, on the grounds that this amounts to personal glorification and such usage can become a device whereby charlatans promote their own trade. Many doctors would prefer to remain anonymous—or say they would—as far as newspaper stories are concerned

This is really a dangerous line of thinking, for a doctor's name in a story is some protection for the public, is at least a check against careless reporting. Without having to worry about where he got his information, the reporter might be led to the following fantasy: "A cure for cancer has been discovered, it was learned last night. This cure involves the drinking of a quart of water a day, elimination of pepper from the diet, and strict bed rest for nineteen years." If a doctor protested against the spreading of such nonsense and demanded to know the source of the information, the writer might stand on his professional ethics, so called, and refuse to give the name of his informant. Such hyperbole may seem out of reach, even of some of the less responsible newspapers, but one has only to track down the sources of some of those "reliable" reports coming from "well informed spokesmen" to appreciate the risk of doing this sort of thing in science stories.

If it is an aggravation for a doctor to find his name mentioned in every paragraph of a newspaper story, then perhaps the simplest thing to do is to mention it once and let it go at that. The point is not that the reporter necessarily wants to use the doctor's name, but the story, in most cases, lacks authority without it.

2. Bibliography.

The failure of newspapers to distribute credit, where credit is due, is one of the most frequent complaints which doctors—and scientists in general—level at the press. (In one case, the doctor complains because his name is in the story; in another he complains because there aren't

enough names in the story.) The scientist argues that since his own work is bound up with the work of his predecessors, and since this is a point he usually underscores in any report of his work, it is reasonable to expect the newspaper account to credit the source of his ideas.

Some scientists are so insistent on this that one gets the impression that any mention of, say, oxygen, should be traced back to the discoveries of Priestly and Scheele. It wouldn't take much of this sort of thing to make the newspaper read like text books, which is what some scientists would prefer. It is interesting, however, that even a casual mention in a story of where the doctor got his ideas, or the fact that he drew on "previous experiments of a similar nature conducted by So-and-So at such-and-such a place" makes the doctor infinitely more willing to discuss his work and explain his objectives. It also adds more words to a story and more type to the overset galleys. Yet, perhaps if this sort of thing can be done briefly and simply, it will serve a useful purpose. But one cannot hope to write a definitive history of science in every half-column account of a medical development.

3. Qualification and accuracy.

Doctors argue that newspapers too frequently fail to make a distinction between a treatment and a cure and point—justifiably—to the confusion wrought by popular accounts of the effectiveness of streptomycin in the treatment of tuberculosis, just to name one example. Thousands of persons die annually of tuberculosis and perhaps other thousands wonder why this is so in the light of the new drugs. With faintly concealed exasperation, the doctor wonders why the science writer can't follow some such simple procedure as this: Having stated that the drug will work—or may work—under certain conditions, then state that it will not work—or may not work—under others; state the second point quickly—and high in the story—so that there will be no chance for confusion in the reader's mind. In many ways, such an argument is unanswerable and the only defense for the press is, again, that among the more responsible science writers, such a procedure is generally followed.

4. The Doctor's Part.

Whether the doctor approves or not, or thinks that the trend is good or bad, the fact is that newspapers are carrying medical stories in increasing volume. Therefore, it would appear to a reporter that the question facing the doctor is not how to keep medicine out of the newspaper but how to get it in so that it makes sense and conforms to reasonable standards of

accuracy. This is such an elementary point to the reporter that he finds himself completely confounded by either the indifference or the open hostility of some members of the medical profession.

The doctor is likely to assert that if he gives the reporter the story, the reporter will probably get it wrong; or, if the reporter does write it accurately, the doctor's colleagues will frown on the publicity. Such a disastrous generalization can only lead one to the conclusion that while newspapermen may need considerable education in science, the medical profession needs at least as much briefing in public relations.

Many doctors complain that newspapers spend too much of their time and precious white space discussing seven-day medical wonders which turn out either to be failures on the eighth day or to be a considerable distance from acceptable treatment. There is evidence to support such an assertion (reports on the use of nitrogen mustard in the treatment of cancer were overplayed, to cite one case in point), but the doctor also bears some responsibility here. Many doctors, in venting their spleen on newspaper coverage of medical matters, complain that the newspapers leap at superficial, spectacular, unproved techniques instead of confining themselves to accounts of sound, proved developments. When this happens, this writer usually asks the doctor exactly what he means and in most cases it turns out that he does not know what he means. What he probably means is that the reported ulcer cure (even though it may have been reported accurately) does not work. Yet the doctor himself may have listened as eagerly as the writer to the account of the new development. It would appear, then, that one of the things the doctor is complaining about is irresponsible doctors, not necessarily irresponsible reporters.

If this judgment makes no sense, then the alternative is clear: medical writing should be confined, if it is to appear anywhere, to the medical journals and should never be touched by the popular publications. This is a rather simple way out of the problem and one that would save responsible newspapers considerable trouble and expense. If on this basis, doctors think they can educate the public about medicine and science, as some newspapers are doing, or can raise millions of dollars for medical research, hospitals and other facilities, or can counteract the vicious propaganda of the anti-vivisectionists, or stress the necessity of vaccination in certain situations, then the doctors know an important secret about public relations which they have not yet let the newspapers in on.

When one circulates among scientists today, one is struck by a remarkable change in the thinking of scientists about newspapers and popularizations of science. For reasons which are not quite clear, scientists appear much more willing today to discuss their work and the impact of science on the community than they were, say, ten years ago. One cannot be sure that the turmoil attending the discovery of the atom bomb—with all of its terrible implications for the future—is solely re-

sponsible for this apparent change. Whatever the reason for the scientist's seeming increasing willingness to talk to reporters, the result is that newspapers are carrying more science stories than ever before. It is true that many of these stories are overdrawn, distorted, occasionally inaccurate (even by the loosest definition of accuracy), contain errors of omission and too frequently explain that a new development has certain possibilities without also explaining that it has certain limitations.

Yet some of the science writing—and an increasing amount of it—in newspapers and magazines is of high quality: interesting, clear, accurate. Many scientists are willing to concede this point. And one reason it is so, is because the scientists have made themselves more accessible. This is particularly true in the fields of chemistry and physics, not quite so true in the field of medicine. If the atom bomb has helped to accomplish this, perhaps it has served at least one useful purpose.

## The Reporter and the "Information Man"

by Joseph Loftus

What is the theory of a government information service? Idealistically speaking it is a service to the people with the high purpose of giving them all the news about their government.

By and large, I think the service approaches that ideal as closely as the newspapers and radio themselves approach it. The ideal is sometimes perverted in both fields.

I have had as many quarrels with government information men as any reporter in Washington, but my quarrels have been with individuals and their policies, and not with the principles of a government information service.

When a newspaper editor rants about an excess of government publicity men and handouts, I generally ask myself, "How much does he think it would cost his newspaper to operate without them?"

When I covered city hall or the courthouse back in Pennsylvania, there was no publicity man to help us with our work. We covered local government thoroughly on our own. When I went to the state capitol at Harrisburg I encountered a few government information men. When I came to Washington I found still more. Why is that?

I think it is simply because government has become so large, for good or for evil—I'm not passing on that point—that the newspapers can not cover it adequately for themselves.

Do the newspapers admit that? I have never seen them admit it publicly. I am not sure they are even conscious of it. Under our present setup, newspapers could not adequately finance coverage of govern-

ment to the exclusion of all government information people. Many newspapers and their press associations can afford larger and better staffs than they now have. Where they can provide such staffs, and fail to do so, these newspapers, in my opinion, forfeit their right to print buckshot criticism of the government information services on which they depend so much. I don't mean they forfeit their legal right. But they do forfeit their moral right.

Their criticism should be confined to the specific abuses which arise. Bored editors and columnists sometimes turn their Monday stints into loose tirades against the mass of week-end handouts which crossed their desks. Well, perhaps the information chiefs should have been more selective in their mailing or delivery lists for a given handout.

But the chances are that in that batch of handouts at least one was quite valuable to this particular editor's newspaper. Another handout which he scornfully threw away was equally valuable to some other newspaper, and so on.

This didn't occur to the critic, or if it did he let the thought perish in the morass of his week-end hangover.

Now, what are the abuses and inadequacies of government information services?

I have one complaint which I consider serious. There are some petty complaints, but **neither** kind is general.

Here's my complaint. Suppose I am assigned to a story which requires some background and interpretation; something more than statistical facts. In short, it requires an interview, perhaps by telephone. I locate the proper government officer. We both know he has the best information there is on it. But he tells me I'll have to get it through the information office. He got his orders. When that happens I become slightly irrational.

What's the excuse for it? There is no security involved, except perhaps the security of the information man's job.

That seems to me to be a hell of a resort for an information man to take to build up the importance of his office. He is not really building up anything. He is tearing down the importance of everybody else in his department. What happens to their sense of importance and responsibility if they are given a job to do but are regarded as too incompetent to talk to a reporter?

The excuse has been given that incompetent or biased reporters have put the department in a hole. Of course that sometimes happens, but that is just a rationalization for a general, selfish policy of putting first-hand sources of news under wraps.

If the reporter is downright incompetent an official has a right to complain about his errors and he won't last long. Perhaps the damage will already have been done, but it isn't likely to be an everlasting hurt. Better to catch him up on that kind of operation than to wait until he misquotes the head of the department at some press conference. Then your boss will really be embarrassed.

I contend that the average government officer who is approached with a question, or who is asked for an interview, is sensible enough and careful enough about his own job to protect himself.

Besides, the mere idea of second-hand interviews is intolerable. No reporter can possibly write out in advance all the questions he expects to ask. One question always leads to another, if only for the reason that the first question may be misinterpreted or incompletely answered.

That kind of practice is channeling news, and channelled news comes close to being censored news.

I am talking primarily about the Justice Department. It is a notorious condition. To my certain knowledge the head of the department repudiated that practice. But also to my certain knowledge I had the same experience after the repudiation.

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Joseph Loftus knows the government information officers from his daily work on the Washington staff of the New York Times. Labor is his principal beat, which he formerly covered for the Associated Press.

Multiply a condition like that in all the government agencies and we won't need reporters. We'll need only messenger boys. That kind of policy penalizes the newspaper or press association which is willing to spend a fair amount of money on a staff. It plays into the hands of the penurious newspaper and press association and into the hands of the lazy reporter.

I asked a group of reporters the other day if they had any complaints about information officers. They had only two. One of the reporters wished that Secretary So-and-So was more accessible.

The other suggestion—and I don't believe the reporter had any particular department in mind—was that when information chiefs put out a statement or a speech they should not try to write a news story but just pass along the text. I offer that for what it is worth. Maybe the reporter was just jealously guarding his own prerogatives, or fancies that somebody is trying to tell him how to write his story.

As a matter of fact, if the speech is a long one I am always glad to have an accompanying story or something indicating the highlights. I don't have to use it but it is something to balance against my own judgment.

A similar case in point was the National Income document put out by Commerce in September. Another reporter in the office did the daily story and I needed the document for a Sunday piece. Neither of us was equipped to analyze it in any reasonably short time. I am sure it was extremely valuable to economists, but a couple of lardhead reporters needed a memorandum, or a guide to the significant items, or even a press conference, to help them.

One thing I found when I was in press association work was that queries did not stop coming in during the lunch hour. Answers were expected just as quickly between 1 and 2 o'clock as at any other hour of the day. But it seemed that when an information chief went to lunch he took his whole staff with him—all, perhaps, except some CAF-3 who didn't know the prices in Woolworth's.

I have had practically no first-hand experiences with the State Department. But I have read from time to time about charges that State conducts underhand diplomacy, not only orally but in writing. I am not talking about Yalta or Potsdam. These charges to my knowledge have never been answered, much less denied.

Bartley Crum, in his recent book, "Behind the Silken Curtain," charges that every time the President made a statement demanding the admission of Jews to Palestine, the State Department secretly cabled the Arabs telling them in effect not to worry because they will be consulted before anything is done. Telling them, in effect, to discount the President's statement. What is our policy, or do we have two, one private and one public? I think the newspapers and the information people together ought to battle like hell to stop that sort of thing.

When I first came to Washington in 1936 one of the departments on my run was Postoffice. You may not consider that the best possible example of a dynamic, news-making department. But Washington life was pretty dull generally then and we made flashes out of fillers. If I had a story idea or a query, I called the information chief. He gave me the name and extension of the man in charge of the stuff. I called the gentleman or went to see him and got what I wanted. It was as simple as that. I don't think that policy hurt Jim Farley one bit.

I should like to mention briefly the man who was my idea of a newspaper man's bureaucrat. He is William H. Davis, who was chairman of the WLB and later economic stabilization director.

As busy as he was, he never used his press representative as a buffer, with me or any other reporter. He tried to make himself available to reporters at all times. He was in a hot spot.

Often I asked Mr. Davis a particularly tough question which he wasn't ready for. He had no pat answer, but that didn't cause him to back away.

He would say, "Let's talk about it a minute." Then he would think it through out loud. He would give me a quote, if possible, or tell me to go ahead and use the relevant facts on my own responsibility.

In his mind's eye was not his own skin. All he saw was the importance of my understanding the problem correctly so that I could deliver it correctly. He used to conclude every important press conference by asking the reporters to call him at home that night if anything came up they did not understand.

It doesn't change my thesis a bit to remind you that Davis was kicked out unceremoniously. Ironically, the cause of it was a press conference statement which a

newspaper reporter distorted. Incidentally, that reporter has left Washington, too.

Now if Davis' objective was merely to hold on to a job and avoid criticism at any cost, his technique was wrong. But his policy was "to hell with Davis." He tried to do a job. He believed in the market place of ideas. He believed that a man had to risk public criticism if he wanted to hold a public job. He did a real, unselfish job in the opinion of every labor reporter and every person who worked for him that I know of.

I wonder if the average department head, or bureau chief, doesn't look to his information officer for more advice and guidance than some of them realize. A business man, or an academician, who comes to Washington and takes an executive position knows very little about press relations. Because of his ignorance he is likely to be very conservative in his approach and hold back. I wonder whether information men couldn't do more leading of their bosses and less following.

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### "Above All, Independence"

What then is lacking or in short measure? [in the big magazines.] Well it seems to me that several trends of the day—the trend toward staff-writing, plus the trend toward editing to supply what is established by polls to be sure-fire entertainment; plus the trend toward more and more disproportionate rewards for those who can supply such entertainment, plus the trend toward slavery to editorial policy, plus the dominance of the market for advertising, as it is now organized, by the organs of huge circulation, and such other organs as deliberately flatter advertisers' opinions, if not their goods too—that all these trends limit in one way or another the chances for men and women with fresh and pioneering ideas, or with special and unorthodox literary talent, to find a hearing adequate to what they have to offer.

"That is why I hope there will continue to be room for a long time to come for magazines which stand for thoroughness, distinction of thought and style, liberal hospitality to fresh ideas, and above all independence. For 90 years the Atlantic has held up to such standards . . ."

—Frederick Lewis Allen in *The Atlantic*,  
November 1947.

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

by Geoffrey Parsons

Chief Editorial Writer of the New York Herald Tribune

There is no one way to produce a good editorial page, any more than there is only one way to be a good city editor. The individual is the center of effective journalism and that system is the best system which yields the maximum product of which a staff is capable. Horace Greeley let himself go in his own intensely individual, earnest way, and so did Charles A. Dana, leading his band of brilliant satirists. The product—in *The New York Tribune* and in *The Sun*—was the best of their respective times. As for city editors, there was Herbert Swope whose stentorian tones came over the telephone to a cub reporter like the command of a top sergeant to a rookie. However insignificant the assignment, the directive was likely to end with: "Never forget, young man; the motto of the *World* is 'Service.'" When the city editor who taught me all I know about news, Tommy Dieuaide of the old *Evening Sun*, had an important assignment to give he would wander over to a reporter in the city room and say gently, quickly: "Want to do a little work?" If in what follows you can discover any influence of this early example I shall be happy, for my debt to Tommy Dieuaide is great.

Therefore all I shall attempt to do here is to describe one way of getting out an editorial page. It happens to be the method used on *The New York Herald Tribune*, and it seems to me a sound way of organizing such a page—that is to say, the mouthpiece of a large metropolitan daily in the world of today. But there are many others, as many as there are types of audiences and styles of thinking and writing.

Let me begin with the question of audience for it involves a basic point, the first essential quality of an editorial in contrast with, let us say, an essay or an article in an encyclopedia. I feel strongly that an editorial which is true to its mission must be addressed to a particular assemblage—the readers of the newspaper in which it appears—a definite group living in a particular time and place. There is obviously a close correlation between this attempted definition and the nature of news. Precisely as a sound conception of news would include in its subject matter everything of current interest in a community—from a bank robbery to a sick elephant, from a new motion picture to the atomic bomb—such a definition by no means

narrows the scope of a page to politics and spot news. There is nothing in which more people are concerned than the seasons of the year, the current weather, the latest quirk of humor. Nothing human is alien to an editorial page. All I am insisting upon is the necessity, if you would have an editorial read, of aiming its speech at your readers in the frame of mind and with the mental equipment with which they will open to your page on a particular morning or afternoon.

It can be helpful to think of an individual reader when you write but there is obvious danger in attempting to guess what an imaginary average reader will or will not understand or like. The analyzers of this problem, like the newspaper promoters, fancy the word "field" to suggest an available newspaper public. They spend much time on the economic facts of a community, its industries, its income levels, and so on. Obviously if yours is an audience whose environment includes orchards, or mines, or a great river, you will wish to understand the peculiar problems of your local activities and write about them with firsthand knowledge and such foresight as you can muster. But it is possible to overstress parochial matters at the expense of topics of broader appeal. Let it be noted that a field has but two dimensions. If an editorial page is worth the doing, it should certainly practice the art of flight. It is in appealing to the imagination of its readers that it can perform its best service. An editorial writer must be familiar with the pages of books of reference, and not less with the poets and novelists. Well, the theater and music, too—why not? The richer a writer's background, the larger his ability to stimulate thought about anything. A good editorial writer addresses the largest classes ever reached by a teacher, philosopher, or critic. He must know as much as possible about his audiences, their likes and dislikes, their knowledge and interests. He cannot know too much if he is to hold their attention. Perhaps some day our pollsters will devise methods of rating tastes and intelligences that will be helpful to these great lecturers. In the meantime the old-fashioned rule-of-thumb approximation must prevail. Do they listen? Do they buy the paper? Do they write letters? Do they talk about stuff? You add it all up and make a guess. The

wider one's acquaintance among all sorts of people, the shrewder that estimate can be. A wide list of friends and a broad background are equally important.

Two specific examples out of my own experience may help suggest the type of estimate one can form. Obviously the clearer and simpler a style can be, the more chance there is of a wide appeal. On the other hand, I am certain that writing down to the level of a supposed greatest common divisor of intelligence in respect to vocabulary is a thoroughly wrong approach. Readers like to learn, to progress. Therein is one reason why they read. If occasionally you send a reader to the dictionary, so much the better. Long-winded sentences and polysyllabic words are far more of a hindrance to the reader than an unusual word that is accurately and significantly used.

My other estimate has resulted in a don't. From sad experience I can testify to the peril that lies in satire. Nothing is more tempting—or more fitting—in commenting upon, let us say, the humorless politician. Alas, the solemn reader in a hurry will not only miss the point of your delicate attack but assume quite wholeheartedly that you are a vicious and contemptible oaf. I have no percentages concerning the quantity of these sobersides. I can only say that their letters arrive with disconcerting certainty whenever the editorial writer attempts a Swiftian approach. Be as funny as you can in the accepted American method; leave the satiric touch to more spacious media.

Even more important than the composition of your audience is the timing of your utterance. Space may be more significant than time in the eyes of the philosophers. In journalism, time is of the essence. The best editorial, written either ahead of its time or belatedly, is sound and fury. To state the rule with more precision, the effort should be to write and print an editorial on the day when by reason of public interest and emotion, it will have the maximum number of readers and the maximum amount of appeal. Timing is undoubtedly the first and most essential talent of the gifted politician. Al Smith preferred to bide his time in a campaign until the moment arrived. So did Franklin Roosevelt. It takes courage and self-restraint and great instinctive skill to postpone and delay in this fashion. The gain in effectiveness is beyond estimating.

To give one obvious example of the principle as applied to editorial writing, let me cite the Willkie editorial which appeared on the front page of the Herald Tribune in the closing days of the Philadelphia convention of 1940. The race among the several leading contenders went through several stages. Toward the end it became clear that Mr. Taft had passed Mr. Dewey and that it was to be a Willkie-Taft finish. My newspaper had long been friendly to Willkie and the temptation to shoot the works in his behalf continued for days. At the cost of much nerve-racking restraint, the Herald Tribune held its fire till the last possible moment, the morning of June 27th, before the voting on the 28th. The issue was then sharply drawn between the two leading candidates, the final shifting of delegates was under way and emotional tension was at its peak. I think it was generally felt at the time that the Herald Tribune editorial, thus timed, was a considerable factor in gaining the day for Willkie.

That is a dramatic illustration of a principle that exists with respect to most editorials. There are plenty of media for the slow, pioneering creation of sentiment. The appeal to a handful of radicals, wherefrom may grow a cause and an issue, can be made through a Fabian Society which over the years, by personal contact, through meetings, in pamphlets, in essays, in books, exerts its influence. The point at which a newspaper editorial can begin to help may come late or soon. A long, hard editorial campaign can give vital help to an uphill fight. The point to be made is no plea for waiting until a jump on the band wagon is all that remains. Neither is it an assertion that a newspaper cannot lead an unpopular cause to victory. It is simply that whether a cause is popular or unpopular, the moment to strike needs to be studied and the manner of appeal closely related to the state of public interest. Many a political campaign is started too soon, with the net effect of boring readers instead of converting them. It is a particular audience at a particular moment that the editorial writer is addressing, not the world in general, nor yet posterity; if he is to interest and persuade its members he must be acutely mindful of its moods and tenses.

This is, perhaps, the point at which to note some of the more obvious mechanical devices by which a reader's attention can be gained and held. He must be thought of as anything but a docile student who will read an editorial as a task or from a sense of duty. Your appeal is a single voice among many that beset him in the

## The Essence of Editorializing

"The very essence of editorializing is dramatization. If that fact has been frequently ignored, it is only because there are so many bad editorial writers. A good one picks out one aspect of the news and by high-lighting it makes it memorable. A good dramatist does the same thing with a confused situation."—Gerald Johnson, N. Y. Herald Trib, Aug. 1, 1947. Book review of Paul W. White's "News on the Air."

midst of a busy day. It must compete not only with all the rest of the newspaper—front-page news, comics, sports, columns, critiques, obituaries—but with such rivals as bacon and eggs, plans for the day, advice to junior, and, for the commuter, a game of bridge.

A fresh look for each day's familiar page comes first on the list. That is why editors try to avoid repetition in planning their pages. If a subject is of overwhelming interest by all means lead with an editorial upon it for as many days as it is at the top of every reader's mind. Ordinarily it is a good practical rule after a leader on a foreign topic to shift to one on the city or nation or whatever is of major concern. By the same test, it is wise to alternate a long, solid leader with a short and lively one. Inertia and habit tend to cast a page in a mold. Only constant effort can save it from monotony.

I place great emphasis on a title and a first sentence. You must think of your potential reader as a shy and elusive trout, perpetually occupied with a score of midges and worms, to say nothing of a fellow fish and glints of sunshine. Your task is to cast a fly so vivid and appealing that forgetting all else he will lap at your bait. To put the principle the other way round, unless you can hook your fish, you have no possible chance of landing him, however vital your statistics or eloquent your peroration.

It is fatal to pursue a metaphor too long and I am not much of a fisherman, so I am probably committing some egregious errors of phraseology or technique. But surely the landing of a fish takes as much skill as hooking him. If the title and the first sentence must catch the eye and the mind, the pull of thought must be strong and constant. There can be no sound objection to any style that remains in close touch with its subject. Words can be short or long—provided they are the right words. Sentences can assume any form. The sole question is whether the attention of the reader is held by a steady tug of argument or emotion. There can be moments of shock and surprise; there must

be no break in the continuity of your case. And a final sentence or paragraph, swift, accurate, and decisive, that leaves your reader completely conquered, is second in importance only to your initial cast.

If such are the general theories, how do you apply them to a staff? How should an editor train his writers to live up to these principles? It is my conviction that the same general procedure serves all these ends. If you are picking a writer, by all means take him from your news staff if you can. For then he will know your community and understand what its members are up to. He will have a shrewd knowledge of the great and the small, the crooks and the saints. And he will never make the mistake of writing an essay addressed to no one in particular—his news training will prevent that error. Of course you will try to find a man with a good all-round knowledge—as well as an expert's acquaintance with his specialty, if he is to be a specialist. One of the best writers on economics I ever knew was an ardent baseball fan—to his great advantage in his awareness of how the bleachers think. Perhaps I should stress the ability to write above all else—to write, that is, in the general style that you seek to maintain on your page. But I have seen too many writers develop with experience and under cautious, gentle training to insist that you look for style first.

We come to the point of training, which to me seems the heart of the matter. I have insisted upon the importance of the individual and surely here is the key to our method. The editor who boxes the ears of his staff and rewrites their work incessantly does not deserve and will never produce a distinguished page. He will lose the zest of his aides; why should they think or write as best as they can if their efforts are altered daily and made to conform to the personal technique of another man? A considerable measure of variety in style gives life to a page, in my view. At any rate, you cannot possibly get the best out of a group of really able writers upon any basis of strict conformity to a single sense of style.

Yes, there must be an editor—to set an example, to catch errors of taste and fact. But he should change as sparingly as possible and never to suit his own prejudices of vocabulary or structure. Have all the "don'ts" you are interested in; cast out the split infinitive and the double negative if they enrage you. Nobody minds conforming to such minor regulations. The spirit of a man's writing—the color of his vocabulary, his preference for Anglo-Saxon or Latin derivatives, the intensely personal

idiosyncrasies which give salt to any writing, are another matter. They are to him sacred, and any interference with them is a sin and an insult. Fire a man if he remains too much out of step with your page. But don't hobble him with infinite corrections. It will be perceived that writing, in this theory, is not a body of learning that can be taught, like Euclid or the French irregular verbs, but the habit of a mind and heart functioning together in that little understood realm of expression which has given birth to all the masterpieces of prose and poetry, major and minor, and which we correctly if somewhat vaguely term creative.

What is said here bears an obvious relation to the problem of monotony which has been discussed. A group of varied writers, with independent minds and personal touches of style is the best protection against that sameness which is the bane of the editorial page. Perhaps I carry my prejudice here, too far. I doubt the

value of a stated editorial conference for fear that it will discourage individual thinking. It is better, in my judgment, to save your group debates for particular issues as they arise and present a new problem for your page. My own custom is to ask each writer in turn daily what he has found to write about, and to discuss the news with him individually. Of course, there are each day certain obvious topics that naturally fall to specialists to handle. They assign themselves. But every time that you stimulate a writer to find his own topic, to think about it and defend it if necessary, you are halfway to securing a living article. If after the give and take of a personal discussion you can say, "Well, anyhow, write it as you feel it," you have set free the most precious forces at your command. Such is the natural road to any really creative words.

I have used the words *cautious* and *gentle* training. They are implicit in the whole process I have sought to describe.

If you have a proper respect for a good style—even though it differs from your own—you cannot possibly meddle with it arbitrarily. You realize instinctively that that way lies murder. The compliment I cherish most came from an experienced editorial writer trained under many bosses, who remarked that I rarely changed a word in his copy but that when I did, the change was necessary and the new word the right one. By all means get angry with a man because he fails you at a pinch, or for any other good practical reason—but never because he is himself and writes as God made him. If you do, you will be destroying the only thing that can make your page come alive.

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Geoffrey Parsons' article on The Editorial Page is a chapter in Joseph Herzberg's book "Late City Edition," copyright by Mr. Herzberg, 1947. It is printed here by permission of the publishers, Henry Holt and Company.

## How Free Are Editorial Pages?

by Robert Lasch

How free are the editorial pages of Chicago newspapers? It depends on how you define freedom, and on whose freedom you are talking about.

I suppose that no Chicago newspaper is the outright slave of any external influence. I doubt if any single advertiser, political boss, or economic interest could compel a Chicago newspaper to express an opinion which the newspaper itself did not wish to express.

What might happen if the entire business community boycotted a Chicago newspaper, as happened to Don Matchan in Valley City, N. D., is something else again. But until that should happen, you can certainly say that Chicago editorial opinion is generally free from external restraint.

But who makes editorial opinion? This leads us to the interesting subject of the role of the editorial writer.

Reuben Maury of the New York Daily News, probably the highest paid member of the profession, has aroused wonder and some criticism by writing editorials of one slant for the Daily News and editorials of quite another slant for Collier's. In a recent letter to Nieman Reports, Maury

indignantly defended himself against a critic in these words:

"When a hired editorial writer is writing editorials he is not writing out of either side of his mouth or out of the middle or any other part of it. He is acting as mouthpiece(s) for the publication(s) for which he works. His job is to express the publications' policies with all the force and skill he can summon up, and without regard to his private opinions. There is nothing 'deadly' about all this. No editorial writer owes any apologies for it to anybody. It is merely a phase of the editorial writing job."

Here we have the familiar "lawyer" argument. The newspaperman is like a lawyer, hiring out his talents for use as the employer sees fit. He either does no thinking for himself, or divorces his own from that which he does on company time.

It's a pleasant theory, and a useful one. Anybody who can talk himself into adopting it is welcome. But for the life of me I can't see the difference between the newspaperman as a lawyer and the newspaperman as a whore.

John S. Knight, in a recent signed editorial in the Chicago Daily News, gave editorial writers a slightly more respectable role. He said they have the opportunity to help form a newspaper's opinions. What he evidently meant was that they can argue with the publisher, possibly change his mind on certain questions, perhaps be

entrusted with making up their own on others. But Knight added that since the owner is responsible for what the newspaper says, he must make the final decision on editorial policy.

Editorial opinion on the Chicago papers therefore is free, but the basic freedom is the owner's and not the writer's. Undoubtedly the degree of the writer's freedom varies. On some papers he may be purely the publisher's mouthpiece, on others he may be given his head some of the time if not all of the time. But whether he suppresses his own opinions in order to express the publisher's, or whether his views happily coincide with the publisher's, he does in the end have to write as the publisher would write, or he loses his job.

The writer's freedom, then, depends upon whether he happens to agree with the publisher. The publisher's freedom depends upon nothing. He has it without qualification, by virtue of the simple fact of ownership.

And you can't get away from that under the present system of newspaper ownership. The larger question is whether this system serves the purpose which a free press is supposed to serve.

It does, I think, when the publishers are conscientious journalists and true to their profession—which is the representation of the public in print. But when publishers choose to represent only themselves, or

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Robert Lasch, native of Nebraska where he began newspaper work on the Omaha World-Herald, was a Rhodes Scholar in 1928-31, a Nieman Fellow in 1941-42. He is now chief editorial writer of the Chicago Sun.

the narrow views of an economic class, or the prejudices of a political party, then the public goes unrepresented, and the "free" press becomes just another organ of a special interest.

What I'd like to see, speaking of fantasy, is a form of newspaper ownership under which these matters would not hinge upon the personality of the publisher. I'd like to see a newspaper in which the owners

were limited to two perquisites: (1) taking a fair return on the capital invested; and (2) selecting an editor or board of editors in whom they lodged full control of editorial policy. Then the press would not only be free, but its freedom would be exercised in a professional spirit by professional people.

The Manchester Guardian operates under a trust ownership of this sort, but I

know of no American newspaper where it has been tried. Some papers get the same result, no doubt, through the willingness of the owner to trust his editors. But the rule, and not the exception, is the paper where the owner, just because he is the owner, and regardless of his qualifications, undertakes to act as editor as well. To my mind, that's what is wrong with the American press.

## For Freedom of Information

by Erwin D. Canham

Editor of The Christian Science Monitor

The other day in Paris, 14 editors or information experts from 11 countries met and agreed on a beginning program to help free the flow of information across national boundaries. This is an important fact. For many years, American newspapermen, have sought to make progress in this direction. They have clearly charted the obstacles, such as censorship, political interference, exchange controls, and so on. They have pressed for diplomatic action. But little has actually been done.

Now, at last, the problem is being tackled strictly on the professional level. This is not to ignore the deeply significant work being done by Kent Cooper in breaking down the monopolistic barriers erected largely by official news agencies before World War I. That achievement, recorded in Mr. Cooper's book, "Barriers Down," helped to set free the wire services. But it was only part of the problem, and Mr. Cooper, Hugh Baillie of the United Press, the officers of the International News Service, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the journalistic honor society Sigma Delta Chi, and many others have long been urging that more sweeping progress should be made.

Efforts to break down obstacles through political or diplomatic intervention have not been fruitful. There has been drafted, under the stimulus of Richard J. Finnegan of the Chicago Times, a treaty setting up free information conditions between individual countries. This treaty is in the hands of the State Department and is available as nations are ready to sign.

Next March at Geneva, the United Nations Conference on Freedom of Information will tackle the political barriers, such as censorship, which now hamper the flow of news between nations. But the outlook for this conference is none too rosy, since concepts on the role of the press are so diametrically opposed between the communist and the democratic countries.

At the Paris meeting, held under the aegis of UNESCO, an entirely different approach was tried. It hinged on what can be done by newspapers and other informa-

tion media, themselves, quite apart from governments. It recognized that working newspapermen cannot themselves directly break down the political barriers. But it explored what they can do within existing political limitations.

The Paris meeting had been preceded by another session of information experts from 12 war-devastated nations. They had recommended a very practical barrier to the flow of information. Taking the work of these two committees together, here is the program of most interest to newspaperers:

1. Formation, where they do not exist, of national organizations of editors along the lines of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. (The same recommendation applies in the fields of radio, films, periodicals, and books.) It is felt that mutual organization by newspapermen is an important step toward strengthening the profession. Such organization in the United States has helped to give editors prestige, status, authority, and a constantly enlarging pool of exchanged data. Such organizations can be watchdogs over violations of press freedom. They can exert proper pressure which could never be brought singly.

2. Co-ordination of these national organizations into an International Institute of Press and Information. This body could do internationally what national organizations do at their level. There is at present only one recognized international newspaper group: the International Organization of Journalists, a combination of national trade unions with headquarters at Prague and a Communist executive secretary.

3. Setting up, with the help of this Institute, of international seminars of working newspapermen comparable to the American Press Institute. These would be chiefly in Europe, where the greatest needs now exist.

4. Inauguration of programs for the exchange of newspapermen between various countries. The non-Americans are desperately anxious to visit the United States to

study press techniques. They recognize that Americans may not be so interested in studying press conditions in their countries, so they suggest that exchange professionals from the United State be permitted to do what they will in other countries—work as foreign correspondents, study economic, political, or social conditions, and so on.

5. Establishment, at the International Institute of Press and Information, which would be in Europe where it is most needed, of reference libraries and exhibit material, showing advanced newspaper techniques to less advanced countries.

These and various other proposals, including some urging national governments to make more foreign exchange available for press purposes, are in the direction of self-improvement. They follow in general the lines of self-improvement which are being so actively pursued within the United States.

All this work is to be aided and stimulated, especially at the organizational stage, by UNESCO, which called together the Paris committees. UNESCO exists to carry out these opening words of its charter: "Since wars are made in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." That lofty ideal translated into practical action means the opening up of multitudes of channels of communication between men of common professional experience in various countries.

UNESCO will aid in the formation of the International Institute of Press and Information. In the UNESCO Secretariat in Paris there is a press section seeking to make practical progress along the lines outlined here. Its continuous job is to help open the channels of information.

But the effectiveness of the proposals depends almost entirely on how actively the working press in the democratic countries strives toward these ways to strengthen and broaden its role. At last an important effort to open up channels of world information is in the hands of the press itself.—C. S. Monitor, Oct. 28.

# WHO SHOULD INTERPRET THE NEWS?

## THE NEWSPAPERMAN IV

by William M. Pinkerton

Every American newspaper is concerned first with the coverage and play of news. One way or another, each newspaper tries also to interpret the news for its readers.

Interpretation is the "what it means" of newspaper work. The difference between fact-finding and interpretation is hardly worth belaboring. But it might be helpful to enumerate the ways in which newspapermen now go about interpreting the news:

1. Explaining the news. In so far as a reporter achieves "objectivity" and factuality in his writing of a news story, the special significance of the event in the whole course of public affairs is left implied rather than stated. The editorial writer, working on a different standard, is free to explain to his readers the importance of today's news events. He may, if he chooses, serve as a school-master, expounding how a certain event came to pass, what factors counted in obtaining a change in government policy, in what manner a new policy will affect the social and economic life of the community. On occasion, he can serve well by doing the "popularizing" which good reporting ought to do, but often fails to do for lack of time and space.

2. Filling in the background. Further to give significance to the event, an editorial writer may attempt to place it in its historical setting—to relate it with what has gone before. By analyzing the short-run trend of history, he may try to make clear the continuity of public affairs. He may point up the relationship between separate events—political, economic and social. Sometimes he may take a grander view and offer devastating historical parallels—parallels which are believed to instruct and edify the reader, though too often the average reader is unfamiliar with the historical norm to which the modern event is fitted.

3. Forecasting the future. Having gone so far in the analysis of current events, the editorial writer finds it easy to take the next step, and to foretell, from the tea-leaves of today, the fortunes of tomorrow.

Undeterred by the "scientific" bugaboos of most academic students of public life, he draws in bold strokes the curve of a future which he sees through his own personal picture of the past. There is no presumption that his extrapolation from known facts is governed by any formal discipline other than the vague ethics of public debate. It is not surprising that such editorial predictions usually conform to the political and economic bias of the newspaper's policy.

4. Passing moral judgment. By long tradition, the editorial writer serves as an unofficial keeper of the public conscience. He is expected to take sides, and to argue his position like any other embattled intellectual. Thus, the editorial writer deals in moral judgments or what the philosophers call "value judgments." He tells his readers what is right with the world, and what is wrong. He fights for causes and attacks the forces of evil on the other side. This priestly role extends to all things, from the conduct of foreign governments to the length of women's skirts or the gastric menace of fried meat in Kansas. To a large extent, this is the element of the editorial writer's work best understood and most widely accepted by the general public. In the same way, it is the thing which emphasizes the gap between the work of reporters and desk editors dealing with news and the men writing "powerful pieces" in the newspaper's "ivory tower."

Historically, the public acceptance of the editor's role as a moral force in the community is well established in American tradition. The violent pamphleteers of Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary days had found worthy successors in the "great editors" of the nineteenth century. Men grew up reading "Greeley's paper" or "Dana's paper" or "Marse Henry," and swearing by their favorite editors' views.

The intensely personal fire of such editorial writing cooled somewhat as financial control of newspapers passed from the "great editors" to the hands of businessmen like Hearst, Nelson, Sulzberger, and Munsey. The editorial columns took on an anonymous and institutional character. People talked about "what the Sun said" instead of "what Dana said." The editor became nameless, as well he might, for too often he was not the controlling force on the newspaper. The newspaper was run by the businessman—the publisher—whose

skills were associated with the counting house and not with the eloquent discussion of public affairs.

This is not to say that the men who lately took control of newspapers lacked a feeling for public affairs. On the contrary, as businessmen they exhibited a very real concern for the maintenance of a system of public morality. The question might be raised whether, given the economic and social status which they occupied, and their training outside the field of news work, they would be able to approach public affairs with "objectivity" or "disinterestedness."

In any case, the character of editorial writing changed completely. The editor (or chief editorial writer) and his staff of assistants became the publisher's agents on the editorial page. Some of the men occupying these posts recognized the analogy between their function and that of the advocate of English law. For a retainer, they presented the case of another. Within limits—large or small—they were able to advise on policy. But advice itself was conditioned by the whole social setting in which they worked, and by the undeniable fact of their relation to the publisher as that of employee to employer. If they wrote as they felt, they could thank their good fortune in having an employer with whom they agreed. Some of them cynically suppressed their own opinions, finding compensation enough in clean work and good wages.

I have no idea what percentage of editorial writers today are in substantial agreement with the editorial policies of their own newspapers. The percentage might well be surprisingly high. But even in agreement, the editorial writer speaks, not as a skilled technician only, but as the voice of an institution. His work is conditioned—not alone (as is so often presumed) by the economic interests of the publisher—but by the newspaper's traditions, by its position in its community and by an institutional sense of public responsibility. All these factors vary in character and in degree, from paper to paper.

More or less informally, the editorial conference has developed. Cases are discussed among the editorial writers, and subjects are assigned. Mechanically, this process is not different from that followed by the Supreme Court of the United States. The writing of the opinion is assigned to

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William M. Pinkerton concludes his series on the Newspaperman and his job with this article. He had ten years of newspapering, five of them in Washington with the Associated Press, before becoming director of the Harvard News Office a year ago. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41.

some member of the majority skilled in the dialectic of the particular issue. Unlike the Supreme Court, however, the editorial conference has no provision for dissenting opinions, or even for auxiliary majority opinions based on differing reasons. The voice of the newspaper sounds in its editorial columns as a single, assured declaration on public matters. In terms of the formal organization of the newspaper, therefore, the editorial writer is subject to higher authority not only as to the opinion which he expresses but also as to the manner, the argument, by which he expresses it. More and more, the editorial opinions of newspapers have become expressions of a kind of institutional soul—consistent, carefully-expressed, even in tone, and always guided by the tacit or spoken governance of the publisher.

Moreover, editorial writing—the whole field of interpretive writing, in fact—seems to rank outside the hierarchy of the craft, in the sense that an apprenticeship in handling straight news is not held prerequisite to employment as an editorial writer. Only among a now-aging generation of foreign correspondents (the Anne O'Hare McCormicks and the Negley Farsons) does one find a comparable number of practitioners who have never served a novitiate in the hard work of police reporting, routine coverage and copy reading. Although some of the best of modern editorial writers "came up on the news side," many outstanding newspapers have on their editorial boards persons of essentially academic experience. (Among these are the Chicago Tribune, PM, the Milwaukee Journal, the Washington Post, the Richmond News-Leader.)

In the broader field, one finds commentators such as the late Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Sumner Welles, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Major George Fielding Elliot, Prof. Lewis B. Haney, whose claim to journalistic employment is derived entirely from prestige achieved in other occupations.

One might conclude that the training which ideally produced great newsmen—the training in the quick, careful checking of data, in accurate statement, in understatement of controverted fact, in an empirical, non-doctrinaire approach to public affairs—was the very training apt to hamper the traditional expansiveness of editorial writing.

Recently, several newspapers (including the Boston Herald and the San Francisco Chronicle) have demonstrated the value of using the reporter's social knowledge and training in the service of the editorial columns. This use of reporters still is rare, however.

Too often, the editorial columns bristle

with the external signs of superior intellect—classical allusions, historical parallels and unexplained references to esoteric writings—and some editorial writers have gained prestige by an ability to give an air of superior authority or pontifical rightness to the views which they express. Since the editorial writers are the ghost writers of an institutional soul—expressing views which largely represent the newspaper's character as a public servant—this tendency is not surprising.

Nevertheless, the feeling has grown among both publishers and newspapermen that the editorial page has been losing its power and that a gap has developed in the editorial service of newspapers. This has created a border area between the two facets of news and opinion; and the border area has been invaded by outriders from both opposing camps.

Perhaps the most successful of the new types of interpretation is the Washington column, which paradoxically offers an impression of objective judgment on affairs and a revival of linguist vigor of the old "personal journalism." The columnist's particular kind of objectivity is expressed in the assertion "nobody tells me what to write." The best of the columnists offer—not cold fact—but emotion enlightened by experience. Their claim to being freed of the economic and social restraints which part of the public has come to associate with newspaper work is reinforced by their appearance in newspapers whose opinions they do not support. Beyond this, however, is a public belief—fostered externally (by syndicate advertising) and internally (by coy references in the columns to "confidential information coming to me" and "the inside dope" and "I am now able to disclose for the first time")—that the columnist is privy to secrets not available to ordinary reporters. To a certain extent this is true. To a large extent it is a fiction made to seem real by the columnist's freedom to recite as fact purely personal conjecture, unqualified "trial balloons" and the kind of informed guesses which editorial writers had made in more modest manner.

Combining the reporter's techniques with the editorial writer's knack of authoritative statement and the special power which the personal column itself created, the best of them have been able to gain a public following easily measurable in circulation and reader-interest. The public testimonial to their work is impressive.

This new power of the columnists has brought a demand from some publishers and editors for more "interpretive stuff" from their own staff writers. But the

phrase "interpretive writing" is surrounded with just enough haze to make these demands sometimes difficult to meet. There is a wide-open area for "interpretive writing" in the best tradition of American reporting. This involves the "backgrounding" of spot news developments and the spelling out of their meaning. It can be done without departing from the usual reporting attitude of non-involvement in the rights-and-wrongs of an event, as both editorial writers and reporters on a few outstanding newspapers have demonstrated in recent years. Along the same lines, the news summary developed on many newspapers before the war as an attempt to tie together the week's news threads into a significant pattern. Such wholesome developments in "interpretive writing" on newspapers have been retarded in recent years by the shortage of newsprint.

The other idea about "interpretive writing"—the one most fostered by an attempt to meet the competition of the gossip columns—is the "doping" of coming events and the "slanting" of reports by newsmen in a manner closely approximating the non-objective writing of the traditional editorial writer. A few scattered newsmen have been working in this "no man's land" between news and opinion for years. Most of the prestige-carrying Washington correspondents have always been men who expounded Government events from a special point of view associated with that of their employers. Some of the most famous foreign correspondents have taken equal liberty in the expression of informed and slanted judgment of news events.

There has been a tendency, I believe, for the pressure of competition from the uninhibited columnists to break down the basic working principles of good reporting—the kind of thing that is best summed up as "objectivity." This challenge to the old news ideal has grown, too, I believe, from the pressure of the public to know more than the facts of the moment can tell about events of great import (a pressure stimulated by the uncertainties of New Deal days and later by the horrible fact of war). It is a sorry truth that today you can find men of long news training who will argue that "objective reporting is the bunk."

It may be that the ranks are closing for another of those epochal battles which have shaped the history of American journalism—a slow struggle for a new kind of interpretation of the news.

There is heavy pressure against the hard discipline of objectivity which has shaped the best newspaper practice of our times. This pressure comes not alone from the minority of slipshod, cynical and romantic

members of the craft itself. It comes from some publishers who have long been restive against the traditional standards of the craft. It comes even more—and more dangerously—from the reading public. There is discouragingly little evidence that the mass of newspaper readers values accuracy, objectivity and enlightenment above sensation, breast-beating and entertainment.

At the same time, a hard core of newspapermen, believing in the values of their craft, are giving renewed thought to the problems which must be solved if our pres-

ent ideal of news is to be saved. They are seeking solutions which demand a new kind of interpretive writing, divorced both from the moralizing of the editorial page and from the gossiping of the columnists. Their aim is a newspaper written in the language of the average reader, with background folded into the news account itself, with full use of human interest—not to pander to the reader—but to coax the reader to the news he needs to know.

There's really nothing new about this—as an ideal. But the tools are now at hand for making it a reality. These tools in-

clude such things as readership polls, scientific tests of readability, the pictograph for making statistics readable, the technique of the picture-story developed by such pioneers as Life, Look and Popular Science, and a whole library of good popularizations of science, social science and public affairs for background.

If trained newsmen put these tools to work, we shall see a rebirth of the influence and effectiveness of the daily press. And the concept of interpretation will affect all aspects of it, just as coverage and play do now.

## Press Freedom, Limited?

by Carl W. Larsen

Freedom of the press—one of the first wartime casualties—is suffering serious bruises again. This time, ironically, it is a disillusioned victim of victorious America's traditional post-war neuroses.

Our win-the-war slogans assured civilians and soldiers alike that the Allies were fighting the war for, among other things, freedom of the press. That, of course, included the freedom of responsible newsmen to roam wherever they wanted and to report whatever they saw, heard or read. Two years after the final shots, one wonders whether press freedom has made any great strides.

True, there has been considerable discussion on increasing press freedom by top government and newspaper officials. Unfortunately, there hasn't been much positive action as yet. In fact, much of the action has been negative.

The "realists" argued, correctly, that there was not much possibility of furthering press freedom in totalitarian Soviet Russia. After all, the Russians have contended that, by their concepts, they have a free press. At best, it was hoped the Russians would give a few more American and European reporters greater freedom to travel in and about their increasing sphere of influence. For months, it hasn't been front page news when the Soviets denied this or that journalist permission to travel in Russia. A lack of housing, the Soviets say, has been one of

the reasons they have turned down visa requests by journalists.

These "realists" had hoped the United States would carry the torch in the diplomatic battle for global press freedom. There has been cause, from time to time, for these Minute Men of Journalism to be optimistic about the early attainment of their goals. Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt lucidly defended the American press before the United Nations and delegates from many other nations voiced sympathetic beliefs. U. S. members of UNESCO also have been working laudably toward furthering press freedom. The philosophers say that press freedom is an absolute thing, but it is little more than relative in too many lands.

Almost daily one reads of a new abridgment of this essential freedom, so vitally needed in a confused world of ill-informed and misinformed peoples. A New York Times correspondent recently was expelled from Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia; the Dominion of India has been given censorship powers by its parliament; the Falange government of Gen. Francisco Franco has refused to grant an entry visa to the New York Times' Paul P. Kennedy; Argentina has made life increasingly difficult for newspapers critical of President Peron's administration; the Kuomintang is censoring many dispatches leaving certain areas of China.

While American officials have been preaching the free press doctrine at Lake Success, N. Y., some Washington policy makers have been charting a conflicting and ominous course in press relations. As a result, the champions of a free press have been forced by events at home to divert their energies toward fighting this un-American trend.

Let's look at the record:

(1): Early in September, Assistant Secretary of State William Benton disclosed a proposed draft of a suggested international agreement on freedom of information. It was prepared under the leadership of Richard J. Finnegan, editor and publisher of the Chicago Times, and was applauded in journalistic circles around the world.

Finnegan's proposed agreement covers those aspects of freedom of information connected with the gathering and international transmission of news and information. Correspondents would be guaranteed the right to enter other countries and to travel freely. Their copy would be sent in and out without censorship, except as might be required by national military security. Finnegan pointed out that the principles expressed in the suggested agreement are such as could be used in the United Nations, or in a multilateral convention signed by many countries, or in bilateral agreements between the United States and other governments.

In releasing Finnegan's draft, Benton said:

"The free flow of news and information among nations and peoples was never more necessary than it is today and never faced with a greater array of deliberately erected barriers. Mr. Finnegan and his associates have undertaken to crystallize the deeply held but rarely formulated views of the executives of American private information agencies on this problem. The principles expressed in Mr. Finnegan's draft would help to make it possible for news, radio and film agencies to seek and disseminate accurate information everywhere; in Secretary Marshall's phrase 'to cover the earth with truth.'"

(2) A few weeks later, a French Com-

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Carl W. Larsen, a Nieman Fellow this year from the Chicago Times, was a Stars and Stripes editor in Paris during the war, later served the United Press in Stockholm.

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munist newspaper reporter arrived in New York with an American visa which certainly was contrary to Finnegan's proposal. The State Department had granted the correspondent, Pierre Courtade, permission to enter the United States to cover the United Nations on the grounds that he confine himself to this specific assignment. The visa said Courtade could not go elsewhere in the United States.

It took behind-the-scenes wire pulling by Secretary of State George Marshall before Courtade could go to Washington in October with French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault. The correspondent for L'Humanite, a French Communist daily, finally was given permission to make the trip after Bidault had asked Marshall. Marshall, it was understood, intervened with the Justice Department to amend Courtade's visa for one 250-mile trip.

A section of the U. S. immigration laws denying admission to foreign Communists was the stated reason for the restrictions on Courtade's stay. It was the first announced time that this section of the law had been used against a newspaperman and presumably several high policy makers approved the action.

On L'Affaire Courtade, Chicago TIMES Foreign Editor Irving Pfaum devoted a column to "The Tyrants in Washington." In part, Pfaum wrote:

"Now is the time for all good men to defend freedom in America—from the American government! But this time it's not an American's freedom, it's the right of foreign Communist newspapermen to report freely from the U. S.

"But using the immigration law to bar journalists is just another legal trick, of the kind tyrants always use to control the press, foreign and domestic. The U. S. is against these things—in theory. In practice, Mr. Truman's administration seems to be for them.

(3) Then, a few weeks after Cause Courtade, the champions of a free press got another disillusioning surprise. Washington correspondents exposed the plans of some government officials to implement a security directive which might possibly keep the public from getting legitimate news about ordinary departmental activities. Doubtless, some of the administration's lieutenants believe they can impose the same type of news restrictions as existed during the war. Apparently this reasoning is conditioned by the numerous government officials who worked so conveniently behind wartime Army and Navy censorship screens which were used to conceal incompetence, misfeasance and error. But, whatever the cause, the fathers of the new press gag rules changed their minds after their plans hit the headlines.

On October 28, the Security Advisory

Board of the State Department, Army-Navy-Air Force Coordinating Committee announced it had revised its definitions of secret material to place them more in line with what are considered strict needs of the government. The SAB is preparing the minimum standards for the handling and transmission of classified, or secret, information in all government departments and agencies.

The decision to modify the interpretations was announced two days after the directors of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, meeting in Cleveland, had denounced any government directives which would "place even the ordinary affairs of federal civilian agencies beyond public scrutiny."

The ASNE'S directors passed a resolution which said the Security Advisory Board had gone "far beyond any reasonable exercise of its authority" in drawing up a directive on security for guidance of Veterans Administration. One clause in the directive erected a shield of censorship around anything that might cause administrative embarrassment or difficulty."

## CENSORSHIP BY CONGRESS?

Congressman Clare Hoffman (R., Mich.) opened a one-man campaign of censorship-by-intimidation in the nation's capital this Fall. The object obviously was to put members of Congress, especially himself, beyond the scope of press criticism. Ironically, Hoffman launched his drive about the time President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights issued its thought-provoking report.

Hoffman used his power as chairman of the important House Committee on Executive Expenditures on Oct. 8 to summon John H. Cline, chief editorial writer of the conservative Washington Evening Star, before the committee. B. M. McKelway, editor of the Star, accompanied Cline.

The congressman charged the Star had erred by printing an editorial which disagreed with his views. The editorial said few Americans would be greatly agitated by the reported action of the Civil Service Commission in listing "disloyal" Congressmen. Cline and McKelway, politely but firmly, told Hoffman the editorial meant just what it said and that they had appeared before him merely out of respect to a Congressional committee.

A few weeks later Hoffman took exception to a story in the Washington Post by Pulitzer Prize Winner Alfred Friendly. It told how Hoffman's inter-

ference in a conciliation meeting had delayed settlement of a strike at Michigan City, Ind. Friendly was called to the Capitol, sworn as a witness before the Hoffman Subcommittee on Labor and was grilled in an attempt to refute his story and make him disclose his sources. Friendly, of course, refused to divulge the origin of his information.

Gen. Omar Bradley ordered the VA directive quashed after the uproar it occasioned.

(4) And, finally, came the abruptly terminated hearings on "Communism in Hollywood" by Rep. J. Parnell Thomas' House Committee on Un-American Activities. The movies, with the newspapers and radio, are the leading organs of mass communication in this nation. When one is attacked, all are injured in one way or another. If it had disclosed any indisputable examples of efforts to use the movies to spread Communist doctrines, Rep. Thomas' committee would have done unsuspecting Americans a service. But headlines, and not Communists, apparently were Thomas' piece de resistance.

Certainly, a powerful political and economic threat—Soviet Russia—has emerged to challenge our desires to achieve by democratic means a stable and free world. But does that mean we must employ totalitarian methods at home to fight totalitarianism elsewhere?

Wouldn't democracy and the Bill of Rights be better weapons?

Later, Hoffman told the New York Herald Tribune that he would call to the witness stand all newspapermen who write articles which he considers accuse committees or their members of "unfair or disreputable conduct."

Philip Graham's Washington Post commented editorially:

"Congress, of course, has the right to investigate and to summon witnesses. But nowhere does the Constitution state that a newspaper is accountable for its contents either to Congress or to individual Congressmen. Mr. Hoffman or anyone else is, of course, at liberty at any time to register objections to the treatment he receives in the press. But the way to do this is not by clubbing a reporter with the weapon of an official congressional proceeding."

Friendly and Cline still are working in Washington. But so is Michigan's Hoffman.—C. L.

*OPAQUE*  
*Opaque*

# THE BRITISH PRESS INQUIRY

## Excerpts from the Memoranda of Evidence submitted to the Royal Commission on the Press by the National Union of Journalists.

### 1. THE NATIONAL UNION OF JOURNALISTS

The National Union of Journalists has a membership of 9,500. Though it is difficult to reach a precise figure of the journalistic population, it is fairly safe to say that this membership includes from 80 to 90 per cent of the newspapermen of the country.

The Union is a trade union existing to safeguard the standards of employment and to improve the conditions under which its members work. It is, however, conscious that its interests cannot be limited by those considerations. Its members are engaged in a public service of tremendous importance to every department of our communal life. The public is concerned in the conduct of the newspapers which convey the news of local, national, and international activities and which reflect and present opinion on public affairs.

We are of the opinion that the production of newspapers cannot be governed by the strictly commercial considerations which govern the making and marketing of other commodities in general demand. Our function is in the nature of a public trust and should be so regarded.

It is perhaps desirable that we should say at once that we are not concerned with the interests of any political party or movement. We have in our membership adherents of all parties and representatives of all schools of political and social philosophy. As journalists we are concerned only that the best possible supply of news about national and international affairs shall be available to the people that they may form a sound judgment and shall be well and truly informed.

Our purpose being in fact to protect by every possible means the essential liberty of the press, we must ask: is it in the public interest that this control, which, for the maintenance of a virile democracy, is denied to responsible government, should pass to half a dozen financially powerful men? It may be that one (or more) of these men will take a highly disinterested and social view of his power of control; if so, that is by chance and is our good fortune. We have no guarantees—and his only responsibility is to his shareholders.

The public, or for that matter the general body of journalists who write and work for the newspapers, also are entitled to draw attention to the significant developments of newspaper ownership by which newspapers from one end of the country

to the other are being brought within the orbit of one or other of the newspaper controlling groups, and to ask where are we going, or, since the name of freedom is invoked, what is this freedom?

### CONCLUSIONS

From the submissions we have made so far, we suggest that the following questions arise and merit the consideration of the Commission:—

1. To what extent do the present forms of financial control tend to the creation of a monopoly of newspaper control?
2. To what extent does the divorce of professional interest from newspaper ownership tend to reduce the status and limit the professional discretion of editors?
3. To what extent does this development make it more difficult for independent national and local papers to withstand the competition of syndicate companies, and still more difficult for any organization or group of persons to establish a paper?
4. Is there any reason to believe that news is presented in such a way as to obscure the facts or to serve a particular end?

### CODE

The implications of these questions go far beyond the scope of trade union activity, but within that more limited field, the National Union of Journalists seeks to raise the standard of journalism not only by securing appropriate material rewards to the journalist, but also by encouraging professional self-discipline. Its disciplinary rule (No. 11) makes a breach of the Union's code of conduct an offense. Principles of that code read as follows:

"1. A member should do nothing that would bring discredit on himself, his Union, his newspaper, or his profession. He should study the rules of the Union, and should not, by commission or omission, act against the interests of the Union.

"9. Freedom in the honest collection and publication of news facts, and the rights of fair comment and criticism, are principles which every journalist should defend.

"10. A journalist should fully realize his personal responsibility for everything he sends to his paper or agency. He should keep Union and professional secrets, and respect all necessary confidences regarding sources of information and private documents. He should

not falsify information or documents, or distort or misrepresent facts.

"11. In obtaining news or pictures, reporters and Press photographers should do nothing that will cause pain or humiliation to innocent, bereaved, or otherwise distressed persons. News, pictures, and documents should be acquired by honest methods only.

"12. Every journalist should keep in mind the dangers in the laws of libel, contempt of court, and copyright. In reports of law court proceedings it is necessary to observe and practice the rule of fair play to all parties.

"13. Whether for publication or suppression, the acceptance of a bribe by a journalist is one of the gravest professional offences."

The above code sets out our own conception of the principles on which we must, as individuals, conduct our work in our respective spheres as working journalists.

What we are now seeking, in effect, is a similar conception for the whole of the industry, a conception, which, if it can be applied in some positive proposals, will correct some of the tendencies to which we have called attention in this document.

The question which arises is, "Can any constructive proposals be devised?" We expect that the members of the Commission, having studied what we have said so far, will themselves put that question.

If later on the Commission would desire to consider some particular set of proposals in greater detail with us, we should be ready to attend for that purpose. We should also be ready, if given sufficient time, to ascertain the views of the whole of our members, on any particular proposals if the Commission felt it desirable to do so. But at this stage, we confine ourselves to an outline of such specific suggestions as have seemed to us to be worthy of attention.

### PROPOSALS

Under the legal head are the following suggestions:

A law to prevent the formation of monopolies.

A reformed law of libel. In this connection much interest will attach to the report of Lord Porter's committee on the Law of Defamation. It is suggested here that the courts might be given the power to order papers to publish in a form determined by the courts, a withdrawal and an apology. The right of reply which is established in

a number of European countries goes a long way to solve the vexed question of damages.

A fixed ratio of advertisement to editorial space.

Encouragement by tax benefit to newspapers putting their ownership into an approved type of trust, definitely laying down the rights of the editor.

Restrictions on certain forms of sales promotions.

Compulsory publications of owners, share capital, etc. (The French law requires that the names of the Director and principal proprietors must appear in every issue. In the case of companies a list of the 50 leading shareholders must be published in the paper every three months.)

A "disclosure of interest" above leading articles. As in the House of Commons a Member must disclose in the opening sentences of his speech any financial interest he may have which is affected by the subject of debate, so above a leading article the financial interest of the proprietor in the subject of the article should be indicated.

Prohibition of black lists.

But some abuses of the press cannot be legally remedied without infringing liberty. They consist of abuses of liberties proper in themselves. We refer to all such matters as distortion of news, deliberately misleading headlines, improper interference with the conscience of reporter and correspondent, and improper directives to editor.

These can only be remedied by the right kind of publicity.

#### A PRESS BOARD

Suggestions are:

The creation of a professional body or

of a statutory body of inquiry set up by the Government or the Lord Chancellor at fixed intervals, say of five years.

A British Press Board or Press Council is envisaged, something like the Arts Council, or the Board of Governors of the B.B.C., or the General Medical Council, or the British Board of Film Censors. The Press Board or Council, of course, would not be identical with any of these. Its problems are different in shape. It could be an elected body representative as far as possible of every section of the industry, and it should certainly include two or three representatives of the general public.

The Council might have the following functions:

To draw up a code of professional conduct and to hear complaints about its infringement. (The Council could be given a statutory basis, and penalties imposed upon a paper for breaches of the code.)

To act as a Court of Appeal where breaches of the code caused dispute between proprietors and editors, editors and working journalists, competing journalists.

To receive from any journalist or from the reading public any allegation of breaches of the standards, and to publicize any adverse verdict against an offending publication.

To exercise a supervision over the advertising side of the press, to secure agreement on the ratio of advertising to press matter in all publications: to ban offending advertisements.

To work out acceptable rules to govern the sale and acquisition of all registered newspaper properties. (Such rules could set a limit on individual holdings of shares; provide for the acquisition of properties

offered for sale by selected trustees, where monopoly designs are shown to be intended; provide against the purchase of properties for the purpose of closing them down.)

To devise regulations to safeguard the status and authority of editors in relation to proprietors.

To approve Trust deeds for tax allowance.

To publish an annual report about the state of the press, about cases it has heard and settled, about circulation, etc.

The Press Board or Council might institute various journalistic and newspaper prizes to be awarded annually by itself.

#### A PUBLISHING CORPORATION

A suggestion has also been made that to further the establishment of more independent papers, Parliament might set up a Publishing Corporation which would provide premises and plant. The analogy here is with the Trading Estates set up in the Distressed Areas. Here the Government acquired land, built the factories, put on power and water, and rented them as going concerns to industrialists. Applied to newspapers, this would mean that anyone desiring to start a newspaper would apply to the Corporation which, when satisfied of the financial stability and reasonable prospects of the Promoters, would provide the facilities at a fixed rental.

We recognize that objections would be raised against some of the suggestions above and that some of them would be less practicable than others. But the best way to meet difficulties is to overcome them.

We are strongly of opinion that the best line of approach would be to try to find proposals that would be voluntarily accepted by the whole industry and applied by the common agreement of both sides.

## The Ownership of the Press

This is an answer in Geoffrey Crowder's *Economist* of London to the proposals of the British National Union of Journalists.

Newspaper proprietors and editors share with Cabinet Ministers and civil servants one secret dread: that they should one day be asked seriously and publicly to explain "how policy is made." Policy is in fact generally "made" by methods so normally human, so consciously easy-going, that to reveal them would raise a great shout of relief and laughter from readers and voters. This is said, not to cast doubt on the high seriousness and care which are often devoted to statesmanship and editorship, but to throw light on the fact that it is the exception rather than the rule for men in either calling to pursue a long-planned, far-seeing course, of which the strategy is fixed and only the tactics need from time to time be debated. There is nothing so

Machlavellian about editorial conferences. Whims, fads, eccentricities, bursts of anger or fits of aspiration, personal prejudices and traditional affections may all go to the making of a considered editorial decision; their influence may be conscious or unconscious, blatant or barely visible. The belief in "success" which so subtly inspires the *Daily Express* is no more a policy in the ordinary sense of the word than is the clever opportunism which makes the *Daily Mirror* march "forward with the people"—or with two or three million of them.

These things would be scarcely worth saying had they not been lost sight of in the agitation against alleged sinister influences in the press, which led to the appointment of the Royal Commission now

sitting. The confused ideas and charges then engendered have begun to proliferate. Proprietors and editors have now on their desks a request from the Royal Commission to answer 32 questions. They tempt one, both by their frankness and by their naivety, to the writing of 32 leading articles. Some of the answers—if honestly given—will be unpublishable; for who could expect the much-abused "press lords" to reply to this question:

Should a paper be a mouthpiece of a particular set of opinions or should it present several points of view on a given topic? Which policy do you adopt? And how is an editor of a popular, "live" daily to reply to this one?

How far are inaccuracy and distortion

due to deliberate sensationalism either in the choice or in the presentation of material? Is sensationalism increasing? Can it be checked? What—it may be asked—have these questions to do with the main avowed object of the Royal Commission, which is to “inquire into the control, management and ownership of the newspaper and periodical press and the news agencies, including the financial structure and the monopolistic tendencies in control”?

Clearly they have nothing to do with it, unless it is assumed from the first that the freedom and accuracy of the press are mainly endangered by the manner in which the industry is organised.

It was argued in a previous article that much that is complained of in the daily newspapers arises from bad traditions, inadequate education and false values among journalists, that the remedy lies largely in their hands, and that it is grossly unfair to assume that the only culprits are the proprietors or the shareholders. It is not even easy to establish a good *prima facie* case against them. The National Union of Journalists has tried to do so in the written evidence it has prepared for the Royal Commission. It set out to show that the control of the press is passing “to half a dozen financially powerful men”; that the public's choice of newspapers—especially in the provinces—is being restricted by the activities of the chains; that the status of editors under these proprietors is declining; that directives and “black lists” are circulated to newspapers by the head offices of chains; that the “press lords” do not give a left-wing government a fair deal. The last thesis is not stated in so many words; but it is clearly implied by the tone in which treatment of the fuel crisis and bread rationing by right-wing rallies is denounced.

The political grievance can be quickly disposed of. It is evident that until some six months ago the national dailies were almost exactly divided in their support for or opposition to the present Government; *The Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *News Chronicle*, *Daily Herald*, *Daily Mirror*, *Star* and *Daily Worker* would usually give its case fair, or more than fair, treatment. And for influence on really effective public opinion, this group must be rated higher than the opposition group of the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Graphic*, *Evening Standard* and *Evening News*. It is surely obvious that any attempt to set a pro-Government group of responsibly conducted, independent, fair and sober newspapers against another group of arbitrarily managed, dependent, unfair and sensational newspapers leads straight to confusion and dishonesty.

The other charges that are brought against the present ownership and organisation of the press boil down to a large number of variations on the three salient themes of “commercialism,” “monopoly” and “private ownership.” These charges crisscross each other in a most confusing way; but essentially they are three separate issues, which can be considered separately.

It is quite true that a modern newspaper is a large-scale business. It has to be. In no other industry has the success of trade unionism in forcing up scales of pay and costs of output—whether in the editorial department or in the printing works—been nearly as spectacular as it has been in the newspaper business. It is now a very costly business to produce a newspaper, and if it is not to be done at a loss, it must be done on a large scale. This is the basic reason for “commercialism,” for the close attention that proprietors are compelled to pay to their profit-and-loss accounts, to their advertisement revenues and to their circulations. Moreover, “commercialism” is not all loss. Before the critics condemn it out of hand, they would do well to study the history of *The Times* and learn how that newspaper gained its prestige and pre-eminence by a shrewd and lively commercial sense exercised by educated gentlemen. As in any other trade, the better paper is usually the more successful, and the richer paper can certainly be the better paper. Commercialism, it is true, has its dangers, such as the alleged influencing of editorial policy by advertisers; but the way to counter them is by the creation of standards of professional conduct, not by denouncing the proprietors for being successful businessmen. Given equal purity of intentions, a rich and successful paper will serve the public better than one that goes bankrupt. It is the purity of the intentions, not the degree of commercial acumen, that is the test.

The modern necessity for operating on a large scale to cover costs is also the basic cause of the decline in the number of independent local newspapers.

Successful trade unionism, here as elsewhere, has bred monopoly. To the extent that the newspaper “chain” is a co-operative enterprise (as some of them are), it is an attempt to combine local independence with the economies of large-scale operation, and as such surely praise-worthy. The tightest monopolies of all, the Press Association and Reuters, are rarely attacked—at least on this ground. A chain can obviously afford to hire much more, and much better, journalistic talent than a struggling independent paper. Even the much-derided syndicated leading article

may be a much better leading article than any of the papers in which it appears could produce for itself. Nine times out of ten, the objection to the “synthetic unanimity” of the Kemsley Press is not to the fact that all these papers speak with one voice but to the fact that it is Lord Kemsley's voice with which they speak. Once again, the question comes down to the motives and the responsibility of the controlling individuals.

This third issue, that of the individual private ownership of newspapers, is the crux of the whole matter. There is undoubtedly something very dangerous about putting so much power into one pair of hands unless it is accompanied by a high sense of responsibility. Examples can be quoted of proprietorial edicts, some of them sinister, some of them merely comic, such as the refusal, as alleged by the NUJ, of the Thompson Press of Dundee to have any mention of Mr. Churchill's name in their papers all through the war. But, once again, a distinction must be drawn; it is not the fact that one man is in a position to issue such instructions that is dangerous, but the fact that some men, placed in such a position, issue the wrong orders. It is in the nature of a newspaper that there must be a strong concentration of authority, as in any other enterprise where far-reaching decisions have to be taken at a moment's notice. It is no more possible to run a newspaper than to run a ship by committee government, or a system of checks and balances. Indeed, many of the proposals for reform are designed to protect the authority of a single man, the editor. Yet if there are reasons for believing that all editors can be safely entrusted with absolute authority, while no proprietor can, they at least do not leap to the eye. May not the thirst for personal power be just as corrupting as greed for gain? Moreover, in a modern newspaper, the editor, if he is a good editor, cannot oversee the whole enterprise, and the authoritative individual whose integrity needs protecting is the active head of the whole concern rather than the head of the editorial department.

It would therefore seem to be a mistake to try to prevent the concentration of authority in newspaper offices or to swallow without examination the complaints of journalists as a class against proprietors as a class. But there is one point of substance to which the reformer may cling. Whoever the man in authority in a newspaper office may be, he should not nominate himself, nor should he be appointed by some other self-nominated individual. Editors, after all, have to prove themselves before they are appointed; proprietors

appoint themselves, either by inheriting wealth or by making it. The community surely has a right to insist that there shall be some conscious and deliberate act of selection, either by a disinterested panel or by a body of persons numerous enough to reflect variety of judgment—that is, either by a judge or by a jury—before any one man is put in a position of authority, either as editor or as proprietor, in a newspaper office.

One attempt to secure this object is represented by the new French Press Law, which prescribes a minimum number of shareholders for every newspaper company, and though such a provision is easy to evade, there might be ways of tighten-

ing it up. Another line of approach that has become familiar in this country is the creation of an impartial trust to pass upon appointments or changes in ownership, or both. It would ill become *The Economist* to argue against the trust idea. But it does have two defects as a prescription for universal application. The first is that it can hardly be applied until after a paper is successfully established; to insist on trusts for all papers would be to increase the difficulties, already great, in the way of any new venture. The second is that, if trusts were prescribed by law, the community would at once have to face the dilemma of either accepting as trustees whomever was nominated by the existing proprietors or else of imposing a right of

review by some public body, which would involve what the *NUJ* calls "the shadow of Government control."

This, it may be suggested, is the basic issue that confronts the Royal Commission. How can the choice of the men to exercise authority in the press be a free choice, and yet a wise choice? It is a special facet of the age-old problem of how men can be made good by Act of Parliament. Nothing that has been said in this article should be taken as detracting from the crucial importance of the problem, when fully analyzed and properly defined. But the Royal Commissioners will have to be very clever men and women if they can solve it.

From the *London Economist*, Aug. 2, 1947

## NEWSPAPER TRUSTS IN BRITAIN

### From Evidence to the Royal Commission

#### THE TIMES

Certain public spirited newspaper proprietors have made such provisions as are possible to protect the independence of their papers. These are of value in the present inquiry. A committee has been established for the special purpose of safeguarding future transfers of the controlling shares in *The Times*. These shares are those of *The Times Holding Company Ltd.*, and are all held by Major the Honourable John Aster, M.P., and Mr. John Walter, who together constitute the Chief Proprietors of *The Times*. The Committee is not identified either with the management or with the editorial policy. "The sole object underlying its appointment" it was stated in *The Times* of August 7, 1924, "is to ensure, so far as is humanly possible that the ownership of *The Times* shall never be regarded as a mere matter of commerce to be transferred, without regard to any other circumstances to the highest bidder, or fall, so far as can be foreseen, into unworthy hands. With this object in view, it has been thought desirable that the members of the Committee should act *ex officio*, that they should be precluded by their position from active party politics, and that they should represent various elements—e.g., judicial, academic, scientific, and financial—in the national life. The following, therefore, have been invited, and have consented, to serve:

"The Lord Chief Justice of England,  
"The Warden of All Souls College, Oxford,

"The President of the Royal Society,  
"The President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants,

"The Governor of the Bank of England.

"They cannot, of course, bind their successors; but in the event of any one or

more of the future holders of their offices declining to act, or being incapable of acting, provision has been made for the appointment of members to the Committee in substitution for them."

The following extract from the Articles of Association of *The Times Holding Company Ltd.*, defines the principles laid down for the guidance of the Committee in the event of any projected sale of the Ordinary (that is, the controlling) shares:

"In coming to this decision whether any proposed transferee is a proper person to hold Ordinary shares of the Company, the Committee shall have an absolute discretion and may give or withhold their approval on any ground without their being bound to give any reason therefor, it being the intention and an instruction to the Committee that inasmuch as the Company holds the absolute voting control in *The Times Publishing Co. Ltd.*, which owns *The Times* newspaper, the Committee in coming to their decision, shall have regard to the importance of (a) maintaining the best traditions and political independence of *The Times* newspaper, and national rather than personal interests, and (b) eliminating as far as reasonably possible questions of personal ambition or personal profit."

#### MANCHESTER GUARDIAN

When Mr. C. P. Scott acquired the *Manchester Guardian* in 1907, he established what has now become a tradition and is expressed in a trust deed, a policy of non-profit making. He drew no dividends, only a salary, and devoted what profits there were to strengthening and improving the paper.

In 1917, to ensure as far as he could

continuity in its conduct he divided his ordinary shares which carried control of the company equally between himself, his son-in-law, C. E. Montague, and his two sons, J. R. Scott and E. T. Scott. So we are told by the *Manchester Guardian* itself.

After the retirement of C. E. Montague in 1925 and the deaths of C. P. Scott and E. T. Scott in 1932, J. R. Scott became sole holder. In 1936 he permanently divested himself of all beneficial interest and formed a trust to which all the ordinary shares in *The Manchester Guardian* and *Evening News Ltd.* were assigned. "Dividends are receivable by the trust, which holds them impersonally for the development of the paper. Provisions are made for the future of the trust which, it is hoped, are so devised as to preserve the paper's independence and integrity."

In the Scott Trust Settlement the Settler states: "It has always been his family's policy to use profits for strengthening the newspapers and not for the payment of dividends, he wishes to secure the continuation of such a policy, and he does not desire to reserve for himself any beneficial interest in the shares." The settled shares are held on trust by the trustees for 20 years.

The present trustees are four directors (all engaged in the actual production of the *Manchester Guardian*), two former directors, and Mr. Paul Patterson, the president of the *Baltimore Sun*, who was asked during the critical war years, and consented, to become a trustee. "It seemed desirable to have at least one trustee of more sure survival value. For many years the *Manchester Guardian* had enjoyed most cordial relations with the *Baltimore Sun*—a paper kindred in spirit and independence—and with its publisher Mr. Paul Patterson."

The trust deed was then sent across the Atlantic for safe keeping.

"The trust is not concerned with editorial policy or control which rests fully with the editors, or with the business control which rests with the managing directors. It is simply an attempt to secure the fulfillment of C. P. Scott's aim that his newspapers should be carried on 'as a public service and not for private profit'."

The Settler can dismiss or appoint trustees up to seven in number. After his death the trustees can appoint new trustees. The trustees act by a majority, unless there are less than three when they may only act to appoint additional trustees. Clause 2 says: "The trustees may revoke the trust at any date after 31st March, 1941. Then or on the expiration of the trust period the trustees shall stand possessed of the settled shares and the trust fund upon trust for one or more of the following persons (a) editors or managers of departments, (b) directors, (c) sons and nephews of the Settler (excluding the Settler himself but including the trustees) in such shares as the trustees decide within six months of the end of the trust. The trustees may make it a condition of transfer that the recipient shall covenant to pursue the same policy in conduct of the business and management of the finances as hitherto adopted." Clause 3 says: "The Settler wishes the recipients to carry on the business as heretofore."

#### NEWS CHRONICLE

We think that the first Newspaper Trust to be established was that of the *News-Chronicle* in 1911. This was an indenture made between George Cadbury and Edward Cadbury, George Cadbury the younger, Henry T. Cadbury (Director of the *Daily News Ltd.*), Laurence J. Cadbury, George N. Cadbury, and Bertram F. Crossfield (Manager of the *Daily News Ltd.*) and Egbert Cadbury.

The last named were made trustees and George Cadbury transferred to them the shares in his possession. They had uncontrolled discretion to sell the same or any part thereof and to invest the proceeds of any such sale upon any such securities or in any such manner of investment as they might select.

If a trustee is unable or unwilling to act the remaining trustees are empowered to appoint a new trustee. The present trustees are: Edward Cadbury, George Cadbury, Henry T. Cadbury, Laurence J. Cadbury, George N. Cadbury, Bertram F. Crossfield (Director of the *Daily News Ltd.*), Egbert Cadbury, Sir Walter T. Layton (Director of the *Daily News Ltd.*), and Geoffrey Crowther (Editor of the *Economist*).

## -From the Nieman Scrapbook

### "There Is Enough Shame to Go Around"

This editorial in the *Des Moines Register*, August 9, tells its own story. But the *Register* did not stop there. Next day it led the paper with a full account of the three-month old attack on a young rabbi at the State University. It developed interviews with a dozen college heads in the State on the question of anti-Semitism. The vigor of its handling of the case led

to the severance of one of the attackers from the State University which had taken no action in the preceding three months. The *Register* gave full credit to Norman Cousins, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, for smoking out the ugly incident which had not been "news" until it appeared in a literary magazine 1500 miles away.

#### AND NO ONE AROSE IN SOCIETY'S NAME

The reported facts about the beating of a man in Iowa City by two anti-Jewish hoodlums reveal the essence of the affair.

Two men were insulting Jews in public. One victim of their slurs went aside with them, hoping to quiet them by reasonable talk. They beat him severely. A number of other persons looked on. Nobody intervened to stop the beating. One man gave help to the victim afterward. The police were called but came after the men who did the beating had fled. According to the *Iowa City Press Citizen*, "The next day, the victim reported the assault to police, but he did not lodge charges against the two men. He has since been urged to take the matter up with university authorities, who have indicated that they are willing to take action against the men if he wishes to press the charges. He has declined to do so." So nothing has been done. The incident took place on May 6. It was not even reported publicly until Norman Cousins, who recently visited the University of Iowa, wrote an article about it in the *Saturday Review of Literature*—a national magazine published in New York City.

There are two questions involved here. First, who bears the responsibility for taking action against the violators—the victim or the city, county, and university authorities? Second, why did the incident remain unpublished for nearly three months, to be aired finally by a New York editor?

This second question is one for the newspapers covering Iowa City (including ourselves) to worry about. We need not quarrel with each other. There is enough shame to go around. It is the other question that is crucial.

The breaking of a contract is a wrong against society. Society has no choice but to take action—not because of regard for the slain, or because of pity for the sorrowing, but because of the need to protect all other members of society.

The responsibility for taking action in this particular case of assault was the re-

sponsibility of the city, county, and university authorities, not the responsibility of the victim. The assault was a wrong against society.

Suppose the assault had involved robbery of the man by two other men; would the police and the county attorney have insisted on the victim's pressing charges before taking any action? Suppose the assault had involved drunkenness by two university students; would the university officials have insisted on the victim's pressing charges before taking action?

We think the answers to these questions are clear. So we ask another:

**Why is assault motivated by robbery or drunkenness a wrong against the public, but assault motivated by intolerance a wrong against a private person?**

A democratic society is far more vulnerable to intolerance than it is to robbery and alcohol. The bystanders, the police, and the university officials have all assumed the role of the sympathetic neutral.

But they were not neutrals. Whether they know it or not, they were participants on one side or the other.

The situation is the same in domestic relations. Those who do not effectively resist anarchy will one day become its victims.

Under civilized life, all individuals are allied to protect each other. An act against a member of a minority is an act against each individual in society, just as murder is a threat to the life of every man. For we are all members of one or many "minorities" at one time or another—economic, political, religious, or otherwise.

This is the interpretation of the incident which one would justly expect from the attorney. It is an interpretation which is imperative upon the officials of a great university, whose concern should always be with high morality and straight thinking.

## From the Nieman Scrapbook--

# The Smear Technique

## An Analysis of the Treatment Given Dr. Edward Condon in the Washington Times-Herald

(This article was contributed by a Washington reporter who makes a hobby of collecting press atrocities.)

"The smear story," the Professor of Journalism told his class, "is at once one of the most rewarding and the simplest to write. The damaging results to the victim of the smear are usually lasting, and if only the simplest regard is observed for the rules of libel, the victim has no recourse. "The barest minimum of rules are required for a craftsmanlike smear:

"1. Use a half-truth, if possible, rather than an outright lie. It is more difficult to disprove.

"2. Choose the half-truth in such a way

that it may be stated in a sentence where as its refutation or explanation will require at least a paragraph.

"3. Effect the smear by innuendo rather than direct statement.

"4. Do not be discouraged or forestalled from your effort by the fact that there is no damaging evidence against your victim. Create it yourself. This is accomplished simply, usually through the connective 'and'. Just mention the man you are smearing in the same sentence with whatever invidious organizations, persons, philosophies and activities that come to your mind.

"In view of the simplicity of the smear

technique, it is discouraging to find so many smear stories which fall short of optimum efficiency.

"An example at hand is from the Washington (D. C.) Times-Herald of July 17, 1947. It is by no means the worst smear story in the world; it includes some imaginative and distinguished passages. But technically it leaves much to be desired.

"Let us proceed with its analysis. The story, by James Walter, is in the left-hand column of notes which will now be distributed to the class. In the right-hand column are comments on the facts and implications, for most of which I am indebted to a speech of Representative Chet Hollifield, in the House, on July 22."

### TIMES-HERALD

Dr. Albert U. Condon, who played an important role in the development of the atom bomb before taking his present job as head of the United States Bureau of Standards, where vital information concerning American industrial research is accumulated, will be called before the House Un-American Activities Committee for questioning about Russian A-bomb know-how, this newspaper learned last night.

Dr. Condon will be quizzed because the committee feels his contacts with Russian scientists and pro-Communist sympathizers in this country qualify him to discuss Soviet atom research, according to Representative Thomas, Republican of New Jersey, chairman of the Un-American Activities Committee.

This newspaper learned that after Condon left as head of the research department of the Westinghouse Electric Co. in Pittsburgh to join the Manhattan project, his leftist associations were under continuous scrutiny by military intelligence personnel.

Before coming to Washington he directed atom-smashing experiments with the Westinghouse cyclotron, only instrument of its kind owned by an industrial laboratory in this country.

He worked on the A-bomb project three times and later the Soviet Government violated diplomatic courtesy by secretly inviting him to the two hundred twentieth anniversary of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, but permission for him to leave this country was refused upon request of the Army.

### THE FACTS

Dr. Condon's first name is Edward.

The lead is scarcely newsworthy. In a magazine article several weeks earlier, Chairman J. Parnell Thomas of the Un-American Activities Committee, declared he was going to call Condon to the stand. Thomas' smear technique, incidentally, was more gifted than the reporter's: Thomas said he was going to "subpoena" Condon, thus creating the impression that Condon was a recalcitrant and unwilling witness, when, in fact, he had never even been requested to testify. On reading the magazine article, Condon promptly wrote Thomas that he would be glad to testify and help the Committee in any way, a fact which the Times-Herald reporter probably knew but did not mention.

Rather nice. Fairly deft usage of a technique known as damning with faint praise.

The reporter is not specific about the "contacts" referred to. This was a wise and also necessary omission, since there were no such contacts.

He did not leave Westinghouse to join the Manhattan project; he was assigned to it by the company in connection with its work on the project.

He was not head of Westinghouse research, but rather associate director.

No doubt he was under scrutiny. He, and everyone else of importance on the project was, or should have been. The important thing is that this scrutiny failed to uncover any derogatory information, for Condon continued with the project off and on, until almost its end.

It was not a cyclotron, but a Van de Graaf electrostatic generator.

He was not invited by the Russians, secretly or otherwise. They invited organizations to send delegates; Condon was chosen as delegate of the American Institute of Physics.

At that time a group of scientists in this country was vigorously attempting to wrest control of scientific secrets from the Army. The request to keep Dr. Condon "at home" presumably came from Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, who master-minded the Manhattan or A-bomb project in New Mexico.

Of this contemplated trip, Dr. Condon told the Times-Herald: "Other scientists were permitted to take the trip to Russia, but the military thought it best that I remain here."

While Groves would not admit direct intervention in the Condon case, he did tell the Times-Herald:

"I would have been remiss in my duty if I had consented at that time to let anyone who knew about the possibilities of the Manhattan project go to such a meeting so soon before the bomb was to be used.

The visit, it developed, was to have been made just 30 days before A-bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, to force the end of the Japanese-American war in the summer of 1945.

The Un-American Activities Committee also is interested in hearing Dr. Condon for the following reasons:

1. Condon, while working for Westinghouse, also served on the science committee of the American-Soviet Friendship Society.

2. During this same his wife, Emilie, a native of Czechoslovakia, was corresponding secretary for the Pittsburgh Council, American-Soviet Friendship Society.

3. After moving to Washington, Dr. and Mrs. Condon attended a meeting of scientists at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Terry Duce, 3014 Woodland Drive NW, where Mrs. Condon's expressions of admiration for Russia were so strong that she was taken to task by one Member of the Senate and two Members of the House.

4. Condon was a close friend of Dr. Harlow Shapley, named in 11 Communist-front organizations, among them the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee, 16 of whose members have been convicted of contempt of Congress.

5. Condon was also a close friend and occupied the New York apartment of Edwin S. Smith, named in 21 pro-foreign groups by the House Un-American Activities Committee, which had him under fire in 1940 for reputed Communist sympathies while he served on the National Labor Relations Board.

6. Condon was constantly checked by military authorities for security reasons at the same time, but not as frequently as Dr. Frank Oppenheimer, card-carrying member of the Communist Party, whose brother, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, led the team of physicists who exploded the first atom bomb in the western desert.

No doubt of the fact that Groves refused permission for Condon to leave. He also tried to stop Dr. Irving Langmuir, but the latter proved to the War Department that his connection with the bomb project was extremely remote, and he was allowed to proceed. Groves' decision in regard to Condon was not particularly bright; the last-minute withdrawal of the only nuclear physicist in the Moscow-bound party caused much comment and provided the Russians an unmistakable tipoff some 30 days before the bomb was dropped.

Condon had no part at that time with the efforts of the scientists to "wrest control" from the military. Incidentally, the scientists were not trying to wrest control of the "secrets" from the Army. They had the secrets already. They wanted—and got—civilian control of the atomic project. This made Groves and the Times-Herald unhappy.

The trip had had White House sponsorship. President Truman had ordered the Army to fly the group to Tehran.

As it happened, Condon had gone back to Westinghouse in February 1945, severing all connection with the A-bomb project. He was unaware that the bomb had been successfully tested or was about to be used.

Presumably this refers to the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. In 1944 and 45, when Russia was our ally, the Council's sponsors included Senators Thomas (Utah), Capper and Saltonstall, Bishops Wells and Peabody, Mrs. J. Borden Hariman, Dr. Frank Aydelotte, Karl Compton, Albert Einstein and Dean Christian Gauss. Dr. Condon severed connections from the Council after the end of the war.

Mrs. Condon is a native of Chicago. She worked for the Russian War Relief, an agency headed by Winthrop W. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank.

Mrs. Condon was not taken to task by anybody for expressions of admiration for Russia on this or any other occasion.

Good technique, here, but it should have been developed further. Shapley, in turn, is at Harvard, which John Reed attended. It should also have been pointed out that Condon reads German, in which language Das Kapital was written.

Smith was in the group, above-mentioned, which went to Russia. Condon met him first at that time. Smith put him up in his apartment for two nights because Condon was caught without a hotel room during that crowded time in New York.

Presumably everyone on the project was checked, unless Groves fell down on his job. As mentioned above, the checking apparently never disclosed anything unfavorable about Condon.

But the reporter is to be congratulated on this paragraph; it has the right touch and method.

Oddly, Condon was born March 2, 1902, at Alamogordo, N. Mex., not far from the scene of the atom-bomb experiments. He quit his \$15,000-a-year job with Westinghouse to work for the Government at a little more than \$9,000.

He was eased into his job as head of the Bureau of Standards under aegis of Henry Wallace.

Thomas said last night that because of Condon's record of reputed Communist sympathies his activities had been under surveillance for a long time by committee investigators, who would continue their inquiries.

The American-Soviet Friendship Society with which Condon served is listed by the Un-American Activities Committee as a Red-front group. At one time it solicited \$500 each—a total of \$22,500—from 45 American corporations to pay for publication and distribution in Russia of certain books.

Efforts of the Un-American Activities Committee to get at books and records of the American-Soviet Friendship Society proved as difficult to get as those of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. As a result the Reverend Richard Morford, executive secretary of the A.S.F.S., has been indicted and is awaiting trial for contempt of Congress.

A little more than a year ago the Communist-owned New York Daily Worker carried stories about Condon and others headed "U. S.-Soviet scientists swap information." Condon was quoted as welcoming the cooperation for peaceful and constructive purposes.

Condon was also closely associated with the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, listed by the Un-American Activities Committee as a Communist group in which Wallace also was active.

Nothing odd about it; it was a perfectly normal delivery.

A true burst of genius by the reporter. This is a new technique and worthy of emulation by every smear writer. The innuendo that a man will accept a lower-paying Federal job only for sinister purposes has limitless possibilities for future exploitation.

He was appointed by President Truman and "eased in" by a unanimous Senate vote of confirmation. He was also appointed by the Senate Committee on Atomic Energy as its scientific advisor.

The "record," never established, is now properly taken for granted.

Condon's offer to testify and otherwise aid the committee is ignored. The impression that we are dealing with a furtive and recalcitrant fellow is felicitously reinforced.

Notably good craftsmanship here. God only knows what the reporter is talking about, an excellent thing in smear stories. The reference is probably not to the above mentioned National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, but it may be another, unconnected organization, the American-Soviet Science Society. This group, which the Un-American Activities Committee has never asked for any information or records, exists for the purpose of translating Russian scientific papers into English, not the other way around. It is backed by a \$25,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. It has never solicited funds from American corporations. Its trustees include Winthrop W. Aldrich, K. T. Compton, and John Foster Dulles; its acting chairman is a member of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research; its members include, besides Condon, Drs. E. C. Lawrence, R. E. Millikan, W. D. Coolidge, Irving Langmuir, etc.

But the word "Soviet" is in its title, and no smear writer worthy of the name would neglect that opportunity.

Condon does not read the Daily Worker or give quotations to it, but references to the Daily Worker in a story of this sort is traditional; its omission would have been inexcusable.

The reporter knew in detail Condon's "close" association, for Condon had told him the circumstances. He had never heard of the group until he was requested to let his name be used as a sponsor at one of its local dinners. He consented after being assured that among the other sponsors were Senator Morse, Mrs. Gifford Pinchot, Mrs. J. Borden Harriman and Mrs. Wiley Rutledge, wife of the Supreme Court Justice.

This was Condon's one and only association with the group.

-From the Nieman Scrapbook

## PM and the Advertiser

Don Hollenbeck on "CBS Views the Press," Oct. 25, 1947

PM began its career as a newspaper without paid advertising; it treated advertising as news, and established a service to consumers, pointing out what it considered good buys in all fields. PM's early guiding spirit was Ralph Ingersoll and he was convinced that a newspaper could make a go of it without advertising revenue, if the newspaper were good enough; one of his early memoranda on the subject said he felt it would be easier to persuade people that a newspaper was being produced in their interest, instead of in the interests of merchants trying to sell them something, and it would keep the minds of PM's management on the job of pleasing the reader.

That was a bright dream, but it faded; PM didn't take on as had been hoped, and after several years of a losing fight, it was decided to open PM's columns to advertising. There was a lot of soul-searching and heart-burning over that decision; it resulted in the resignation of Mr. Ingersoll as editor.

But in accepting paid advertising, PM did not do away with its consumer service; it continued to devote a page to pointing out what its readers should and should not buy. Advertisers didn't rush into PM with a lot of money to buy space. Accounts came slowly, and very few of the firms which had been boosted in the consumer news columns responded by taking advertisement space to any great extent. But one nice account PM did get recently: LeWinter's Incorporated, a radio, appliance, television and furniture chain, with five stores in Brooklyn and Queens, began to advertise in the paper. At first it bought four column ads, then increased the space to full pages. LeWinter's liked the job PM was doing for the firm, and late in September, its general manager, Martin M. Gotty wrote a testimonial letter for PM's advertising director. It said in part, LeWinter's planned to increase its expenditure budget for PM advertising by three hundred per cent for the balance of the year. It went on to say the results the firm obtained through PM greatly exceeded the most optimistic expectations, and LeWinter's looked forward to being a large consistent advertiser in PM.

On October 7th, PM reproduced that letter in a full page advertisement intended to convince others with something to sell that they too should buy space in the paper to help sell it. But the very next day, there appeared on PM's shopping news page a story on the general subject of buying a radio-phonograph combination. In that story, there appeared the following sentence: "PM's advice: Wait as long as possible before buying. Prices are due for a drop, most likely in the form of new, less expensive models." There you had a sharp conflict; in its advertisements, LeWinter's had been urging PM readers to buy radio-phonograph combinations, but in the news columns those same readers were being told to hold off buying radios, to wait for a possible drop in prices. So what happened? So LeWinter's abruptly stopped advertising in PM, and here we must explain an advertising practice involving third persons. The third person is the distributor of a product, and in some cases, he pays a percentage of the advertising bill, although the advertisement is taken in the name of the retail outlet. In this case, the distributor is Bruno-New York, Incorporated. Mr. Gotty of LeWinter's said he had been advised by the distributor to cancel all future advertising in PM unless the shopping news columns were withdrawn. Sometimes the distributor picks up as much as half of the advertising bill, so his feelings about the matter are of considerable importance to the retail outlet. In this case, there are other retail firms involved: Bruno-New York's general sales manager Gerald Kaye said he had notified about a half a dozen other dealers that he was cancelling authorization for advertising in PM.

It is, of course, an advertiser's privilege to buy space wherever he wants to, and wherever his copy will be accepted. To quote Mr. Kaye again: "You can't go along with newspapers that set themselves up as authorities on what is good and what is bad merchandise. We don't tell them not to do it, but if the newspaper wants to set itself up as an authority on what people should or should not buy, then it shouldn't accept advertising."

But in PM's week-end edition, Oct. 25, there was a full-page advertisement of LeWinter's, this time pushing the product of another manufacturer. Mr. Gotty, LeWinter's general manager, was ready with an explanation. He said he'd found another distributor willing to pick up half the ad-

vertising bill, and that they were going to try a few ads to test their pulling power against the consumer news—that too was in the week-end edition. Mr. Kaye, representative of the distributor which had originally objected to the shopping news, said his views hadn't altered: PM would get no advertising supported by him so long as the shopping news continued. This, plus the fact that the other ads are being put into the paper with the avowed intention of competing with the editorial columns, makes the issue clear: will PM's shopping news column be withdrawn? Rae Weimer, managing editor, says PM will continue its present policy on consumer news, and that there are no plans at present to take the page out of the paper.

And there is by no means unanimity of opinion at PM about this particular matter: one of the hardest working men at the plant is the business manager, Lowell Leake, whose job as defined by Editor John Lewis is complete responsibility and authority for selling advertising, and for selling the paper the editorial department places in his hands. In this case, Mr. Leake has put himself on record as saying that he doesn't blame the advertiser at all for withdrawing his account; in Mr. Leake's opinion, the story which caused the withdrawal was not factual.

If PM's shopping news page continues as is, with the same sort of outspoken comment and advice about consumer problems, there will undoubtedly be other occasions on which the readers of PM are told one thing in the advertising columns, and another thing in the consumers' news columns, to the unhappiness of the advertiser, and to the possible further depletion of PM's cash-box.

It is not easy to imagine the rest of the metropolitan press in a similar situation for a number of reasons: they usually have no departments in their news columns comparable to PM's shopping news; they are newspapers operated in the traditional style of devoting outright inducements to purchase merchandise to their advertising space, and indeed, in some cases, they make quite a thing of this: we put the yardstick to last Thursday's edition of the Daily News—a husky one of 76 pages—and found there were 960 inches of news, excluding features such as columns, and 4000 inches of advertising. About four to one for the advertiser.

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Don Hollenbeck, a newspaperman before he became one of radio's star performers, reviews the Metropolitan press every Saturday evening over CBS.

## Reviews--

## Leave the Press to Its Readers

**GOVERNMENT AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS.** By Zechariah Chafee, Jr. Univ. of Chicago Press. 2 Vol. \$7.50.

Zechariah Chafee's name has been for a generation practically a synonym for free speech. He tackled the problem of a free press with the Hutchins commission and for three years served as its vice chairman. An urbane and sophisticated lawyer, his skepticism about getting results by "having a law" or doing anything by government that can be done any other way permeates his book. On practically every problem of the press he comes out where he went in, convinced it is safer to leave things alone than to try a cure that might prove worse than the complaint. He makes a mild suggestion about improving the libel laws, not for the protection of the press but of its victims. Otherwise he'd leave the problems of the press to time and the readers with a prayer for more publishers who care enough about standards to trust them to their professional staffs.

But if the results seem largely negative, that is because Chafee had so many straw men to knock down. It is actually a buoyant book, full of confidence in the corrective force of public opinion. Unquestionably some of his press commission colleagues thought he had too much faith in this rather intangible force and too little in the capacity of a democratic society to make constructive use of its government. But the Chafee view won out, as a reference to the Hutchins commission report shows, though it is shown in much more detail and more clearly in this sequel to the report. It is largely made up of the memoranda that Chafee drew up for the guidance of the commission as they took up, point by point, the situation of the press in a free society. He wrote these pieces with amiable informality, like a man talking to the fellow members of a congenial club, and he has happily not edited out the wit and humorous digs that enlivened his briefs. The earlier published report contained the essence of these two interesting volumes: but in squeezing out the essence, Robert Hutchins discarded all of the ripe flavor of good talk that makes Chafee's book as pleasantly filling as Hutchins' report was formidably abstract. If Chafee's fuller discussion had come first the commission would have been better understood and the publishers might better have

realized there was no occasion "for imitating Vishinsky" about it, as Charles Puckette observed of them in a review in the New York Times.

Quite apart from its place in the series of Hutchins Commission reports, Chafee's book has a quality of its own that will outlast the current controversy over the report itself. It is as full of as good talk about the press as any book one is apt to get hold of.

And good talk is a scarce enough article about anything, so that very many reading desks are likely to give Chafee house

room for a good while. Journalism students ought to be encouraged to discover it, for its forbidding title will never tempt them.

Chafee gives full treatment to censorship, sedition laws, obscenity cases, proposals for group libel laws and the press in contempt of court — to all of which we may be able to give attention in our next issue. Here below are given some salient passages on the central question of the power and responsibility of the press in relation to its freedom.

— LOUIS M. LYONS

### Power and Responsibility

#### Some Passages of Chafee's On Keeping the Press Free

"Besides certain tendencies toward legal restrictions, there are more deep-seated causes for grave anxiety about the future of the freedom of the press. Modern democratic society is in the greatest crisis of its history because new conditions have been rapidly created by a technical civilization.

"A technical society makes for the centralization of economic power and the drift toward monopoly aggravates the problem of obtaining justice. The same technical tendencies make for large-scale enterprises in the field of communications and present us with the problem as to how various sections of the community shall have adequate channels to make their appeal to the conscience and mind of the community. As the instrumentalities increase in quantity and variety, they tend to pass under the control of corporate wealth and like-minded individuals, so that they cease to express fully the diversified interests of the public. Big concentrations of economic power in other industries are also a danger to free speech because they do or can exert direct and indirect pressure upon newspapers and radio stations in various and subtle ways. . . .

"The principle of freedom of the press was laid down when the press was a means of individual expression, comment, and criticism. Now it is an industry for profit, using techniques of mass suggestion and possessing a great power. A government is always quicker to exercise control when organizations are involved rather than individuals. Is the old principle of the

Areopagitica applicable to this new situation?

"Concentration of newspapers and broadcasting stations in the hands of the wealthy group causes inadequate access to less fortunate groups, a peril to justice. The press then fails to satisfy the need for social health through adequate communications in order to relieve the stresses and strains and class antagonisms caused by increasing industrialization. A widespread belief in the unfairness of the media arises.

"When a considerable number of people voice a grievance, they bring pressure on the government to do something on their behalf.

#### THE SELF-RIGHTING PROCESS IN DANGER

"It was plain to the Commission that the self-righting process by which in the long run truth is to emerge from the clash of opinions, good and bad, is not working well at the present time. It was unquestionably demonstrated to us that the output of the press includes an appallingly large quantity of irresponsible utterances and even deliberate lying. Consequently some members feared that it is a matter of manipulation or luck what conclusions will emerge from such a tangle. The Commission was disturbed by three obstacles to the satisfactory operation of the self-righting process today:

"First and foremost is the drift toward concentration of power. This is exempli-

*"The First Amendment was not passed to protect vehicles of advertising and entertainment."*—Zechariah Chafee, Jr.

fied by the large number of cities with only one newspaper, the common ownership of newspapers and radio stations, and the growth of newspaper chains. Now, diversity in the effective communication of facts and opinions is a fundamental presupposition of the self-righting process.

"A second obstacle lies in the present prevalence of sales talk in American life, so that it naturally flows into the press. There is a significant distinction between discussion, which tries to uncover the facts, and sales talk, which is interested in the facts only so far as they further the sale. If the spirit of sales talk prevails over the spirit of discussion, talk can no longer be met with talk. Freedom of speech loses its self-regulating power.

"Thirdly, the public reads unfavorable news and opinions about people and policies with more appetite than the favorable. Hence an unfavorable item may be insufficiently counteracted because the opposing item (a) will not be printed or (b) will not be read . . . This inclination of the public to hear about quarrels and excitement and the unusual makes it hard for them to get a well-rounded understanding of important situations at home and abroad. Often it is the long-run facts which really matter. In the pithy words of one of our number: "The fact that no more dogs are biting men should be bigger news than 'Man bites dog.'"

"One existing remedy for this partial presentation of life is that longer articles do get favorable and constructive information to interested readers. The monthly magazines and books are a better vehicle for this than the daily press. Even so, is there adequate counteraction to untrue or lopsided derogatory news?"

#### THE SHERMAN ACT IS NOT THE ANSWER

"The truth is that we do not know what to do with monopolies. When we are so uncertain about the proper policies for business in general it is much too soon to be sure that the Sherman Act is just what the press needs.

"It is fair to conclude that a wider distribution of the ownership of great newspapers, etc., will not solve the problem of bigness. Much will depend, of course, on having the right sort of managers; but even a single owner might select a good manager or be one himself. It is not clear that diffusion of ownership among the employees of the newspaper would necessarily remove the evils of bigness, although it might bring a stronger professional in-

fluence to bear upon the policies of the paper. Still, power is always likely to get into the hands of a few people, whatever the system. The mode of selection is not so important as the quality of the men who make the main decisions . . . The real problem is how to give more power to the people who are professionally motivated and less to the people who are economically or profit motivated.

#### ADVANTAGES OF BIGNESS

"Bigness in the press is not quite like bigness in oil or beef. If five packers are selling most of the beef, this cuts out the independents from selling the same thing except to a few customers. It would be better, perhaps, for buyers to get what they want in a more evenly distributed way. By contrast, it is good for hundreds of thousands of people to purchase the *New York Times*."

"I am glad to recognize the way news is gathered with great fulness and written up with conspicuous ability and the excellence of many radio commentators and newsreels. Vigorous application of the Sherman Act might very well lower the level of performance in some of these cases. For example, a regional chain employs an able foreign correspondent, but, if it were broken up, none of the constituent members might feel able to afford him. A great motion picture company can make experiments without risking its solvency, but with a host of little producers everybody might stick to the old ruts for fear of going into the ditch."

#### THE PEOPLE THE OWNER WANTS TO PLEASE

"I think the significant thing is that there are so many managing editors and other top editors and Washington correspondents, and so forth, hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of them, all of whom happen to feel the same way. They don't have to be told what to say, because they would be more likely to agree with the boss than disagree with him. These people, as well as the owners, have a certain motive, and that is to please certain people.

"The persons whom the owners and managers want to please may be the people who run the country or the friends they meet in their clubs. In either case, if you want to produce a greater open-mindedness in the particular newspaper, you have to raise the standards of the whole class which the owner or manager wants to

please or else make him want to please the whole community, and either is too big a job for the Sherman Act.

"My conclusion about the public service theory is that for the most part it represents a moral and professional obligation of the press, not a legal obligation.

#### PROFESSIONAL SPIRIT THE NEED

"The responsibility which the community seeks in those who run a newspaper is like the responsibility of the men in charge of a ship. The law can punish an officer for gross derelictions of duty, as in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, but it cannot tell him what commands to issue throughout the next voyage.

"Only a comparable professional spirit among those in command of a newspaper or a broadcasting station will make it genuinely responsible to the public. There is reason to believe that such an attitude is increasingly prevalent, not only in some well-known newspapers in large cities but also in many journals in small cities and rural regions, where there is no competitor.

"Even the honest newspapermen make too much of their political impartiality and thus indicate a lack of awareness that economic bias is much more insidious and hard to avoid because of the large investment needed for a newspaper."

"The true responsibility of the press is to the individuals who read and listen and inwardly digest."

#### NOT FOR ADS, NOT FOR COMICS

"Another point often forgotten is that the First Amendment was not adopted to protect vehicles of advertising and entertainment. They are legitimate and beneficial activities, but so are stock-broking and circuses, which receive no constitutional immunity. The more newspapers and radio allow advertising and miscellany to swamp news and ideas, the greater the risk of losing some of their privileged position."

"Constitutions and courts will not permanently protect the press if it neglects its primary task of furnishing news and opinions in the form which society needs. Institutions become vulnerable when they cease to do their main jobs well. Sooner or later the public welcomes somebody else who will furnish what it lacks—frequently the state. A vacuum has been created, and government officials rush in.

"Therefore, the strongest assurance which the press can have against governmental encroachment is the vitality of its service to the community."

## Our Policy in Asia

**DANGER FROM THE EAST.** By Richard E. Lauterbach. 422 pages. New York: Harper & Brothers. \$3.75.

Dick Lauterbach, recently of "Life," now the new editor of "47" going on "48," returned last year from a ten-months' tour of Japan, Korea and China and wrote his book while on a Nieman Fellowship. It thus combines the best features of his maturing anecdotal, interpretative style with the scholarship he was able to employ while carrying on his studies of the Orient under Professor John K. Fairbank and others of the Harvard regional program.

Although books on Germany have been and still are coming out almost monthly, Lauterbach's is the first good account written about the Japanese occupation. It covers half the volume, with a short section on Korea followed by a somewhat longer analysis of the Marshall mission in China during late 1945 and 1946—how and why it failed to bring peace between the Koumintang and the Communists.

Lauterbach, like so many other liberal correspondents who have lived under the reign of MacArthur in Japan, feels that our promises there have been a lot better than our deeds. He thinks we got off to a good theoretical start, and that not everything we have done in two years was bad, but he raises these serious criticisms, among others:

In his failure to take the advice of civilian experts, and to permit the Allied Council to be the real advisory body it was supposed to be, MacArthur has in effect been the victim of the old "Bataan Crowd" around him, the military mind. This was one of the reasons, probably, for his allowing the original conservative Jap cabinets of Hatoyama and Yoshida to stay in office as long as they did, permitting the economic situation to get so out of hand that a bad inflation set in. Then, embarrassed, MacArthur found himself forced to crack down on the revitalized labor movement when it wanted to call a general strike.

Facing a Japanese people with scant sense of war guilt, and one ready and willing to worship him as much as the Emperor (or both), SCAP has been led astray by phony efforts to unmask the old regime and the old ways of life and business. Lauterbach calls this the "judo technique," pretending to yield but not really giving, and waiting instead for a chance to throw the enemy. In the pseudo-break-up of the old Zaibatsu industrial empires, in the screening of teachers and re-writing of textbooks, in the break-up of old national-

istic organizations, this technique has fooled MacArthur and his friends, Lauterbach believes. It is one thing to use the Jap government for reform; it is another just to stand by and let it use you.

The Korean chapters are helpful in affording the reader a background of the unhappy stalemate there, while the China section is filled with colorful details of life at the Chiang Kai-sheks, of face-saving maneuvers within a stymied Manchurian truce-team, and of how an inflation in Shanghai can reach the point where, if asked how you feel, you have to say "like a million dollars—U. S."

Well-written as it is, China by Lauterbach is more a mosaic than a thorough analysis of the political give-and-take there.

It may be criticized, in this reviewer's opinion, for its failure to examine the motives of the Russians and the Chinese Communists as carefully as it assesses our own. While it is certainly true that the Chinese, and the Asiatics as a whole, have every right to determine their own future, and should, with the help of UN, nevertheless factors of Soviet-American conflict in Asia have grown more important and bitter since the war's end. They cannot be either neglected or put out of context to each other, and to the world picture of disintegrating relations.

However, one does not have to agree with everything Lauterbach says to recommend his book as one of the best on the Far East. —Robert Shaplen

## Bleck's Best Customers Talk Shop

**LATE CITY EDITION.** By Joseph G. Herzberg. Henry Holt and Company, N. Y. \$3.00.

City Editor Joseph G. Herzberg nursed the idea, Henry Holt and Company put up the cash and the New York Herald Tribune's able editorial staff went to work on a "new kind of textbook for journalism students."

What came out was not a dull classroom text, but a 282-page, easy to read book that gives the newspaper reader a good understanding of contemporary big-town newspapering.

In 29 brief and entertaining chapters, Herzberg & Co. tell about their various jobs, what it means to be a newspaperman and what it takes to put out a daily newspaper. The book, "Late City Edition," is titled after the Herald Tribune's most diligent effort—its daily, final, post-midnight offering to several hundred thousand New Yorkers.

Anecdotes, case studies, historical analyses and experiences are related by the newspapermen-authors to clarify the means (gathering, reporting and writing the day's news) to the end (publishing and circulating the Herald Tribune). Almost every section of the H-T's vast editorial department is analyzed for the reader's edification. There are chapters even by those journalistic types normally obscured in the anonymity of a job well done—the rewrite man, the obituary editor, the copy desk man and that strange man in the glass cage who sometimes appears more budget than news conscious—the managing editor.

Unfortunately conspicuous by their absence are two essentials in any big newspaper shop—the Sunday editor and the copy boy. Herzberg, in his foreword, says

no chapter has been devoted to the Sunday editor because a "Sunday paper is little more than a swollen daily." That may be true, but the public certainly would like to know something about the "mad genius" responsible for putting together the 100-odd features that contribute greatly to making their Sabbath reading an all-day job. And, in defense of the copy boy, isn't he, or she, the abused provider of nourishment (and drink) for the editorial stable, the jack-of-all-trades always so handy to call for the slightest reasons and the stuff from which many good reporters have grown?

Of course, since they generally are a vocal group, most newspapermen often have expressed their philosophies about "The Business," as it is reverently called in bars and press rooms. But few have put these gems on paper. The Herald Tribune staff took advantage of their opportunity, and penned some reflections that give both flavor and character to their chapters.

Ringleader Herzberg leads off, in the opening chapter on "The City Room," with the observation that "a modern newspaper is Thucydides sweating to make a deadline."

"Into the city room," Herzberg writes, "come the bright and the shoddy, the gay and the sad, the glories of the strong and despairs of the weak. From the Broadway night clubs and from strange places thousands of miles away, the stories come in side by side. The world is measured off once in 24 hours and one who drops a coin on a news-stand and picks up a paper buys a piece of himself each day."

Especially appealing is the on-the-head definition of a newspaper reporter by John G. Rogers, himself a crack reporter.

"The newspaper reporter is the most pro-

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liffe and widely read writer who ever lived. From Walla Walla to New York and around the world he flails his typewriter incessantly as the first step in the mass production of news. He is male and female, young and old, and he works 24 hours a day, including Sunday, cranking out his short-lived wares—hot stuff today, shelf paper tomorrow. At best, his product is very good, dispensing information tersely, clearly, and accurately. At worst, it is confusion, cliché, misspelling and falsehood. To a large extent, people will read him whether he writes well or poorly. This consumer indifference is always depressing to reporters who work hard at the typewriter to give the story quality, but it remains a fact that the readers of newspapers are after information and not inspiration or beauty."

For those interested in good news writing, Rogers offers some intelligent advice:

"There is a very special kind of beauty in good newspaper writing. Its ingredients are crispness, clarity, punch, and economy. In essence, good newspaper writing is an expert job of simplification. The reporter knows something—a piece of news. His job is to tell it to the reader and, of course, it helps a lot if, in the first place, the reporter actually understands what it is that he knows. . . . Usually the bigger and more important the story the easier it is to simplify. Or, rather, the less it requires simplification. When the President dies, there is no need to struggle at the typewriter. There is no way in the world to start except to say that the President died, and from there on the importance of the event makes every available detail a part of the story."

Also on the subject of writing, Rewrite Man Robert B. Peck meditates:

"Rewrite on a morning newspaper is essentially a simple job. It is just a matter of fitting words to facts. The snugger the fit, the better the story. The rewrite man doesn't even have to get the facts. Somebody else digs them up, and sends them in. All the rewrite man has to do is to marshal them, dress them up and let them march. It is a pleasant job for anybody who likes to write.

"His job was born of the speed with which a metropolitan newspaper is put together. Speed remains one of the most important elements in it. It is luxury seldom enjoyed by a rewrite man to get a good story to write early in an evening which is free enough of the pressure of other news to permit him to give his story the attention he thinks it merits. Generally, he must content himself with the thought that the story he turns out is, at best, a make-

shift—a thought which is a wonderful consolation to a man who probably could have done no better if he had spent thrice the time upon his opus."

Sports writers always have been a bewildering lot to their newspaper colleagues. One of them, the Herald Tribune's Red Smith, tries to shed some light on the mysterious tribe of gents who follow the Dodgers, Man o' War and Les Canadiens. His chapter might be titled: "The Lament of a City Desk Man Who Became a Sports Writer."

Smith wisely observes, "It is unhappily true that a great many sports departments bear about the same intimate relationship to the rest of the newspaper as the iron mine bears to the open hearth." And, he adds, "The trouble with most bad sports writers is that they have only the foggiest notion of what newspaper work is all about."

The fledgling sports writer, Smith complains, comes to the sports editor with two pieces of equipment—"a desire to get into the ball game free and a pious resolution to expunge all trace of English from the stuff he writes."

"Faithful reading of sports pages—psychiatrists cannot explain why he chooses the model he does—has taught him (the fledgling) that a base hit never may be called a hit but a bingle, a safety or a clout; that an inning must always be a stanza, canto or chapter; a basketball player is a cager; a soccer player is a booter and a football player, a gridder; that the only printable designations for a baseball team in Brooklyn are Dem Bums and Durochermen."

Sports writers, Smith pleads, should be newspapermen first and sports writers next. Undoubtedly, he will find many sympathetic newsmen in city rooms across the nation.

The girl reporter is strictly an "only yesterday" addition to newspaper staffs. But she has grown up, and a chapter is devoted to the "sob sister." Take India McIntosh's words for it:

"The only thing which the girl reporter must yet achieve is the right to carry a man's full load of responsibility. On the whole, the stories which she covers are one-day stands; they are tidy little episodes which can be packaged in three quarters of a column and then forgotten. With hungry eyes, she watches the men reporters draw most of the running stories—the big stories, with many facets, which splash page one for days or even weeks. The city desk, with all its democratic leanings, is wary of the woman reporter's emotional equipment and seldom dares to put these traditionally unstable factors to a test which might smear up the front page."

One of the top correspondents in Wash-

ington is Bert Andrews, head of the Herald Tribune's bureau there. That the capital city has its pitfalls for newspapermen, as well as for politicians, is the theme of Andrews' eight-page chapter. In Andrews' own words:

"Washington is a reporter's paradise, but it puts a competitive strain on a reporter perhaps greater than that imposed in any other city. Its temptations have ruined many great reporters and many, many more who could have been great. Yet it dangles rewards that are solid enough to make the steady men, the reliable men, the brilliant men take strain and temptation in stride."

Andrews proceeds to list what he believes are the three main pitfalls in contemporary Washington: (1) liquor, (2) laziness and (3) swell-headedness. "More social-drinking, with more intelligent and charming people of both sexes, can be done in Washington than in any other city in the world," he says.

An interesting chapter by Stephen White is titled: "The Science Reporter," but it could just as well have been called: "The Problems of a Special Assignments Man."

Because of their many facets and ramifications, it would be impossible for any one man to know everything about science and allied fields. Yet a science reporter is expected to keep abreast of what's new in science. The same problem, White points out, is faced by aviation and medicine reporters in their fields.

Well, how does White cover his beat? Simply, by knowing scientists. "In every field of science," he writes, "it is my business to know the great men who teach and inspire others. I must also know the men who are doing great work today and the men who will do great work in the future. These men cover science for me."

But a science reporter, like other newsmen, has responsibilities. White lists them as (1) a rudimentary knowledge of the terminology and problems in the field which the reporter is covering and (2) the absolute confidence of the men with whom the reporter deals.

"The honest scientist worries whenever he speaks to a reporter."

There is a formula for gaining the scientist's confidence and respect, White says, and it is:

"He will not trust me, a reporter, until he is sure that I will neither misunderstand nor misquote him. And on my part, if I am to continue in business, I must be careful never to misquote him or to misunderstand him. I must also trust his confidences. He will tell me of work in progress only if he knows I will maintain silence until the work is finished."

—Carl Larsen

## A Newspaperman's Books

### The Presidents and the Press

by James E. Pollard

Macmillan Company. 866 pp. \$5.00

A candid, comprehensive, impartial account of the troubles Presidents have had with the press through U. S. history. Particularly good and full on the FDR and Hoover regimes and their immediate predecessors since the rise of the press conference.

### Heaven's Tableland: The Dust Bowl Story

by Vance Johnson

Farrar, Straus & Co., 288 pp. \$3.00

The dust bowl, its history and prospects, by an author who knew it as an editor in the Panhandle. Vance Johnson lived a long time in the dust bowl, reported its farming, tried to figure out its economy. He began this book on a Nieman Fellowship several years ago and has continued it in the spaces of free time of a Washington correspondent. A competent, readable, significant book about one of the great marginal areas of the United States whose land problem is translated in such human problems as made John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath."

### Your Newspaper

by Nine Nieman Fellows.

(Leon Svirsky, Ed.)

Macmillan Company. \$2.75

Announced in our last issue, this joint product of nine of the eleven Nieman Fellows of 1945-6 was published in November. Two chapters have been printed in this quarterly. Two chapters were featured in two October issues of the Saturday Review of Literature, and a long section from the book was published in an October number of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin. An "arguable" book, one of its authors says, it was already being argued in newspaper editorials and publishers' retorts, before its publication. Its major points run parallel to those made of the British Press by the National Union of Journalists, summarized in this issue of Nieman Reports. It is an attempt by one group of newspapermen to appraise current performance of the American press by their own yardsticks in its various departments, and to design a blueprint for the kind of newspaper they would like to see and believe in. As its title suggests, it is aimed at the newspaper reader, but it will be surprising if most of its readers are not newspapermen, who are very generally the kind of soul-searching, self-analyzing bunch represented by these nine.

### More Interesting People

by Robert J. Casey

Bobbs Merrill. 348 pp. \$3.00

Another rollicking volume of the kind of stories that have made the fabulous Bob Casey of the Chicago Daily News one of journalism's immortals to his own contemporaries.

### Back Home

by Bill Mauldin

William Sloane, Assoc. 315 pp. \$3.50

The adjustment of the able, wise, young author-artist of "Up Front" to civilian life as he encounters the pressures and prejudices of press and public through his syndicate managers.

### The Wayward Pressman

by A. J. Liebling

Doubleday. 284 pp. \$2.95

This is the New Yorker's Wayward Press output since Benchley, wrapped up in the journalistic autobiography of the current author of those irreverent pieces about the newspapers. Liebling does not present the press quite as its publishers would like it to be presented. He does not like publishers. He is not always fair nor always funny, but he applies the prophylactic of laughter to some of the pomposities, phonies and absurdities of daily journalism with such effect that the working pressmen are probably his best customers.

### American Memoir

by Henry Seidel Canby

Houghton Mifflin Co. 433 pp. \$5.00

The autobiography of one of America's serious journalists in which the story of the rise of the Saturday Review of Literature and the Book of the Month Club and reminiscences of the old New York Evening Post are contributions to the history of American journalism and letters. The changing pattern and tempo of American life are interpreted in the flow of one man's life and thinking. A book stamped with the high integrity and writing that characterize all of Canby's life and work, and so a heartening book for a young writing man to read.

### Of Making Many Books

by Roger Burlingame

Charles Scribner's Sons. 341 pp. \$3.75

A lively, engaging book about publishing and authors as seen through the history of one distinguished publishing house and magazine, Scribner's. An important, authentic, revealing thread of the literary life of the last generation and the one before that, seen largely through the letters and characters of the authors who made its history.

## Clark Porteous

### "A First-Rate Reporter"

—by His Boss

By EDWARD J. MEEMAN

Editor Memphis Press-Scimitar

When Clark Porteous was chosen to ride on a float pounding his typewriting to typify the Freedom of the Press in the Victory Day Parade, Memphis Post No. 1 of the American Legion made a fine choice.

First, because he is a reporter, and reporting is the most important phase of newspaper work.

Second, because of the kind of a reporter he is.

Clark Porteous is objective. He gets the facts, and lets the facts speak for themselves. He gets all the facts. He does not color them. Neither does he take their natural color out of them. He reproduces the actual color of the facts, be those facts bright or drab.

He is a good listener. He is infinitely patient to get all of anyone's side of a story. And he works hard.

Recently he got a very high honor. He was selected by the Nieman Foundation for a year's study at Harvard. The Nieman Foundation is a lot of money which was left by the publisher of that excellent newspaper, The Milwaukee Journal, to provide further study by America's outstanding newspapermen. A fine idea, too.

I was a little concerned on what Harvard would do to a down-to-earth newspaperman like Clark. I didn't think they could improve him much. I feared they might get too much of the mud off his shoes. Before he left I said:

"Clark, you are a first-rate reporter. Don't let them make a second-rate intellectual out of you."

I need not have been concerned. Clark came back from the ivy-clad towers just as much a down-to-earth reporter as he was before. If they added to Clark's intellectual equipment, and I suppose they did, they didn't take away his remarkable qualities as a reporter. One of the best of those qualities is that while there's no story that he thinks too big to tackle, there's none too small to be beneath his notice. And always, the courage to go to the very bottom of any matter.

We editors depend on our reporters to give us the facts on which to base our editorial expressions. How important that those reporters be men in whose objectivity, accuracy, and fairness we can rely. Clark Porteous is such a reporter.

*A baffling riddle of American politics is here brilliantly described and simply explained. How a Talmadge can win without "the streetcar counties" by the use of a "ghost candidate."*

## A Reader's Guide to Georgia's Politics

by C. W. Gilmore

The shifting drama of Georgia politics has amused and irritated the rest of the nation for a number of years, leaving in its wake a mixed response of groans and guffaws. Furthermore, there appears to be little hope for a let-up in the comic opera antics of Peach State politicians. The American newspaperman and his readers, in event they haven't had enough already, are due for another dose about the middle of this summer.

This second dose, like the well-remembered banana republic affair last winter, will be crammed down the thoughts of most of us in the shape of wire service reports totaling a half million words or so. From these accounts, we will learn most of the surface events. But, unfortunately, there is a good deal more to Georgia politics than meets the eye.

Even Georgians, who have to live it day in and day out, often get lost in the quick shuffling of political maneuvering. So it is almost too much to expect the casual observers, with nothing more to go on than newspaper accounts, to see what is happening. For that reason, before the summer campaign begins, a short course might be handy.

By way of introduction, Herman Talmadge, who figured prominently in the palace revolt early last year, will try again in the July primary election. Like his father before him, and like most successful candidates before that, he will run for governor of Georgia according to plan. And also like his predecessors, he will give you to understand that the plan is "white supremacy."

To accept such a simple explanation is to harbor a halftruth. "White supremacy" has about the same relationship to a Georgia politician that "Democracy" has to a national office-seeker. All of them are for it.

Actually the campaign this summer between Talmadge and Acting Governor Melvin E. Thompson will involve, more than anything else, a series of political manipulations and gyrations closely reminiscent of the going-on in other states. The plan is, of course, political organization.

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Charles W. Gilmore learned about Georgia politics as a political reporter for the Associated Press in Atlanta. He is a Nieman Fellow this year.

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In this sense, Georgia politics are the same as any other. The campaigns are fought out by rival machines, and the smoothest machine usually wins.

But how do these machines work in Georgia? That is the key to Georgia's bewildering political sideshow. And it is the one phase that never finds its way into print. Readers are left to mull over the surface events, the frills and furbelows of "white supremacy." Underneath all the shouting is the thing that counts.

Politicians are an ably adaptable lot. They have discovered that the shortest route to success lies in the tools at hand, the eccentricities of a system of government. It is these eccentricities that are exploited in Georgia. So while practical politics fundamentally may be the same everywhere, the finer points have been adapted to conform with Georgia's unique governmental structure. This structure is a product of the Civil War. The keys to Georgia politics are skeleton keys, hidden away in the closet of history.

Like its sister states of the South, Georgia has a one-party system which any high school youth can rightly attribute to the Republican reconstruction period. Since that unhappy time, only Democratic candidates have had much success in general elections. This typically southern limitation on the electoral process plunges the power of political decision into party primaries. In these Democratic primaries, the question of office-holding is settled among contending Democrats. It boils down, in the long run, to a sort of intramural "two-party" system between the Ins and Outs.

The Democratic party stranglehold is the cardinal principle of Georgia politics. From it springs all the tricks of the trade. One of these tricks is the well-publicized, but generally misunderstood, county unit system. The county unit vote is another vestige of Reconstruction. It was invented by Georgia Democrats, oddly enough not to disenfranchise the Negro, but to keep northern Republicans out of the capitol.

The Republicans brought it on themselves. In occupying Georgia after the Civil War, these so-called carpetbaggers naturally concentrated their forces on the few cities of the state, urban areas like Atlanta and Savannah. By rounding up a large vote in these populated communities,

they were able to outballot the rural farmers and plantation men. Finally, when these wool hat Georgians reformed the Democratic party, they rigged it so political power never again could be vested in the cities.

The ringer was the county unit system which, ostensibly, allots electoral college votes to counties on the basis of population. As a matter of fact, proportionate distribution is a farce, and never was intended to be anything else. There are, all in all, 410 county unit votes. A candidate for Democratic nominations wins a county's unit vote by winning a plurality of the county's popular vote. A total of 206 unit votes is sufficient for nomination and that means election.

How are these unit votes distributed? That is the farce. Fulton (Atlanta) county, with a population approaching a half million, has six of them. Five other large counties also have six unit votes in selecting a nominee for state or federal office. A little lower in the population scale are 34 counties with four votes. But on the bottom, with populations under 15,000 persons, are 119 counties with two unit votes apiece.

To put it another way, two-thirds of the state's 3,000,000 inhabitants live in 56 counties with 204 unit votes, or not quite enough. In Georgia it is entirely possible to poll a third of the popular votes in the primary and win the Democratic nomination. By the simple expedient of virtually disenfranchising the voters of metropolitan counties, the device reversed the normal arrangement and produced, instead of a city political machine as in Memphis or Jersey City, a sprawling, rural political organization.

This gift of unequal power to small counties resulted, naturally, in another factor in Georgia's political character: the opportunity to control the state simply by controlling the votes of the small counties. This is accomplished with a dozen or so men and women strategically located in each county. These machine workers, usually county officials, can call upon enough kinsmen and friends to swing an election in any direction. In Georgia, with surprising candor, they call it "delivering a county."

The process by which these faithful few, these rural ward heelers, are brought into line by one faction or another, unfortu-

nately is so uniform throughout the land of politics that it scarcely merits repetition. As elsewhere, the county political rings of Georgia are bought with political promises of the usual kind, if not by an actual outlay of cash. Their job is to round up enough voters to win a plurality in their county. This usually is a matter of a thousand votes or so in the small counties. The two-units mount up; 103 little counties can win the primary.

With Georgia politics fashioned by these tools, it is hardly surprising that candidates invent "issues" appealing to rural voters, to a poor white farmer whose ballot is worth ten in Atlanta. It becomes clearly understandable why the late Eugene Talmadge, four times elected governor before his death, seldom took the stump in what he called "the streetcar counties."

There is yet another device employed in Georgia politics, but copyrighted so-to-speak by the Talmadge family. It has been used also, in times past, in the national political arena. The device is "the third candidate." This not-too-novel system of divide and conquer enabled Eugene Talmadge to lag 17,000 popular votes behind the leader in 1946 but amass most of the county units.

In practically all the little two-unit counties, Eugene Talmadge could expect a plurality of the votes in a three-man race. But in many of them, a majority of the votes would be cast against him. He would win the county when the majority split between his two rivals. Theoretically, in event only two men ran, the majority of the votes still would be cast against Talmadge — but for a single opponent. This may or may not be the case, but Eugene Talmadge — in all his political career — never won a two man race or lost a three man race.

In any event, because of this weakness, it became expedient for Talmadge to have two opponents. Therefore, the real fight in Georgia this summer, when another Talmadge runs, may not be a struggle to wear the laurel of white supremacy. It may hinge on a third man, a "ghost" candidate.

Herman Talmadge's supporters, as they did so effectively for his father, will try to introduce a third candidate in the race for governor. On the other hand, Melvin E. Thompson will be trying to discourage opposition. Whether or not a third man runs may well determine who wins the party primary.

The fuss in Georgia last year came about when the winning candidate for governor, Eugene Talmadge, died a few

weeks before his inauguration. The lieutenant-governor elect, Melvin E. Thompson, had not campaigned against Talmadgeism but he was historically aligned with the opposite political faction. Thompson had been executive secretary to Ellis Arnall, the most vigorous of the Talmadge foes, and had been appointed revenue commissioner by Arnall. Therefore, when Thompson claimed the office of governor by right of succession, the Talmadge leaders were confronted with the embarrassing position of winning the battles and losing the war. They attempted a pseudo-legal seizure of the government and hastily started drafting legislation to prevent future recurrences.

The legislative program to perpetuate themselves, and their organization, in power eventually failed all along the line. But if Herman Talmadge is elected governor this summer, it is safe to assume that the legislation will be considered again by the General Assembly in 1949. The general program goes back a number of years.

The continuing struggle for small counties each time an election year rolled around naturally has been exhausting for politicians and their financial contributors. It has become increasingly difficult for the Talmadge organization. When, in 1946, more than 100,000 Negroes registered to vote — presumably all against Talmadge — it appeared to many that the end had come. Talmadge, however, squeaked through the election by the skin of his county units. But the handwriting was on the wall. As more and more Negroes voted, particularly in the small counties, it became evident that Talmadge strength in the rural areas would diminish.

Spurred on by this eventuality, the Talmadge forces determined to change the state's election laws to: (1) prevent voting; (2) strengthen the county unit system, and (3) purge the registration lists. This, they felt, could be accomplished by a series of three bills which they introduced in the General Assembly last January. For purposes of identification, the bills were known as the White Primary Bill, the Registration Bill and the County Unit Amendment.

The White Primary bill received widespread publicity when it was tried, and declared unconstitutional, in South Carolina. It is not a law, in the strict sense of the word; it is a piece of legislation to repeal laws. Earlier federal court opinions held that racial discrimination could not be exercised in an election in which the state was a party. The state becomes a party when it enacts laws regulating the conduct of primary and general elections.

So, Talmadge forces reasoned, all they needed to do was repeal all state laws re-

gulating primary elections. By thus removing the state as a party, the conduct of primaries would be left up to the Democratic State Executive committee. The Democratic Party, in effect, would become a private club; it might conduct its elections anyway it pleased and could determine who might vote. To insure honest elections, the supporters of the plan pledged themselves to incorporate the state laws into the rules of the Democratic party. They did not say who would enforce the rules.

After a series of public hearings in which 90 per cent of the witnesses opposed passage, the White Primary bill was rushed through a Talmadge dominated house of representatives and state senate. With great fanfare, the bill was signed by Herman Talmadge during the two months he held office as de facto governor. When Talmadge was ousted by the state supreme court, Acting Governor Thompson promptly vetoed the bill.

The second proposal, the Registration bill, was a companion measure. There were still on the registration books the names of some 100,000 Negroes, eligible thereby to vote in general elections. The Talmadge forces, with foresight, envisioned the possibility of a rival Democratic party in event the White Primary bill became effective. Two parties would mean two candidates in the general election, and nobody disputed the right of Negroes to vote in the general election if they were registered.

The Registration bill merely discarded all existing registrations and set up a new general registration, to be followed every two years by another registration. The idea, of course, was to strike the names of most Negroes and then find them "unqualified" to register when the new lists came around. The Registration Bill also restored the poll tax, which Ellis Arnall had discarded a few years before during his term as governor.

The plan so far, then, was simply this: by repealing all primary election laws, and converting the Democratic party into a private club, Negroes could be prevented from voting in primaries. By abolishing existing registrations and starting anew, Negroes, by one means or another, could be forbidden the general election. There was yet a third obstacle to overcome. In the general election, the county unit vote does not operate. The winner is the man with the most popular votes.

With only one Democratic candidate running in the general election, this posed no problem. But what if two "Democratic" parties sprang up under the White Primary bill, and each of them offered a candi-

date? The Talmadge forces readily recognized that such a situation would restore the decision to the general election and the voting strength of the large cities. Eventually, this could create a city machine to engulf the existing rural machine. The County Unit Amendment was quite simple. It merely proposed to make the county unit system operative in the general election as well as in the primary election. That would shut all the doors.

The Registration bill passed the house of representatives, after several amendments, and died in a senate committee dominated by pro-Thompson delegates. The County Unit Amendment, requiring a two-thirds vote of the general assembly, failed to pass by a scant margin.

That is the character of Georgia politics. It is not a pretty picture. It dominates the state's thinking as well as its emotions. Whether or not Georgia can lift itself up

by political bootstraps, only time can tell. The Talmadge machine, however, has now been out of power for six years, longer than ever before. If Thompson is elected to fill out the term this summer, the Talmadge machine will have lost eight years of patronage and influence. It may or may not be able to overcome the obstacle.

But whatever happens, there will be more to it than "white supremacy," a waning battle cry at best.

## Complaints' and Otherwise--

### Valuable

Why didn't somebody tell me about the Nieman Reports before?

Vol. 1, No. 4, with which the Record-Searchlight subscription started, is so valuable I'd like to have the three earlier ones. If back copies of any or all of the first three numbers are available, I'd appreciate your sending them and billing us.

Paul C. Bodenhamer  
Editor, Record-Searchlight  
Redding, Calif.

### From Richard Neuberger

For a long time I have wanted to tell you how excellent I think Nieman Reports are. I wish they could be read and taken to heart by every newspaperman in Alaska and the northwest. Out this way the great and vital domestic story is the monopolistic and absentee ownership of resources. So few papers feel any duty or freedom to tell this story, yet it concerns the lives of every one of their readers. I wish Nieman Reports could get to all who write—nay, all who read. They are grand.

Richard Neuberger  
Portland Oregonian

### From the Guild Reporter

The piece by Robert Lasseter, "No Other Allegiance," in the July issue of Nieman Reports impressed people here, and I'd like to reprint the piece in our next Guild Reporter.

Our feeling is that Lasseter's ideas and thought should be of great interest to newspapermen, and ought to be given wider circulation.

Will you give us permission to reprint? We'll give full credit, of course.

I'm writing to Lasseter to get more background, and his picture, if possible.

I confess I have not completed reading Nos. 3 and 4 of Nieman Reports, but as far as I've gone I've enjoyed them, and think there should be more of this sort of thing. It stimulates thought and spreads ideas.

Wilbur E. Bade,  
Editor, Guild Reporter.

### Not One Letter On Press Report

An article by Louis M. Lyons in your July issue has been called to my attention. In it press reaction to the report of the Commission of Freedom of the Press is noted.

The statement is made, generally, that the press was lax in reporting the report's findings. I find references to a number of newspapers which did not comment on the report. The statement is made, "No newspaper carried the full text." Mention is made of The New York Times and The Christian Science Monitor which did carry extensive digests of the report.

With some pride I should like to point out that The Birmingham Age-Herald published better than two-thirds of the full text of the report, deleting material only because of space limitations. Even so our

morning paper (The Age-Herald) carried large takes of the report for more than a week, an installment running each day.

If it should be of any interest, I would like to note the fact that despite this considerable effort to inform the public as to the contents of the report, despite our regular press association dispatches about it, and editorials of some length in both our morning and afternoon editions, these newspapers received not one letter from readers on the subject of the report. One may draw his own conclusions from that.

Perhaps I should add that the long digest we presented was carried under a three and sometimes a four column head on our editorial page, prominently displayed.

Sincerely,  
E. L. Holland, Jr., Assistant Editor  
Birmingham Age-Herald

## Tulsa Tribune Protests Gunther Label

In the October 1947 issue of "Nieman Reports" an article by Louis M. Lyons, your chairman, comments favorably upon Mr. John Gunther's appraisal of the American press as included in his recent book, "Inside U. S. A."

"Gunther's journalistic appraisals should be among his surest," says Mr. Lyons, "because he is himself a seasoned newspaperman."

In the same article Mr. Lyons also says of Mr. Gunther, "He quotes the Tulsa Tribune to demonstrate that Tulsa is the most reactionary and isolationist town in the country."

First, may I point out that both Mr. Lyons and Mr. Gunther are guilty of very sloppy thinking if they assume that the emotional temper and mental calibre of a city can be fairly assessed by a look at a local newspaper. Many successful newspapers editorially express views that are not at all concurred in by the majority of their readers. Hence, if the Tulsa Tribune were, indeed, the most reactionary and isolationist newspaper in America it would be unfair to tar Tulsa with the same brush without further research into the public mind.

If Mr. Gunther ever visited Tulsa I know of no Tulsans with whom he conferred, nor did he, so far as I can learn, call upon any Tulsa newspaperman. I cannot seriously describe as a "seasoned newspaperman" the reporter who neglects the elementary reportorial function of examining at first hand the subject upon which he is writing.

Secondly, the Tulsa Tribune is neither reactionary nor isolationist, as any cursory examination of our editorial policy would have revealed.

We were the first major newspaper in the southwest to push for the generation of publicly-owned light and power.

We were the first to support rural electric co-operatives.

We have been foremost in championing all government proposals for flood-control, soil-conservation, and irrigation.

We have taken the lead in demands for better popular education and expanded free hospitalization and clinic care, even at the expense of greater tax assessments on all property owners.

We are the only major newspaper in the southwest, so far as I know, that has made a business of skinning greedy corporations. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch is currently

## Complaints

conducting a campaign against a rate-grab by the Southwestern Bell Telephone Co. Our friend, Ralph Coghlan, will be glad to tell you that the Tulsa Tribune first pointed out this menace editorially, and that we supplied the Post-Dispatch with the first tips that led to its present investigation.

As to our "isolationism" I enclose a collection of articles on the European situation that I wrote while abroad this summer. Our views are summarized in the final article which pleads for aid to Europe and outlines the possible consequences of our refusal.

If you accept as a fair definition of a "liberal" a person or organization that opposes all attempts to push the common people around, then the Tulsa Tribune is one of the most liberal newspapers in America.

As we see it there are three forces in American life today that are capable, if unregulated, of destroying the people's liberties. They are big business, big government, and big labor unions. Whenever we have felt that any of these have exceeded reason in their race for profits or power we have never hesitated to level our guns and fire.

We dispute the right of any man to call himself a "liberal" if he closes his eyes to the excesses of any of these three.

If the Tulsa Tribune's editorial policy is to be damned by the Nieman fellowship as "reactionary" then the late Joseph Pulitzer was reactionary when he pledged both of his newspapers to the battle against "predatory plutocracy and predatory poverty."

And if the "liberalism" of the Nieman fellowship cannot be measured by the Pulitzer yardstick it might be interesting to learn whether your organization is, as it claims, devoted to the aid and further enlightenment of truth-telling American journalists, or whether it is becoming, like so many other ostensible uplift groups, a front for adherents of a foreign ideology, pledged to discredit by ridicule, innuendo, or falsehood all but the left-wing of American journalism.

Jenkin Lloyd Jones,

Editor, Tulsa Tribune

The Gallup Poll last Summer found that nine out of ten Americans had heard about the "flying saucers" that were the current silly season story. At the same time the poll found that only about half the people had heard of the Marshall Plan and only 61 per cent had heard or read about the Taft-Hartley Bill.

## NOTES

In two notable series this Fall the New York Herald Tribune came close to adding a new dimension to journalism. It assigned a group of seven staff men to make a collective survey of America's resources, for answers to the question: "How well prepared is the United States to meet its new responsibilities?" The series ran under the title "How Strong is America?" Steve White covered minerals, notably coal, iron and steel. Robert Bird investigated power and agriculture, including fertilizers. Fitzhugh Turner turned to industry. James Minifie and Ansel Talbert between them covered airplane manufacture, and Walter Hamshar reported on the shipyards. John Durston was assigned to Alaska. John O'Reilly's subject was "people." They started on their survey in the Trib's flying newsroom August 12th. The series ran the end of September and early October.

Immediately afterwards the Trib started another notable series, "Behind the Iron Curtain," to report the collective investigations of four of its European correspondents, Russell Hill, Ned Russell, William Attwood and Walter Kerr, on political conditions in Poland, Finland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria.

Seldom, if ever, have such comprehensive assignments on such vital and difficult problems been carried out by groups of reporters pooling their knowledge, experience and findings to provide a single analysis for the reader.

The Lexington Leader published an "Open Letter" to candidates for municipal office to ask them 16 questions on their stand on the most pressing needs of the city. When the numerous candidates sent in answers ranging up to 1,000 words on a single question, the Leader printed them all in full in nearly three full pages, October 17th.

This was a new departure for the Leader, which under the vigorous city editorship of Bill Stucky has been crusading against illegal gambling, bad traffic conditions and sloppy municipal operations with effective results.

A development of large potential influence in journalism is the organization of the National Conference of Editorial Writers which held its first meeting October 17 in Washington with an attendance of 100 editors and editorial writers. Among them were a number of editors of leading

papers: Ralph Coghlan of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Barry Bingham of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Carroll Binder of the Minneapolis Tribune, Forrest W. Seymour of the Des Moines Register, Robert Lasch of the Chicago Sun, John H. Crider of the Boston Herald. Members of the conference included four former Nieman Fellows, Lasch, Crider, Millard C. Browne of the editorial page of the Buffalo Evening News, and Irving Dilliard of the editorial page of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The New York Newspaper Guild has figured out the average life span of the ten New York dailies which have ceased publication since 1916 and found it 51 years. This statistic is suggestively close to the working years of one man's life time. It would seem to be an interesting research project for some journalism school to see whether the average span of metropolitan papers exceeds one generation. Some care would be required to eliminate those synthetic spans where a name has been perpetuated beyond the life of the original organ.

Whenever an important newspaper shifts its political allegiance, that is news of national note. But a change in economic doctrine, which may be more basic, passes unnoticed. So it is that the New York Times moved out from under the doctrinaire 19th century laissez-faire views of Henry Hazlitt over toward Keynesian economics, and this vast difference went unmarked except in the conversation of economists.

Henry Hazlitt, whose views long dominated the economic expression on the Times' editorial page, left the paper some months ago. That his doctrine departed with him was first clearly shown when the Times went down the line of wholehearted support of President Truman's message to Congress proposing controls for inflation. On Nov. 18 the Times concluded its column-long editorial support with this unmistakable utterance:

"It is to be hoped we will be spared the anguished cries of those who raise the spectre of totalitarianism whenever a government attempts to combat an emergency with emergency measures. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the private enterprise system has less to fear from hostile foreign propaganda than it has from those who are either unable or unwilling to grasp the fact that if that system is to endure and thrive in normal times then it must be saved from the unnatural strains and stresses of war and other national emergencies, as well as from its own excesses, which have a way of manifesting themselves on such occasions."

# Robert Edward Dickson

November 2, 1900 — December 12, 1947

From his Kansas City boyhood to his death at 47 in New York, Bob Dickson's life was an epitome of the American journalism of his time. He had ranged over it widely, an adventuring, questing spirit and a craftsman of high competence. He was a first class newspaperman. "One of the most competent cable editors I have ever dealt with," said his old city editor on the New York World-Telegram when Dickson applied for a Nieman Fellowship in 1941.

Without waiting to finish high school, he found a job in the Associated Press in Kansas City and when he had his high school diploma a year later he was ready for assignment as correspondent to the Wisconsin-Michigan regional office. In the following five years before his marriage he wandered over much of America and worked on papers in Ottawa, Kansas, El Paso, Texas, Oklahoma City, St. Paul, Kansas City and New York. The experiences of this early adventuring he later recounted in a warm human essay, "Over the Hills and Far Away," published in "Newsmen's Holiday," Harvard Press, 1942. What he chose to recall in affectionate reminiscence was a storied memory of characters out of an earlier day—the old tramp printers and Morse operators, whose

paths he companioned as he was starting out and they were passing from the journalistic scene.

By 1923 he was back in Kansas City, a staff member of the Star. There he married Verona Gene Stuart. A chance to work on a new Sunday paper led him to St. Paul where his success won him appointment as Sunday editor on the Des Moines Register. With a few years' savings he took his wife and small son to Europe in 1927 and there he joined the staff of the old Paris Herald to become night editor under Laurence Hills. But when a second baby was on the way, he returned to New York to join the copy desk of the Herald Tribune. Two years later he was appointed chief make-up editor of the World-Telegram, whose copy desk he served for a dozen years. He was telegraph and cable editor when he became a Nieman Fellow in 1941, "to repair my lack of directed study," as he said in his application. "I expect to acquire, not a complete background for editorial and interpretive writing on international affairs, but a platform from which to continue to study. The year after his fellowship he was asked to join the war staff of OWI and accepted. "I had shied away from government information jobs,

but this is different," he said. "Maybe I won't accomplish a thing, but I am satisfied the opportunity is there and I'll give them a first rate copy of a guy who's trying."

The OWI assigned him first to London and then to Athens where he served as U. S. Information Service director, special assistant to the ambassador and press attache. With the war over, he chose to return to newspapering in New York on the new United Nations assignment for the Herald Tribune. Last Fall he was appointed professor of Journalism at New York University where he had taught a course. But his final illness prevented his start on his new teaching career.

He would have made a fine teacher for he had warmth, understanding, much patience and deep sincerity. He was a high minded journalist. He had a free spirit and a zest for life that led his own to ever broadening channels. In all human relations he had a fine loyalty and a sure instinct. The Nieman fellowship meant much to him and will miss him. He leaves his wife, a son, Robert, and a daughter, Shirley, whose loss his old friends and associates among the Nieman Fellows share.

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## NIEMAN NOTES

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A dozen Nieman Fellows of the South and as many other editors of the region held a two day session on the TVA with Director Gordon R. Clapp and others of the TVA staff, Sept. 13th and 14th in Nashville, where Silliman Evans, publisher of the Nashville Tennessean, was host to the group. The editors attending came from Alabama, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee. One session was given to discussion of MVA by Ralph Coghlan and other members of the staff of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Ben Stong, chairman of the regional committee of the MVA.

Nat Caldwell of the editorial staff of the Tennessean, a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41, was chairman of the arrangements. Louis M. Lyons, curator of the Nieman Fellow-

ships, served as moderator. The following former Nieman Fellows attended: Neil Davis, editor, Lee County Bulletin, Ala.; Osburn Zuber of Birmingham, Harry S. Ashmore, editor, Arkansas Gazette; Paul Hughes, Ed Edstrom and Cary Robertson of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Edwin J. Paxton Jr., assistant publisher of the Paducah Sun-Democrat, Clark Porteous of the Memphis Press-Scimitar, and Robert Lasseter, editor, Rutherford Courier, Murphreesboro, Tenn.

Paul L. Evans, returning from a Nieman Fellowship to his editorship of the Mitchell (S. D.) Republic, made a tour of five western cities operating under the city manager system to do a series of articles on their experience. His conclusion: that the city manager plan is no cure-all but provides a greater opportunity for efficient economical municipal government; its success depends on the active interest and par-

ticipation of the voters, and the election of good men. He rated it as working extremely well in Alliance, Neb., Boulder, Colo., and Albert Lea, Minn., fairly well in Rapid City, S. D., and still in transition difficulties in Laramie, Wyo.

John McL. Clark bought the Claremont (NH) Daily Eagle just before Christmas. A Nieman Fellow in the first group, 1938, he had been in quest of a New England newspaper since he ended his war service with the army.

Foreign Policy Reports for Aug. 1, is a 12-page pamphlet on "Spain in the Post-War World" by Robert Okin. Now on the New York Sunday Times staff, Okin was an Associated Press correspondent in Spain during the Spanish civil war, was a Nieman Fellow in 1942-3, later served Time, Inc. as a war correspondent in the Pacific.

Richard E. Lauterbach became editor in November of the Magazine '47, now '48. As correspondent for Life, Lauterbach covered much of the globe during the war, and has published three books out of his foreign service experience, "These are the Russians," "Through Russia's Back Door" and "Danger from the East," the last done during last year on a Nieman Fellowship, reviewed in this issue.

Frederick W. Maguire left Goddard College this Fall to become assistant professor of journalism at Michigan State College. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1943-4.

"The Sinking of the Poelau Bras" by W. H. McDougall, Jr., in Collier's for Dec. 6 is a foretaste of his book Six Bells Off Java, which Scribner's have in press for Spring publishing. Bill McDougall did most of the writing on a Nieman Fellowship in 1946-47. The material for the book he lived in for three years as a prisoner of the Japanese.

One of the 14 editors named to judge nominations for this year's Pulitzer prizes in journalism is John H. Crider, editor of the Boston Herald, a Nieman Fellow in 1940-41.

The Autumn number of Southwest Review has an article, "Psychosis Down South," by David Botter, Washington correspondent of the Dallas News, a Nieman Fellow in 1944-45.

The George Westinghouse Science Writing Awards of \$1,000 for the best newspaper and best magazine science series in 1947 went to George A. Keaney, New York World-Telegram feature writer, and Steven M. Spencer, associate editor of the Saturday Evening Post. Keaney's five-article series ran in March on "Blood—Still a Mystery of the Ages." Spencer, a Nieman Fellow in 1939 won his award for an article "New Hope for the Anemic" published in the Post Dec. 14, 1946. He has contributed frequent science articles to the Post since 1943, has been one of its editors since 1946.

Donald Grant, a Nieman Fellow in 1941-2, received a new assignment on the St. Louis Post-Dispatch at the end of the year, to become Editorial Title Page editor.

Rinehart & Company brought out a new novel by Hodding Carter in December—Flood Crest, another story with its setting in Carter's own Mississippi background. Publisher of the Delta Democrat-Times in

Greenville, Miss., Pulitzer Prize winner for his editorials in 1946, a Nieman Fellow in 1939, Carter has won honors in both journalism and fiction.

#### ATHENS ON THE OHIO

The third conference of Nieman Fellows in the South since Summer was held in Louisville Nov. 29-30 with the seven Kentucky Fellows as hosts and organizers of the program.

The topic of the first day's meeting was "The Balkans with World Implications." Mark Ethridge, publisher of the Louisville Courier-Journal and chairman of the United Nations Balkans Inquiry Commission, led the discussion. Theodore Andrica, nationalities editor of the Cleveland Press, who makes an annual news tour in the Balkans, and Vasilios I. Chebithes, Greek-born attorney of Washington, D. C., completed the panel.

The second day's session was on "Occupation and Re-education," led by Pres. John W. Taylor of the University of Louisville, chief of the education and religious affairs section of the U. S. Military Government in Germany. The other speakers in that session were Sam V. Noe, principal of Halleck Hall in Louisville, formerly educational consultant to the U. S. Military Government in Italy; Dr. Justus Bier, chairman of the University of Louisville Art Department, formerly director of the Kestner Society Art Institute in Hanover, Germany; Dr. Edmond Schlesinger of the University of Louisville and Col. George H. Chescheir who commanded a German Prisoners of War camp.

Hosts were the seven Kentucky Nieman Fellows, Paul Hughes, Cary Robertson and Ed Edstrom of the Courier-Journal, Edwin J. Paxton, Jr., director of the Sun-Democrat's Radio Station WKYB, A. B. Guthrie, Jr., of Lexington, Henry Hornsby of the Lexington Leader and Fletcher Martin, city editor of the Louisville Defender. Participants included editors and staffers of the Louisville papers, John Popham, New York Times regional correspondent, Frank Stanley, publisher of the Louisville Defender, and the following Nieman Fellows: John F. Day, managing editor, Dayton News; Francis P. Locke, associate editor, Dayton News; Harry S. Ashmore, editor, Arkansas Gazette, Nat Caldwell, associate editor, Nashville Tennessean; Robert Bordner and Theodore Andrica of the Cleveland Press, Robert Lasseter, editor, Rutherford Courier, Murphreesboro, Tenn., and Louis M. Lyons, Curator, Nieman Foundation, who served as moderator.

#### War Horse Weller

When he was an undergraduate, George Weller, Harvard class of '29, wrote a novel. Now back at Harvard as a Nieman Fellow, aged 40, he played center right through the season for Adams House football team. In the years between Weller has been Balkan correspondent of the New York Times, war correspondent of the Chicago Daily News, Pulitzer Prize winner, author of several books, father of a daughter who is old enough to play football. He played every game without a substitution.

#### Charley Horse Wagner

Charles Wagner, the book critic, is an alumnus of Columbia Univ. where his football career was disrupted by a series of charley-horses. Wagner went to Baker Field to watch the Columbia-Army game which ended Army's four-year unbeaten streak. So often did he stand up, sit down, stand up again, etc., while watching the game that Wagner—the Nieman Fellow and now Harvard historian, and the only Columbia poet ever to receive a letter in football—limped home, because the knee-bending had given him a charley-horse.

—Leonard Lyons, Nov. 12.

#### A Hundred Local Items

I am sending you a copy of our last Sunday's paper as it represents something we have been trying to do down here in a news sense. That is, to make our paper and particularly our Sunday paper an almost entirely local and area news product. If you check through the paper you will see that there are probably a hundred local items and several hundred names in the various sections. We are doing this because it seems the best answer to metropolitan and radio competition. Of course, on week days and usually on Sundays we have a bigger proportion of world news than this, but the Associated Press wires were pretty dead on last Saturday anyhow.

Incidentally, we defeated the gent whom I lambasted in the front page editorial almost 2 to 1. The labor meeting which is announced in a small front page story, and at which I talked, was the first meeting of organized labor ever held here at which an employer talked on the problems of labor and took a pro-labor stand. I am enclosing a report of the meeting also, as well as a bit of lampooning of the sheriff whom we defeated last summer. Our journalism may not be unbiased but we sure have fun.

Hodding Carter  
Greenville, Miss. Delta Democrat