

Does Nixon Regard A Free Press As Just Another Enemy Sanctuary?

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lisher of a major chain of newspapers, who called the Cambodian invasion "of questionable legality and dubious morality." There is the *Wall Street Journal* which termed it a poor gamble. There is Robert Shaplen of the *New Yorker*, who has been in Indochina longer than any American reporter and in the past has been second only to Joe Alsop in his support of U.S. intervention. He reports from Saigon that in view of the deteriorating political situation in South Vietnam, "the Cambodian adventure may well prove disastrous", that few observers in Saigon share Nixon's hope that it will shorten the war. On the contrary, Shaplen writes, "consistent misunderstanding and mismanagement . . . have now brought us to the highly dangerous point of withdrawing our troops and broadening our commitment—a script worthy of Lewis Carroll."

Even The New Leader Turns Anti-War

Even the *New Leader*, the one place on the left where Nixon could find support and sympathy in his Red-hunting days in the 50s, has defected. In an article by Roger Hilsman, written on the eve of the Cambodian invasion, it declares that Nixon's Vietnamization policy "represents a decision to continue the war, not to end it." Hilsman, who was one of the architects of intervention in Vietnam under Kennedy, now warns against "participation in a Cambodian offensive." If Nixon and Agnew are out to revive McCarthyism, the number and variety of those to be labelled subversive have grown fantastically. When I began publication in the heyday of McCarthyism 18 years ago I never dreamt that some day I would share the pillory with a Luce publication! In journalism at least Nixon has kept his pledge and brought us all together.

Even conservative and pro-war papers like the *Washington Star* regard Agnew with disfavor. It sees in his "verbal rabbit punches" a factor making for "a wide and dangerous polarization of opinion." It says "many who support the decision on Cambodia . . . have reacted with dismay to the Administration's handling of the predictable crisis that action precipitated on the home front." It deplores the creation of an atmosphere in which "more and more, those who disagree with a given opinion are looked upon not as countrymen with differing reasonable points of view but as the enemy." That illustrates what the *Wall Street Journal* was talking about the other day when it said in an editorial, "Toward Conciliation," that "the Administration's thinking is tainted by a self-destructive

Editors Growing Nervous

As reaction to campus demonstrations grows in this country, employment opportunities for radicals and the not-so-radical have begun to narrow—especially in the area of summer jobs. Institutions as diverse as the federal government, the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and New England prep schools are now asking direct and possibly illegal questions about a job applicant's political history . . . After taking in a fistful of radical interns last year, the *Washington Post* drew a hard line on political activists this year in response to Agnew-led attacks on the "liberal" press. "We're not sure we can afford to be hiring political activists any more," Ben Bagdikian, the *Post's* national editor reportedly told one intern applicant.

Both the *Post* and *Times* asked prospective summer interns a long series of prospective questions having little relation to reportorial skill in interviews this spring. Examples include: What was the last political demonstration you participated in? Would you serve in the Army? How do you plan to get out?

Post editors agonized over and finally rejected one student they considered eminently qualified after he answered that he would go to jail rather than serve in the army. Executive Editor Benjamin C. Bradlee reportedly argued that this level of commitment might hamper his journalistic objectivity. One editor later admitted that the person would have been hired had he answered differently.

—Scott W. Jacobs, *The Harvard Crimson*, May 14.

belief: that the Administration is conservative, that the public has turned 'conservative' and that therefore the public will back the Administration come what may." It warned that "unless Administration planners treat the public as the complex and sensitive organism it is, they will only lose their very real chance for building sustained moral and political backing."

Such sober second thoughts seem to be beyond this Administration. Nixon and Agnew seem increasingly to regard a free press as another privileged sanctuary. Will their crusade for freedom in Asia finish by ending it at home? It is not too early to begin to ask the question. More and more, as anti-war dissent rises in every class and region, Nixon and Agnew are thrown back on an appeal to the Know Nothings of our time.

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