

Issue

# NiemanReports

---

October 1954

## Harold L. Cross on Infringements of Press Freedom

**What An Editor Should Know**

**Forrest W. Seymour**

**Our Blended Heritage**

**Mark Ethridge**

**Sound Newspapering**

**Norman E. Isaacs**

**Whaddy Mean, Local?**

**Sylvan Meyer**

**The Business of Writing**

**Louis M. Lyons**

**Our Straining Times**

**Max Hall**

Nieman Scrapbook — Nieman Notes —

**REVIEWS:** Bovard of the P-D; Grove Patterson's Book; The Press and America; The Foreign Correspondent; My Mission to Spain; The American People in the 20th Century; Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age; The Beecher-Tilton Case; Adventures of Mark Twain

# NiemanReports

Nieman Reports is published by the Nieman Alumni Council: Barry Brown, Providence, R. I.; Thomas H. Griffith, New York City; A. B. Guthrie, Jr., Great Falls, Mont.; John M. Harrison, Toledo, O.; Weldon James, Louisville, Ky.; Francis P. Locke, Dayton, O.; Frederick W. Maguire, Columbus, O.; Harry T. Montgomery, New York City; Charlotte F. Robling, Darien, Conn.; Dwight E. Sargent, Portland, Me.; Kenneth Stewart, Ann Arbor, Mich.; John Strohmeier, Providence, R. I.; Walter H. Waggoner, Washington, D.C.; Melvin S. Wax, Claremont, N. H.; Lawrence G. Weiss, Boulder, Colo.; Louis M. Lyons, Cambridge, Mass., Chairman. Published quarterly from 44 Holyoke House, Cambridge 38, Mass. Subscription \$2 a year. Entered as second-class matter December 31, 1947, at the post office at Boston, Massachusetts, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

VOL. VIII, NO. 4

OCTOBER, 1954

## Is Crusading Over-rated?

by Will Lindley

Television and radio programs, motion pictures and best sellers are doing newspapermen and the free press of our democracy something of a disservice by stressing much too heavily a certain phase of the newspaper profession.

The reference here is not to the often-deplored depiction of newspapermen as hard-drinking, work-dodging loud-mouths. The reference is to the emphasis placed upon newspaper crusading. And although this misplaced emphasis is the butt of newspaper office jests, many newspapermen take the crusading idea too much to heart.

Crusading newspapers generally are ranked among the highest in the land, while those which quietly play their roles in the democratic scheme of things often are accounted also-rans. That this can be an erroneous approach in assessing the worth of newspapers is demonstrated by considering the role assigned to the press in a democracy. It is (as I understand it) to inform the people as to what their officials are doing. News about what friends, neighbors and attention-getters elsewhere are doing, unless it involves the public welfare, is pretty much incidental. Thus the premium in a democracy should be placed on consistently unbiased reporting, on well-rounded reporting, on fully detailed reporting.

It is understandable, of course, that the spectacular performances of crusading newspapers should receive a great deal of attention. Their front pages virtually shout for it with their "look what we've done now" stories. The attention and awards these newspapers receive certainly

Will Lindley is on the staff of the *Spokesman-Review* of Spokane, Washington.

are not begrudged them. It is unfortunate, however, that the idea should be so widely held that crusading is the apex of newspapering.

Certainly that is the belief of many journalism school graduates. On their first jobs they sweat through routine stories—club notices, plumbers' conventions and 90th birthday stories—looking forward to the time when they can set the town on its ear with an expose of, perhaps, some real or imagined blunder of the city hall gang. For most of the young reporters, the chance never comes. Instead, they move on from small stories to medium-sized stories and an occasional big one. A front page byline now and then helps their egos, but sometimes they enjoy a little self pity because they've never had a chance to handle an honest-to-goodness crusade. Many a young reporter has tried, of course. He sketches the thing out in a memo to the city editor and the latter smiles politely and says he'll talk it over with the old man. There the matter often ends. The reporter learns that the paper's policy doesn't allow crusading.

Now there's nothing wrong with crusading done in a responsible manner. There are times when a newspaper would be lax in its obligations if it didn't expose mistreatment of the public trust. However, our democratic processes normally assign such work to law enforcement officers, with the role of the press that of encouraging these public servants in the proper performance of their duties.

But what if there seems to be the need for some crusading, yet the newspaper's policies will not permit it? To the alert reporter a no-crusading policy should offer no insurmountable barrier. Let us say the situation which the reporter thinks calls for remedy is the manner in which the city council is neglecting its duties to the public by spending a good part of the week at the golf course (or club house). On a crusading newspaper, the reporter could disguise himself as a caddy and keep score not only on the councilmen's golf games but on their absences from office. The results could be published with a secretly snapped photo of the reporter-caddy and the mayor hoofing it toward the clubhouse after 18 holes of golf. The supposed result: public wrath.

On the non-crusading newspaper, a persevering reporter could achieve the same result by making the last line in several score public affairs stories: "Mayor Jones was not available for comment. He was golfing at the Smouldering Stump Country Club."

The result of such enterprise should be that eventually regular readers of city hall news would get the idea that the mayor and his fellow councilmen had been neglecting their work. These people would talk the matter over with others until the impression became general. Of course, that type of approach by the reporter may not work. But if

(Continued on page 47)

# What An Editor Should Know

by Forrest W. Seymour

It is sometimes said that a newspaper editor need not know very much about anything, but must know a little bit about everything. This is not a mere flippancy. When we hire a neuro-surgeon to perform a very delicate and critical operation, we want him to know everything that can be humanly known about his specialty, and whether he knows anything about the ancient Babylonian civilization or nuclear fission is not important at the moment. In other words, in his own specialty he can properly have a one-track mind if he is good enough at it, and still make a notable contribution to humanity.

But a newspaper editor is not this kind of specialist. He is responsible for an institution which, by its very nature and function, has to do with the whole spectrum of Man's knowledge and activity. His workshop is the field of ideas, and that field is not limited by the necessary specialization in a complex civilization such as ours. Nor is it limited in time to that which is contemporary, for even the "new" ideas of one generation are usually but refinements of the ideas of earlier generations, shuffled into new patterns by practice and experimentation.

In an audience of this sort and in this environment, I do not have to present any brief for what we call the Liberal Arts education. For this university and its president for a long time have been dedicated to this development of the "whole" man, of citizens with as nearly "complete" minds as possible. Such eminent men as Henry Wriston of Brown, James Conant, and Nathan Pusey have spoken more eloquently than I can, in behalf of what might be called horizontal education as a necessary base for vertical specialization. I am sometimes troubled by the difficulty of defining it: one of my colleagues used to say you have to have it to understand the importance of it. The current *Key Reporter* of Phi Beta Kappa has a number of articles on this subject, in which Liberal Arts are described as "the thinking, the conscience, the integrity, the culture, the preservation of a people"; as "essential for the democratic way of life"; as merely the tools with which to prepare ourselves for a liberal education in life itself; and so on.

In any case, specializations are properly built on this foundation, not as substitutes for it. And the only apprehension I have ever felt about schools of journalism is that they may sometimes mistake technical skills of the craft for the principal tool of editorship, which is knowledge and understanding.

---

Forrest Seymour, editor of *Worcester Telegram and Gazette*, described the editor's job to a Harvard Conference on Careers, March 9.

So my first counsel to anyone who aspires to newspaper editorship, in the truly professional tradition, has always been: Know the nature of Man. The whole history of his evolution. There will come some understanding of what he has learned and what he has failed to learn. And we must not sit haughtily on a mountain top and expect our generation suddenly to comprehend what 300 preceding generations have failed to successively, for one reason or another, to comprehend. Know also the conditions of contemporary man. For upon discovering that two-thirds of the world is living, eating, sleeping, and working in substantially the same tools as in Abraham's time, you may learn to be less impatient.

Know as much as possible about Man's experience and inventiveness in the field of political science, which is actually a rather recent art. Its refinement into a workable, dependable pattern has come about only in very limited spaces on the earth's surface even today; the forces of economics keep throwing it out of gear as fast as we get decent systems established; and even the most advanced and skillful political techniques are susceptible to sudden reversal by demagogues, sometimes in dinner jackets, with Neanderthal minds and morals.

But our civilization depends upon our capacity to preserve the nobler and more distinguished achievements Man has made in this long and tedious struggle. So we must understand well the philosophy of democratic behavior, beginning with the oldest Judaic traditions upon which so much of Christian ethics has been built. An editor needs to know what it is, in the spirit of Man, that has made him face martyrdom a million times without flinching; for no truly effectual editor will escape a little taste of this now and then. He needs to understand the inner compulsions that drive men to stand up courageously for a principle, for no better reason than that it is right—when all the "practical" arguments would persuade them to abandon it. I myself am not a religious man in the conventional sense, and I do not think that Paul saw any vision on the road to Damascus except the one in his own tortured mind; but I feel that I understand very well what went on inside him when he then discerned that the Christian philosophy was not for Jews alone, but for all men, because it embraced truths that transcended race or ritual. This lesson has now, after 1900 years, been so widely learned that occasionally a Republican editor approves of something initiated by a Democratic administration, and vice versa.

A competent newspaper editor must know his world.

This doesn't mean that he must have seen a great lot of it with his own eyes, though that is helpful—and certainly desirable if he can manage it. The resources for understanding what goes on, even in the remotest parts of the earth, are enormous in our time. That is, they can be understood if the student (meaning the editor) has the intellectual foundation in Sociology and Economics and Political Science that I've been talking about. The amount of current reading matter available, concerning everything from Somaliland to Tannu Tuva, is absolutely mountainous nowadays. And there are even films from everywhere (except perhaps from inside the Iron Curtain) which bring all the flavor of backward societies, lacking only the odors. Anyone who reads, and thinks, and listens, and thinks, and watches, and thinks, will understand most of the behavior of most of the people in the world well enough. Not perfectly, but well enough. These things any editor worthy of the name must do—read, read, read; listen; watch; but mostly—think.

The editor needs to know his own community intimately. It will not hurt him to put in a spell on the Parks board, and the Community Chest, and the Citizens' school committee, and the taxpayers association or the Chamber of Commerce. If he is not too puritanical, it may serve him well to drop in at a popular tavern once a month, for a beer with some labor leader; there are more votes made here than are made in the Union League club. He needs to know people who operate vegetable stalls and popcorn stands, and have them know him. A competent editor must know what makes his contemporary society tick, or fail to tick. And he must love his community, deeply and passionately; long for it to thrive; have pride in it. Absentee ownership is unfortunate, but absentee editorship is unthinkable.

And now at last, I will add that a good editor must know the tools of his craft. He must acquire at least a general, working knowledge of the processes of printing, engraving, stereotyping, photography, and all the rest. But if he is a reasonably intelligent man, this is the simplest part of it. I once told a college graduate who tardily decided he wanted to turn to journalism, "Find a small paper, and get a job sweeping the place out. If you have anything on the ball you will be running the editorial shop in six months." He did, and he was.

You will recognize, I trust, that I have been talking not about what an editor must "believe," but only what he should know. Because it is my conviction that any truly

educated man will believe in the Truth, will comprehend the good reasons for its endless pursuit, and thus will have the wisdom and courage to stand for the Right, and do what needs doing. The demagoguery in its many forms which impedes Man's upward progress is able to persist and succeed only in the midst of ignorance—wherefore, the editor must enlighten, above all, if he is to leave his tiny grain of influence on the right side of the scale. To whatever degree he distorts or confuses, for any reason, he is degrading the trust with which his profession charges him.

I hope that most people do not go into the profession of journalism with the notion that to become an editor of a newspaper or magazine is the all-important goal, for it is not. Many a good political writer or desk man makes a greater contribution to his society than his editor does. I do not sneer at the green stuff, but I think there ought to be other factors than the cash return in any young person's consideration of possible careers. And the title of editor does not necessarily indicate a large income anyway; some newspapers dispense editorial titles as a substitute for salary.

I have a son—a graduate of the college here, by the way—who is in the newspaper business, I am sure, because he loves it. He would like to get ahead as fast as possible, which is proper. But he understands that the average fellow has to pile up experience to build a career just as you have to pile up bricks to build a house. It is often considered harsh advice nowadays, and it is sometimes considered impudent, when you tell college graduates that they may have to start pretty close to the bottom, and scratch for a while. But I am afraid this is one of the facts of life.

But it doesn't make any difference what most of us do—we still have to begin at the beginning. And as I said earlier, the more you learn along the way about the tools of your craft, the better editor you will be when you get there.

And whether you arrive there, or turn to one of the numerous specialties of journalism which are now fairly lucrative in themselves, remember that reading and spelling and grammar and arithmetic are cornerstones—carry a pocket dictionary and a style book around in your pocket if you have to. And that zeal in the job and diligent digging for facts are the walls; they need to be solid. And that devotion to the Truth, always, is in the roof that protects the structure of a free press from the rot and erosion of evil influences.

# “There Is No Substitute For A Good Newspaper”

by Norman E. Isaacs

Just three years ago—lacking a month and a few days—I was called into the office of the publisher of the St. Louis *Star-Times* and told that the next day's editions would be the last. I do not intend to conduct here a public post-mortem. I raise the subject because I think you are entitled to a sort of backdrop for what I am about to say.

The main point is that for five and a half months I was an unemployed managing editor. They may well have been the most important months in my whole life because for the first time—literally, the first—I had to think.

All of us use the word “think” very loosely. We “think” this and we “think” that. We do nothing of the kind. We operate by a kind of mental pre-arrangement. Rarely do we sit down and really think—to reason things out, to weigh, to balance and arrive at conclusions.

I grew up in newspaper offices. There was nothing else I had ever wanted to do. Like everyone else, I learned a thousand and one what nots to do. I picked up bad habits, too. From assorted bosses, I picked up some good attitudes, discarded some bad.

Mainly, I operated on instinct. My politics had been partly formulated by boyhood exposure to a voluble and partisan father; by debate around newspaper offices; by some personal experience. My newspaper attitudes—fortunately, I think—had been fashioned principally by a youthful exposure to some great crusading editors—men who had both ideas and ideals.

Like every other managing editor, I had had my battles with the business offices. Perhaps some of them had been more intense than others had experienced. But even these arguments were instinctive on my part. I cannot truthfully say that they were ever thought out and when I looked back I could see that many of my positions were arrogant and pig-headed.

At any rate, in the summer and fall of 1951—at the age of 43—I suddenly had to stop and think.

My friends were wonderful. They tried to rustle up many jobs for me. Some flattering non-journalism business offers were made.

But did I want to leave newspapering?

If I did stay in it, did I insist on being a managing editor?

---

**Norman E. Isaacs** is managing editor of the Louisville *Times*. He was president of the Associated Press Managing Editors Conference in 1952. This is from an address to the National Newspaper Promotions Managers Association, May 10.

Did it matter what kind of newspaper I went to work for—providing, of course, they would give me a job?

What about newspapering anyway? Was it worth the effort? Wouldn't I be better off in some cushy spot in business or industry? What was it I really wanted to do?

Well, I preferred newspapering. But not at the expense of my convictions. That, it seemed to me, was an empty life. What good would money be if you had to walk down alleys to avoid the people you knew? I would like to go to work for a newspaper that rather reflected my own attitudes—an honest newspaper; a clean one; a decent one—a *responsible* one.

I must be candid and tell you that I had all but given up hope of such a connection when the unanticipated telephone call came from Louisville. And I am quite aware that I am probably the one in a thousand who got the lucky break at a decisive moment. If I never have good luck tap me again, I am still ahead.

This is the backdrop. If it were not such a painful and unsettling process, I wish all of you could have the same opportunity to sit back and really think it through—not only to think backward, but forward as well.

If all of you had that opportunity, I am convinced that the field of newspaper promotion would move forward in seven-league boots.

For newspaper promotion, gentlemen, shares greatly in the indignities which are frequently heaped on good newspapermen and on potentially good newspapers.

I have had my share of those indignities. In my time, I have had to promote old automobile contests, baby picture contests, bathing beauty contests, marathon dances, moving picture tie-in events, personal sketch artists, hand-writing analysts, comic strip contests. You name it; I probably have had to promote it at some time or another.

Yet what did all these promote? The newspaper? No sir, not by a long shot. They degraded the newspaper. These events either made the advertising department think they were making some client delighted—which wasn't true—or the promotion manager had talked himself into believing that if he just promoted something, he was helping keep the newspaper's name before the public.

I shudder when I speculate on how many hundreds of thousands of dollars have gone down the drains in this type of inane, inept, unworthy and useless promotion.

The conclusion is inescapable that there is no substitute for a good newspaper—honestly published, honestly sold and honestly promoted. Check for yourself the list of

America's top newspapers and you will find very little of the cheap and tawdry in either their production methods or their promotion activities.

Sure, you can buy circulation. And you can buy yourself broke, too. I do not have to defend that statement. The record also will bear that out.

Yet to this day there are publishers who will buy—on the recommendation of their circulation managers and promotion managers—contests, stunts and assorted gimmicks designed to buy circulation. So the newspaper will add a few thousand papers. All the while, everyone knows that holding that circulation means paying a higher price on the next go-round. And still higher and higher. Nonetheless, this same type of publisher will have no hesitancy about sitting down to write a biting editorial about the insanity of a government permitting an ever-spiraling inflation.

A great many of us who believe deeply in journalism as a profession were dismayed this last year by the introduction of the "Lucky Buck" promotion. Here you have a pure and unadulterated gimmick—a senseless spending of money in an effort to get circulation figures. Money poured into space; into effort; into time and energy. The most recent study of New York circulation figures failed to convince me that any real gain of any kind had been made by any of these "Lucky Buck" promoters.

Actually, the only newspaper that seems to keep gaining with any consistency in the greater New York area is the big suburban daily, *Newsday*, and it apparently does it by intelligent coverage in depth of its area. *Newsday* got in on the "Lucky Buck" promotion by printing the numbers and in high good humor telling everyone that they didn't have to waste a nickel on anybody else's paper.

That so-called responsible newspaper owners and promotion men in the middle of the 1950's will go for this kind of cheap stunt is a disgrace.

I am one who has had my fill of newspapers which have to exist by peddling cheap insurance. Or by promoting newsboys' bands. Or by any other kind of expensive side-promotion to cover up the fact that what they are selling isn't really worth buying.

Some newspapers still believe that one way to get advertising clients and influence them is to give expensive parties and to buy expensive blocks of tickets for important events—charging the whole bill to promotion and then hammering down on all other expenses on the grounds that business conditions do not justify any leeway.

These are the newspapers—the "Lucky Buck" promoters, the insurance peddlers, the sponsors of newsboys bands, the party givers and the ticket buyers—which fail to understand Mark Ethridge's profound observation that the best newspaper dollar ever spent is the editorial dollar.

Men who choose not to understand can easily misinterpret that statement. It takes some thinking to understand

it fully and I repeat again that too many have not had the opportunity to get sufficient time to sit down and think.

Looking back, I have become more deeply convinced than ever that the newspaper advertiser can never be bought by any phony promotional methods. He may listen because someone has been nice to him; but he will not buy space for that reason. There is only one justification for his advertising: To bring results.

Either the newspaper rings the cash register for an advertiser, or it doesn't. When the cash register does ring, the newspaper can depend on the advertising coming in regularly. When it doesn't, no amount of sugar-coating and no amount of promotion money will keep the advertiser in the paper over the long haul.

My first experience with this came a long time ago. It made a tremendous impression on me and embittered me for some years because I didn't understand.

I was about 19 at the time, a kid sports writer. Boyd Gurley was editor of the Indianapolis *Times* and in the process of winning the Pulitzer Prize for breaking up the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana. The Klan—in retaliation for the steady drumfire of exposure—called for a circulation boycott and later an advertising boycott.

The Klan was strong and circulation did drop. You can understand my consternation when advertisers also dropped out with alacrity—even those advertisers whom one would judge to be so emotionally involved in the crusade that you would almost take it for granted that they would see it through to the bitter end.

No thanks to them, of course, the crusade persisted and was successful. The Klan was destroyed as an organization in Indiana. Circulation came back—then climbed. And the advertisers came back.

For years after that, I had only contempt for them. I looked upon them as moral cowards. Years later, I came to understand it more clearly and more tolerantly.

The advertiser has no morals. He is utterly and completely selfish—and undoubtedly has to be in order to survive. He may hate everything for which a newspaper stands—and yet be its greatest space-buyer. He may read a newspaper avidly because he likes its editorial viewpoint, yet the moment he is solicited for advertising he becomes a cold, calculating businessman.

Nothing in the way of phony promotion can change this single overriding factor. And yet so many newspapers waste the talents and time of promotion men trying to build solicitations and campaigns that deal in fantastic extravagance and overstatement.

I am proud to work for a company that undersells itself ever so neatly. I consider the phrasing a masterpiece of sound judgment:

"We publish two good newspapers. They are read by everybody in and around Louisville. We

sell advertising space at reasonable rates. It produces sales."

Four sentences. An intelligent, proud statement. And it has stood up for years.

Don't you think, too, that the same approach goes for the reader? It does. Down to the last detail. Given a good newspaper and good service, you have a reader who is constant, dependable and loyal.

Isn't it a dreadful admission of weakness to buy billboards shrieking about "the best" comic strips? Or to run full-page office ads promoting a contest of some type or another?

Wouldn't the dollars be better spent improving the newspaper as a product?

If newspapering is to move ahead, we have to quit kidding ourselves about the media we are working with. That is one of the big troubles with it. We haven't understood it well enough. For too many years, we've had too many charlatans running around, making fancy speeches—and almost all of them covering up, attacking any one who dares to criticize us, wailing about the dangers to freedom of the press, and about the designs of a big, bad government against us—and almost all of them heavy with the dreadful economic perils that beset us on all sides.

Once radio was listed as one of the dragons in the list. Lately, television has taken its place. Such nonsense.

It is time we ourselves—we who work with newspapers—took stock. We need no St. Georges come to slay the dragons. We need an understanding approach to our work. We need a proper assessment of the role the newspaper plays in society.

The newspaper is a curious anomaly in a free enterprise society. It is, on the one hand, a business enterprise—unregulated and uncontrolled by the State; yet given certain privileges of expression by the Constitution; a business yet a public utility, serving the needs of the people. If it is to succeed in its multiple roles, it must have an appreciation of its position—a humility of its role as a public servant—it must have assurance of its power—and, most of all, it must have a deep integrity, going all the way from owner to apprentice. Every single one who works with the paper must have a pride in his calling and in his product. And everyone must *want* to keep the freedoms which are so precious to all of us.

I recall vividly the calumny heaped by so many newspaper owners and editors upon the Commission on Freedom of the Press—the Hutchins Commission—back in 1947 when the report was issued. Get a copy of the book, *A Free And Responsible Press*, read it and see for yourself the pathetic shortsightedness of so many newspaper executives. When you read it, you will readily see that

the commission was serving nobly the best, long-range interests of the press.

It pointed out many of our weaknesses and it called for voluntary, internal reform in order to forestall any encroachment by government. The wiser and saner publishers and editors praised the report, but they were all but drowned out in the cacophony of those who to this day think almost every critic of the press is a violently dangerous enemy. These are the men themselves who are the most dangerous enemies to a free press. It is they who bring discredit on the whole profession by their money-grubbing, by their selfishness, and by their arrogance.

Let us look at the picture in its total form.

Newspapers have been, are, and probably will remain the most vital part of the nation's vast communications machinery. The total national circulation is tremendous. And it covers everything from the biggest cities to the smallest.

The news and picture magazines are popular, but they are a supplemental medium—no more than that. Where a newspaper in a city may have 100,000 circulation, a news magazine with more than 10,000 would be amazingly successful. I would estimate the figure to be half that.

Radio, I believe, has more news impact than the news and picture magazines. Television is still a lesser form of news competition. At this stage it is purely supplemental—but it has some great natural advantages and over a long period it may prove to have more adaptability than we presently believe.

Rather than being menaces, these competing media have had a salutary effect on newspapers. We have been forced to change emphasis; we have been compelled, by competition, to do many things better.

Let me hark back for the moment to the almost-forgotten day of the newspaper extra. Some of the older gentlemen here will recall with ease the day of the baseball extra. No week-day afternoon was complete without it—home delivery routes and all. I wonder how many extras are put out now in the United States. Not very many, I'd guess, in a year's time.

What killed the extra? Radio. That simple. We couldn't compete with instantaneous transmission. But while it may have killed the extra edition, it didn't damage newspapers in the slightest. Circulations dipped, recovered and climbed.

We found that sports interest had increased. And where once we were able to get by with perhaps ten columns of sports news, we had to go up to twelve and fourteen and sixteen and beyond. We found that radio wasn't such a terrible villain after all.

I remember when I was told that the introduction of the weekly picture magazines, on slick paper, was the beginning of the end. This we could not possibly compete with.

Today, our newspapers are equipped with wire transmission photo equipment and it is the rare big-city newspaper which cannot within an hour reproduce a photograph taken in Washington or San Francisco, or even on a battle front five thousand miles away.

We publish more pictures in a week than even the flossiest picture magazines—and we not only give the top national and international pictures, but the one field the national magazines can't possibly touch—the local pictures, the meat and potatoes of our daily existence.

We do so many things better than we once did. We have newspapers today which if they are not great newspapers, at least are very, very good newspapers. To me, it is no accident that these good newspapers are also successful newspapers financially.

To me, it also seems no accident that these are the newspapers which are carefully promoted—and by carefully, I mean prudently, sensibly, cleanly. The whole import of their promotions is to emphasize the quality of their products, the quality of their editorial content.

Which brings me back, full-cycle, to some of our weaknesses. I suspect that our greatest weakness as a group is stubbornness.

Let me take it first from the news and editorial side. News and editorial men have fallen down in their jobs these past several years in quite a few respects. One of them has been in failing to keep pace with the changing quality of our readers. Another has been in clinging to outworn and outmoded techniques of writing, editing and producing newspapers. And still another has been a sort of ivory-tower attitude toward all other departments on the newspaper—as if we in the news and editorial departments possessed all the brains available.

Too many news and editorial men are contemptuous of the mechanical departments; supercilious toward the advertising and circulation departments; and blind as bats toward the usefulness of proper promotion.

I think almost the same things, in slightly different proportions, can be said of the failures of those in the promotion field.

Promotion too, has failed to keep pace with the changing attitudes of the readers. It has clung to outworn stunts, presentations and assorted gimmicks. Promotion has seemed to be blind toward the possibilities of learning what the newspaper actually has to offer the customer.

Because some of us were trained in a certain way does not necessarily make that way the right one.

I know of one publisher—now no longer a publisher—whose stubbornness was a thing of wonder.

Once, many months ago, his newspaper had a big package deal with one of the major syndicates. He had all his comic strips in one basket. His major competitor made a backdoor deal, buying the whole package at double the

price. You can imagine the publisher's consternation when the syndicate notified him that on the contract's expiration date there would be no renewal.

The publisher was in a panic. His plight was described to me in detail by the man who was managing editor. He tried desperately to talk the syndicate out of the cancellation. No soap. So—helter-skelter—he slapped together a whole new collection of comic strips and then waited fearfully for his day of doom.

What happened? Nothing. A few squawks here and there. A few stops and switches to the rival paper. But no catastrophe. You would think from this experience that the publisher would have learned that comic strips were not the answer; that good ones, bad ones, or indifferent ones, his newspaper's livelihood did not depend on them so urgently.

But, no. This gentleman proceeded then to enter into the most rigid deals for comic strips—long-term, iron-clad contracts at fabulous prices—and some which never even appeared in his newspaper. And he called himself an astute business man. He was one of those who believed in billboards advertising comic strips as his paper's best offer and he continued these practices to the day he went out of business.

The cold truth of the matter is that all of our newspapers could dispose of comic strips today with no earth-shaking consequences. I have no particular desire to eliminate them. I think some of them are amusing. And I think the youngsters are particularly attached to them. My point is only that we are kidding ourselves if we insist they are essential. Any editor who has dropped a comic strip in recent years can testify that it makes practically no difference. I dropped one recently and as far as I know no one even knows it is gone.

Try dropping the vital statistics and see what happens.

Talking about kidding ourselves, let me bring up another little item.

For years now, the oratorical fakirs who represent themselves as spokesmen for the newspapers have been seeing dragons under the bed in the guise of the magazines.

I wonder about that when I see the numbers of newspapers which are promoting the sales of magazines on the side. Buy *The Bugle*, goes the story, and with it you buy this magazine and that one and this one.

One gentleman who knows the score told me that some newspapers are so deep in the magazine selling business that they spend more time keeping track of the magazine subscriptions than they do of their own newspaper circulation.

What I have been saying simmers down to a summary of the promotional challenges of the 1950's.

The first of these challenges is to place our houses in ethical order.

The second of the challenges is to quit acting like ostriches about the competing media. Television and radio will continue to be two of the world's great means of communicating. And so will the magazines. Let's compete honorably and sensibly—and let's quit running them down on the one hand and then playing footsie with them under the table.

Three, let's get down to the job of treating journalism as the profession which it is. Let's employ people as professionals who love journalism; let's give them proper and intelligent training; and let them take pride in our real accomplishments in serving the public.

Four, let's quit promoting for an age that's dead and gone. The last successful newspaper serial was "Chickie" and that ran at a time when even I was too young to understand it. And nobody gives houses away any more for circulation. Promote on today's basis—with good sense. Promote the product; not the side bait.

And, five, let's do all this with our heads up—without

being afraid. We still are the world's dominant news medium. We're going to stay that way.

The way to stay on top is to do the basic newspaper job—the printing of news—in clean and decent and complete fashion. Let's make our own advertising—the advertising of newspapers—a model for all other advertisers. Let us state the facts of the case honestly and with integrity.

Like news and editorial men, those in promotion have to get up and fight with your own tools—words and pictures. And words and pictures that do not add up to tripe.

Promotion men have much more voice in the making of their newspapers than many think. If they can only build some advertisements that boast of the real accomplishments of your newspapers, they will be proceeding to guide your newspapers on the right path.

By the very direction of its copy, promotion can instill pride in the news and editorial people; and can instill in publishers a sense of achievement; a sense of wanting to improve still more the quality of the newspaper.

## Not Flesh Or Fowl . . . by Walter Gieber

The Sunday Editor of the New York *Times* is a brave man. He is attempting to stem the stampede to the staccato style of newswriting advocated by the social engineers (Dr. Fleisch is their prophet!).

Lester Markel, writing in the April 1954 *ASNE Bulletin*, argues that newswriting is not the way we talk (as claimed by the readability technicians).

Mr. Markel has an effective argument against the choppy style.

But he then proceeds to make newswriting too mysterious a process.

"It is not a tangible thing," he writes.

If a news story fulfills its function, it supplies information. Information is tangible. If it isn't tangible, it isn't information. At best it is confusion.

Too many of us, flesh or fowl, get trapped in a generalization that all communication is the same thing. Fleisch and the other social engineers assume that communication should be the same as conversation. Some journalists confuse it with art, permitting themselves the emotional luxury of their psyche wrestling with all sorts of obscure symbols.

Communication is a craft—not an art—used by people living and working together. It is a craft because it is utilitarian and is used by people to serve a purpose. Mathematics can't be applied until the formula boys account for the specific purpose of the communication.

"I wuvs oo," whispers the swain.

Fleisch scale is pre-nursery—perhaps. The object of the boy's affections understands the words and even the purpose (and it may not be two-year-old level). The rest of us would be bored or titillated, depending on our ability to perceive the purpose of the communication.

There are as many kinds of communications as there are sets of persons communicating. It is possible, however, to set forth several levels of communication:

1. *Conversational coin*: This is idle chatter with no purpose other than to kill time or put off a pest.

*Illustration*—Two strangers at a bar:

Joe: Nice day. . .

Sam: Yup. . .

Joe: Da Dodgers oughta do okay?

Sam: Yup. . .

Joe: Dey really is in da clutch. . .

Sam: Real cool. . .

2. *Word of mouth*: At its best, a highly sensitive medium in which the persons involved can feel out the meaning and intent of the words; gestures play an important role.

*Illustration*—Two gals gossiping:

Suzie (raised eyebrows): Dear, it's true what they're saying about Arabella. . .

Lucy (shocked look; hands pressed against cheeks): NO!

Suzie (smug look): And she. . .

3. *Palaver and ritual*: The favorite form of communication, too often labelled as information, used by "spokes-

men," hucksters, politicians, and lazy editorial writers. This form of communication consists of spewing out words meaningful only to the writer, his yes-men, and other initiates:

*Illustration*—A speech given at any convention, even those attended by journalists and publishers:

"We have reached a critical junction in the affairs of the American press, and, gentlemen, it behooves us to put aside glittering generalities. The American press to remain free must put the freedom of the American people above all mundane considerations. We are all members of the team . . . yak . . . yak. . ." (Lots of applause)

4. *Rhetoric*: The traditional and often stylized form of communication found in sermons, and some editorials and political addresses. At best, its form is that of logic.

*Illustration*: "When, in the course of human events. . ." (What was that reading level?)

5. *Information*: Direct communication with the purpose of telling the other chap exactly what is going on. It can be specialized; the mathematician can use his symbols, mysterious to the rest of us, and be understood by another mathematician. And it can be very simple—"The President of the United States is Dwight D. Eisenhower."

Information is the preferred communication in business and technology and it should be the form used by journalists.

*This is information*:

"The Commerce Department announced last night that 400 tons of kumquats have been imported from China. . ."

*The next is NOT information*:

"Informed sources have told this newspaper that Red infiltrators in the State Department have permitted 400 tons of Chinese kumquats to enter this nation to destroy the American pantry. . ."

(Which story has the art?)

Let's get back to newswriting. It is presumed that the reporter is attempting to inform his readers. He doesn't use mathematics. Typographical science has made exact studies of the visual perception of newspapers. We can accept that 10-point Kool, Hole-of-Calcutta ink, and Sea-sick-Green newsprint make the best combination for the Daily Toot. But a reporter doesn't have a science of language.

A good newswriter, when attempting to transmit information, understands the facts involved, knows the individuality of his newspaper audience, and appreciates the impact of concise information. And this is craftsmanship—no art or conversation.

If any newswriter sweats—as any craftsman should—it is in the honest labor of being certain that the information isn't obscured by verbal gestures ("alleged"), conversa-

tional coin ("Senator Snort hit back at his critics"), and ritual ("a small but appreciative audience").

There's nothing mysterious about this. Reporters who haven't become lazy and have avoided the telephone-desk habit, can back this up.

---

Walter Gieber is assistant professor of journalism at Indiana University.

## Whaddya Mean, Local?

by Sylvan Meyer

Back on my high school newspaper every once in a while we would prevail upon the principal to hold an announcement until the weekly was distributed. That way we could get a scoop.

The small town daily has to get its scoops about the same way. We beat the gossips occasionally, but even when we don't the gossips read the paper avidly. They want to see if we got the story right.

But, then, who cares about scoops? Many of our readers don't see the paper until the next day, anyway, and even that manages to keep abreast of the metropolitan paper in the territory on wire coverage, thanks to the fact that rural mail route carriers only make one round a day. Your papers wait at the post office a long time to catch that one.

Readers forget that one big story, that magnificent campaign. They pick up the paper to read about themselves and their community and the more detail they read, the more interpretation, the more exhaustive analysis of their own affairs, the better they like it.

Every man interprets the universe according to the way it reflects on his own image. Consequently, the first mirror is his own community and its environs. When he understands what he sees there and knows that he is a participant in its life, he is ready to be a statesman and a nation-man and a world-man.

What do we mean, local? I pick up local papers, large and small, and find canned editorials, uncredited; a hodge-podge of syndicated features unleavened by local talent (no matter how lousy); obituaries literally buried in the insides; dull wire stories played high on page 1 with lively local stories played low on the back page. Why do newspapers do this? I don't know. Suppose the ladies' ready-to-wear store on the square put Dior fashions in the window and concealed the prints under empty boxes in the basement?

Readers call up when the paper is late. (The carrier is playing football in a sandlot.) "Where is the paper? We want to read *our* news!"

*Nieman Reports, Editor and Publisher, Quill*—all the trade magazines print more or less frantic solutions to the television problem. Actually, the solution is easy. No

other medium of mass communication now in existence can do what the newspaper can do. Radio and television haven't the time, the staff nor the facility to disseminate detailed, background news of the local community. Their commentators can wax glib about the four corners of the earth and toss their generalizations concerning Iran and Indo-China toward millions of ears and eyes, but they'll never walk into the courthouse at Gainesville, Ga., or even Chicago, Ill., and come out with a list of land transfers, or marriage license applications, or grand jury indictments.

The newspapers have an absolute monopoly on detail and vital statistics and I am constantly amazed at how few capitalize on their opportunity to run lists, just plain, old every day lists, of jurors, court proceedings, building permits, and all the other six point accumulations that furnish conversation in the drug store coffee club and at the civic club meetings.

And I'm not talking about country journalism. I'm talking about things that people talk about. I have yet to hear the hardware clerk and the farmer buying fence staples discuss the subtleties of Naguib's coup d'etat.

They're saying, "Did you see in the paper where John Jones, ol' Bob's boy, brought the Smith place up the road to build a corn mill?"

Corny? No, sir. Something they didn't hear on NBC? Yes, sir.

Of course, our readers hear about Naguib. They know almost as much about world and national affairs as they would from normal reading of a metropolitan paper. For the news is in the paper, in less length and detail, to be sure, but national and world news is backgrounded in excellent special features from the wire service and the syndicates. These are promoted and pointed out as worth reading.

I'm complaining, not bragging, about 16-page papers that contain not a stick of wire copy because I wish we had room for more local news and I wish it came in more steadily. With a larger staff, which most small papers can't afford, we could delve even deeper into the detailed information that is meat and drink to the local reader.

By assigning a five-man staff to a beat list of more than 60 separate categories and organizations, suppressing the desire for even finer breakdowns, our local newspaper searches for detail. In a follow-up story, it interprets the detail, in another it features the people who are involved in the detail, and on the editorial page it tries to appraise the detail in a logical opinion.

Will John Cameron Swazey ever announce into the living rooms in your town his ideas on the county commissioners' decision to raise the tax levy two mills?

Neither will he look into the progress of your Community's effort to build tourist trade and wrap-up the separate projects of the past six or eight months so that people's thinking on the subject will be better organized.

Local newspapering never gains the advantage of anonymity and that may well be one reason why it is sometimes a discouraging trade. News sources are all too aware that the man who writes the front page article is the same man who writes the editorial, and if they don't like the editorial they can be difficult to deal with. Even in large cities, the distinction between an editorial and a news story burns brightly only behind the brow of the professional. Many readers and news sources don't know the difference and don't care.

So the habit of thorough local coverage becomes important. If you do today what you did yesterday and you do the same thing tomorrow, pretty soon the sheriff becomes accustomed to your poking around his jail docket and the commissioners get used to your sitting in on their meetings. It's the first poke and the first sit that require holding out for your rights.

We have "freedom of information" trouble, but with more staff we would have less of it because we could make routine those checks that now are special and that arouse the justified suspicion that we are checking because we caught wind of special treatment or a cover-up.

Now all of this goes beyond selling papers or pandering to mass tastes.

Unless the local newspaper gives the public detailed and accurate information pertaining directly to the heartbeat of the community, the public will not get it at all. In government coverage particularly, the newspaper's information should be so complete that a citizen who reads it carefully can make up his mind intelligently on a policy decision in that government.

We have high school and college graduates throughout this land who understand the structure of Congress, the cabinet and the Supreme Court, know vaguely of the organization of their state General Assembly and what the governor does, but who don't know how many county commissioners they have or what the city manager is supposed to manage.

Even local government becomes more and more delegated to planning boards, hospital authorities, housing authorities, park and recreation boards, boards of education and municipal cemetery committees. Thus the effective processes of government drift further and further from the direct control of the electorate. Only complete newspaper information, reported in infinite detail can fill the gap.

The metropolitan press often does the best it can to cover not only its own city but the smaller cities and villages in its circulation area. But to give them real coverage is an impossible job. State-wide newspapers promote the myth of State-wide coverage. Often no other daily serves their scattered territories. They hit most of the small places with a lick and a promise. Success stories blossom, series after series extoll "progress," Four-H Clubs," etc. If someone

is killed or dies, if a school burns or a train is wrecked they print it.

Some heated squabble, generally due to local misunderstanding resulting from incomplete information and unconfirmed rumor, receives play embarrassingly prominent to the local community and invariably inadequate in terms of local background. But the day by day routine of news, the full and detailed treatment of each step the community takes along its way never makes print. I realize how impractical a task it would be for every big newspaper to cover every little incorporated town that nestles beneath the stone wings of its journalistic edifice. But ain't it a shame.

We gasp with horror when the polls reveal that 27.9 of of the people in the nation never heard of Bataan; 19.3 never heard of Anzio. How many people in hometown America never heard of their school superintendent, their local judge, their own indebtedness?

The job belongs not to the smaller dailies alone, but to the big ones, the 25,000 and 50,000 and the really great big ones who hold sway as "the" paper in perhaps hundreds of communities known only to the state editor and to him only as those places where, when he gets time, he must hire a high school boy to string for him.

Community life, save for a thin skin of sophisticates,

forms America's foundations. It is the individual's primary contact with all the rest of humanity. His feeling of responsibility to his neighbor and his fellow villager, townsman or suburbanite comes before his concern for the next town or the next country. World peace is important but he views world peace in terms of his community's part in making it possible. If his newspaper doesn't help him to understand his own community, he doesn't have much hope of ever understanding the larger communities of which he is a part.

People fidget with their newspaper. "Not a thing in this rag tonight," they say. How silly, says the editor. There's an exclusive yarn from Trieste, a brilliant analysis of the world bank, four distinguished columnists, an editorial on autumnal leaf coloration plus a soul-searching essay on our moral obligations to Formosa, with an untold variety of recipes, comic strips, dress patterns.

"Funny thing," says the editor, "this survey says the classified ad page has tremendous readership."

Well, there is a reason, Buddy. Those little ads hit people where they live. And your readers are opening their papers at the back to read those ads before they read your news.

No want ads on TV, eh, Mr. Swazey?

---

Sylvan Meyer is editor of the Gainesville (Ga.) *Times*. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1951.

## A Country Editor's Week

A favorite question put to the 9,000 weekly editors of America is: "What do you find to do on days other than Thursdays?"

We have had this query presented to us many times and we have always fumbled with the answer. So this week we decided to learn for ourselves just how we fritter away the time.

Figuring a 65-hour week for a country editor, this is about how we fill each shining hour:

Activity	Hours
News gathering and writing	14.0
Background reading	10.0
Editorial writing	1.5
Production, delivery	6.0
Janitor work and maintenance	1.0
Employe matters and payroll	1.0
Accounting, collections	3.0
Civic meetings, lectures (av. 5 a week)	7.5
Advertising	3.0
Printing and purchasing	6.0

Proofreading	2.0
Circulation	.5
Letter writing	.5
Answering citizens' queries	1.5
Paying bills	.5
Attending to mail	3.0
Making notes in bed	.5
Travel	1.0
Photographs and photoengravings	.5
Miscellaneous	2.0
Total hours	65.0

This, of course, is not a typical breakdown of a country editor's week. We know one editor who works at home until noon each day to avoid the hundreds of distractions at the office. Many others devote half their time to advertising and printing solicitation. More commonly, the editor devotes most of his time to the Linotype, make-up of printed forms, and press work. In these cases his wife usually handles the news and bookkeeping.

It would be fine, in some ways, if

America's smalltown editors could spend more time secluded in thought. But since their newspapers are private industries, and not subsidized, the editors must necessarily direct most of their attention to keeping the business in a healthy economic condition. This activity gives editors the grass-roots touch we hear so much about in Washington. They are concerned with the welfare of the community because their newspapers' success is bound to the place where they live.

Some editors put in only a 50-hour week and others crowd in 70 or 75 when circumstances require. A number even go down to the plant on a Sunday afternoon and run off two pages of the next edition.

All of this may seem like a lot of work and worry. It is. Yet we see few editors leaving their vocation. Serving as the information clearing house of a good American smalltown gives a satisfaction that country newspapermen seldom wish to surrender.

—Littleton (Colo.) *Independent*, Jan. 1

# New Blood to Share Our Blended Heritage

by Mark Ethridge

Judge Shelbourne has given me the very pleasant assignment of welcoming you as new citizens of the United States. This class is particularly notable in that it is the biggest group of new citizens admitted at one time in Louisville, and among them are the first two displaced persons to come to Louisville. They disembarked from the first shipload of D.P.'s to the United States.

You need not feel strange here. All of us have come from somewhere else. We are a new country in terms of history. We can not boast the pyramids and tombs of Gizeh or the hieroglyphics of Summeria with the first traces of man's habitation of the earth. The civilization from which any of you has come has its roots deeper in history than America's. What we can say to our new citizens is that we here in America are a fusion of all the ethnic strains and all the civilizations of the world.

We have drawn upon the Mediterranean basin for our religions, for much of our language, for our system of numerals, for the evidences of the antiquity of man and his relationship to the natural and supernatural forces which are missing here. We have grown upon the "glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome"; upon the fierce fighting spirit of the Balkan mountains that resisted tyranny through 400 years of Turkish rule and will manifest itself again.

We have drawn from Western Europe our language, our laws, much of our system of government, and, along with the few cavaliers who came this way, the "tired, the poor," the landless, the religious and political dissenters who sought a haven here. The vast tide of immigration, for whatever reason people came here, has enriched our country. Fused with the old stock, it has given us as a people the restless energy which has created a material prosperity greater than that which has ever been centered in one country in the world's history.

But it would be a mistake for you, as new citizens, to believe that, no matter how many evidences we give to the contrary, we as a people place our highest valuation upon our tangible possessions. It was Woodrow Wilson who said, "America is not a mere body of traders; it is a body of free men. Our genius is built upon our freedom—it is moral, not material. We have a great ardor for gain, but we have a deep passion for the rights of man."

I would adjure you to keep that in mind about your

---

With these words, Mark Ethridge, publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, welcomed a new class of citizens in Louisville June 26.

fellow citizens. We like to fight less than any nation I know, but three times in the span of even a young man's life we have transported vast armies 3,000 and 7,000 miles to fight in freedom's name. The young men who landed upon the Normandy and Anzio beaches, who waded into the gun emplacements at Tarawa and upon the volcanic beach at Iwo Jima, were not hardened professionals in the art of war. They were the young fellows you see hanging around the corner drug store or driving tractors on our farms; they were the young Niseis from Hawaii, the Army's most decorated battalion. They were the young Filipinos who, with their country under occupation, joined up and fought gallantly with their American brothers.

For whatever reason they may tell you they fought—and we Americans are most remarkably tongue-tied and shy about expressing our ideals—it was because they did share with all free peoples everywhere a common feeling and an ideal: the hatred of bullies and oppressors and the determination to be free and to help others to be free. Whether the American can tell you in so many words or not, he *is* a spiritual and political product of the Judaic-Christian religion, the words of French and English philosophers such as Rousseau and Locke, of the Declaration of Independence, the Massachusetts and Virginia Declarations of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, the Emancipation Rights, Tom Paine's writings, the French Declarations of Proclamation and the Atlantic Charter. He challenges brutal authority as your immediate ancestors challenged and overthrew the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings. He shares with all free peoples everywhere exultation at the spirit of Nikola Petkov, who, when being led to the gallows in Sofia five years ago, shouted to his murderers, "You can kill me, but you can not kill freedom. Long live freedom."

All Americans feel pride when we think of the contribution nationals of other countries have made to us. We do not need to recall that von Steuben, a Prussian, was the drillmaster of Washington's small army; that Pulaski, a Pole, fell at Savannah; that Kosciusko, a Pole, was Washington's engineer and fortified West Point; that LaFayette was one of Washington's commanders, or that DeGrasse was Admiral of the French fleet that bottled up Cornwallis at Yorktown. Indeed, we do not have to go far back into our history at all. We only have to look around us to see some of them:

Carl Milles, the sculptor who made the Museum of Modern Art what it is, was born in Sweden;

Eliot Saarinen, the architect, is a native of Finland;

Leopold Stokowski came to us from Poland; Walter Damrosch and Dr. Theodore Thomas from Germany; Dimitri Mitropoulos from Greece, and the conductor of our own Louisville symphony from England.

Alexander Graham Bell, who gave us the telephone, was from Scotland; General Goethals, who built the Panama Canal, was a native of Holland; Joseph Pulitzer, perhaps the greatest of our newspapermen and sire of distinguished newspapermen sons, was a native of Bohemia; Knute Rockne, greatest of our football coaches, whose players at Notre Dame had names that sounded like the roster of a Polish regiment, was from Norway; Dr. William Mayo, founder of the Mayo Clinic and father of famous Mayo sons, was an Englishman; Carl Schurz, Union general and United States senator, came from Germany; Albert Gallatin, congressman, senator, ambassador, nominee for vice-president—the man whose statue stands in front of the treasury which he served as secretary—was a Swiss; Spyros Skouras, the theater magnate, a Greek; Sikorski, the aviation genius, a Pole; David Sarnoff, who has been responsible for great developments in the electronics and communications field, was Russian born. Chief Justice Warren and Charles Lindbergh are grandsons of Swedes. The movies and the stage are peopled by foreign-born stars such as Victor Borge, Greta Garbo, Deborah Kerr, Audrey Hepburn, Marlene Dietrich, Cary Grant and Balanchine, the choreographer.

The awful weapon to which we perhaps owe our freedom at the moment was, contrary to what so many Americans think, not primarily the product of native American minds. Nels Bohr and Charles Lauritsen, Danes; Lisa Meitner, a refugee from Hitler; Fermi, a refugee from Mussolini, and of course Einstein, from Germany, made major contributions to the creation of the atom bomb. Oppenheimer, the administrator and primary figure in its development, got his education in nuclear physics in Europe. It was Teller, a Hungarian, who unlocked the door to the H bomb, aided by Bethe, an Austrian, I believe.

We have felt enrichment of new blood and old culture here, too. Drs. Schlesinger, an Austrian, Bier and Herz, Germans, and Brodschi, Rumanian, are distinguished members of the University of Louisville faculty. Our most distinguished minister and perhaps our leading citizen, Rabbi Rauch, was born in Galicia.

It is we Americans who lose when we restrict immigration as we have recently done. Very few of that distin-

guished list which I have mentioned could pass the tests we prescribe now for admission to this country. We seem to be afraid of ideas. I hope, and believe, it is a passing phase in our life, because we are at heart a revolutionary people. It is somewhat ironic that so many Americans are likely to recognize revolution only when it translates itself into political revolt or violence.

But the truth is that our very genius has been revolutionary. It will continue to be unless we stifle it and betray our heritage so greatly as to insist that the American shall be a robot, stifled as to dissent and inhibited in the free flight of his imagination. For Americans to become conformists would be to betray the central core of our political and economic genius. It would be to betray those peoples and those nations who are free because they exercised the right to dissent and followed the examples of the French and American revolutions. It would stunt our economic growth. Our mass production line is a revolt against ancient guilds; our distribution system—the super-markets—a revolt against the country store. Every invention which has increased the productive capacity of man, speeded his travel, lightened the burdens of the housewife, is a revolt against ancient methods. We Americans ought to have more sense than to be willing to spend millions upon the improvement of our gadgets and at the same time fear the infusion of new blood and new ideas. We need them and in that spirit we are most heartily glad that you have come.

There is only one thing more I should say. You are becoming American citizens at the time when this country, because it is the strongest of the free nations and therefore the prime antagonist of the totalitarian nations, is in the greatest danger in its history. But, as Elmer Davis said, "This nation was not built by cowards; it will not be preserved cowards."

As far as I can sense the feeling of the American people, theirs is a philosophy that subscribes to Churchill's words to his own people when he said, "We ought to rejoice at the responsibilities with which destiny has honored us, and be proud that we are guardians of this country in an age when her life is at stake," and to Jefferson's words when, in a letter to Monroe, he said, "But some men are born for the public. Nature by fitting them for the service of the human race on a broad scale, has stamped them with evidences of her destination and their duty. We as a nation bear the stamp of destiny and duty."

We welcome you to share our privileges and our trials.

# The Business of Writing

by Louis M. Lyons

Journalism has a bad name. It is a bad name.

But the best journalistic style is superb for all narrative purposes—I almost said for all practical purposes.

It is lean economy of language, moving on active verbs in a simple structure that is effortless to read, and is given life, vigor and color by a sound ear for the needed word.

This is, I say, at its best. We recognize it when we see it.

Meyer Berger on the *Times*, at his best, has it—a lively pace all the way. James Morgan on the Boston *Globe*—all too rarely now, but New Englanders have enjoyed him all their lives—uses an almost Biblical frugality of words, to gain the strength of simplicity. Tom Stokes in Washington is a plain blunt man like his sentences. Ed Lahey of the Chicago *Daily News* has a pungency in choice of words that saves him acres of description and explanation. Homer Bigart in the New York *Herald Tribune* has a penetrating force in his hard sentences.

We remember the strong individuality of Heywood Brown's light but devastating sentences. E. B. White's books were first journalistic pieces.

Any vigorous writer you will find uses direct rather than indirect sentences, active rather than passive verbs. He makes his story move. And it moves on verbs. The verbs are the dynamic parts of speech. They get you there.

Adjectives have their place but not every place. A lean, muscular style will do with few adjectives. They can easily become excess baggage. They ought to earn their way like the articles in a knapsack that has limits to its capacity and can easily weigh you down with anything not indispensable.

Brisk movement then is a desirable characteristic of good journalistic style.

It means telling the story efficiently, with no waste motion. It is lively. It is active. It doesn't drag or turn off into blind alleys, or pause for irrelevant observation, or pull in extraneous matter. It gets over the ground without stopping to moralize or reflect on the meaning of the universe or to gaze aimlessly around at the scenery or conjure up pretty images of details not visible to the eye.

In short, it sticks with its task and carries the reader along through a terse, cohesive recital.

At its best, I say, this is the most economical form of writing—an economy of the reader's time and of his attention. For it keeps to the point and does not tax or dissipate his energies in following the trail through a diffusion of language.

The disciplines of journalism are despotic as to time and space. These are the great limitations. They may be oppressive. They can be destructive and are certainly discouraging to fine writing. The journalist speaks slightly of fine writing. He means fancy writing, and his medium affords no chance for it. It gets in the way. It intrudes into space needed for facts. It is discouraging to the young writer, self-conscious about style and bursting to express himself.

The journalist most of the time is not expressing himself. He is merely an agent chronicling an event as it occurred, as nearly as he can approach that actuality. He must repress his urge at self-expression, and restrain his flights of fine writing.

This curbs if it does not repress the instinct for creative writing—for imaginative work. For the imaginative writer who has real literary talent for literature with a large L, as McGregor Jenkins used to put it, newspaper work can be disillusioning and possibly destructive. He is a misplaced person in journalism. And so I often feel he is. Ever since young graduates in literature began coming to see me about getting onto newspapers, I have had some mighty misgivings about the literary fellow who wants to start on a newspaper. He may find its limitations frustrating.

But for the fellow whose ambition and talent are for literature with a small l—the everyday writing of reports, articles, editorials, topical magazine and book writing—the exactions of daily journalism may be a valuable training, a discipline in a craftsmanship that is peculiarly adapted, I suggest, to our times—to our needs, which I would describe in brief as the need to be informed. A compelling need in a complex world when there are too many things we need to know and most of them coming too fast for us and too complicated.

We need clear, crisp reporting, so presented as to be capable of our use—within the limits of our time, energy and grasp.

It is a hard job to be informed—never harder than now—never more important than now.

The complexity of events increases. The difficulty of getting at the facts behind the news grows greater. All your time we have been befogged one way or another by censorship, secrecy, security, the new science of propaganda, the Iron Curtain from many areas, to say nothing of the murkier fog of demagogic distortion of the facts.

Some of our most responsible magazines, recognizing this need, have increasingly sought out the topical article to interpret the background of the most timely and im-

---

This is from a series of lectures at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference, August 1954.

portant and complicated events. This means they have turned more to reporting—reporting in depth—to pick up from where the daily headline left it and go on from there. For this very essential purpose, the reporting style I have been describing is truly functional.

We value efficiency in the writing of the things we need to read. With our leisure we may choose to devote our time to reading imaginative works, philosophy or art. But for our need of information, for our bread and butter reading to keep up with events, whether by book or magazine or newspaper, we require direct, simple economy of statement, an informed report. It must arrest our attention to the compulsion of knowing the score, and it must hold our interest to the essentials of what is happening. If it is wordy and diffuse or difficult, we lay it aside as something we ought to read when we have time; but in the competition for our attention, the chances are against our going back to it. We find other material less demanding of us.

You can scold us as intellectually lazy. But we have right to economize our time. We can argue for the necessity, with so many demands on our attention. And as Pres. Conant said in a wry criticism of culture for culture's sake, "Some people would rather go to the ball game."

In a very real sense all topical magazine and book writing is reporting. It stems from the same need. It deals in the same requirements: to inform the reader. A rock-bottom imperative in all such writing is that it deal objectively with the facts. Objectivity is *the* ultimate discipline of journalism. It is at the bottom of all sound reporting—indispensable as the core of the writer's capacity, of his integrity.

When I was a cub reporter I had a story to do on the quarterly report of the old Boston Elevated system, the present MTA,—the transit system, whose history then as now was a nearly unbroken record of deficits. This time they were in the black. I knew just enough to know how extraordinary that was.

I wrote:

"The Boston Elevated had a remarkable record for January—It showed a profit—etc."

The old night editor brought my copy back to my typewriter. He knew I was green. In a kindly way, quite uncharacteristic of him, he spelled out the trouble:

"Remarkable is not a reporting word," he said. "That is an editorial word. We just tell the facts. Tell the story so that the reader will say, 'That's remarkable.'"

Objectivity is the primary lesson of journalism. Complete objectivity may indeed be unattainable, as our friends on *PM* used to plead when caught violating it. But the striving for it is the grail of journalism, and what gives it character. Many never attain it. Some are incapable of understanding it. These are forever inept, out of place in the job. A reporter without it is like an artist who cannot

draw. You can never be sure of the shape of things with him.

Objectivity is a hard discipline for the young. It means losing yourself in absorption in the facts. It means keeping yourself and all your whimsies and idiosyncracies out of the way of the story to let the facts make their own impact on the reader. This is a mature concept. It takes most people a long time to learn to submerge themselves in the report and let it be wholly factual. It is more than a matter of style. It is a habit of mind, even a trait of character.

I don't mean that a story tells itself. The journalist needs great facility, a ready vocabulary, a sense of precision in choice of words, of accuracy in phrasing, a definiteness of statement, a sense of the concrete. But his is *not* self-conscious writing. The reader should never have to be conscious of the writing at all. It should be so transparent as to leave the reader's attention free to follow the unfolding narrative.

The enemy of efficient writing is obscurity. Journalists have a word for it—fog—which means just what it says. Fog gets in the way of clear, definite statement. It has to be rigorously edited out and the sentence thinned down and straightened out to say what it means without any fuss or blur or uncertainty. There isn't any room for argument as to which is the antecedent. There shouldn't be any *which* there in the first place if there is a chance of question as to whether it means this or that. The newspaper reader isn't going to spend any time figuring out how to parse the sentence. All that side of it has to be second nature to the reporter who is going to hold his reader long enough to tell him anything. Very often the quick answer is to cut the sentence in two. It is amazing how many sentences gain in clarity and also in vigor just by putting a period where that comma was.

While we are down to details like commas, it is worth noting that another enemy of clarity is the self-conscious effort to avoid repeating a word. If you have to hunt for a synonym, the safe rule is, don't. It is no sin to repeat a word. If the word, as often happens, is a key word in the report, possibly the subject of it, repetition may be necessary to make sure it is intelligible. The sense of the sentence always comes first. The absolute essential is that the reader have no chance of failing to understand it. If there is any chance that your "it" or "he" or "they" or "those" may be construed as referring back to anything but the word you want to avoid repeating, then repeat it.

*The New Yorker* of August 7 had as one of their ironic items, this:

"Who Should We Educate?"—title of an article in the California Teachers Association Journal.

*The New Yorker* replies:

"Golly, don't ask little we."

The English language is so full of booby traps that we can't afford to take any chances with it. Americans never really learn grammar, to handle it safely. The least you can do with its fine points is to avoid getting involved with them at all. If you aren't sure of who or whom, avoid them. They are usually best avoided anyway. Who clauses are usually cumbersome. If you don't know *that* from *which*, use them sparingly. That-which situations are safer than who-whom, because most readers can't discriminate that from which. Subjunctives for most are as lost as Atlantis.

But anybody making a living by writing ought now and then to get hold of a grammar and spend some time with it. It is an interesting exercise.

Fowler's *Modern English Usage* is a joy to read and full of sound sense and instructive hints for avoiding bad English. One has a right to certain prejudices in usage—like Mr. Churchill—but not to very many—not to a point of eccentricity—not to a point where the form intrudes on the reader's attention.

I was taught, and thoroughly shared the view, that it is weak, pointless and indirect to start a sentence with "It is" or "There are." In general I believe it is true, and that these forms are to be avoided in favor of a more direct, active opening. But on reading Eric Hofer's strong article "The Workingman Looks at His Boss" in *Harper's* for March, I find he starts his article with "There are" and as he uses it, it lends weight to the sober statement which he makes his text:

There are many of us who have been workingmen all our lives and, whether we know it or not, will remain workingmen till we die. Whether there be a God in heaven or not; whether we be free or regimented; whether our standard of living be high or low—I and my like will go on doing more or less what we are doing now.

That is surely no weak opening. I would not change his "there are"; rather it changes my prejudice.

That happens to all of us. It is an indication of the flexibility, even fluidity, of our language that prejudice gives way to usage when it proves itself. When I was young, A. Lawrence Lowell was a name of great authority. I remember an English teacher who urged against using "couple" to mean other than a married pair, until in an annual report as President of Harvard, Lowell used "a couple of years" and, such was his stature, that ended the hostility to such use of "couple" with great numbers of English teachers.

What saves us is that English is a flexible vehicle and usage is tolerant with the writer who is interesting and has something to say.

The abuses of journalistic writing are many—largely traceable to incompetence and near illiteracy in some of

its practitioners. But in the hands of a craftsman, it has efficiency, vitality, the interest of sharp clear statement and the accuracy of precise and plain language. It can also have a pleasant ease of natural manner and a happy association of sound with meaning if the writer has a good ear for a well chosen word: what Philip Gibbs calls a feeling for the quality of words.

Such an ear is a natural gift in a writer as in a musician. But its effective use is an art worth cultivating.

The modern mechanics of communication makes us more aware of this sense of sound. Increasingly in our time the written and spoken word approach each other. Radio has transformed reporters into broadcasters. The news all has the same source in the great news agencies. They rewrite it for radio, and commit many sins in the process. The purpose is obvious: to adapt the sentence to easy listening. This is the less needed if it is a sound sentence to start with.

Even so, the mere act of speaking or reading tends with all of us to shorthand version—fewer words, shorter sentences, a more rapid completion, a greater care for words that cannot be confused with other words, a more conscious avoidance of the unfamiliar or the stilted. Radio requires this. So far, this may be an improvement of style, a refinement of the written form, a more efficient recital. If—always—it is done by competent craftsmen. Too often it is not.

The time element is a problem. Usually the radio does not permit time for as full a report, as detailed a narrative as the newspaper. This is a deficiency of the medium. It tends to provoke a telescoping and abbreviation which often makes for distortion. More serious, it gives occasion for conclusive statements that may do violence to the objectivity of the total report. The need for a brief package job—for a five minute period say—makes for a superficial overall that gives an illusion of a definite finality of the event which just may not exist. An Elmer Davis, master of the laconic style, can condense the essential news for us in five minutes. But the genius of his combination of seasoned wisdom, experience, knowledge, integrity and craftsmanship has not been duplicated on the air.

To catch listener attention and hold it, the radio news writer too often resorts to meretricious means of peppering up the news, of overcoloring the report.

The first thing an intelligent operative would do with the radio news package report laid down for him to recite on the hour is to kill the opening sentence—the lead. This is almost invariably a hopped-up, editorialized, oversimplified and conclusive appraisal of the news that hasn't yet been reported. If he killed that, he could then give the report, or the abbreviated version furnished him. If he wanted to comment on it, his comment would logically follow the report instead of anticipating it.

Having knocked off the froth at the top, he would then go through with a blue pencil and transform many slanted, loaded, prejudiced words into honest, objective nouns and verbs.

I have been doing this for over three years with the part that I use of a teletyped radio wire report. I can do it almost automatically, although the result is often enough that what I have left isn't worth broadcasting. That enables me to save my listeners time by leaving it out, to make more time for such hard facts as may turn up before the day is over. I prefer my opinion of the news to be my own.

Most people make hard work of writing. Perhaps all of us do at least part of the time.

This, I think, goes with a tendency to overwrite.

When I speak of hard work of writing, I do not mean to deprecate or minimize the drudgery of redrafting, of polishing, of refining. There can never be too much of the perfecting of a manuscript.

But I refer to the first draft, to the beginning of the operation, of getting it started. The warm-up—the striving for a striking lead.

A very wise editor once suggested that the best result comes from throwing away the first page of a manuscript. What he meant was that so many writers have about that much fluff or froth or superfluous excitement, or nervous uncertainty about the shape of the story, that they have to work off before they get down to cases and begin their story.

You see feature writers—indeed any kind of writers—tearing off one trial after another of a lead—sweating it out—doing a paragraph—throwing it away—trying another, using up their nervous energy, just on the first sentences.

I suggest this is usually the wrong approach. That the thing is to get your notes organized—shipshape—lean back and think about them a bit, and then just start to tell the story in a natural fashion.

After it is written you may come upon a better start. You may even want to turn it end for end. But that is a second part of the job. Also it often suggests itself. After you've written it a while, so that it begins to flow, so that the story is telling itself, a much more natural opening may turn up. After you're done, you may very well want to reshape it to start with that.

But it can be an awful waste of time and energy to do over and over the opening merely for the sake of a smart opening. Meantime you are losing steam for the whole job, and very likely getting tired of it all.

I think this overstress on the opening comes from newspaper work and is one of the evils of newspaper work—the terrific emphasis on the lead. Of course, in writing for a deadline, you may have to complete the lead and let it go

on the wire or to the copy boy before you finish the story. That is one of the limitations of newspaper work from which you are blessedly freed if your medium is a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or for no deadline at all—something to do when you have the mood and leisure to do it right.

Another curse of the journalistic habit is the tradition that everything goes into the opening. The what, why, and when, how, where, who, Rudyard Kipling's six honest serving men. Important, true—but not necessarily all to be packed into the lead. That is for the reader who is suspected of never turning beyond the first page—or getting much below the headlines.

One of our most successful newspaper editors, Basil Walters—"Stuffy" Walters—used to have a conviction that most writers overwrite. To get them out of it he required a reporter returning from an assignment to come in and recite the story to him before he wrote. In his oral report, the reporter tended to give a natural, rapid narrative, leaving out non-essentials. Then Walters would tell him to go and write it just as he'd talked it.

*Time*, Inc., whatever else it is guilty of, deserves some credit for discovery that the best way to report a story, usually, is to follow the prescription of the King of Hearts, in "Alice." "Just begin at the beginning and go on to the end; then stop."

The magazine article permits the writer to escape the newspaper requirement to summarize all in the opening and then begin to tell the story, with some inevitable duplication in the later paragraphs. Of course, all chance of suspense and most chance of continuity is denied the newspaper writer by this convention.

Partly from the necessity of breaking so many newspapermen of their arbitrary news writing habits, magazine editors, many of them, have developed their own very arbitrary requirements of how to write a magazine story. I am sure that these have been necessary, and that many articles are more readable because of them.

But I suggest they have their application chiefly to writers who need a set of crutches to lean on—often writers who ought not to be writing at all.

No sensible editor would apply such rules to the natural story teller whose first sentence is interesting in itself and whose story gathers interest as it unfolds—to hold the reader as it carries him along.

What difference would it make how or where Dickens opened one of his *Pickwick* stories? Or at what point Mark Twain began talking of life on the Mississippi?

Edith Sitwell, writing a moving, intimate recollection of Dylan Thomas in the first *Atlantic* to come out after his death, starts simply: "Dylan Thomas is dead."

Jacques Barzun in "America's Passion for Culture" (*Harper's* for March) opens with as nondescript a sentence as one well could:

"Whatever department of life one thinks of today . . ."

Yet it is a provocative article, and lively all the way. One almost concludes it makes little difference how you get into a piece that can make its own way.

We have all had an experience of picking up a book or an article and finding our eyes caught by a passage well into it, feeling held by it, and going on with it—and then out of interest turning back to see where it began and who did it. But we didn't need any artificial stimulus of lead or title—it was all interesting; it attracted us by its own quality.

It is the same as with a talk. You hear a speaker. He opens with a funny story—he hopes. Then, having done his duty by the tradition of after dinner speaking, he drones on laboriously for his half hour. You would escape if you could. Another speaker just starts in and holds your attention by his own keen interest and grasp of the subject. You feel you are getting something new and fresh or interesting or different all the time he talks, and you want to hear more.

We encounter both kinds of writing. The article that opens with an artificial device to sell it to the reader is most apt to sag into a desultory recital after it gets past the contrived lead.

The mere fact of so much contrivance of writing—so many articles on how to write—so many gimcracks about arresting attention—such a science of the word doctors—as to how many words to a sentence and how many syllables to a word—all this suggests that the field of writing is attracting many people who have no natural capacity for it and would probably be more effective and happier doing something else.

I suggest that most writers are aware of awkward sentences or poor organization in a piece. Sometimes failure to correct it is sheer laziness. Another factor against sufficient revision, I am sure, is typing. I find it myself. As long as the thing is in long hand, I chew it up, scratch it out, pull it apart and patch it up. But once it's typed I have

immediately a great reluctance to change it. The typescript has such a permanent look. It looks so neat and finished. Subconsciously I'm probably aware of how long it took to type it, and what a job it will be to get it done over, and with so many demands on the office time I resent the time it takes to do things over. But I am sure a prime necessity for the writer is to lose his respect for a typescript, and mark it up just as ruthlessly and casually as he did his own longhand.

It needs to be typed, after his first long hand draft. I am sure that is an important stage. It's much easier to read over, and there's a better chance to get the hang of it as a whole piece. It is in better shape to work on—to revise. But you have to get over that block that makes you hesitate to mar those beautiful typed pages.

Peter Abraham, colored South African author of a fine novel, *Tell Freedom*, says:

"I read the Bible and I saw." He credits the simplicity and strength of his prose to an instructor at a Teachers College who, "whenever I used big words or made clumsy and almost meaningless sentences, sent me to the Bible."

James Stern, reviewing the result in the *New York Times' Book Review*, August 8, says:

"In *Tell Freedom* there is not one big word, not one clumsy sentence."

Those who have capacity to work out their own salvation as writers, to write with originality, individuality, to say something and say it effectively in their own way, ought to avoid the synthetic and artificial, for it will surely rob their writing of its own character and strength.

It seems to me it is time for resistance to the props and patterns that yield so much ersatz writing. To the writer who hasn't got it and never will have, this can't do any harm. He has no talent to bury in slick processing. But to the writer with a promise of development, the only road to growth is to be yourself, and that requires you to tell your own story your own way.

## Should Country Editors Live In Vacuums?

by Stephen E. Fitzgerald

In the July issue of *Nieman Reports*, Mr. Evan Hill complains, at some length, of the country editor's desperation in coping with a flood of press releases. He then goes on to make what appears to be a rather broad and in my opinion unfounded assault on public relations generally.

Mr. Hill perhaps confuses public relations and publicity. But he seems to me off base on quite a number of counts. I should like to say why I think so.

One must assume that Mr. Hill would prefer to see country editors cut off from communication with the various information sources which he identifies as: business groups, philanthropic groups, government agencies, pressure groups, educational institutions and political organizations. That's covering quite a lot of territory.

I find it hard to believe that Mr. Hill seriously entertains the idea that the rural editor should live in a vacuum, or that he must be protected from the daily visits of the postman. But this is what he seems to suggest.

However much the editor may yearn for the easy days of yore, when he could confine his efforts to reporting church suppers or school picnics, it is now impossible to go back to 1910. The modern world *is* complex, and there *are* many things going on in business, philanthropy, government, pressure groups, educational institutions and political organizations which affect the lives of people living in rural areas.

The true business of an editor is to edit. If a valid business organization—or a pressure group, or a philanthropic foundation, on anybody else—wishes to send an editor a statement for consideration, the organization presumably has such a right in a democracy. The sending of press releases is part of the flow of information in a free society.

Mr. Hill complains that most of the press releases received by his unidentified newspaper were rejected. This is not surprising—and it does not necessarily prove anything. Most of the wire service copy received by most newspapers is not used—a recent study by the International Press Institute showed most papers used only a *fraction* of the foreign news sent to them—but the papers do not drop the wire services. Editors do not expect the news agencies to select the copy usable in their papers; they know that editing for local readers is their responsibility.

It seems to me a very good development in American life—the number of press releases sent by important groups to country editors. It indicates that many people consider rural readers among America's intelligent citizens—and are attempting to keep them informed.

If Mr. Hill's editor really did throw all the press releases away without looking at them, this does not demonstrate

good editorial judgment. It is, let us say, at least conceivable that a government agency such as the Atomic Energy Commission might have something of interest to report to the citizens of the small town to which Mr. Hill refers. Even a strongly biased statement by, say, the American Medical Association, may be news—or at least worth some attention, analysis and comment by the editor. This particular editor has an audience of some 2,500 subscribers, each of whom might be affected by what the AMA says, thinks or does. If Mr. Hill's editor chooses to throw such material into the wastebasket unread, is he then a good editor?

Mr. Hill follows with a paragraph in which he says that the "experienced news man who goes into public relations knows the problems confronting the editor and takes pains to see that his releases are well-written, interesting, easy to use and with some news value. And, if possible, he adds the local angle or twist that often keeps the release out of the wastebasket."

This raises several questions. Does it necessarily give more value to a press release if the release is prepared by a man who knows the few basic tricks of the newspaper trade? Should the release be written to intrigue a bored editor, or should it be designed to convey as much essential information as possible? Should it always have "the local angle or twist?"

Let us take the last question first. The American Cancer Society sends out a press release, reporting the progress of cancer research in a California university. Should the Cancer Society try desperately to give the story a "local twist" for Bangor, Maine, and all other cities and towns to which the release may be sent? Or should the Society simply report the facts, and assume that intelligent editors know that one out of every five families in the U.S. will be hit some day by cancer? Once again, it seems to me that the answer depends upon how seriously the editor tries to do a job of editing.

The release writer has a right to distribute information to anyone who may be concerned. The editor has a right to accept or reject it. To suggest that the average country editor will print otherwise useless material if someone will "twist" it for him or give him a prefabricated "peg" is to suggest that the average country editor is indeed a lazy or vulnerable fellow.

Now let us consider the question of whether the release should be written to intrigue the editor. I do not think press releases should be specially packaged or jazzed up for jaded editorial eyes. Those who send out press releases

should not be primarily worried about the editor's "problems." They should assume that he is competent to deal with these problems, and that they should be primarily concerned about spreading on the record information they have to convey.

I do not accept the notion that press releases prepared by former newspapermen are bound to be more interesting or more acceptable than those prepared by people supposedly not acquainted with the mystic rites of getting out a newspaper. In the top rank of practicing public relations men today there are, of course, many former newspapermen. There are also a good many ex-lawyers, ex-teachers, and ex-engineers—and many of these people can turn out prose as readable as any written by veterans of the city room.

Mr. Hill complains that some organizations distributing press information were "not aware of the composition of the towns to which they were sending the handouts." Quite possibly this is all to the good. When government agencies send their releases in standard forms to all editors, leaving the editors the right to accept or reject, I am not upset. But when such agencies start "rifling" special stories to individual papers, doing the editors' work for them, then I can begin to get scared.

In making these comments I do not imply that an editor's job could not be eased if press release writers did a more intelligent job of sifting their mailing lists and getting their information to the places where a demand for the information actually exists. From a technical viewpoint, some of the releases sent to editors are admittedly frightful. But I am disturbed by Mr. Hill's idea that editors have to be hand-fed.

At the end of his articles Mr. Hill blandly remarks that "there is no doubt that the publicity industry is deceiving its employers." He urges organizations hiring publicists to compare the number of releases used with the number mailed, and suggests that businessmen in particular would be shocked to find how many releases had been discarded. His statement is naive.

American businessmen are far more sophisticated about publicity than Mr. Hill seems to realize. They know that the competition for news space in papers and magazines is intense, and that many releases fall by the wayside. And they also know that much of the news moved on the wires by the major news agencies does not appear in most papers—but they feel that it is necessary in the modern world to compete in the field of public information with the best instruments available.

The press release is only one instrument—and a *comparatively minor instrument*—used in modern public relations. Public speeches, radio scripts, television programs, traveling exhibits, books and pamphlets, motion pictures are also used

by American business to reach particular audiences. All these channels of communication have their defects and their difficulties, but all of them are effectively utilized in carefully planned public relations programs. Of course, a good deal of public relations work is concerned with questions of management policy in which the question of press releases never arises.

American businessmen may not always be as wise as Mr. Hill would like them to be, but they are certainly rather tough-minded, and like to know where their dollars go. The steady growth of public relations in recent years offers proof enough that businessmen are increasingly aware of the value of this kind of activity. They realize that business in the twentieth century largely depends on good will—and good will largely depends on deserving it in the first place.

If Mr. Hill will turn to any issue of the *New York Times*, or the *Herald Tribune* (Sunday would be an especially good day), or any other metropolitan paper, he will find that column after column of news or information is based on press releases or statements processed at the source in some fashion before submission to the editor. I'll bet Mr. Hill a Scotch and soda on the results of an experiment he could conduct at Boston University. Let some of his students analyze any good daily for a period of two weeks, giving attention to the front page, the editorial page, the fashion and theater pages, sports pages and the business section. My bet is that such an analysis would show conclusively that well over 50 per cent of the stories or features are based on information voluntarily supplied by an interested (and, I hope, honest) source.

And I don't see anything wrong with this. Personally I happen to believe that the newspapers of the country have a kind of built-in responsibility and spirit of service which is true of no other mass medium; I believe and hope we can depend on editors to exercise judgment and discretion in using the material they get. But I also know, as Mr. Hill should know, that editors would go mad if they had to do all the work which is now performed by the thousands of people who write material for *consideration* by the press.

The National Association of Science Writers, at its annual meeting in San Francisco last June, discussed this whole matter. Members groaned about the number of press releases they received, and wished they didn't have so much material to plow through. But they finally decided that it was their responsibility to go through the material they received—because that was a vital part of their job.

I think the same responsibility rests upon Mr. Hill's country editor, whether he accepts it or not.

---

The author is president of the New York public relations firm of Stephen Fitzgerald & Company. An alumnus of the *Baltimore Sun*, he was a Nieman Fellow in 1940.

# Book Reviews

## Grove Patterson's Book

by John M. Harrison

I LIKE PEOPLE. Grove Patterson. Random House, New York. 300 pp. \$3.50.

Among living American newspaper men, few are so widely known as Grove Patterson. People have been his hobby through a long and active life. In this, his first book, the editor-in-chief of the Toledo *Blade* writes about his hobby.

To those of us who have had the privilege of knowing Grove, reading this book is rather like an extension of one of many conversations had with him—over coffee in the *Blade's* refreshment lounge, at a dinner party, or a luncheon club. Some of the stories we have heard before. Some are new. But they all are interesting, for he has the knack of story telling.

*I Like People* is at its best when it deals with people—with Grove Patterson's boyhood experiences in Carlyle, Ill., with his Oberlin College days, with his early newspaper career in Lorain, in Cleveland, and in Toledo. Or when this editor who never has lost the abilities of a first-rate reporter is slipping down to Washington from the 1948 Democratic convention in Philadelphia to get a first-hand briefing from Harry Truman on the whistle-stop campaign he planned, finagling an interview with Benito Mussolini, or talking with panhandlers on the streets of Toledo.

Readers of the book who don't know Grove Patterson are likely to be most im-

pressed by the fact that his judgments of people—even people with whom he has been in sharp disagreement—always are rounded and, essentially, kind. Those who do know him will attest that this isn't something phony, assumed for purposes of writing a book. Maybe it's because he really does like people so much. In any event, though he may be sharply critical of a Brand Whitlock or a Franklin Roosevelt, and although he has never quite got over a congenital preference for Republicans, he always can appreciate that others besides himself have had honorable motives.

Deliberately, perhaps, there is not much here about the impact of Grove Patterson on a city and a newspaper. Someone else will have to write that story. It would embarrass Grove to do it.

But something of what has won him the love and respect of so many people, and something of the qualities that have made him a great editor does emerge from these pages of reminiscing, tale spinning, philosophizing. Liking people, Grove Patterson has drawn people to him.

Those of us who have worked with Grove have been aware of this a long time. We are glad that others, reading his book, will become aware of it, too.

John Harrison is on the editorial page of the Toledo *Blade* where he was an associate of Grove Patterson. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1952.

## The Beecher-Tilton Case

FREE LOVE AND HEAVENLY SINNERS. The Great Henry Ward Beecher Scandal. By Robert Shaplen. Alfred A. Knopf. New York. 273 pp. \$3.95.

Eighty years ago America was rocked by the great Beecher-Tilton scandal. A jury out eight days was hung for 52 ballots and never could decide whether Mrs. Tilton's husband had proved the charge of adultery against the most famous preacher in the United States. The scandal had followed a tortuous course for five years

before the celebrated trial. It had become entangled with about every social issue of the day until the public controversy involved all Henry Ward Beecher's many causes and the standing of the most fashionable church in New York, maintained by the pillars of respectability. To Beecher's adherents it seemed that the very structure of American society required his vindication. Tickets to the trial were black marketed. Thousands of spectators were turned away daily. The AP alone had 30 reporters on the case.

It made more headlines than the impeachment of President Johnson. And probably it was more responsible than Darwin for emptying the big city churches in the subsequent generation.

Robert Shaplen has deftly recreated the atmosphere of the case. The Beecherites were as impervious to any evidence against their idol as McCarthyites today. Shaplen lets the incredible attitudinizing of American society in President Grant's day reveal itself. It is a delicious item of social history that tells much more than it says. Part of the backdrop is in the lusty Free Love movement of Victoria Woodhull, who moved in on the Beecher case to pep up her crusade.

Parts of this appeared in *The New Yorker*, to which Robert Shaplen is a frequent contributor. He is author of a book of short stories, *A Corner of the World*. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1948 after five years as a correspondent in the Far East.

## American Adjustment

by Piers B. Anderton

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By Oscar Handlin. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 244 pages. \$3.75.

The first half of this scholarly book offers a tautly-written, fact-packed account of the dissimilarities of the American people and the waves of immigration which caused these dissimilarities. And immigration is, of course, Mr. Handlin's strength, as he proved with his Pulitzer-prize work, *The Uprooted*.

In the final section, however, he wavers into an attempt to describe in 80 pages the Depression and World War II eras and to foretell the future of the American people. The prose mushes—"How frail the barriers between civilization and the primal jungle!" The facts are becoming flabby—"Men were Catholics, Protestants, or Jews, categories based less on theological than on social distinctions."

But that is anti-climax to the swift, scholarly early chapters on the gigantic adjustments of the immigrants and the one dead spot in America's expansiveness—the color line.

The chapter on the color barrier opens

lines of further thought and independent investigation. In a few paragraphs Mr. Handlin describes the trap into which the negro was forced between 1865 and 1900, the conflicting advice on how to escape given by Booker Washington, Dubois and the NAACP and the negro's psychological reaction through religion and social compromises.

Mr. Handlin's title is misleading and

he has misled himself. He has attempted too much in a little over 200 pages and the final third of the book sags.

One minor error of interest to newspapermen is Mr. Handlin's double reference to the owners of the *Staatszeitung* as the Ritter family.

Piers Anderton is a Nieman Fellow from the copy desk of the San Francisco *Chronicle*.

## O. K. Bovard - The P-D's Legend

by Wm. J. Woestendiek

BOVARD OF THE POST-DISPATCH by James W. Markham. Louisiana State University Press; 226 pp. \$4.

Like many others who preside anonymously over the flow of news to millions day by day, Oliver Kirby Bovard, the last of Joseph Pulitzer's great editors, was not well known to the public.

But among his fellow workmen throughout the United States Bovard of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* was known as "the greatest managing editor." Today, nine years after his death, tales are still told of his remarkable accomplishments.

The vision, daring and skill in news development that gained the *Post-Dispatch* the national standing it has had for many years were largely Bovard's. He instilled the paper with a crusading vitality that remains today.

The story of Bovard's 40 fabulous years with the *Post-Dispatch* as told by James Markham is the story of a remarkable man, always dynamic and frequently ruthless, who sought to make his newspaper a "people's university" that gave the people the truth and interpreted the news for them.

O. K. Bovard came to the *Post-Dispatch* in 1898 as a reporter, handling general assignments and covering the police courts. Two years later he was named city editor and started building a staff aimed at making the paper's daily news coverage the most complete in the city. The ability with which he did that job was shown when the normal newspaper practice was reversed—and morning papers began to rewrite the *Post-Dispatch*, an afternoon paper.

From the day he became city editor, Bovard, who as a reporter had been a

friendly drinking companion, became a coldly impersonal executive who insisted that friends on the paper call him "Mister." Despite his coldness, Bovard inspired dogged loyalty from his staff.

He trained many young reporters, among whom were Marquis Childs, Richard Stokes and the publisher's second son, Joseph Pulitzer Jr. Wrote young Pulitzer, who years later was to find Bovard's political philosophy too far to the left, to his father:

"Bovard has more brains than anyone in this office."

Pulitzer wasn't the only one who thought so. Bovard had the same opinion of himself and took no pains to conceal it.

After being called to New York by Pulitzer Sr. to compete with two other men for the managing editorship of the New York *World* in 1907, Bovard was told by the publisher that the top job was going to another man but that Bovard was to stay with the *World* as assistant managing editor. Bovard refused to stay because, he told Pulitzer, the editor chosen was inferior to him.

So back to St. Louis and the job of managing editor of the *Post-Dispatch* went Bovard. The next few years were ones of empire building for the young managing editor and of rapid growth for his paper. Enjoying the complete confidence of his publisher, Bovard went on to blaze new trails in national and international news fields, opening a Washington bureau and sending correspondents far afield.

Markham tells of the many campaigns and crusades that followed, all of them with Bovard moving his crack term of reporters with the skill of a field commander. The Teapot Dome scandal, the Kelley

kidnapping, and city vote registration frauds were among the crusades that served as classic examples of Bovard's thoroughness.

The man also seemed to have an amazing news sense. Outstanding example of this sense was the false armistice flash in 1918.

The end of a war is big news and when the false flash was cabled to the U. S. in 1918 four days before the actual end of hostilities, most American newspapers hit the streets with extras.

In St. Louis, the *Star* was one of those papers. But at the *Post-Dispatch*, Bovard sat calmly at his desk and ordered the armistice flash ignored. When the paper came out celebrating St. Louisans jeered the *Post-Dispatch* as they stormed the office.

Despite terrific pressure from the seething mob outside and emotional reaction from the fear of being scooped inside, Bovard refused to budge. By morning he and the paper were vindicated: the war was still in progress.

Markham tells these stories well, but too often in prose a little too stiff with the marks of the college professor. The text might have been helped by the use of O. K. Bovard's highly-respected blue pencil.

Of particular interest to newspapermen are the chapters on Bovard's techniques, principles and practices and his interpretations, ideals and ideologies. They furnish a sharp insight into the mind of a great editor and the man for whom he worked, Joseph Pulitzer Jr.

Bovard quit the *Post-Dispatch* when he could no longer agree with Pulitzer policies (Pulitzer felt his great editor was becoming too "radical"), but he left behind a crusading tradition that is still alive.

Markham traces the development of the differences between Bovard and Pulitzer and includes the general opinion of the incident as expressed by Oswald Garrison Villard, who wrote:

"I have an idea that Mr. Bovard's retirement is not due merely to differences of opinion with Mr. Pulitzer, but also to his increasing displeasure with the state of journalism in general."

William Woestendiek is Sunday editor of the Winston-Salem *Journal and Sentinel*, now on a Nieman Fellowship.

## News From Abroad

AS OTHERS SEE US. Ten Studies in Press Relations. International Press Institute, Zurich. 75 cents.

It seems to make little difference where a foreign correspondent is situated. He feels that the press of that country presents a very imperfect picture of his own country. When his criticism is handed to the local editors, they can explain it away in just about the same terms everywhere. They cite their difficulties and limitations of space and reader interest.

These reports make a two-way circuit. In Germany, France, Italy, England and India, American correspondents report on the handling of American news. In the United States, correspondents of those five countries report on the American press handling of news from their lands. Each of the ten reports is submitted to comments by several editors of the native press that is criticized.

All of these are illuminating reports, some very penetrating, and nearly all the comments on them are practical, reasonable and informed. The first impact on the reader of these studies is discouraging. It is such an impossible job for one correspondent, even the best, to deal adequately with a whole country. It would be even if he had news space which is not available to him. Inevitably much of his copy comes from official statements from political bureaus.

No one is more impatient with this than the correspondents themselves. Yet in this interchange, the United States is more completely reported than any other country. All recognize Washington as the primary news source. No European country has the news space of our big American papers; so their problem is intensified. Joseph Newman, London correspondent of the New York *Herald Tribune*, finds the small space that the thin British papers give to foreign news is "hopelessly inadequate." Except for their two or three greatest papers, a quarter of a column is about all the British newspaper can devote to the entire field of foreign news. That single fact embraces nearly all problems of reporting. "With few exceptions, the British press has whittled its foreign news to the vanishing point. It is difficult

to believe that this starvation diet of foreign news over so many years has not had unfortunate consequences on . . . an under-informed British public." Of nine papers studied, he found only two reporting the composition of Eisenhower's cabinet, only three naming the new Republican ambassador to Great Britain, and most giving "only the shallowest account of the Korean War and the American defense effort."

Conceding most of Newman's report, one British editor comments, "The majority of the British population gets its news from the BBC, not the press. No country in the world receives half the coverage given America on the BBC. . . . The popular press really only 'comments' on the news that is given by the BBC and on American affairs." Another British editor doubts that printing a greater volume of news would be more informing. "Good journalism must place a very high priority on the skillful selection and competent writing of news," he holds.

Alex Faulkner, American correspondent for the London *Daily Telegraph*, has about the same to say of the American press picture of Britain as Newman has of the British press picture of America. Except for the few great papers with their own correspondents, "the picture is sketchy, episodic and not very enlightening." The sad story of Clement Attlee's speech of May 13, 1953, that fueled up one of Senator McCarthy's most inflammatory outbursts, makes a case study for Faulkner. This instance is by now fairly familiar to American newspapermen. Faulkner blames "the highly selective reporting of speeches, made up of broken quotations . . . making it often very difficult to get at the true sense of what a speaker said." True enough. But the damage here came from the malignant use of a deliberate distortion in one of the worst of newspapers, which no longer exists.

J. Emlyn Williams, Bonn correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*, has a thorough report on the post-war development of the German press. He notes particularly their interest in American industrial and scientific development and their coverage of United States military build-

up. He says German readers can take news that American editors might reject as dull. But he finds the detailed factual reports often lacking the interpretation needed to give them meaning to the reader.

Wolfgang Koehler, New York correspondent of the *Hamburger Abendblatt* states flatly that outside New York the United States is least interested in foreign news of any civilized country. "The outside world seems to be considered a nuisance, more or less, except for tourist purposes."

German news has had more space than that of most other countries, and he has no hesitation in relating this to the cold war and the resulting favorable turn of American politics toward Germany. But he finds this extensive news coverage on Germany "so factual that one sometimes fails to see the wood for the trees." Just what Williams is saying about American news in Germany. Most of our news from Germany comes from the wire services and is standardized, "the institutional kind" springing from political press releases, Koehler says.

American readers, for example, have no realization that Hamburg has become the New York of Germany since the post-war isolation of Berlin. He appeals for "a little more blood and sex and color injected into the foreign news—just a little more of what is going on in the German equivalent of Main Street."

Volney Hurd in Paris, reporting on the French press, and Louis Foy, American correspondent of French papers, are saying much the same. Foy finds the foreign news as reported by American wire services "generally factual and accurate, but negative, uniform, lacking in significance and human interest."

Of human interest material, he notes it is probably the "best" French news in the American press. "If human interest stories would look less for the 'cute' angle and strive more to give a full picture of the people and their problems, and try to explain why they act and react the way they do, these might then fill in the incomplete impression given by the political reporters."

Arnaldo Cortesi, Rome correspondent of the New York *Times*, finds "far more

## Our Foreign Correspondents

space given by the Italian press to news from the United States than from any other country. The work done by the best Italian analysts is remarkably free of anti-American bias." But he finds their stories give a picture of American life that is out of focus. He puts much of the blame on US news and photo agencies "which lay far too much emphasis on Hollywood and Reno and prefer to distribute spicy or funny items rather than interpretative stories."

Ettore Della Giovanna, American correspondent of the *Giornale d'Italia*, describes travelling for weeks through the United States without ever finding a news item about Italy. The reason for this, he says, is that, "Italy does not know how to be a source of news. Italians are completely ignorant of public relations."

But also, he feels, Italy has no news attraction for American editors. "Coverage of political news from Italy is limited, by and large fair, but incomplete."

India is a very different story from Europe. Robert Trumbull, New Delhi correspondent of the *New York Times*, and K. Balaraman, American correspondent of *The Hindu* in Madras, agree that American papers tend to feature bizarre items on India. The Indian correspondent feels that our news about India is colored by the cold war and that the solid developments of the new nation are neglected. Trumbull notes the tendency of Indian papers to play up the "Negro problem" in the United States and give a too simplified picture of events in this country. The Indian press situation is complicated by its division into English language and native press, and by the virtual monopoly of the British Reuters in foreign news.

These reports are provocative enough to be stimulating. They ought to reach every foreign news editor.

The comment of an Iowa editor on one of them will do to sum up:

"Louis Foy's survey of the news from France," he writes, "is the best I have ever read. News editors should ask themselves every week whether they are giving their readers a comprehensive picture of affairs in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. Or are they giving only a spotty and hasty picture of those areas through a desire to achieve brevity?"

Louis M. Lyons.

THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT.  
Univ. of Iowa. Iowa City. 50 cents.  
72 pp.

Forty correspondents were asked to describe their jobs in terms of the problems of covering a foreign country. Some of the ablest American correspondents are in this group and some of their reports tell as much about their very special jobs as we are apt to learn anywhere.

An old hand like William Stoneman of the *Chicago Daily News* writes from Paris that covering the news in Europe today is a breeze and the only real problem is making it interesting. How to select the most significant news and write it in lively enough fashion to hold the reader from switching to the sports page is the job as he sees it. Of course this is every writer's job. Stoneman describes the difficulty to avoid boring the reader or cheating him with an over-simplified spiced-up dish. Paul Ghali, out of 14 years foreign service, feels that difficulties of language and censors are over-rated. The real problem is to keep down our prejudices and keep up to one's own standards of digging out important news and making it real to the reader. Harold Callender, veteran Paris correspondent of the *New York Times*, tells of converting himself into a specialist on the European Payments Union so that American business men and bankers could understand the key to European recovery.

The roving correspondent adds the problems of a tourist and a migrant to all his others. Jules Dubois covers South and Central America for the *Chicago Tribune* from a base in Panama, operating like a police reporter on a 24-hour alert for revolt or disaster anywhere between Mexico and Antarctica. George Weller covers the Middle East from Rome for the *Chicago Daily News*, but may reach to Indonesia. He describes a news tour of 16 months, never staying a week in one place. His chief difficulty has been the suspicion of Arabs toward Americans because of our sympathetic policy to Israel. Weller describes the importance of reading the local papers, using interpreters, and securing translations from the U.S. Information Service. American diplomatic posts are a factor in a correspondent's job. They can

be very helpful or a handicap. We have both kinds. Correspondents describe both in descriptions ranging from praise to denunciation. Policies of news agencies affect the correspondents' work. Jack L. Begon, NBC bureau chief in Rome, counts it of great importance that his company keeps a correspondent in one post as long as he does a satisfactory job. The rule in some offices of rotation every two years he says is unsound because a reporter needs many months to learn enough background to do a good job. Farnsworth Fowle, who has covered Turkey, Germany and England for the *New York Times*, says that our news agencies have too few correspondents abroad and these have too little experience. These have too much of their time office-bound—"bogged down in office routine, looking for local customers for the news service, supervising the relaying of copy from other points and entertaining visiting firemen. . . How can any mortal caught in such a routine keep in touch with developments outside the 'well-informed circles' in the capital of the country he is professing to cover?" George Weller says a reporter's objectivity is menaced by the practices of some news agencies of requiring him to sell their news service to local papers as well as report the news. "If an agency correspondent has to stay in well with the business community he cannot do a full-time job as a correspondent."

Percy Forster, INS correspondent in South America, complains that American newspapers simply don't print the meaningful news of the 11 South American republics. "Specials" come through from the home office and do splash stories, but the significant day to day developments, filed by the wire services, is not printed, he says. "The weekly news magazines virtually live on what the daily newspaper editors don't want to give their public."

South America is scamped more than most areas. Europe's old capitals are still the most systematically covered. Japan, says Ernie Hill of the *Chicago Daily News*, is a comparatively easy country to cover because of the information channels established by the years of American occupation.

Views of the seriousness of censorship and dictatorships as handicaps to news

transmission vary with the reporters. Likewise the importance given knowledge of languages. Marcel Wallenstein, European correspondent for the *Kansas City Star*, advises the student who intends to work in a foreign country that he better leave the technical details of how to operate a newspaper or collect and write news, and concentrate on the languages of the countries where he hopes to be employed. French and German are essential in Europe and he regretted a lack of Arabic while working in the Middle East. Kingsbury Smith, European man-

ager of INS, finds French usually sufficient to confer with officials in Europe. But behind the Iron Curtain language is an obstacle to reporting, he says, because some who would talk to a correspondent are reluctant to reveal their views to an interpreter. But such old hands as George Weller in the Middle East and Robert Trumbull in India say that they do not find language barriers a great problem. English is spoken by most government officials; or in the Middle East, French.

LML

## The Story of the American Newspaper

THE PRESS AND AMERICA. By Edwin Emery and Henry Ladd Smith. Prentice-Hall Inc. New York. 792 pp. \$9.

The newspaper story in America is assembled here in 800 pages, many of them lively and informed. The book crowds vast detail into logical and convenient organization, and brings to every chapter a full bibliographical guide.

Its arrival is beyond our final press time but we are holding up to give it a necessarily hasty but very hearty welcome as a valued addition to any small shelf of newspaper books. It is a most useful reference that comes right down to date in 1954. The second half is on 20th century journalism and the final chapters are fresh undertakings in journalistic history. Their titles suggest their content: "The Common Denominators," "The Press in Modern War," "From Jazz Journalism to Interpretive Reporting," "Radio and Television: New Competitors," "Government and Press: New Deal Era," "The Challenge of Criticism"; and "Some Representative Newspapers." These current discussions are salted with familiar names and incidents of the contemporary news scene. Each such chapter compresses material for a full book and brings inevitable disappointment with the summary treatment of many developments worthy of more detail. Both authors are teachers of journalism and they evidently count on student readers to fill in the details from the excellent bibliographies that make a major contribution to each chapter.

Chronological arrangement has its limitations. One has to piece together the career of Oswald Garrison Villard from five different areas. An excellent chapter on consolidations ends in the 1930's and the trend is unexpectedly brought down to date in the chapter on Radio and Television. "Common Denominators" is too general a catch-all of recent change, and it might as well include interpretive reporting, which turns up elsewhere. The whole development of science reporting is done in a paragraph and labor reporting in a little more than a page. The landmark of the Hutchins' Commission Report on "A Free and Responsible Press" is only an item whose significance is not told. The rise of the columnist is covered in four pages and the field of the modern cartoonist in two, both of them brought in as incidents in the development of syndicates. The history of the Newspaper Guild is similarly briefed under the chapter on Government and the Press. But all this is like complaining that a good story has to be cut to fit into a crowded paper on a big news day. These competent historians have packed in all that one book can hold. Altogether this seems likely to prove the most useful single volume for reference on American newspapering that one could have within reach. At \$9 it is apt to be in reach of librarians and journalism schools more often than of newspapermen. To grieve over this may be as bootless as to growl at the price of coffee. But the high cost of important books puts a tragic limit to their use by those who would most appreciate them.

LML

## Today's Fantasy

(Some leaves from *The Second Tree From the Corner* by E. B. White;)

Although as an observer I try to keep abreast of events it is a losing game. Progress, deeds, overtake a man. Somebody (I think it was I) once remarked that today's fantasy is tomorrow's news event. . . .

I asked the city editor how was I to express a certain thing.

He thought for a moment. Then he said, "Just say the words." . . .

One time a newspaper sent us to a morgue to get a story on a woman whose body was being held for identification. A man believed to be her husband was brought in. Somebody pulled the sheet back. The man took one agonizing look, and cried, "My God, it's her!" When we reported this grim incident, the editor diligently changed it to "My God, it's she!" . . .

We have been saving the clipping through fetid summer weeks, because the publication of the Dick Maney photograph in the *Herald Tribune* sets a mark in journalism which will not be reached again in our time, as the saying goes. Mr. Beebe, whose text the picture illustrates, was telling how he stayed sensibly in town during a hot week-end, and how pleasant this experience was. Nobody even phoned, he wrote, not even Dick Maney phoned. The *Tribune* gravely produced a picture of Mr. Maney and ran it—a man whose only immediate news value was that he had not phoned Lucius Beebe over a hot week-end. . . .

The first duty of a newspaper is to stay alive. And the most important single fact about any newspaper is that it differs from the next newspaper and is owned by a different man, or group of men. This fact (the fact of difference) transcends a newspaper's greatness, a newspaper's honesty, a newspaper's liveliness, or any other quality. The health of a country deteriorates every time a newspaper dies of strangulation or is wiped out in a mercy killing.

## Boston Reformers of the Nineties

YANKEE REFORMERS IN THE URBAN AGE. By Arthur Mann. Belknap Press. Harvard. 314 pp. \$5.

Something was stirring in Boston in the '80's and '90's though not enough to generate the dynamics needed for the 20th century. Such as it was and what there was of it, the fire of the end-of-century reform in the Hub is fully and sympathetically recorded in this book, whose title claims just a little too much. It fills out two decades of social history in a city that earlier had given birth to more than its share of reform. It is no surprise to find that this book was inspired by Oscar Handlin whose own larger enterprises in this long neglected field have had such handsome results.

In Silas Lapham's day Boston's Golden Age still gave out a late glow that attracted vital characters bent on applying a moral conscience to the problems of the time. Their eager convictions enliven these pages, although the endless movements they spawned finally accumulated a tedious record.

The people who crowd this book are mostly forgotten now but they were full of sap and kept their causes at a constant boil, in spite of the cold climate and the unresponsive inhabitants. They were enormously prolific, but more as editors and pamphleteers than as authors of the kind of literature that has lasted. The author explains that the reformers were not in the top rank of writers, which is another way of saying that the popular writers of the period were not much affected by the reform movements. Neither were the colleges, the newspapers, most of the churches nor the other institutions that made up the organized life of the city. The reformers made their own life in the interstices of the community life. They must often have seemed to be talking to themselves. Some were eccentric geniuses, doubtless hard to live with. Some were pioneers whose crusades later bore fruit that strengthened the social structure of our later times.

The ferment they felt has its own splendor that justifies the telling as part of the saga of the unquenchable spirit of selfless striving for human betterment.

They were still in the age of optimism and they were the true believers in progress. Looking backward, it seems almost incredible that they should have held such sure conviction that they had the answers to the ills and evils of society and that only persistence and energy were needed to carry through their reforms.

The most readable chapters deal with a few of the more colorful and dynamic reformers of the era. The story could probably be more interestingly told in the form of biography of one or more of these: John Boyle O'Reilly, Solomon Schindler, Frank Parsons, Vida Scudder, Robert A. Woods, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Nicholas Gilman.

Labor was the key problem, indeed the lot of labor was the key to nearly all their problems. Their approaches to reform ran all the way from socialism to settlement houses. It was variously radical, liberal and just uplift.

The tragedies of some of these lives are barely indicated, as in the frustrations of O'Reilly and Schindler by the institutional walls that closed in on them. The greater tragedy of the community that remained

indifferent or hostile to its finest spirits is hardly touched. One misses the drama of the struggle and defeat of these ardent souls. One misses indeed the whole structure of the surrounding circumstance that leaves these burning lives consuming themselves almost in a vacuum. The author seems nearly to confess this by tacking on a final chapter to explain the significance of the characters who have peopled his pages. How did this churning agitation fare in the press? Just five words are given to that. The Boston papers of the time "were not open to crusaders." What of the role of the leading American educator, Charles William Eliot? The chapter on "The Higher Learning" does not mention his name. This omission is indeed a feat. He surely was responsible for appointment of some of the trail blazers in the new economics, then battling for a hearing. In other areas both his responsiveness and his limitations of outlook must have been decisive factors. Historians will justify the distinction of the Belknap Press imprint on this book as a useful compendium of social record. The general reader may feel that he ends with a riddle of the failure of the fires of reform to ignite a static community.

LML

## Mark Twain's Biography

THE ADVENTURES OF MARK TWAIN. By Jerry Allen. Little, Brown & Co. Boston, 455 pp. \$4.50.

The literature on Mark Twain is enormous and much of it the lusty controversy that his own provocative genius incited. But he had needed such a one volume biography as this, which contains both the extraordinary spirit and the literary record of America's greatest writer. Jerry Allen is a new biographer and she proves by this work that she has what it takes to tell a great human story. If her publishers are smart they will egg her on to other literary biographies. We could use more of this quality. Her book has the zest and pace of a novel. But it has also true insights and historical care. To venture into a field where claims have been staked by such formidable frontiers-

men as Bernard DeVoto and Van Wyck Brooks took an adventuring spirit, and she brought it off in such fashion as to satisfy even Clara Clemens, daughter and redoubtable trustee of Mark Twain.

One welcome result of such a vivid life of Mark Twain is bound to be more reading of his work. It led this reader forthwith back to *Huckleberry Finn*, a fine dividend on a fine book. Jerry Allen is a converted journalist,—former foreign correspondent for the New York *Herald Tribune*, broadcaster for NBC and editorial assistant to Raymond Gram Swing. Her success with Mark Twain ought to stimulate other newspapermen to try biography, a field for which many of them have exceptional resources.

LML

## McCarthy Wrap-up

McCARTHY AND THE COMMUNISTS. By James Rorty and Mosche Decter. Beacon Press. Boston. 163 pp. \$1.

This makes a convenient reference on Senator McCarthy. It is a cool recital and sober analysis. Elmer Davis calls it the best book on McCarthy he has read, and Frederick Woltman, Reinhold Niebuhr and Erwin Canham join in this estimate. It is easier to be detached now that the record of the wreckage is nearly all in. Had the authors waited another couple of months they might have wrapped it up as history. For either November or the Watkins Committee will put a period to the virulence of the McCarthy attacks. Publishing their report before the Mundt Committee published its, the authors were confident that "the antibodies" of American public opinion were already powerfully at work and "may be trusted to contain and eventually to eliminate the demagogue from Wisconsin."

This book sufficiently presents McCarthy methods. Its description of their irresponsibility is familiar. The more revealing part of the record is the utter failure of McCarthy to complete anything, prove anything, effect any result except to raise a cloud of headline suspicions, charges, innuendoes and slanders, to damage American morale at home and prestige abroad. The book's record is sufficient of McCarthy and his victims. It is inadequate in dealing with those who stood up to McCarthy and completely defaults the shameful accounting of the wide yellow streak of public cowardice which the McCarthy terror has exposed in formerly respected political figures. There is a practical chapter on "How to Combat Communism Responsibility" and a succinctly devastating analysis of the Buckley book on *McCarthy and his Enemies*. Neatest job in the book is the consistent parallel between McCarthy methods and Communist methods. Both are described by ten points: 1. The multiple untruth; 2. The abuse of documents; 3. Insinuation and innuendo; 4. The slander amalgam; 5. Intimidation; 6. Attributing significance to the irrelevant; 7. The bluff and diversionary gambit; 8. The personal spy network; 9. Contempt for the law; 10. The unfounded charge of treason.

## Claude Bowers' Report on Spain

by Lawrence A. Fernsworth

MY MISSION TO SPAIN, by Claude G. Bowers, Simon and Schuster, N. Y., 1954. \$6.

It seems but a short time ago that Spain's unsavory dictator, Francisco Franco, was condemned by the United Nations as a partner of Hitler and Mussolini, as a standing menace to freedom and peace and as heading a regime that was unfit for the company of free peoples. Today we see the strange spectacle of certain American statesmen hailing him as a bulwark of freedom and peace and of the military branch of our government making an alliance with him. "France saved Spain,—and consequently Europe—from Communism"—so runs the black myth which he and the friends of his type of totalitarianism have so persistently propagated that it has come to be believed by men of short memories and by a new generation. The familiar big lie technique is producing its fruit.

There was never a moment when a book like that of Mr. Bowers, who was our ambassador to Spain throughout the Republican period and throughout the long war which dealt its death blow to Spanish democracy, was more needed. It is a devastating refutation, based on observation and fact, of the lie that Spain was veering to Communism, or the other hoary and oft-repeated lie that Spaniards are incapable of governing themselves.

Incidentally Mr. Bowers puts the so-called civil war in focus by pointing out that it was no civil war but an act of Fascist aggression; it was the beginning of World War II, the first phase of the war to destroy democracy in Europe.

When Mr. Bowers first went to Spain in the growing days of the young Republic, the elite of Madrid at once began purring into his ears lurid tales of disorders in all parts of the country, of anarchy reigning, and of the incapacity of the Republic to maintain order. At that period, however, no one had yet thought of accusing the Republic of fostering Communism. This was an afterthought of the Fascist aggression.

Had Mr. Bowers remained in Madrid and accepted these tales, as was a custom among too many diplomatic officials, including some of our own, he would doubtless have made them the burden of his reports. But his reportorial instinct impelled him to go forth in search of the facts. He embarked on a series of journeys to various parts of Spain in quest of disorder and anarchy. He found only peace and tranquility, and the cordial welcomes of a generous people.

"We had traveled from one end of Spain to the other in search of the disorders 'bordering on anarchy,' of which we had heard in the drawing rooms of Madrid, and had found nothing of the sort."

The newly born Republic, under the leadership of Don Manuel Azaña, an intellectual and a conservative liberal, was indeed the very opposite of a revolutionary regime. It had prided itself on coming in by a bloodless revolution.

"The Communists knew that Azaña's land program was aimed against Communism, but the great land owners were not so wise. When the landowners were restricted in their exportation of grain and agricultural products to keep prices within reach, the landowners called it 'Communism.' The agrarian reforms were a challenge to the persistent feudalistic society of the Spanish state . . . The labor laws were not even socialistic."

Mr. Bowers relates an absorbing, readable story as he follows the vicissitudes of the Republic in the face of its multiple enemies, to the eve of the Fascist aggression in 1936. He has, in the preceding three years, visited all parts of Spain, has met numerous personalities, both for and against the Republic; he has been a spectator of many dramatic and even tragic events. He tells about places and persons, recounts tales of varied experience, draws striking word portraits of the personalities who were shaping the destinies of Spain: Azaña; President Alcala Zamora; Alejandro Lerroux; young José Primo de Rivera, the founder of Spanish Fascism; Count Remanones, King Alfonso's only friend left in Spain, and others. You per-

ceive that Bowers' mission to Spain was an absorbing adventure.

In that fatal July, 1936, the forces of Fascism struck. During the previous three years Mr. Bowers had seen it preparing. He understood, but our government could not or would not, despite his reports. When the war against democracy exploded at length, it understood even less. The State Department ignored his reports; it would not even reply to them; instead its policy dovetailed with that of the Chamberlain government which heard and saw nothing of Fascist aggression; which denied the Republic the right of self-defense, and which made the second and more devastating phase of World War II inevitable.

"As the time to strike approached, with Fascist agents from Italy and Nazi agents from Germany on the ground, the most fantastic stories were set afloat. 'Bela Kun has arrived in Cadiz to launch a Communist revolution.' No, said others, 'he has landed in Barcelona.' Why bother about details?"

After the outbreak of the war the diplomatic corps was established at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, in France, 20 minutes from the Spanish border. From this observation post Mr. Bower kept in constant touch with the war, and made occasional missions into Spanish territory.

"I observed that while the diplomatic representatives of totalitarian states were aggressively Fascist, an appalling proportion of the diplomatic representatives of the democratic nations were either cynically indifferent to democracy or actually antidemocratic in spirit. . . This was the primary reason for the long procession of diplomatic victories for Fascism, making a new world war inevitable. I concluded that the preservation of democracy and a free society demands that no one be tolerated in the diplomatic service of a democratic state who is not a convinced and militant democrat."

Mr. Fernsworth is a former correspondent of the London *Times* and the New York *Times* in Spain. He is now Washington correspondent of the Concord (N. H.) *Monitor-Patriot*. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1949.

## Nieman Scrapbook

### New Mexico Segregation

Grand Junction, Colorado  
Sept. 13, 1954

The two enclosed related stories are for consideration in the next *Nieman Reports*. It seems to me there may be a number of reporters, especially in the Western States, who may be interested in Spanish-American jury duty. The Supreme Court decision in this matter was generally overlooked by newspapers coming, as it did, on the heels of the school segregation decision.

The story was given page one play in the Grand Junction *Sentinel* and, as such things go, aroused practically no indigna-

tion from majority groups. The attitude of the native white westerner is that the Spanish-American is a dirty, stupid lout who is naturally inferior to the human race and certainly not worthy of judging the guilt or innocence of his contemporaries.

I am now courthouse reporter at the Grand Junction (Colo.) *Daily Sentinel*, also covering general assignments. This is exciting country to us and although the paper is small (14,000 daily) it has fine liberal instincts.

Alan Pritchard

### One Name on Lists

#### No Spanish-Americans on Juries Here

A recent U. S. Supreme Court decision on the rights of Spanish-Americans to serve as grand and petit jurors may have a definite effect in the District and County Courts here. The decision may be the basis for mistrial in cases involving Spanish-American defendants if the present system of passing up Spanish-Americans for jury duty here is continued.

On the other hand, there is an equal possibility that jury rolls may be opened up to Spanish-Americans. It would be the first time in the history of this country that they would be recognized for such service. In the past they have been generally ignored, although county officials say the omission has not been deliberate.

During the same term of court, eight Court in Mesa county, seven criminal cases were tried. Of the eight persons involved as defendants, one was a Negro-American; three were of the Caucasian stock generally classified as "white," and four were Spanish-American.

The guilt or innocence of the eight accused was determined by due process of law. All had pleaded not guilty to the charges and it fell to a jury of their equals to judge their involvement. Theoretically, at least, each had an equal chance before the bar of justice—the law does not deprive a man of his rights because of a hyphenated heritage.

During the same term of court, eight juries of 12 men and women were impaneled to hear the cases. The 96 jurors (one case had to be retired because of a hung jury) were selected from a list of 300 names picked by county commissioners from a list of 600 names supplied by the county assessor and the county treasurer offices.

Of the eight persons tried, more than half were of members of minority groups—Negro-American or Spanish-American.

Of the 96 jurors who heard the case, none was of a minority group; all were "whites."

Of the 300 names selected by the county commissioners for jury service, none was of a minority group; all were "whites."

Of the 600 names selected by the assessor's and treasurer's office for the commissioners screening, none was of a minority group.

Of 1,800 names on lists for the last three years, only one Spanish-American name—on the current list—has appeared, and he was passed up by county commissioners in their screening last week.

In the last 13 years, which would cover the screening of several thousand names for jury service, only one Spanish-American person has been called to jury duty service. That person reported for duty five times. That she did not serve on a

jury is not a matter of contention; she was rejected on challenges by defense or prosecution attorneys. As a matter of information, during the same period one Negro-American was called to jury service. She was excused on her own request because of pregnancy.

There are, in Mesa County, some 2,500 permanent residents of Spanish-American heritage, according to reliable estimates. They make up six per cent of the total population of about 40,000. At that ratio, and considering about 7,000 jurors' names supplied in the 13 year period, 420 of them should have been Spanish-American names.

The record shows just the two.

Has there been systematic exclusion of Spanish-Americans from the jury lists?

The county assessor and the county commissioners say "No." They just never gave it any thought, they say. It was a matter which they had not considered, they say.

Both the treasurer and the assessor supply their jury names from an identical card file that lists all personal property and real estate taxpayers in the county. The selection is made on a haphazard thumbing through the file, 300 names by each. It is possible, of course, that this method would miss the relatively small percentage of Spanish-Americans.

There is some admitted screening done at this level, but both offices said it was not a screening of Spanish-American names. They do pass up names of doctors, lawyers and druggists who are exempt from service by law. And there is also an inclination to pass up "important people"—businessmen for whom it would be a hardship to be tied up for a term of trials as jurors.

"There is no reason at all why Spanish-American names haven't been on the lists," said one official. "It is just something that happens."

Under the Colorado Statutes, all citizens not convicted of a felony are competent to serve as grand or petit jurors. They do not have to be taxpayers, either. The law says that the county assessor or the county treasurer shall supply "any list in their offices of inhabitants or taxpayers" and that the county commissioners shall select from that list in counties where there is no jury commission. The county commissioners may also select any other per-

sons qualified for jury duty, the law states, giving them permission to go beyond such lists if they think it necessary.

Would the Spanish-American juror be competent to serve?

The Rev. Fidel Gonzales, pastor of the Asembleas de Dios Church on South Ninth Street, thinks that some, at least, would. There are many, he said, who have difficulty with English. This handicap would bar them from service. It would be difficult to conduct a court case for a juror who couldn't understand the language.

### *14th Amendment Cited*

## Jury Service Involves Rights

Whether Spanish-Americans are entitled to consideration as jurors in Mesa county is a problem that goes to the heart of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. The problem was considered on a Constitutional basis in the recent Supreme Court decision.

The Fourteenth Amendment reads, in part, as follows:

"All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

Chief Justice Earl Warren based his decision of May 3 on the "equal protection" clause. "The exclusion of otherwise eligible persons from jury service solely because of their ancestry or national origin is discrimination prohibited by the Fourteenth Amendment," he declared.

His opinion was given in the case of one Pete Hernandez of Jackson county, Texas, who was convicted of the murder of a cotton planter in 1951. The conviction was appealed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals on the basis that there were many persons of Mexican ancestry in Jackson county qualified for jury duty but that for 25 years there was no record of any person with a Mexican or Latin-American name having served.

"I have talked about this before with my people," said Mr. Gonzales. "Without much difficulty I could make a list of perhaps 25 who would be competent as jurors. This would be a wonderful thing if they could take such a part in their community."

Most of those who would be competent to serve, Mr. Gonzales said, would be of younger generation, persons under 40 years of age or thereabouts. The older ones, he said, speak mostly "work language"—sufficient English to do their jobs but not enough to explore in the abstractions of guilt and innocence at a trial.

The appeal court rejected the contention, however, and the matter was taken up to the U. S. Supreme Court. After due deliberation, the appeal court verdict was reversed. Said the Chief Justice in his opinion: "Circumstances or chance may well dictate that no persons in a certain class will serve on a particular jury during some particular period. But it taxes our credulity to say that resulted in there being no members of this class among the over 6,000 jurors called in the past 25 years." The Chief Justice also noted that while the law itself does not discriminate, "those administering the law do."

The appeal in the Texas case did not ask that Spanish-Americans serve on juries trying Spanish-American defendants. It asked only that such cases be tried by a jury from which all members of the minority group had not been systematically excluded. "To this much," concluded Chief Justice Warren, "he is entitled by the Constitution."

What may the decision mean to courts in this county?

Simply that it could be the basis for a new trial at the expense of the taxpayers if the present system of omission of Spanish-American names is continued. Several local attorneys have said they would not hesitate to use the Fourteenth Amendment in such cases. On a complicated case, such as a murder trial, such retrials could tote up to another bill for taxpayers, a bill which could be avoided.

The district attorney and his assistants

are the ones on whom falls the burden of proving a case against a criminal. Understandably, the people's prosecutors do not like to re-try cases which they have already won.

"I see no reason why Spanish people shouldn't be on the jury rolls," said Amos L. Raso, assistant district attorney. "In the light of the Supreme Court decision, I think it would be wise."

County Attorney Gerald Ashby, whose role is that of counsel and not as prosecutor, said he thought the county commissioners had been acting within the area proscribed by the state statutes in making their selections. He added, however, that inclusion of Spanish-Americans on the jury rolls "would be only right and fair."

The Supreme Court decision in the Texas case was considered important

enough by the American Judicature Society to be made the subject of a lead editorial in the June issue of that body's official Journal. The editorial concluded with this paragraph:

"Soviet propagandists have made much of such examples of racial tension as could be found in this country. We challenge them to acknowledge the assurance of justice for members of such minority groups which this decision gives, and to make similar provision for the millions of such people under their rule."

The Supreme Court decision has opened the way for ridding another vestige of discrimination. As Chief Justice Warren indicated, it is up to those who administer the law to do their part. To do any less is to add fuel to the smoky fires of Communist propaganda.

passed at Saturday's meeting are hereby published. We, the editors, hope that this declaration will help to create understanding and appreciation of the liberal cause for which we stand.

\* \* \*

### What Do We Seek?

In establishing our goal, it becomes paramount that we define those elusive touchstones of liberal greatness which this newspaper must seek.

To begin with, we must recognize that a truly great newspaper must be greater than any one of, or the sum total of, its creators.

Its integrity must rise above the combined consciences of its editors in that, when it speaks, its words are those of someone far wiser, far more reasonable, far more fair, far more compassionate, far more understanding and far more honest than those men, crippled by human weaknesses and failings, whose task it is to write those words.

A truly great newspaper must seek universal respect, for without such respect its message will reach but a limited audience.

A truly great newspaper must remain unfettered by the leash of any and all special interest groups.

For to voluntarily embrace the philosophical cause of liberalism is one thing, but to be embraced by the chains of advertiser, publisher, stockholder, political party, particular farm organization, particular management or labor organization is another.

Few newspapers have escaped such bondage. Few newspapers have achieved true greatness.

In the metropolitan realm the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* in our country and the Manchester *Guardian* in England have done so. In the rural areas only William Allen White's *Emporia Gazette* stands out as an example.

Here then is our challenge. Can we meet it?

### The Characteristics of Liberalism

Recognizing that the primary purpose of the Park Region Publishing Company organization is a mutual desire to recognize, reinforce and project into the future the liberal traditions of this newspaper, it becomes mandatory that this "liberalism" be spelled out as clearly and suc-

## Story of a Liberal Paper

To the Editor:

I thought you would be interested in the enclosed editorial from the *Park Region Echo* at Alexandria, Minnesota, which has been a liberal newspaper for 70 years.

The story very briefly is this: Early last fall it appeared likely that the biggest stockholder, a man who controlled 27 per cent of the stock of the *Park Region Echo*, was about to sell to conservative interests. For several years the liberal traditions of the paper had rested on the slim margin of a 3 to 2 vote on the board of directors. The liberal section, including two 1948 Minnesota School of Journalism graduates who are on the editorial staff, started

a campaign to buy the stock. The money finally was raised, and the new purchasers organized a trust agreement which set up the *Park Region Echo* as a liberal newspaper for the next "99 years." At the annual meeting Don Kelly, one of the two Minnesota Journalism graduates, was elected to the Board of Directors.

John Obert, city editor of the *Echo* and the other 1948 School of Journalism graduate, made a statement of principles of the paper which is the item I think you would be especially interested in for an issue of the *Nieman Reports*.

Edwin Emery  
Professor of Journalism  
University of Minnesota

*Park Region Echo, Alexandria, Minn., June 22*

## The Echo's Liberalism

Last Saturday the stockholders of the *Park Region Echo*, meeting in annual session, adopted by unanimous vote a comprehensive declaration of the aims and principles of this newspaper.

From time to time over the years the question of the *Park Region Echo's* policies and politics has been discussed on many occasions. Through the years this newspaper has earned a reputation as one of the few "liberal" newspapers published in the state of Minnesota.

The word liberal is perhaps one of the most ambiguous and difficult to define in the English language. In the course of history it has taken on many different connotations.

At this point in the progress of the *Park Region Echo*, the publishers and stockholders have decided to define those liberal aims and principles which this newspaper seeks.

With this point in mind, the following excerpts from the lengthy resolution

cinctly as it is possible to spell out such relatively intangible characteristics.

The classic definition of Liberalism is "Progressivism that lies between Conservatism and Radicalism. Disposition to constructive change unfettered by tradition."

In the realm of politics, at least, such a definition might suffice, for it is true that this newspaper's editorial pronouncements have generally fallen within the limits of this definition and it is true that by such definition the *Park Region Echo* has found itself aligned with the political party which most closely subscribes to this position—the Democratic party on the national scene and the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party in Minnesota.

It is more probable than possible that this newspaper will continue to find itself sharing the political sentiments of the Democratic party in the foreseeable future.

But it must be remembered that the definition of liberalism we seek today is a definition which will hold true for as far into the future as we can imagine and as such must not be shackled to any nominal political party.

For it is just as true now as it has been true in the past that the liberal party of today can become the conservative party of tomorrow.

A true and lasting liberalism, as we see it, must incorporate those characteristics which apply equally well in any generation to any field of human activity.

Such characteristics would include:

An inclination—to resort to reason rather than to emotion, to respect the right of others to hold opinions different from ours, to look at both sides of every question and to perceive the degree of truth that lies at either side, to see things in shades of gray rather than in black or white, to seek the truth at all costs in every issue,

A disposition—to love rather than to hate, to sympathize with rather than to condemn,

A deep concern for—the betterment of the lot of the masses, the downtrodden and oppressed and the persecuted,

An undying hatred for and an unceasing resolve against—the forces of totalitarianism under any name and in any guise,

A dedication to—the principles of individual rights and freedoms,

A devotion to—the democratic cause.

With characteristics such as these, a truly great liberal newspaper not only finds it possible, but indeed finds it compulsory, to support and encourage American liberal elements in our society which all too often find it difficult or impossible to present their case to the public through the medium of the conservative press.

These elements would, of course, include cooperatives, labor unions, civil liberty organizations, and groups whose function it is to promote racial, religious and international tolerance, understanding and appreciation, when such organizations are known to be loyal and patriotic American groups.

But the very definition of liberalism, as given above, prohibits any in toto endorsement of all or any one of these elements. For the truly great liberal newspaper must, at all times, be free to praise and to criticize indiscriminately and when the liberal movement, through the misdirection of any one of its integral parts, falters or errs it is the responsibility of the liberal press to speak out against such abuses. Only by soul-searching self-criticism will the liberal cause flourish.

By the same token, the truly great liberal newspaper must never hesitate to pay tribute where tribute is due, regardless of whether the commendable was said or done by liberal, conservative, radical or reactionary.

By strict adherence to these aims and principles we are convinced that the *Park Region Echo* can enhance its own reputation, gain universal respect and, by so doing, deliver its liberal message to an ever-increasing and far more receptive audience.

---

## From India

July 28

To the Editor—

Enclosed find my check for our subscription to Nieman Reports. I used the magazine in the U. S. as the most valuable publication on Journalism available. I find it equally valuable here in India in the department of journalism at Hislop College in Nagpur.

EVERTON CONGER

## NIEMAN NOTES . . .

1940

A daughter, Barbara Elizabeth, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Nixon on August 3d in Detroit where her father handles public relations for the Automobile Manufacturers Association.

1943

Edward J. Donohoe, assistant editor of the *Scranton Times* has been named chairman of the 1954 Heywood Broun Award competition sponsored by the American Newspaper Guild.

James M. Daniel of the Scripps-Howard papers in Washington writes that the big Washington group of former Nieman Fellows are planning again a series of group dinners this winter with guest speakers from the national political scene.

1945

Houstoun Waring, editor of the Littleton (Colo.) *Independent* flew around the western reclamation projects in President Eisenhower's party in August. On the trip he and Mrs. Waring visited the Ernest Linfords (1947) in Salt Lake City where Linford is chief editorial writer on the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

1946

Richard E. Stockwell was appointed in September to a new position, editorial director of American Aviation Publications. He left the editorship of the Monsanto Chemical Company's magazine for the new post. Stockwell had earlier experience in aviation journalism. He was editor of *Aviation Age* from 1949 to 1952. He is a licensed pilot, has won several awards in industrial journalism.

1948

Rebecca Gross, back on her job as editor of the Lock Haven *Express* after her accident, is scheduled as one of the speakers in a lecture program announced by the New York Women's Press Club.

Alfred Knopf published a new book of Robert Shaplen's, *Free Love and Heavenly Sinners*, in September. It relates the great American scandal of the Beecher-Tilton case. Some of it came out in a *New Yorker* series this Summer.

1949

Christopher Rand was in *The New Yorker* for September 18th with an article on Tibet.

George Weller and Ernest Hill (1943), foreign correspondents of the *Chicago Daily News*, have reports describing their work and experiences in a pamphlet "The Foreign Correspondent," published by University of Iowa School of Journalism.

1950

Melvin Wax was host to the New England regional Associated Press News Executives meeting, Sept. 9 at Sunapee, N. H., as he completed his term as president of their association. Wax is managing editor and assistant publisher of the *Claremont (N. H.) Daily Eagle*.

1951

Alice and Angus MacLean Thuermer send word from Bombay, India, of the birth of a daughter, Katherine Annie, their third child.

1953

From Australia, Jack Flower of the *Sydney Herald*, writes of a vacation on a sheep farm 200 miles north of Sydney after a hectic news year that included the Queen's tour, a national election and the Petrov Royal Commission to investigate Soviet spying.

A Fall wedding was indicated for Robert E. Lee, Washington correspondent of the *Ridder* newspapers, when his engagement was announced Sept. 7th, to Mrs. Phyllis P. Mead of Washington, daughter of Mrs. Edwin D. Morgan of Ipswich and William P. T. Preston of New York.

A son, Winfield Strickland, was born May 19 to Mr. and Mrs. Watson S. Sims in New York where Sims is on the Associated Press staff.

1954

Hazel Holly starts a new job November 1, when she leaves the *San Francisco Examiner* to become public affairs editor of the *Women's Home Companion*.



Written for 'The Pacific Citizen', Feb. 3, 1954

## Hawaii Meets Hodding Carter

by Lawrence Nakatsuka

Hawaiians learned a lesson in tolerance and understanding from a newspaper editor from the Deep South recently. A strange thing to report, unless you know the Hawaiians and unless you know Hodding Carter, the editor.

The Hawaiians are a proud people, proud because they live in the world's happiest "melting pot of races." They like to think they are intolerant only of intolerance. They have very little patience with race-sensitive areas like the Deep South.

Then came Hodding Carter to do a story for the *Saturday Evening Post* on Hawaiian statehood. Carter is no ordinary newspaperman. At 47, he has become a voice of the New South, an able spokesman for the side of the South that hasn't been described much till lately.

Editor of a small town daily—the *Delta Democrat-Times*—in Greenville, Mississippi, Carter is a Pulitzer Prize winner, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard, a Guggenheim Fellow, and author of several books on the South.

With his wife Betty, Carter toured the Hawaiian Island for two weeks, gathering material on the pros and cons of statehood for Hawaii. What he found strengthened his conviction that Hawaii should be granted statehood.

But he became disturbed at what he called the glibness of the general Hawaiian attitude towards the South. He found the Hawaiians had a one-sided picture of the South. They were not unique in this attitude. It is an attitude typical in many parts of the United States.

Carter said he understood the reason for the Hawaiian attitude. It was the Congressmen from the South who had defeated statehood legislation time and time again. Thus, in the minds of Hawaiians, the South became identified with the worst labels of racial bigotry, economic and social backwardness, and political demagoguery.

Before leaving Hawaii, Carter gave a talk before the Honolulu Press Club. In his friendly yet forthright way, the editor said he wanted to give the other side of the picture.

He did not defend or excuse what was bad about the South. But he emphasized instead the progress the New South has made in race relations.

He spoke proudly about the fact that his town of Greenville has a Negro policeman. Negroes there are given educational, recreational and hospital facilities equal with those for the white people. Equality in voting also is an accomplished fact.

The pattern of intolerance, Carter noted, is changing. A new conscience is emerging and the Negro is taking his place in the civic and political life of the South.

This quiet revolution has gone largely unnoticed in Hawaii and perhaps in many other places. Comfortable, even smug, in the feeling that they have solved their own race relations, most Hawaiians have failed to appreciate the enormous difficulties and differences in the racial problems of the South.

Hodding Carter has done a good deed for Hawaii. He has made the Hawaiians see "the other side" of the South.

Lawrence Nakatsuka is press secretary to the Governor of Hawaii. He was a Nieman Fellow in 1952 from the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*.



## Peace Seen Linked With Information

by Charles A. Wagner

Two men fought with bare fists the other night on Harvard Square in Cambridge, Mass., when a newsboy sold the last copy of a newspaper to one of them, and the other claimed he had signaled for it first.

It is perhaps significant that, only a few miles away in Boston, a similar scene was enacted about 188 years before, when a precious Newsletter was fought for in a waterfront coffee shop.

Free men will always fight for the right and the need to be informed. Armies of Americans have died for that right throughout our history. The irony of things may prove that this kind of demand, backed even by force, may be the average citizen's way of contributing to world peace.

\* \* \*

An informed citizenry is a free citizenry. Knowledge is not only power; it is the means of world survival to make use of that power. For we know, from the valuable lesson of the dictatorships of Italy, Germany and finally Russia, that a nation whose citizens are deprived of the full story of national and international doings is a nation enslaved, and therefore prone to tyranny and ultimate warring upon the rest of the world.

Four centuries ago, Erasmus traveled all over Europe to find at first hand the state of things in the countries of the West. A century later, Descartes visited the Low Countries and Scandinavia for the same purpose. Today, the free nations of the world have good newspapers capable of keeping their peoples informed in all fields of human endeavor.

\* \* \*

It is the duty of all our citizens to demand and receive adequate information on every facet of human activity and proclivity. The light that this kind of knowledge can shed may well be the light of

---

This article of Charles Wagner's won an honorable mention in a competition on a project, "Steps Toward World Peace" in which the top award went to Tully Nettleton of the *Christian Science Monitor*. Mr. Wagner was a Nieman Fellow in 1945.

peace on earth for which so many have given their lives.

DeWitt Clinton once said "a general diffusion of adequate knowledge is the precursor and protector of republican institutions. Spiritual truth comes from knowledge and is more important than cities of stone. For when people do not

know how other people are thinking and praying and acting, the spirit dies."

\* \* \*

It is the duty of the average citizen to be informed. For the weapon of knowledge is so keenly edged in spirit that it alone is sharp enough to cut down the will to war.—N. Y. *Mirror*.

## Beware of Little Caesars!

"We must beware of the many little Caesars who would impose censorship on us," Alan C. McIntosh, president of the National Editorial Association, told the editors of Colorado in Denver last Friday.

The next day, the daily newspapers wrangled about whether free expression also belonged to colleges of journalism. Four prominent daily editors of this state condemned the director of the college of journalism at Boulder.

What were the charges?

One newspaperman reportedly said the director had cartoons by Herblock of the *Washington Post* and Fitzpatrick of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* hanging up in his office.

Another declared the newspapermen of the future were being taught critical attitudes about the press. (Students even studied a case where a major story was suppressed by one Colorado daily only to be publicized by the newspaper in a neighboring town.)

This was a closed session of the dailies, and so only rumors have emanated from the room in the Albany Hotel. But they were substantial enough rumors to get on a TV program that night.

It is our contention that journalism schools have enormously increased the value of the American press in the past thirty years. Anyone who can remember newspaper ethics in Denver, New York, and Chicago, for example, back in the 1920s will appreciate that readers are getting a much better product today than ever before. This product is far from perfect, but in another generation we may have editors and publishers with a finer record than those of the past.

Newspaper history shows that the great majority of newspapers have opposed our great presidents in ten out of twelve campaigns. It also reveals that the preponderance of the press has supported the failures and below-average presidents in nine out of ten campaigns. Perhaps our colleges can teach the journalists of tomorrow to recognize a good man and his program when they see one. To do this, one must be trained not only in the social sciences but to dig objectively after facts. He must view all social phenomena with a critical eye, and he must acquire this practice in appraisal at his college of journalism.

Not only must the professor of journalism train newspapermen and women, but he also has the responsibility of suggesting improvements in the press of the United States. This takes a special brand of courage. It is so rare that the nation's leading editorial writer recently called attention to the lack in a speech delivered in New England. However, he did cite and praise the director of the college of journalism at Boulder for performing this function.

The daily newspaper discussion last Saturday was not one-sided. Bold voices were raised in defense of free inquiry in colleges. Some of the editors apparently feel that a college of journalism is designed to serve not merely the newspaper industry but society as a whole—the people who pay the taxes for its existence.

Nothing more will probably be heard of the secret meeting at the Albany. But we are sorry it took place. It was symptomatic of the times. Too many people are afraid of expression.

Littleton (Colo.) *Independent* Mar. 5.

*That Man in the Kitchen***Irish Luck Helps a Cook**

by Elinor Lee

(This is the twenty-ninth in a series of articles on the man-most-likely-to-succeed—in the kitchen.)

"MAYBE it's the luck of the Irish," says Justin McCarthy when he is asked the secret of his success in the kitchen.

Anyone who has ever sampled any of his cooking knows that not even the Irish could have that much luck. Imagination and ingenuity, plus love of good food and time to prepare it, are the planks in the kitchen platform of this candidate.

A native of Chicago, Mr. McCarthy inherits his love of good food and cooking.

"When I was a small kid," he says, "I used to hang around the kitchen, both at home and at my grandmother's. She had an Irish cook and I can still remember the wonderful aroma and taste of fresh baked Irish bread (with raisins) that she baked every Saturday."

When he was 18, he had his own apartment and did his own cooking.

"I didn't make enough money—that was during the depression—to eat out. I discovered how much fun it was to cook then, and I'm still doing it," he adds.

As director of public relations for the United Mine Workers Union, Mr. McCarthy finds this hobby an excellent way to relax, especially on weekends when he has time to "really get going in the kitchen." He loves wine cookery and isn't afraid to tackle any recipe, making changes whenever he sees fit.

An experimental cook, he feels that any meat or cheese dish, eggs or fish—or any special sauce—is improved with a touch of herbs or spices. He likes to experiment with Mexican cookery, Pennsylvania Dutch, German, Russian and especially Italian dishes.

When he was a student at the University of Illinois and later as a reporter on the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Chicago Sun*, Justin McCarthy enjoyed reading cook books and trying out recipes.

More recently, when he spent a year at Harvard doing postgraduate work on a Nieman Fellowship, cooking was an extra-curricular activity which he and Mrs. McCarthy enjoyed.

The Justin McCarthys love to entertain, and work well as a team in the kitchen. Mrs. McCarthy does the baking and makes desserts, while her husband takes over the meat and vegetable department.

He "isn't a meat and potato man," says his wife. "He likes both foods, but likes to do interesting things with them. The tougher cuts of meats for instance, he marinates in wine vinegar with herbs before cooking. Recently he bought a 2½-inch thick piece of chuck roast, seasoned it with meat tenderizer over night, then added barbecue sauce and broiled it for dinner. It was delicious," she adds. He saves all steak and meat bones and makes soup stock; ham bones he uses for lentil or bean soup.

"I don't like to waste any good food," he says.

One of his favorite dishes is Shrimp McCarthy, Justin McCarthy's variation of Shrimp Dejong. His father used to tell him about the famous restaurant in Chicago where this dish was served.

"I never found a recipe so I made one up," he says. "Here's how I do it, although I can't be specific. I cook by taste," he adds.

**Shrimp McCarthy**

Cooked shrimp (as much as you need for the number of people to be served)

Butter and olive oil  
1 cup bread crumbs  
Anchovy paste  
Finely chopped garlic  
Salt and pepper  
Minced parsley

Cook garlic in half butter and half olive oil about 2 minutes, add other ingredients

plus 1 table spoon lemon juice and dry white wine to moisten 1 cup of bread crumbs added to mixture (for 8 servings). Put cooked shrimps in seafood shells (th kind you use for baking or broiling) until heated through and bread crumbs are brown.

"It's a social success every time," says Mr. McCarthy. Another of his culinary social successes is ham baked in a rye crust with brandy.

**McCarthy Baked Ham**

"First make a crust of rye flour and bouillon or water. Add enough liquid to make rye flour hold together so it can be rolled and molded around the ham. On inside of this crust sprinkle some caraway seeds, chopped chives or onions, chopped parsley, a little oregano, nutmeg and tarragon and minced garlic (garlic is optional). Pat this on inside of rye crust.

"Then make a thick paste of 1 cup honey and 2 teaspoons dry mustard (English). Smear this paste over skinned ham, stud ham with cloves (or mix dry cloves with brown sugar-honey paste). Wrap ham in pastry leaving small opening at top. Plug this opening with stopper made of pastry. Bake ham according to directions on wrapper.

While ham is baking, baste with brandy by removing pastry stopper in rye crust and pouring 1 tablespoon of brandy into opening every hour. While the ham is baking inside its pastry crust, the flavor of the brandy, spices and herbs will permeate the meat.

"You've never tasted anything better," admits Mrs. McCarthy, and adds a word of caution for the uninitiated: "Break the rye pastry crust off ham before serving. The glaze on the ham will remain."

The McCarthys like to serve this ham specialty with cooked shell macaroni combined with sour cream and mushroom sauce, a salad and cold Rose wine.

Washington Post Feb. 2.

# Our Straining Times

## *The Public Mind 1929-1954*

by Max Hall

On January 14, at Columbia University, the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, spoke as follows: "Liberty—not Communism—is the most contagious force in the world. It will permeate the Iron Curtain. It will eventually abide everywhere. For no people of any race will long remain slaves. Our strength is in our diversity. Our power is in freedom of thought and of research."

When the Chief Justice said "our power is in freedom of thought," he included the free world generally, not the United States alone. And that was entirely proper, because Americans have no monopoly on freedom. Nevertheless his statement does apply most forcefully to America as the most powerful nation, and, so understood, it was an authentic expression of the American democratic faith that came down to us from the nineteenth century. His optimism, his faith in progress, his sense of the world mission of America, and his conviction of the goodness and power of individual freedom and diversity—all these put him solidly in the groove of the American tradition.

\* \* \* \* \*

The American of the nineteenth century bore upon him plainly the marks of the frontier and the farm. He was a prodigious worker, frequently on the move, a great experimenter. He disrespected authority and discipline, but worshipped fair play and a higher law, and often took satisfaction in trying to reform others. He had faith in himself, in private initiative, and in the certainty of progress. He believed in God and the Bible. He had faith in America as the redeemer of the world, though he knew little about the world and cared less. He had faith in the goodness of individual freedom.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the American reached the year 1929 he was more civilized than he had been at the turn of the century, not so able to do for himself, not so religious, not quite so unquestioning in his various faiths. But he still had most of his traditional attitudes. He believed in success and in progress. He felt secure in the solidity of America's economic order, and he felt secure behind his oceans. He wanted no part of affairs in Europe. He thought government was best when it did not get very heavily involved in

his existence. The successful businessman was his hero. The key to his American democratic faith was still the doctrine of the free individual. He little suspected what the next twenty-five years would dump in his lap.

Since 1929 what has been happening around us? Well, here are some of the *visible* changes: We have gained forty million people. We have become even more predominantly urban and industrialized. The main thrust of our cities has changed from upward to outward. Our motor vehicles have multiplied from twenty-seven million to fifty-five million. Buses have supplanted streetcars. Commercial airplanes, which were just getting started in 1929, carried passengers on more than twenty-seven million trips last year. Talking pictures and radio have grown from infants to giants. Starting with 1946 more than twenty-eight million television sets have come into our homes. Other new industries have been born. All this mechanization and acceleration have increased our comforts and pleasures, and probably also our neuroses, and doubtless have had cumulative effects upon the public mind. I think that it would be difficult to relate most of them individually to the significant changes of outlook that I wish to dwell upon.

But it is not difficult to see the impact of the great events of the quarter-century. They were events of shattering force and world-wide ramifications. Depression . . . War . . . the Atom . . . Cold War , , , and, overlapping most of the others, Prosperity.

\* \* \* \* \*

While the nation was struggling out of the depression, the news from abroad became more and more disturbing, and then came World War II. Europe was flattened, and the day when the United States could avoid international responsibility was finally ended.

Out of the defeat of Hitlerism sprang noble prospects for a more stable world, and the United Nations was established to help bring it about. But the emergence of the Soviet Union as a major world power, expanding the territory it dominated and never ceasing its basic unfriendliness of purpose toward non-Communist systems, clouded those bright prospects and brought new disappointments, angers, and fears.

The tension of the cold-war period was aggravated by a frightful upsurge in mankind's powers of destruction. The Atomic Era had its dawning in the quarter-century we are

---

At the 25th anniversary of Phi Beta Kappa at Emory University, Max Hall described the changes in the public mind since 1929. A Nieman Fellow in 1950, Hall is on the staff of the Foreign Operations Administration.

studying. It holds breathtaking possibilities for mankind, both for peaceful advancement and for oblivion. Its repercussions on the American public mind, I think, will become better known in the next quarter-century. I think it is safe to say that in spite of the terror of the atomic and thermonuclear bombs and the shadow that their existence throws over international relations, the implications are sinking but slowly into the public mind. Far too slowly, I know, to satisfy the people who run the Civil Defense Administration in Washington.

So our traditional confidence has taken some hard wallops. But the shocks and disillusionments are only part of the story. In the depression the morale of the people was lifted by a new leader and a New Deal. The response to Pearl Harbor was an instant closing of ranks, an outpouring of effort that resulted in epic industrial and military achievements. The ruination of Europe brought the Marshall Plan. Americans could well be proud of their accomplishments both at home and overseas.

Besides, the confidence of the people was bolstered by a period of unprecedented economic expansion in the forties and fifties. The economic prosperity, helped along by other contributing factors, caused a truly astonishing increase of the population. This boom was all the more surprising to the experts because it followed a dismal slump in the birth rate during the thirties. For many years now the birth rate has been running not only higher than in the thirties but also higher than in the late twenties. Apparently the weakening of people's faith in a bright future is not causing them to refuse to bring forth children.

Nevertheless, on balance, I think we may conclude that there is no longer anything that could be called the "cult of optimism." Most Americans probably believe that the country will be in another world war within the next quarter-century. They have more fears than they used to. In prosperity they have not forgotten the nightmare of the Great Depression, and they fear another one. But these developments have not brought anything remotely resembling defeatism. Perhaps there is something to be said for taking off rose-colored spectacles, so long as we have our courage, our pragmatic experimentalism, and our love of freedom.

The general increase of anxiety may have contributed to the rise of interest in religion that has been noted in the last few years. This rise is one of the most interesting, and maybe one of the most significant, developments within the American mind during the quarter-century. But I do not believe that its importance can yet be evaluated.

\* \* \*

What is causing more people to go to church? Dr. George Gallup, the pollster, wrote recently that many people attribute it to "the example set by President Eisenhower, a regular church-goer." Maybe that is one of the contributing

causes, but I am sure that the whole answer—if I knew the whole answer—would be a lot more complicated than that. The answer would probably have to take account of the griefs and fears growing out of wars and threats of wars. It is also possible that any turning to religious values indicates a lessening of people's satisfaction with other values. Could it be that the value of material success and comforts is weakening in our society? Or the value of science and technology as inevitable bringers of human progress?

One of the familiar traits of Americans is that by and large they dearly love to join together—not only in churches, but in clubs, fraternal orders, and movements of all descriptions. But until the last twenty-five years one form of association, organized labor, had proceeded very slowly. In the twenties, business was in the saddle of American life and public affairs. In the thirties, Roosevelt undertook to create more of a balance by strengthening workers and farmers within the framework of capitalism. The New Deal deliberately fostered the growth of labor unions.

It seems to some historians—and I think it is a sound view—that perhaps the most significant result of the strengthening of labor and improvement of working conditions has been that multitudes of laboring men have acquired a middle-class outlook rather than the psychology of the underdog. Something of the same thing might be said about farmers. And businessmen, whose prestige has arisen again in the forties and fifties, surely are much more broad-minded and humane toward their employees, much less predatory in society, than they were twenty-five or fifty years ago. We are not all one happy family in America, and our politics is a continual struggle among great interests, but it seems to me that both industry and labor have grown more responsible.

I believe that our quarter-century has seen a striking improvement in interracial attitudes, at least in the South. For another example, America has with good reason lost much of its inferiority complex in music and art. But I have to be selective. And I intend to devote the rest of this paper to three main topics.

- First, attitudes toward the rôle of government;
- Second, attitudes toward the position of America in the world;
- And third, the dangers to our freedom of mind.

Americans in this period moved to a different concept of the responsibility of government for the welfare and security of the people. Economic Darwinism—the survival of the fittest—all but faded from the public mind. Americans instead began looking to government, especially their federal government, to prevent depressions, to provide jobs if depression came, to insure individuals against sundry forms of misfortune; to protect them against unfair practices; and to offer in good times or bad times a large num-

ber of other services that government had never before performed in this land of rugged individuals.

This historic change of mind grew out of the racking ordeal of the depression. The New Deal strove not only toward recovery but also toward reform. There was bitter opposition to all this from those who thought that American ideals were being destroyed. But the indications were that the average American's sentiments more closely approximated those of the North Carolina tenant farmer quoted by Dixon Wecter in his book, *The Age of the Great Depression*, as follows: "I'm proud of our United States, and every time I hear the 'Star-Spangled Banner' I feel a lump in my throat. There ain't no other nation in the world that would have sense enough to think of WPA and all the other A's."

The New Deal has long since taken its place in history, and for fifteen years the public climate has not been encouraging to the enactment of new social-service legislation. In fact there are some fields in which New Deal trends were put into reverse. But not back to 1929. Much of the structure that has grown up in accordance with a social-service concept of government remained solid, no longer in the arena of political dispute because it had become so plainly a part of the public mind. No one thought it surprising when President Eisenhower, the first Republican President since Hoover, told the nation last January 4: "We believe that the slums, the outdated highway, the poor school system, deficiencies in health protection, the loss of a job, and the fear of poverty in old age—in fact, any real injustice in the business of living—penalizes all of us. And this Administration is committed to help you prevent them." On January 14 the President called for a substantial expansion of social security. In so doing he told Congress that to help individuals provide for economic security in their old age and economic security for their families in case of death, "to reduce both the fear and incidence of destitution to the minimum—to promote the confidence of every individual in the future—these are proper aims of all levels of government, including the Federal Government." And repeatedly the President has stated that the full powers of the government would be used to sustain prosperity and prevent a depression. Of course there would never come a time in America when there would not be controversy over whether this or that administration had taken the correct actions to combat economic slumps, and over whether the actions had gone too far or not far enough; but apparently the responsibility to take them had been generally accepted. And not many people seemed to feel that this new emphasis on security placed our individual freedom in jeopardy.

In addition to accepting more collective responsibility for individual security, the American public reluctantly accepted the idea of bigness in government. The federal establishment grew enormously. In monetary terms most of

the expansion came not from the new concept of individual security but from the increasing emphasis on national security. The people grumbled and wanted economies, but by and large they wanted the services provided by government—including the services connected with national defense—worse than they wanted the economies. Budgetary pruning was accomplished at times, but drastic cut-backs to the good old days were impossible.

From the broad standpoint of world history, the most important change in the American public mind has been our acceptance of international responsibility to strengthen and defend freedom throughout the world.

This rôle was thrust upon us by the war and the spread of world Communism. And the principal motive for our international actions—as with any country—has been our concern for our own security. Regardless of what shoved us out into the world, the essential facts are (1) that we are in it, and (2) that our country has used its tremendous power generally in a mature manner, with a decent respect for other countries, and with the ingenuity that has always characterized the American mind. This had taken place in spite of some handicaps. We are fairly new at this game and we are not yet ideally equipped. George Kennan has said that we came to the twentieth century "with the concepts and methods of a small neutral nation." As Henry Steele Commager puts it, most Americans felt that "the conduct of foreign policy was rather like the conduct of a "revival meeting—a continuous wrestling with sin." We still have not been willing to make the best use of the principle of professionalism in diplomacy. Many Americans look upon all diplomats as suspicious characters. Conflicts between Congress and the Executive Branch has aggravated the difficulty of arriving at thoughtful decisions. But Americans need not be ashamed of their record so far.

Has America's acceptance of responsibility been accomplished by an increase in our tolerance and understanding of other countries? I think it has—at least toward other countries in the free world. But this is not quite so easily demonstrated. Along with our new internationalism there is quite a lot of nationalism, and some of it is the unattractive kind. Although our government, representing the majority of our citizens, has put the utmost emphasis on international coöperation, some people seem to resent our allies almost as much as they resent the Politburo. They do not seem to know what Assistant Secretary of State Walter Robertson brought out in a recent speech, namely, that "our freedom was wrought not at Yorktown and Midway alone but on a thousand battlefields from Thermopylae to the Marne, Lake Ladoga and the skies of Britain. Our material possessions go back to Archimedes, the Arab algebraists and Galileo. We Americans, unlike the Russians, did not invent everything."

Finally we come to the danger within our own borders.

"Our strength is in our diversity," said Chief Justice Warren. Are we growing less diverse? "Our power is in freedom of thought and of research." Do we feel less free to think and speak for ourselves, to question, and to dissent? Are we becoming more prone to drift toward the lazy security of conformity.

Well, there is no doubt of tendencies in that direction. There are evidences of guilt by association, guilt by being controversy, of someone's choosing what books people ought not to read, what movies they ought not to see; of suspicion of free inquiry and discussion; and there are evidences of people's unwillingness to speak out against such manifestations. I don't wish to exaggerate our plight. I cannot agree with the statement attributed to one lecturer that "in the name of freedom we are rapidly creating a police state." Nor with the statement attributed to an educator that a "miasma of thought control" is spreading over the country. I think those are overstatements. But I do believe that there are internal threats to our freedom which no American can afford to ignore.

Our mood of the moment has in it a good deal of fear: fear of depression, fear of Russia, fear of Communists. We can hope that the fear of depression will soon fade, but the fear of Russia will continue, and may intensify as H-bombs grow more numerous. When people are afraid, they are more likely to listen to authoritarians or opportunists who come bearing clear-cut solutions and convenient scapegoats; they are more likely to believe the worst of their fellow citizens. I doubt that demagoguery in itself is worse nowadays than in other periods of our history, but it is more dangerous. For example, Senator Joseph McCarthy, by playing upon existing fears and prejudices, has made himself an international figure. In so doing he has interfered with the operations of the government and with our foreign relations, fooled a good many people with the false notion that their federal government is swarming with traitors, set American against American, and damaged our American ideals of fair play and freedom of inquiry. The irony of all this is that it was done in the name of anti-Communism—for the Communists have been the chief beneficiaries.

I mention McCarthy only as a notorious symptom of the times. If his prestige continues downhill to oblivion, this will not solve all our problems. Even before he became nationally known, cultural historians were writing about the pressure for intellectual conformity in the nineteen-

forties, the growing intolerance with independence and dissent, and the retreat of the critical attitude toward American life and values which had marked the twenties and thirties.

Much has been made of "Americanism." But what is Americanism? Surely Commager was correct when he wrote in 1947, "Every effort to conform Americanism to a single pattern, to construe it to a single formula, is disloyalty to everything that is valid about America."

\* \* \*

Now as to Communism. Communism, with its controlled thinking, its complete intolerance of dissent, its forcing of whole populations into a gray uniformity of mind without rights, without dignity, is the opposite of everything we hold dearest. Militant Communism, seeking to dominate the world, is the greatest menace to our free institutions that has ever arisen. Strangely, some of the Americans who hunt Communists most zealously here at home seem the least interested in the government's efforts to organize the free world to halt Communist expansion abroad. Nevertheless, even within our own borders, Communists must be considered dangerous as actual or potential spies, saboteurs or fomenters of violence. Their illegal activities must be uncovered and prosecuted. They must be kept out of government jobs and other places where they can serve Soviet Russia to our detriment. This is only common sense.

But we must always distinguish between treason and ideas. We have nothing to fear from ideas. Our defense against shabby or false ideas is more ideas, free inquiry and free discussion. Communist ideas have never appealed to more than a relative handful of our people, because our people traditionally have been unwilling to turn over their minds and consciences to someone else.

Once we start repressing ideas—no matter how abhorrent they may be—we become more like the Communists.

Once we start trying to force on people our judgment as to what they should read, hear, see, say, or believe, we become more like the Communists.

\* \* \*

We can expect no letup soon in the external and internal threats to freedom. To cope with these threats we and our children will need even more freedom to think, discuss, and investigate than Americans have had up to now. Surely that is the proper aim of education.

# WHERE STANDS THE BATTLE LINE ON PRESS FREEDOM?

*A Review of the Historic Right and Appeal Against Its Indirect Infringement.*

by Harold L. Cross

*This is a powerful piece by a distinguished authority on newspaper law. Mr. Cross here explores the many modern conditions affecting the constitutional freedom of the press. A thorny disputer of recent government processes and Court decisions, the author's strong views and crochets enliven his documented study. He finds one freedom expanded—against Contempt—but others restricted in various indirect ways. He ends with a strong plea for fullest access to sources of public information. Mr. Cross is author "The People's Right to Know."*

In 1791, with Independence won and a form of government new to mankind created, our forefathers riveted to their nation in the Bill of Rights that which they intended to be the ring of steel expressed in the First Amendment. They clamped corresponding bands upon their states. Alone of all humans we, the people, have such guarantees in our organic laws.

Harken again to the command of the First Amendment; and, as you do, reflect that the press is the only form of private enterprise specifically safeguarded against all governmental abridgment.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Thus the year 1791 is thrice pregnant. It marks our greatest, but not final, victory in the ancient struggle for freedom of expression—the struggle that had been waged for three and one half centuries in singular bitterness and bloodiness for the freedom to print. It marks the beginning of the struggle that, after a pause, is ours to wage—to maintain and consolidate the victory our forefathers won. And often it marks the time to which we must return for definition of our freedom, inasmuch as the First Amendment does not define the term and the Supreme Court has declared that determination on occasion "requires an examination of the history and circumstances which antedated and attended the adoption of the abridgment clause."<sup>1</sup>

The ink with which the quills had written the Constitution had scarcely dried when the Amendment was violated. We were in an undeclared war. It was fought far off. It was indecisive; it lingered on. Some called it Adams' War.

Others, dissatisfied with its limited conduct, clamored for a bigger war. The enemy was that brutal, war-mongering, predatory world power—Napoleonic France.

In emotions this engendered, Congress in 1798 passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, both aimed at abridging press freedom, the latter expressly so targeted. Though never ruled invalid by the Supreme Court, it may hardly be doubted that the Sedition Act,<sup>2</sup> as Jefferson declared, was "a nullity as absolute and as palpable as if Congress had ordered us to fall down and worship a golden image." Even more unpopular than the war, these Acts upset the Federalist Party which sponsored them. They inspired men so wise as Jefferson and Madison to conjure up the dread doctrine of secession. They played a vivid role in teaching government and people a lesson that was to endure for a century. "Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, let we forget, lest we forget."

During that century—from 1801 to 1902—we, the people, were freer to utter and know than men had ever been in any age or clime before. How free is evidenced in these contemporaneous political utterances:

If ever a nation was debauched by a man, the American nation has been debauched by Washington. If ever a nation has suffered from the improper influence of a man, the American nation has suffered from the influence of Washington. If ever a nation was deceived by a man, the American nation has been deceived by Washington. Let his conduct then be an example to future ages. Let the history of the Federal Government instruct mankind that the masque of patriotism may be worn to conceal the foulest designs against the liberties of the people.

So wrote B. F. Bache, grandson of Benjamin Franklin, in his newspaper, the *Aurora*.

If Jefferson be elected we may see our wives and

daughters the victims of legal prostitution, soberly dishonored, speciously polluted, the outcasts of delicacy and virtue, the loathing of God and man.

So spoke Timothy Dwight, Congregationalist minister, president of Yale College.

In the presence of, perhaps by reason of, such uses, yes and abuses, of this freedom this nation grew great.

Except when President Jackson sought to bar from the mails printed matter advocating abolition of slavery and for a few missteps during the Civil War, the 19th Century passed without substantial abridgement by nations or states. Unchallenged by controversy, not required to think of this freedom in terms of abstract political principle, people and press alike let their spirits dull, their weapons rust. Nevertheless, fringe gains were made. Their cumulative effect is important.

### Dynamic Changes

Suddenly this relative quiet was shattered. Somewhat over-simplified in the telling, the dynamic changes are traceable to consequences of three explosions.

One, September 6, 1901, was the assassination of President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz, the anarchist. Lineal descendants, so to speak, plus other causative factors, were three sets of laws. One was a series of statutes in eastern states prohibiting "criminal anarchy"—commonly defined as advocacy of overthrow of government by force or violence or other unlawful means.<sup>3</sup> The second set was statutes in western states prohibiting "criminal syndicalism"—usually defined as advocacy of commission of crime sabotage, unlawful acts of violence or unlawful means of terrorism as a means of accomplishing change in industrial ownership or control.<sup>4</sup> The third set is Acts of Congress culminating in the Smith Act,<sup>5</sup> part of the Alien Registration Act of 1940, our first peace-time sedition Law, under which conviction of the eleven principle Communists was sustained by the Supreme Court<sup>6</sup> last year and lesser miscreants of the breed have been found guilty.

The second explosion, June 28, 1914, in far-off Sarajevo, was the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by a Serbian patriot. Consequences of that fateful act, plus contributing causes, were the Espionage Act of Congress of 1917,<sup>7</sup> the even more drastic Act of 1918<sup>8</sup> and some pretty silly state laws.<sup>9</sup> The 1918 Act was repealed in 1921,<sup>10</sup> but the 1917 measure will come alive automatically on a declaration of war. These statutes were aimed at oral or printed matter calculated to cause insubordination or disloyalty in the armed forces, to obstruct recruiting, to oppose the cause of the United States in the war, to create contempt or scorn for the Government, Constitution, Flag or uniform and so on.

Nearly 2000 persons were convicted, most of them for mere criticism of our entrance into and conduct of the war

and many of them for utterances which are thin soup in comparison with criticisms of the Civil War period and those during the recent conflict in Korea. A Windsor, Vermont minister was convicted and sentenced to 15 years for a pamphlet which was essentially a philosophical argument against participation in the war, not by the Nation, but by individual Christians.<sup>11</sup> The producer of "The Spirit of '76", filmed before we entered the war, dealing with historical events of the Revolution, was convicted and sentenced to ten years because one scene, the so-called "Wyoming Massacre" in Pennsylvania in 1778, depicted British soldiers bayoneting American women.<sup>12</sup> His film was seized, his business bankrupted. In more senses than one, disaster had overtaken the spirit of 1776. The son of the Chief Justice of New Hampshire was convicted and sentenced for a chain letter which added up to a charge that the President and Secretary of State had misinterpreted the German's Sussex Note on submarine warfare.<sup>13</sup> Other instances, fully as shocking, might be cited; and some are referred to in notes hereto.

The third explosion came that "Black Friday" in October, 1929, when the Stock Market banged down on the first of many temporary bottoms.

With the ensuing depression came bitter political conflict between those two ancient philosophies—freedom by individual volition and action under group compulsion of government. The avowed purpose of much of the explosively expanded activity during the national administrations since 1932 has been governmental armament of those deemed to be weak so that they could extract larger economic advantage from those deemed to be strong. Those who thought their strength due to superior acumen, industry and thrift naturally resisted. Seeking engines for their propaganda, the contending forces sought to bend the press, particularly the daily newspaper press, to their respective wills. Newspapers as middle class organisms were more neutral than the antagonistic ideologists desired and so came in for long and bitter criticism from right and left, especially left.

Moreover, a substantial majority of newspapers opposed the elections and many of the measures of Presidents Roosevelt and Truman. This recalcitrant opposition is accompanied by an unprecedented series of punitive expeditions against the newspapers. That there is no relationship of cause and effect between the opposition and the expeditions may not be provable or disprovable by competent legal evidence. However, the assertion that there is no such relationship strikes me, as the late Alfred E. Smith was wont to say in a variety of connections, as "too much corn beef for a nickle." The roads along which these expeditions advance are administrative and judicial interpretations of Acts of Congress passed under the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution, particularly the Sherman and Wagner Acts.

### Recent Developments

What then of the struggle, and how free is our press? Frankly I do not know. It is impracticable for anyone even to begin to encompass the problem under applicable limitations. Inexorable demands of time and space preclude analysis of the numerous decisions. All I dare attempt is to indicate fundamentals and cite the most significant recent developments.

These points seem reasonably clear:

First. Freedom of the press is a broad term—not absolute, objective or static. It eludes definition and gains stature or suffers erosion as does the most rockbound coast under impact of wind and wave.

Second. The First Amendment does not speak equivocally.<sup>14</sup> Rights thereunder are not to be tested by the presence or absence of abuses<sup>15</sup> or by the supposed value or lack of value to society of the matter involved.<sup>16</sup> Press freedom must be distinguished from “responsibility” and “integrity.” For a government to enforce by law or by force outside of law, its conception of “responsibility” or “integrity” might produce a better press, which is unlikely, or a worse press as happened in Hitler’s Germany, Mussolini’s Italy, Stalin’s Russia and Peron’s Argentina. Such a press, better or worse, would not be a free press. We must insist on the right of others to express the thought we hate.

Third. This freedom as constitutionally won is far broader than that of England. When we won it here, press freedom there, Blackstone tells us, “consists in laying no previous restraints upon publications and not in censure for criminal matter when published.”<sup>17</sup> In other words, his government could not interfere by censorship or injunction before the words were printed, but could punish them after publication as it pleased.

The Blackstonian theory dies hard. The men of 1791 intended to slay it. The Supreme Court dealt it a lethal blow in saying:

From the history of the subject it is plain that the English rule restraining freedom of the press to immunity from censorship before publication was not accepted by the American colonists.<sup>18</sup>

and nailed down the coffin with this:

\*\*\* to assume that English common law in this field became ours is to deny the generally accepted historical belief that “one of the objects of the Revolution was to get rid of the English common law on liberty of speech and of the press.”\*\*\* No purpose in ratifying the Bill of Rights was clearer than that of securing for the people of the United States much greater freedom \*\*\* than the people of Great Britain had ever enjoyed.<sup>19</sup>

That is of utmost importance in beating back punishment for so-called sedition, and punitive taxation and prosecution

for alleged contempt of court. The corpse is stirring. The people had best be alert. Newspapers may be silenced in these fields and yet survive. But can the people survive silences imposed upon their organs of information?

Fourth. There can be no doubt that the statutes referred to in this discussion, as interpreted by the court and applied by juries in many instances, have diminished *in fact* freedoms we have long enjoyed. The press is being subjected to an expanding legislative control. Government has moved into newspaper offices to exercise tutelage in the last analysis as to who shall write and edit the news, to whom the news must be furnished, what advertising must not be rejected and so on.

Yet each of these statutes has been ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court,<sup>20</sup> so that we have it as matter of law that they are not abridgments. The results have disclosed not only the routes by which but the ease with which the First Amendment may be by-passed. The results were reached in a number of instances by bare majorities. The very number of the minority justices, to say nothing of their reasoning, indicates merit in the contentions of abridgment and discloses the gossamer by which our freedom hangs. In these great issues the 5 to 4, or 5 to 3 or similar split decision may not be belittled as just another defeat in a law-suit; it tolls the death of a freedom.

Fifth. The struggle we wage involves the same fundamentals as did the struggle in centuries past. It is ever being waged somewhere in the land. It is waged on two fronts. The first is to prevent government from resorting to *means* of infringement that are inherently abridging. For example, licensing and punitive taxation are inherently abridging *means*; their application does not depend on the nature of particular printed matter. The second front is to prevent government from enlarging unduly the kinds of printed matter that may be subjected to means of restraint otherwise proper. Thus, prosecution by due process of law is not necessarily an abridging means but it may become so by undue enlargement of the printed matter declared punishable. For example, the Espionage Act of 1918 was wrongful abridgment, in my opinion, for that reason despite provision for jury trial and appeal.

### Means of Infringement

The first front opposes four general types of means of infringement. They are:

1. Government ownership. This, most stifling of all, was the means first used in England when Caxton imported the printing press from Germany under King Edward IV as a part of the royal regalia, so to speak, like coinage. This means, used in Russia, has spread to Argentina and elsewhere. We have it in the form of myriad government “news” hand-outs issued at taxpayers’ expense and our propaganda to foreign countries, including the State Depart-

ment's magazine "Amerika", distribution of which in Russia has just ceased. The problem is political rather than legal.

2. Restraints exerted before publication to prevent or control content or circulation, the second English means. Typical forms include licensing, censorship, judicial injunction, deprivation of the mail privilege and such modern inventions as "cease and desist orders", "fraud orders" and the like issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Trade Commission, National Labor Relations Board, the Post Office and other administrative agencies.

3. Subsequent prosecution for past publication such as punishment for seditious libel, criminal libel, published matter alleged to be in contempt of court and others. This, a pet hate in 1791, the third means used in old England, was superimposed upon the second.

4. Indirect abridgments not involving judicial procedure or depending on the nature of the printed matter. Examples are punitive or discriminatory taxation, other financial burdens and exactions, closure of news sources to public and press, governmental control of supplies of newsprint paper. These are insidious means, difficult to oppose politically and legally, and, unhappily, they often fail to outrage those liberals who are such stout fellows in other aspects of our struggle.

The second front involves these types or classes of published matter:

1. Indefensible libel damaging to individuals.
2. Matters advocating the overthrow of government by force or violence or other unlawful means. Freedom of the press does not include this but the doctrine is susceptible of abusive extension to punish ordinary seditious libel.
3. Matter obstructing the administration of justice punishable as contempt of court.
4. Matter which discloses military secrets.
5. Matter which infringe copyrights or other proprietary rights in writing.
6. Matter which creates a clear and present danger of bringing about a substantive evil that government has the right to prevent. Examples are matter which threatens riot, panic, mutiny and the like.
7. Matter injurious to the moral, physical or financial well-being of individuals. Examples are obscene matter, advertisements of habit-forming drugs, fraudulent advertising.

The problem with these is essentially one of reconciliation of rights. The law of libel may be used to throttle political discussion, military censorship to conceal blunders, contempt of court proceedings to bar needed knowledge of acts and criticisms.

### Where do we Stand?

Where stands the battle line this morning? It resembles strikingly, I think, our majestic coastline, where the almost

irresistible force of the sea beats upon the almost immovable body of the ancient rock. Here jut promontories boldly challenging new waves of doctrine. There are bays and coves eroded by the tides, sometimes under cover of the fog of our preoccupation with other things, sometimes so deeply that "head tides" are hard by our capital of defenses. Let us apply this concretely.

### CENSORSHIP

Here, like superb Schoodic, juts Point No Licensing or Censorship. Exerted by English kings, first at common law and later with aid from subservient Parliaments, these were the primary means of infringement for three centuries. In 1695 the latest of the laws expired. It was never renewed. Since then no English-speaking monarch has asserted such a common law right; and, with one exception, no English-speaking legislature has sanctioned licensing or general censorship of the press. The one exception is our Congress which, in its unlamented "Blue Eagle" experiment—the National Industrial Recovery Act of the 1930's<sup>21</sup>—set up a licensing system for American enterprise with Presidential discretion to require licenses industry by industry. The measure was not aimed at the press but did not exclude it. The Supreme Court shot down the bird before the rising controversies between President and press reached the courts.

Censorship suffered a heavy defeat in 1952. In action that stirs uneasy recollections of medieval processes, church and state had combined in New York, where statutory motion picture censorship prevails, to bar on grounds of "sacrilege" the film "The Miracle." Produced in Italy by Ingrid Bergman's husband, Roberto Rossellini, its presentation in New York, the courts pointed out, brought almost unanimous condemnation by Catholics, heavy majority approval by Protestants. Overruling or at least modifying its earlier view that the motion picture as an entertainment feature is not within the protection of the First Amendment, the Supreme Court ruled the censorship invalid.<sup>22</sup> The censors, it was said, were "adrift upon a boundless sea amid a myriad of conflicting currents of religious views, with no charts other than those provided by the most vocal and powerful orthodoxies." The other statutory grounds for censorship—obscenity, indecency, immorality and inhumanity—were not dealt with, of course.

### LIBEL

On the far side of a deep bay looms Point Libel. Seditious libel—the doctrine of libel upon government—never gained a permanent foothold here. This chief means of restraint after publication, the one used so barbarously in Star Chamber, was beaten back by public revulsion against the Sedition Act of 1798 and in three great lawsuits. The lawsuits were

the New York colonial government's criminal libel prosecution of John Peter Zenger in 1735, which was ended by a resounding "not guilty" verdict;<sup>23</sup> the federal government's attempt to prosecute the New York *World* and Indianapolis *News* in 1909 for criminal libel for their penetrating criticisms of President Theodore Roosevelt's Panama Canal tactics, which were thrown out;<sup>24</sup> and the ten million dollar civil libel suit of the City of Chicago against the Chicago *Tribune*, which was dismissed by the Illinois Supreme Court in 1923 on the grounds that municipal governments can not sue for libel.<sup>25</sup>

However, important ground was lost in those federal and state "espionage acts" of World War I. The relative quiet in this area during World War II gives reason to hope that some of the lost terrain has been recaptured. But spirits of fear, lost confidence and vengeance stalk abroad. Men of 1652 were maimed by law for what then seemed so preposterous as to challenge the infallibility of the Pope and the divine right of kings. A State-of-Mainer, Elijah Parish Lovejoy, graduate of Colby College, was slain by a mob in 1837 for what then seemed so preposterous as to demand freedom of expression for those advocating abolition of slavery. Men are being flayed now for disloyalty for what seems so preposterous as to question the infallibility of my World War II boss in bomb-shattered Chungking—Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek—and the thesis that we could have saved China for America if only we had enabled him to shoot down more Chinese.

Point Libel has been breached menacingly. The Supreme Court in May upheld the constitutionality of an Illinois statute providing punishment for defamation of "a class of citizens of any race, color, creed or religion."<sup>26</sup> This is one of those dismaying 5 to 4 splits. Apparently aimed at motion picture and other entertainment, the statute was used to convict for a lithograph in the form of a petition to the Mayor and City Council of Chicago to prevent further encroachment of Negroes on the property of whites and so on. Too long for analysis here, the matter was held to be group libel by the Illinois court, was certainly in bad taste, was regarded by the Supreme Court as extreme if not violent and was characterized by dissenter Justice Black, with whom I agree, as "mild compared with usual arguments on both sides of racial controversies." This is a disaster. It is notice to legislatures that they have power to silence or jail unpopular minorities and a warning of silence to minorities as the First Amendment, even as supplemented by the Fourteenth, grows fragile.

#### TAXATION

Between the headlands mentioned lies Taxation Bay, deep, difficult to navigate. Taxation has been used long to abridge freedom. Queen Anne started it in 1711. Needing money for her war and wishing to silence critics of its con-

duct, she had Parliament impose three taxes—on newspaper paper, advertising and circulation. Termed the "Taxes on Knowledge", they lasted a century and a half and then were repealed on the very ground that they were infringements. The Stamp Act of 1765 exported them here and brought condemnation on the same ground.

Taxation played a vital role in overcoming opposition to adoption of the First Amendment. Men of 1791 knew of licensing, censorship and sedition as means of infringement but they had not experienced those means and had not given their national government express power to use them. But they had felt on their necks the hot breath of the tax collector and they had given the nation express power to tax.

There is no doubt that the intent was to bind Congress in exercise of powers granted it. There is little doubt that the intent was to bar taxation of the press. On the whole, our forefathers' intent prevailed for almost a century and a half.

In the 1930's Senator Huey Long, having acquired his state by the "second Louisiana purchase" and wishing to punish the daily papers for their opposition and to favor the weeklies for their support, caused the legislature to impose a two per cent gross receipts advertising tax on papers with a weekly circulation over 20,000. The federal District Court, at the suit of the dailies, dodged the issue of press freedom but held the statutes invalid as discriminatory.<sup>27</sup> The State sought review, whereupon the Supreme Court, disdaining the narrow ground, ruled the tax a violation of press freedom.<sup>28</sup> This was unanimous.

This and other decisions seem to add up to about this: taxation is unconstitutional if discriminatory or intended to restrain or punish and it may be invalid if cast as payment for a license. But politicians have learned to soak everything in sight and so avoid discrimination, to conceal evidence of intent so as to by-pass the Supreme Court decision and to refrain from using the term "license tax." What of taxation that is merely burdensome or destructive. We have that now in fact, but it is difficult to challenge or prove in litigation. Whatever its merit in other connections, "home rule" legislation granting local power to tax is a menace to a newspaper in the presence of municipal authorities irked by criticism. Litigation is at hand, particularly in California. Here is a new battleground. The only weapon may be votes, not courts.

#### LABOR AND ANTI-TRUST

To the left around the point is Interstate Commerce Bay. It has two prongs—Wagner Act and Sherman Act Coves.

Despite some pious protestations about reducing industrial strife, the purpose of the Wagner Act was to organize labor. To that end, with the wisdom of which I have nothing to say here, administration was entrusted to a board which had holy zeal to achieve that purpose, became in-

filtrated by persons with ideologies hostile to employers as a class and was vested with powers to arm labor and disarm management which included a basis for silencing the latter. The basis, you remember, was that provision that it is unfair labor practice to "interfere with, restrain or coerce" in exercise of granted rights.<sup>29</sup> It has been said that great issues call for strong language, that queasy words will not do so.<sup>29a</sup> Perhaps this is not a great issue. At all events I need not remind you how the word "coerce" was tortured to bar employers from all but the feeblest utterance. So outraged was Congress that the Taft-Hartley Act cut back to size administrative discretion to mock the First Amendment.<sup>30</sup> So it was that Justice Minton, then of the Seventh Circuit and now of the Supreme Court, could comfort us in 1948 with the assurance that "perfunctory, innocuous remarks and queries addressed to employees concerning their union membership, when standing alone," are within the protection of the First Amendment.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, freedom to speak and print enjoyed by employers for generations were abridged in fact. They still are. The basis is a law made by Congress. Sometimes when employers asked me how far they could go in stating their views I felt obliged to remind them of the ancient proverb: Before thou fordest the river, O brother, revile not unduly the crocodile's mother.

With the First Amendment becoming so leaky to the flow of indirect infringement, the Wagner Act was applied directly to newsgathering in the case of *National Labor Relations Board v. The Associated Press*.<sup>32</sup> It was held that the AP had violated the Act in dismissing an editor for union activities. Its contention that it had a right to have labor and other news handled by a person free of galloping ideologies on the subject was rejected by the majority justices. The order compelling the editor's re-instatement was held not to violate the First Amendment—5 to 4. The number, judicial capacity and reasoning of the dissenters—Justices Sutherland, Van Devanter, Butler and McReynolds—gives one furiously to think of the hair's-breadth by which government took over this power in the last analysis to determine who shall gather, write and edit the news on which Americans rely.

The Associated Press, a non-profit, cooperative newsgathering organism of newspaper publishers, was in substance a hundred years old and the Sherman Act over fifty when government first used the latter to regulate the former in 1945. It did so in the matter of election to membership, which determines the right to be furnished the AP news report. In voting upon applications for membership, members are restrained from taking into account resulting competition between old and new members. This, too, was a bare majority decision—5 to 3, with Justice Jackson not sitting.<sup>33</sup> The majority Justices rode off in three divergent directions to reach their destination. The dissenters—Chief

Justice Stone and Justices Roberts and Murphy—were agreed that the decree threatened press freedom.

With government thus armed to sit in the last analysis on both newsgathering and news furnishing, the Department of Justice used the Sherman Act to move in on advertising. The sole newspaper published in Lorain, Ohio, being engaged in competition with a radio station, misguidedly told advertisers they could not use his paper if they used the station. He got short shrift. The Supreme Court told him that his right to refuse advertising, long enjoyed by newspapers and others, still stood but is neither absolute nor exempt from regulation.<sup>34</sup> Our disapproval of the business tactics of a single newspaper should not blind us to the ultimate consequence of governmental power thus upheld to regulate advertising.

On the foregoing and other evidence it seems a fair conclusion that statutes based on the interstate commerce clause have in fact altered rights, economic practices and freedom, and that administrative and judicial interpretations have swept the press far along in a stream of social and economic change and so-called reform quite unhindered by the stern injunction of the First Amendment. Is it unfair to suggest that unless the trend be halted, the national government will expand its power to say: This organ of public information I choose to spare but that one I will smite.

#### CONTEMPT

Another headland is Cape Contempt of Court. Here, in the process of reconciliation of the right to freedom of speech and of the press with the right to a fair trial, the Supreme Court has greatly extended the scope of permissible comment.

In four lawsuits involving Harry Bridges, the West Coast labor leader,<sup>35</sup> the *Los Angeles Times*,<sup>36</sup> the *Miami Herald*,<sup>37</sup> and the *Corpus-Christi Caller-Times*,<sup>38</sup> that court in effect rejected the English common law to which some judges had become quite addicted, overthrew the "reasonable tendency to obstruct" test, and banned the use of contempt proceedings to punish utterances that in reality were libel remediable as such. Vehemence of language and utterance during the pendency of proceedings are no longer controlling tests. The fires kindled by the comment must constitute a clear and present danger of real moment, an imminent threat to administration of justice.

However, another issue looms—the extent of contempt power over news concerning, as distinguished from comment upon, judicial proceedings. Here too English law and custom are cited. The question in substance, though over-simplified in statement, is whether government by arresting someone or taking jurisdiction of a lawsuit acquires a monopoly of utterance on issues of guilt or innocence, merit or lack of merit.

### Access to News

Nearby breakwaters are abuilding for a headland of new proportions—Cape Freedom of Information. Its essence is access by people and press to public records and proceedings. The public business is the public's business. Freedom of information is the just heritage of the people. Without it we have but changed our kings.

Our people must have the right—the *level* right—directly and through their press to examine the conduct of their affairs, subject only to limitations imposed by the most urgent public necessity. Subject thereto, this right and the remedy to enforce it must receive constitutional sanction and so be removed from risk of deprivation or dilution by officials, legislatures or courts.

The organized newspaper press of the nation is leading a campaign to these ends. It needs and should have the support of the public and Bench and Bar. Legislation is being passed to remove curtains that shut out light, such as those hanging in front of records of expenditures of some two billions of dollars of tax money annually for direct relief; to clarify and enlarge definitions of the term "public records" and declarations of rights of public and press inspection thereof, and to require open meetings of state and municipal bodies instead of secret or executive sessions.

Dynamic, explosive expansion of governmental activity demands this revival of the neglected constitutional right to the raw materials of public knowledge. For example, boards of education no longer meet in slumberous routine. In many parts of the nation they determine great expenditures in expanding communities with already over-burdened economies. They pass upon the ideologies of those to teach our youth. They decide what text and research material may, or may not, go before our children. These are vital matters. The people are entitled to know not only what decisions were reached but how and why and who voted for and against them.

### The Spirit of the Constitution

We, the people, firmly and undismayed, must stand upon the Constitution, of course. But events show that the law cannot safely be made our sole reliance. We must react in spirit too. We should trust more to reason, and less to force within or without the law, to convince those who differ. Our legislators should say "No" more often to pressure groups wishing to jail those of other views. A man should not be convicted of crime in the streets in Chicago where the courthouse is, for saying that which, whether we like it or not, would probably bring cheers of approval in hundreds of other streets in Chicago and its residential suburbs. All of us, people, legislators, press and, last but far from least, our public servants, should exercise more restraint, far more, to the end that this freedom shall be subjected less often, far

less often, to the mercy of day-by-day majorities of the Supreme Court.

Our forefathers feared and intended to bar, not so much direct interference with the content of printed matter over which the nation was granted no power, as those indirect abridgments which might be spelled out from powers that were granted. Let it not be forgotten that the Constitution does single out for special protection, not the butcher or baker or candle-stick maker but those superb organs of information—the human voice and the printed page.

### NOTES

1. *Grosjean v. American Press Company, Inc. et al.*, 297 U. S. 233, 56 S. Ct. 444, 80 L. Ed. 660 (1936)
2. 1 Stat. (1798)
3. For example, New York Penal Law, sections 160-6 (1902)
4. For example, California, Gen. Laws, Deering, 1937, Act 8428
5. 18 U. S. C. A. 2385, 54 Stat. 671
6. *Dennis et al. v. U. S.*, 341 U. S. 494, 71 S. Ct. 857, 95 L. Ed. 1137 (1951); *U. S. v. Dunne et al.*, 138 F. 2d 137 (8th Cir. 1943), cert. den. 320 U. S. 790, 64 S. Ct. 205, 88 L. Ed. 476 (1943), reh. den. 320 U. S. 814, 64 S. Ct. 260, 88 L. Ed. 492 (1943), reh. den. 320 U. S. 815, 64 S. Ct. 426, 88 L. Ed. 493 (1944)
7. 18 U. S. C. A. 2388
8. Act of May 16, 1918, c. 75, section 1, 40 Stat. 553
9. For example, Montana Laws, 1918, extra. sess., c. 11
10. Res. March 3, 1921, c. 136, 41 Stat. 1359
11. Bull. 79, Dep't. of Justice, Interpretation of War Statutes
12. *U. S. v. "The Spirit of '76"*, 252 F. 946 (D. C. Cal. 1917); *Goldstein v. U. S.*, 258 F. 908 (C. C. A. 9th Cir. 1919)
13. *Doe v. U. S.*, 253 F. 903 (C. A. A. 8th Cir. 1918)
14. *Bridges v. State of California*, 314 U. S. 252, 62 S. Ct. 190, 86 L. Ed. 192 (1941)
15. *Ibid.* And see V Writings of Thomas Jefferson, p. 47, P. L. Ford, ed.
16. *Winters v. New York*, 333 U. S. 507, S. Ct. , 92 L. Ed. 840 (1947)
17. Blackstone, Commentaries, I, 109.
18. *Grosjean v. American Press Company, Inc. et al.*, *supra*
19. *Bridges v. State of California*, *supra*
20. For examples:—N. Y. Criminal Anarchy in *People v. Citlow*, 268 U. S. 652, 45 S. Ct. 625, 69 L. Ed. 1138 (1925); California Criminal Syndicalism in *Whitney v. California*, 274 U. S. 357 (1927); "Smith Act" in *Dennis et al. v. U. S. and U. S. vs. Dunne et al.*, both *supra*; Espionage Act in *Schenck v. U. S.*, 249 U. S. 47, 39 S. Ct. 247, 63 L. Ed. 470 (1919)
21. Act of June 16, 1933, ch. 34, 53 Stat. 95; *Schechter v. U. S.*, 295 U. S. 495, S. Ct. , 79 L. Ed. 1570 (1935)
22. *Burstyn, Inc. v. Wilson*, U. S. , 72 S. Ct. 77, 96, L. Ed. 687 (Adv. Sh. No. 16, June 16, 1952)
23. Rutherford, John Peter Zenger (New York, 1904)
24. *U. S. v. Press Pub. Co.*, 219 U. S. 1, 31 S. Ct. 212, 55 L. Ed. 65, 21 Ann. Cas. 942 (1910); *U. S. v. Smith* (Indianapolis News), 173 F. 227 (D. C. Inc. 1909)
25. 307 Ill. 595, 139 N. E. 86 (1923)
26. Ill. Penal Code, Division 1, section 224a, Ill. Rev. Stat. 1949, ch. 38, section 471; *Beauharnais v. Illinois*, U. S. , S. Ct. 96 L. Ed. 620 (Adv. Sh. No. 14, May 19, 1952)
27. *American Press Company, Inc. et al. v. Grosjean*, 10 F. Supp. 161 (La. 1935)
28. *Grosjean v. American Press Company, Inc. et al.*, *supra*. And see *Preston v. Finley*, 72 F. 859 (C. C. Tex. 1896); *New Orleans v. Crescent Newspaper*, 14 La. Ann. 816 (1859); *Information vs. Jager*, 29 S. C. 438 (1888); *Norfolk v. Norfolk Landmark Pub. Co.*, 95 Va. 564 (1898); 5 Brooklyn Law Rev. 328; 49 Harvard Law Rev. 998, 20 Minn. Law Rev. 671

29. 29 U. S. C. A. 158
- 29a. *Hall v. Binghampton Press Co.*, 263 App. Div. 403, 33 N. Y. S. 2d. 840 (1st Dep't. 1942), aff'm'd 296 N. Y. 714, 70 N. E. 2d 537 (1946)
30. 29 U. S. C. A. 158(6) (c)
31. *Sax v. N. L. R. B.*, 171 F. 2d 769 (7th Cir. 1948)
32. *The Associated Press v. N. L. R. B.*, 301 U. S. 103, 57 S. Ct. 650, 81 L. Ed. 953 (1937)
33. *The Associated Press v. U. S.*, 326 U. S. 1, 65 S. Ct., 1416, 89 L. Ed. 2013 (1945), reh. den. 362 U. S. 802, 66 S. Ct. 6, 90 L. Ed. 489
34. *Lorain Journal Co. v. U. S.*, U. S. S. Ct. , 96 L. Ed. 121 Adv. Sh. No. 4, December 31, 1951)
35. *Bridges v. State of California*, *supra*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Pennekamp v. Florida*, 328 U. S. 331, 66 S. Ct. 1029, 90 L. Ed. 1295 (1946)
38. *Craig v. Harney*, 331 U. S. 367, 67 S. Ct. 1249, 91 L. Ed. 1546 (1947). And see *Smotherman v. U. S.*, 185 F. 2d. 676 (10th Cir. 1950)

---

Harold L. Cross, veteran libel lawyer and newspaper counsel, has long been distinguished as lecturer of the Pulitzer School of Journalism as author and expert on newspaper law.

---

## OUR REVIEWERS

Our next issue will return to our normal policy of reviewing—one reviewer to one book. In this issue the book reviews or notices are by the editor except the few otherwise signed. This was necessary to deal with the Summer's book accumulations the editor found on his desk as he returned just before press time. Those he couldn't get through will be reviewed in the next issue.

---

## Is Crusading Over-rated?—

(Continued from page two)

he is conscientious, he ought to try it. And one of the advantages of such an approach is that it's pretty difficult to hurt an innocent man, because the reporter is sticking to factual writing instead of getting into the dangerous business of drawing conclusions.

Naturally that type of reporting never is going to get much attention from Hollywood or fiction writers. But its importance to the democratic processes ought to be understood better by the journalism student and graduate. For there are more opportunities for that sort of public service than there ever will be for crusading. It may not be as thrilling to turn out 10 articles on the operation of a city's water system as to start a series with a big "I," but one may do just as much good as the other. It depends on the reporter. A good one will not be too much limited by a policy of a conservative approach to stories.

Actually a crusading policy can get in the way of fair reporting. Let's say the paper is trying to whip up enthusiasm for a new airport. In such circumstances, a reporter might be tempted to play up stories on minor airport crashes, lack of accommodations and so forth while not working too hard on articles favorable to the existing field. The reporter might feel he actually was helping the newspaper, or he might feel a special allegiance to the man who butters his bread. The conscientious reporter is likely to be better satisfied with an editorial policy which simply directs him to get the facts.

# The biggest magazine bargain in America!

NIEMAN REPORTS AT \$2 A YEAR.

*The best Christmas present for a newspaperman.*

---

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT NEWSPAPERING.

---

*Everything in it is For and By and About Newspapermen!*

Four Times a Year — Four Issues for \$2.00

250,00 words for \$2.00 and all of it good reading. No ads except this one.

No policy line except whatever interests newspapermen to write  
and to read about newspapers.

---

Nieman Reports is published by the Nieman Alumni Council, representing the 200 newspapermen who have held Nieman Fellowships at Harvard. It aims to provide a medium for discussion by newspapermen of matters common to their work.

*Start a subscription for a newspaper friend with this issue.*

Send subscription to:

NIEMAN REPORTS, 44 Holyoke House, Cambridge 38, Mass.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

CITY ..... STATE.....

*Don't print this ad*