

# In the Crusading Tradition

By JONATHAN DANIELS, editor of the *Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer*, whose new book, *"They Will be Heard,"* is due soon from McGraw-Hill.

**I**N A BIG cluttered room in the Columbia University school of journalism a few years ago, Lee Hills of the Knight Newspapers, Scott Newhall of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and I served as the Pulitzer Prize judges of editorial writing in America. Some of the entries had come in the form of elaborate presentations by newspaper promotion departments. Others were just pieces clipped out and stuck into envelopes. We read the whole mass. Most were competent. All were righteous. But in the whole pile we did not find one we felt was worthy of the prize. Certainly, we agreed, there were none through which came the brilliance or militancy of the old, blind, domineering Joseph Pulitzer, who was a personality in the press even when he was off in a soundproof cabin on a guarded yacht.

We so reported. Evidently, however, the august Pulitzer board above us was appalled by our negative position. At their meeting they called for the pile of clippings. They went through the big folios and the tattered sheets. And they found, as we had not been able to do, a prize-winner. They were probably right. Certainly by making the award they did not give aid or comfort to the dolorously repeated dictum that old-time crusading "personal journalism" has disappeared.

Possibly that was a bad year. Perhaps in this age of proliferating prizes the cantankerous characters who make personal journalism would scorn to gather their yesterday yells and hope for a solemn annual award. Perhaps it has always been true that the editorial that raises the hair of its readers and shows

the hair on the chest of its writer seems comparatively pallid when read much later out of context and out of its circulation area. But of a couple of things I am confident: In American history personal journalism and crusading editors have both always seemed about to disappear. And in terms of the patterns for journalists set by many schools of journalism today, we would not always like them if we found them.

Horace Greeley had some notion about the disappearance of such editors as early as 1841, when he was only beginning, as editor of the *Tribune* ("The Great Moral Organ"), to set the model for crusading personal journalism. And by 1855, *Putnam's Monthly* was confidently declaring that "the great journals are now rather corporate institutions than individual organs; and hence the former autocratic influence of men like Horace Greeley is on the decline." Then, of course, many were sure when Greeley died in 1872 "that the day for personal journalism is gone by, and that impersonal journalism will take its place."

"A great deal of twaddle," said Charles A. Dana, editor of the *New York Sun*, who could be both charming and caustic—and in his own lifetime changed from idealistic socialist to extreme conservative.

"Whenever in the newspaper profession," said Dana, "a man rises up who is original, strong, and bold enough to make his opinions a matter of consequence to the public, there will be personal journalism; and whenever newspapers are conducted only by commonplace individuals whose views are of no consequence to anybody, there will be nothing but impersonal journalism. And this is the essence of the whole question."

Dana certainly did not end the debate about the demise or the indestructibility of punch-packing personal journalism

or the editors who made it. Before he died in 1921, Henry Watterson, the much-quoted "Marse Henry" of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, had announced the disappearance of such papers and editors with rhetorical finality: "The soul of Bombastes has departed, and journalism is no longer irradiated by the flash of arms."

When Watterson himself put down his pen forever, the equally quoted William Allen White wrote sadly to the same effect in his *Emporia Gazette*. White had watched the consolidation of many independent papers and the resulting unemployment, for a time at least, of many newspapermen. He had seen too much of a journalism "that floats complacently, securely, witlessly in the serene pool of our American finance-capital structure!" Watterson's death moved him to say that the newspaper business was developing no more individualistic editors like "Marse Henry," who sometimes seemed Bombastes himself.

**Y**ET, fortunately, there have been clear evidences that crusading editors are a durable breed, even in an age of change and the growth of news-vending as a commodity industry. The appearance of chain newspapers did not necessarily mean that a tactful pursuit of profit by pleasing everybody had made obsolete men ready with the editorial cat-o'-nine-tails for those they regarded as malefactors. Often a roaring sense of responsibility remains even when all the papers in a town are under the same ownership. Men do still take risks for civic virtue. And often prize-givers, schools of journalism, and press organizations do find editors in whom to take both pride and comfort. (Other such editors are probably overlooked in a nation in which even the greatest papers are largely local in their leadership.)

There is not now and never has been



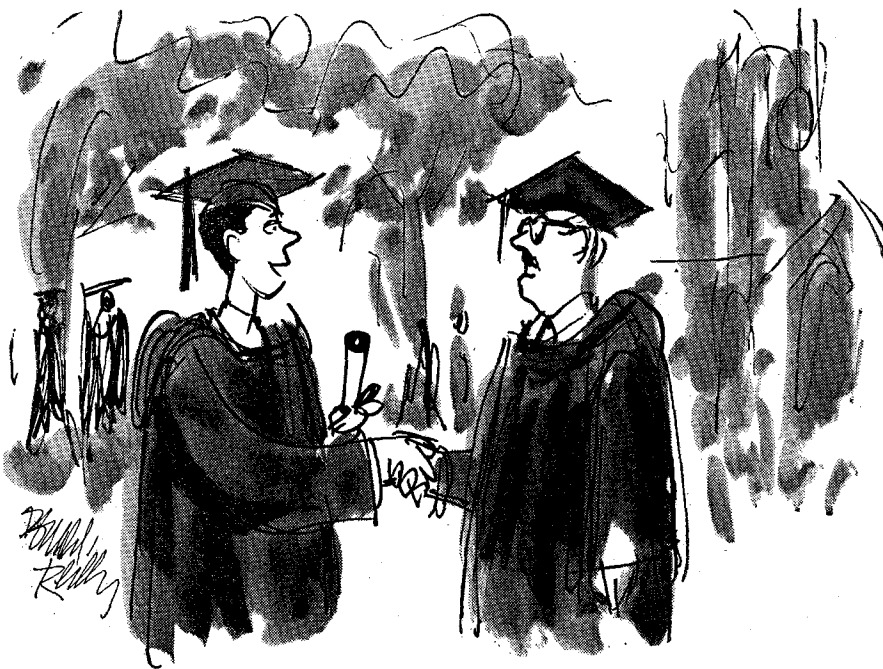
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any one model of the personal journalist or the crusading editor. Many of those of the past would look as awkward on marble pedestals as some do now with prizes in their hands or framed awards on their walls. Though there are monuments to him, in his lifetime Horace Greeley's personal eccentricities embarrassed many of his fellow editors. William Lloyd Garrison was an irritant not only to slaveholders but to many fellow Abolitionists as well. Not all, of course, were virtuosos of verbal violence. As much of the impression of the press on American history has been made with sugar as with vinegar. After all, there was William Rockwell Nelson, whose *Star* got Kansas City out of the mud, as well as Adolph Ochs, whose *Times* proved it possible to get the New York press out of the dirt. The crusade of Henry Grady of the *Atlanta Constitution*, more oratorical than editorial, was his effort to love the North and South together again after division. The range of crusades runs all the way from caress to cocklebur. Not the causes for which crusading editors fought but the vitality which they brought to their views has been the mark of the breed. Certainly the time-determined righteousness of their causes does not shape the pattern of the men.

**T**HE Boston Tea Party began in the print shop of Ben Edes's *Gazette*. But Edes was as much concerned about the tax on his paper as the tax on tea and he aroused patriot mobs to behavior that can only be described as hoodlum. Edmund Ruffin of Virginia, who was given the honor of firing the first shot at Fort Sumter, was ready to be a martyr for slavery. Abolition, in turn, had its martyr in Elijah P. Lovejoy, who helped set John Brown marching.

It is irrelevant to the definition of personal journalism that Albert Parsons was hung as one of the Chicago anarchists and that such a journalist as John Reed was buried with Bolshevik honors by the Kremlin. In "yellow journalism," Pulitzer, as well as William Randolph Hearst, was as much concerned about circulation as about saving Cuba in the "splendid little war" they helped arrange for its freedom. Possibly E. W. Scripps, whose papers stoutly took the side of the "95 per cent," the common people, was aware that they could buy more penny papers. (Once they did sell for a penny!)

The notion that the business office dulls the fighting edge of the press disregards the fact that the first little fighting editors were their own editorial and business departments at the same time. George Jones of the *New York Times* was a publisher in the most modern sense and when he fought the Tweed Ring he did not entirely please the



"I'm going to dedicate my first ad to you Professor McGill."

lofty business community, many members of which, along with Tammany, had their hands in the municipal till.

Of course, there has been much change in American journalism since the earliest days when it was said that a man with a handkerchief full of type could set up a paper and array it against all the evil forces he saw in his world. Yet, way back in 1733, when John Peter Zenger in his *New York Weekly Journal* ridiculed the royal governor and in the process established the principle of press freedom, he was glad to have backers who would help him to profit. In his ink-stained apron, Zenger would appear odd at gatherings of either the American Society of Newspaper Editors or the American Newspaper Publishers Association. He would be qualified for membership in both.

**T**ODAY, of course, newspapers are only items in the midst of media, often stumbling in their tasks over the cables of electronic competitors. However, they still grow mightily in the apparently inexhaustible market for communication as a commodity. Though newspapers are still pretty much family-owned, they have mushroomed or toadstooped into the greater corporate structures that many feel have depersonalized them. That could not be better indicated than in the transition from regal Hearst to diminutive Samuel I. Newhouse. As an opulent entrant into metropolitan journalism, Hearst in 1895 paid \$180,000 for the *New York Journal*. Newhouse, adding to his lengthy chain or collection, paid more for the New Orleans newspapers in 1963 than Thomas Jefferson did for the Louisiana Purchase.

The descent of Hearst on Park Row was almost a full-dress procession. New-

house seemed to rise almost secretly from the *Staten Island Advance*. Hearst arrived at his press properties in special trains with retinues in attendance. His editors everywhere attended his wishes and waited for his words. Newhouse remains almost anonymous. He comes by commercial plane carrying a briefcase. He seems to have no desire to impose his personality, if any, on his properties. Their increasing number, from Syracuse, to Portland, to Birmingham, to New Orleans, indicates that he understands profits. Even some publishers who fear the growth of chains and monopolies as likely to turn political thinking to ideas of public regulation have not been quite sure whether to regard the swiftly growing Newhouse as millionaire mouse or menace. He could be the embodiment of an impersonalized press. Yet under his ownership, crusade—under local direction—has gone on. His *Portland Oregonian*, which had won a Pulitzer Prize for distinguished public service before he obtained it, went on, after he bought it, to win another in a costly crusade.

**I**N fact, "a great deal of twaddle" is today the best description for the notion of the crusading editor's doom, just as it was when Dana wrote after Greeley died.

There will always be crusading newspapers and editors. The weakest and strongest papers and editors are inescapably crusaders. Mediocrity gets its message across. Timidity can be taught, and in too many towns it is being taught. Afghanistanism, or editorship that thunders at distant dangers but is muted about municipal affairs, did not begin in our times. Back in the days after the Spanish War there was an

editor of the Greensboro *Patriot* in North Carolina who never saw shenanigans in City Hall but gave unshirted hell to Aguinaldo, leader of the Philippine insurrectionists. His nickname became "Aguinaldo" for the rest of his days. There have been such men in all the years since Gutenberg invented movable type. There will be such if man, with his need for news, ever settles on the moon.

**T**HERE will be crusading editors, too, so long as vitality, dissent, and determination exist among literate men. The causes in which they enlist their pens, their typewriters, or their dictating machines do not determine their quality. They may fight great rogues or urge the planting of roses. Their positions may be radical or reactionary, and about matters great or small. The measure is their militancy.

William Allen White inadvertently called attention to the source of the best definition of such editors when, in 1896, he damned among other Populists a lady in Kansas, Mary Elizabeth (called Mary Ellen) Lease. White did not mention her name. He only referred to her in his editorial "What's the Matter with Kansas?" as one of "three or four harpies out lecturing." But clearly his reference was to Mary Ellen, a woman nearly six feet tall, with no figure, a thick torso, and long legs—but with a golden voice. She could, said the Emporia editor, "recite the multiplication table and set a crowd hooting or hurraing at her will." One great sentence recalled from her speaking especially irritated White then. It deserves remembrance now.

"It is time," cried Mary Ellen in her rich contralto, "for Kansas to raise less corn and more hell."

There always have been editors who

have felt that it was time to raise hell—against the British Crown, the Federalists, the Jeffersonians, the Whigs, both Andrew Jackson and those who did not like him, against slavery and against emancipation, against Tammany and the trusts, against anarchists and Communists, pacifists and militants, and against the Money Power, for and against Prohibition, against and for labor and capital, civil rights and civil righters, against crooks and against reformers.

Furthermore, there has never been a time in our past when the press was not under public attack for its impertinence or its pusillanimity—often both at the same time. Pugnacious editors have not always been easy to bear. George Washington went into a roaring rage upon hearing of newspaper criticism directed at him. So did Thomas Jefferson on occasion—after he had fathered free press guarantees. But editorial pusillanimity was not invented in our time. After he had been elected with the aid of sharp-penned journalists, Jefferson set up as the editor of his own organ a gentleman whose mildness was such that he was called "Silky-Milky Smith" and his paper the "National Smoothing-Plane."

Now, undoubtedly, anonymity seems to grow among editors. Electronics and syndication often obscure them as they raise columnists and commentators to high fame. The press appears to be more and more a business, less and less a vehicle of crusading concern. Competition and combativeness both seem muted in an opulent society. In a computer age the pen—even the typewriter—may become as obsolete in the editorial sanctum as the pistol.

As a matter of fact, arms for defense are still not entirely unnecessary. One of

my favorite contemporary fighters, Hodding Carter, of the Greenville, Mississippi, *Delta Democrat-Times*, felt it well to have a pistol at hand when rednecks from Arkansas and Texas were crossing the river to join student tumult as the government matriculated James Meredith at Ole Miss in 1962. But fat, furious, sentimental, and belly-laughing Ralph McGill, operating under the odd title of publisher of the Atlanta *Constitution*, is generally attacked only by dirty, anonymous telephone calls. He will not be intimidated. Nor will such men as eighty-five-year-old Thomas M. Storke, of the Santa Barbara *News-Press*, who in 1961 took on a sort of rich, reactionary rabble which thought it held a monopoly on patriotism. And there are other journalists, babes beside Storke, who are ready to tangle with forces they consider dangerous on the Left, the Right, and in between.

**I**T pleases me that my own paper, the *News and Observer*, of Raleigh, North Carolina, has long been referred to by many as *The Nuisance and Disturber*. But as a liberal, Democratic editor I respect such muscular conservatism as that often shown by the Chicago *Tribune*. And there is crusade implicit in the defense of old South Carolina mores in the *News and Courier* of Charleston. Sometimes it seems to me in our times to be fighting for a fantasy. It shoots as if it were firing the first shots at Fort Sumter all the same. I remember that years ago Heywood Broun, who had been fired from the great old *World*, said in kindness after the death of Ralph Pulitzer that if he got that dying newspaper into the red, he had at least got it out of the yellow. The trouble there was, as it may too often be elsewhere, that the yeast was gone with the yellow.

Editors grow old and papers die or are merged sometimes in mortuary fashion. But actually few things change in the character of the American press. One pile of entries for a prize is no satisfactory sample of press vitality even at a school of journalism that announces annual accolades. The press pattern of the past is the continuity of the future. There will always be Washingtons to wince and rant at abuse and Jeffersons who hold to their faith in freedom despite freedom's faults. And there will also always be editors incapable of flame and force in the use of freedom. But—and it is the great and precious but—there will always be men word-armed and word-ready, in the tradition of the crusading American editors of the past. Impertinent often, pugnacious always, unintimidated by power, uncaptured by conformity, they will be at every barricade of American battling. The meaning of this land will be lost when their spirit is gone.



"He's genuinely sorry about biting your hand."

# A STRONG AND STEADY LIGHT

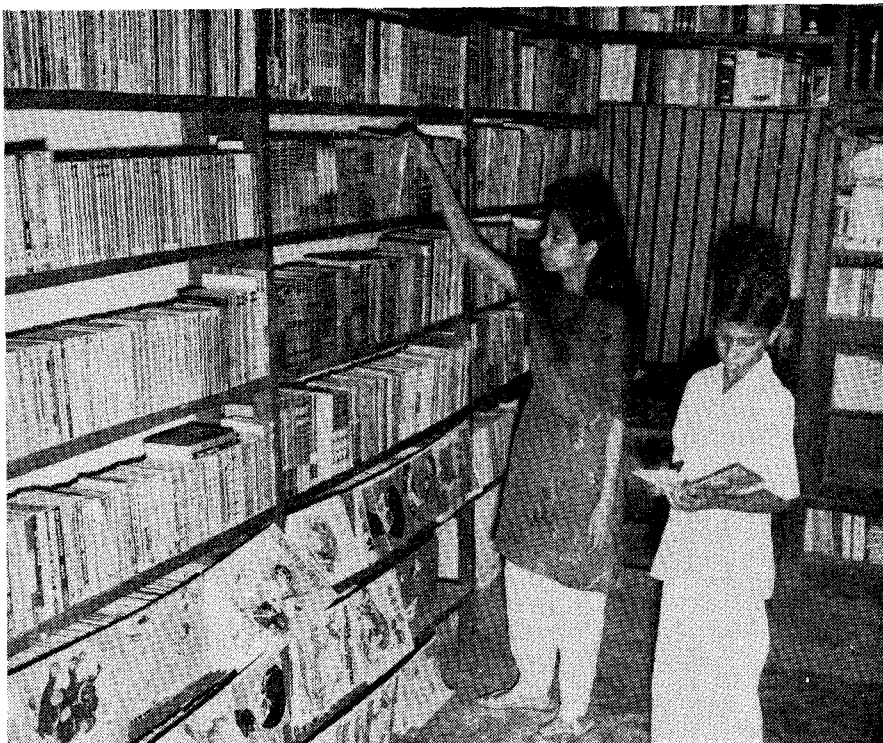
By JOHN TEBBEL

**I**F COMMUNICATIONS among and between peoples is a major contribution toward a more peaceful world, a nonprofit organization called Franklin Book Programs must be the most successful agency the United States possesses in the effort to stop the global slide toward destruction.

Franklin is not engaged in "selling democracy," or the American Way. Its operations in the new, revolution-created countries are not subject to burning by mobs or to hostile attacks by governments. Everybody loves Franklin, except perhaps the ideological warfare experts of Russia and China, because these American book-publishing experts are devoted solely to strengthening book-publishing capacity in developing countries where it exists, and creating that capacity where it does not.

By any measurement Franklin is one of the most impressive cultural activities the United States is engaged in, yet it is probably the least known to Americans. Its activities reach out from its central New York office to subsidiary offices in Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, Teheran, Tabriz, Kabul, Lahore, Dacca, Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Lagos, Enugu, and (with a somewhat different program) Buenos Aires. These offices are staffed entirely by citizens of the countries in question. Out of them to date have come publishing organizations producing 2,500 book titles—nearly 43,000,000 copies—in Arabic, Persian, Peshtu, Urdu, Bengali, Malay, and Indonesian. Project programs include books in Spanish, English, Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo.

Proving that international cooperation can be a two-way street, Franklin has also organized within the current academic year two ten-week, thirty-man seminars in book publishing for middle- and top-management publishing personnel from the developing countries, a program sponsored by the government. The visitors have been given lectures, discussion sessions, and visitations to embrace the broad aspects of publishing—creating books, manufacturing them, getting them to readers, creating a larger market, and dealing with problems peculiar to the countries involved. In the final three weeks, the group divides into seminars considering such topics as management and editorial problems, design and manufacture, and sales promotion and distribution.



Library users in Dacca, Pakistan—the Franklin Book Program in action.

The money to finance Franklin's ambitious program has come from foundations, corporations, individuals, and government, both here and abroad—as well as a certain percentage from operational income. It appears to be money extremely well spent. The idea behind Franklin is that education is the basic investment for economic development, and that books are the basic tools of education. Educated, economically healthy countries will, in time, be countries able to take their proper place in the world dialogue of nations, which most serious students of international affairs believe to be the ultimate road to world peace.

Beyond its present, shorter-range planning, Franklin has a long-term objective. It means to create a vigorous local publishing industry in every country it touches, an industry that will publish, for both children and adults, books written by local authors and illustrated by local artists. It would like to see a complete system of school and public libraries, a nationwide system of retail book distribution at low prices, and the establishment of a tradition of book-buying by both parents and children.

Franklin has come a long way toward its objectives, both short- and long-range, in its brief thirteen years of existence. It was born in 1952, at a joint

meeting of committees representing the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council. Francis St. John, of Brooklyn; Luther Evans, of the Library of Congress; and Dan Lacy, then on loan from the Library to the State Department and now managing director of the ABPC, were major figures in the creation of this unique organization that was intended to be independent and nongovernmental yet necessarily, by its nature, had to establish a working relationship with the government.

Named for that universal man, Benjamin Franklin, who founded the first American public library, Franklin Book Programs began modestly by arranging to publish American books in translation. As time went on, however, it got more and more into producing textbooks locally, training people in the book industry, devising reference book projects, establishing systems of mass distribution, and providing technical assistance in editing, printing, and bookselling. More recently it has been substantially involved in school library projects.

All kinds of American bookmen have contributed to the program's success, including authors, librarians, publishers, printers and booksellers. Its officers in-

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