

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE AMERICAN PRESS

a thesis submitted to the Department of

History of the University of Sydney in

December 1976 in fulfilment of the

requirements of the degree of Doctor of

Philosophy relatively simple or straightforward

by

Graham J. White

PREFACE

Most of those who have attempted to analyse Franklin Roosevelt have felt obliged to emphasise the complexities and ambiguities of his character. They have seen in their subject a confusing mixture of puzzling contradictions : a Hudson River aristocrat turned democrat; a prosperous, landed conservative who practised radicalism;¹ a sworn upholder of the Constitution who struck at the Supreme Court; and their conclusions have been, in so many words, that Franklin Roosevelt was an enigma, an endless riddle, or, in any event, a man whom it is quite impossible to understand in any relatively simple or straightforward manner. Nor could these conclusions be considered surprising. Who, it might fairly be asked, having examined Franklin Roosevelt's political record, could throw a mantle of consistency over his aims and actions, or, by discovering some hidden order in that chaos of improvisation and experimentation called the New Deal, see clearly into the mind of its chief architect? Even if Franklin Roosevelt was not ideologically homeless, an adroit but completely rudderless improviser, should he not be seen essentially as a pragmatist who, taking his main cues from changing circumstances and opportunities, merely raked together some scraps of ideology to bolster his often bewilderingly inconsistent actions? A substantial body of critical opinion

¹A. Merriman Smith, Thank You, Mr. President (2nd ed.; New York : Harper Brothers, 1946), p.78.

would suggest that he should.²

Yet there are grounds for suspecting that the emphasis on the elements of paradox and discontinuity in Franklin Roosevelt may have been carried far enough. To begin with an obvious question, if Roosevelt was, as is so frequently argued, without clear direction, conscious of his inconsistencies, deeply divided, as at least one writer has suggested,³ between conflicting worlds and experiences, and therefore, presumably, subject to the mental and emotional discomfort with which one might expect such dissonance to be associated, how then does one account for that most conspicuous of all his personality traits-- his soaring self-confidence? He, at least, it might be observed, never appeared to have shared the difficulties of those who have been unable to discover in his programmes or ideas much evidence of ideological or political consistency. On the contrary, Franklin Roosevelt gave the strong impression that he knew precisely what he was trying to do and, in the process, exuded the kind of confidence which a priori we would not expect a man afflicted with chronic doubts over his identity, political role or objectives to display. Indeed no impression derived from the present study is stronger than that, in relation to the world of politics at

²See, for example : Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., The Coming of the New Deal, Vol. II of The Age of Roosevelt (3 vols.; London : Heinemann, 1957-61), pp.556-569; James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt : the Lion and the Fox (London : Secker and Warburg, 1956), pp.472-477; James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt : the Soldier of Freedom (London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971), p.vii; Paul K. Conkin, FDR and the Origins of the Welfare State (New York : Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967), p.99; Columbia University Oral History Project : Interview with Marquis Childs, October 17, 1957, pp.50-51.

³Burns, Lion and Fox, p.473; Burns, Soldier of Freedom, p.vii.

least, Franklin Roosevelt possessed a deeply ingrained positive self-concept; that, in other words, he looked upon himself and upon his role with evident, enduring and almost total satisfaction. These observations do not sit happily alongside interpretations which depict Roosevelt as a double-minded or philosophically nebulous man.

Admittedly the question may be largely one of balance and degree. It is not so much that one would wish to dispute the basic point that Roosevelt was a highly complex person; it is, rather, that one would want to ask whether this is necessarily the most important point and whether, in discussions of Roosevelt's character, it may not have been emphasised in such a way as to conceal or at least to minimise what may be of greater ultimate significance -- the high degree of coherence and consistency, and even a certain simplicity in the man. It is not, therefore, that one need necessarily emphasise his complexity less, but that one might profitably emphasise his simplicity more.

An examination of Franklin Roosevelt's relations with the American press highlights this very point by demonstrating that his essential attitudes toward that institution were derived from a basic and coherent set of assumptions and ideas about American politics and government which he had developed by early 1925 and from whose basic tenets he never departed. Central to this cluster of ideas were an elementary theory of human nature, a simple dualistic notion of social and political conflict resting upon it, a

cyclical view of history which saw the control of government alternating between the Jeffersonian "many" and the Hamiltonian "few," and an ideal construct of a democratic state which had been approximated during Jeffersonian booms of the past and which, presumably, would endure if ever the periodic and regrettable slumps into Hamiltonian oligarchic control could be eliminated in the future. In this general connection, no idea was more important than Roosevelt's perception of himself as another Jefferson whose task it was to preserve American democracy against the recurring attempts by Hamiltonian minorities to wrest control of it from the people. All history, to Franklin Roosevelt, was the history of such democratic struggles. Roosevelt's consistency can be appreciated once it is realised that, having developed these ideas early in his career, he spent the rest of his political life spinning out their implications in various spheres. Their importance to him was profound. Unoriginal and banal though they may have been, they nevertheless assumed, once Roosevelt had built them into a structured and integrated system, an intellectual and moral dynamism of their own. Armed with them, he was untroubled by any doubts as to either his long-term purpose or his short-term role. More than this, his self-concept, in political terms, was a profoundly satisfying one, enabling him to identify himself with great Presidents of the past, and to see himself as engaged in the same titanic struggle, victory in which had established their greatness. In much the same way he could effectively rationalise and

deal with opposition to his policies, overcome the disadvantages of his patrician background and credibly pose as champion of the people. Franklin Roosevelt's Jeffersonianism had, for him, the comprehensiveness, the assurance, the sense of transcending purpose of a religious faith. Roosevelt's massive self-confidence, it is suggested, was not unrelated to his acceptance of such ideas. Nor, it will be demonstrated, were his basic attitudes toward the American press, about which he had, by the time he became President, developed firm expectations both as to its necessary role in an ideal democratic system and as to its historically-established tendency during previous periods of democratic trial. It was just because, in an important sense, the critique which Franklin Roosevelt applied to the press of America was ideologically based, inflexible, resistant to fresh evidence, that he became, for that institution, such a formidable and baffling opponent : his battles with it were fought within a frame of historical and ideological references which its members could only partly understand and under rules which often they could only dimly perceive. For while Roosevelt may have been clear as to its required role and standards, to the press of America that role seemed unreasonably circumscribed, those standards often arbitrary and irrelevant. What will be demonstrated, however, is that once Roosevelt's basic philosophical and ideological position is appreciated, many aspects of his relations with the press which may have appeared not merely complex but inexplicable fall satisfactorily into place, a proposition which will be

recognised as having a more general implication.

Any attempt to state what portion of a work is deemed to be original is fraught with obvious difficulties relating, among other things, to the genesis in one's own mind of ideas the origins of which are, at the time, obscure or unrecognised, and the possibility that, unbeknown to the person concerned, others may have anticipated his thinking. The formal requirements relating to the presentation of this thesis demand, however, that such a statement be attempted. On one level, one outcome of this inquiry should be to help set straight the record concerning the American press's treatment of Franklin Roosevelt and to clear away some myths behind which this subject has been partially obscured. If, in this respect, the conclusions are to some extent original, so, also, are the methodological techniques devised to analyse newspaper treatment of the Roosevelt administrations, on which some of those conclusions will be seen to rest. More significantly, this research constitutes an extended study, not hitherto attempted,⁴ of one facet of the life of a highly important political figure. In this respect, it might be pointed out that it is one thing to recognise, as many have, that Franklin Roosevelt displayed a degree of virtuosity in his handling and his exploitation of the press which was (and is) probably unsurpassed; it is another to construct a sustained

⁴An early treatment of this subject in James E. Pollard, The Presidents and the Press (New York : Macmillan, 1947) is basically descriptive.

analysis to demonstrate why this was so, and thus to illuminate, so far as Franklin Roosevelt was concerned, one area in which his extraordinary political skill can be seen to full advantage. But, ultimately, this thesis constitutes an attempt to interpret Franklin Roosevelt in a new way. His imagined political affinity with Thomas Jefferson, his familiarity with the notion of an inherent antagonism and continuing struggle between anti-democratic Hamiltonian minorities and Jeffersonian majorities (which, after all, formed part of the intellectual baggage of the Progressive era) may have been recognised;⁵ the centrality of their importance so far as Franklin Roosevelt is concerned has not. What this thesis demonstrates, through detailed study of his relations with the American press, is that his commitment to these ideas -- certainly superficial, possibly delusive -- exerted a basic, even a controlling influence over Franklin Roosevelt's attitudes and his behaviour; what it implies, is that a recognition of Roosevelt's commitment to these ideas may be of considerable assistance in explaining his behaviour in other areas. In short, the argument to be developed in the following pages constitutes an attempt to clear away the ambiguities and supposed complexities which surround Franklin Roosevelt's political personality and to discover the rock upon which the edifice of his political life was built. This argument, these ideas,

⁵See especially : Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt : the Ordeal (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1954), ch. XII; Merrill D. Peterson, The Jefferson Image in the American Mind (New York : Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 360-63.

are, so far as I am able to tell, my own.

The major conclusions of this research bear on another broad issue. One question which has exercised both contemporaries and historians concerns the place of the New Deal in the American political tradition, and, more specifically, whether it represented a major discontinuity, which, breaking sharply with the past, shifted the American political, social and economic system in new, and, to some, alien directions. Had Franklin Roosevelt, it was asked, merely re-shuffled the existing political economic and philosophical cards, or had he used a different pack? The interpretation of Franklin Roosevelt presented in these pages makes it clear that, in the eyes of its chief architect at least, any "newness" in the New Deal related essentially to the means by which the latest in a long series of attempts by minority groups to wrest control of the American system from the people had been turned back, the essentially conservative end of his policies never being in doubt.

A further distinctive feature of this work lies in the degree of emphasis given to what is considered to be the crucially important relationship between Franklin Roosevelt and Claude G. Bowers, and the demonstration of the fact that Roosevelt's philosophical and political debt to this man was great.

This study began and ended with the Roosevelt press conferences. From them came, directly or indirectly, its initial questions and its main controlling ideas; against the evidence contained in them solutions were tested, ideas

modified and developed. The unique importance of the press conferences is that they enable Roosevelt to speak for himself, to reveal his mind. Over, by rough estimate, better than 5,000,000 words of press conference transcript, in spontaneous answer to all manner of questions, impromptu lecture, gratuitous comment or through sheer inadvertence, one learns his views -- on the Washington press corps, on publishers, on the press's ethics, its failings, its function, ideally, within the American governmental system. Without necessarily accepting what Roosevelt says at face value, one is nevertheless in a position to begin to study Franklin Roosevelt from the standpoint of what he says about himself and his beliefs about what he is like. If answers are not always given, certain questions are insistently posed.

Apart from the extensive use made of the Presidential press conference, this study of Franklin Roosevelt's relations with the American press is grounded on an analysis of certain unpublished material held at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, particularly the papers of Roosevelt himself and of his press secretary Stephen Early, but including, also, those of Samuel I. Rosenman, William D. Hassett, Lowell L. Mellett and the records of the Democratic National Committee. At the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., the papers of William Allen White, Harold L. Ickes, Raymond Clapper, Helen Rogers Reid, Victor Murdock and Joseph and Stewart Alsop were consulted; from the Lilly Library, University of Indiana, a

portion of the papers of Claude G. Bowers was obtained. Other important sources from which information was derived were several of the interviews conducted in connection with the Columbia University Oral History Project, and a very large number of contemporary newspapers, magazines and journals. Naturally, much of this material has been scrutinised by others (though some of it, notably the very extensive analyses of newspaper treatment of the New Deal supplied to the President by the Division of Press Intelligence, I suspect, has not); but it has been examined by those with other purposes in mind, without the material ever being, where it concerned the President's relations with individual newspaper owners, columnists or reporters, exploited in full, or without it ever having been drawn together for general evaluation and analysis. In relation to the use to which material from these sources has previously been put, it could be pointed out, further, that while Franklin Roosevelt's relations with the American press have briefly been looked at as constituting one aspect of his Presidency, his Presidency has not been approached from the vantage point of an analysis of his relations with the American press.

In connection with this study I received generous financial assistance, for which I am grateful, from the University of Sydney, by way of an Overseas Travel Grant, and from the Eleanor Roosevelt Foundation. I am appreciative, also, of the efforts of the staffs of various libraries. To my many requests, often unusual, for assistance, the staff

of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, have responded with courtesy, promptness and great efficiency; my debt to them is considerable. Similarly, the staff of the Library of Congress and the National Records Centre at Washington, the Lilly Library, University of Indiana and the New York Public Library have been unfailingly helpful and also exceedingly efficient. To the staffs of Fisher Library, University of Sydney and Monash University Library, Victoria, also go my thanks.

I am grateful, too, for the assistance which I have received from several individuals. Professor Saul Padover of the New School of Social Research, New York, a participator in the events about which I have written, apart from sharing with me some personal information relating to the period of my research, expressed great interest in my topic, pointed me in several fruitful directions and made helpful comments about my methodological approach in the area of newspaper sampling. Professor Arthur Mann of the University of Chicago has encouraged me, discussed my ideas and given much sagacious advice. I am particularly indebted, too, to Dr. Lazar Stankov of the Department of Psychology in the University of Sydney, whose main expertise lies in the statistical field, because he has been prepared, in broad terms, to put the seal of his approval on the procedures which I have devised for finding answers to certain specific questions relating to Franklin Roosevelt's treatment at the hands of the American press, and, over several discussions, has helped me both to refine

those procedures and more carefully and accurately to spell out the implications of the results which they produced. To my father, who has patiently corrected the proofs of this work and made useful suggestions concerning the organisation of the material I am also grateful. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Christiana M. Campbell of the Department of History in the University of Sydney. She, it has seemed to me, has struck precisely the right balance between encouragement and criticism, between informed comment and firm advice. She it was who suggested a topic which I have found to be rich and significant. She has also, by her outlook and her approach to the study of history itself, helped materially to make the experience of writing this thesis not merely satisfying, but also enjoyable.

SUMMARY

Having begun with an analysis of Franklin Roosevelt's critique of the American press, this study then uses the central propositions of that critique -- that the reporters supported Roosevelt, that the newspaper proprietors opposed him, and that, because of the subservience of the former to the latter, he had, as President, to contend, not merely with overwhelming editorial opposition, but with the deliberate "slanting" of news dispatches against his administrations -- as a loose analytical and organisational framework within which the relationship between Roosevelt and the American press is discussed.

Chapters I, II and III are devoted to a consideration of Roosevelt's relations with the Washington correspondents, with emphasis being given to the President's spectacular initial victory over the press corps, the longer-term bases of his popularity, the remarkably skilful manner in which he was able, by his adroit handling of the reporters, to use the American press to his own political advantage, and the often serious conflict which occurred between the President and the correspondents. Always underlying and sometimes disturbing the pattern of interaction between Roosevelt and the Washington reporters, it is argued, was the President's highly circumscribed conception of the role of the press and a related set of expectations regarding the reporters' functions which they, as a group, were unwilling to fulfil.

Chapter IV examines the anatomy of Roosevelt's relations with the newspaper owners in order, primarily, to demonstrate that the President's comprehensive denunciations of newspaper owners as a group cannot easily be reconciled with his dealings with a not insignificant number of owners as individuals.

Chapters V and VI are concerned with the treatment of Franklin Roosevelt by the American press, and, more specifically, with an evaluation of Roosevelt's charges that the overwhelming majority of the American press was against him, and that many hostile newspaper owners forced their reporter-employees to "slant" their dispatches against Roosevelt's administrations. The validity of both charges is strongly questioned.

In the latter stages of the thesis, the discontinuities, which have emerged in preceding chapters, between Roosevelt's statements about the American press and his actual relations with it, together with certain other distinctive attitudes manifested by the President toward that institution are highlighted, and, in the final two chapters, synthesised and explained in terms of Franklin Roosevelt's Jeffersonian political philosophy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER	
I. THE BEST NEWSPAPERMAN WHO HAS EVER BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.....	9
II. UNITED IN HOLY NEWSLOCK.....	30
III. I CAN APPRECIATE WHAT YOU ARE TOLD TO WRITE....	84
IV. THE GROUP MORE RESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT THAN ANY OTHER GROUP IN AMERICAN LIFE.....	126
V. THAT FAMOUS 85 PER CENT.....	184
VI. HIS DISPLEASURE, LIKE THE RAIN, FALLS EQUALLY UPON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST.....	234
VII. NOTHING WOULD HELP HIM MORE THAN TO HAVE IT KNOWN THAT THE NEWSPAPERS WERE ALL AGAINST HIM.....	295
VIII. IS A JEFFERSON ON THE HORIZON?.....	357
IX. CONCLUSION.....	387
APPENDICES.....	395
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	415

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Democratic National Committee Survey of 204 Newspapers in Cities of 100,000 or above outside the South prior to 1936 Election.....	192
II. Editorial Reaction by a Selected Group of Newspapers to Certain Events during Roosevelt's Presidency.....	196
III. Reporting of Roosevelt's Speeches by Nine Newspapers during 1936 and 1940 Election Campaigns.....	264
IV. Front Page Reporting of Roosevelt's White House Press Conferences by Nine Newspapers for Three Month Period before 1936 and 1940 Elections.....	276

INTRODUCTION

Franklin Roosevelt's account of his relations with the American press was simple and unvarying. His essential thesis, which an extensive experience with the press during a long Presidency caused him neither substantially to modify nor progressively to develop, was that the American press opposed him; that its opposition was proprietor-based; and that he encountered, as a result of such opposition, not merely widespread editorial disapproval, but tendentious and distorted news reports. The slanting of news dispatches in an anti-Administration direction was not, Roosevelt was consistently to maintain, the fault of the working journalists : they, he believed, supported him; but, regrettably, the overwhelming majority of newspaper owners was against him, and as a consequence -- such was the owners' power -- the critical articles often written by the former were to be attributed to the all but unvarying hostility of the latter.

These ideas were propagated by Roosevelt assiduously throughout his Presidency with a frequency which revealed his preoccupation with them and with an animus which betrayed, on his part, a surprising strength of emotional commitment. A long footnote to the transcript of his first Presidential press conference, as reprinted in the 1938 edition of his Public Papers and Addresses,¹

¹The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt, ed. by Samuel I. Rosenman (5 vols.; New York : Random House, 1938; 4 vols.; New York : The Macmillan Company, 1941; 3 vols.; New York : Harper and Brothers, 1950).

became, of such views, the authorised public version :

"I think it is generally conceded," Roosevelt wrote, "that the overwhelming number of newspapers in the United States, especially the larger papers, have been more or less critical of the New Deal policies in general and of my Administration in particular." Yet, he went on, although such hostility had produced an "array of editorial opposition" to his policies and his goals, "the great majority of newspaper correspondents who cover[ed] the White House" were "personally friendly to the Administration, and in general approve[d] its objectives, most of its methods, and the legislation adopted to accomplish its goal." "I know," he continued, "that a number of the newspaper correspondents who write so-called 'unfriendly' articles are not personally opposed to the things they write about." These correspondents wrote as they did, he explained, because "many hostile newspaper owners require[d] their Washington correspondents to give their news dispatches a critical or unfriendly touch." Roosevelt made it clear that his favourable references to the Washington press applied "only to the writers of what are known as news stories" and not to the nation's columnists, who, he observed, based most of their columns "either on the pure imagination and invention of the writer or on untrue gossip," frequently "molded and fitted" their journalistic output "to supply what the writer or the 'service' believes the subscribers desire to read," and who, as a consequence, were regarded by their readers with tolerant amusement, by their colleagues with professional disdain and by the President, it was obvious, with lofty

contempt.²

The notion that the overwhelming majority of the newspapers in the United States opposed him was given surprising precision in Roosevelt's assertion that the percentage of press opposition that he faced could be reckoned at eighty-five. "Things here are going well," he wrote to Norman Davis in January 1936," in spite of Supreme Court majority opinion and Hearst and Alfred E. Smith, and 85% newspaper opposition."³ The figure was to be repeated many times : to Ambassador William Dodd in Berlin he confided his fear that a Republican win or substantial Republican gains in 1936 "would prove that an 85 percent control of the Press and a very definite campaign of misinformation could be effective here just as it was in the early days of Hitler's rise to power";⁴ to Claude G. Bowers he wrote the following year : "All of the fat-cat newspapers -- 85% of the whole -- have been bitterly opposed to everything the administration is seeking";⁵ to a reporter, who asked Roosevelt at a press conference in August 1938 what percentage of the nation's press could be designated as "the Tory press," the

²Ibid., II, 38-39.

³Franklin D. Roosevelt to Norman Davis, January 14, 1936, quoted in Donald Day, ed., Franklin D. Roosevelt's Own Story (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1951), p.257.

⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to William E. Dodd, August 5, 1936, quoted in The Roosevelt Letters, ed. by Elliott Roosevelt (3 vols.; London : George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1952), III, 605.

⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to Claude G. Bowers, n.d. [1937], quoted in James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt ; The Lion and the Fox (London : Secker and Warburg, 1956), p.317.

President replied that it was eighty-five;⁶ to representatives of the American Youth Congress, who dined at the White House in June 1940 he declared : "Remember this always : 85 per cent of the papers of the United States are opposed to this Administration";⁷ and at a press conference a month later, during which he struck out at Republican opposition to the expansion of the TVA for defence purposes, he remarked : "I don't suppose that will be written by the famous 85 per cent of the Press."⁸

If Franklin Roosevelt's conviction that he faced overwhelming press opposition had not been specifically affirmed in his 1938 statement and in his reiteration of the charge that 85 per cent of the nation's newspapers were hostile to his policies, it would have been strongly implied by the manner in which he criticised press ethics and standards. Typically, his charges were generalised, with the President, in the eyes of some, unfairly attributing to the many the undoubted faults of the few. The practice drew an early complaint from publisher Roy Howard. In August 1935, Howard sent Stephen Early, Roosevelt's Press Secretary, a confidential memorandum from a Washington columnist which

⁶ Press Conference No. 478, August 23, 1938, Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt, with an Introduction by Jonathan Daniels (25 vols.; New York : Da Capo Press, 1972), XII, 41.

⁷ Press Conference No. 649-A, June 5, 1940, Presidential Press Conference, XV, 456.

⁸ Ibid., No.661, July 16, 1940, XVI, 42.

warned of an impending Administration assault on the press. "Not in recent years," the columnist declared, "has a president or a major presidential candidate centered an attack on the press generally." Howard, whose newspapers, Early told Roosevelt, had been "truly carrying the flag for the New Deal,"⁹ elaborated the point: "I hope," said he, in a reference to the President, "that in his reactions to newspapermen he does not...take a short-cut, generalize, and indict the craft as a body." Might not the President, the publisher wondered, "take occasion to re-emphasize his appreciation of the fact that all of American journalism is not to be judged on the basis of its most partisan units?"¹⁰ There was no response from Roosevelt on that occasion and nor, despite the repeated remonstrations of Early, did he ever change his ways: "Steve explained this [the inadvisability of making general criticisms of the press] to the Boss time and again," White House Secretary Grace Tully has recalled, "but there were many occasions when the Press Secretary felt his advice had gone in one ear and out the other."¹¹

Although he did not say so specifically in his 1938 account of his relations with the American press, Franklin Roosevelt's opinion of the newspaper owners of

⁹Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, n.d. [1935?], President's Personal File 68, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰Roy Howard to Stephen T. Early, August 9, 1935, President's Personal File 68, [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#)

¹¹Grace C. Tully, F.D.R. My Boss (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p.87.

America was not high. So far as he was concerned, their background was dubious, their journalistic talents meagre, and their motives suspect; they endangered the standards of the American press by their ignorance, its freedom by their venality, and its public role by their incompetence. Roosevelt commented on these matters in a letter to Joseph Pulitzer in which he quoted with approval the remarks of Grover C. Hall, Editor of the Montgomery (Alabama)

Advertiser, to the American Society of Newspaper Editors :

Most of them [Hall had stated, in a reference to press owners] came not from news room desks but from the counting room, otherwise they would not have the money necessary to buy even a country daily....-- few of them are journalists at heart. Most of them do not know the difference between an objective news story and a free reader for a furniture store.¹²

Even those who had come up through the ranks of journalism were, in Roosevelt's view, imperilled by the very nature of their occupation : having reached a certain level of affluence they lost contact with ordinary citizens and came, he believed, to embrace the Hamiltonian theory of society and government. As a result, "the check book and the securities market supplant[ed] the old patriotism and the old desire to purvey straight news to the public."¹³

It was such owners that placed the freedom of the press in jeopardy. "Our newspapers," Roosevelt told Pulitzer,

¹²Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, November 2, 1938, President's Personal File 2403, [D. Roosevelt Library](#).

¹³Franklin D. Roosevelt to Josephus Daniels, September 28, 1940, quoted in Carroll Kilpatrick, ed., Roosevelt and Daniels : A Friendship in Politics (Chapel Hill, North Carolina : University of North Carolina Press, 1952), p.197.

"cannot be edited in the interests of the general public, [sic] from the counting room."¹⁴

Under the circumstances, it was to be regretted that the newspapers of America bore so heavily and unmistakably their owners' stamp. "The more I see of American newspapers," Roosevelt confided to Josephus Daniels in September 1940, "the more I am convinced that they represent, in nine cases out of ten, the personal slant or point of view not of the publisher, not of the editor, not of the public, not even of the advertiser, but of the fellow who owns the paper!"¹⁵ Reporters, Roosevelt believed, were in a subservient and ineffectual position; though pro-Administration in their sympathies and more than adequate in their professional capabilities, they were reluctantly forced, often on pain of dismissal, to conform to the owners' "personal slant." After perhaps the bitterest confrontation between Roosevelt and the Washington press, at a conference in August 1937, the President sought, in characteristic fashion, to shift the blame for their transgressions onto their employers: "I understand," he told them. "You fellows are placed in such position very often....we can talk about it in the family and off the record. I can appreciate what you are told to write."¹⁶

¹⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, November 2, 1938, President's Personal File 2403, D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to Josephus Daniels, September 28, 1940, quoted in Kilpatrick, ed., Roosevelt and Daniels, p.197.

¹⁶Press Conference No. 389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 120-21.

The charge became a commonplace : to a group of editors Roosevelt declared in April 1938 : "I am for them [the Washington reporters] -- ... In the newspaper game those boys down here in Washington have as high a standard of ethics and morals and fair play as any profession in the United States." "But," he added significantly, "a lot of them labor under a very big handicap. It does not trace back, of necessity, to their editors. It traces back to the owner of the paper, essentially."¹⁷

If Franklin Roosevelt's thinking about the American press may be more admired for its simplicity than respected for its sophistication or originality, there can be no doubting the tenacity with which he adhered to these basic beliefs. Time and again, often under circumstances which belie the suggestion that his remarks were designed solely for public consumption or narrow political advantage, he recorded his convictions that the American press, by an overwhelming majority, opposed him, that such opposition originated with the newspaper owners, and that the Washington newsmen, despite their favourable orientation toward the New Deal, were forced to colour and otherwise to distort their news dispatches in accordance with their employers' predilections. No amount of experience or evidence to the contrary was ever to weaken his adherence to these basic propositions. To Franklin Roosevelt, it seems, they were axiomatic.

¹⁷ Press Conference No. 452-B, April 21, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XI, 364. See also, for example : Press Conference No. 260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 363; "Arthur Krock Sees Threat to Press," New York Times, October 8, 1940, p. 12.

CHAPTER I

THE BEST NEWSPAPERMAN WHO HAS EVER BEEN PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES

The victory of Franklin Roosevelt over the Washington press was achieved without difficulty and acknowledged without reluctance. Demonstrating a virtuosity that amazed them, the new President took the Capital correspondents by storm, winning, from the outset, their affection and admiration; securing, over the crucial early stages of the New Deal, their allegiance and support. The correspondents themselves have amply recorded his triumph : his first meeting with the reporters, said one, was "the most amazing performance the White House has ever seen";¹ he quickly won from the newsmen, observed another, their friendship and "what cooperation they can give consistent with covering the news -- which is quite a lot";² he was, declared a third, "a great hit among the newspapermen at Washington."³ Comments on his impact became effusive :

I rubbed my ears [wrote newsman Marlen Pew] and opened my eyes when I heard hard-boiled veterans, men who had lived through so many administrations that there are callouses in their brain, talk glibly about the merits of the White House incumbent.⁴

¹Quoted in "Mr. Roosevelt 'Ungags' the Press," Literary Digest, CXIV (March 23, 1933), 10.

²Russell Owen, "The White House Revolution Brought About by Roosevelt," New York Times, March 19, 1933, p.41.

³Ibid.

⁴Marlen Pew, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (April 8, 1933), 36.

The accolades continued throughout the President's first year : in June, Arthur Sears Henning, a Washington newsman for twenty-three years and chief of the Chicago Tribune's Washington bureau for nineteen, estimated that the relationship between the White House and the press had never been as satisfactory from the newspapermen's point of view;⁵ "the reportorial affection and admiration" for the President, declared Raymond Tucker, in the October edition of Collier's, was "unprecedented." "He has," Tucker stated, "definitely captivated an unusually cynical battalion of correspondents."⁶ Traditionally, Presidential honeymoons with the Washington press were brief, but in June 1934, Raymond Clapper drew attention to the continuing Roosevelt press triumph : "Mr. Roosevelt came ... to Washington. The correspondents saw him and were conquered. He won them and he has still a larger proportion of them personally sympathetic than any of his recent predecessors."⁷ A year later, a front page editorial in the Scoop, annual publication of the Press Club of San Francisco, enthusiastically reiterated the point :

This edition of the annual SCOOP we dedicate to the "best news source in America," Franklin D. Roosevelt.... the nation's reporters will smile contentedly as long

⁵Quoted in "New Deal for Press Praised by Henning," Editor and Publisher (June 10, 1933), 54.

⁶Ray Tucker, "Part-Time Statesmen," Collier's (October 28, 1933), 26ff., quoted in Leo C. Rosten, "President Roosevelt and the Washington Correspondents," Public Opinion Quarterly, 1 (January, 1937), 39.

⁷Raymond Clapper, "Why Reporters Like Roosevelt," Review of Reviews (June, 1934), 15.

as F.R. sits on the throne dishing out "hot copy." ... , instead of dreading a boring White House press conference, they now look forward to these gatherings with enthusiasm.

The Press Club of San Francisco salutes you, F.R.⁸

What lay behind this unprecedented newspaper success? To the Washington reporters, it is clear, Roosevelt's virtues were etched vividly against the sombre background of his predecessors' incompetence. As Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover had won a reputation as the best "grapevine" in Washington, a perfect goldmine of "graveyard stuff";⁹ he had brought to the White House "perhaps the largest clientèle among the newspaper correspondents of any president in ... history."¹⁰ For a time he pleased the Washington reporters, too, quickly exorcising the mythical "White House spokesman," behind whose shadowy form Calvin Coolidge, to their growing resentment and derision, had concealed his Presidential opinions; re-assuring them of his intention to continue the existing system of bi-weekly press conferences; and announcing, for their convenience and his own protection, a three-fold classification of news : statements for quotation, news that could be attributed to official sources though not to him directly, and information

⁸Editorial in Scoop (annual publication of Press Club of San Francisco), 1935; see Harlee Branch to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 14, 1935, President's Personal File 82, [Franklin D. Roosevelt Library](#).

⁹Paul Y. Anderson, "Hoover and the Press," Nation, CXXXIII (October, 1931), 382.

¹⁰Charles Michelson, The Ghost Talks (New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1944), p.17.

that could not be printed but which might be expected to enable the reporters better to understand the Presidential mind.¹¹ For three months his press conferences were "rich and useful."¹² But Hoover's popularity proved transient, and by October 1931, journalist Paul Y. Anderson could write that "the relations of Herbert Hoover with the newspapermen whose work brings them into immediate contact with the Presidential office have reached a state of unpleasantness without parallel during the present century." They were characterised, Anderson stated, "by mutual dislike, unconcealed suspicion, and downright bitterness."¹³

The history of this transformation is instructive. Though Hoover's system of news classification had been excellent in theory, "its actual operation," Anderson wrote, "lasted as long as a jug of corn liquor at a Baptist camp meeting." Direct quotations "promptly degenerated into mimeographed hand-outs of insignificant content"; background material was insubstantial and not always reliable; press conferences began to decline in duration and diminish in frequency.¹⁴ As the Depression deepened, so, it seemed to the reporters, did Hoover's gloom; he made fewer efforts to

¹¹Theodore G. Joslin, article in the Washington Sunday Star, March 4, 1934, quoted in Public Papers and Addresses, II, 44. Samuel Rosenman, II, 44.

¹²Robert W. Desmond, The Press and World Affairs (New York : D. Appleton-Century Company, 1937), p.314.

¹³Anderson, "Hoover and the Press," p.382.

¹⁴Ibid. p.384.

overcome his natural lack of loquacity and dried up as a news source. "Mr. Hoover," observed veteran White House correspondent Mark Foote, "is not a man given to small talk. He cannot, or will not, ... 'make news!'"¹⁵ In the face of such sullen aridity, press relations withered. The President's practice of playing favourites among the press compounded his unpopularity: he angered the Washington corps by breeding trained seals -- reporters who were fed exclusive information by the President in private and who then performed for him in public by using it to write stories of which he approved. Of the best-fed seal, Mark Sullivan -- member of the President's "medicine-ball cabinet," and so frequent a caller at the White House that the staff considered him one of the household -- every newsman in Washington was envious.¹⁶ The list of Hoover's failings could be extended. He was inconsiderate toward the reporters, often crassly so, departing suddenly for his Rapidan camp and attempting, so they believed, to shake the reporters from his tail. An incident in July 1931 involving New York Herald-Tribune correspondent Frank Connor, whose car was wrecked and whose wife seriously injured as he tried to match the furious Presidential pace, dramatized the President's insensitivity.¹⁷ Nor was Hoover a man to

¹⁵Quoted in Marlen Pew, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (February 28, 1931), 70.

¹⁶Irwin H. Hoover, Forty-Two Years in the White House (Boston : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp.209,250.

¹⁷George H. Manning, "Strained Air Pervades the Press Circle as White House 'Leak' is Sought," Editor and Publisher (July 18, 1931), 1010.

accept criticism with equanimity. Described by Charles Michelson as "always notoriously the thinnest-skinned executive in Washington," he reacted even to seemingly harmless reports with an asperity which produced further division. When newsmen attempted to "cooperate" with Theodore Joslin, who, it was believed, had been appointed to the President's staff in order to "humanize" Hoover, by writing human-interest stories -- to save money, a White House curtain had been patched, rather than being replaced; Hoover's dog had bitten a Marine at the Rapidan; Mrs. Walter H. Newton, a White House secretary, had been thrown from her horse into a brook -- the President took deep and surprising offence. A New York Times report of a Rapidan trip which mentioned incidentally that the average speed of the Presidential party had exceeded fifty miles per hour produced, "for God knows what reason," wrote an exasperated reporter, a similar response. As the President's sensitivity to criticism increased, secret service inquiries were ordered into news leaks, often to be followed, in comic opera fashion, by attempts, on the part of the investigators, to discover how news of their activities had leaked out.¹⁸ Sensitivity gave way to vindictiveness. Displaying "simply amazing" industry, the President set about ascertaining the authorship of offending news stories. There was scarcely a correspondent, it was said, "but has his stories of

¹⁸Michelson, The Ghost Talks, p.31; "Mr. Hoover's Refusal to be Humanized," Literary Digest (July 25, 1931), 8; Anderson, "Hoover and the Press," p.383; Manning, "Strained Air Pervades Press Circle," p.10.

presidential complaints to his office concerning stories Mr. Hoover did not like."¹⁹ Aware that newspaper owners and editors were frequent guests at the White House and the Rapidan, the Washington correspondents reacted angrily when stories of personal reprisals against reporters in return for Presidential favours began to circulate, and "the diminishing esteem in which the working press held him [Hoover] was suddenly galvanized into actual and bitter resentment."²⁰ Attendance at his press conferences dwindled, conferences were held with decreasing frequency, and, in the last few months of his Presidency, Herbert Hoover's contacts with the Washington press virtually ceased.²¹

It was against the gloomy background of Herbert Hoover's relations with the Washington press that Franklin Roosevelt's virtues shone forth with a clear and penetrating brilliance. His manner, when he met the press, was open and friendly, his answers swift and informative; and the Depression which had so burdened his sullen predecessor seemed, the reporters noted, to have left his own confidence and buoyancy unaffected. Where Hoover had shunned the reporters, Roosevelt welcomed them; where he had attacked them, Roosevelt championed them; where Hoover had seemed determined to obstruct,

¹⁹Michelson, The Ghost Talks, pp.31-32.

²⁰Anderson, "Hoover and the Press," p.383.

²¹Stephen T. Early, "Hobgoblins -- 1935 Model," Red Book (April, 1935), 25; see copy in Papers of Stephen T. Early, box 38, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

the new President was eager to assist. Journalistic egos were soothed by Roosevelt's affable and colloquial manner;²² professional pride appeased by his appreciation of the importance of the reporters' role. The correspondents were flattered, too, by the President's willingness to identify with them -- phrases like "in the family" and "just between us boys and girls" were to become standard -- and gratified by what seemed to be his willingness to share with them confidential, off-the-record information. The new President's opening remarks to the reporters who attended his first press conference signalled the coming changes :

It is very good to see you, [he told them] and my hope is that these conferences are going to be merely enlarged editions of the kind of very delightful family conference I have been holding in Albany for the last four years.²³

The conference became legendary : the use of first names by the President, the "delightful informality," the rich harvest of "live" news -- all these drew widespread and appreciative comment.²⁴ The contrast, sharp and unmistakable, between the style of the new incumbent and that of his predecessor was soon being spelt out by a reporter :

In nothing is the contrast between Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt more marked than in the President's press conferences with the Washington correspondents.... At these functions President Roosevelt is a gracious host rather than a harried Executive undergoing inquisition. He sits behind his desk,...looking with

²²Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.39.

²³Press Conference No. 1, March 8, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I,1.

²⁴George H. Manning, "New Deal for Press Begins at Once," Editor and Publisher (March 11, 1933), 4.

either grave face or answering smile from one questioner to another, and frequently enjoying some humorous sally by a correspondent whom he knows. He laughs with them and calls many by their first names.²⁵

Especially dramatic, from the standpoint of the reporters, was Roosevelt's decision to abolish the requirement that their questions be submitted in writing before each conference, a practice which had prevailed since an addled or ignorant Warren Harding, attempting an off-the-cuff answer to a reporter's query, committed a diplomatic faux pas which mortified his Secretary of State and embarrassed his government.²⁶ Where written questions were demanded, the initiative in press conferences lay firmly with the President, who could ignore awkward questions altogether, or, unbeknown to reporters, deliver propaganda in the guise of answers to questions which he had never been asked. Nor had Hoover's insistence that reporters' written inquiries be submitted twenty-four hours in advance made any contribution to the spontaneity of his meetings with the press. Roosevelt's daring innovation clearly signalled his intention to meet the reporters on equal terms, to field any questions

²⁵Russell Owen, "The White House Revolution Brought About by Roosevelt," New York Times, March 19, 1933, p.41.

²⁶Asked by a reporter in 1921 whether the Four Power Pact covered Japanese islands in the Pacific, Harding answered in the negative. To placate the British and the Japanese, Secretary of State Hughes, who was, at the time, chairing the Washington Conference, forced the President to withdraw the remark. See Raymond Brandt, "The President's Press Conference," Survey Graphic, XXVIII (July, 1939), 448.

they cared to throw at him, and to subject himself to the scrutiny of the entire press corps when he reacted to its queries. For the press, as well as for the people, Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" had begun.

Under Roosevelt, too, what had been a pitiful trickle of White House news quickly increased to a torrent. In the face of economic catastrophe, Hoover's instinct had been to keep national problems to himself and to deflect the correspondents' questions with "monosyllabic rebuffs";²⁷ Roosevelt, by contrast, was prepared to talk, and to do so with what the reporters regarded as amazing freedom. In his first press conference, it was said, the new President "gave the correspondents more sensational news than some of his predecessors had handed out in four years." "Compared to what happened on March 8, 1933, [Franklin Roosevelt's first press conference] and what continued to happen from then on," veteran correspondents were later to agree, "all previous Presidents were Trappists who didn't even talk to themselves."²⁸

Such comparisons between the new President and previous incumbents could be multiplied. If Hoover had shunned the reporters, the new President seemed positively to enjoy their company. A Presidential address to the National Press Club shortly after Roosevelt took office was

²⁷William L. Rivers, The Opinionmakers (Boston : Beacon Press, 1965), p.134.

²⁸Walter Davenport, "The President and the Press," Collier's, CXV (January 27, 1945), 12.

described by a reporter as "one of the happiest, most humorous and candid speeches" the Club had heard. Roosevelt, the man declared enthusiastically

rocked the house with his drollery. His eyes were flashing, face beaming good nature and, departing said that it had been the most restful evening he had enjoyed in Washington.

"In the presence of newsmen," the reporter commented, "he seems to relax."²⁹ Unlike Hoover, the new President provided for the comfort of reporters on Presidential trips; he showed, too, a keen understanding of the journalists' needs and psychology : when he signed the emergency banking bill one evening in the White House, the press was invited to attend, and the oldest of the correspondents "could remember few similar occasions on which a President of the United States asked newspaper representatives to come over and witness what they all wanted to observe."³⁰ Theodore Joslin, who had handled Hoover's press relations, had not been admired; Stephen Early, Roosevelt's Press Secretary, was universally respected.³¹

Nor, in the reporters' eyes, did Roosevelt suffer by comparison with Hoover's predecessors. Like Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson evinced a determination to publicise Government affairs, but while the end was admirable the

²⁹Marlen Pew, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (April 8, 1933).

³⁰Russell Owen, "The White House Revolution Brought About by Roosevelt," New York Times, March 13, 1933, p.41.

³¹Stephen Early's role is fully discussed in ch.2 pp. 51-57.

means were frequently abrasive. Lacking Roosevelt's intuitive understanding of the reporters' needs, Wilson had prepared for his press conferences as carefully as for any lecture, and had then become irritated when the questioning moved in personal or trivial directions. He talked to the press like a schoolmaster and seemed reluctant to submit to cross-questioning by a group whom he regarded as his intellectual inferiors.³² He was, said a correspondent, "congenitally shy, mortally afraid of newsmen and unable to trust them."³³ On all these counts, comparisons ran heavily in the new President's favour. Roosevelt won credit, too, for not launching "trial balloons," as some previous incumbents, notably Theodore Roosevelt and Calvin Coolidge, had done. The custom of the former had been to give exclusive though anonymous stories to a clique of reporters -- often, according to Washington legend, while he was shaving -- with the clear understanding that he would repudiate story and reporter if the balloons blew in a politically embarrassing direction.³⁴ Calvin Coolidge attracted bitter criticism for similar reasons. Because he refused either to be quoted directly on any subject or to accept any responsibility for the statements which he made, reporters invented a mythical "White House spokesman," whose dubious authority, they

³²Brandt, "President's Press Conference," p.448.

³³Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Press and the President," Century (December, 1925), 197.

³⁴Brandt, "President's Press Conference," p.448.

hoped, would bolster their dispatches. Coolidge, they then charged, used this spectral figure as a smokescreen behind which he was able to launch trial balloons with impunity. "The correspondents," complained reporter Willis Sharp, "are supposed to present these views [of Coolidge] as if they dropped from heaven, and are wholly unprotected when, as has happened, Mr. Coolidge finds it expedient to repudiate them."³⁵ Increasingly irritated, the reporters hit back : one made repeated attempts to get "this ghostly creation" across to his readers as the "White House spooksmen," only to be frustrated by the misguided zeal of a copy editor, who persisted in correcting what he took to be a typographical error;³⁶ others took to ridiculing the "spokesman" and to referring to Coolidge's press conferences as "seances."³⁷ An exasperated editor was eventually moved to describe Coolidge's press conferences as "these symposia of silliness" and to complain that they had "been reduced to the lowest point of futility."³⁸

Indeed, to the Washington press it must sometimes have seemed that Franklin Roosevelt had taken over the virtues of his predecessors without inheriting their vices. Warren Harding had approached Franklin Roosevelt in affability and

³⁵Willis Sharp, "President and Press," Atlantic Monthly, August, 1927, p.240

³⁶Michelson, The Ghost Talks, p.236.

³⁷Marlen Pew, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (February 28, 1931), 70.

³⁸Quoted in "White House Corps Urged to Strike," Editor and Publisher (August 18, 1928), 22.

gregariousness, but was scarcely his equal in political expertise or in his grasp of the complex affairs of government. Calvin Coolidge the Washington press regarded as an urbane and canny New Englander, an accomplished politician, an artful publicist, and an inveterate twaddler. "With an art that almost defied description," wrote one, "Coolidge used his press conferences for the dissemination of trivia."³⁹ On matters of substance, on the other hand, his remarks were timid, nebulous and inconsistent.⁴⁰ When a group of correspondents attempted on one occasion to recall one remark, any remark, which Coolidge had made, "the only thing they could dredge up from their memories," journalist Walter Davenport recalled, "was his famous 'I do not choose to run.' And that wasn't said at a press conference."⁴¹ Denied solid news, the reporters turned to myth : an "angle" which would give colour and news value to a man who naturally possessed neither was decided upon and the Washington press gave to America "silent Cal, the Sage of Vermont."⁴² Such myth-

³⁹Henry Suydam, in Conference on the Press (Princeton University, 1931), p.67, quoted in Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.46.

⁴⁰Villard, "Press and President," pp.196, 200.

⁴¹Davenport, "President and Press," p.13.

⁴²Brandt, "President's Press Conference," p.448; J. Fred Essary, Covering Washington (Houghton-Mifflin, 1927), p.91, quoted in Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.46.

making was calculated (Silent Cal's reputation for taciturnity was quite undeserved : he often surprised and sometimes dismayed the reporters by his garrulousness), with the Washington correspondents habitually working, according to Raymond Clapper, United Press bureau chief in Washington, "with ... tongues in cheek." If Coolidge quietly intimated that he was not in favour of a certain bill, the dispatches from Washington next morning might begin : "President Coolidge, in fighting mood, today served notice on Congress that he intended to combat, with all the resources at his command, the pending bill."⁴³ But with Franklin Roosevelt, who was himself such wonderful copy, who electrified the correspondents with his positivism and astonished them with the scope and sweep of his actions, and who provided them, as a consequence, with a continuous supply of "live" news stories, such dissimulation was never necessary. "For once," Clapper observed, pointing to the difference, "Washington newspapermen are deluged with a surfeit of big news. Instead of scratching for a story, they must pick and choose."⁴⁴

Clapper drew together many of these points in a perceptive article in the June 1934 issue of Review of Reviews⁴⁵ in which he discussed the reasons for the Washington

⁴³Quoted in Douglass Carter, The Fourth Branch of Government (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1959), pp.33-34.

⁴⁴Raymond Clapper, "All Eyes are Turned on Washington," Editor and Publisher (January 13, 1934), 9.

⁴⁵Raymond Clapper, "Why Reporters Like Roosevelt," Review of Reviews (June, 1934), 14-17.

press's enthusiasm and affection for Franklin Roosevelt. Five elements in the President's "unusual popularity" were isolated. In the first place, Clapper pointed out, the contacts between the President and the Washington press were pleasant. With newspapermen regularly assigned to the White House, Roosevelt was on "extremely intimate terms" : they were guests of his family at Sunday night suppers, travelled with him on vacations, played water polo with him, and discussed confidential policies with him long before any publication of them was permitted. Toward the much larger group of correspondents who attended his bi-weekly press conferences, Roosevelt was similarly amiable, answering their queries with patience and good humour, or, where evasion was called for, accomplishing it with a "wisecrack" rather than a "scowl!" The second reason for the President's great popularity with the reporters, the writer believed, was that his press conferences were invariably productive of news. "He never sends the reporters away empty-handed," said Clapper. "They are always sure of plenty of news from Mr. Roosevelt's press conference." Ordinarily, Clapper asserted, a new President would begin by drawing a large press conference attendance only to see that attendance dwindle as the flow of news dried up. But with Roosevelt this had not happened, so that the reporters

Thinking back upon past Presidents who were grumpy and had no news, are ready to cheer for one who can give them several laughs and a couple of top head dispatches in a twenty-minute visit.

The unusual productivity of Roosevelt's press conferences was linked by Clapper to the President's decision to throw

the conferences wide open by dropping the written-questions rule and agreeing to answer any questions the reporters chose to ask, and to Roosevelt's willingness to assume full responsibility for his answers. He noted, too, that, under the President's influence, this open-door policy had spread through all government departments, where high officials had shown a new willingness to give out information and where efficient press contact men -- former newspapermen with excellent records as reporters -- helped the correspondents do their jobs. Clapper summed up the results :

All this leaves most newspaper men with a feeling that the Administration from President Roosevelt down has little to conceal and is willing to do business with the doors open. This makes the newspaper man's work infinitely easier and more effective; and since he remembers how hard the going was under some previous administrations, he likes the new deal much better.

The other stated reasons for Roosevelt's popularity were not related specifically to journalistic matters. Reporters, who had "seen the ball fumbled so often at the White House," admired, said Clapper, the political craftsmanship of a man "who could close every bank in the country and call it a 'holiday',...[and] who was always ready with a new rabbit to pull out of the hat when the audience began to grow restless." More fundamentally, there was, among the reporters, acceptance of the President's sincerity, sympathy for his objectives, and admiration for his courage and willingness to experiment.

Clapper's list should be extended. Franklin Roosevelt's insight into publicity techniques, his superb "news sense," his ability to "time" releases so that they

broke with maximum effect, and his rare talent for dramatizing his actions and announcements, investing even routine affairs with news value, earned the admiration and the gratitude of professionals.⁴⁶ So, also, did his capacity to give the reporters information in a form which enabled them readily to incorporate it into their dispatches. "Every newspaperman who has attended his press conferences," wrote Earnest Lindley, "knows his gift for simple and logical analysis. He accumulates masses of detail but he can cut through them to the heart of the problem."⁴⁷ "He talked," another reporter has recalled, "in headline phrases."⁴⁸ These abilities were particularly appreciated in the early period of the New Deal when the pace of events was bewildering and the entire character of news seemed to be changing, the former stress on personalities and party-infighting having given way to a new emphasis of matters of socio-economic concern. Leo Rosten, who had extensive interviews and informal contacts with more than 150 members of the Washington press corps over a fourteen-month period during Roosevelt's first term, concluded that "a pronounced majority of the correspondents often feel inadequate to cope with the bewildering complexity

⁴⁶Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," pp.39-40.

⁴⁷Ernest K. Lindley, The Roosevelt Revolution : First Phase (New York : Viking Press, 1933), p.274.

⁴⁸Jack Bell, The Splendid Misery : A Study of the Presidency and Power Politics at Close Range (London : T.V. Boardman and Company Limited, 1960), p.183.

of the news they are designed to cover."⁴⁹ One embattled correspondent commented to Rosten :

I'd like to see the Tugwells or the Frankfurters try to write the stories they're breaking for the girls and boys who read little Orphan Annie. That would be a laugh. No matter how low I get to feeling, I always know I'm doing a better job than they could.⁵⁰

Similar insecurity was reflected in the reporters' press conference questions : "Off-the-record, Mr. President," one asked, "can you fill us in on what the situation is on that? [the possible inflation of the dollar] Personally, I am as ignorant as a nincompoop on it all."⁵¹

Although the extent of Franklin Roosevelt's victory over the Washington press could not easily have been anticipated, there was not mistaking either the measure of his achievement or the benefits which it brought. Such was the charm with which Roosevelt "mesmerized" the Capital correspondents that "only the hardier among them," it was said, "could remain wholly aloof, entirely unaffected."⁵² Many felt themselves to be "losing their once prized ability to view each succeeding administration with an objective, if not professionally jaundiced eye."⁵³ A representative of

⁴⁹Leo C. Rosten, The Social Composition of the Washington Correspondents (Chicago : University of Chicago Libraries, 1937), p.7.

⁵⁰Ibid., p.8.

⁵¹Press Conference No.37, July 28, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 94.

⁵²Frank R. Kent, Without Grease (New York : Morrow and Company, 1936), p.190.

⁵³William E. Berchtold, "Press Agents and the New Deal," New Outlook (July, 1934), 24.

Editor and Publisher, the trade journal of the newspaper industry, who spent a week in December 1934 interviewing twenty-five top reporters, found among them a general belief that the Roosevelt personality was leading to the colouration of Washington news reports, with, according to Arthur Krock, head of the New York Times bureau, some writers being prepared to "pull their punches" because "they are persuaded that so delightful and democratic a man must know what is best for everybody." The chief of another large bureau complained to the interviewer that he was continually receiving letters from editors asking whether the President had the press hamstrung.⁵⁴ As late as January 1936, J. Fred Essary, chief of the Washington bureau of the Baltimore Sun, found it necessary to make a spirited rejection of the charge that the Washington correspondents were lending themselves to wholesale propaganda on behalf of New Deal policies, and that the President, "by the exercise of personal charm, ingratiating candor, [and] a measure of Machiavelian adroitness" had been able to hypnotise the reporters into glorifying his acts and purposes.⁵⁵ In these early New Deal years, the Roosevelt newspaper triumph seemed all but complete.

Ultimately, the measure of Roosevelt's triumph lay

⁵⁴Bice Clemow, "Recovery on Way, Capital Corps Feels," Editor and Publisher (December 29, 1934), 8.

⁵⁵Quoted in Robert S. Mann, "Capital Corps No Propaganda Victims, Writers Tell Journalism Teachers," Editor and Publisher (January 4, 1936), 3.

in the evaluations of the professionals, who judged his performance and profited from his skill. Their verdict was clear-cut and unanimous. Franklin Roosevelt, members of the Washington press corps believed, "would be eminently suitable as a grade-A newspaper correspondent in Washington,"⁵⁶ "had the news sense of a managing editor,"⁵⁷ "might qualify as the chief of a great copy desk."⁵⁸ Franklin Roosevelt, wrote columnist Heywood Broun, delivering the final accolade, was "the best newspaperman who has ever been President of the United States."⁵⁹

⁵⁶Richard Wilson, "Reporting the Washington News," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXIX (January, 1942), 128. (Wilson was made head of the Washington bureau of the Des Moines Register and Tribune in 1933.)

⁵⁷Quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.561.

⁵⁸Quoted in Clemow, "Recovery on Way," p.8.

⁵⁹Quoted in Rivers, Opinionmakers, p.135.

CHAPTER II

UNITED IN HOLY NEWSLOCK

The structure of Franklin Roosevelt's relations with the Washington press, which had been erected with skill, was maintained with resolution. Throughout the entire period of his Presidency, the correspondents agreed, Roosevelt's contacts with the press were pleasant, his news-output abundant; and, among the Capital newsmen with whom he dealt, his expertise was respected, his impartiality acknowledged, and his popularity, as a consequence, substantially undiminished. Recurring controversy might shake, but could not destroy, these foundations.

The record of continuing pleasantness in the contacts between Roosevelt and the Washington press can be traced in the transcripts of the press conferences and the tributes of the correspondents. The opening exchanges at a press conference on October 11, 1933, were not uncharacteristic:

Q: Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. (Exhibiting sabre)

Q: Are you going to cut off a few heads this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Charlie (Mr. Hurd) you have to be good this morning. You watch your questions carefully.

Q: Anything about the monetary situation? (Asked by Mr. Hurd)

THE PRESIDENT: Give me that sword. (Laughter)¹

Another good-humoured exchange was prompted by a story by

¹Press Conference No.59, October 11, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 3.

Francis Stephenson describing an incident in which the President's car had temporarily moved ahead of its Secret Service escort and accompanying reporters:

THE PRESIDENT: ... Oh, Stevie, I'm awfully sorry to spoil a good story, but it was only thirty miles an hour that I was doing, and there wasn't another car on the road at the time.

Q: (Mr. Stephenson) I tell you that is what my speedometer...(Laughter)

Q: You probably did not notice it.

Q: You leave us flat like that again and we will make it eighty miles an hour. (Laughter)²

Later, in December 1935, when Roosevelt was asked a facetious question designed to embarrass him, he was equal to the challenge :

Q: Are you disposed to explain your action of approving the allotment of \$61,000 to build a new house for elephants in the Zoo in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; ... the reason for approving that was it was brought to my attention by the Smithsonian and the Natural History Museum in New York and various scientific and political societies that the elephant is in grave danger of becoming extinct. (Prolonged laughter.) a large part of this money, I understand, will be used not only for an elephant house but also for digging a pit for the elephant! (Laughter)

Q: Mr. President, you are sure you are not trying to make a donkey of the elephant? (More laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No chance of their becoming extinct.³

Not that Roosevelt was invariably able, in the informal give-and-take of the press conferences, to escape unscathed. With a group who listened to him regularly, his love of parables could lead to trouble, as it did when, on one occasion in the early period of the war, he lectured the

²Press Conference No.38, August 2, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 116.

³Press Conference No.257, December 17, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 341-42.

reporters on the subject of inflation. Wishing to emphasise that the people were over-spending on luxuries, he told a sceptical group of reporters of a garage mechanic friend who had dropped in for "a chat," complained that his "missus" was having to pay an exorbitant price for strawberries, and received, for his trouble (and the nation's edification), a stern lecture from his President and an injunction to cease throwing away his defence plant wages in a foolish fashion. Six months later, the question of inflation having arisen again, the parable was repeated, with strawberries, on this occasion, being replaced by asparagus. "Mr. President," asked United Press correspondent Merriman Smith, after Roosevelt had told his tale with earnestness and conviction, "is that the same mechanic who came in a few months back complaining about the price of strawberries?" As the press conference erupted with laughter, a blushing Roosevelt shouted above the guffaws : "My God, Merriman, it's true. It is true. It was the same man." "But," Smith has recalled, "he could hardly finish the sentence because he was laughing too hard, himself."⁴ To the Washington correspondents, such good-humoured informality was highly prized : their vested interest in maintaining an agreeable atmosphere at their regular meetings with the Chief Executive was strong; their feelings of gratitude toward a man who helped so greatly to engender it unmistakable. "The routine associations between an administration and the Washington press corps,"

⁴Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, pp.73-74.

noted New York Times' reporter Turner Catledge in December 1936, "have probably never been more agreeable."⁵ Franklin Roosevelt, the most senior of the Capital correspondents estimated, in March 1937, was "the most amiable Oval Room leader within memory."⁶ Almost invariably, occasional visitors to the President's press conferences made similar observations. Charles A. Baird, of the Fort Wayne (Indiana) News-Sentinel, attending a conference in March 1938, found Roosevelt "in a jovial mood" and noted that he had "laughed frequently" and "addressed several of the reporters by their first names."⁷ The onset of war somewhat dampened, but it could not radically change, Roosevelt's press conference mood. W.R. Mathews of the Tucson (Arizona) Star, who watched him meet the Washington press in August 1942, was struck by his complete informality and by the fact that the President "always had a smile and a chuckle." Instead of resenting "trap" questions, Mathews declared, Roosevelt "takes sport in dodging them with quick witted banter."⁸ These impressions were confirmed in a revealing comment made by a regular

⁵Turner Catledge, "Federal Bureau for Press Urged," New York Times, December 29, 1936, p.4.

⁶"Exclusive Set Gathers Capital News," Literary Digest (March 6, 1937), 28.

⁷Charles A. Baird, "Reporter Finds Roosevelt Press Conference Anything But Boring," Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, March 8, 1938. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1938 -- January 20, 1939, Early Papers.

⁸W.R. Mathews, "Presidential Press Meetings Have Vital Place in Capital," Tucson Star, August 7, 1942. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, August 1, 1942 -- January 20, 1943, Early Papers.

Washington reporter the following year :

Nor have problems and heartaches of war robbed him of his sense of humor, of that contagious smile,...of the laugh which, if less frequent, is not less hearty...

.....
 Merry banter that once marked the president's press conferences still crops out [sic] from time to time and on these occasions one understands the close relationship that exist [sic] between the correspondents who cover the White House and the only president who ever let down the bars and his own hair and stood under unrestrained fire of questioning.⁹

A mere five months before Roosevelt's death, reporter Paul Wooten set down this impression of his mood and demeanour before the press :

He loves jokes and never is at a loss for fitting repartee....

.....
 The president was never in better form than at the press conference Friday. He got one good laugh after another out of the questions.¹⁰

Patriotic hyperbole aside, the general tenor of these remarks indicates that the heavy and continuing investment which Franklin Roosevelt made in press goodwill returned him substantial dividends.

In Roosevelt's contacts with the reporters outside the regular press conferences, a similar spirit prevailed. A

⁹Lily May Caldwell, "News Reporter at F.D.R.'s Press Confab Finds Him Sad, Confident," Birmingham News-Age-Herald, n.d. See copy in Scrapbook, August 1, 1943 ---
 January 20, 1944, Early Papers.

¹⁰Paul Wooten, "President Jokes with Reporters : Gets One Good Laugh after Another at Conference"; see President's Official File 36, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, for copy of this undated article, and for Stephen Early's letter of November 16, 1944 thanking Wooten for it.

correspondent who fell ill was likely to receive flowers from the White House, irrespective of whether or not his paper supported the Administration.¹¹ In one instance, when the mother of a bachelor correspondent died, and a quiet funeral was arranged, the reporter discovered only after the event that the Roosevelts had sent flowers and that Mrs. Roosevelt had attended the service. The following Sunday the newsman was asked to the White House for supper.¹² Consideration and friendliness continued to be extended to the correspondents on the President's trips; reporters languishing newsless at Poughkeepsie, near Roosevelt's up-state New York home, or at Warm Springs, might receive a telephone invitation to join the President's family for a swim or a picnic.¹³

It would be easy, though misleading, to suggest that Franklin Roosevelt's strongly positive attitude toward the Washington correspondents was largely the product of political calculation; but, though he courted the reporters openly and cultivated them with assiduity, his liking for them and for their craft, they could not but have recognised, was both deep and unfeigned. It was also contagious: "He likes the press," said a reporter, after a wartime press conference, "The feeling is mutual." "I'm a dyed-in-the-wool Republican," confessed a visiting columnist, "but I fell like

¹¹Clark Kinnaird, ed., The Real F.D.R. (New York : The Citadel Press, 1945), p.23.

¹²Charles Hurd, When the New Deal Was Young and Gay (New York : Hawthorn Books, 1965), pp.241-42.

¹³John Herrick, "With the Reporters at the Summer White House," Literary Digest, CXVI (August 12, 1933), 5.

a ton of bricks."¹⁴ Far from being a tedious and burdensome chore, Franklin Roosevelt's regular meetings with the reporters were stimulating and enjoyable -- "a welcome interlude," in the words of his Press Secretary Stephen Early, "in a schedule that is often heavy with dead and uninteresting routine and the droning of dull visitors."¹⁵ Roosevelt, in the later estimation of one newsman, looked forward to his press conferences with the same enthusiasm with which Dwight Eisenhower contemplated a game of golf.¹⁶ The President's affectionate regard for the press corps was reflected, too, in his constant attendance at its functions -- Gridiron dinners,¹⁷ National Press Club Dinners and the Dinners of the White House Correspondents' Association. The White House Correspondents' dinners were the only wartime dinners outside the White House attended by the President, and in 1940 he even left his sick bed rather than break such an engagement.¹⁸ Again, he could not always have relished the satire. At the 1935 Gridiron Dinner, reporters lampooned

¹⁴Quoted in Caldwell, "F.D.R.'s Press Confab."

¹⁵Stephen Early, "Washington Correspondents," Liberty, February 24, 1940; see Early Papers, box 39 for original of this article.

¹⁶Bell, Splendid Misery, p.180.

¹⁷The Gridiron Club was a newspapermen's dining club which gave two dinners each year at which the President and members of the Cabinet and Congress were lampooned.

¹⁸Early, "Washington Correspondents"; White House Correspondents' Association, Release, March 5, 1944, Early Papers, box 38.

the New Deal in an "Indian Skit." Opponents of his policies, Roosevelt learned, had arranged for their own adoption into Indian tribes because "the Indians are the only ones who get anything out of the New Deal -- they have nothing to lose." "Big Chief" Hugh Johnson, busily engaged inside a wigwam writing a column about Donald Richberg, emerged briefly to ask : "How do you spell nincompoop?" The whole New Deal, the Indians said, was "in a stew"; the NRA was "in a pickle," the PWA "in a jam." It was "time to can them all." After the Indians had done with the NRA, "the Blue Eagle would look like something out of a cuckoo clock."¹⁹ The following year Roosevelt saw himself riding in a chariot drawn by slaves, with attendant trumpeters, centurions, senators and Roman soldiers bearing banners inscribed "F.D.R. Imp." Pensioners in an old people's home chatted about "the same old Franklin," then in his tenth term at the age of eighty-six.²⁰ None of this outwardly perturbed Roosevelt; on the contrary, he entered enthusiastically into the spirit of such occasions, hitting back at the reporters with witty speeches, and expressing support for the Gridiron Club and its activities. The country had no need to fear totalitarianism, he informed the 1938 gathering, so long as the Gridiron Club put the President in his place and told the Government how to govern.²¹

¹⁹For copy of "Indian Skit" performed at Gridiron Dinner, April 13, 1935, see F.D.R. Speech File 1583, President's Personal File 1820.

²⁰Raymond Clapper, article in Columbus Citizen, December 22, 1936, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.794.

²¹For copy of speech see F.D.R. Speech File 1588, Gridiron Club Dinner Speech, April 9, 1938, President's Personal File 1820.

"I do enjoy these dinners," he declared in 1940. "I enjoy seeing all the old familiar faces, beaming as they do tonight with the bright spirit of good-will and friendship for this Administration."²² It is unnecessary to take such pronouncements at face value in order to believe that Franklin Roosevelt did feel a special affinity with newspaper reporters and relished their company.

Especially revealing in this context were the extraordinarily generous compliments which Roosevelt occasionally paid to reporters. In his speech to the National Press Club in November 1938, having spoken nostalgically about famous reporters who had helped to "train" him in the past, he went on to declare that there was "no group of finer, more deeply sincere, though sometimes cynical on the surface, sensitive group of human beings in the world than the newspaper men of America."²³ This notion he later repeated when he challenged a comment by columnist Raymond Clapper that newspapermen were "not, perhaps, the most likable people in the world." "I have always," said he, "thought that they were just as likeable as, and perhaps a bit more interesting than, a group representing any other profession!"²⁴ Much more effusive, however, was a tribute to "the reporter" which appeared at the head of a 1945 Collier's article on "The

²²For copy of speech see F.D.R. Speech File 1591, Gridiron Club Dinner Speech, April 13, 1940, President's Personal File 1820.

²³For copy of speech by Roosevelt to National Press Club, November 19, 1938, see Early Papers, box 28.

²⁴Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen T. Early, April 12, 1943, Early Papers, box 24.

President and the Press" and which, the editor revealed, had been given to him by Roosevelt some years earlier. It ascribed to newsmen qualities which they themselves, one feels, would have been reluctant to claim :

He is everywhere.

His perception, his intelligence, encompass all men, all things, [sic] His eye scans the earth, surveying its tragedies and comedies, its men of wealth and of poverty.

In the beginning he chiselled in living rock the news of the first dawns of promise. In the great ending, he will write "thirty" -- his own mystic symbol of conclusion -- and the strange history of man will be complete²⁵ [sic]

In the light of such comments, correspondents' references to the "reporters' President"²⁶ and "the best newspaperman who has ever been President of the United States" gain a further dimension.

Also illustrative of Roosevelt's attitude toward the reporters was the manner in which he championed their cause. The American Newspaper Guild had been formed under the aegis of the New Deal, but, when delegates assembled in Washington for the organising convention, NRA administrator Hugh Johnson gave them little encouragement. Roosevelt, by contrast, called some of their leaders to the White House and told them : "Forget Johnson. Go ahead. My blessing on you and more power to you." One delegate recalled that the party left the White House "walking on pink clouds that winter evening."²⁷

²⁵Davenport, "President and Press," p.11.

²⁶Herrick, "Summer White House," p.29.

²⁷Quoted in Curtis D. MacDougall, The Press and its Problems (Dubuque, Iowa : William C. Brown, 1964), p.496.

Other benefits from the New Deal were more tangible: reporters' wages rose substantially under the National Recovery Administration voluntary codes and later the Wagner Act, and, together with others in the work force, they benefited from the Wages and Hours and Social Security Acts. Gratifying too, so far as newsmen were concerned, was the attempt which the President made to raise the prestige and status of the "fourth estate". An annual party and dance was held at the White House in honour of newsmen, whose names began appearing also on the guest lists of State dinners, not merely, as before, as "side guests", but as the equals of diplomats and statesmen.²⁸

Responding to Franklin Roosevelt's goodwill toward them and appreciating his efforts on their behalf, the Washington correspondents repaid him generously in affection and overlooked many of his shortcomings. During the war years, a reporter pointed out, the President had "occasionally shown a petulance that from another type of man might have permanently alienated him and the correspondents as a whole." But such a permanent falling-away did not occur, and a veteran correspondent, a first-hand observer of press relations under four Presidents, explained why :

With Roosevelt, [said he] this is the only time that I had the feeling that I was welcome here in the White House, that I belonged here, that I was as important here as a member of Cabinet or of Congress -- even more important. I think you'll find that feeling generalhere, at Hyde Park and on his special trains, we're not only welcome but we have the distinct feeling -- for

²⁸Hurd, Young and Gay, pp.240-41.

the first time -- that we belong there, that he's our President. Ours. See?²⁹

Pleasantness and goodwill alone would not have continued to satisfy the Washington reporters had the output of White House news been inadequate. Under Franklin Roosevelt it rarely was. The President held news conferences twice a week, his Press Secretary daily, and the release of newsworthy announcements or appointments was prompt and unceasing. The White House was referred to as "one continuous press conference,"³⁰ a news "volcano,"³¹ or, near the end of Roosevelt's Presidency "an everlasting spring of news";³² Roosevelt himself was called "one of the greatest news wells the world has ever known."³³ In the press conferences themselves, the President's knowledge of detail was a continual source of wonder. He could discuss, the correspondents discovered, local and regional, as well as national or international affairs. Indeed, for all his adroitness and charm, many reporters found this to be the most impressive quality of Roosevelt -- the sheer range of his information.³⁴

²⁹Davenport, "President and Press," p.13.

³⁰For script of radio interview of Stephen Early over N.B.C. on July 6, 1934, see Early Papers, box 38.

³¹Ibid.

³²For script of radio interview of Stephen Early by Richard Eaton on March 20, 1944 see Early Papers, box 38.

³³Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.185.

³⁴Hurd, Young and Gay, p.233; "President and Press," Philadelphia Bulletin, February 4, 1938. For copy of this article see Scrapbook, January 21, 1938 -- January 20, 1939, Early Papers.

The quality of Presidential news, moreover, continued to be high as out of his press conferences poured stories of national and international importance.

Part of the explanation for this copious news output was essentially personal: Franklin Roosevelt, with his vivid and exciting personality was fascinating to reporters, a point which was graphically expressed by Washington correspondent Jack Bell :

F.D.R. was a President after a newsman's heart.... He acted, he emoted; he was angry, he was smiling. He was persuasive, he was demanding; he was philosophical, he was elemental. He was sensible, he was unreasonable; he was benevolent, he was malicious. He was satirical, he was soothing; he was funny, he was gloomy. He was exciting. He was human. He was copy.³⁵

"You are still the most interesting person," William Allen White told him at the annual Presidential press conference for news editors in 1939. "For box office attraction you leave Clark Gable gasping for breath."³⁶ But ease of news gathering is a function not merely of Presidential personality, but of political style, and an active Presidential leadership of the Roosevelt type, a leadership style which exploited conflict as a means of publicity, naturally gave rise to material which made more interesting copy.³⁷

Reporting the political activities of Franklin Roosevelt, it is clear, was not merely productive; it was

³⁵Bell, Splendid Misery, p.183.

³⁶Press Conference No. 540-A, April 20, 1939, Presidential Press Conferences, XIII, 284.

³⁷Dan D. Nimmo, Newsgathering in Washington : A Study in Political Communication (New York : Atherton Press, 1964), pp.197-98.

exciting : the President's ability to make politics fascinating and vital, his superb talent for dramatization -- these qualities produced among the Washington press a feeling of expectancy, a feeling that a big story might break at any time. United Press White House correspondent Merriman Smith, describing an incident which occurred in 1940, has perfectly illustrated this point. When Roosevelt spoke at the Warm Springs polio clinic after a Thanksgiving dinner, the newsmen who were with him at first paid little attention to his hackneyed opening remarks. Then, Smith has recounted, with an imperceptible change of emphasis, Roosevelt moved to a discussion of the war. The change in his tone and subject immediately alerted the reporters that Roosevelt's comments were meant for them, rather than the polio patients. He spoke of the oppressed people in Europe, of how little they had to be thankful for. By the following Thanksgiving, he suggested, America might also be "looking back to a peaceful past." The reporters understood well enough that "something ominous and world-shaking was about to be said." "The Roosevelt build-up to a smashing remark," Merriman Smith has written, "was unmistakable." Smith's account continues :

The climax was slow and deceptive in its approach. Mr. Roosevelt suddenly veered to tell how he had spent part of the afternoon listening to the Army-Navy football broadcast. Where else in the world, he asked, could such a game be held? Then the climax.

By next Thanksgiving, the President said, our boys in training at the naval and military academies "may actually be fighting in the defense of this country."

He stopped and as the echo of his voice fell before the thunderous applause, the newspapermen broke for the door,...

I yelled to my wire operator as I hit the door of the telegraph office:

"Flash-- Warm Springs, Georgia -- Roosevelt says we may be fighting within a year."³⁸

Franklin Roosevelt did not so much release news as create it; to be with him, reporters felt, was to have "a front seat at the making of history."³⁹

In contemporary comments on Franklin Roosevelt's relations with the American press, references to the expertise which he displayed in the conduct of his press conferences are an insistent and recurring theme.⁴⁰ His performance, observers agreed, was generally superb, his technique incomparable, and his virtuosity of a kind that, irrespective of where their basic sympathies lay, the Washington reporters could neither fail to benefit from nor cease to admire. "Every time one goes to a White House press conference," wrote Bulkley Griffin in the Hartford Times of 16 December, 1940, "he is made to recognise once again that Franklin D. Roosevelt is without peer in meeting newsmen."⁴¹ Quite apart from the range and quality of his information and what Arthur

³⁸Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, pp.108-09.

³⁹Ibid., p.3.

⁴⁰See, for example : Hurd, Young and Gay, p.231; Kingsley Martin, Editor : A Second Volume of Autobiography, 1931-45, Hutchinson, 1968 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1969), pp.241-42; "Arthur Krock Sees Threat to Press," New York Times, October 8, 1940, p.12; Ben H. Miller, "There's Nothing Like Our Press Conference," Baltimore Sun, n.d., enclosed in letter from Miller to Early, June 6, 1941, Official File 36; Willard M. Kiplinger, Washington Is Like That (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1942), p.91.

⁴¹Bulkley Griffin, "Washington," Hartford Times, December 16, 1940. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, August 1, 1940 -- January 20, 1941, Early Papers.

Krock referred to as Roosevelt's "congenital bon homie,"⁴² the reporters, for solid practical reasons, continued to appreciate Roosevelt's expository skill. His ability -- evident also in his fireside chats -- to explain the broad outlines of Administration policy in language which the reporters (and the people) could understand, and to use homely metaphors to relate problems to the experience of ordinary people, fitted precisely the reporters' practical need for simplification. For them, the pressure of deadlines, the shortage of news space and the conventions for arranging information within that space -- the headline, the short lead and the inverted pyramid of news -- required a simplification of complex issues; and the President's clear explanations, salient examples and homely phraseology made the task of achieving it immeasurably easier.⁴³ Moreover, despite the informal and apparently spontaneous manner in which his press conferences were conducted, Roosevelt remained skilfully in control : the initiative under the oral questioning system may have appeared to lie with the reporters; in practice, as they knew, it rarely passed from Roosevelt's hands. Frequently he began his conferences with announcements of such news importance that the issues dominated the conference and pre-empted discussion of more embarrassing questions.⁴⁴ Thus,

⁴²Arthur Krock, Memoirs (London : Cassell and Company, 1970), p.145.

⁴³Leon V. Sigal, Reporters and Officials : The Organization and Problems of Newsmaking (Lexington, Massachusetts : D.C. Heath and Company, 1973), p.73.

⁴⁴Hurd, Young and Gay, p.233.

in October 1942, on meeting the reporters after a defense-plant tour, from which, they believed, they had unreasonably been excluded, he avoided the question of censorship which was uppermost in their minds by monopolising the discussion and adroitly shifting its focus onto subjects of immediate news significance.⁴⁵ Similarly, he was able to forestall questions on the embarrassing issue of Justice Hugo Black's membership of the Ku Klux Klan, about which the press corps wanted information, with the somewhat implausible announcement that he wished to be as helpful as he could followed by the dictation of a short statement to the press which amounted to a refusal to comment until Justice Black returned from Europe.⁴⁶ Roosevelt had the ability, too, where questions on them were not forthcoming, to introduce into the body of a press conference subjects to which he wished prominence to be given, and while, in this regard, the correspondents were occasionally irritated by his propaganda, they were usually impressed by his skill.⁴⁷ Evasion of direct questions presented few problems. The President could fail to hear a question, or give a facetious answer -- as he did when he was asked his opinion of some charts of economic indicators displayed

⁴⁵ Arthur Robb, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (October 10, 1942).

⁴⁶ Press Conference No. 398, September 14, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 208-09.

⁴⁷ James L. Wright, "Does President Pour Out His Soul or Just Bunk?", n.d., publication details unknown. For copy of this article see memorandum Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 21, 1935, President's Personal File 82.

at a press conference and simply replied : "Very nicely done."⁴⁸ Alternatively, he could merely decline to discuss a matter at a particular time on the grounds that such discussion, in his unelaborated opinion, would be premature. With some highly significant exceptions, he would rarely be drawn on foreign affairs (partly because, like Woodrow Wilson, he feared that foreign press representatives at his conferences would repeat his off-the-record remarks to their embassies), and when asked, on one occasion during a European crisis, what the subject of his recent discussions with the Polish Ambassador had been, impassively replied "Stamps."⁴⁹ With spot questions on economics or finance, he tended to be short and evasive rather than knowledgeable or expansive, often exploiting the reporters' own feelings of inadequacy in this area by his periodic reminders that "there are two professions in this world that do not know the difference between dollars and dimes; one is the clergy and the other is the press."⁵⁰ As an alternative, he might retreat into pedantic literalism by, for example, asking a reporter who had raised the question of inflation to define the phenomenon about which he had asked;⁵¹ or, on another

⁴⁸Press Conference No.69, November 15, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 458.

⁴⁹Brandt, "President's Press Conference," p.499.

⁵⁰Press Conference No.238, September 13, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 161. See also : Press Conference No.260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 362; Press Conference No.649, June 4, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 439.

⁵¹Press Conference No.13, April 19, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 152.

occasion, replying enigmatically to a request that he comment on Ramsay MacDonald's scheme for consultative pacts : "You can print his language." When the questioner persisted, Roosevelt simply read MacDonald's press release to the conference -- straight out of an American paper.⁵² Added to all this was the unwritten rule that, once Roosevelt had signified his unwillingness to discuss an issue, he was not to be pressed. "It is," he told a press conference with journalism teachers in 1935, "perfectly easy to avoid telling things you do not want to have come out."⁵³ In this general context, the good humour that prevailed in his press conferences was very much to Roosevelt's advantage. Frequently he could avoid a difficult question with a quip that threw the whole room into laughter⁵⁴ -- often being abetted by several reporters whose main purpose, in the words of one of their more serious colleagues, "seems to be to say something so cute that the President doubles up with laughter."⁵⁵ In either event, before the author of the embarrassing question could follow it up, the conference was likely to have moved off in a different direction.

⁵²Press Conference No.19, May 10, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 231-32.

⁵³Press Conference No.260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 361.

⁵⁴"News and Comment from the Nation's Capital," Literary Digest (August 18, 1934), 18.

⁵⁵A. Merriman Smith, A President Is Many Men (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1948), p.157.

Roosevelt's technique showed considerable sophistication. He adroitly side-stepped "loaded" questions and, by refusing to give "yes or no" answers, avoided a trap into which, for example, an inexperienced Harry Truman was quickly and regretfully to fall.⁵⁶ Asked by an eager and optimistic reporter whether he did or did not consider the solution of the war debt question vital to the success of the London Economic Conference he merely replied: "Have I stopped tickling the soles of my mother-in-law? Yes or no."⁵⁷ So expert at handling the press did he consider himself to be, that he confidently lectured others on the subject. At the meeting of the National Emergency Council on 11 December 1936, Roosevelt, having confided to departmental and agency heads that handling the press was "a special art all by itself," gave a revealing illustration of his own technique. The previous week a reporter had asked him to comment on a speech by the American Ambassador in England which had called for a closer relationship between Great Britain and the United States. Had he endorsed the call, he explained, the press would have reported him as advocating a working alliance between the two countries at a time when, at the Naval Conference then in session, both were experiencing difficulties with the Japanese. The story would have become sensational -- an Anglo-American alliance against Japan -- and embarrassing. On the other hand, had he refused any comment,

⁵⁶Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.26.

⁵⁷Press Conference No.19, May 10, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 245.

such refusal would have given rise to headlines intimating that he had dissented from the Ambassador's remarks. Consequently, he simply denied having read the speech, although in fact he had.⁵⁸ It was a tactic which he employed with great frequency. At such times, the Washington correspondents knew what Roosevelt was doing; they understood the practical and political difficulties with which he was faced, the constraints within which he was often forced to operate, and were prepared, by and large, to admit that he was dealing as fairly with them as the rules of government and politics would allow. Although there was some dissatisfaction with his evasiveness, there was also admiration for his skill, and, in the general appreciation of the rich benefits his press conferences produced, resentment was swallowed up in gratitude.⁵⁹

Presiding over his press conferences, Franklin Roosevelt was compared to a consummate performer, a brilliant and accomplished actor, who met the challenge of a critical audience and took pleasure and pride in his own performance, seldom missing his cues.⁶⁰ Like an actor, too, he eagerly asked for critical comment after each performance,⁶¹ and to

⁵⁸Proceedings of the National Emergency Council, December 19, 1933 — April 28, 1936, Film 13-6, micro copy No. T 38, roll No.1, pp.46-50, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁵⁹Brandt, "President's Press Conference," p.449; Davenport, "President and Press," p.13.

⁶⁰Marquis W. Childs, "I've Got This Thing Simplified; Private Interview with FDR," American Heritage, VIII (April, 1957), 38.

⁶¹For copy of speech by Roosevelt to National Press Club, November 19, 1938, see Early Papers, box 38.

one of those whose opinion he always sought, he undoubtedly owed a large measure of his success.

Stephen Early, who was appointed by Roosevelt to the position of Presidential Press Secretary, had behind him an extensive career in newspaper and newsreel work and a friendship with the President that reached back to Roosevelt's term as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, which Early, as an Associated Press reporter, had been assigned to cover.⁶² From that time he had become associated with Roosevelt, Marvin McIntyre and Louis Howe in a group which met annually to celebrate Roosevelt's birthday and which subsequently became known as the Cuff Links Club.⁶³ In 1920, Early joined Roosevelt's Vice Presidential campaign organization as "advance man," but, following Roosevelt's defeat, rejoined the Washington staff of the Associated Press. In 1927 he became Washington representative of Paramount Newsreel, from which position he was appointed, as also had been the other Club members, Howe and McIntyre, to the Roosevelt secretariat. The selection of Early and two other accomplished newsmen to Roosevelt's personal staff was seen to be auspicious -- a clear indication, Washington correspondents thought, of the importance which the new President was preparing to attach to his relations with the American press. From newsman George H. Manning, it drew an appreciative comment: Early, Howe and McIntyre, he wrote,

are expected...to be extremely helpful...They are personally well known to most of the newspaper men,

⁶²For script of radio interview of Early and Marvin McIntyre by George Durno on N.B.C., May 15, 1933, see Early Papers, box 38.

⁶³Membership of the Club was confined to those who had been presented with gold cufflinks by Roosevelt after the 1920 Vice Presidential campaign. See Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p.150.

know their needs, their wants, and their psychology, -- and most of the Washington newsmen regard them as their close friends and like them.⁶⁴

Particularly so far as Stephen Early was concerned, Manning's forecast proved accurate : in memoirs, letters and journalistic literature of the period, generous tribute has been paid to the Press Secretary's unusual ability, continuing popularity and professional success. Presidential Assistant Samuel Rosenman believed that a great deal of Roosevelt's success with the Washington press could be attributed to Early. "The White House correspondents," Rosenman wrote, "admired Steve's ability, respected his integrity, and loved him personally."⁶⁵ It was an assessment which Grace Tully, another member of Roosevelt's staff, endorsed.⁶⁶ From the outset, reporters, too, wrote of Early in glowing terms : for his handling of the banking crisis, commented Raymond Tucker in the New York World Telegram of March 8, 1933, "almost every correspondent -- and they are notoriously hard to satisfy -- patted him on the back and extended congratulation."⁶⁷ Praise came also from United Press Washington Bureau Chief Raymond Clapper, whose letter to Early on 18 March 1933 commenced :

I want to put in writing what I have told you several times already. I think you are doing a

⁶⁴George H. Manning, "Capital Corps Hopes for New Deal," Editor and Publisher (March 4, 1933), 5.

⁶⁵Samuel I. Rosenman, Working with Roosevelt (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1952), pp.453-54.

⁶⁶Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, pp.86-87.

⁶⁷Ray Tucker, "Secretary Early Helps Reporters," New York World Telegram, March 8, 1933; for copy of this article see Scrapbook March 4, 1933 -- March 4, 1934, Early Papers.

simply magnificent job. This feeling, as you undoubtedly know, is general among Washington correspondents....up to now the performance has been from our point of view one hundred per cent.⁶⁸

Over the twelve years during which Stephen Early directed White House press relations, the plaudits were to continue.⁶⁹

With Early, originated many of the innovations which marked Roosevelt's approach to the press. Bringing to his job a firm conviction, based on his own wide experience, that the most immediately popular and constructive act the Administration could take would be to throw its doors open to the press, Early inaugurated a "goldfish bowl" approach to government.⁷⁰ He it was who urged Roosevelt to abandon written questions at his press conferences,⁷¹ who strongly cautioned him against treating the reporters with other than complete impartiality.⁷² He worked to change the atmosphere of the White House so that, in his own words, the correspondents would be "welcomed, as gentlemen, not

⁶⁸Raymond Clapper to Stephen Early, March 18, 1933, Early Papers, box 2.

⁶⁹Lindley, Roosevelt Revolution, p.280; Press Conference No.26, June 2, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 345; Theodore G. Joslin, article in Washington Sunday Star, March 4, 1934, quoted in Public Papers and Addresses, II, 41; Kent Cooper to Stephen Early, March 11, 1940, Early Papers, box 2.

⁷⁰Raymond Clapper, "Cuff Links Club," Review of Reviews (April, 1935), 50; see copy of this article in Early Papers, box 39.

⁷¹Raymond Clapper, "F.D. Decides Against Revival of White House Spokesman," Washington Daily News, July 28, 1937. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

⁷²Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p.290.

suspected as spies."⁷³ The dividends were rich and immediate : Early, wrote a grateful Frank Kent in March 1933, "fairly exudes cordiality and informality....[he] had created a warm, sunny atmosphere in which the press delightedly basks."⁷⁴ The new Press Secretary, in the view of George Durno, had inaugurated a "new deal" of his own at the White House that almost made newsgathering a pleasure : he was, Durno pointed out, accessible at any hour of the day or night to reply to reporters' questions, and, equally importantly, knew most of the answers.⁷⁵ Where other secretaries had been content with information given them by Presidents or Cabinet members, Early was prepared to confront his superiors and ask for more data. Thus, when Secretary Woodin declined to give the press further details about the Administration's banking programme, which was known to have been prepared for submission to Congress, Early went directly to Roosevelt and a more complete statement was quickly forthcoming.⁷⁶

Having organised White House press relations along

⁷³Stephen T. Early, "Hobgoblins 1935," p.102. Journal in which published unknown; see copy of article in Early Papers, box 38.

⁷⁴Frank R. Kent, "The Great Game of Politics," Baltimore Sun, March 26, 1933. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, March 4, 1933 -- March 4, 1934, Early Papers.

⁷⁵See script of radio interview of Stephen Early and Marvin McIntyre by George Durno on N.B.C., May 15, 1933, Early Papers, box 38.

⁷⁶Tucker, "Early Helps Reporters," p.34.

such lines, Early then insisted that the same policies be followed by the press agents in every government department and agency.⁷⁷ Party hacks in press officers' jobs were replaced by experienced newsmen whose impact was often dramatic. Charles Michelson, press agent for the Treasury, caused an immediate upheaval in that institution by his insistence that no statements were to be released to the press unless he, himself, could understand them.⁷⁸

Michelson's influence over Treasury Secretary Woodin was equally dramatic : within a fortnight of taking office a man who had begun by being shy and suspicious of newsmen, was visiting Treasury press headquarters where "he sat on a desk and regaled the correspondents with a mandolin recital of his new musical compositions." It was only with difficulty that Michelson persuaded him against providing a big refrigerator stocked with beer for his "new friends."⁷⁹ Further, if suppression of news was attempted anywhere in the Administration, Early moved quickly to prevent it.

Of comparable significance was the role that Early played in developing Franklin Roosevelt's press conference skill. His extensive background in newspaper work and wide circle of press acquaintances enabled Early to anticipate the questions which the President might be asked and groom him for suitable replies.⁸⁰ Before each press conference, he

⁷⁷Clapper, "Cuff Links Club," p.50.

⁷⁸Michelson, The Ghost Talks, p.56.

⁷⁹Ibid., p.57.

⁸⁰William E. Berchtold, "Press Agents and the New Deal," New Outlook, (July, 1934), 26. See, for example : memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 16, 1939, Early Papers, box 23.

coached the President and provided him with newsworthy announcements;⁸¹ at its conclusion, along with, perhaps, Charles Michelson and Marvin McIntyre, he reviewed Roosevelt's performance and suggested how his technique might be improved.⁸²

Over a twelve year period Early retained the reporters' trust and affection,⁸³ never lying to them or giving them a false lead. He remained accessible to the reporters at all times (even though, as one correspondent put it, he had "the early morning or midnight temper of a mountain lion freshly trapped by only one leg");⁸⁴ and the vigour with which he argued with them in defense of the President was matched only by the vigour with which he defended them against the President when he felt them to be

⁸¹See script of radio interview of Stephen Early by Richard Eaton on March 20, 1944, Early Papers, box 38. See, for example : Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 28, 1941, Early Papers, box 24.

⁸²See script of speech by Roosevelt to National Press Club, November 19, 1938, Early Papers, box 28.

⁸³After a speech by Roosevelt at Madison Square Garden on October 28, 1940, some members of the Presidential party were temporarily prevented from boarding a train at Pennsylvania Station. In the ensuing scuffle, Early, it was claimed, kneed a Negro policeman in the groin. The Washington correspondents' support for the Press Secretary and his version of the events that had transpired was prompt and overwhelming. For "the Sloan incident," see Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, pp.152-53; for the correspondents' support of Early see "White House Corps Defends Steve Early," Editor and Publisher (November 16, 1940).

⁸⁴Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.9.

in the right. He slew once again the "White House spokesman," whom Roosevelt had shown signs of wanting to resurrect; dissuaded the President from excluding from his press conferences reporters whose stories had offended him, and, though he often vexed the President by doing it, unfailingly supported the reporters' right to accompany him at all times, even during his war-time trips and recuperative holidays.⁸⁵ It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the part played by Stephen Early in maintaining the good relations between Roosevelt and the Washington correspondents was not merely important but crucial.

To the extent to which they were successful, Stephen Early's initial insistence upon and constant advocacy of a policy of complete impartiality in White House dealings with the press were important factors in Roosevelt's continuing popularity with the Washington correspondents. For several years at least, reporters seeking exclusive interviews with the President were rebuffed. Probably the first to suffer in this way was New York Times' bureau chief Arthur Krock who, early in April 1933, telephoned Marvin McIntyre to request a private interview with the President, urging that his ability to see Herbert Hoover whenever he had wished and his position as representative of the largest paper in Roosevelt's home city and state entitled him to the privilege. McIntyre

⁸⁵Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.454; Raymond Clapper, "F.D. Decides Against Revival of White House Spokesman," Washington Daily News, July 28, 1937. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

recommended against the interview and correspondence between the White House and Krock makes it clear that the latter's arguments and, for a time, his subsequent efforts to gain preferment, were unavailing.⁸⁶ The Washington correspondents were aware that Roosevelt met some of their number privately at informal dinners but, believing that the substance of any discussions which took place on these occasions was not made public and that the President saw several reporters at a time, they were not perturbed by such practices.⁸⁷ Stephen Early was at pains strongly to emphasise the policy of complete impartiality. Replying, in July, 1936, to a request that the President answer a series of questions submitted by the North American Newspaper Alliance, he wrote to columnist Paul Mallon :

It is needless for me to tell you that when the President came to the White House he established a parity for the press, a policy of treating all alike.... Throughout his Administration not a single newspaperman, not a single special writer for magazines, or other publications has obtained an exclusive interview. Neither has the President written his opinions for any press association, syndicate, newspaper or magazine.⁸⁸

The commitment to complete impartiality was re-affirmed repeatedly by the Press Secretary⁸⁹ who, even after his

⁸⁶Memorandum, M.H. McIntyre to Stephen Early, April 3, 1933, Official File 144; Arthur Krock to Marguerite LeHand, May 4, 1933, President's Personal File 675.

⁸⁷George H. Manning, "President Candidly Consults Reporters in Advance of Budget Announcement," Editor and Publisher (January 6, 1934), 4.

⁸⁸Stephen Early to Paul Mallon, July 9, 1936, Official File 2272.

⁸⁹See, for example : Early, "Hobgoblins," p.25; Stephen Early to J.V. Connolly, October 11, 1937, President's Personal File 82; "President Gives Krock Exclusive Interview, But Taken Parity Vow," Editor and Publisher (March 6, 1937), 42.

retirement from the White House, would not permit the suggestion that he had acted in any other way in his dealings with the members of the press. In a friendly letter in October 1945 publisher Roy Howard assured Early that he had not forgotten "the many occasions on which you went to the front line for me" or that "over a great many years I was on the receiving end of favors and personal consideration from you." Early's response was typical :

You make one statement which I dare suggest we correct. You are not and never have been indebted to me and there is nothing to be paid off. Whatever I did on the old job for you and others was done because I felt it was right to do.⁹⁰

By and large the press appears to have accepted what Early said. "Of one thing I am sure," wrote James L. Wright in the Buffalo Evening News in 1935, in an article which was by no means uncritical of the President, "Mr. Roosevelt has no fair haired boys who can slip in for a few minutes' private chat and get an exclusive story."⁹¹ Looking back over the whole Roosevelt Presidency, Charles Hurd was later to make a similar comment : although Roosevelt had, Hurd admitted, "a number of close friends in the newspaper world," it was hard "to recall a single instance when these friends obtained a fact or viewpoint not given to their competitors."⁹²

⁹⁰Roy Howard to Stephen Early, October 2, 1945, and Stephen Early to Roy Howard, October 3, 1945, Early Papers, "Roy Howard" folder.

⁹¹James L. Wright, "Does President Pour Out His Soul or Just Bunk?" n.d. publication details unknown. For copy of this article see memorandum Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 21, 1935, President's Personal File 82.

⁹²Hurd, Young and Gay, p.230.

Hostility was aroused by two widely recognised departures from the policy of impartiality -- exclusive interviews granted by the President to Arthur Krock in 1937 and to Anne O'Hare McCormick in 1938 (the first-mentioned, in particular, provoking an outcry which amply confirmed the soundness of Early's judgement concerning the wisdom of the previous policy)⁹³; but, apart from these outbursts, some muted rumblings about "supersecret Sunday suppers for huge-circulation columnists,"⁹⁴ and occasional references to "publicity racketeers"⁹⁵ -- columnists who served as the President's mouthpieces -- Roosevelt appears to have attracted relatively little criticism for any lack of impartiality which he may have displayed towards the press.

It is difficult to see why. The year before his celebrated exclusive with Roosevelt, Arthur Krock had floated a trial balloon for the President following a private conversation at Hyde Park to which he had been invited as an overnight guest. After Roosevelt had outlined his "grand design" for dissipating European tensions, a plan involving a meeting with the heads of the major states abroad, Krock, having

⁹³"Inspired News -- The Press, the President and the Public," Christian Science Monitor, March 3, 1937, p.3; Pollard, Presidents and Press, pp.787-88.

⁹⁴Walter Davenport, "The President and the Press," Collier's CXV (February 3, 1945), 47.

⁹⁵"Censorship is Secondary," Peoria Journal-Transcript, August 19, 1941. For copy of this editorial see Scrapbook, August 1, 1941 -- January 20, 1942, Early Papers.

secured an undertaking from Roosevelt that he would not repudiate the story, wrote a page one report in the New York Times giving details of the scheme. When the article was published, a clamour arose among the other reporters for Roosevelt to deny its authenticity. The President kept his undertaking to Krock to the extent of refusing to comment on the article but, according to Krock's account, encouraged Henry Wallace to tell the press that in his judgement the story had no foundation.⁹⁶ Then came Krock's success of March 1937, following a cleverly phrased letter in which he offered the President a chance to elaborate on the issues surrounding his Supreme Court proposal.⁹⁷ Apparently finding the proposal irresistible, Roosevelt granted the exclusive interview, agreed that the article should appear on page one of the Times, and decided to weather the press resentment that might follow, though, in the event, its ferocity probably surprised him. The article won for Arthur Krock the 1938 Pulitzer Prize and for Franklin Roosevelt the temporary enmity of the Washington press. Roosevelt declared himself to have been chastened by the experience but a promised reformation on his part was short-lived: later the same year another Times reporter, James Kieran, was granted an exclusive interview which became the basis for an article on the manner in which Roosevelt kept in touch with public opinion.⁹⁸ Much

⁹⁶Krock, Memoirs, p.183.

⁹⁷Arthur Krock to Stephen Early, February 16, 1937, February 23, 1937, February 26, 1937, March 1, 1937, Early Papers, "Arthur Krock" folder.

⁹⁸James M. Kieran to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 9, 1937; memorandum "G." [Grace Tully?] to "The P.S." [Marvin McIntyre?], September 14, 1937, President's Personal File 392. The article, "The President Listens In on the Nation," was published in the New York Times Magazine on October 3, 1937.

more significant, however, was the highly favoured treatment that journalist George Creel received at Roosevelt's hands. "By reason of my New Deal services..., and also because I represented Collier's," Creel has written, "the doors of the White House were opened to me, affording the privilege of a fairly intimate relationship with the President." He did not exaggerate. Unbeknown, apparently, to the Washington press, Roosevelt repeatedly used Creel to send up some vitally important trial balloons :

Time after time [this newsman has revealed]...he used my articles in Collier's to test out public opinion. Under such titles as "Roosevelt's Plans and Purposes" and "Looking Ahead with Roosevelt," he would outline the laws and policies he had in mind, and then sit back and see what happened.

It was surprising that Roosevelt who, in this respect, was behaving much as Coolidge and Theodore Roosevelt had done, was able to escape the notice of the correspondents and the odium which such practices, had they been discovered, must have attracted, especially since every article was preceded by an editorial comment that boasted of its authoritativeness "due to Mr. Creel's long and close association with the President." Often Roosevelt actually dictated whole paragraphs to Creel. In August 1935, while reporter and President were preparing the piece entitled "Looking Ahead with Roosevelt" (the Supreme Court had ruled against the NRA in June) Roosevelt dictated two long paragraphs which, so far as the Court was concerned, signalled his broad thinking, if not his precise intention. "Fire that," he observed grimly, "as an opening gun." Surprisingly, however, the

article was ignored by the rest of the press. In December 1936 Roosevelt again, as he thought, tested the winds of public opinion. At his suggestion, he and Creel produced an article entitled "Roosevelt's Plans and Purposes," which, when it was published in the December 26 issue of Collier's, contained a three-column discussion of the Supreme Court. Creel anticipated an explosion both in Congress and in the press, but, he has recalled, "incredibly enough, not a newspaper in the country caught the significance of the statement."⁹⁹ Roosevelt's underestimation of the extent of the adverse reaction to his Court proposal may, in the light of such events, be less surprising.

Anne O'Hare McCormick, special columnist of the New York Times, had made no attempt to conceal the fact that her two articles on Roosevelt in 1938 were based on exclusive interviews.¹⁰⁰ The first, entitled "As He Sees Himself," began : "The foregoing views and opinions were amplified by the President in recent conversations with the writer"; the second, "As Roosevelt Sees His Foreign Policy," was equally explicit. The generally eulogistic tone of these articles ("The more an interviewer sees of the leaders of other nations the more he is impressed by the unique quality of interest and energy,...which Mr. Roosevelt possesses....His quicksilver

⁹⁹George Creel, Rebel at Large : Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years (New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1947), pp.289-92. For a time, Creel was chief of the Western Division of N.R.A. and Chairman of the Advisory Board of W.P.A.

¹⁰⁰Anne O'Hare McCormick, "As He Sees Himself," New York Times Magazine, October 16, 1938, pp.1,3,19; "As Roosevelt Sees His Foreign Policy," New York Times Magazine, November 13, 1938, pp.1,2,20-21.

mind invariably moves from the general to the particular..."; "No recent President,...has been so world-minded, so well suited by interest in international politics and understanding of other countries to be his own Foreign Secretary") may partly explain why Roosevelt had agreed to further publications of this type after saying publicly, following the furore over the 1937 Krock interview, that he would not do so. But these two articles by no means represented the full measure of Mrs. McCormick's success : she was quite indefatigable in her subsequent efforts to obtain exclusive interviews with Roosevelt; she was also very frequently successful.¹⁰¹

The columnist Drew Pearson was another who at times received favoured treatment from the President. Roosevelt, it has been claimed, would occasionally supply him with damaging information on members of the Cabinet whose loyalty he suspected, or give the columnist material for exclusive stories in areas of his special interest -- such as the recognition of Russia.¹⁰² A sensation was caused when, early in 1944, Pearson's "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column published secret letters sent to the President the previous year by William Phillips, his temporary personal representative in India, suggesting that that country was increasingly resentful

¹⁰¹The President's Personal File 675 contains much correspondence between Anne McCormick and the President and his staff concerning that journalist's efforts to obtain exclusive interviews with Roosevelt.

¹⁰²Oliver R. Pilat, Drew Pearson : An Unauthorized Biography (New York : Harper's Magazine Press, 1973), pp.34, 157.

of British rule and that a pledge to grant independence might add thousands to allied forces. Phillips had later returned to Europe as political adviser to Eisenhower, but shortly afterwards was removed from that post as the result of what Roosevelt saw as an act of retaliation by Churchill for Phillips' statements over India. Angered by this action, Roosevelt was displeased also by the British leader's objections to the renomination of Henry Wallace as Vice President and the projected appointment of Edward Flynn as Ambassador to Australia. When Phillips' letters found their way into Pearson's column, a furious Churchill demanded an inquiry. Pearson would say only that he had received the letters "from an Indian," but there were some in Washington who recalled that the President was the Great White Father of all Indian tribes. A not inconceivable reason why a parallel British enquiry was abruptly terminated was that its discovery of the source of the "leak" proved embarrassing.¹⁰³

One other clear but apparently undetected breach of the policy of impartiality involved the journalists Joseph Alsop Jr., and Robert Kintner and a series of articles they had been commissioned to write on the outbreak of war. Alsop, whose cousin she was, had used Mrs. Roosevelt as an intermediary and, on this occasion, Stephen Early, to whom the President turned for advice, uncharacteristically recommended in favour

¹⁰³Ibid., pp.34-36.

of the interview which the journalists had sought.¹⁰⁴

Nor could the official policy of impartiality be said to have embraced representatives of the Negro press, the record of whose attempts to obtain admission to Roosevelt's press conferences is protracted, tortuous and eloquent. In October, 1933, Frederick Weaver, Washington correspondent of the Afro-American and the Atlanta Daily World, wrote to Early seeking a press pass to the White House conferences. Weaver pointed out that the previous restriction against coloured reporters on the grounds that they represented weekly rather than daily newspapers could not fairly be applied to him as two years previously the World had become a daily.¹⁰⁵ Shortly after this, another request was made, this time by Trezzvant W. Anderson, President of the Washington Press Club, a group representing Negro newspapermen and publishers in Washington. "If the welfare of 14,000,000 colored people in the United States is of no consequence to those in the administration...", he told the Press Secretary, "then I ask you to ignore this letter and permit the press conferences of the President to continue without colored correspondents, and permit the ignoring of the press interests of the colored race to also continue." Early replied to Anderson's letter on 25 October, pointing out that admission

¹⁰⁴Joseph Alsop Jr. to Eleanor Roosevelt, September 29, 1939; memorandum, Stephen Early to Grace Tully, October 5, 1939; Joseph Alsop to Stephen Early, n.d.; Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 23, 1940; Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt March 23, 1940; President's Personal File 300.

¹⁰⁵Frederick S. Weaver to Stephen Early October 22, 1933, Official File 36.

to the President's press conferences would be automatic following the admission of a reporter to either the House or Senate press galleries or the White House Correspondents' Association, to which bodies, by inference, he advised Anderson to apply.¹⁰⁶ But accreditation by these bodies was evidently neither speedy nor automatic. In November, Weaver, whose own efforts to make headway with the Senate Press Gallery had evidently proved as fruitless as his initial approach to Early, wrote directly to Roosevelt to request admission to his press conferences. "I bring you this plea," said he, "though it is a right, and ask that you not cast it aside lightly, but give it your consideration and let me hear from you personally."¹⁰⁷ Roosevelt referred the letter to Early, who again referred Weaver to the House and Senate Galleries, urging him to press his case for a quick decision.¹⁰⁸ Seven years later, his attempts to gain admittance to the White House Correspondents' Association having been unsuccessful, Weaver again wrote to the Press Secretary with the request that the many letters which had been sent to him and to the President be brought to Roosevelt's attention.¹⁰⁹ If they were, no action on Weaver's behalf was

¹⁰⁶Trezzvant W. Anderson to Stephen Early, October 10, 1933; Stephen Early to Trezzvant W. Anderson, October 25, 1933; Official File 36.

¹⁰⁷Frederick S. Weaver to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 6, 1933, Official File 36.

¹⁰⁸Stephen Early to Frederick S. Weaver, November 15, 1933, Official File 36.

¹⁰⁹Frederick S. Weaver to Stephen Early, November 12, 1940, Official File 36. For Weaver's unsuccessful efforts to gain admittance to White House Correspondents' Association see Frederick S. Weaver to George Durno, November 23, 1940; Frederick S. Weaver to Stephen Early, December 7, 1940; Official File 36.

forthcoming.

The year 1940 saw the beginning of a concerted effort to have Louis R. Lautier admitted to Roosevelt's press conferences. His many advocates acknowledged that, normally, only reporters from daily newspapers were eligible, but argued that an exception should be made in Lautier's case as he would, in effect, be representing the entire Negro press which, with one exception, comprised weekly newspapers.¹¹⁰ Early's response was to re-affirm the ban against representatives of weekly publications and to point out that, under the same rule, correspondents of such publications as Nation, New Republic and Time were excluded.¹¹¹ The counter-argument, put by Eustace Gay, of the Philadelphia Tribune, that Negro weeklies were newspapers, rather than magazines, occupying the same position in relation to Negroes that metropolitan papers did in their communities, proved unavailing,¹¹² as did a later offer by the editor of the Kansas City Call to ask a Negro daily newspaper to request Lautier to represent it if such a move would overcome the main stumbling-block to Lautier's admission.¹¹³ In seeking to explain White House policy to Mrs. Roosevelt in February 1941, Early stated :

As soon as any colored man or woman comes to the White House with credentials from a daily paper --

¹¹⁰ See, for example : J. Anthony Josey to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 29, 1940; C.A. Franklin to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 30, 1940; Edward Lawson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 2, 1940; Official File 36.

¹¹¹ Stephen Early to C.A. Franklin, November 4, 1940, Official File 36.

¹¹² Stephen Early to Eustace Gay, December 7, 1940; Eustace Gay to Stephen Early, December 12, 1940; Official File 36.

¹¹³ C.A. Franklin to Stephen Early, January 10, 1941, Official File 36.

as soon as they comply with the rules and regulations -- they, of course, will be automatically admitted. There is one such daily newspaper printed in the United States -- in Atlanta. The editor of this paper, however, has never appointed a Washington correspondent, although he has been advised of his right to do so.¹¹⁴

The campaign for Negro representation at the President's press conferences reached a crescendo in mid-1943, with full scale assaults being made by the Negro Newspaper Publishers' Association and the Associated Negro Press.¹¹⁵ In a letter to Early, Claude A. Barnett, President of the latter body, reminded him that the Associated Negro Press had been seeking admission to the White House press conferences for several years, that in addition to sixty-five weekly papers the organisation served two dailies, and that "despite the fact that we have qualified in every manner for admission..., and despite our previous correspondence with you, we have had no word of favorable action."¹¹⁶ In the event, however, it was the Negro Newspaper Publishers' Association which finally prevailed. Its formal request to Early on 18 January 1944 for the accreditation of Harry S. McAlpin as a White House correspondent for the Association and the Atlanta Daily World was successful, and the colour line at Franklin Roosevelt's White House press conferences had finally been broken.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴Stephen Early to Eleanor Roosevelt, February 10, 1941, Early Papers, box 9.

¹¹⁵C.A. Scott to Claude A. Barnett, July 24, 1943; Claude A. Barnett to Harold R. Beckley, July 30, 1943; John H. Sengstacke to Stephen Early, November 25, 1943; Official File 36.

¹¹⁶Claude A. Barnett to Stephen Early, December 10, 1943, Official File 36.

¹¹⁷John H. Sengstacke to Stephen Early, January 18, 1944, Official File 36.

Extensive comment on the process by which such accreditation had been achieved would be superfluous but attention might be drawn to some of its aspects. Early's repeated insistence that Negro news representatives were being excluded on the ground that they represented weekly rather than daily newspapers took no account of the fact that the first request he had received, in October 1933, had come from the representative of a daily paper, the very paper, in fact, which he informed Mrs. Roosevelt in 1941 had never applied. Nor did it take account of a subsequent offer to appoint Lautier the representative of a Negro daily. Quite apart from this, and contrary to Early's repeated assurances, the representatives of weeklies were admitted to the President's press conferences, as a reference, in a New York Times article in 1942, which described a Roosevelt press conference, to "Felix Belair of Time Magazine [and] a coterie of magazine men,"¹¹⁸ reveals. Indeed, the loophole through which the Negro press finally stepped was the discovery by its representatives that twenty-five correspondents of weekly trade journals were attending Roosevelt's meetings with the press on a regular basis.¹¹⁹ Additionally, it lay well within the competence of Stephen Early to exercise discretion in favour of a correspondent

¹¹⁸ Frank L. Kluckhorn, "The Best Show in Washington," New York Times Magazine, February 1, 1942, p.7.

¹¹⁹ Cyril B. Dickson, "First Negro Admitted at FDR Press Parley," Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, February 10, 1944. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1944 -- July 31, 1944, Early Papers.

who did not meet the formal requirements for press conference admission, as he did, for example, in the case of Walter Winchell, an enthusiastic supporter of the Administration, whom Early arranged to have admitted as often as Winchell wished.¹²⁰ The policy of impartiality toward the press in the Roosevelt White House, it seems clear, operated within sharply defined racial limits.

In the most fundamental sense, the satisfactory relationship between Franklin Roosevelt and the Washington press endured because it rested on the solid bedrock of mutual advantage. The correspondents' regular contacts with the President at his press conferences meant that they were plugged in to an inexhaustible news source; that, under congenial circumstances, they could check their leads, ask their questions, and obtain the information upon which their daily stories would be based. Theirs, they knew, was a privileged position: they learnt of many important Administration programmes, of which Lend-Lease was but one example, before Congress, and were in a unique position to gain early insights into Presidential thinking.¹²¹ Occasionally, Roosevelt might reveal a basic attitude directly, as he did when a correspondent asked after his Quarantine Speech whether there was any likelihood of a conference of peace-loving nations and he replied: "No, conferences are out of the window."

¹²⁰Walter Winchell to Stephen Early, March 22, 1943; Alice Winegar to W.D. Hassett, March 25, 1943; Official File 36.

¹²¹Lindsay Rogers, "President Roosevelt's Press Conferences," Political Quarterly, IX (July, 1938), 364-65.

You never get anywhere with a conference."¹²² But to reporters who knew Roosevelt well, and who had developed a finely calibrated sensitivity toward him, a shift in nuance, a chance remark, a facial expression, the manner, even, in which he dodged a question, could convey meaning. Having absorbed his perspectives, the Washington correspondents could often anticipate his policies.¹²³ It is significant that the possible advent of Dewey in 1944 quickly revived their apprehensions. Dewey, a contributor to the 15 May, 1944 issue of the Guild Reporter pointed out, did not like reporters, hated to be asked on-the-record questions, hated, equally, to talk off-the-record on any subject. Dewey refused, moreover, to take responsibility for his pronouncements, insisting, rather, that his remarks be attributed to "sources close to the Governor," a ploy which Albany correspondents derisively referred to as his "insinnuendo technique." The Republican Presidential aspirant, the writer continued, favoured exclusive interviews, obstinately declined to give out lists of appointments and visitors, and had no relish for his conferences with the press.¹²⁴ Against Franklin Roosevelt,

¹²²Kluckhorn, "Best Show in Washington," p.31.

¹²³James L. Wright, "Does President Pour Out His Soul or Just Bunk?", n.d., publication details unknown. For copy of this article see memorandum Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 21, 1935, President's Personal File 82; Kiplinger, Washington Is Like That, p.166; Hurd, Young and Gay, pp.233-34; "Roosevelt Press Conferences Make History Book Footnotes," Christian Science Monitor, December 30, 1936, p.12.

¹²⁴"To Newsmen Who Know Dewey Best He's Not a Choice for Anything," Guild Reporter (May 15, 1944), 3.

none of these charges could have been laid. After twelve years he still stood supreme, his press conference regarded by reporters as "the best show in Washington," an exciting combination of "real-life drama, history in the making and superb personal performance."¹²⁵ He was, as he always had been, a reporters' President and, the correspondents continued to believe, likely to be superior in his dealings with the press to any of his rivals.

For Franklin Roosevelt, the advantages of his regular contacts with the Washington press were equally substantial. The very frequency of his press conferences ensured that big stories would break either in a conference or so close to one that the President could make an immediate comment, which helped to portray Roosevelt as the focus of national activity.¹²⁶ So far as the business of government was concerned, he used his press conferences to communicate executive action and to address the country with more flexibility and regularity than he could in either formal message or fireside chat.¹²⁷ The conferences became a springboard for the launching of his ideas,¹²⁸ an effective means of shaping public opinion. At them, he could explain to the

¹²⁵Kluckhorn, "Best Show in Washington," p.7.

¹²⁶Elmer E. Cornwell Jr., "The Presidential Press Conference : A Study in Institutionalization," Midwest Journal of Political Science, IX (November, 1960), 373.

¹²⁷Ibid., p.376.

¹²⁸Kluckhorn, "Best Show in Washington," p.31.

correspondents, and, through them, to the people, the broad thinking behind an Administration programme, dramatizing ideas in a fashion that was likely to be reflected in headlines and news stories.¹²⁹ One outstanding example of this technique was Roosevelt's discussion of Lend-Lease at a press conference the month before he introduced the bill incorporating that proposal; his widely publicised garden-hose analogy probably did as much as anything to convey to the public the method by which he had decided to help Britain and to rally support for his scheme.¹³⁰ Further illustrations can be found in the press conferences which he held before his special messages on the devaluation of the dollar or reorganisation of the Supreme Court. His annual pre-budget press conferences with the correspondents -- another Roosevelt innovation -- served the same broad purposes. In a wider political perspective, Roosevelt's press conferences were an integral part of a well established sequence by which he sought to mobilize public opinion behind important policy initiatives. Initially, in a fireside chat, he would state the nature of a problem and outline the general principles which should govern its solution; there would follow meetings with the press at which, using background and "off-the-record" discussion, he would thoroughly acquaint the reporters with his thinking so that

¹²⁹"President and Press," Philadelphia Bulletin, February 4, 1938. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1938 -- January 20, 1939, Early Papers.

¹³⁰Elmer E. Cornwell Jr., Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1965), pp.155-56.

they could write knowledgeably (and sympathetically) about the policy; and, finally, public opinion having generated a demand for action, would come a message to Congress recommending a specific piece of legislation to meet the problem at hand.¹³¹

The press conferences, too, were an important means by which Franklin Roosevelt could gauge public opinion. "The run of my conference questions," he told his annual conference with journalism teachers in 1935, "usually gives me a sense of public opinion."¹³² He was later to elaborate on this idea to a White House Correspondents' Association dinner in 1941, explaining to the reporters that for eight years he and they had been helping one another : he, by keeping them informed about government, national and international issues, from the point of view of the Presidency; they, by giving him "a great deal of information about what the people of this country are thinking."¹³³ In the same way, he frequently began his press conferences by asking the correspondents what the news was. Martin Gumpert, who observed Roosevelt's reactions to reporters' questions at a press conference, perceptively described the process:

From the way questions are formulated, from the tone of the interviewers, he senses the mood of

¹³¹H.G. Nicholas, "Roosevelt and Public Opinion," Fortnightly, CLXIII (May, 1945), 307-08.

¹³²Press Conference No.260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 363.

¹³³Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address at Annual Dinner of White House Correspondents' Association," March 15, 1941, reprinted in Public Papers and Addresses, X, 61.

the country, the weight of current events, trends, problems -- all coming to a head in these few minutes

and, understanding Roosevelt's mastery of that technique, and his pride in that mastery, and in his capacity to catch the drift of public thinking, shrewdly observed: "With Roosevelt, one has the feeling not only that he regards the living contact with public opinion as a political necessity, but that he enjoyed it as an esthetic treat."¹³⁴

Additionally, Franklin Roosevelt was able to use his press conferences to influence the content of news and the manner of its presentation. The "straight" reporting of press conference news, on which he always insisted, actually favoured him for the dispatches retailed his background comments without suggesting, in the process, that Roosevelt's views may have been inconsistent with views previously expressed, or that they were based on inadequate factual material.¹³⁵ But beyond this, he used his personality with telling effect. Franklin Roosevelt's charm and persuasiveness were legendary -- columnist Mark Sullivan once said of him that he "could recite the Polish alphabet and it would be accepted as an eloquent plea for disarmament"¹³⁶ -- and in his press conferences he exploited these assets powerfully to shape the correspondents'

¹³⁴Martin Gumpert, First Papers (New York : Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), p.301.

¹³⁵Rogers, "Roosevelt's Press Conferences," p.366.

¹³⁶New York Herald Tribune, October 26, 1936, quoted in James F. Ragland, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Public Opinion, 1933 -- 1940" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1954), p.456.

attitude toward the events which they heard him discuss, so that many took their cues from him and adopted his perspectives.

With easy cadences, [wrote Martin Gumpert] with tiny pauses, with the nuances of expression that flit across his mobile face, he exerts a compelling influence....

.....
 One can almost see the skill with which he turns situations to his own account, how he, in turn, by means of gestures and pauses, by shadings of his temper, conducts the choir of the press with his invisible baton.¹³⁷

Other procedures were more overt. Roosevelt might suggest that an editorial of which he approved be repeated by the rest of the press,¹³⁸ or that the press discuss a certain issue ("I think you have got a very definite duty to start that thing going around the country.")¹³⁹; he might bring remote pressure to bear on editors to follow closely a government handout ("I hope very much that the managing editors will read it [a statement on the Agricultural Adjustment Act] because the average managing editor in the East knows no more about farming -- ... than a chicken.")¹⁴⁰; or he might simply try to write an article

¹³⁷Gumpert, First Papers, pp.288-89, 301.

¹³⁸See, for example : Press Conference No.747, June 6, 1941, Presidential Press Conferences, XVII, 383.

¹³⁹Press Conference No. 636-A, April 18, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 266.

¹⁴⁰Press Conference No.243, October 25, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 217.

for the reporters ("In other words," he would frequently say, "here is the way I would put it if I were writing the story"; or, more blatantly : "If I were writing your stories for you, I would say it [the 1934 Budget Message] is the most brutally frank Budget Message ever sent in."¹⁴¹ Roosevelt could negatively influence news content by using off-the-record comments to spike false rumours, or prevent the press blundering into sensitive areas, or even, as with MacDonald's Consultative Pacts scheme, virtually to kill discussion of a subject, for a time, in the American press.¹⁴²

Nor were journalistic standards neglected. Through his regular press conferences, Roosevelt was able to put continual and at times intense pressure on the correspondents to conform to those standards of reporting which he believed to be appropriate. Described by Arthur Krock as "the greatest

¹⁴¹Press Conference No.14, April 21, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 164; Press Conference No.84, January 3, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, III, 6.

¹⁴²At a press conference in May 1933, Roosevelt was asked about Ramsay MacDonald's scheme for consultative pacts. Roosevelt discussed the matter at some length, but put his remarks "off-the-record" so that the American press would not, as he put it, "get stampeded by things coming over from the other side." See Press Conference No. 9, May 10, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 239. Other examples : Asked, in August 1933, about a report that he intended no action on war debts, Roosevelt replied : "That story was based on a hundred and twenty-five degrees in the sun." In July 1935, in answer to a reporter's statement that he had been reported in some papers as not favouring Triple-AA amendments, he merely replied : "I have to apologise for the papers; that is all I can do." See Press Conference No.38, II, 117 and Press Conference No. 220, VI, 26, respectively.

reader and critic of newspapers who had ever been in the President's office,"¹⁴³ Roosevelt read eleven newspapers each day,¹⁴⁴ scrutinising them expertly with the aid, publisher J. David Stern has revealed, of a photographic memory,¹⁴⁵ received many press clippings through the mail and an extremely detailed weekly analysis of press reaction to his policies.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, when the reporters assembled before him he knew what many of them had written. His standards were exacting, his instructions continuous -- "Never in my twenty years here have newspaper reporters received as much advice as to how to do their work,"¹⁴⁷ said Raymond Clapper in 1939 --, the consequences of not measuring

¹⁴³Bice Clemow, "Recovery on Way," p.8.

¹⁴⁴Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p.76.

¹⁴⁵Publisher J. David Stern witnessed the operation of Roosevelt's photographic memory on several occasions. On one occasion, Roosevelt wished to discuss with Stern an article from the Boston Transcript which compared the average prices of ten commodities at the present time with their average prices ten years earlier. When his Secretary was unable to find the news clipping, Roosevelt wrote down the twenty figures. A subsequent comparison with the original table revealed that Roosevelt's figures were ninety per cent correct, and that the errors which he had made in two of the figures were slight. See Columbia University Oral History Project : Interviews with J. David Stern, December, 1953 -- March 1954, p.47. Further confirmation comes from Edward J. Flynn. See Edward J. Flynn, You're the Boss (New York : Viking Press, 1947), p.212.

¹⁴⁶The role of the Division of Press Intelligence, the source of these analyses, is fully discussed in chapter 5, pp. 200-27.

¹⁴⁷Raymond Clapper, article in Columbus Citizen, November 20, 1939, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.813.

up to his somewhat arbitrary requirements often decidedly unpleasant. "Mr. Roosevelt," one correspondent ruefully observed, "could be as rough and tough as a Third Avenue blackjack artist."¹⁴⁸ At his press conferences, Roosevelt could ridicule wayward reporters, as he did Charles Hurd, of the New York Times, and Ernest Lindley of the New York Herald Tribune, in April 1935, for their conflicting interpretations of a National City Bank monthly report.¹⁴⁹ He might even attack a correspondent directly, analysing an offending article line by line, and branding various statements "deliberate lies!" Ernest Lindley, the President's biographer and the Administration's friend, was the recipient of one such sustained attack in April 1937.¹⁵⁰ Unrelenting, too, were the President's attempts to lecture the press on its role within the democratic system and to propagate his own ideas on this particular subject.

Unquestionably, also, Roosevelt determined to use his press conferences to create a supply of news which could, by dominating the front pages of the nation's press, overcome the heavy editorial opposition which he so often faced. "For four years," noted columnist David Lawrence in June 1937, Roosevelt had "dominated the best pages in the American

¹⁴⁸Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.22.

¹⁴⁹Press Conference No.235, September 4, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 137-38.

¹⁵⁰Press Conference No.389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 109-39.

newspapers -- ..." He "was on page one more often than was any opposition influence or factor. He got page two almost as frequently." Lawrence went on to invite his readers to look back over the issues of any daily newspaper covering Roosevelt's first term.

It will be found [said he] that Mr. Roosevelt scored nearly every day with striking persistence and regularity. He was constantly in the headlines.... He conceived the news that would make headlines. He met the press regularly twice a week and was... masterful in his ability to create news articles.¹⁵¹

Actual research has provided some confirmation of Lawrence's estimate : a study of the New York Times for the period November 1, 1934 to October 31, 1935 has shown that a total of ninety-two Roosevelt press conferences produced one hundred and four page one stories in the Times, twenty one of which were considered of sufficient importance to rate a two or three column headline.¹⁵² Seven White House press conferences in the three-month period preceding the 1936 Presidential election produced six front-page reports in the New York Times, six in the Baltimore Sun, six in the New York Herald Tribune and four in the Washington Post; sixteen White House press conferences in the three-month period prior to the 1940 election gave rise to thirteen page-one stories in the New York Times, thirteen in the Washington Post, twelve in the New York Sun, eleven in the Baltimore Sun, eleven in the

¹⁵¹David Lawrence, "The Battle for the Headlines," United States News, V (June 21, 1937). See copy in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

¹⁵²Cornwell, "Press Conference," p.388.

Washington Times Herald, nine in the New York Herald Tribune, and eight in the New York World Telegram.¹⁵³ Roosevelt's ability to dominate the front pages was recognised by others as well as Lawrence. Reviewing press treatment of the President in the 1932, 1936 and 1940 elections, Editor and Publisher, in its December 12, 1942 edition commented: "Mr. Roosevelt owned the front page day after day....His ideas on campaign issues...,had to be placed before the public whether or not the editors agreed with him."¹⁵⁴ Asked who was the best columnist in America one editor replied: "That's easy -- Franklin Roosevelt. He can hit the front page with a column of his own opinions any day he wants to. And we've got to print it."¹⁵⁵ The policy was quite deliberate: Roosevelt was said to have remarked repeatedly that he cared little about editorial pages, but greatly about front pages and, therefore, about the reporters who wrote and the copy editors who headed them.¹⁵⁶ "If the newspapers report what I do and say," he remarked to New York Times' Washington correspondent Charles Hurd during the 1940 campaign, "I am not concerned about the editorials or the columnists."¹⁵⁷ Yet the success of such a policy depended ultimately, David Lawrence pointed

¹⁵³For the survey on which these figures are based see chapter VI, pp. 261-62, 273-92.

¹⁵⁴Editorial, Editor and Publisher (December 12, 1942), 3.

¹⁵⁵Quoted in Davenport, "President and Press," (January 27, 1945), p.12.

¹⁵⁶Lawrence, "Battle for Headlines." See copy in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

¹⁵⁷Hurd, Young and Gay, p.239.

out, on Franklin Roosevelt's own skill :

By careful timing, by bringing out the sensation, by emphasising now and again some vital change in administration policy and tying it in closely with popular trends, Mr. Roosevelt won his headlines.¹⁵⁸

In these senses, the Washington correspondents' need to obtain news was at least matched by Franklin Roosevelt's need to create it. Their relationship was complementary, their dependence mutual. For over twelve years the two parties were, in Walter Davenport's words, "united in holy newslock."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸Lawrence, "Battle for Headlines," United States News, V (June 21, 1937). See copy in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

¹⁵⁹Davenport, "President and Press," (January 27, 1945), p.46.

CHAPTER III

I CAN APPRECIATE WHAT YOU ARE TOLD TO WRITE

It would not merely be perverse to point out, in opposition to Franklin Roosevelt's 1938 account of his relations with the American press, that he often quarreled with the reporters whom in practice he liked and sometimes cooperated with the columnists whom in principle he detested. His attitude toward the latter was openly contemptuous : in his 1938 statement, he publicly dismissed them; in his White House press conferences he continually derided and mocked them.¹ The output of columnists was, Franklin Roosevelt believed, based on speculation or gossip, moulded to suit the requirements of their clients, and unworthy of serious attention by their readers or professional respect of their colleagues. Columnists themselves, he inferred, were absurdly pretentious, attempting a task which he himself had found to be impossible, and presuming, on the basis of a knowledge that was clearly inadequate, regularly and authoritatively to comment on weighty national affairs. Their views were narrow, their

¹See, for example : Press Conference No.156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 169-70; Press Conference No.630, March 19, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 204-5; Press Conference No.743, May 23, 1941, Presidential Press Conferences, XVII, 355; Press Conference No.913, August 10, 1943, Presidential Press Conferences, XXII, 53; Press Conference No.985, December 22, 1944. Presidential Press Conferences, XXIV, 281.

judgement feeble, and, by fostering the unfortunate demand for interpretative stories, they insidiously weakened the press itself, causing the reporters to emulate their method but the public to deride its results.² How such a comprehensive and sustained indictment of columnists can be reconciled with Roosevelt's personal relations with some of the most important of them or with the treatment which he often received at their hands, is not, however, immediately apparent. For, while he may have abused them in public, he was prepared to cooperate with them in private -- as his dealings with Anne O'Hare McCormick, Drew Pearson and even Arthur Krock have shown --; and, while some mass circulation columnists, like Frank Kent, Westbrook Pegler, David Lawrence, Hugh Johnson and Mark Sullivan were constant and bitter in their opposition, others, like Walter Winchell, Dorothy Thompson, Ernest Lindley, Drew Pearson, Robert Allen, Samuel Grafton, Robert Allsop, Joseph Kintner and Jay Franklin, were, at varying times, active and even enthusiastic in their support.³ Yet throughout his Presidency, Roosevelt sustained toward columnists a basic objection which such personal cooperation or support could neither substantially modify nor even temporarily abate. That was made plain, if ever it needed to be, a few months before Roosevelt's death, when, following his description of columnists as "an unnecessary

²Press Conference No.156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 168-70.

³The attitudes of various columnists toward the New Deal are discussed in chapter VI, pp. 322-334.

excrescence on our civilization,"⁴ Lowell Mellett, until recently a member of the Administration, but at the time of his writing a columnist for the Washington Evening Star, enjoined the President to "quit saying unkind things about us columnists," and, reminding Roosevelt that he was not without support among that group, enclosed some favourable columns by Jack Bailey to illustrate his point. Roosevelt, however, was unrelenting. A columnist's political orientation, he explained to Mellett, was immaterial; and, so far as their attacks were concerned, he, himself, was "waterproof." Even were all columnists to support him, he told Mellett, he would feel precisely the same.⁵ Roosevelt's objection, it is plain, was not merely to columnists who opposed him, but to columnists per se, and, his comments make it clear, was not based solely on his distaste for their journalistic shortcomings, but was bound up tightly with his own conception of the function of reporters and the wider role of the press in American society.

With another major aspect of Franklin Roosevelt's own account of his relations with the American press, on the other hand, there could be less disposition to quarrel. The statement which he made in 1938 that "the great majority

⁴Press Conference No.985, December 22, 1944, Presidential Press Conferences, XXIV, 281.

⁵Lowell Mellett to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 23, 1944 and Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lowell Mellett, December 28, 1944, President's Secretary's File, Mellett folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

of newspaper correspondents who cover the White House are personally friendly to the Administration,"⁶ though tendentious, to a degree, in its easy equation of their attachment to him personally with their support for his Administration politically, was nevertheless valid as a generalisation when he made it, and would have been broadly appropriate as a description of reportorial attitudes had he chosen, subsequently, to repeat it. But what survives as a generalisation must yet be subjected to important qualification; for a comprehensive study of the relations between Franklin Roosevelt and the Washington press reveals that the correspondents' allegiance to the President survived in spite of basic disagreements and periodic disputes which were neither small in degree nor unimportant in nature or ultimate significance. Of such conflict, Roosevelt's own account of his relations with the American press gives no hint.

Some conflict was inherent, built into a situation in which both President and press sought to be the first to reveal government plans and policies -- the President in order that he might make his own stage-managed announcements, at the most politically opportune time; the reporters in order that the press could fulfil its assumed function of keeping the public informed in advance of governmental thinking so that political debate could not be circumscribed,

⁶Public Papers and Addresses, II, 38.

or political action precipitate.⁷ Their search for such advance knowledge led newsmen to cultivate various members of the Administration who, under guarantee of anonymity, supplied information helpful to their own schemes or aspirations and frequently damaging to those of their rivals. Some "leaks" were unintentional, as when Arthur Krock tricked Secretary Woodin into revealing that the United States was to abandon the gold standard;⁸ most were deliberate and politically or personally inspired. Examples abound. Columnist Raymond Clapper, for one, was made privy to Cabinet discussions through conversations with, at various times, Attorney General Robert Jackson, Navy Secretary Knox and Commerce Secretary Jesse Jones.⁹ In December 1941, Harold Ickes revealed to Clapper the contents of a letter which he had sent to Roosevelt complaining about the President's decision to give Henry Wallace and the Economic Defense Board control over oil shipments and supplies, suggesting to Clapper that the decision was in conflict with a previous executive order conferring such powers on himself, and protesting that he had not been consulted about the change. At the same time he charged

⁷ Arthur Krock, "Press vs. Government -- A Warning," Public Opinion Quarterly, I (April, 1937), 45.

⁸ Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Arthur Krock, April, 1950, p.33.

⁹ "Communism Fifth Column, May 27, 1940," Raymond Clapper Papers, Diaries 1940-42, Library of Congress; Raymond Clapper to Roy Howard, November 29, 1940, Clapper Papers, Diaries 1940-42; Notes on Discussion with Ickes over Luncheon, December 29, 1941, Clapper Papers, Diaries 1940-42.

that Harry Hopkins was the cause of most of his troubles and revealed that Jones had failed miserably in his efforts to build up stock-piles of rubber, much to the President's dismay.¹⁰ Secretary Ickes, it was well known, confided also in columnist Drew Pearson,¹¹ and Arthur Krock's connections within the Administration were extensive and, from a newsman's point of view, lucrative.¹²

Roosevelt made strenuous efforts to control the release of unauthorised information : his own abundant news-output, together with the deluge of official (and favourable) publicity emanating from the vast army of New Deal press agents, kept many newsmen well-fed and contented rather than lean and hungry for news of factionalism or damaging feuds; he sought, too, to funnel all information and all contacts with the press through the departmental press agents and to discourage unofficial and informal contacts;¹³ he lectured departmental heads on the dangers of discussing the affairs of other Departments with the press;¹⁴ and he

¹⁰See Notes on Discussion with Ickes over Luncheon, December 29, 1941, Clapper Papers, Diaries 1940-42.

¹¹See memorandum Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 30, 1941, Early Papers, box 24; Eugene A. Kelly, "Distorting the News," American Mercury (March, 1935), 312.

¹²Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Arthur Krock, April, 1950, p.93; Krock, Memoirs, pp.180-81.

¹³Kelly, "Distorting the News," pp.160-63; "Arthur Krock Sees Threat to Press," New York Times, October 8, 1940, p.12; Krock, "Press vs. Government," pp.46-49.

¹⁴Proceedings of the National Emergency Council, December 19, 1933 -- April 28, 1936, Film 13-6, micro copy No. T 38, roll No. 1, pp.48-50, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

put pressure on the correspondents at his press conferences to deal only with official press agencies.¹⁵ Rumours persisted, also, of an Administration plan to establish some form of centralised press bureau, the more effectively to control the release of Government information.¹⁶ On a personal level, Roosevelt, by Arthur Krock's account, gathered information on the social activities of members of the Administration, even down to the lower echelons, especially on their relations with members of the press, and then brought pressure to bear on his subordinates to sever such contacts in order to eliminate the journalists' sources of information.¹⁷ The President's efforts met with considerable success : while routine associations between the Administration and the press were said, by New York Times' reporter Turner Catledge in December 1936, never to have been more pleasant, "in no recent time," Catledge declared, "has the door been shut so tightly against information other than that passed out officially."¹⁸ Nevertheless, there were, according to Arthur Krock, too many industrious and ingenious newsmen in Washington and too many officials in whose interests it was to cooperate

¹⁵See, for example : Press Conference No.199, April 26, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, V, 251.

¹⁶Krock, "Press vs. Government," pp.45-49; Catledge, "Federal Bureau for Press Urged," pp.1,4; "Super Press Bureau," Editor and Publisher (January 2, 1937), 28.

¹⁷Krock, Memoirs, 180-81.

¹⁸Catledge, "Federal Bureau for Press Urged," p.1.

with them for the flow of such information to be eliminated, and, in Roosevelt's press conferences, his anger over its release continued to surface.¹⁹

A second fundamental conflict occurred, in Arthur Krock's view, because of a difference in essential obligation between Government and reporters. In deciding whether to publish information, a newspaper had merely to ask whether it was true, whether it had been legitimately acquired, and whether it ought to be public property. Information might meet all of these tests, Krock pointed out, and yet be regarded by a President as diplomatically premature or politically confusing. This difference in obligation generally lay behind actual or technical denials of news stories that were substantially true, a practice in which the President indulged and from which this correspondent had suffered.²⁰ Thus, on one occasion, Roosevelt had denounced Krock personally, accused him of harming the international interests of the United States and complained to that reporter's employer, because the journalist revealed information which, by Krock's account, had been given to him by the Secretary of State.²¹ Krock had a similar experience in 1938. Shortly after the Czechoslovakian crisis of that year Jesse Forrestal and

¹⁹Krock, "Press vs. Government," p.46.

²⁰Arthur Krock, "Washington D.C.," in We Saw It Happen, ed. by Hanson W. Baldwin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), p.15.

²¹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Adolph Ochs, November 26, 1934, President's Personal File 29; Krock, "Washington D.C.," pp.15-16.

Paul Shields, two men associated with the President, told the reporter of an attempt by Roosevelt to arrange a meeting with Hitler for the purpose of trying to avoid war. Three weeks later "another very important person in Roosevelt's unofficial group of advisers" confirmed the story, adding that Roosevelt had sent an emissary to attempt to arrange the meeting and assuring Krock that there were no restrictions on publication. Believing, he has maintained, that the story would be good publicity for the President, Krock wrote it. Roosevelt responded by denying its authenticity in a statement which read : "I have read the Krock story in the New York Times. It is not true, but otherwise it is interesting and well written." On this occasion, the reason for his denial seemed more capricious. Asked, subsequently, by Attorney General Frank Murphy, why he had repudiated a story so favourable to himself, his reply, as recounted by Murphy to Krock, was : "He had his timing wrong. It didn't happen when he said it did. It happened three months before."²²

At a more prosaic level, Roosevelt's desire for occasional privacy clashed with the need which the press association reporters, in particular, recognised to cover his activities at all times. On his war-time trips Roosevelt called the wire-service men who insisted on

²²Memorandum William Hassett to Stephen Early, April 28, 1939, President's Personal File 675; Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Arthur Krock, April 1950, pp.42-44.

accompanying him "ghouls," or sometimes "vultures," and complained that they were merely waiting for something to happen to him. Their rejoinder was that they waited in case anything should happen, and that the public had a right to know, at all times, what the President was doing and where he was. An exasperated Roosevelt once remarked that "the reporters and photographers will never be satisfied until they follow me to the toilet."²³

Leo Rosten, who conducted extensive interviews and questionnaires with the Washington correspondents toward the end of Roosevelt's first term, dated the first serious dissatisfaction with Roosevelt among the reporters from the early part of 1935. As the New Deal began to falter, so, in some cases, did the reporters' allegiance to it. They looked for its intended benefits without finding them and began to suspect the long-term suitability of what they now saw to be a piecemeal emergency programme.²⁴ A series of uncharacteristically inept acts by the President widened the breach. In February, 1935, he told a press conference that he would not support State N.R.A. legislation, but, when Governor McNutt of Indiana protested, he extricated himself from a difficult situation by charging the pressmen, who had reported his remarks, with "misrepresentation."²⁵

²³Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.4; A. Merriman Smith, A President Is Many Men (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1948), p.86.

²⁴Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.42.

²⁵Bice Clemow, "F.D.R. Retains 'Open' Conferences," Editor and Publisher (March 2, 1935), 9, quoted in Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.43.

Similarly his "horse and buggy" strictures against the Supreme Court, following its verdict against the N.R.A., offended many journalists and weakened their faith in his political sagacity,²⁶ just as his denial that he had recommended so called "soak the rich" legislation after spokesmen for the Administration had announced that he had, amazed and angered them.²⁷ There was keen disappointment, too, when Roosevelt cut off a persistent questioner by telling him : "This isn't a cross-examination," for reporters had come to feel that this was their right.²⁸ Other complaints were more personal and, in Rosten's estimation, more trivial. Roosevelt's resort to humour to evade press conference questions was resented, his smile, facial expressions and use of first names were suspected. There was a growing feeling, too, against "off-the-record" remarks which were seen, increasingly, as a means of protecting the President rather than helping the reporters.²⁹ The correspondents' reaction, Rosten surmised, was accentuated by a sense of their own professional shortcomings. They, who liked to think of themselves as hard-boiled cynics, incapable of being taken in by smooth words

²⁶Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.43.

²⁷Ashmun Brown, "The Roosevelt Myth," American Mercury, XXXVII (April, 1936), 392, quoted in Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.43.

²⁸Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.44.

²⁹Ibid., pp.44-45.

and clever political techniques, had succumbed, they now saw, to Franklin Roosevelt's charm and to the deluge of New Deal publicity. Seduced by that charm and ballyhoo and handicapped by their own keenly-felt inability to produce anything better than an impressionistic and surface interpretation of events, they had created, and themselves believed in, the "Roosevelt myth".³⁰

It was born [wrote veteran correspondent Ashmun Brown, in April, 1936,] in the first year of the New Deal. We Washington correspondents were its parents. Day after day we informed the gullible public that Franklin D. Roosevelt was by far the smartest politician who ever occupied the White House. We even believed the myth ourselves. But we don't any more.³¹

The myth having been dispelled, the correspondents' sense of professional guilt gave a sharper edge to their growing disenchantment with the President.

As their continuing commentary on his performance makes plain, beneath the apparently calm surface of Roosevelt's relations with the Washington correspondents, such criticisms continued as an undercurrent. Even some reporters who thought highly of the President, Ernest Lindley noted, disliked what at times they considered to be "an artificial strain in his cordiality."³² Some, on the outer fringe of his press conferences, began to resist their premature termination by "front row" colleagues whom

³⁰Ibid., pp.48-50.

³¹Brown, "Roosevelt Myth," p.390.

³²Ernest K. Lindley, Half Way With Roosevelt (New York : Viking Press, 1936), p.81.

they considered to be "too enamored by the President's charm."³³ Drawing attention to the President's habit of evading questions with jokes or quips, another reporter noted that a growing number of serious correspondents were declining to laugh unless they were genuinely amused.³⁴ Moreover, although Roosevelt was almost invariably a good news source, that did not imply, such was his dominance of his press conferences, that the correspondents could obtain from him the information which they sought. Declared James L. Wright :

Mr. Roosevelt is a man with the air of candor, but lacking in candor. He adroitly sidesteps and dodges. Unless one is hypnotized by being called by his first name, and will trade a presidential smile for a piece of news, he must admit that is so.³⁵

"Franklin Roosevelt," said another, "gets what he wants out of conferences because he runs them"; newsmen obtained those stories which the President wished to give them, and might go away week after week "without answers to questions which they consider uppermost in the public mind."³⁶ The tone of other comments was more bitter.

³³"They Don't Laugh Just to be Polite," Literary Digest, CXX (August 17, 1935), 27.

³⁴Ibid., p.26.

³⁵James L. Wright, "Does President Pour Out His Soul or Just Bunk?" n.d., publication details unknown. For copy of this article see memorandum Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 21, 1935, President's Personal File 82.

³⁶J.H. Grider, "President's Press Conference," American Mercury, LIX (October, 1944), 483.

Newsman Eugene Kelly described the press conferences as "in the main, colossal jokes... nothing but concentrated sales talks for the New Deal." Off-the-record comments might, Kelly wrote, have the effect of "swelling the collective chests of newcomers, who labor under the delusion that they have been singled out from the rest of mankind as repositories of highly confidential information," but were, in reality, "only another ruse of the New Dealers" who realised that prefacing their remarks by such a phrase would doubly ensure their publication.³⁷ Not only was there suspicion of the President's charm, irritation at his evasiveness, resentment against his domination and distaste for his propaganda, but, once the turbulence of the early emergency had settled, the whole apparatus of New Deal publicity began, to some correspondents, to take on a more menacing appearance. Government publicity, it was freely acknowledged, had never been so effectively organised or so widely disseminated : there were skilled press agents in every department or agency, and, in large organisations such as the N.R.A. or A.A.A., publicity divisions comparable in scale to those possessed by a large newspaper; the "handouts" which these bodies issued were plentiful (the N.R.A. alone had distributed more than 5,200 by July 1934), and often better written than if the correspondents had prepared them themselves.³⁸ At first,

³⁷Kelly, "Distorting the News," pp.313-14.

³⁸Krock, "Press vs. Government," p.46; William E. Berchtold, "Press Agents and the New Deal," New Outlook (July, 1934), 24.

official New Deal publicity evoked, if not open enthusiasm, grudging acceptance:

I do not know [a reporter wrote in 1935] how this administration, with its weird and far flung activities could be covered if there was not a man in each department whom we could call up to steer us to the individual we must talk to about a story. They [press agents] are time savers in a turbulent period.³⁹

But, as the immediate economic emergency passed, criticism came to be directed at the size of the New Deal publicity machine (there were said to be "almost as many newspaper men in the New Deal as there are in the press gallery"),⁴⁰ at its voracious appetite for staff (a large metropolitan newspaper was reputed to have had its Washington bureau stripped twice of every reporter except its chief),⁴¹ and at a disturbing tendency to make the press agents and bureaus the sole contacts between the Washington press and the Administration.⁴² By March 1935, one correspondent was remarking acidly that reporters now seldom wrote their own stories but had become mere messenger boys running between the government bureaus and their own offices carrying statements prepared by press agents. "Any boob," he

³⁹James L. Wright, "Does President Pour Out His Soul or Just Bunk?" n.d., publication details unknown. For copy of this article see memorandum Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 21, 1935, President's Personal File 82.

⁴⁰Quoted in Kent, Without Grease, p.49.

⁴¹Ibid., p.50.

⁴²Krock, "Press vs. Government," p.47.

observed with feeling, "can deduce, a priori, what type of 'news' is contained in this rubbish. Sprinkled with the saccharine juice that drips from the press agent's pen, the handouts exude a supreme confidence in the worthiness of the Administration and its leaders."⁴³

The onset of war brought new tensions. In the months following Pearl Harbour Roosevelt placed new and, to the correspondents, unnecessary restrictions on their coverage of his movements, refusing to allow reporters to board his train or even to publicise his periodic trips to Hyde Park. Protest, especially by the three press associations, which, between them, supplied news to every newspaper in the country, was incessant but, for a time, futile.⁴⁴ The first major concession to the correspondents came in September 1942 when the three White House wire service reporters were permitted to accompany Roosevelt on a two-week tour of the nation's defence plants. But, even here, the refusal to allow these reporters to file their stories until the tour had ended produced what, to them, was an absurd situation in which Roosevelt was seen by thousands across the country on a trip which the American press was forbidden to report. The situation seemed, moreover, to afford the President some enjoyment : he drove through Seattle, waving cheerfully to thousands -- "an entire city

⁴³Kelly, "Distorting the News," p.307.

⁴⁴Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, pp.47-48.

off the record" a reporter laconically remarked -- and jokingly told a huge audience to forget that they had seen him as his trip was supposed to be secret. The crowd of 20,000 was amused; the reporters were not.⁴⁵ In a letter of protest signed by thirty-five correspondents, which awaited Roosevelt on his return, the signatories complained that they had been unable to obtain any satisfactory explanation as to why the President's security had required complete suppression of all news about his tour until after its completion. They were in agreement, they assured him, with the spirit of his own National Newspaper Week message which asserted that the press had "the duty of keeping the people fully and truly informed," but objected that the policy pursued during his recent trip made it difficult for the press "to carry on in the spirit which you have so ably stated."⁴⁶ The atmosphere at the press conference that followed was tense,⁴⁷ and when the President observed that there was less understanding of the requirements of war in Washington than elsewhere and that this view was based on the personal knowledge of one who had seen more of the country than had the reporters, he was bluntly reminded by one of them : "That isn't our

⁴⁵Ibid., pp.49-56.

⁴⁶See memorandum Byron Price to Stephen Early, September 30, 1942, President's Official File 144, enclosing letter of complaint from Washington correspondents to Roosevelt.

⁴⁷See Robert E. Kennedy, "The President's Press Conference," Chicago Times, October 7, 1942; "Usual Banter Missing at Tense Press Conference," Washington Star, October 2, 1942. For copies of these articles see Scrapbook, August 1, 1942 -- January 20, 1943, Early Papers.

fault."⁴⁸

The correspondents were incensed, too, at the lack of consideration shown to them during Roosevelt's wartime meetings with other heads of state. Particularly contemptuous, in their own eyes, was their treatment during Roosevelt's first meeting with Churchill at which the Atlantic Charter was signed. They reacted with extreme scepticism to an official announcement that the President, at a time of international crisis and coincidentally with the exodus of top military personnel from Washington, was to undertake a fishing trip, and with mounting anger to a situation in which the Potomac, on board which he supposedly was, remained off the coast of Swampscott, Massachusetts, monotonously and provocatively beaming to them a daily bulletin : "The day was clear and beautiful and the party enjoyed good fishing." Though Roosevelt gave a brief news conference following his return from his rendezvous with Churchill at the harbour of Argentia, off Newfoundland, most of their information about the conference filtered through to the American reporters from the British press, two of whose representatives, in breach of an agreement with Roosevelt, had been surreptitiously included in Churchill's official party.⁴⁹ Typically, Roosevelt had enjoyed the deception practised on the reporters and the furore which

⁴⁸"FDR Says Some Publishers Interfere with War Effort," Editor and Publisher (October 3, 1942), 7.

⁴⁹Michael Reilly and William J. Slocum, Reilly of the White House (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1947), pp.120-21.

his disappearance had created : Elliott Roosevelt likened him to a twelve-year-old boy playing cops-and-robbers who had shaken off a playmate trying to "shadow" him.⁵⁰ Columnist Paul Mallon probably summed up the reaction of American newsmen when he complained that the American press had "certainly got a shabby deal, if not a double-crossing, in a great event of American history."⁵¹

The Washington press was further antagonised by the President's treatment of its members at his overseas conferences. At Cairo, accredited correspondents were kept from the conference by barbed wire, and, after the conferees had moved to Tehran, the reporters were held at Cairo under military orders.⁵² Once again, the British, in the words of one newsman, "made the Americans look like idiots," breaking an agreement, as they had done at the Atlantic Charter meeting, by releasing a communiqué on the Cairo conference prematurely, and keeping their own people well-informed about the conference by quoting "world travellers" as they arrived in Portugal.⁵³ At the Casablanca

⁵⁰Elliott Roosevelt, As He Saw It (New York : Duell, Sloan and Pearce, Inc., 1946), p.20.

⁵¹Paul Mallon, article in Boston Herald, August 16, 1941, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.833. For other complaints see Time, August 25, 1941, p.11; "Censorship Is Secondary," Peoria Journal-Transcript, August 19, 1941. See copy of latter article in Scrapbook, August 1, 1941 -- January 20, 1942, Early Papers.

⁵²Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.833.

⁵³Reilly, Reilly of the White House, p.176; Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.58.

conference in 1943, the accredited United States correspondents were forbidden to talk to individuals and had to be satisfied with one restricted press conference, at which no questions could be asked. Such arrangements, Raymond Clapper believed, transcended mere military censorship and moved clearly into the field of political censorship.⁵⁴ Not until the Yalta did Roosevelt include representatives of the American press as members of his official party on overseas trips, though he did, during the Casablanca conference, to even the account with Churchill, arrange with White House Secret Service head Mike Reilly to have George Durno, a captain in the Air Transport Corps but previously I.N.S. correspondent at the White House for seventeen years, added to his party as a baggage officer.⁵⁵

Within the United States, correspondents protested angrily against the severe restrictions placed on the reporting of the United Nations Food Conference at Hot Springs in 1943. Press arrangements, according to Arthur Krock, "made a mockery of the oft repeated Presidential promise that the press is to remain free and, except in matters of military information, subjected to no unusual restraints."⁵⁶ When Roosevelt was asked, at his press

⁵⁴Raymond Clapper, article in Columbus Citizen, December 24, 1941, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.834.

⁵⁵Reilly, Reilly of the White House, p.141.

⁵⁶Arthur Krock, "Independent Reporting of Food Talks At Issue," New York Times, April 4, 1943, p.E3; Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.832.

conference on 18 May, about "reports that the restrictions on the press coverage at Hot Springs constitute restrictions on freedom of the press," he attempted to deflect the question by suggesting that the reporters might also like to have a "tier of benches" in the Cabinet Room and in his office. "What's wrong with that?" quipped an obliging reporter and, in the manner of so many others, a difficult situation was avoided.⁵⁷

By and large, the voluntary censorship system worked effectively from its inception after American entry into the war,⁵⁸ but at times, to the Washington press, its administration appeared petty, its restrictions ludicrous. Behind its protective shield, Arthur Krock complained, even Presidential subordinates took grateful refuge, and correspondents were prevented, in the interests of national security, from reporting such mundane events as the week-end visits of Henry Morgenthau to his farm.⁵⁹ In March 1945, columnist Westbrook Pegler openly challenged the voluntary censorship system by threatening to publicise Roosevelt's next trip to Hyde Park, after the President had arrived, on

⁵⁷ Press Conference No.897 May 18, 1943, Presidential Press Conferences, XXI, 323.

⁵⁸ For details of censorship system see Byron Price, "The American Way," in Journalism in Wartime, ed. by Frank Luther Mott (American Council on Public Affairs, 1943), pp.29-33, reprinted in George L. Bird and Frederick E. Merwin, eds., The Press and Society : A Book of Readings (New York : Prentice Hall, Inc., 1951), pp.142-46.

⁵⁹ Krock, Memoirs, p.185.

the grounds that, since the President was as well protected there as he was at the White House, no question of security would be involved. Moreover, Pegler pointed out, during the recent election campaign, Roosevelt had not only openly ridden through the streets of Eastern cities in his search for votes but had made speeches to unselected crowds in Connecticut, without any questions of security having been raised.⁶⁰ This same incongruity was pointed up by United Press White House correspondent Merriman Smith : during the 1944 campaign, all reporters had been welcome on the President's train and "practically every restriction on reporting his movements had been lifted," but, Smith observed, as soon as Roosevelt was re-elected, "slam went the lid again."⁶¹ Concerned that Roosevelt's obduracy over this matter was threatening the entire voluntary censorship system, Director of Censorship Byron Price warned Stephen Early that "the whole thing is boiling up pretty strongly" and that "the President's insistence in covering up all movement when it isn't necessary, may result in cracking the censorship code and result in the disclosure of military matters which would mean loss of life." That, Price is reported as having said bluntly, "would be the fault of the White House." In Price's outspoken view security was scarcely involved in the President's "little trips" and,

⁶⁰Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," Washington Times Herald. See copy of this column enclosed with memorandum Jonathan Daniels to Ruthjane Rumelt, February 20, 1944, President's Official File 4695.

⁶¹Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.59.

he pointedly observed, as Roosevelt had relaxed security during the recent campaign, the Washington correspondents had come to believe that some of the censorship demanded by the President was pure selfishness on his part.⁶² For a time Roosevelt continued to resist Price's objections and Early's entreaties, but a change was signalled when, following the President's next trip to Hyde Park, the White House "scooped" Pegler by announcing that the trip had taken place before the columnist could reveal the fact. Pegler had thus achieved, Time pointed out, "something which he and many United States editors wanted : a slight easing up of an absurd censorship." "In future, the White House announced, once the President had returned, it would be permissible for the press to reveal that he had been away."⁶³

Serious conflict between President and press occasionally flared in the Roosevelt press conferences, especially when Roosevelt struck directly at reporters who had transgressed his standards or fallen short of his expectations. The President criticised the reporters with some regularity and, on many occasions, with apparent justification : at his press conference on 31 May, 1933, for instance, he objected to the wording and implication of a New York Times' story which began : "The White House refused to concede publicly that there had been any definite

⁶²Memorandum Jonathan Daniels to Ruthjane Rumelt, February 20, 1945, President's Official File 4695.

⁶³"The Press," Time, March 19, 1945.

program adopted by President Roosevelt for dealing with the War Debt problem." Such an article, which followed speculation by the Times that a programme of this type had been formulated, was, Roosevelt complained, like "a story one day that the President had murdered his own grandmother and the next day saying that the President had refused to concede that he had murdered his own grandmother." There was no argument from the reporters when he described the story as "not clean ball."⁶⁴ But the correspondents were not always as willing to accept with passivity and equanimity lectures on their professional and personal shortcomings by a man whose credentials as a press expert they suspected, whose conception of their role seemed unrealistically circumscribed, and whose depiction of their motives was often, in their view, grotesque. On August 9, 1937 Roosevelt, singling out from several similar stories a report by Ernest Lindley on the visit of Edward Flynn to Hyde Park and the possible connection between that visit and the New York mayoralty campaign, commenced to read the article line by line to the reporters making clear, at each stage, his objections to it. The transcript is instructive :

THE PRESIDENT: [reading from the article] "Hyde Park, N.Y., August 8 -- Edward J. Flynn, Democratic leader of the Bronx and of the Roosevelt wing of the Democratic organisation in New York city, conferred with President Roosevelt here today."

Lie number one, he did not "confer".

⁶⁴Press Conference No.25, May 31, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, I, 324.

"Neither the President nor Mr. Flynn would say anything about their talk."

This is a statement and it is a lie. You never asked me.

"In fact, some effort was made to keep Mr. Flynn's presence here a secret."

The effort was made by bringing him down in my car to a place you were all going to be. That was the effort. That was a lie just as was the U.P. story [to which Roosevelt had previously referred]. The same holds true, it just is not true, Ernest.

Q: (Mr. Lindley) Mr President --

THE PRESIDENT: So far we have had three of them.

Q: (Mr. Lindley) Would you like to give me a chance to reply?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me read some more. Let us see if there is anything else in it.

"But as to Mr. Flynn's purpose, there was no occasion for doubt. As in the 1933 Mayoralty campaign, he is again seeking the intercession of the national administration on behalf of the Roosevelt section of the Democratic set-up in New York city in a campaign against Mayor F.H. LaGuardia."

If that is based on anything that happened yesterday, it is a lie and, obviously, it does refer to what happened yesterday.⁶⁵

In the exchanges that followed, Lindley, though not without argument, admitted that his statements that Roosevelt and Flynn had "conferred" and that neither would make any comment on their "talks" were misleading and gave the President legitimate ground for complaint. But the issues of the purpose of Flynn's visit and of whether or to what extent an effort had been made to conceal his presence were not, in the reporters' minds, as clear-cut. Since Roosevelt had told them only that some of his neighbours were coming to Hyde Park for a social visit and Presidential Secretary McIntyre, in charge of appointments, had informed them that

⁶⁵Press Conference No. 389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 110-11.

only one person of political significance (John March) would be attending, the correspondents had been surprised by Flynn's appearance and intrigued by an overt reference to New York city politics which he had made. In attacking the correspondents, Roosevelt, in effect, argued that, had Flynn been invited for political reasons, he (Roosevelt) would have informed the reporters of that fact. As he had not done so, Flynn ought merely to have been regarded by them as a "neighbour" who had come to Hyde Park for a "social visit," his acknowledged importance as a political figure notwithstanding. And, the President reiterated, in furious and unreasonable hyperbole, "I still insist if I want to see God Almighty socially, it is social news and not political news."⁶⁶ Not inconceivably, an ingrained and well-founded scepticism as to the unvarying veracity of politicians may have contributed to the reporters' reluctance meekly to accept the official interpretation of the events surrounding Flynn's visit -- in November 1935, for example, when reporters had pressed Roosevelt for a comment on a visit by Father Coughlin to Hyde Park, he had merely repeated, mechanically, that the visit had been a social one, an assertion which, on the face of it, lacked credibility --⁶⁷ but, in any event, in subsequent exchanges, their positions hardened. Roosevelt's demand that United Press correspondent Frederick Harkness justify his report

⁶⁶Ibid., p.115.

⁶⁷Press Conference No.237, September 11, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 150.

of the incident brought from that reporter the blunt rejoinder : "I wrote it as I saw it. If I was wrong, I was wrong"; and, when the President, in a renewed attack on Lindley later in the conference, suggested that he admit, as the United Press had done, that the whole story had been a mistake, Harkness again interrupted : "I beg your pardon. I said that I wrote it as I saw it and if I am wrong, I am wrong." Nor would Lindley accept that the inaccuracies in his own account had resulted from the pressures under which he worked or that that account was entirely fanciful. "I know your difficulties," Roosevelt had said to him. "You have to turn out so much stuff a day." "I am under no compulsion to write news for my paper," Lindley replied stiffly, "...the fact remains that Mr. Flynn is a factor in New York city politics and his visit to you is a matter of extreme news interest." What followed was vintage Roosevelt:

I understand. You fellows are placed in such position very often....We can talk about it in the family and off the record. I can appreciate what you are told to write....

.....
it does not take away, in any way, from my affection for the group of you....

.....
that is why the newspapers are losing the influence they had ten years ago...because of interpretative stories that do not hold water.

Lindley and Harkness rejected these general charges just as they declined, in relation to the specific criticisms which Roosevelt had levelled against them, to yield further

ground.⁶⁸

Another rancorous exchange between the President and the reporters followed publicity given to the idea that America's frontier in Europe in its battle against fascism was the Rhine, a suggestion that Roosevelt was reported as having made to the Military Affairs Committee of the Senate. Asked, at his press conference on 3 February 1939, for a clarifying statement on foreign policy, Roosevelt launched into what Editor and Publisher described as "the most blistering assault upon the correspondents in the six New Deal years."⁶⁹ "Some members of the Senate and quite a number of newspaper owners" were, he declared, "deliberately putting before the American people a deliberate misrepresentation of facts -- deliberate." Angrily pointing to several newspapers on the desk before him he complained that there was not a single story or headline in any of them that did not give "to put it politely, an erroneous impression." The upshot of such reporting, the correspondents were reminded, was that the American people were beginning to realise that the things that they were reading and hearing were "pure bunk." Asked specifically about a report that he had told some members of the conference that "the Rhine was our frontier in the battle of democracies versus fascism," he called the story

⁶⁸Press Conference No.389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 112-311.

⁶⁹James J. Butler, "Newsmen Fight Back in Breach With FDR On 'Rhine Frontier'," Editor and Publisher (February 11, 1939), 1.

a "deliberate lie." The reporters' subsequent questions revealed their resentment and their incredulity :

Q: You indicated a moment ago that in these fourteen or fifteen newspapers you have on your desk there was an impression given, erroneously, of both facts and in the headlines,...Did your reading of those papers go far enough to convince you of what may be the motive of fifteen or more of the newspapers on a given day writing erroneous information --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, Fred (Essary), that is a very long subject. You know perfectly well that a story that starts as a story-- "it is learned from reliable sources,"... or "sources close to the President suggested," etc.,...-Now, when that story goes out, you are all covered by making that qualification, but the fellow who writes it up the next day, either in the editorials or in the subsequent news stories, leaves out your qualifying phrases....

Q: The thing that impresses me most about your observation is that the things that we are writing or our editors are writing and our publishers are publishing are being applauded abroad....

THE PRESIDENT: That [Roosevelt's complaint about deliberately misleading stories] follows out the statement that the American frontier is the Rhine. Some boob got that off; I don't think it was a member of the Press. That was applauded in France....it was attacked in Germany,...the attack and the applause are again based on a misstatement of fact. Now what can I do about it?

Q: Have somebody in the Senate give the correct version.

THE PRESIDENT: No, you have got the correct version. I just gave it to you.

Q: Do you doubt that somebody said that?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it very much. I would like to have that traced....

Q: Do you doubt somebody said that to a newspaper man?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I believe somebody did say it, but I would like to have you bring the fellow down here....70

Outside the conference those correspondents whose integrity had been impugned sought out their informants in an attempt to obtain confirmation of their articles.

Soon the President was being challenged from Capitol Hill to tell "the whole story," two Senators who had been present at the meeting were demanding that they be released from their undertaking to keep confidential the matters discussed, and one conferee, Senator Nye, had countered Roosevelt's statement to the reporters at his press conference that the suggestion that the conferees had pledged to secrecy was "100% bunk" by confirming that the President himself had imposed the rule. Others who had been present gave some confirmation of the Rhine frontier story. When some correspondents demanded of press secretary Stephen Early that their reports be compared with the official record of the President's conference they were told that no record had been kept, yet it was asserted by some conferees that a White House stenographer had been present.⁷¹ The reaction of the Washington press to the whole incident was probably summed up by New York Sun reporter Phelps Adams :

Today the President went far beyond the bounds of any previous sallies in this direction and brought to a dramatic climax what has long been regarded by many newspaper men here as a perfectly conscious campaign designed to undermine the confidence of the American people in any and all newspapers which publish critical reports of any Administration policy or action.⁷²

New York Times' bureau chief Arthur Krock commented that it was no new experience for the press to see White House

⁷¹Butler, "Newsmen Fight Back," p.1.

⁷²Ibid.

friendliness on the day of publication of a story turn to anger if public opinion subsequently proved hostile, and speculated that the story had been a Presidential trial balloon. Roosevelt, an expert on "leaks," could, Krock argued, have prevented their occurrence in this instance by issuing a joint communiqué at the conclusion of his meeting with the Senators. Not only had he failed to do this, but he had allowed the reports of the meeting to go unchallenged for two days before deciding to open his attack on the press, a procedure which Krock believed to be "more indicative of a method gone awry than of a belief that 17 senators would repeat nothing he said to them." In all probability, Krock surmised, it was not the protests in Rome and Berlin that had prompted the President's belated denial and his attack on the American press, but the strongly adverse reaction within the United States which made it clear that two of his policy aims -- the repeal of the Neutrality Laws and the defeat of the Ludlow war-referendum resolution-- had been hindered rather than helped by the story.⁷³ But whatever its proximate cause the episode represented, according to Editor and Publisher, the correspondents' "first wide-open break with the White House."⁷⁴

Some of Franklin Roosevelt's predominant attitudes

⁷³ Arthur Krock, "Foreign Policy Mix-Up Follows Secret Moves," New York Times, February 5, 1939, p. E3.

⁷⁴ Butler, "Newsmen Fight Back," p.1.

toward the American press are illustrated in the two incidents which have been considered : his hatred of "interpretation" which, in the case of the Flynn story, meant unwarranted speculation, but which, more usually, and specifically in the case of the Rhine frontier story, was equated with a version of political events other than his own; his belief that the increasing recourse of the correspondents to "interpretation" was causing the public to lose confidence in the press; and his assumption of a dichotomy of interests and loyalties between reporters and newspaper proprietors and his consequent tendency to exonerate the former on the grounds that, when they transgressed, they did so on the orders of the latter.

A month after the Rhine frontier incident, another angry confrontation between Roosevelt and the Washington press occurred. At his press conference on March 21, 1939, Roosevelt, reacting angrily to a suggestion that there had been a change in the Administration's attitude toward corporate taxation, attacked the press generally for its alleged failure to give emphasis to statements by himself and Senator Harrison that there should be no changes in tax structure which would reduce the government's yield from corporate taxation. While Stephen Early shook his head in apparent sympathy with the correspondents, Roosevelt was repeatedly challenged over the validity of his charge; but, although, under sustained questioning, he somewhat modified his criticisms, he

continued to maintain that in no newspaper had his views been stated with sufficient clarity or emphasis. Amongst the Washington press corps there was puzzlement and resentment against what they regarded as an unwarranted attack on their handling of news.⁷⁵ The President, some of them agreed, was showing a greater willingness to attack the press generally.⁷⁶

Others made the same charge. In mid 1937 columnist Franklin K. Waltman had noted that practically every White House press conference was marked by some sally against the press,⁷⁷ a complaint which was echoed in a Washington Post editorial of July 1943 which declared that the President was "constantly casting slurs at the integrity of the newsmen," and accusing them of being "artists in color, not for the fun of it, but because of orders from their 'bosses'."⁷⁸ In the same vein, another Washington correspondent, looking back over the later years of Roosevelt's Presidency, recalled that Roosevelt had "lectured the reporters,....called them liars and used the mighty weight of his office in pile-driving fashion" against them.⁷⁹ At times Roosevelt impugned not only the reporters'

⁷⁵Press Conference No.531, March 21, 1939, Presidential Press Conferences, XIII, 210-15; Felix Belair, "President Frowns on Tax Law Change," New York Times, March 22, 1939, pp.1,17.

⁷⁶Belair, "President Frowns on Tax Law Change," pp.1,17.

⁷⁷Quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.816.

⁷⁸Editorial, Washington Post, July 1, 1943.

⁷⁹Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.15.

integrity but also their patriotism : in March 1943 he informed a press conference that there would be no successful fifth column in the country were it not for the "sixth columnists" who were providing a vehicle through which the former could "distribute their poison," and, when asked to elaborate, replied : "Oh, I don't think so, because I would have to include quite a lot of people in the room."⁸⁰ In December the following year, he astonished the Washington press by presenting an Iron Cross to reporter John O'Donnell, through a fellow correspondent, an action which, the reporters quickly recognised, had the effect of smearing O'Donnell with a pro-Nazi brush on the eve of the trial of a suit which he had brought against pro-New Deal publisher J. David Stern and the Philadelphia Record over an editorial which described him, among other things, as a Naziphile and an anti-Semite. The strongly anti-New Deal Washington Times Herald called the attack "a new low in his [Roosevelt's] campaign of vilification against those correspondents who have incurred his displeasure";⁸¹ and even Charles Hurd, a reporter whose general attitude toward the New Deal was favourable, wrote that "the general consensus [among reporters] was that Roosevelt was hitting below the belt."⁸²

⁸⁰Press Conference No. 814, March 24, 1942, Presidential Press Conferences, XIX, 232.

⁸¹Walter Trohan, "O'Donnell Suit Victory Seen Blow to New Smear Campaign," Washington Times Herald, January 31, 1943. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1943 -- July 31, 1943, Early Papers.

⁸²Hurd, Young and Gay, p. 228. For a discussion of The O'Donnell suit see chapter IV, pp. 179-80.

A further reference to the President's propensity to attack the working press was given some time later by Drew Pearson who, when he was denounced by Roosevelt as a "chronic liar" for a story which suggested that Cordell Hull was anti-Soviet and wished "to bleed Russia white," declared himself "complimented to join the long list of newspapermen whom the President has attacked."⁸³

The complicated field of press ethics and reportorial standards was a subject on which, though in no sense an expert, Franklin Roosevelt nevertheless dogmatised, never tiring of giving the Washington reporters advice, criticising their dispatches, lecturing them about their accuracy and making confident pronouncements as to the standing of the press in American society. "Never in my 20 years here [in Washington]," declared Raymond Clapper in November 1939, "have newspaper reporters received as much advice as to how to do their work, and as much warning against light-fingered handling of important news situations."⁸⁴ What many reporters were reluctant unquestioningly to accept, however, were Roosevelt's credentials as a press expert and his fitness, as a consequence, to offer such gratuitous and such confident criticism. To Arthur Krock it was remarkable that a man whose sole experience in the collection and presentation of news had been as a reporter on the Harvard Crimson should

⁸³Quoted in "FDR Attacks Pearson; Backs up Hull Statement," Editor and Publisher (September 4, 1943), 9.

⁸⁴Raymond Clapper, article in Columbus Citizen, November 20, 1933, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.813.

give the impression "that he understood these functions better than the lifetime professionals."⁸⁵ The Washington press corps was, after all, an élite journalistic group whose educational standard, occupational record, level of remuneration and prestige were conspicuously above the average for their occupation. Leo Rosten, whose 1936 sample of one hundred and twenty seven Washington correspondents included representatives of 186 leading dailies, all the press associations and leading columnists, found that 72.4 per cent of the group had attended college, of whom 51.1 per cent had graduated; that special correspondents questioned had worked for their present newspapers an average of 12.5 years, and press association reporters for an average of 11.3 years; that the average years of newspaper work for the group was 18.8, and their average period of employment in Washington 9.7. Rosten found, also, that, for the majority (75.5 per cent), journalism had been a deliberate career choice, and that, throughout the newspaper industry, few editorial positions carried greater prestige than that enjoyed by the Washington reporters.⁸⁶ Such a competent, dedicated and professionally self-conscious group were not merely irritated by Roosevelt's posturing as a press expert : his dogmatic views on press ethics, his gratuitous advice on reportorial standards, his derisory remarks about their financial acumen, the manner in which he publicly ridiculed their most respected colleagues,

⁸⁵Krock, Memoirs, p.182.

⁸⁶Rosten, Social Composition, pp.9, 12-13.

the continual stream of insults which he directed against columnists, and, in particular, his repeated assertions that the Washington correspondents were journalistic stooges who wrote what they were told -- all these practices caused a predictable amount of irritation and resentment. "That he [Roosevelt] can still command the loyalty of correspondents after such mortal affronts to their pride and stoutly defended integrity is," declared reporter Walter Davenport in February 1945, "among the more remarkable of his accomplishments."⁸⁷

Roosevelt's injunction, so frequently repeated, that the Washington reporters should maintain a clear distinction between "straight" news, which concerned itself with "the facts," and "interpretative" writing, which embellished such reporting with speculation, analysis or other extraneous comment, was asserted with dogmatism, defended with resolution and applied with inconsistency. Columnists and editorial writers, both of whom were interpreters rather than reporters, he could afford to dismiss : he heaped insults on the former and, though he could not deny to the latter their function, he was fortified by the belief that few people read what they wrote⁸⁸ and that their efforts at interpretation, when they were not misguided or malicious, were puerile and derisory

⁸⁷Davenport, "Presidents and Press," (February 3, 1945), p.47.

⁸⁸"Herald Tribune Answers Attack by FDR," Editor and Publisher (November 12, 1938), 10.

in comparison with his own. It was in his detestation of columnists that Franklin Roosevelt's hatred of interpretation reached its peak. "No human being," he told the reporters in a reference to columnists, "can write a story once a day. He has to write a whole lot of pure bunk in order to fill his space."⁸⁹ The percentage of "absolute manufactured error" in the writings of gossip columnists was, he informed his annual press conference with editors in 1937, as high as forty per cent (he claimed to have checked it for a week).⁹⁰ "So-called respectable columns," he noted some time later, were "about twenty per cent wrong," while the worst columns contained "eighty per cent of misstatements."⁹¹ Roosevelt's derisory references to columnists culminated in his description of one of them (Drew Pearson) as a "chronic liar,"⁹² and his comprehensive denunciation of all of them as "an unnecessary excrescence on our civilization."⁹³ Editorial writers were often similarly deficient : in theory, their function was legitimate; in practice their exercise of it was usually

⁸⁹Press Conference No.156 November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 170.

⁹⁰Press Conference 360-A, April 15, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, IX, 308.

⁹¹Press Conference No.630, March 19, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 204.

⁹²Press Conference No.915, August 31, 1943, Presidential Press Conferences, XXII, 82.

⁹³Press Conference No.985, December 22, 1944, Presidential Press Conferences, XXIV, 281.

inadequate. Thus, when a reporter suggested at a press conference in September 1938 that, as a result of recent speeches by Joseph Kennedy, Ambassador Bullitt and the President himself, the impression was growing abroad that the United States was morally allied with European democracies in a "stop Hitler" movement, Roosevelt replied that such "impressions" were merely "interpretations by columnists and editorial writers" who, if they would read what Administration officials had said, would find that their interpretations were "about 100 % wrong."⁹⁴ "I was right," he reminded his annual press conference with newspaper editors in 1939, in a reference to his interpretation of the international situation of a year earlier, "and most of you,...were wrong."⁹⁵ With the Washington reporters, on the other hand, whose ostensible concern was with "the facts," Roosevelt saw a continuing danger that "straight" news reporting could become sullied by "interpretation," and it was against this tendency, and the loss of public confidence in the press which it would cause, that he repeatedly warned. "It must be hell to have to interpret," he told reporters at a press conference at Hyde Park in November 1934. "But you know, that is one reason why ---... the American public today are paying less and less attention to news stories because so many of them

⁹⁴Press Conference No.484, September 9, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XII, 84.

⁹⁵Press Conference No.636-A, April 18, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 265.

have become interpretive." "Give them [the people] the facts," he declared, "and nothing else."⁹⁶

But to the professionals of the Washington press corps, the President's constant strictures against interpretation caused not merely resentment but mystification. To many, the distinction which he drew between "fact" and "interpretation" seemed spurious, his pronouncements curiously inconsistent with his own press conference practice. If reporting was, as Roosevelt maintained, "the retailing of facts as announced," such handling of news, the correspondents pointed out to him, "would be little else than dissemination of Administration propaganda." In any event, hard and fast distinctions were, they evidently believed, impossible to sustain: "Following this conversation," New York Times' reporter Charles Hurd observed dryly, adding a sceptical post script to his account of the discussion between Roosevelt and the reporters of the difference between fact and interpretation, "the correspondents carried out their work for that day by interpreting the President's reaction to the [Congressional] election results."⁹⁷ Nor, in the Washington reporters' view, did Roosevelt's injunction to "give them the facts and nothing else" sit happily alongside his suggestions that "If I were writing this story, here is how I would

⁹⁶Press Conference, No. 156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 166-67.

⁹⁷Krock, Memoirs, p.186.

write it" or "If I were writing the heading on this story, here is how I would headline it"; for, as Arthur Krock pointed out, when Roosevelt made such overt suggestions, the reporters realised, even if he did not, that he was "slanting the facts to his purpose."⁹⁸

If Franklin Roosevelt was aware of the incongruity of a situation in which he continually counselled the reporters against interpretation and at the same time filled up his press conferences with "background" and "off-the-record" remarks, or gave directions to the reporters as to how stories ought to be written, he gave no sign of it. He evidently saw no inconsistency, in lamenting, in his public statement of his relations with the American press, the fact that "many hostile newspaper owners require their Washington correspondents to give their news dispatches a critical or unfriendly touch" and then proceeding to inform his readers that his press secretary met the correspondents each morning "for the purpose of giving them the White House background, or in the parlance of the newspaper, the 'White House slant' on the current news of the day."⁹⁹ Nor did he hesitate, on one occasion, to invite the reporters to do what he had continually warned them against : asked a question on tax adjustment at a press conference in October 1938, he suggested that, since newspaper stories were viewing an important national problem from only one angle, it would

⁹⁸Ibid., p.182.

⁹⁹Public Papers and Addresses, II, 38-39.

be "an interesting thing for you to use your imagination on and write interpretative stories."¹⁰⁰

But, if Franklin Roosevelt's strictures against interpretation caused mystification or irritation amongst the Washington press corps, his assertion that its members were in journalistic bondage to the newspaper owners, whose anti-Administration bias they were forced to reflect, caused open resentment. Even in the press conferences, where argument was difficult, the President found himself, on this point, openly challenged.¹⁰¹ Again and again the newsmen denied Roosevelt's charge, but the fact that he continued to make it is significant for it indicates that, while his very considerable antagonism toward the American press was usually vented on the Washington correspondents, its major object was the newspaper owners.

¹⁰⁰Press Conference No.407, October 29, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 302.

¹⁰¹See, for example : Press Conference No.452-B, April 21, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XI, 361; Press Conference No.389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 127-28.

CHAPTER IVTHE GROUP MORE RESENTED BY THE PRESIDENT THAN ANY OTHER
GROUP IN AMERICAN LIFE

If Franklin Roosevelt regarded the Washington reporters customarily with tempered affection and columnists invariably with lofty contempt, he reserved for American newspaper owners a more active and implacable hostility. In his 1938 statement¹ he had drawn attention to their antagonism toward his Administration and to what he believed to be their practice of requiring their reporter-employees to reflect that opposition in news dispatches; through his press conference comments and personal correspondence he developed a more elaborate critique. Newspaper publishers, he believed, were unfitted by background or training for their task, lacked journalistic talent, and had little grasp of their wider public responsibilities. In political outlook they were reactionary, in economic crisis obstructive, in war often unpatriotic, and, so firm was their commitment to "the counting room" rather than "the news desk," that they were incapable of editing newspapers "in the cause of democracy," and endangered "from within" the very press freedom about which they so tirelessly but fraudulently expressed their concern.²

¹Public Papers and Addresses, II, 38-39.

²Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, November 2, 1938, President's Personal File 2403.

Owners, to Franklin Roosevelt, were the repository of press sins and shortcomings, to whom all responsibility could ultimately be attributed. Editors, no less than reporters, were firmly under their control: "It is not the editors," he told the correspondents during an angry outburst against the press in 1938; "Hell, most of the editors have got families. They cannot lose their jobs. They have to write what the owner tells them to."³ By implication, therefore, if the overwhelming majority of the press opposed the President, the owners were to blame; if its tactics were often deplorable, the owners were to blame; if support was lukewarm where it should have been enthusiastic, with carping criticism being substituted for active, two-fisted support, or the press debased its standards, or forfeited public confidence in its integrity, or initiated fear, or contributed to recession, the responsibility lay with the owners and publishers of America. "Lack of [public] confidence [in the press] today," Roosevelt told a conference with journalism teachers in 1935, in a statement which illustrated the general set of his thinking, "is... because of the colored news stories and the failure on the part of some papers to print the news.... It is not the man at the desk in most cases. It is not the reporter. It goes back to the owner of the paper."⁴

³Press Conference No.479, August 26, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XII, 54.

⁴Press Conference No.260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 368.

The depth of Roosevelt's antagonism toward publishers can be seen in the acerbity of his comments about them and the frequency of his criticisms. Of William Randolph Hearst, a particular foe, he remarked that "there was no man in the whole United States who was as vicious an influence,"⁵ while Colonel Robert McCormick and Cissy and Joe Patterson, he once wrote, "deserve[d] neither hate nor praise— only pity for their unbalanced mentalities."⁶ More usually, however, he concentrated his hostility on owners as a group, and, in his press conferences, his attacks upon them became a commonplace : "Almost every week," noted a "Kiplinger Washington Letter" of June 1937, "there's some White House 'crack' against newspaper publishers as a class,— off the record and unpublished."⁷ Such was the frequency of Roosevelt's attacks that publishers were called the President's "favorite whipping boys" and, by columnists Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, "the group more resented by the President than any other group in American life."⁸

Roosevelt's critique of American newspaper publishers

⁵Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes (3 vols.; New York : Simon and Schuster, 1953-54), I, 472, quoted in Rodney P. Carlisle, "The Political Ideas and Influence of William Randolph Hearst, 1928-1936," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1966), p.114.

⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt to Archibald MacLeish, July 13, 1942, President's Personal File 245.

⁷Kiplinger Washington Letter, June 5, 1937, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.817.

⁸Quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.186.

and their activities serves occasionally to illuminate, but more usually to obscure, the pattern of his relations with several of the more important members of that group and the measure of opposition or support which, individually and collectively, they provided for his policies. Even with William Randolph Hearst, for example, who was eventually to attack the New Deal with sustained ferocity and with journalistic tactics which many besides the President would find distasteful, a long period of bitter opposition was preceded by a briefer period of harmonious personal relations and enthusiastic journalistic support. Hearst had played an important part in securing the nomination of Roosevelt⁹ and, in the period between Roosevelt's election and assumption of office, discussed with him policies by which recovery could be achieved and the personnel of which the New Administration was to be composed. The publisher produced an eleven point plan for the former, and some gratuitous advice on the latter, opposing Al Smith and Owen Young, but supporting the inclusion of Baruch, Glass, Norris and "a woman" as Secretary of Labour. Expressing his general agreement with Hearst's eleven points, Roosevelt told E.B. Coblentz, a Hearst editor who acted as intermediary between President and publisher, that he and Hearst were "working toward a common end."¹⁰

⁹See Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt : The Triumph (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1956), pp.308-09.

¹⁰Edmund Coblentz, William Randolph Hearst : A Portrait in His Own Words (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1952), pp.146-50, E. Coblentz to William Randolph Hearst, January 11, 1933, Hearst -- E.D. Coblentz Correspondence, Bancroft Library, University of California; quoted in Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," pp.77-78.

The Hearst press, which had campaigned for Roosevelt's election, greeted his inauguration and the decisive action of his first weeks in office with enthusiasm. The San Francisco Examiner stated that Roosevelt's inauguration "brings hope to the American people," and later praised the President's "remarkable skill in making up his mind quickly on critical problems." The newspaper chain suggested that April 30 be set aside as "President's Day" in appreciation of the "bold and sustained action" that "had banished lethargy from our government."¹¹ Although the delight of the Hearst press in the new Administration was not unalloyed-- its owner looked askance at some of the President's appointments, notably Hull as Secretary of State, Woodin as Secretary of the Treasury and Bingham as Ambassador to England, and was particularly suspicious of Raymond Moley¹² -- the area of agreement between the newspaper chain and the Administration was wide. Roosevelt's "bombshell" message to the London Economic Conference in June 1933, which undercut plans to achieve currency stabilisation, was called "a modern declaration of independence," the N.R.A. received qualified support and the Blue Eagle campaign to stimulate consumer spending active backing.¹³ Hearst

¹¹San Francisco Examiner, March 9, 1933, p.18, March 10, 1933, p.2, March 19, 1933, pp. E1,10, March 24, 1933, p.1, April 12, 1933, p.2; quoted in Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.79.

¹²Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.79.

¹³Ibid., pp.80-82.

wrote to the President that he had been "doing a little work...telling the business people how fine you are," and surmised that, at Roosevelt's next election "we will make it unanimous."¹⁴ On the first anniversary of Roosevelt's inauguration the Hearst press, which, whilst tolerantly criticising its shortcomings, had remained firm in its allegiance to the Administration, favourably reviewed the President's record. "I personally think," Hearst wrote, "that Mr. Roosevelt is a very great President and a very sincere patriot."¹⁵

The 1934 general strike in San Francisco altered Hearst's attitude toward the New Deal and particularly toward the N.R.A., which had, he believed, through its insistence that employers negotiate with workers' representatives, opened the door to such excesses.¹⁶ By the time of the Congressional and gubernatorial elections of that year, the Hearst chain had shifted from its outright advocacy of the New Deal to a policy, as expressed by Hearst to Coblentz, of providing "moderate support to sound and judicious candidates of either party."¹⁷ Nevertheless in

¹⁴William Randolph Hearst to Franklin D. Roosevelt, n.d., President's Personal File 62.

¹⁵Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," pp.83-87; San Francisco Examiner, March 4, 1934, pp.1,15, quoted in Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," pp.86-87.

¹⁶Ibid., pp.91-92.

¹⁷William Randolph Hearst to E. Coblentz, August 10, 1934, Hearst - E.D. Coblentz Correspondence, quoted ibid., p.92.

May and again in October, the publisher was a guest at the White House, the President writing to him on the latter occasion : "I am delighted to hear from Joe [Kennedy] that you are coming down to see me Monday. If you have not made other arrangements, I hope you will stay with us Monday night at the White House."¹⁸ The publisher drew his own conclusions from the results of the 1934 elections, acknowledging that the outcome represented a vote of confidence in the President, but seeing it essentially as an endorsement of the "sound progressivism" for which he himself stood. Errors of the Administration had, he believed, been overlooked because of the beneficial results that had been achieved.¹⁹

The break between Roosevelt and Hearst came in 1935. When the President, in his annual message to Congress in January of that year, announced that Americans "must forswear that conception of the acquisition of wealth which, through excessive profits, creates undue private power over private affairs and, to our misfortune, over public affairs as well,"²⁰ Hearst criticised the suggestion

¹⁸ See Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Randolph Hearst, May 18, 1934, Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Randolph Hearst, October 3, 1934, Stephen Early to William Randolph Hearst, October 6, 1934; President's Personal File 62.

¹⁹ Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.96.

²⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to Congress, January 4, 1935, Public Papers and Addresses, IV, 17, quoted in Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.101.

in an editorial which was printed in all his newspapers.²¹ When, later that month, Roosevelt intervened to settle the case of Dean Jennings, a Hearst employee who had been dismissed for taking part in Guild activities and whose case the Guild had been fighting through various agencies for seven months, in Hearst's favour, the move was seen by some as an attempt to appease the publisher,²² but, in any event, in mid-April Hearst instructed Coblentz to "settle down to a consistent policy of opposition to this Administration."²³ Alarmed by the resultant wave of criticism, the President invited Coblentz to the White House

²¹ Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.102.

²² Dean S. Jennings, a reporter, had been dismissed from one of Hearst's newspapers for engaging in union activities. The American Newspaper Guild fought Jennings' case before various San Francisco labour boards and then at Washington, where it finally succeeded in bringing the case before the National Labor Relations Board. The Board ruled that Jennings had been improperly dismissed and ordered his re-instatement. When Donald Richberg, Administrator of the N.R.A., had the case reopened, the Board re-affirmed its earlier decision. At this point Roosevelt himself intervened, and, in a public letter to the National Labor Relations Board, requested it not to exercise jurisdiction in labour disputes but to refer all such questions to various code authorities. Suggestions were made that Roosevelt had been prompted to act in this way by Hearst. See Nation (September 25, 1933). For details of Jennings' case, see Ferdinand Lundberg, Imperial Hearst : A Social Biography (New York : Random House, 1936), p.198.

²³ William Randolph Hearst to E.D. Coblentz, April 9, 1935, Hearst - E.D. Coblentz Correspondence, quoted in Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," pp.104-05.

for a discussion of the particular problems which were concerning Hearst,²⁴ but the brief truce which followed the meeting came to an abrupt end on June 19 when Roosevelt sent to Congress a message asking for heavier taxation of the wealthy. "The President's message," Hearst wrote to his chief editors, "is essentially Communism."²⁵

As the 1936 elections approached, hostility between President and publisher increased. The erstwhile supporter of organised labor now called the Wagner Bill "one of the most vicious pieces of class legislation that could be conceived"; the crusader against monopolies saw the Wheeler-Rayburn Bill as "PURE VENOM distilled by a PERSONAL AND MALIGNANT OBSESSION." A Hearst headline on the Works Progress Administration announced: "Taxpayers Feed 20,000 Reds on N.Y. Relief Rolls,"²⁶ and on the eve of the election, Hearst's Buffalo Evening News ran a full page editorial which aimed to "inform readers on the encroachments and conspiracies of Communist forces on your Government, property and liberty." Among the encroachments mentioned by the News was a F.E.A.A. - financed college in Arkansas which was depicted as a hotbed of communism, with nudism, free love and other indecencies being practised openly on the campus.²⁷ Roosevelt hit back.

²⁴Carlisle, "Political Ideas and Influence of Hearst," p.106.

²⁵Ibid., pp.108-9; William Randolph Hearst to E.D. Goblentz, June 19, 1935, Hearst - E.D. Coblentz Correspondence, quoted ibid., p.109.

²⁶Quoted in Edwin Emery and Edwin H. Ford eds., Highlights in the History of the American Press (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p.325.

²⁷Buffalo Evening News, November 2, 1936, quoted in George Wolfskill and John A. Hudson, All But the People: Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Critics, 1933-1939 (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p.192.

On 15 August the White House released a copy of a message recently sent to all Hearst editors. It read :

The Chief instructs that the phrase "SOAK THE SUCCESSFUL" be used in all references to the Administration's Tax Program instead of the phrase "SOAK THE THRIFTY" hitherto used also [sic] he wants the words "RAW DEAL" used instead of "NEW DEAL."

The White House statement called attention to "the deliberate coloring of so-called news stories, in accordance with orders," and asserted that "the fault lies wholly with the owner."²⁸ A second White House statement in September 1936 referred to a "planned attempt led by a certain notorious newspaper owner to make it appear that the President passively accepts the support of alien organisations" -- a reference to the Hearst chain's assertions that Roosevelt was being backed by Communists in the United States. "The American people," the statement continued, "will not permit their attention to be diverted from the real issues to false issues which no patriotic, honorable, decent citizen would purposely inject into American affairs."²⁹ Not surprisingly, contact between Roosevelt and Hearst ceased and the Hearst press, which had been frantic in its efforts to defeat the President in the 1936 campaign, became his indefatigable critic thereafter.

The allegiance of Colonel Robert McCormick to the New Deal was of shorter duration. The publisher of the Chicago

²⁸White House Press Release, August 15, 1935, President's Personal File 62.

²⁹White House Press Release, September 19, 1936, President's Personal File 62.

Tribune, who had known Roosevelt from their school days at Groton, and had earlier backed his campaign, whilst he was Assistant Secretary of the Navy, to build up naval strength, decided to support Roosevelt in 1932, and, for a time, maintained his enthusiasm for the new President.³⁰ In May 1933 he invited Roosevelt and his wife to stay at his home when they came to Chicago to open the World Fair. "It seems to me," McCormick wrote, "you are making very good weather of it in the storm." Roosevelt, who had to decline the invitation, responded with a suggestion that McCormick visit him in Washington.³¹ In these early months of the new Administration, McCormick was impressed by Roosevelt's decisive action and ability to implement his policies, but by the Autumn of 1933 his enthusiasm had begun to wane. At a speech in October 1933 to mark the two hundredth anniversary of the trial of John Peter Zenger, a colonial editor of New York, McCormick, who was chairman of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association Committee on Freedom of the Press, expressed his disquiet over what he saw as moves by the Administration to restrict that

³⁰James Ragland, "Merchandisers of the First Amendment: Freedom and Responsibility of the Press in the Age of Roosevelt, 1933-1940," Georgia Review, XVI (Winter, 1962), 367; Robert R. McCormick to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 3, March 6, 1917, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert R. McCormick, March 1, 1917; quoted in Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), p.393 (footnote).

³¹Robert R. McCormick to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 6, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert R. McCormick, May 16, 1933; President's Personal File 426.

constitutional right, and specifically over attempts to bring the press under the provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act.³² When, shortly afterwards, a Tribune correspondent asked the President at a press conference about "a disposition to curb the freedom of the press," Roosevelt, recognising the source of the question, advised the reporter to "tell Bert McCormick he is seeing things under the bed."³³

From that time relations between Roosevelt and McCormick deteriorated sharply, the personal antipathy between them grew, and the Tribune maintained toward the New Deal a virulent and raucous opposition.

Notwithstanding Hearst's and McCormick's early cooperation with the President, Roosevelt's relations with these two publishers, had they been typical, would have been consistent with and provided some explanation for, his strictures against newspaper publishers as a group. The same could be said in relation to Henry Luce, owner of Time, Life and Fortune, whose opposition to the New Deal was, however, more subtle, and whose relationship with the President was less clear-cut. Visiting Roosevelt soon after his inauguration, the publisher had been captivated by the new incumbent -- "My God!" he is said to have exclaimed, "What

³²Ragland, "Merchandisers of the First Amendment," p.367.

³³Press Conference No.64, October 27, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 383, quoted in Ragland, "Merchandisers of the First Amendment," p.368.

a man!" -- but Time, which began by praising Roosevelt, was offended by the recognition of Russia in October 1933 (the magazine depicted Russian Foreign Minister Litvinov as a "shrewd, sly Foreign Commissar" who came to the United States "baring his canine teeth in a merry grin" as a result of recognition), and its attitude toward the new Administration became, as a result, more critical.³⁴ In the economic sphere, although Fortune, Luce's business magazine, gave generally sympathetic coverage to the first year of the New Deal, there was an undercurrent of concern in both that publication and Time about New Deal extravagance and its constraints on business.³⁵ Following Roosevelt's success in the mid-term elections he was named Time's Man of the Year, but the magazine boosted Landon in 1936, generally continued its criticism of Roosevelt during his second term, backed Willkie (with whom Luce was closely associated) in 1940 and supported Dewey in 1944, contrasting, on this occasion the President's supposedly poor physical condition -- "His thinning hair was pasted flat... His weary face looked seamed and haggard" -- with the buoyant good health of his opponent -- "cool, precise, tough minded....A crisp, vigorous young man."³⁶

³⁴W.A. Swanberg, Luce and His Empire (New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), pp.106-07,131; Harold L. Ickes, The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes, III, 220.

³⁵Robert T. Elson, Time Inc. : The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, (New York : Atheneum, 1968), p.207; Swanberg, Luce and His Empire, p.131.

³⁶Swanberg, Luce and His Empire, pp.132, 220.

Against this prevailing background of opposition by Luce's publications to the Roosevelt Administrations,³⁷ the relations between Luce and Roosevelt were never close and sometimes hostile. There was little direct contact between the two, although the President did meet the publisher at Hyde Park in August 1937, and at the White House in May 1939, the latter meeting having been arranged at the suggestion of June Hamilton Rhodes, who reported to Marguerite Le Hand that Luce had paid the President a "perfectly wonderful tribute" in a recent speech.³⁸ Two further meetings occurred, in January 1940 and February 1941, the first at the publisher's request, the second at the President's.³⁹ Apart from these infrequent meetings, Roosevelt's communications with Luce, which were often handled through intermediaries, were almost exclusively concerned with objections by the President to the content of the latter's publications and of their style, which, in a reference to Time magazine, he once called "a serious detriment to the future of successful democracy in the United

³⁷ See also, James R. Jensen, "The New Conservatism of Fortune Magazine, 1930-1952," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1956), pp.51-56.

³⁸ John Franklin Carter to Marguerite LeHand, August 26, 1937, June Hamilton Rhodes to Marguerite LeHand, April 20, 1939, Grace Tully to Edwin M. Watson, May 1, 1939; President's Personal File 3338.

³⁹ Stephen Early to Edwin M. Watson, January 25, 1940, Henry Luce to Edwin M. Watson, February 27, 1941, Edwin M. Watson to Henry Luce, February 27, 1941; President's Personal File 3338.

States."⁴⁰ In February 1938 the President did sign a letter congratulating Time on its first fifteen years -- the magazine, the letter stated, "had shown a degree of originality that has been refreshing and oftentimes delightful" -- and wishing the publication "a long life in serving the public by disseminating accurate information in a manner to keep the reader from drowsing;"⁴¹ but denunciation by the President was far more common, and was never more dramatically accomplished than in November 1941, when the President issued a public statement attacking Time. Earlier that month, in a story on the political crisis facing the Popular Front government of Chile's President Pedro Aguirre, Time had reported that "while the Popular Front swayed, bushy mustached President Aguirre... spent more and more time with the red wine he cultivates." The Chilean Government demanded an immediate apology and, to compound the United States Government's embarrassment, President Aguirre died shortly after the report. At his press conference on the same day Roosevelt released a statement for direct quotation which pointed out that the United States Government had been forced to apologise for the "disgusting lie" which had appeared in Time and that it had been informed by its Ambassador to Chile that the article had been "a notable

⁴⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry Luce, November 20, 1940, memorandum Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, December 3, 1940; President's Personal File 3338.

⁴¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry Luce, February 8, 1938, President's Personal File 3338.

contribution to Nazi propaganda against the United States."⁴²
 In the event, Roosevelt's attack was followed by a brief, though, as it proved, tenuous rapprochement; in the full flush of patriotic enthusiasm after the attack on Pearl Harbour Luce wrote, in his response :

The drubbing you handed out to Time before December 7 was as tough a wallop as I ever had to take. If it will help you any to win the war I can take worse ones. Go to it! and God bless you.⁴³

Roosevelt told Luce in reply :

I like your letter... because it combines honest patriotism with genuine sportsmanship. It is another striking witness to the spirit of national unity which will win the war....The waters of Pearl Harbour have closed over many differences which formerly bulked big.⁴⁴

Franklin Roosevelt's relations with certain other publishers were more durable. By comparison with his cousin, Colonel Robert McCormick, with whose journalistic orientation he was eventually to become so closely identified, Captain Joseph Patterson maintained a friendship with Roosevelt and an allegiance to his Administration which were to extend into the President's third term. It was Patterson, whose acquaintance with Roosevelt dated from their schooldays,⁴⁵ who, in the early months of the new Administration, launched the movement to provide the new incumbent with a swimming pool.

⁴²Time, November 17, 1941; White House Press Release, November 25, 1941, President's Personal File 3338; Elson, Time Inc., pp.480-81.

⁴³Henry Luce to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 16, 1941, President's Personal File 3338.

⁴⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry Luce, December 22, 1941, President's Personal File 3338.

⁴⁵Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p.291.

Gratefully acknowledging the gift, Roosevelt wrote to the publisher in May 1933 : "The thought that this campaign was initiated voluntarily, without my knowledge or sanction, and subscribed to so generously means as much, if not more, than the pool itself."⁴⁶ From the outset, Patterson's mass-circulation New York Daily News fought strongly for the New Deal, its editorial of 6 March 1933 constituting a virtual journalistic blank cheque :

This newspaper now pledges itself to support the policies of President Franklin D. Roosevelt for a period of at least one year from today; longer, if circumstances warrant....Whatever Mr. Roosevelt may urge as methods of attacking these emergencies, we expect to support him, to withhold constructive criticism, to give the new leader a chance."⁴⁷

For almost eight years, the News was to provide active and often vociferous support.

Relations between Patterson and Roosevelt during the President's first two terms were close and cordial : there were consultations between them at the White House and at Hyde Park, affectionate messages, and requests by the publisher for advice.⁴⁸ An enthusiastic exchange of congratulatory

⁴⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph M. Patterson, May 30, 1933, President's Personal File, 245.

⁴⁷Quoted in John Tebbel, An American Dynasty : the Story of the McCormicks, Medills and Pattersons (New York : Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1947), pp.258-59.

⁴⁸Marvin H. McIntyre to Joseph M. Patterson, May 17, 1935, Joseph M. Patterson to Marvin H. McIntyre, May 20, 1935, Stephen Early to Joseph M. Patterson, August 5, 1936, Joseph M. Patterson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 5, 1937, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph M. Patterson, July 5, 1938, memorandum, Grace Tully to Marvin H. McIntyre, August 15, 1938; President's Personal File 245.

messages took place after Roosevelt's electoral success in 1936; when Patterson passed on to the White House a telegram message from Lord Beaverbrook which congratulated the President on his re-election and Patterson for the part he had played in securing it, Roosevelt's response was wholehearted :

I do not need to tell you how very splendid you have been throughout. I have a very strong feeling that the NEWS was worth more to us in the city in the way of votes than all the political meetings and speeches put together.⁴⁹

In September 1937 Patterson requested and was given an appointment with Roosevelt in order that he might be "advised on foreign policy,"⁵⁰ and, in recognition of the publisher's "great and helpful interest in this legislation," Roosevelt, in July 1940, made a presentation to Patterson of the pen with which he had signed a bill to enlarge the navy.⁵¹

Yet Patterson's views were changing in a manner which would bring himself and Roosevelt into direct and violent conflict. Three signed articles by the publisher in the News, written after he had returned from a European trip

⁴⁹ Joseph M. Patterson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 6, 1936 (enclosing letter from Beaverbrook to Patterson, November 6, 1936), Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph M. Patterson, November 9, 1936; President's Personal File 245.

⁵⁰ Joseph M. Patterson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 5, 1937, President's Personal File 245.

⁵¹ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph M. Patterson, July 24, 1940, President's Personal File 245.

in 1939, revealed the drift of his thinking. In the first, Patterson argued that the state of German roads and agriculture made the prospect of war that year remote; in the second he speculated that the Fuehrer was essentially an aloof and mystical figure; and in the third he spoke optimistically of the political future of Chamberlain, calculated that Munich had given the British Empire an additional ten months in which to prepare for war and expressed some doubt as to whether war would take place at all. When Hitler invaded Poland a month later the News spoke patriotically of the need to "be loyal and obedient to our government," but, as the conflict moved through its first year, the newspaper became increasingly isolationist, and, while it continued, for a time, to support Roosevelt as the man who was keeping the United States out of "Europe's war," it broke with him after his re-election over Lend-Lease, henceforth described by the paper as "the Dictator Bill." By October 1941 the News was declaring editorially : "This war should be known...as Roosevelt's war, because Franklin Roosevelt is the man who has got us into it as far as we are now."⁵² A temporary reconciliation was effected following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, when Patterson called on Roosevelt to confess that his isolationist policies had been misconceived. In a sustained attack, during which he read to Patterson a series of News editorials

⁵²Tebbel, American Dynasty, pp.263-65.

which had criticised the Administration, the President, it has been claimed, reduced the publisher to tears.⁵³

Patterson's apparent change of heart proved to be short-lived; the News was soon speculating editorially that the President was conspiring to destroy the American form of government and make himself "first Caesar" of the United States.⁵⁴ Patterson's newspaper continued its opposition to Roosevelt during the remainder of his third term, opposed his re-election in 1944 and was probably alone among the important dailies in the United States in not carrying an obituary editorial on the first possible occasion after the President's death.⁵⁵

A consideration of Franklin Roosevelt's relations with Roy Wilson Howard, of the powerful Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, also points to a significant discrepancy between the President's critique of newspaper owners as a class and the pattern of his relations with individual members of that group. In many ways, Howard was a newspaper publisher after Roosevelt's own heart : he had graduated to that position after a long and successful career in journalism which, beginning with his appointment as high school

⁵³Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, pp.291-93; memorandum, Edwin M. Watson to Stephen Early, December 10, 1941, J. Romanza to Edwin M. Watson, December 12, 1941; President's Personal File 245.

⁵⁴Quoted in Tebbel, American Dynasty, pp.265-66.

⁵⁵Ibid., p.268.

correspondent for the Indianapolis News, had continued with a variety of journalistic positions in Indianapolis, St. Louis, Cincinnati and New York, and culminated in his appointment first as Vice-President and General News Manager of the United Press and later as its President. In the latter position, Howard had enjoyed outstanding success, securing interviews with several figures of international importance. In 1922 he became a partner and the dominating influence in the Scripps newspaper group, a consolidation once described by Calvin Coolidge as "a world power, influential beyond the dreams of its founders," and by the mid nineteen thirties was the head of a press empire that embraced a long chain of daily newspapers, the United Press, and the Newspaper Enterprise Association feature syndicate.⁵⁶

His initial doubts about Franklin Roosevelt having been resolved at a meeting between himself, Scripps-Howard editor-in-chief George B. Parker and Roosevelt in early October 1932, Howard threw the very considerable weight of more than forty Scripps-Howard newspapers behind Roosevelt in the campaign of that year,⁵⁷ and, throughout the President's first term, the publisher's support for the New Deal and its chief architect was strong and unvarying.

⁵⁶ John Tebbel, The Compact History of the American Newspaper (New York : Hawthorne Books, 1963), pp. 237-38; George Seldes, Lords of the Press (New York : Julian Messner, Inc., 1938), p. 76.

⁵⁷ Louis B. Wehle, Hidden Threads of History : Wilson Through Roosevelt (New York : Macmillan, 1953), pp. 105-06.

"Don't let the fact that I was not enthusiastic about Frank Roosevelt before his nomination confuse you as to my present state of mind," Howard wrote to Stephen Early on 6 March 1933. "I had all my enthusiasm for Hoover before his election. My enthusiasm for Roosevelt has developed steadily ever since his nomination." In the same letter Howard offered "the full measure of our cooperation" and assured Early that "when you have any idea that you believe constructive, you can be sure that if you care to shoot it at me, I'll give it everything I have in the way of serious consideration."⁵⁸ On the same day Howard forwarded to the President a copy of a message which he was preparing to dispatch to all Scripps-Howard editors :

There is every indication to-day that Roosevelt's speech Saturday and the new administrations' (sic) aggressive action Sunday have smashed the Hindenberg line of the depression. The War is not over....All of which should be stated frankly in editorials and news coverage....Be sure that your local editorials sound a note of leadership and smiling courage.

Obviously gratified, Roosevelt thanked Howard for his "fine message."⁵⁹ Anxious further to demonstrate his support, the publisher brought to Roosevelt's attention a reply which he, Howard, had made to a letter from Parry D. Saylor, President of the Canada Dry Corporation, in which Saylor had suggested that the Corporation's advertising in Howard's

⁵⁸Roy Howard to Stephen Early, March 6, 1933, Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

⁵⁹Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 6, 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, March 9, 1933; President's Personal File 68.

newspapers was not unrelated to their editorial attitudes toward the New Deal, and implied that an increase in the volume of the former would follow a more critical orientation in the latter. Howard's response must have disappointed Saylor but ought to have pleased the President: "I am so sold on the efforts he [Roosevelt] has made," he wrote, "that neither as an editor nor as an individual am I disposed to indulge in any back-seat driving at the present time." The aim of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, Howard went on to state, would be to continue to support Roosevelt "in the effort which he is making to construct a sounder and a more progressive social and economic structure."⁶⁰

Howard's continuing enthusiasm for Roosevelt was reflected, editorially, in his newspapers. In April 1935 the President wrote to the publisher expressing his gratitude for a New York World-Telegram editorial entitled "Stop the Calamity Howling!" which Howard had sent to him. "The fate of more than a hundred million individuals," the World Telegram had informed its readers, "is almost completely in the hands of Franklin Roosevelt. Any political enemy who would tie his hands imperils the economic lives of the entire American people." The editorial went on to invite the President to "state clearly and simply what popular support you desire, and if the need exists point out the men or the

⁶⁰ Parry D. Saylor to Roy Howard, December 22, 1933, Roy Howard to Parry D. Saylor, December 29, 1933, Roy Howard to Louis Howe, December 29, 1933, memorandum, Louis Howe to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 21, 1934; Official File 53.

interests who are blocking actions necessary to recovery," and assured him that he would "not be disappointed with the results." Roosevelt's response was effusive : "You were on the conservative side," he wrote to Howard, "in saying that this editorial might interest us mildly....our interest and appreciation far exceeds any such appellation."⁶¹

When, the following month, the World Telegram saluted the President for his veto message on the bonus -- "Rarely has such courage been shown by a man in public life" -- Howard again forwarded a copy of the editorial to Roosevelt adding, on this occasion, his own tribute : "Your speech yesterday scored a new high in my opinion. It was just great."⁶² Such support was general throughout Scripps-Howard newspapers which, Stephen Early informed the President, were "truly carrying the flag for the New Deal."⁶³

Relationships between Howard and Roosevelt were close throughout Roosevelt's first term. The publisher was a frequent Presidential visitor, and wrote repeatedly to offer advice, sympathetic criticism and assurances of his continuing

⁶¹"Stop the Calamity Howling!" editorial, New York World Telegram, April 15, 1935; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, April 18, 1935. See copy of this editorial and Roosevelt's letter in President's Personal File 68.

⁶²Editorial, New York World Telegram, May 23, 1935. See copy of this editorial and Howard's letter to Roosevelt, n.d., in President's Personal File 68.

⁶³Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, n.d., President's Personal File 68.

allegiance.⁶⁴ In May 1935 Howard warned Roosevelt of an attempt that was being made to suggest that the President would be unperturbed if Congress overrode his proposed veto of the Patman soldiers' bonus bill, and, adopting the publisher's suggestion, Roosevelt clarified his position in a personal statement at a subsequent press conference.⁶⁵ Later that year Howard wrote to Roosevelt expressing disquiet over "some of the techniques recently employed in Washington," assuring the President, at the same time, that his "enthusiasm for the basic principles at stake has in no wise lessened."⁶⁶ A characteristically enthusiastic letter from Howard followed a speech made by the President in April 1936 : "Reading that Baltimore speech today," Howard wrote, "eye [sic] got the greatest lift eye [sic] have enjoyed in months. It was a generation ahead of most of the political yammering eye [sic] have heard during the past eight months." Roosevelt responded with an invitation to the publisher to stay overnight at the White House.⁶⁷ Howard continued, also, to seek the President's advice as

⁶⁴See Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 3, 1933, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marvin H. McIntyre and Marguerite LeHand, September 8, 1933, memorandum, Marvin H. McIntyre to Marguerite LeHand, September 12, 1933, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, October 8, 1934, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, October 8, 1934, Marvin H. McIntyre to Roy Howard, May 11, 1935, memorandum Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marvin H. McIntyre, July 22, 1935; President's Personal File 68.

⁶⁵Roy Howard to Stephen Early, May 16, 1935, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, May 20, 1935; President's Personal File 68.

⁶⁶Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 18, 1935, President's Personal File 68.

⁶⁷Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 14, 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, April 19, 1936; President's Personal File 68.

to the editorial policies which his newspapers ought to adopt. Toward the end of Roosevelt's first term, Press Secretary Early conveyed to the President Howard's feeling that he had "reached the point now where he would like to come in to get fresh information and guidance before he, through misunderstanding or misinterpretation of policies made at a distance, goes off on the wrong track," and, following discussions with Roosevelt during an overnight stay at the White House, Howard expressed gratitude for the opportunity to "re-adjust my sights,"⁶⁸ and assured the President that "we are going to give you -- or honestly attempt to give you -- a full 100% of our support."⁶⁸ When Roosevelt was elected for a second term, Howard wrote expressing his delight.⁶⁹

Howard's efforts to cooperate with Roosevelt went beyond his editorial endorsement of New Deal policies. The celebrated and supposedly spontaneous exchange of letters between the President and the publisher in September 1935, over the need of business for a "breathing spell" following a hectic period of New Deal reform, was a contrived and carefully orchestrated move in which Roosevelt and Howard collaborated closely in an attempt to allay the fears of business on the one hand and to permit the President to make

⁶⁸Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, n.d., Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, n.d.; President's Personal File 68.

⁶⁹Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 6, 1936, President's Personal File 68.

a full public statement in defence of the New Deal on the other. Following a meeting between himself, Roosevelt and Early in July 1935, Howard sent a draft of his "breathing spell" letter to the White House with the request that Roosevelt amend it in any way he wished and include in it any matter on which he desired to make public comment. "I believe," Howard wrote to Stephen Early, "[that] the stunt can be handled in a fashion to do some real good." Roosevelt made substantial modifications to Howard's draft which was then returned to Howard and finally released by the White House, together with the President's much more extensive reply, on September 6. Three days after the release Howard wrote to the President to express his gratification at the beneficial effects which the exchange of letters appeared to him to have produced. "I am very happy," he told Roosevelt, "to have been able to cooperate with you in getting over this note of reassurance."⁷⁰

Beginning in 1937, Scripps-Howard editorial policy toward the New Deal began to evince a more critical tone. In July the Washington News, expressing scepticism over Roosevelt's announcement that he hoped to save \$400,000,000 in the coming fiscal year, pointed out that the President, in attempting a saving of \$295,000,000 over the last quarter

⁷⁰Roy Howard to Stephen Early, July 30, 1935, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, August 6, 1935, Roy Howard to Stephen Early, August 7, 1935, Roy Howard to Stephen Early, August 16, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, September 2, 1935, Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 6, 1935; President's Personal File 68.

of the preceding fiscal year, had managed less than one third of that figure. Obviously nettled, Roosevelt ordered the Bureau of the Budget to check the newspaper's claim and announced his intention of taking the matter up with Scripps Howard.⁷¹ In the same month the News carried a series of editorials expressing the Scripps-Howard chain's opposition to the President's attempt to re-organize the Supreme Court. Roosevelt was urged by the News to abandon a scheme which, it was asserted, was threatening not merely his own standing and the entire New Deal programme, but the nation's form of government as well. "Fully appreciating the provocation and the irritation that caused the President to launch what has proved to be his ill-starred idea," the News declared on July 20, 1937, "we believe today that defeat of it is necessary if democracy is to live in this land."⁷² Nevertheless, Howard continued to express support for what he considered to be the essence of Roosevelt's programme and drew the President's attention, in a telegram of July 16, 1937, to what he considered to be "the strongest and most unselfseeking newspaper support the fundamentals of the New Deal have to-day."⁷³

⁷¹"Will the Brakes Work?" editorial, Washington News, July 8, 1937. See copy of this editorial in President's Personal File 68. Memorandum, Stephen Early to Director of Budget, July 10, 1937, memorandum Bureau of Budget to Stephen Early, July 15, 1937; President's Personal File 68. The actual saving achieved was \$194,000,000, rather than the anticipated saving of \$269,000,000.

⁷²Editorial, Washington News, July 20, 1937. See copy of this editorial in President's Personal File 68.

⁷³Roy Howard to Stephen Early, July 16, 1937, President's Personal File 68.

Relations between Roosevelt and Howard were further strained by an incident which occurred in October 1937. On the fourth of that month, the New York Post and the Philadelphia Record carried a report by Robert S. Allen of a speech made by the President at the opening of a flood control and irrigation project at Fort Peck, North Dakota. "The highlight of the President's speech," Allen wrote, "was a caustic spanking of Roy W. Howard." Although Roosevelt had not mentioned the publisher by name, he had, according to Allen's account, made scornful reference to a New York owner of newspapers, a "doubting Thomas," who, in a recent conversation with him, had urged that power and flood control projects be abandoned and the resulting jobless be put on the dole since one half of his own income was being taken by Federal income taxation.⁷⁴ Clearly perturbed, Howard wrote to Stephen Early, enclosing a copy of Allen's dispatch, pointing out that, with the possible exception of the reference to a "doubting Thomas," none of the information given by the President applied to him, but asking, nevertheless, for an assurance that no person in the Presidential party had said anything that might have justified Allen's story. Early's response must have been less than completely reassuring, consisting, as it did, of an assertion that neither the President nor any of his official party had, on inquiry, admitted to naming the

⁷⁴Robert S. Allen, "Human Budget Is More Vital, Says President," New York Post, October 4, 1937. See copy of this article in Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

individual to whom the President, in his speech, had referred. Early gave essentially the same reply to a subsequent letter from Howard which made reference to a report that Roosevelt, during a Hyde Park press conference before a recent Western trip, had related substantially the same story about the unnamed New York publisher and, on being asked by a reporter whether the publisher referred to had earned a reputation for wearing "loud" ties, had replied : "You have it!"⁷⁵ When, a few days later, he accepted an invitation to meet the President, Howard told Presidential Secretary Marvin McIntyre that the projected conversation might be "the beginning of various other talks or the end of all of them."⁷⁶ In the event, however, the conflict between Roosevelt and Howard was smoothed over : the meeting was followed by an off-the-record conference between the President and the editorial board of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, shortly after which Howard sent to the White House an editorial written by Scripps-Howard editor-in-chief George Parker which praised what the writer considered to be Roosevelt's more realistic approach to the recession and his attempts to end the feud between business and government.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Roy Howard to Stephen Early, October 12, 1937, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, October 13, 1937, Roy Howard to Stephen Early, October 15, 1937, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, October 16, 1937; Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

⁷⁶ Memorandum, Marvin H. McIntyre to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 20, 1937, President's Personal File 68.

⁷⁷ Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 5, 1937, President's Personal File 68; Roy Howard to Stephen Early, November 29, 1937, Early Papers, Roy Howard folder (copy of editorial "Roosevelt Realism," New York World Telegram, November 29, 1937 enclosed).

Yet, by 1938, the change in the editorial policy of the Scripps-Howard press had been recognised : "The gradual swing to the Right of the two dozen newspapers controlled by Roy Howard," declared George Seldes in the New Republic of July 1938, "has provided a major mystery as well as a major tragedy....liberalism and progressivism have almost disappeared from these papers." Although Howard was sensitive to the charge that he had abandoned the New Deal and refused to announce any formal break with its policies, he had, according to Seldes, "forgotten the school-boy axiom that front-page actions speak louder than editorial words."⁷⁸

Although the deterioration of relations between Roosevelt and Howard continued, the point of complete rupture was never reached. In April 1939 the President arranged a meeting with the publisher after the latter's return from a European trip,⁷⁹ and when, a month later, Roosevelt wrote to Howard objecting to certain statements made in a Scripps-Howard editorial, although his criticism was sharp, his letter ended on a friendly note. "Go to it Old Top," the President wrote, "and come and see me soon." Howard replied in similar vein, admitting the fallibility of Scripps-Howard editorial

⁷⁸George Seldes, "Roy Howard and his Papers," New Republic (July 27, 1938), 322. See, also, "Attention Roy Howard," Nation (May 14, 1938), 548-49.

⁷⁹Memorandum, Stephen Early to Edwin M. Watson, April 17, 1939, Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

writers, thanking the President for his criticism, but taking exception to Roosevelt's statement that he could not "expect the large number of people who write editorials to stick to facts." "I think you can expect it," Howard stated, "and I think you should expect it, and whenever I or any of our outfit desert the facts, I'll not only resent it, but I'll appreciate having you call the matter to my attention."⁸⁰ Two months later, however, when Roosevelt criticised Howard directly over a United Press report that he, Roosevelt, and Cordell Hull had disagreed over the language of a neutrality message which the President planned to send to Congress, the publisher responded with less equanimity. Roosevelt's anger at the story, which he had read in the anti-Administration Washington Times-Herald under the sensational headline : "Neutrality Note Splits F.D.R. and Hull," was such that he summoned United Press Bureau Manager Lyle Wilson to the White House to denounce the report and then issued a public statement declaring that the United Press story was "wholly false," and "the culmination of other false stories," and that the incident marked "the limit of any decent person's patience." Wilson vigorously defended the conduct of the United Press and so, when Roosevelt involved him in the controversy, did Howard. Pointing out that both the story and the confirmations of it had come from highly placed members of the

⁸⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, May 3, 1939, Official File 53; Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 8, 1939, President's Personal File 68.

President's own Administration, Howard rebuked Roosevelt for using "the enormous power of your position to castigate working newspapermen whose good faith, loyalty and patriotism is... no more open to question than is yours or mine," and reproached him for overlooking, by his criticism of Howard, the fact that the Scripps-Howard newspapers had "editorialized and fought to the limit of our ability to support your stand and your program, on the neutrality and arms embargo."⁸¹

The year 1940 marked the nadir in relations between Howard and Roosevelt. In June the President was angered by the refusal of Howard to undertake a survey of conditions in Latin America for the Administration. He did not name Howard as the person in question when he referred to this refusal in his 1940 acceptance speech but, some weeks later, the pro-New Deal columnists Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner did.⁸² The incident had an unfortunate sequel when, in September 1940, Hugh G. Grant, American Minister to Thailand, reported that Howard, during a visit to the American legation, had made a bitter attack on Roosevelt, accusing him of bad faith in offering the publisher the South American assignment, suggesting that he was mentally

⁸¹Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 17, 1939, President's Personal File 68; Joe Alex Morris, Deadline Every Minute : the Story of the United Press (New York : Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957), pp.219-20.

⁸²Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, June 1, 1940, President's Personal File 68; article in Portland, Oregonian, August 14, 1940, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.816.

and physically exhausted, and charging that he was attempting to lead the United States into war. Informed of Grant's charges, Howard described them to the President as "an unconscionable perversion of the word and the spirit of the conversation."⁸³

Sickness and war were later to effect a measure of reconciliation. When Howard became ill in mid 1941, Roosevelt was willing to sign, though he did not compose, an affectionate letter to the publisher : "Lowell [Mellett] has told me what the doctor has told you," the letter began, "and I can't believe it. There couldn't be anything wrong with your heart. That always has been in the right place. It has just been your head, Roy." In his letter of thanks Howard observed that it was "characteristically kind" of the President to take notice of his indisposition.⁸⁴ By the time Howard had recovered, the United States was at war and, in these new circumstances, he was quick to pledge his support. Writing in April 1942 to inform Stephen Early, and, through him, the President, that he was "back on the job" once more, Howard spoke glowingly of the morale of the people of Hawaii and forecast that a similar spirit would prevail in the United States "as soon as the President succeeds in the grand effort he is making to achieve by

⁸³Telegram, Ambassador Grant to Secretary of State, September 2, 1940, Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 15, 1941; Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

⁸⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Roy Howard, July 16, 1941, Roy Howard to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 19, 1941; President's Personal File 68.

education what the Japs achieved so quickly in Hawaii, by other means, on December 7th." Early's assurance that Roosevelt had been "delighted" at the news of Howard's recovery and "naturally pleased with your comments on the efforts he is making to win the war," did not quite capture the spirit of the President's blunt memorandum to his Press Secretary : "Action speaks louder than words."⁸⁵ Encouraged by Early's response and oblivious of the President's, Howard wrote again almost immediately.

Now that we are in [he stated] I have dropped the curtain on everything that did, or did not, happen before December 7th. I think the hope of any man with an ounce of vision must be to see the President successful in his efforts to achieve total war at the earliest possible hour.⁸⁶

To make good that offer of cooperation, Howard passed on to Presidential Assistant Lowell Mellett some comments made to a United Press reporter on the effectiveness of Allied propaganda in Europe and an assessment by Jim Miller, South American Manager of the United Press, of the political situation in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.⁸⁷

Although the allegiance of Howard to the New Deal

⁸⁵Roy Howard to Stephen Early, April 23, 1942, Stephen Early to Roy Howard, April 29, 1942, memorandum Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, April 29, 1942; Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

⁸⁶Roy Howard to Stephen Early, May 1, 1942, Early Papers, Roy Howard folder.

⁸⁷Roy Howard to Lowell Mellett, May 26, 1942, Papers of Lowell Mellett, box 13, Roy Howard folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

weakened after the attempt to reorganise the Supreme Court in 1937, and the disaffection between publisher and President became serious, the complex and shifting pattern of relations between Franklin Roosevelt and Roy Howard and the substantial support which the Scripps-Howard chain gave to the policies of the Administration are quite obscured by the blanket criticisms which Roosevelt levelled against the newspaper publishers of America.

When Roosevelt spoke, as he frequently did, of the opposition which he faced from "the overwhelming majority" of the American press, and especially from the larger papers, he could not fairly have included in either of those categories the New York Times, which supported him in the 1932 and 1936 elections (and was to support him in 1944), and with the publishers of which he enjoyed, on the surface at least, extremely cordial relations. Adolph Ochs backed Roosevelt in 1932 and, although shocked by some New Deal measures, accepted the early reforms in the belief that he was not compromising his conservatism by adopting new measures to preserve democracy in the face of the new dangers with which it was faced.⁸⁸ The friendship between Ochs and the President pre-dated Roosevelt's election and continued until Ochs' death in April 1935.⁸⁹ In an affectionate letter to the publisher in November 1933, which

⁸⁸Gerald W. Johnson, An Honorable Titan : A Biographical Study of Adolph S. Ochs (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1946), pp.154,277.

⁸⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Adolph S. Ochs, September 5, 1932, quoted in The Roosevelt Letters, ed. by Elliott Roosevelt, III, 91.

catches the spirit of the relationship between the two men, Roosevelt expressed sympathy with Ochs over his recent illness and invited the publisher and his wife to stay overnight at the White House. "Do not," he concluded, "consider this a command, but only the request of an old friend of yours who greatly likes to see you." Ochs replied with similar warmth. "I know," he wrote, "[that] you have the best interests of the country at heart and are doing all in your power to extricate us from this complicated situation."⁹⁰

The one controversy of significance between Roosevelt and Ochs saw an interesting reversal of the President's customary procedure of blaming the publisher for the failings of the reporter. When Arthur Krock reported in the New York Times of November 21, 1934 that Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Minister, was disliked by the United States Government because of the manner in which he had approached discussions in London over naval ratios, Roosevelt wrote a letter of complaint to Ochs charging that Krock's article was "interpretive" rather than factual, and pointing out that this was not the first occasion on which that journalist had "rendered a real disservice." On the suggestion of the Times' Managing Editor, Edwin L. James, Ochs had Krock himself draft a reply. Sent to the President under Ochs' signature, it repudiated Roosevelt's charges by pointing out that the article was based "on the statement of not

⁹⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt to Adolph S. Ochs, November 14, 1933, Adolph S. Ochs to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 20, 1933; President's Personal File 29.

one, but several persons who are recognized as reflecting the administration feeling in these matters" (subsequently revealed by Krock to have included the Secretary of State), that these persons had assured Krock that publication of the story "would serve the best possible purpose," and that information received by the Times from London had indicated that Sir John Simon "had made amends."⁹¹

In a message of congratulations to Roosevelt in November 1932, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, had told the new President : "Yours indeed is a mandate from all the people,"⁹² and when Sulzberger took over the control of the Times, Adolf Berle suggested, on the basis of recent discussions with the publisher, that Roosevelt might find it beneficial to invite the publisher to stay overnight at the White House. "It was grand to see you," the President wrote to his guest after their meeting. "I do hope you and Mrs. Sulzberger will come down again soon." Sulzberger, in turn, expressed his appreciation of the opportunity to exchange views with the President.⁹³

Under Sulzberger, the Times supported Roosevelt in

⁹¹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Adolph S. Ochs, November 26, 1934, Adolph S. Ochs to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 30, 1934; President's Personal File 29; Krock Memoirs, pp.182-83.

⁹²Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 9, 1932, President's Personal File 675.

⁹³Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 31, 1936, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 6, 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, March 5, 1936; President's Personal File 675.

1936, switched to Willkie in 1940, largely because of its opposition to the idea of a third term, but returned, albeit belatedly, to Roosevelt in 1944, on the grounds that he was better equipped than his opponent to lead the nation to victory in war.⁹⁴ In welcoming the last-mentioned decision, Roosevelt displayed, for the Times, a quite uncharacteristic enthusiasm, informing Sulzberger that the endorsement of the newspaper had been "one of the greatest encouragements" in his attempts to "prepare the way for a lasting peace." His letter of appreciation concluded with fulsome praise :

For the encouragement you have given me and my administration, I wish to make this acknowledgment, and I want to let you know, too, that I feel the task ahead of us would be a great deal harder, our success a great deal more doubtful, if it were not for the courage and integrity that are best typified by newspapers like the NEW YORK TIMES -- newspapers that hold their policies above price or economic influences.⁹⁵

On a personal level, the relationship between Roosevelt and Sulzberger was marked by periodic meetings between them, the occasional affectionate exchange of greetings, efforts by the publisher to cooperate with the war effort and attempts by the President to discipline the Times when it strayed from the path of journalistic rectitude. The publisher met the President at Hyde Park in October 1937 -- this time at the suggestion of Henry Morgenthau (who sent word

⁹⁴Meyer Berger, The Story of the New York Times, 1851-1951 (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1951), p.493.

⁹⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, November 21, 1944, President's Personal File 675.

through Presidential Secretary Watson that "he [Morgenthau] had a very good reason for suggesting that you [Roosevelt] ask Arthur Sulzberger [sic] and his wife up here while you are at Hyde Park," and that Roosevelt "would understand")⁹⁶ --- and with some regularity following the outbreak of war.⁹⁷ In January 1940, Sulzberger sent to Roosevelt a dispatch from the Times' Berlin correspondent giving details of the Reich's ban on news, and, in October of the following year, with obvious patriotic pride, a collected volume of the war-time editorials of the Times.⁹⁸ In May 1943, Roosevelt, notwithstanding his veto against travel by any newspaper owner to any war areas, gave the publisher permission to go to Moscow, though only on the conditions that he do so in his capacity as a member of the Central Committee of the Red

⁹⁶Marvin H. McIntyre to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 14, 1937, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marvin H. McIntyre, October 15, 1937, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Marvin H. McIntyre, October 16, 1937; President's Personal File 675.

⁹⁷See, for example : Edwin M. Watson to Arthur H. Sulzberger, December 16, 1939, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Edwin M. Watson, December 18, 1939, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 27, 1940, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, November 28, 1940, Stephen Early to Arthur H. Sulzberger, November 29, 1940, memorandum, Stephen Early to Edwin M. Watson, February 8, 1941, memorandum, Stephen Early to Edwin M. Watson, May 19, 1941, Ruthjane Rumelt to William D. Hassett, August 31, 1943, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, June 13, 1944, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Edwin M. Watson, January 1, 1945; President's Personal File 675.

⁹⁸Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 2, 1940, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 17, 1941; President's Personal File 675.

Cross, and that he refrain from writing any articles.⁹⁹ On his return, Sulzberger wrote that he was "eager to see you [Roosevelt] to tell you of some of my experiences" and enclosed a programme of a concert of American Music performed in Moscow on the fourth of July. In a cordial reply, Roosevelt expressed satisfaction at the publisher's safe return and regret at having been unable to hear the Russians' rendering of "Old Man River."¹⁰⁰ When their projected meeting was postponed because of the Italian surrender, Sulzberger wrote to Roosevelt expressing his delight.¹⁰¹ Following another overseas trip which Sulzberger made in 1944, Roosevelt asked the publisher to discuss with him "a number of foreign matters, especially the problem of Poland."¹⁰² An exchange of letters between Roosevelt and Sulzberger late in 1944 marked a high point in their relations. On his return from a tour of the Pacific, Sulzberger, in responding to Roosevelt's letter praising the Times for its support in the recent election and for its general journalistic influence, wrote : "I am overcome with wonder at what we are doing in the Pacific War....," and, he continued, making a suggestion

⁹⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Sumner Welles, May 11, 1943, President's Personal File 675.

¹⁰⁰Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 2, 1943, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, August 4, 1943; President's Personal File 675.

¹⁰¹Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 8, 1943, President's Personal File 675.

¹⁰²Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, June 13, 1944, President's Personal File 675.

which under other circumstances the President might have found objectionable," only hope I can find the way to reflect some of that feeling in the columns of the New York Times."¹⁰³

Twice in 1940 Roosevelt approached Sulzberger directly over stories in the New York Times which the President saw as detrimental to the United States. In May of that year he wrote at length to the publisher "privately" and "off the record" on a matter which, he implied, concerned the well-being not merely of the United States, but also of the world. According to Roosevelt's account, the White House, on the previous day, had learned that the Times was about to carry a story from Rome that Roosevelt had made another peace overture to Mussolini, who, in his turn, had rejected it. When Mr. Hulen, of the Times' Washington Bureau, had attempted to confirm the story at the White House and the State Department, he had, Roosevelt assured Sulzberger, been told that the story was untrue and, indeed, a formal White House announcement had been issued to the effect that the dispatch from Rome on which the Times' story was to be based, was "completely erroneous." The essence of Roosevelt's complaint was that the White House denial had been mentioned in the "sub head" rather than the "head" and that it had not been printed separately by the Times but had been inserted parenthetically in the story after the lead. Roosevelt concluded by informing

¹⁰³ Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 26, 1944, President's Personal File 675.

Sulzberger that reports reaching him from London and Paris indicated that the story had done great harm and went on to charge that the Times had "unwittingly, of course, helped the cause of Germany." The letter obviously irritated Sulzberger who assured Roosevelt in his reply that no-one at the Times would willingly have added to his problems in foreign affairs, and that on his own instructions, the later edition of the Times on the day in question carried the White House statement as the lead to the story and referred to the official denial in its headline. Having confirmed that its Rome correspondent was "positive as to his source," the Times had assumed that the denial was "diplomatic in character" and that "while the approach had not been in the form of a peace offer, it was an effort to involve Rome in a discussion with this country along such lines as might tie her hand against any immediate entry into hostilities." Sulzberger concluded his letter on a note of feigned incredulity :

It is amazing how limited is our imagination. When events such as have just transpired take place,...they are so infinitely worse -- so infinitely more threatening in their aspects -- than anything we have been able to conceive!¹⁰⁴

Later that year the President again objected directly to Sulzberger about a report by New York Times correspondent John White that Uruguay and the United States had reached an agreement on naval and air bases. The story, he complained, had caused a serious controversy in political

¹⁰⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, May 9, 1940, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 10, 1940; President's Personal File 675.

circles in Uruguay and played into the hands of those who were opposing efforts being made toward continental defence. As White's dispatches had caused embarrassment to the United States' Government on several previous occasions and resulted in a series of complaints from the Argentine and Brazilian governments, he ought, the President strongly hinted, to be replaced. Having thoroughly investigated the complaint, Sulzberger took, on this occasion, the action which the President had suggested.¹⁰⁵

Notwithstanding his occasional differences with them, therefore, Franklin Roosevelt's relations with Adolph Ochs and Arthur Sulzberger were marked by a degree of cordiality and amiability of which his own statements about newspaper publishers gave no intimation.

In the light of Roosevelt's objections to newspaper owners, it could be thought of as somewhat surprising that the President's dealings with Eugene Meyer, the banker who bought the Washington Post, and who had come, therefore, in Roosevelt's terms, from "the counting room" rather than "the news desk," were marked by friendliness rather than hostility, and, particularly after the outbreak of war, by offers from the publisher of assistance and indications of support. In a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1934, Meyer characterised the editorial policy

¹⁰⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, November 13, 1940, Arthur H. Sulzberger to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 15, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Arthur H. Sulzberger, December 2, 1940, Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 2, 1940, memorandum, Edwin M. Watson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 7, 1940; President's Personal File 675.

of the Post as being based on "a philosophy of human conduct and of democratic government as established by certain tested principles which we consider distinctly American." The policy, Meyer stated, had been "rational, realistic, and [constructively] critical," and the newspaper had "sought scrupulously to avoid a vindictive or partisan note."¹⁰⁶ In practice this meant that the Post supported the early New Deal initiatives, swung against Roosevelt in 1935, and maintained a generally critical attitude toward his domestic policies from that time, but gave strong support to the Administration's foreign and defence policies.¹⁰⁷

On a personal level, Meyer sought appointments with Roosevelt after his return from overseas trips in 1939 and 1941 for the purpose of passing on information likely to be of value to the President¹⁰⁸ and, beginning in 1938, supplied Roosevelt with the results of opinion polls which had been commissioned by the Post. In March 1941, for example, Meyer called to Roosevelt's attention the results of a series of polls which showed that the transfer of forty more destroyers to the Allies would be approved by

¹⁰⁶Problems of Journalism : Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1934, p.206.

¹⁰⁷For an analysis of the editorial policies of the Washington Post see chapter V, pp. 196-97.

¹⁰⁸Memorandum, Stephen Early to William D. Hassett, August 11, 1939, memorandum, William D. Hassett to Stephen Early, August 11, 1939, memorandum, ? to Edwin M. Watson, October 16, 1941; President's Personal File 5018.

fifty-six per cent of the population and opposed by twenty-six per cent, that there was sharp public hostility to strikes in defence industries and overwhelming support for projected Federal moves to deal with them, and that men of draft age favoured the Lend-Lease Bill. In July 1943, Meyer sent Roosevelt the results of a trial national poll which indicated that, if an election had been held at that time, the President would have received fifty-nine per cent of the vote.¹⁰⁹ In the congratulatory messages which Roosevelt received from Meyer after his war-time speeches can be seen a further indication of the publisher's support. In August 1941, for instance, Meyer cabled Roosevelt from London : "Hearty congratulations on strength of policy and simplicity and logic of your statement." "Many, many thanks for that message of congratulations," Roosevelt wrote to him in reply. "Your kind expressions are appreciated immensely."¹¹⁰

The list of publishers with whom Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed cordial relations can be extended. The friendship between Roosevelt and William Allen White, owner and publisher of the Emporia Gazette, preceded Roosevelt's Presidency,¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Edward C. Eicher to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 18, 1939, Eugene Meyer to Ralph Foster, March 28, 1941, Edwin M. Watson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 29, 1943; President's Personal File 5018.

¹¹⁰ Eugene Meyer to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 12, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Eugene Meyer, September 16, 1941; President's Personal File 5018.

¹¹¹ See, for example : William Allen White to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 11, 1928, Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, February 28, 1928, Papers of William Allen White, Series C, box 139, Library of Congress; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Rear-Platform Extemporaneous Remarks at Emporia, Kansas," October 13, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 465.

endured throughout it and easily transcended any dislike which the President may have had for newspaper owners as a class. A lengthy and affectionate correspondence between the two reveals its strength. There was more than a little justice, too, in Roosevelt's claim that "Bill agrees with me three years and a half out of every four."¹¹² "It gives me a great deal of pleasure," he wrote to the Kansas publisher in January 1934, after a supporter had drawn his attention to one of White's editorials, "to know that you are with us in these strenuous times."¹¹³ Later, in January 1940, after White had sent him a Gazette editorial endorsing the Administration's trade-agreements programme, Roosevelt told the publisher: "At this critical time in world affairs it is fine to know that there are strong voices like yours which are willing and ready, irrespective of any partisan consideration, to speak out courageously in defense of constructive and far-sighted policies."¹¹⁴ The note of non-partisan cooperation was struck also in an exchange of letters in June 1938 over a request by the President to the publisher for a confidential assessment of one of the candidates for the Republican primaries in Kansas, whom Roosevelt had heard was "openly a fascist and... showing KKK tendencies." After a lengthy discussion of the

¹¹²Press Conference No.360-A, April 15, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, IX, 268.

¹¹³Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, January 22, 1934, White Papers, Series C, box 217.

¹¹⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, January 23, 1940, White Papers, Series C, box 347.

man in question, White, a Republican and the owner of a Republican newspaper, made reference to Roosevelt's pledge to keep the source of the information confidential :

If John Hamilton puts me up against the wall and Jim Farley stands you up beside me, each of us for trafficking with the enemy, I hope someone will lend us a flag so that we can hold it up and tell the world that we died for our country and to hell with the party.¹¹⁵

Later, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, White was to serve as intermediary between Roosevelt and Willkie in an effort to prevent the issue of the Administration's foreign policy from dominating the 1940 Presidential campaign.¹¹⁶

On other occasions, White wrote to the President with entreaties, or to offer encouragement or advice.¹¹⁷

The conclusion to a letter of June 1939 was characteristic :

Before closing will you permit one who differed from you about the court plan and who bats his eyes and swallows and gasps a bit as our debts mount to say that I think you did one swell job entertaining the King and Queen from England.¹¹⁸

Himself a critic of the press and particularly of the

¹¹⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, June 8, 1938, William Allen White to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 10, 1938; White Papers, Series C, box 290.

¹¹⁶William Allen White, The Autobiography of William Allen White (New York : Macmillan, 1946), pp.641-42.

¹¹⁷See, for example : William Allen White to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 22, 1934, White Papers, Series C, box 217.

¹¹⁸William Allen White to Franklin D. Roosevelt, June 8, 1939, White Papers, Series C, box 320.

influence of commercialism on its standards,¹¹⁹ White nevertheless manifested concern over Roosevelt's growing offence at that institution. In his introductory speech as President of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association at that body's annual press conference with the President in April 1939 White spoke in a conciliatory manner. "Most of us," he told Roosevelt, "have agreed with most of the things that you have tried to do. If some of us have disagreed with a few of the things, it was in sorrow, not in anger, and it hurt us much more than it did you. (laughter)"¹²⁰ In an exchange of letters the following November the publisher returned to this theme:

Now about newspapers : don't let them get in your hair. They do the best they can do and you do the best you can do and in both cases it is a pretty good job. God knows we are the best informed people in the world. And also if God doesn't know I'll probably get there before you do and tell him that F.D.R. has done a swell job, started a great nation thinking in new altruistic terms about new human relations which must be preserved if our country stands the wrack of the storm.

So what do you care? And anyway don't bother about me. You turn around to your desk and go to ruling. And know that one friend who sometimes yells "ouch" at you, in the main and on the whole thinks you are one fell of a heller [sic], by and

¹¹⁹One of White's more memorable statements in this regard concerned publisher Frank Munsey. "Frank Munsey, the great publisher," White wrote, "is dead. Frank Munsey contributed to the journalism of his day the talent of a meat packer, the morals of a money changer and the manners of an undertaker. He and his kind have about succeeded in transforming a once-noble profession into an eight percent security. May he rest in trust." Quoted in Seldes, Lords of the Press, p.274. See, also, ibid., pp.274-80.

¹²⁰Press Conference No.540-A, April 20, 1939, Presidential Press Conferences, XIII, 284.

large, in the main, on the whole, less the usual commercial discount.¹²¹

In December 1939 Roosevelt made a direct request to White to come to the White House for a discussion on world problems. "I need," said he, "a few helpful thoughts from the philosopher of Emporia." Pointing out in his letter that the world situation was growing progressively worse, the President discussed the dangers to the United States inherent in the Russo-German Non-Aggression Pact, and expressed his general fear that the serious implications of developments in Europe were being greatly underestimated by the American public. "Therefore, my sage old friend," Roosevelt concluded, in a tone which catches the spirit of the relationship between the two men, "my problem is to get the American people to think of conceivable consequences without scaring the American people into thinking that they are going to be dragged into this war. Think it over and do come down to Washington soon."¹²²

Although their relationship with Roosevelt was not as close as was White's, the basic allegiance to the New Deal of J. David Stern and Marshall Field was never in doubt. When Stern, owner and publisher of the Camden (New Jersey) Courier, the Philadelphia Record, and, from 1933 to 1939, the New York Post, first met Roosevelt before the 1932

¹²¹William Allen White to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 15, 1939, White Papers, Series C, box 320.

¹²²Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, December 14, 1939, President's Personal File 1196.

Democratic Convention, he was "completely disarmed by his charm," and, having been convinced by Roosevelt and Samuel Rosenman that the Presidential aspirant had accomplished ninety per cent of his programme as Governor of New York, decided to support Roosevelt in 1932.¹²³

Almost immediately Stern was involved in a scheme devised by Roosevelt to brand Al Smith as the favourite of big business at the 1932 Convention. Roosevelt had seen the political possibilities in a situation which involved Philadelphia Democratic leader John O'Donnell. O'Donnell had recently gone to New York to deliver his delegates to Smith, but, as Smith had kept him waiting for two hours, had joined instead the Roosevelt camp. When Smith sent his campaign manager Frank Hague to Philadelphia to regain O'Donnell's support, Hague merely compounded O'Donnell's embarrassment by seeking an introduction to him through the Republican City Chairman, thus effectively demonstrating that O'Donnell was not acquainted with leading members of his own party. Finding that O'Donnell was obdurate, Hague then asked General Atterbury, Republican National Committeeman and president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, to intercede on his behalf to persuade O'Donnell to support Smith. "Can you imagine more dramatic proof of Al Smith's link with Big Business?" Roosevelt asked Stern. He went on to request the publisher to send 5000 copies of the Philadelphia Record

¹²³Columbia University Oral History Project : Interviews with J. David Stern, December 1953 -- March 1954, pp.46, 48-50.

with the O'Donnell story on the front page to James Farley at Chicago. "I see a headline," Roosevelt mused. "Triple Play Hague to Atterbury to O'Donnell." Stern himself handled the story which, he was later to recall, "worked like a charm."¹²⁴

Roosevelt welcomed the acquisition by Stern in 1933 of the New York Evening Post and was soon benefiting from that newspaper's support. The Post quickly took issue with those publishers who were opposing the Newspaper Code, declaring editorially that its requirements "would have nothing to do with the editorial or news aspects of the business." "A clergyman," the newspaper pointed out, in response to one of the publishers' major objections, "can be arrested for passing a red light, or parking beside a fireplug, but this is hardly a menace to religious liberty." At his next press conference, Roosevelt commended the Post's editorial to the reporters.¹²⁵

Half way through Roosevelt's first term, Stern became concerned about what he saw as "the President's trend toward the right." In a letter to Senator Joseph Guffey in February 1935, the publisher complained that Roosevelt had been "shifting more and more towards big business so that I find it harder and harder to justify his actions." Stern complained also that he had not seen

¹²⁴Ibid., pp.48-50.

¹²⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to J. David Stern, December 3, 1933, President's Personal File 1039, Press Conference No.81, December 27, 1933, Presidential Press Conferences, II, 579; quoted in Ragland, "Merchandisers of the First Amendment," p.370.

Roosevelt for over five months, a fact which seemed to him to indicate that the President was "avoiding outspoken liberals." Reaffirming his "absolute faith" in Roosevelt's "sincerity and courage," he expressed a desire to "have a real talk which will let me understand the real purposes of the Administration." The overture brought a quick response from Roosevelt, to whom, naturally, Stern's letter was forwarded : "Read this," he instructed Secretary McIntyre, "and send for Dave Stern."¹²⁶

Despite any misgivings that Stern may have had, his newspapers continued to support the President and to attack his opponents : the Hearst press was assailed for its attitude toward the New Deal in general and social security in particular,¹²⁷ and, when a May 1938 Fortune survey revealed that Roosevelt's popularity remained high -- 54.7% of the people supporting him as against 34.4% who did not -- the Post analysed New York newspapers in order to demonstrate that the city's readers had been "kept in ignorance of a significant pro-Roosevelt poll."¹²⁸ When Roosevelt was criticised by the press in the summer of 1938 for intervening in party primaries in an attempt to prevent the election of Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland and Representative John O'Connor of New York, he read out to a press conference a Post editorial vigorously defending his

¹²⁶J. David Stern to Joseph F. Guffey, February 6, 1935, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marvin H. McIntyre, March 4, 1935; President's Personal File 1039.

¹²⁷Columbia University Oral History Project : Interviews with J. David Stern, December 1953 -- March 1954, p.105.

¹²⁸Seldes, Lords of the Press, pp.163-64.

action. By permitting direct quotation of the editorial he ensured its wide circulation.¹²⁹

On 29 January 1943, John O'Donnell, head of the Washington Bureau of Patterson's New York Daily News, was awarded \$50,000 damages in a libel suit which he had brought against Stern and the Philadelphia Record. The suit arose out of a report written by O'Donnell in April 1941 which asserted that American warships were convoying Lend-Lease supplies to Britain. When Presidential Press Secretary Stephen Early denounced the story as a "deliberate lie," the Record used the phrase as the title of a front page editorial, written by Stern, which accused O'Donnell, among other things, of pro-Nazism and anti-Semitism. According to the violently anti-New Deal Washington Times Herald, "not for one minute during the nine days [of the hearing] did counsel for the paper, ...relax its efforts to persuade the jury that President Roosevelt was personally interested in the outcome of the case in behalf of his old friend, J. David Stern." The newspaper which was being sued, noted the Times Herald, "has stood high in New Deal favor for consistent support of the Administration and its aims." It was on the eve of this trial that Roosevelt had made a presentation of an Iron Cross to O'Donnell through a fellow correspondent, and, although the President explained that the award was being made because of an attack which O'Donnell had made on former White House correspondent

¹²⁹Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.809.

George Durno, the "citation" had the effect of branding the reporter as a Nazi just as his suit was about to be heard. Stern, the Times Herald reported, had paid a visit to the White House a few days before the Iron Cross episode. Additionally, the White House was said to have canvassed friends and acquaintances of O'Donnell as possible witnesses against him.¹³⁰

Franklin Roosevelt enjoyed the support of J. David Stern and his newspapers for the entire period of his Presidency. His congratulatory letter to the publisher following the election of 1944 referred to the "outstanding job" which Stern's newspapers had done in "making clear just what the election...was about," and, in a private conversation with Stern he expressed the view that the support of the Courier-Post had been decisive in New Jersey, and that the usefulness of the Record had transcended the boundaries of its city and state.¹³¹

Another avowedly pro-New Deal publisher from whom Roosevelt received constant support was Marshall Field, owner of the New York newspaper PM and of the Chicago Sun. The former publication, an experimental newspaper which accepted no advertising and was controlled

¹³⁰Walter Trohan, "O'Donnell Suit Victory Seen Blow to New Smear Campaign," Washington Times Herald, January 31, 1943. See copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1943 -- July 31, 1943, Early Papers.

¹³¹Franklin D. Roosevelt to J. David Stern, November 21, 1944, J. David Stern to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 28, 1944; President's Personal File 82.

by its own staff, caused great interest amongst journalists when it was launched in 1940 and, from the outset, gave enthusiastic backing to the Roosevelt administration. A month after it had begun, the paper's Washington correspondent delivered to the President a series of pro-Administration editorials written by its editor, Ralph Ingersoll, together with a message from Ingersoll that PM was to be "150% for Roosevelt."¹³² Nor was the pro-New Deal orientation of Field's Chicago Sun, launched in 1941 as a rival to McCormick's Tribune ever open to question : from the outset this publication gave vociferous backing to the President's policies and attacked his enemies.¹³³ Of it, William Randolph Hearst was to remark : "The President of the United States wanted a new deal morning paper in Chicago, a political and personal organ. Mr. Marshall Field, III, ... arranged to give the President his desire."¹³⁴ Significantly, it was as the result of a complaint by Marshall Field that the Roosevelt Administration brought its anti-monopoly charge against the Associated Press. In March 1942,

¹³²Memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 23, 1940, President's Personal File 6646.

¹³³Marshall Field, Freedom Is More Than a Word (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1945), p.113; "Drive to 'Smear' Press : Critics of FDR Charged," Editor and Publisher (August 15, 1942), 7.

¹³⁴"Associated Press Members Make Comment on U.S. Suit," Editor and Publisher (November 21, 1942), section 2, p.1.

five months before Assistant Attorney General Arnold filed the suit against the Associated Press, Field had had a lengthy discussion with the President about his complaint.¹³⁵

Roosevelt recognised the contribution of Field's newspapers to his cause in a letter to the publisher shortly after the 1944 election, which paid tribute to the "great service" which PM and the Sun had rendered. "We still have a free press," Roosevelt declared, "and as long as newspapers continue to hold their editorial policy above price or economic influence I believe we always shall have a free press. Your newspapers have done much to brighten this prospect."¹³⁶

In the light of his generally hostile attitude toward them as a group, the nature of Franklin Roosevelt's relations with some of the more important newspaper publishers of the United States is, to a degree, surprising; the substantial measure of support which they provided for his Administrations somewhat unexpected. So far as McCormick, and even Hearst, both of whom opposed him with such ferocity, are concerned, it is not remarkable that Roosevelt in his resentment against them, should have overlooked their early support; nor could the President's relations with Henry Luce have been expected to modify any antagonism toward publishers which he may have felt. But, as one moves across the spectrum

¹³⁵ Marshall Field to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 14, 1942, President's Personal File 6095.

¹³⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marshall Field, November 21, 1944, President's Personal File 6095.

of publishers, past Howard, who cooperated closely with the President into his second term, and Patterson, who supported him until his third, and looks more closely at the cordiality of his relations with Ochs, Sulzberger and Meyer, and the strength of his friendship with White, and considers, further, the enthusiastic backing which he received from Stern and Field, so does the gap between the rhetoric of Roosevelt's public statements about publishers and the reality of Presidential-publisher relations widen, and the discrepancy between his antagonism toward publishers as a group and his fruitful relations with some publishers as individuals become more marked. There is a further consideration. Even on the basis of the amount of publisher and press support which Roosevelt is now seen to have received, the President's repeated assertions that he faced overwhelming press opposition, begin to look suspect. For if Franklin Roosevelt exaggerated the opposition of newspaper publishers, might he not also have exaggerated the degree of opposition which he faced from the press as a whole, since, at least by his own argument, the latter was very much a function of the former?

CHAPTER V

THAT FAMOUS EIGHTY-FIVE PER CENT

The validity of Franklin Roosevelt's assertion that he faced overwhelming newspaper opposition is capable of objective assessment, particularly if attention is confined to the treatment of his administrations in the daily newspapers of America. An examination of the declared political affiliations of the nation's daily newspapers, as collected annually by Editor and Publisher, the leading trade journal of the newspaper industry, provides an appropriate starting-point. Responses to a questionnaire sent by that magazine to newspaper publishers late in 1935 indicated that, of 1,800 daily newspapers for which statistics were collected, 316 or 17.56 per cent were claimed by their publishers to be Republican, 328 or 18.22 per cent to be Democratic, 211 or 11.72 per cent to be Independent-Republican, 153 or 8.50 per cent to be Independent-Democratic, and 792 or 44.00 per cent to be Independent in their political affiliation.¹ What is notable here, besides the fact that the proportion of Independent newspapers was relatively large -- more than twice as great, in fact, as was the number of Democratic or Republican newspapers -- is that the number of Democratic newspapers

¹See Marlen Pew, "Shop Talk at Thirty," Editor and Publisher (September 26, 1936), 48.

slightly exceeded the number of Republican newspapers and that the combined total of Republican and Independent-Republican newspapers was only slightly greater than the combined total of Democratic and Independent-Democratic publications. Five years later the distribution of political affiliation was virtually unchanged, with 292 or 15.62 per cent of the nation's dailies declaring themselves to be Republican, 301 or 16.16 per cent to be Democratic, 209 or 11.22 to be Independent-Republican, 233 or 11.87 per cent to be Independent-Democratic and 838 or 44.98 per cent claiming to be Independent.² It is unnecessary to postulate anything more than a very rough correlation between political affiliation and editorial policy in order to appreciate that an assertion that eighty-five per cent of the nation's press opposed the President collides immediately with these figures, since, for such a claim to have been true, it would be necessary to envisage a situation in which, on the most likely assumptions, not merely all Republican, Independent-Republican and the very large number of Independent daily newspapers in the United States opposed the President, but that, in addition, all Independent-Democratic and something over one in ten of the Democratic newspapers did so as well.

Nor is the charge of eighty-five per cent press opposition borne out by statistics collected by Editor and

²Source : J. Percy H. Johnson, ed., Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals (Philadelphia : N.W. Ayer and Son, 1941).

Publisher on the political alignment of the nation's daily newspapers during Presidential election campaigns. Even in the crucial campaign of 1940, when press opposition to the President reached a crescendo, a survey by Editor and Publisher of two-thirds of the nation's English-language dailies revealed that 289 or 22.71 per cent of the newspapers which responded were supporting the President, that 813 or 63.86 per cent were supporting his opponent, and that 171 or 13.43 per cent were not committed to either candidate. Such figures most certainly revealed solid press opposition to Roosevelt, but, even here, the estimated percentage of the nation's press that opposed him in his controversial third term bid was sixty-four, not eighty-five. In earlier Presidential elections it was considerably less : in 1932, Roosevelt had received the backing of an estimated 40.52 per cent of the nation's daily press, as against 52.02 per cent for Hoover, with 9.45 per cent being uncommitted; in 1936 the corresponding figure for Roosevelt had been 36.1 per cent, as against 57.10 per cent for Landon, with 5.8 per cent uncommitted.³ In 1944, a poll of three-fourths of the nation's dailies, published by Editor and Publisher just prior to the election, indicated that Dewey was receiving the support of 60.10 per cent of the daily press, that Roosevelt was favoured by 22.00 per cent and that 17.90 per cent of dailies were uncommitted.⁴

³See "Gain in FDR Press Support Shown By Second E & P Survey," Editor and Publisher (October 26, 1940), 7.

⁴See "60% of Dailies Support Dewey; Roosevelt Backed by 22%," Editor and Publisher (November 4, 1944), 9, 68.

Even during Presidential election campaigns, therefore, when newspaper opposition to the New Deal was at its height, the actual percentage of newspapers which openly declared their opposition to it did not approach the figure continually quoted by Roosevelt.

To the statement that the overwhelming majority of the American press opposed Franklin Roosevelt, further qualification is necessary. There may be a need, as Frank Luther Mott has pointed out specifically in relation to the 1940 election, to disaggregate figures for newspaper opposition which lumped together the strident opposition of "bigoted party organs," in which headlines were biased, signed Washington correspondence unfair and editorials and cartoons immoderate, with that of "the reasonable partisans," which supported the candidate of their choice strongly but reported fairly both sides of the campaign, and "the passive supporters" in which support for one candidate and opposition to the other tended to be nominal and phlegmatic. In 1940, according to Mott, the "bigoted party organs" were the smallest of the three groups and the numbers of "passive supporters" only slightly less than those of the "reasonable partisans," which comprised the largest class. One explanation for the relative lack of partisan political involvement of many newspapers, Mott has surmised, was that consolidations in the newspaper industry had, by 1940, greatly increased the number of communities which were served by a single newspaper, so

that, in such circumstances, a newspaper which adopted a strongly partisan approach would run the risk of alienating a considerable section of its readership, and jeopardising its local monopoly position.⁵ Implicit in such an argument is the suggestion that, in the periods between Presidential elections, the luke-warm allegiance given by the "passive supporters" to the President's opponents, as well as their opposition to him, might have all but melted away -- in circumstances, that is, in which the need to make a specific declaration in favour of one Presidential candidate or another no longer applied.

Whether for this or other reasons, statistics for press opposition to Roosevelt during election campaigns do not accurately reflect the editorial policies of the nation's press in the periods between elections. Two analyses of newspaper opinion based on the editorial pages and front pages of newspapers in all sections of the United States and representing over twenty per cent of total daily newspaper circulation, which found their way to the White House, provide some confirmation of this assertion. The first, which covered the week ending October 7, 1939, showed that the level of support for the President had been 50.0 per cent in domestic affairs, 72.8 per cent in foreign affairs, and that the weighted total of press treatment favourable to the

⁵Frank Luther Mott, "Newspapers in Presidential Campaigns," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII (Fall, 1944), 359.

Administration had been 63.3 per cent.⁶ The second survey, covering the week ending April 20, 1940, revealed a decline in press support for the Administration's domestic policy to 24.4 per cent, but a similarly high level of approval, 71.9 per cent, for its foreign policies. The weighted total of newspaper support for the week covered by the second survey was 42.9 per cent.⁷ An analysis, published by Time in August 1942, of press support for Roosevelt over the two-year period from the outbreak of war and based on the weekly press surveys of editorial policies conducted by James S. Twohey Associates reinforces this point. The analysis suggested that, over the period surveyed, Roosevelt typically won the approval of well above fifty per cent of the nation's

⁶James S. Twohey Associates, "Analysis of Newspaper Opinion for Week Ending October 7, 1939." See copy in Official File 144. Twohey, a former statistician for the Farm Credit Administration, conducted press surveys for the Democratic National Committee during the 1936 campaign and later set up an independent press-sampling service. His tabulations were made by sampling a cross-section of approximately twenty per cent of the newspaper circulation of the nation, whose reactions had, according to Time Magazine, which used Twohey's statistics, come within three per cent of those of the daily press as a whole. See "Press Support for President Roosevelt Since War Began," Time, August 25, 1941, p.16.

⁷James S. Twohey Associates, "Analysis of Newspaper Opinion for Week Ending April 20, 1940." See copy in Official File 144. These Twohey analyses were obtained for the White House by Eugene Meyer; see Eugene Meyer to Stephen Early, June 8, 1940, Official File 144.

press for his handling of foreign issues, that his handling of domestic issues from August, 1939 until the end of that year had been approved by something between forty and fifty per cent of the nation's press, that he had suffered a long trough of press unpopularity in domestic affairs during 1940, with newspaper support running, on average, at something approaching thirty per cent, but that, following his re-election in November 1940, his domestic policies had been backed by, on average, approximately fifty per cent of the daily newspapers of America. The Time analysts commented that, on domestic issues, the President's popularity rose whenever he announced an economy move, took a strong stand against organised labour, or moved to control inflation, and that on foreign issues, his popularity with the press increased at times of crisis in the war (except during those periods when the plight of the Allies seemed hopeless), when trade treaties were negotiated, when he spoke to the nation on radio, and when the United States was threatened by the Axis.⁸ Levels of press support revealed by these surveys far exceed those prevailing during Presidential election campaigns. In addition to these unofficial surveys, extensive sampling by the Administration's own Division of Press Intelligence was repeatedly to confirm the discrepancy between the day-to-day press treatment of the Roosevelt administrations and the declared political alignment of the

⁸"Press Support for Roosevelt Since War Began," Time, August 25, 1941, pp.16-17.

nation's press during Presidential election campaigns.⁹

Direct evidence relating to press treatment of his administrations reached Franklin Roosevelt from several sources : the surveys of the Democratic National Committee, his own daily newspaper reading, the results of analyses conducted by the Division of Press Intelligence, and the quantity of miscellaneous press clippings sent to him by associates and supporters. In this respect, the results of a survey which Roosevelt himself commissioned from the Democratic National Committee during the election campaign of 1936 are of particular significance.¹⁰ The survey examined 204 newspapers in cities of 100,000 people or more, not including those in the Southern states, where, according to the compiler, Carl Byoir, "there is no contest." Its results, which are summarised in table I, led Byoir to comment that : "On the whole, the percentage in favor of the President is... higher than any of us thought it would be," though he did point out that, of the total circulation of pro-Roosevelt newspapers of 6,462,814, a significant number, 2,500,000, were in New York alone, which meant that outside of that state there was a circulation of approximately four million for the President and 13,000,000 against. Even with the predominantly pro-Roosevelt Southern press excluded, however, the percentage of press opposition to the President revealed by the Democratic National Committee's own figures

⁹The surveys of the Division of Press Intelligence are discussed below, pp. 200-27.

¹⁰See Carl Byoir to Marvin H. McIntyre, October 7, 1936, Early Papers, box 1.

was sixty per cent, a result which, while it correlates well with the Editor and Publisher estimate of fifty-seven does not approach the President's own frequently quoted figure of eighty-five.

TABLE I : DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE SURVEY OF 204
NEWSPAPERS IN CITIES OF 100,000 OR ABOVE
OUTSIDE THE SOUTH PRIOR TO 1936 ELECTION.

	number of newspapers	total circulation
Pro-Roosevelt	50	6,462,814
Anti-Roosevelt	123	15,527,461
Independent	31	1,672,246
Total number of newspapers	204	23,662,521

Roosevelt's contention that he faced overwhelming newspaper opposition may be further tested against the actual editorial treatment of his administrations by the newspapers which he read each day.¹¹ To assess this treatment,

¹¹Tully, F.D.R. My Boss, p.76. According to Grace Tully, the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day were : the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, the Baltimore Sun, the New York Journal American, the Washington Times Herald, the New York World Telegram, the New York Sun, the Washington Daily News and the Washington Evening Star. The Washington Daily News and the Washington Evening Star are not available for research purposes. Neither is listed in Newspapers in Microform, United States, 1948--1972 (Washington : Catalog Publications Division, Processing Department, Library of Congress, 1973). The Washington Evening Star can be purchased from the Micro-filming Corporation of America, Glen Rock, New Jersey, but, as this is not a research library, it would have been necessary to purchase a full set of the holdings of this newspaper in order to complete the survey work described below. Grace Tully has revealed that, although Roosevelt had press clipping services available to him, he "preferred to make his own first screening of representative morning papers." Ibid.

the writer made an examination of the editorial reactions of nine of those newspapers to a series of important events, distributed throughout Roosevelt's Presidency and covering both domestic and foreign affairs. The events selected were : Roosevelt's election in November 1932, his first Inaugural Address of March 1933, the first "fireside chat" in March 1933, in which he outlined measures to deal with the banking crisis, the end of the special session of Congress in June 1933 (the first hundred days), the message to Congress in February 1934, asking for legislation to regulate the Stock Exchange, the Congressional Elections of November 1934, the Supreme Court's invalidation of the N.R.A. in May 1935, the "horse and buggy" press conference at which Roosevelt attacked the Court's decision, the President's campaign address at Madison Square Garden on October 31, 1936, the election of November 1936, the second Inaugural Address of January 1937, Roosevelt's message of February 1937 on the re-organisation of the Judiciary, the Quarantine Speech of October 1937, the "fireside chat" of June 1938, in which Roosevelt announced his intention to fight the "copperheads" in his own party, the decision of September 1939 to convene a special session of Congress in order to seek the repeal of the arms embargo, Roosevelt's nomination for an unprecedented third term, the announcement in September 1940 of the "destroyers for bases" deal, the election of November 1940, the third Inaugural Address of January 1941, the "fireside chat" of September 1942, in which Roosevelt threatened to act on price stabilisation if Congress

continued to refuse to do so, the Annual Message of January 1943, the acceptance by the President of the fourth-term nomination in July 1944, the election of November 1944, and the announcement of the Yalta Agreement in February 1945. Editorials by the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day on these events were classified according to whether they were "favourable" to the Administration, "unfavourable," or whether they constituted, in essence, a "general discussion" of the event in question, eschewing a strongly pro or anti-Administration line. In relation to editorial comment on each of these events, representative sentences illustrative of the general tone of each of the editorials were recorded, and have been reproduced in Appendix A. In order to test the reliability of this writer's judgements as to the nature of the editorials, the results obtained from the analysis of three of the newspapers -- the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune -- were compared with the results obtained independently by another person.

Among the more important assumptions underlying these procedures were : that, given his own newspaper-reading habits and the importance of the events in question, Roosevelt would have been aware of the nature of such editorial comment; that editorial reaction by the newspapers which he read each day to these critically important events might be expected significantly to have influenced his own attitudes toward the American press as a whole, as well as to have provided a corrective should his own assessment of

the editorial policies of the press in general been awry; that, in view of their obvious importance, these would have been issues which would have called for immediate editorial comment and about which editorial writers would have been unlikely to have been reticent; that such editorial comment would have been considered at the highest level, and would be likely, on that account, to uncover the basic sympathies of those who controlled editorial policies; and that, for these reasons, the editorials selected would constitute acid tests of the various newspapers' positions.

The results of the analysis of editorial opinion are shown in table II.

Of a total of 167 editorial comments by the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day on the issues selected, fifty-five, or thirty-three per cent, were favourable, sixty-one, or 36.5 per cent, were unfavourable, and fifty-one, or 30.5 per cent were general discussions of the issues in question. Among the individual newspapers surveyed, opposition came most obviously from the Chicago Tribune, which commented unfavourably on sixteen of the twenty occasions on which it offered editorial opinions on the issues examined, from the New York Journal American, a Hearst publication which began in 1937, which criticised the President or his Administration in four of the seven editorials which were surveyed, and from the New York Sun, which criticised Roosevelt on eleven of the twenty-two occasions on which it made an editorial comment on

TABLE II : EDITORIAL REACTION BY A SELECTED GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS TO CERTAIN
EVENTS DURING ROOSEVELT'S PRESIDENCY*

	Newspapers**										TOTAL	F	U	GD
	NYT	NYHT	CT	BS	WP	NYWT	NYS	NYJA	WTH					
Election 1932	F	GD	GD	F	F	F	U				7	4	1	2
First Inaugural Address 1933	F	F	F	F	F	F	GD				7	6		1
First Fireside Chat 1933	F	-	-	F	F	-	F				4	4		
End Special Session Congress 1933	GD	-	U	F	GD	-	GD				5	1	1	3
Stock Exchange Regulation 1934	GD	GD	-	na	GD	F	-				4	1		3
Congressional Elections 1934	GD	GD	U	GD	GD	GD	GD					1		6
Invalidation NRA 1935	U	U	U	GD	U	F	U				7	1	5	1
Horse and buggy press conference 1935	-	-	-	U	U	-	-				2		2	
Campaign Address 1936	U	U	U	-	U	GD	U				6		5	1
Election 1936	F	GD	U	GD	GD	GD	U				7	1	2	4
Second Inaugural Address 1937	F	GD	U	GD	U	GD	GD				7	1	2	4
Re-organisation of Judiciary 1937	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				7		7	
Quarantine Speech 1937	F	GD	U	F	F	F	U	U			8	4	3	1
Fireside Chat 1938	GD	U	U	U	-	GD	U	-			6		4	2
Repeal Arms Embargo 1939	F	F	U	F	F	GD	F	U	F		9	6	2	1
Third Term Nomination 1940	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	F		9	1	8	
Destroyers for Bases 1940	GD	F	F	F	F	GD	U	-	F		8	5	1	2
Election 1940	GD	U	U	GD	GD	U	U	GD	F		9	2	3	4
Third Inaugural 1941	F	GD	-	F	F	GD	F	GD	F		8	5		3
Fireside Chat 1942	U	-	U	F	F	F	GD	-	na		6	3	2	1
Annual Message 1943	GD	F	U	F	F	F	GD	-	GD		8	4	1	3
Fourth Term Nomination 1944	GD	U	U	U	GD	U	U	U	U		9		7	2
Election 1944	F	GD	U	GD	F	GD	GD	GD	U		9	2	2	5
Yalta 1945	F	F	GD	F	F	GD	F	-	U		8	5	1	2
TOTAL	23	20	20	22	23	21	22	7	9					
of which Favourable	10	5	2	11	11	7	4		5					
Unfavourable	5	7	16	5	6	4	11	4	3					
General Discussion	8	8	2	6	6	10	7	3	1					

* Abbreviations : F, favourable comment; U, unfavourable comment; GD, general discussion; -, no editorial; blank space, newspaper not published at that time (the New York Journal American began publication in 1937; the Washington Times Herald in 1939); na, not available (in both cases, the relevant issues of the newspapers concerned were missing from the Library of Congress holdings).

**Abbreviations : NYT, New York Times; NYHT, New York Herald Tribune; CT, Chicago Tribune; BS, Baltimore Sun; WP, Washington Post; NYWT, New York World Telegram; NYS, New York Sun; NYJA, New York Journal American; WTH, Washington Times Herald.

the issues in question. For only one other newspaper, the New York Herald Tribune, did the number of editorials critical of the President (seven) exceed the number which supported his actions (five). By contrast, of twenty-two editorials carried by the Baltimore Sun, eleven supported Roosevelt and five expressed opposition to him; of twenty-three editorials in the Washington Post, eleven were laudatory and six critical; of twenty-one editorials in the New York World Telegram, seven expressed support and four opposition; of twenty-three editorials in the New York Times, ten were supportive and five critical, and of nine editorial comments made by the Washington Times Herald, which began publication in 1939, five were favourable to Roosevelt and three unfavourable.

The writer's judgements as to the character of the editorials carried by three of the newspapers in the sample accorded reasonably closely with those made independently by another person. On the classifications for the twenty Chicago Tribune editorials there was complete agreement; of the twenty-three editorials in the Washington Post, similar conclusions were reached in relation to nineteen; of twenty-three editorials published by the New York Times, there was disagreement, though not major disagreement, on seven, a discrepancy which may be accounted for by the fact that Times editorials often canvassed many sides of a particular question and qualified whatever conclusions were reached, making it more difficult to place editorials with

confidence in one of the available categories.¹² In this respect, among the nine newspapers examined, the New York Times was exceptional.

So far as the twenty-four events which were selected for the survey were concerned, on eleven of them -- the election of 1932, the first Inaugural Address, the first "fireside chat," the Stock Exchange regulation plan, the Quarantine Speech, the move to repeal the arms embargo, the "destroyers for bases" deal, the third Inaugural Address, the threat to by-pass Congress on price stabilization, the Annual Message of 1943, and the announcement of the Yalta Agreement in 1945 -- the balance as between favourable and unfavourable editorial comment went in the President's favour, usually heavily so. On a further eleven of the events selected -- the result of the Congressional Elections in 1934, the invalidation of the N.R.A. in 1935, the "horse and buggy" press conference, the campaign address of October 1936, the

¹²The editorial comments of the Chicago Tribune, Washington Post and New York Times on the selected issues were classified by Dr. C.M. Campbell of the Department of History, University of Sydney, as well as by the writer. Discrepancies are set out below :

Washington Post

	<u>G.W.</u>	<u>C.C.</u>
End of Special Session of Congress, 1933	GD	F
Congressional Elections, 1934	GD	F
Invalidation of N.R.A., 1935	U	GD
Fourth-Term Nomination, 1944	GD	U

New York Times

	<u>G.W.</u>	<u>C.C.</u>
First Inaugural Address, 1933	F	GD
Congressional Elections, 1934	GD	F
Fireside Chat, 1938	GD	U
Destroyers for Bases, 1940	GD	F
Election, 1940	GD	U
Annual Message, 1943	GD	F
Fourth-Term Nomination, 1944	GD	U

election of 1936, the second Inaugural Address, the announcement of the scheme to re-organize the Judiciary, the "fireside chat" of 1938, the third term nomination, the election of 1940, and the fourth-term nomination in 1944 -- the balance of editorial comment went against the President, again, usually heavily so. On the remaining two events -- the end of the Special Session of Congress in 1933 and the election of 1944, there was an even distribution of favourable and unfavourable editorial comment.

Generally, the break-down of editorial opinion suggests a pattern of early press enthusiasm for the New Deal, followed by a long trough of relative press unpopularity extending from the decision of the Supreme Court invalidating the N.R.A. in May 1935 to the period of intense debate over the Presidential Message on the re-organization of the Judiciary in February 1937; of strong subsequent opposition to Roosevelt's nomination for a third and then a fourth term, but of a consistently high level of support for the Administration's major foreign policy initiatives.

No satisfactory confirmation of the assertion that the Roosevelt administrations faced overwhelming opposition from the American press is provided by such figures.¹³

¹³If the question of "weighting" is introduced, it becomes much more difficult to draw conclusions from the foregoing analysis. In his assessment of the strength of press opposition to his policies, Roosevelt may have been influenced by his knowledge of the relative circulations of the newspapers which he read each day, a subject about which he probably had general, though not precise, information. Thus, for example, opposition by the Chicago Tribune, which in 1940, had a circulation of 1,076,866, would probably have

Further direct evidence as to the treatment of his administrations by the American press reached Roosevelt from the Division of Press Intelligence. This Division was established in July 1933 by the direction of the President and at the instigation of Presidential Secretary Louis Howe. For a time, the Division was operated as part of the N.R.A., but, in July 1935, was transferred to the National Emergency Council. When that agency was abolished in July 1939, the Division of Press Intelligence became part of the Office of Government Reports until it was transferred, in

weighed more heavily with Roosevelt than support by the Washington Post, with a circulation in 1940 of 132,089. Similarly, support on a particular issue by the New York World Telegram, flagship of the Scripps-Howard fleet, would have been important not merely in itself, but also because the editorial in question may have been reproduced by other Scripps Howard newspapers (though this is by no means certain), or, if it were not, would probably have represented the general line which the editors in that newspaper chain would have been likely to follow. Similar comments would apply to editorials in the New York Journal American, a Hearst publication, and an opponent of the President. Further considerations arise. The qualitative importance of support by the New York Times, a not uncommon occurrence, would have been great, considering that newspaper's premier position in American journalism, its moral influence and the nature of its readership. As, to the best of my knowledge, no satisfactory statistical method exists by which factors such as the ones referred to above may adequately be taken into account, I have decided to use a relatively simple method. The fact that the results of the survey of newspaper editorials correlate reasonably well with other evidence contained in this chapter, and particularly with the results of the analysis of the reports of the Division of Press Intelligence, suggests that the method adopted has validity. Circulation figures for the Chicago Tribune and Washington Post were taken from Johnson, ed., Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals (1941), pp.1142, 1143.

June 1942, to the newly created Office of War Information. In November 1942, following a survey of its activities conducted by the Bureau of Intelligence of the Office of War Information and a budgetary cut imposed by Congress, the Division's activities were sharply curtailed. From the outset, the chief function of the Division of Press Intelligence was the reading and clipping by its staff of approximately four hundred of the largest daily newspapers in the United States and the preparation and distribution to Government officials of a daily mimeographed bulletin, in which news and editorial comment on Government activities were classified, briefly described and indexed. From the vast reservoir of press clippings built up by the Division, officials could be provided, on request, with clippings on news items of particular interest.¹⁴

There were three vehicles through which the Division of Press Intelligence conveyed information concerning treatment by the daily press of the Roosevelt administrations to the White House : the daily Press Intelligence Bulletins, special reports on the editorial reaction to events which were considered to be of particular importance, and, from July 1941 until the effective emasculation of the Division in November 1942, weekly summaries of the editorial reaction by the nation's press to foreign and domestic events. The

¹⁴Lela Stiles, The Man Behind Roosevelt : The Story of Louis McHenry Howe (New York : World Publishing Co., 1954), pp.249-50; R.G. 44, Office of Government Reports Preliminary Inventory, National Records Center, Washington, p.11.

Press Intelligence Bulletins were lengthy and somewhat indigestible compilations which classified news columns, editorial opinion and the comments of the nation's columnists, and, through the provision of a numerical coding system, provided a means by which those receiving the Bulletin could obtain copies of the various items included in summary form in the Bulletin. Although the Press Intelligence Bulletin was received each day at the White House, there is no evidence to show that the President made direct use of it, and, indeed, regular and detailed examination of the Bulletins by him would almost certainly have been ruled out because of their size and the diverse and, to the President, marginally relevant nature of much of their content. Thus, for example, Bulletin No.80, issued on December 30, 1933, was over seventy pages in length and contained classifications of press comment on subjects ranging from monetary policy and local government to milk control, transient camps and coast guard consolidation. Statistical breakdowns of editorial opinion, as distinct from news comment, on certain issues were occasionally provided. Bulletin No.80, for instance, recorded that, of 44 editorials on the President's silver-buying plan in the papers covered by the Division's survey during the preceding week, thirteen had been favourable, six unfavourable and twenty-five had discussed the plan generally. The newspapers in which the various categories of editorial had appeared were then listed along with index numbers which would have enabled them to be retrieved. Such surveys of editorial

opinion may have been consulted by Roosevelt, though, considering the size of the bulletins and the frequency with which they appeared, it is not easy to conceive of this happening on a regular basis.¹⁵

Of much greater use to the President would have been the occasional special reports of the Division of Press Intelligence. To begin with, these reports took varying forms and appeared irregularly, sometimes being supplied on the initiative of the Division's director, Katherine C. Blackburn, sometimes at the request of Roosevelt or of Stephen Early, who, it might be supposed, was acting on such occasions on the President's behalf. One of the earliest of the special reports, which was received in January 1934, revealed that a recent speech by Roosevelt to a Woodrow Wilson Dinner had been commented upon favourably in 130 editorials and unfavourably in ten. The report went on to list the newspaper which had carried favourable or unfavourable editorials and to reproduce typical excerpts.¹⁶ A month later, following a survey of the editorial reaction to numerous speeches by Republicans on the occasion of Lincoln's birthday, which had severely criticised the Administration, the Division of Press Intelligence

¹⁵See Official File 1275. Other examples : Bulletin No.907, September 22, 1936, consisted of fifty-eight pages plus a four page index; Bulletin No.1702, May 12, 1939, consisted of 114 pages plus a five page index; Bulletin No.2534, February 7, 1942, consisted of 136 pages plus an eight page index. All in Official File 1275.

¹⁶Division of Press Intelligence, "Digest of Editorials on Roosevelt Speech at Wilson Dinner." See Katherine C. Blackburn to Stephen Early, January 5, 1934, Official File 1275.

reported to the White House that most of the speeches had not been commented on editorially, even by Republican newspapers, and that, in Independent newspapers, the speakers had been ridiculed. The compilers of the report went on to refer to overwhelming press criticism of Charles A. Lindbergh's telegram to the President over the cancellation of air mail contracts, and to observe that there was "not the slightest indication of any decrease in the tremendous personal popularity of the President in every part of the nation." Although the A.A.A. was said to be receiving more editorial criticism than any other part of the recovery programme, the Division's staff concluded that no outstanding critic of that programme was commanding national attention.¹⁷ A report which reached Stephen Early in April 1934 was less flattering and brought a terse comment from the Press Secretary to the President : "You may be interested to know," Early wrote, "that an editorial compilation made from a digest of 400 daily newspapers fails to show a single editorial favourable to the proposed tax on coconut oil."¹⁸

Two lengthy memoranda on news and editorial comment on measures to be considered during the coming session of Congress, received by the White House in November and December 1934, represented a further attempt by its Director to make the activities of the Division of Press Intelligence

¹⁷See Katherine C. Blackburn to Stephen Early, February 19, 1934, Official File 1275, which enclosed a copy of this report.

¹⁸Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 19, 1934, Official File 1275.

more directly useful to the President; but Roosevelt's response to the innovation was tepid.¹⁹ More valuable than descriptive and impressionistic surveys of this kind was a statistical breakdown of editorial comment supplied by the Division on two speeches on power delivered by the President in Tupelo, Mississippi and Birmingham, Alabama on Sunday 18 November 1934, which showed that twenty two newspapers had commented favourably on the speeches and eighteen unfavourably. Like the reports on the measures which were to come before Congress, this report was forwarded to Roosevelt.²⁰

If the early special reports sent by the Division of Press Intelligence to the White House revealed a pattern of press response which was predominantly favourable to the Administration, considerable press opposition to several New Deal measures was indicated by a series of analyses received during 1935. The first of these examined editorial reaction to bills pending in Congress over the period from March 19 to March 25 and found that the balance of unfavourable over favourable editorial comment had been, for the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill four to one, for the Wheeler-Rayburn

¹⁹Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on News and Editorial Discussion of Coming Session of Congress," See Katherine C. Blackburn to Marguerite LeHand, November 8, 1934; Marguerite LeHand to Katherine C. Blackburn, November 13, 1934. A similar report, covering the period December 1 to December 24, 1934, was sent to the White House; see Katherine C. Blackburn to Stephen Early, December 29, 1934. All in Official File 1275.

²⁰See memorandum, Stephen Early to Marvin H. McIntyre, November 27, 1934, Official File 1275, which encloses this report.

Utility Holding Company Bill, seventeen to one, and for the proposal to extend the N.R.A., twelve to one. Further, the Steagall Banking Bill and the Guffey Coal Bill had been opposed by thirteen and five newspapers, respectively, without receiving any editorial support. Other measures to provoke opposition had been the proposed A.A.A. amendments, which had been vociferously objected to by nine newspapers, largely on the ground that "Secretary Wallace already has too much power and shouldn't be given more," and the Tugwell-Copeland Revised Pure Food and Drugs Bill which had drawn hostile comment from four of the newspapers sampled. On the other hand, editorial opinion on the President's message to Congress on the Utility and Holding Company Bill had been more evenly distributed, with thirty-two editorials commenting unfavourably on the message, and thirty favourably. On the credit side, the report noted that the defeat of the McCarran "prevailing wage" amendment was being looked upon as a signal victory for the President, that the National Defense Appropriation had been supported in ten newspapers and opposed in only one, and that the President's Ship Subsidy Message had found favour with sixteen newspapers without provoking any adverse editorial comment.²¹ A further report, which covered the period from April 9 to April 15, made it clear that, although the passage of the Work Relief Bill had been favourably

²¹Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction to Bills Pending in Congress for Period March 19 through March 25." See Katherine C. Blackburn to Stephen Early, March 28, 1935, Official File 1275.

received, the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill, the Harrison N.R.A. Extension Bill, the Wheeler-Rayburn Holding Company Bill, and the Steagall Banking Bill continued to encounter strong press opposition. There was, moreover, the report noted, "increasing unanimous disapproval [sic]" of the cotton processing tax and widespread criticism of the proposed A.A.A. amendments which, it was feared, would lead to "new dictatorial powers." Favourable comment for the period in question had been largely confined to general editorial approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission drive against "stock swindlers," and, in relation to the emergency relief programme, lavish praise for the work done and for the assistance provided for the men involved.²² Shortly after this, a memorandum from the Division on preliminary editorial reaction to the Supreme Court decision invalidating the N.R.A. would have given the President a foretaste of the overwhelming press endorsement which that decision was to receive.²³ A Division of Press Intelligence report analysing press comment for the week from July 16 to July 22 on measures currently before Congress once again revealed strong press opposition to the Administration's domestic

²²Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction. Week from April 9 through April 15." See Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, April 19, 1935, Official File 1275.

²³Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction to Supreme Court Decision in NRA Case, May 29, 1935," Official File 1275. Thirteen editorials had endorsed the decision, none had opposed it and seven had discussed it generally.

programme : the President's tax programme was shown to have drawn thirty-five unfavourable comments but only two favourable ones; the Wheeler Rayburn Utility Holding-Company Bill was criticised in the only seven newspapers which had commented upon it; the House's passage of the Administration's T.V.A. Bill was welcomed editorially by only four newspapers but opposed by twenty-eight; the Guffey Coal Control Bill had been criticised editorially by six newspapers and supported by one, while the President's letter asking for passage of this bill irrespective of doubts as to its constitutionality had been condemned by thirty-three of the newspapers sampled and endorsed by only four. There was, in addition, continuing criticism of the delay in the commencement of work relief programmes, unanimous disapproval of plans to continue the Public Works of Art Project and overwhelming support for a Boston Circuit Court decision which declared an A.A.A. processing tax on cotton unconstitutional. Some solace for the Administration may have been provided by those sections of the report which spoke of the almost unanimous approval in the press of the new reciprocal trade agreement with Russia (twenty-three editorials commented favourably on the agreement and only two unfavourably), in the editorial recognition of an apparent return of farm prosperity, and in a measure of support (nineteen editorials in favour, eleven against) for Secretary Hull's statement to the Italian Ambassador that, in its attitude toward the Italian-Ethiopian controversy, the United States was concerned to preserve the Kellogg-

Briand pact.²⁴

The dominant tone of certain other special Division of Press Intelligence reports received at the White House during Roosevelt's first Administration was more favourable. In May 1935 a report on editorial reaction to a statement on foreign trade, highly critical of the Administration, issued by George N. Peek was sent to the President at the request of the State Department. Its conclusion was that, while some anti-Administration newspapers had viewed Peek's figures with the usual alarm and urged that an inquiry be launched into the foreign trade position, others, which were said by the Division of Press Intelligence to have been consistently critical of the Administration, had played down the issue.²⁵ A second report which reached the White House in May 1935 showed a balance of press comment in favour of the President on both domestic and foreign issues : a recent "fireside" radio broadcast had been commended by seventy-six newspapers and criticised by sixty-two; a United States Chamber of Commerce attack on the President's legislative programme had been supported by forty-six newspapers but opposed by sixty-nine; Secretary Hull's efforts to revive foreign trade through

²⁴Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction Week from July 16 through July 22," July 23, 1935, Official File 1275.

²⁵Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction to the Peek Statement on Foreign Trade Issued May 6." See Katherine C. Blackburn to Marguerite LeHand, May 11, 1935, Official File 1275.

reciprocal trade pacts had been widely praised; there had been a notable increase in favourable comment on the A.A.A. programme and "universal acclaim" for progress in reforestation. Additionally, the emergency conservation programme had evoked unanimous praise, the expansion of the C.C.C. had been generally approved, and, although there had been growing criticism of the planning of work relief organisation, such criticism was still, the report concluded, outweighed by favourable sentiment. By contrast, attention was drawn to the existence of continuing heavy criticism of the cotton processing tax, the Steagall Banking Bill and the New Deal recovery programme.²⁶ In the area of foreign affairs, the Division of Press Intelligence recorded widespread press support for the President's proclamation of an arms embargo in October 1935. In a series of daily surveys covering the period from October 21 to November 2, which Louis Howe directed the Division to send to the President, editorial comment was shown to be heavily in Roosevelt's favour with a total of thirty-four editorials praising the declaration, twenty-six disapproving of an attack made on it by the New York Port Development Conference, and twenty-three asking for an extension of the embargo to include materials such as cotton, copper, oil and foodstuffs. No opposition to the proclamation was disclosed in the surveys.²⁷

²⁶Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction Week from May 7 through May 13." See Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, May 16, 1935, Official File 1275.

²⁷See Katherine C. Blackburn to Marguerite LeHand, November 2, 1935, which encloses the daily reports for the previous ten days; Official File 1275.

In summary, the record of daily press treatment of the Roosevelt Administration during the President's first term, as indicated in the special reports of the Division of Press Intelligence which reached the White House during that time, is one of strong initial support, of continued backing for the Administration's foreign and trade policies, but of very substantial opposition to several New Deal agencies and to many aspects of the Administration's legislative programme, with relief and conservation policies standing as exceptions. In most cases, and possibly in all cases, Division of Press Intelligence special reports which revealed these trends and characteristics were seen by the President.

The relatively few special reports from the Division of Press Intelligence which the White House received during Roosevelt's second term gave some confirmation of these trends of substantial, though by no means unqualified press opposition to the Administration's domestic programme and continued support for its stand in foreign affairs. In June 1937, an analysis of press reaction to the President's Message to Congress proposing minimum wage and maximum hours legislation revealed a mixed editorial response, the objectives of the message meeting with "widespread indorsement," but the means by which those objectives were to be attained, namely the Black-Connery Labor Standards Bill, encountering "almost unanimous denunciation."²⁸ More

²⁸Division of Press Intelligence, "Editorial Reaction on President's Message to Congress Proposing Minimum Wage and Maximum Hours Legislation, June 10, 1937," Official File 1275.

favourable to the Administration were the results of a survey by the Division of Press Intelligence of press reaction to the President's Annual Message in 1938 : of 142 editorials devoted to the address in its entirety, sixty-nine had endorsed it, fifty-two had criticised it and twenty-one had discussed it in general terms.²⁹ However, when the President argued directly in a speech to the American Retail Forum in May 1938 for a continuation of New Deal policies and objectives, Press Secretary Stephen Early forwarded to him a Division of Press Intelligence special report which showed that, of 219 editorials on the address, only eighteen had definitely applauded the President's stand. Of the remainder, 150 had opposed it and fifty-one had discussed the speech in general terms.³⁰ Continuance of general press support for the Administration's foreign policy was indicated in a memorandum which revealed that, of the newspapers sampled by the Division of Press Intelligence during the period from May 1 to June 1, 1940, eighty-three had published editorials in favour of granting aid to the allies, as against forty-nine which had expressed opposition to such a move.³¹

²⁹Division of Press Intelligence, "General Press Reaction to Annual Message of President Roosevelt, January 3, 1938," Official File 1275.

³⁰Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction to the President's Speech before the American Retail Forum, May 22, 1939." See, also, Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, June 2, 1939. Official File 1275.

³¹Division of Press Intelligence, "Memorandum on Editorial Reaction Toward Aid for Allies, May 1, 1940 to June 1, 1940," Official File 788.

The reporting to the President by the Division of Press Intelligence became systematised during Roosevelt's third term. In July 1941, Lowell Mellett, Director of the Office of Government Reports, of which the Division had become a part, offered to provide the President with weekly statistical abstracts of editorial opinion, as prepared by the Division from the Press Intelligence Bulletins compiled over that period. Roosevelt accepted the offer. Described by Mellett as "a more careful and complete check of editorial opinion than is being made by any other agency, private or governmental," these weekly reports presented, in concise and readily-usable form, a statistical break-down of editorial opinion of the nation's press on a wide variety of subjects, foreign and domestic. Moreover, because many of the statistics were cumulative, these weekly reports would have enabled the President to watch the shifts in editorial opinion on important issues.³² One example was the question

³²Lowell Mellett to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 18, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lowell Mellett, July 21, 1941; Official File 788. The Weekly Analysis for the period June 5 - June 11, 1942, for example, indexed the editorials of the newspapers sampled under two broad headings, "international affairs" and "domestic affairs." Under the former, were the following heads and sub-heads : World War -- Diplomatic, Political, Economic etc. : General World Situation, Coordination of Allied War Efforts, U.S. and Possessions, Latin America, British Empire, Russia, Axis countries, Axis-Occupied Countries, France, China, Miscellaneous Countries; World War -- Military and Naval Operations : Far Eastern and Pacific Theaters, Atlantic Theater, Eastern European Theater, Western European Theater, African theater. Under "domestic affairs" the categories were : War Production Program : Price Control and Inflation, Civilian Supply, Strategic Materials, Production and Industry Operations, Miscellaneous; Post-War Planning, Labor Matters, Labor Supply and Manpower, Army and Navy Matters, Fiscal and Tax Matters, Alien Control and Subversive Activities, War Information and Censorship, Defense Transportation, Civilian Defense, Miscellaneous. The analysis for this week consisted of the above index plus fifteen closely-typed pages. See "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction, June 12, 1942," Official File 788.

of the extension of the term of military service for selectees, National Guardsmen and Reserves. Editorial opinion on this issue was monitored weekly from July 14 to August 21, 1941, over which period the percentage of editorial opinion in favour of extension rose from 79.65 for the period July 14 to July 24, to 93.2 for the week ending July 31, and then, over succeeding weeks, reached 89.1 per cent, 96.9 per cent, 97.5 per cent, and 97.4 per cent. Of a grand total of editorials on the subject from July 14 to August 28 of 1151, 1043 or 90.6 per cent supported extension and 108 or 9.4 per cent opposed it -- a sufficiently decisive result.³³ Another subject which was treated in considerable detail in early reports was that of United States - Japanese relations. Editorial opinion on this issue, as monitored by the Division, revealed a widespread demand for firm action by the United States in the current crisis, embracing such measures as the freezing of Japanese assets, and stern criticism of the past policy of appeasement.³⁴ In another area, weekly summaries during August and September showed a strongly favourable editorial reaction to the Roosevelt-Churchill conference and the Atlantic Charter declaration : in the week from August 29 to September 4, 1941, 256 of the editorials surveyed by the Division of Press Intelligence approved of the meeting and

³³See Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Summary," August 22 to August 28, 1941, Official File 788, for a summary of editorial opinion on this issue over the period July 14 to August 28, 1941.

³⁴Ibid.

of the formulated eight point programme, twenty-nine urged the publication of more facts on the meeting and of details of possible commitments resulting from it, and seventy-nine discussed miscellaneous phases of the question.³⁵

Isolationist sentiment was shown to be on the wane when a radio speech by the President in early September earned widespread approval, while a speech by Charles Lindbergh at Des Moines on the same evening was the subject of bitter press criticism.³⁶ In domestic affairs, two matters which figured prominently in the early weekly reports of the Division which were sent to the White House were the Administration's tax bill and the proposed legislation to control prices and instalment buying. The reports made it clear that the former had received a mixed editorial response, with the proposal for a joint income tax return being solidly opposed, but the proposal to widen the income tax base winning support; so far as the latter was concerned, the legislation was broadly supported, although there was criticism of the omission of measures to control wages and farm prices.³⁷

³⁵See Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Summary," August 15 -- August 21, August 22 -- August 28, August 29 -- September 4, September 5 -- September 11, September 12 -- September 18. All in Official File 788.

³⁶Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Summary," September 12 -- September 18, 1941, Official File 788.

³⁷See, for example, Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Summary," August 1 -- August 7, August 15 -- August 21, August 22 -- August 28, August 29 -- September 4, September 5 -- September 11, September 12 -- September 18, 1941. All in Official File 788.

In addition to the break-downs of editorial opinion on various subjects, early copies of the weekly reports included miscellaneous sections under which were collected news items which, the Division of Press Intelligence analysts evidently believed, might have been of particular interest to the President. Thus, for example, there was included in the summary covering the period from August 5 to August 14, 1941, a report on an article by W. Kelsy, from the Detroit News of August 7, which had linked Roosevelt's "disappearance" on his trip to meet Churchill with the mysterious trip of Cleveland on the yacht Oneida in 1893, during which, it was later discovered, a team of five surgeons had operated on a malignant ulcer in the roof of Cleveland's mouth. Kelsy's story hinted at a similar explanation for Roosevelt's absence. Another item in this issue reported on a news story in the Chicago Tribune which reviewed the application made by pro-New Deal publisher J. David Stern to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for a loan, the refusal of the application, the subsequent intervention by Hopkins and Corcoran and the eventual arrangement of the loan through Philadelphia and Canadian banks. An editor's footnote to the story read : "Another story of how the public purse was used to control a newspaper will be published soon."³⁸

The system of reporting by the Division of Press Intelligence reached its highest stage of development during

³⁸Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Summary," August 5 -- August 14, 1941, Official File 788.

the period from September 26, 1941 to May 15, 1942. During that time, the weekly reports which Roosevelt received commenced with a crisp and lucid two-page summary of the salient features of the week's editorial opinion. Containing interpretative as well as purely analytical comment, these skilfully-devised preliminary comments would have enabled the President to see, virtually at a glance, what the general drift of newspaper opinion in the United States was and how press opinion was dividing on crucial domestic and foreign issues.³⁹ A copy of the preliminary summary of the Weekly Analysis for the period September 26 -- October 2, 1941, is reproduced in Appendix B. In the period from the inception of these summaries to the attack on Pearl Harbour, editorial opinion on international affairs reflected a further strengthening of press support for the Administration's foreign policy. The analysis for the week September 19 to September 25, 1941, which set the general tone of what was to follow, pointed out that recent events abroad, notably the

³⁹See Lowell Mellett to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 26, 1941, Official File 788, for Mellett's notification to the President of the change in the form of the weekly analyses. An example of the interpretative comment which began to be offered occurred in the preliminary summary of the analysis covering the period October 17 to October 23, in which, having pointed out that "only 151 editorials were devoted to Neutrality Act Revision and only 69 to the Lend-Lease Program," the compilers then added: "Apparently editorial writers are taking for granted additional Lend Lease funds, with only two last week and six this week urging consideration of payment." See Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," October 17 -- October 23, 1941, Official File 788.

reports from Russia and the continued sinking of ships, had had a marked effect in unifying the American press in support of more aggressive action and stronger support for the President's foreign policy. The Administration's policy of "aiding the democracies" was being strongly backed, with a majority of newspapers urging the prompt granting of additional lend-lease funds. Condemnation of isolationists in general and of Lindbergh in particular had risen sharply, with thirteen editorials approving the isolationists' stand and 117 condemning it and urging national unity. In the following weeks and up to the outbreak of war, the two-page summaries which headed the weekly reports revealed strong and growing support for the President's request for revision of the Neutrality Act, and for the specific proposal to arm merchant ships, as well as continuing acceptance of the need for additional lend-lease funds. Editorial hostility to isolationist policies continued. Although the President was strongly criticised for asserting, in a radio address early in October, in which he attempted to justify additional aid to Russia, that religious freedom existed in that country, reaction to his Navy Day Address later that month was reported to have been "extremely favorable," the speech being hailed as "a frank statement of our present positions and an inspiring appeal for united action against Hitler." It was noted, however, that a syndicated Scripps-Howard editorial had demanded to know how the United States could continue sending supplies to the allies as well as arming its own forces. When the United States-Japanese crisis developed in November 1941,

the Division of Press Intelligence reported "virtual unanimity in support of the handling of the situation by Secretary Hull and an insistent demand that we stand firm against appeasement or too great compromise."⁴⁰

The prefatory summaries of weekly Division of Press Intelligence reports in the period from 26 September to the outbreak of the war with Japan dealt with domestic affairs and the national defence effort as well as the foreign situation. The preliminary summary of the report covering the period September 19 to September 25 noted that the Supply Priorities Allocations Board was receiving a divided press, that there was overwhelming press criticism of Secretary Ickes' handling of the oil shortage situation, and that a majority of the press had approved the Administration's tax bill but was demanding an urgent curtailment of non-defence expenditures. The report drew attention, also, to strong press criticism of the President for reviving the controversy over the Supreme Court through the publication of an article in Collier's.⁴¹ Over succeeding weeks, Secretary Morgenthau was

⁴⁰ See the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction for this period in Official File 788. Criticism of the President for his statement on religious freedom in Russia is in the Analysis for October 3 -- October 10, 1941; reaction to the President's Navy Day Address began to be recorded in the Analysis for October 24 -- October 30, 1941, which also makes reference to the Scripps-Howard editorial. The concluding quotation in the paragraph is taken from the Analysis for November 21 -- November 27, 1941.

⁴¹ Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," September 19 -- September 25, 1941, Official File 788.

commended for warning of the dangers of inflation but repeatedly criticised over a proposal to place a one hundred per cent tax on profits in excess of six per cent, and the N.Y.C. and C.C.C. were attacked for high-pressure recruiting tactics aimed at maintaining their allocations of funds. While the past achievements of both agencies were recognised, sharp curtailment of their activities was now urged. In another sphere of domestic policy, there was general editorial support for the Administration's proposal to restrict instalment buying and qualified support for the scheme to control prices, general agreement on the necessity for price control being coupled with a widespread insistence that such control be extended to cover wages and farm prices. The summaries drew attention, also, to the overwhelming press condemnation of John L. Lewis for calling the captive coal miners' strike in defiance of the President, though such condemnation was accompanied by much editorial criticism of Secretary Perkins and Administration labour policies, which were held by many newspapers to be accountable for the existing labour crisis. The dispute having been settled, the President won editorial praise for his patience and success in the handling of it.⁴²

Predictably, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour was followed by an upsurge of patriotic sentiment in the nation's press. Division of Press Intelligence reports

⁴²See Preliminary Summaries of the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction, September 26 -- December 14, 1941, in Official File 788.

reaching the President in the early weeks of the war revealed that his message to Congress asking for a declaration of war against Japan, his radio address to the nation on December 9, and his talks with Churchill aimed at formulating a unified Allied command had received wholehearted editorial endorsement. Even Secretary Knox's report on Pearl Harbour was generally commended for its frankness. Similarly, the Division's survey of editorial opinion for the week ending December 31, 1941 referred to "almost unanimous agreement on major international and war issues."⁴³ To convey an impression of the sentiment aroused by the President's Annual Message, delivered the following week, the Division included representative excerpts from various editorials in the preliminary section of its report: "equal to this hour of destiny" (Baltimore Sun), "fiercely inspiring" (New York Mirror), "summons... to total victory" (Philadelphia Bulletin), "call to toil and battle" (New York Herald Tribune), "fighting speech" (Washington Post), "ringing speech" (Philadelphia Inquirer), and, from the Wall Street Journal, "Okeh, Mr. President, let's go."⁴⁴ Such enthusiasm continued throughout the early part of 1942, the President's radio address to the nation in mid-February evoking "practically

⁴³See Preliminary Summaries of the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction, December 5 -- December 11, December 12 -- December 18, December 19 -- December 24, December 26 -- December 31, 1941, Official File 788.

⁴⁴Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," January 2 -- January 8, 1942, Official File 788.

unanimous editorial praise and endorsement,"⁴⁵ although a report reaching the White House early in March did refer to "continued and growing criticism" of the Allies' relations with Vichy France.⁴⁶

As the war progressed, the reports of the Division of Press Intelligence began to reflect a diffusion of editorial interest, with editorial comment extending to military and naval operations in the various theatres of the war and to diplomatic, political and economic developments in the belligerent countries. In so far as it reflected favourably or unfavourably on the Roosevelt Administration, the general pattern of Division of Press Intelligence reports on international affairs and the war effort over the period from March 1942 to November 1942, at which time the Division's activities were sharply curtailed, was one of strong editorial endorsement of public pronouncements by Roosevelt, coupled with a significant level of criticism of the war effort.⁴⁷ Thus, while, on the one hand, the President's order of April 1942 giving priority in foreign shipments to Russia was hailed by the press,⁴⁸ a message to

⁴⁵Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," February 20 -- February 26, 1942, Official File 788.

⁴⁶Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," March 6 -- March 12, 1942, Official File 788.

⁴⁷See Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction for the period from March 1942 to November 1942 in Official File 788.

⁴⁸Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," April 10 -- April 16, 1942, Official File 788.

Congress on April 27 was generally approved,⁴⁹ Roosevelt's "total war" address shortly afterwards was applauded as having "summed up the military situation masterfully,"⁵⁰ and his Labor Day Address of September 1942 was commended as being both realistic and inspiring,⁵¹ press charges of complacency, inaction, inefficiency and confusion in the conduct of the war, and demands for an end to social experimentation and Administration disunity became recurring themes. In a Division of Press Intelligence report covering the period from August 21 to August 27, 1942, for example, a heavy volume of criticism was directed against Administration disunity, the quarrel between Donald Nelson, General Somervell and Admiral Robinson being cited by some newspapers as an example of the current lack of unity.⁵² A later report for the week ending September 24, 1942, listed forty-four editorials as criticising the direction of the national war effort and calling on Washington officialdom for more vigorous leadership.⁵³

Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour,

⁴⁹Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," April 24 -- April 30, 1942, Official File 788.

⁵⁰Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summaries of the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction, May 1 -- 7, May 8 -- 14, 1942, Official File 788.

⁵¹Division of Press Intelligence, Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction, September 11 -- September 17, September 18 -- September 24, 1942, Official File 788.

⁵²Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," August 21 -- August 27, 1942, Official File 788.

⁵³Division of Press Intelligence, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," September 18 -- September 24, Official File 788.

domestic matters were, for a time, crowded out of the reports of the Division of Press Intelligence by international affairs. Nevertheless, studies of press comment on what the compilers referred to as "domestic affairs" (though, by this time, the line between "domestic affairs" and "the war effort," as classified by the compilers of the reports, had become blurred) for the remainder of 1941 revealed an acceptance by editorial writers of the need for wartime censorship of the press (though some warned against over-rigid restrictions),⁵⁴ and a favourable response to the President's call for a labor-management conference aimed at assuring uninterrupted production for the duration of the emergency.⁵⁵ In the period from the end of December 1941 to May 1942, the weekly reports reaching the President from the Division of Press Intelligence drew attention to substantial, though by no means unqualified press support for the Administration's production, labour, taxation and anti-inflation programmes. The creation of the War Production Board in January 1942 was greeted favourably, though comment on the War Labor Board was "noticeably diverse," with some newspapers expressing scepticism as to its likely effectiveness in view of what was said to be the Administration's record in the handling of past labour controversies. However, over the same period, the weekly

⁵⁴Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," December 19 -- December 24, 1941, Official File 788.

⁵⁵Division of Press Intelligence, Preliminary Summary, "Weekly Analysis of Press Reaction," December 26 -- December 31, 1941, Official File 788.

reports highlighted press criticism of confusion and delays in defence production, of waste in government agencies, and, in the context of a demand for the elimination of non-essential, non-defence spending, demands for the curtailment of the activities of certain New Deal agencies, notably the N.Y.A. and the C.C.C. A special report to the President on a press conference statement by him in March 1942⁵⁶ on a forty hour week showed that, of 300 newspapers examined over the two days since the statement, only thirty two had carried editorials on the statement, and that, of these, only five had supported the President's position.

Between May and November 1942, the Division's weekly reports revealed a measure of support for the Administration's price control programme, but continuing criticism of the exemption from control of wages and farm prices. In other areas, the creation of the Office of War Information in June 1942 received a favourable press, as did the appointment of Elmer Davis to head it (though mainly in the context of press criticism of confusion in Government information

⁵⁶ See Preliminary Summaries of the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction covering the period from December 1941 to May 1942 in Official File 788. The special report, which was received on March 19, 1942, is also in Official File 788.

services and demands that the release of war information be speeded up), and the action of the House in refusing appropriations for the continuance of the C.C.C. won approval. An entry in a report for the period June 19 to June 25 drew attention to the fact that nine editorial writers had been "puzzled over Mrs. Roosevelt's statement that wage stabilization must wait for complete success of [the] price control program which cannot succeed unless it includes wage stabilization." A notable feature of the editorial comment over this period was a continuing demand that the President take decisive action to curb the rising cost of living, and, when he issued an ultimatum to Congress in his Labor Day Message of September 1942 that if that body did not move to control prices, he himself would do so, there was significant press support for the move. But, as usual, approval was qualified, with several newspapers expressing unease over the possible constitutional implications of such a course of action.⁵⁷

Over the period July 1941 to November 1942, during which time Roosevelt received a more complete picture of the editorial treatment of his Administration by the American press than he received at any other time during his Presidency, the weekly reports of the Division of Press Intelligence revealed a high level of press support for the Administration's

⁵⁷See the Weekly Analyses of Press Reaction for the period from May 15, 1942 to October 30, 1942 in Official File 788.

foreign policies, as evidenced, before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, by strong sentiment in favour of extension of the term of military service, demands for firm action against Japan, support for the Allies, hostility toward isolationists, support for the President's request for revision of the Neutrality Act, and, after the outbreak of hostilities, by virtually unanimous support for the President's early statements on the war, and continuing editorial endorsement of his major public pronouncements on war issues. In domestic affairs, press treatment of the Administration over the period in question was critical but not overwhelmingly so. Substantial press hostility was directed against shortcomings in the war effort, with recurring charges of inefficiency and disunity within the Administration, and toward the continuation into war time of the activities of certain New Deal agencies, especially the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A., now thought to be inappropriate. On the other hand, there was considerable newspaper backing for the Administration's attempts to institute price and instalment buying control, though, in relation to the former, the lack of control over wages and farm prices continued to cause discontent, and qualified support for the Administration's production, labour and taxation policies.

Neither on the basis of these regular reports, nor on the basis of the special reports received by Roosevelt during his first and second terms, can the charge of overwhelming newspaper opposition to his administrations be sustained.

About the final major source of direct information concerning press treatment of his Administrations which Roosevelt received -- the press clippings sent to him by supporters and associates -- it is difficult to generalise, for, unless such clippings were earmarked on arrival for inclusion in one of the special subject files within the President's Personal File, the President's Official File or the papers of Press Secretary Stephen Early, they would have vanished, beyond the limits of feasible search, into the vastitudes of alphabetically-filed Presidential mail, the volume of which, it has been estimated, was five to eight thousand letters per day.⁵⁸ So far as hostile press clippings were concerned, the great bulk of those which are recoverable were taken from the Chicago Tribune and the Hearst press.⁵⁹ Two examples taken from the large volume of anti-Tribune mail received by Roosevelt were a letter from Charles A. Churan dated November 6, 1933, complaining that a Tribune cartoon of that date had constituted "a cowardly, traitorous [sic] act" and was "maliciously untruthful,"⁶⁰ and a copy sent for the President's information of a letter which Harold F. Condon had written in August 1936 to the editor of the same

⁵⁸Leila A. Sussman, "FDR and the White House Mail," Public Opinion Quarterly, XX (Spring, 1956), 5.

⁵⁹See President's Personal File 426 for letters criticising the Chicago Tribune, and President's Personal File 62 and Official File 846 for complaints against the Hearst press.

⁶⁰Charles A. Churan to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 6, 1933, President's Personal File 426.

newspaper and which began : "At present you are conducting a most vicious, damnable, and contemptuous [sic?] campaign against the GREATEST PRESIDENT, [sic] who ever occupied the White House."⁶¹ Among the favourable clippings received by the President was a large number of editorials written by the pro-Administration and anti-Tribune editor of the Chicago Daily Times, Richard Finnegan. In May 1935, for example, the Managing Editor of the Daily Times, Louis Ruppel, sent to Roosevelt one of Finnegan's editorials, which, he asserted, was "as fine a piece of work as I have ever seen." A grateful President requested Ruppel to tell Finnegan on his behalf "that that editorial is the kind that helps a fellow!"⁶² Nor was it unusual for the supportive editorials of William Allen White to be brought to the President's attention.⁶³

While it is not too difficult to believe that hostile and sometimes abusive clippings from McCormick and Hearst

⁶¹Harold Francis Condon to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 11, 1936, President's Personal File 426. A copy of the letter to the Tribune was enclosed with Condon's letter to the President.

⁶²Louis Ruppel to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 3, 1935 (the editorial by Finnegan was enclosed), Franklin D. Roosevelt to Louis Ruppel, May 9, 1935; President's Personal File 2133. See this file for many other favourable editorials from the Chicago Daily Times.

⁶³See, for example : Lowell Mellett to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 8, 1941 (enclosing editorial by White), President's Secretary's File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, January 22, 1934, Franklin D. Roosevelt to William Allen White, January 23, 1940; White Papers, Series C, boxes 217, 347.

publications may have impressed themselves more firmly on Roosevelt's mind than did clippings which indicated newspaper support, it appears that, of the clippings which found their way into the President's Personal File, the President's Official File and the Papers of Stephen Early, the number which expressed opposition to the President may not have exceeded, on a straight quantitative basis, the number which expressed support.⁶⁴

The notion that Franklin Roosevelt was opposed by the overwhelming majority of the American Press became established as part of New Deal conventional wisdom and has survived to become part of its legend. Testimony on this point from contemporaries is as unanimous as it is unreliable: Presidential Assistant Samuel Rosenman wrote in relation to the 1936 campaign that "at least 85 per cent of the press was against him [Roosevelt]";⁶⁵ Democratic National Committee Director of Publicity Charles Michelson asserted, in relation to the elections of 1936 and 1940 that "nearly all papers were

⁶⁴See, for examples of favourable clippings: John Cochran to Stephen Early, November 11, 1933, Early Papers, box 2; Stephen Early to William Toner, October 7, 1941, Early Papers, box 16; Franklin D. Roosevelt to O.E. Butler, December 18, 1935, President's Personal File 82; Morgan S. Sanders to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 5, 1935, Early Papers, box 39; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Jonathan Daniels, January 15, 1934, President's Personal File 1020; Kenneth C. Hogate to Franklin D. Roosevelt, September 2, 1939, President's Personal File 2864; Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 31, 1935 (enclosing editorial from Boston Daily Globe, August 26, 1935), Official File 144; David Gibson to Stephen Early, October 18, 1940, Official File 144; Olin W. Kennedy to Marvin H. McIntyre, July 8, 1937, Official File 36.

⁶⁵Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.99.

anti-Roosevelt";⁶⁶ pro-New Deal publisher J. David Stern believed that 90 per cent of the press opposed the President in 1936,⁶⁷ a figure quoted also by reporter Charles Hurd, specifically in relation to the 1940 election,⁶⁸ and by Justice William O. Douglas and Rexford Tugwell in general comments on the New Deal period made in recent correspondence with this writer.⁶⁹ The actual situation would seem to have been different. So far as the declared political affiliation of the nation's daily newspapers was concerned, the number of Republican and Independent-Republican publications probably never amounted, during Roosevelt's Presidency, to more than thirty per cent of the total of daily newspapers.⁷⁰ That, in addition to these, some Independent and Independent-Democratic newspapers opposed Roosevelt is undeniable; that all of them did so, together with a not insignificant proportion of nominally Democratic newspapers, is inconceivable. In relation to Presidential election campaigns, when newspaper opposition to Franklin Roosevelt reached its peak, it is only by equating "absence of support" with "opposition," and by

⁶⁶Michelson, The Ghost Talks, p.45.

⁶⁷J. David Stern, Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1962), p.18.

⁶⁸Hurd, Young and Gay, p.238.

⁶⁹Letters from William O. Douglas, October 23, 1974 and Rexford G. Tugwell, October 25, 1974.

⁷⁰See pp.184-85 above. The combined percentage of Republican and Independent-Republican daily newspapers in 1935 was 29.28, and, in 1940, 26.84.

lumping together those newspapers which remained uncommitted to either candidate with those who opposed the New Deal, that Roosevelt's estimate of the magnitude of press opposition to the New Deal may be approximated. During the periods between elections, it is clear, press opposition to the Roosevelt administrations fell well below its Presidential campaign level. The general pattern of daily newspaper treatment of the Roosevelt administrations, a pattern which is suggested by the results of the editorial survey discussed above and confirmed by reports from the Division of Press Intelligence, is one of strong support for the early New Deal programme, general, and, at times, bitter, though by no means unqualified opposition to the President's domestic policies, widespread opposition to certain events such as the attempt to reorganise the Judiciary and the third-term bid, and continuing support for Roosevelt's foreign and defence policies. The material from which such a pattern of press treatment could have been built up was made available to Roosevelt through his own daily newspaper reading, through the special and weekly reports of the Division of Press Intelligence, from at least one important survey by the Democratic National Committee, and (although it is not possible to be as confident on this point) from the press clippings sent to him by supporters and associates. Of the general nature of that pattern, Roosevelt could scarcely have been ignorant.

"Remember this always," the President told

representatives of the American Youth Conference in June 1940, "85 per cent of the papers of the United States are opposed to this Administration."⁷¹ Although others besides Franklin Roosevelt would make the charge, he, far more than they, had grounds for knowing it to be false.

⁷¹Press Conference No.649-A, June 5, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 456.

CHAPTER VI

HIS DISPLEASURE, LIKE THE RAIN, FALLS EQUALLY UPON THE
JUST AND THE UNJUST

However much he may have regretted the lack of newspaper support for his policies, Franklin Roosevelt's frequently-voiced objections to the press of America had less to do with its editorial policy than with its ethics. In this respect, it is clear, his chief concern was with the question of bias in the presentation of news. The opposition of newspaper owners might, he sometimes asserted, legitimately be expressed through statements of newspaper opinion, but when, as he believed was consistently the case, it overflowed the editorial columns to produce a distortion of news presentation, such opposition threatened not merely the freedom of the press but the future of the American democratic system as well.¹ No less an indication than editorial opposition of overwhelming owner-hostility, the widespread distortion of news by the press of the United States was, Franklin Roosevelt

¹See Raymond Moley, After Seven Years (Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press, 1939, First Bison Book Printing, March 1971), p. 337; Press Conference No. 389, August 9, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 120-21; Press Conference No. 260-A, December 27, 1935, Presidential Press Conferences, VI, 368; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry Luce, November 20, 1940, Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, December 3, 1940; President's Personal File 3338.

believed, more threatening and more insidious.

To make a general assessment of the ethical standards of the American press during the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt and of the extent to which owner-inspired distortion of news took place would be a daunting and excessively difficult task. In the swirl of contemporary debate, in which views are polarised, criteria subjective and ill-defined, and in which, using examples which are always striking but frequently extreme, disputants move effortlessly, in their criticism or defence of that institution, from the particular to the universal, it is not easy to see where the balance of the argument lies. In the realm of contemporary generalisation, for every thrust there seems to be a parry : Roosevelt declares publicly that eighty-five per cent of the press is comprised of Tory newspapers, the Chicago Tribune congratulates that eighty five per cent for its "courage in fighting the overwhelming power of the [New Deal] political machine"; Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, debating the issue of the freedom of the press with publisher Frank Gannett, asserts that the press is enslaved to advertisers, Gannett, in his reply, charges that the Administration has embarked on a campaign to smear the press and pave the way for censorship by the government;² the President insists that story-slanting is rampant, Helen Rogers Reid, of the New York Herald Tribune,

²"The Press and the People -- A Survey," Fortune, August, 1939, p.64.

announces that "the old policy of coloring the news belongs to the newspaper of other days" and that "all they [the newspapermen] are instructed to do is to get the facts and write them in the clearest, most informative way possible";³ Roosevelt asserts that newspapers, too frequently edited from the counting room rather than the news desk, are losing the confidence of the people;⁴ William Allen White, speaking to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1939, states that "the American press is honest according to its lights, which are clearer and more penetrating than the illumination of any other section of American public life," and adds defiantly : "We invite comparison in our conduct and morals with the politicians who run our government."⁵

If general criticisms of the press in the age of Roosevelt may be found in rich profusion, it is equally true that particular examples of press sins and shortcomings can be accumulated to the point of tedium : a Hearst attack, in 1936, on the W.P.A. is headed "Taxpayers

³Helen Rogers Reid, Speech, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, November 4, 1936, Papers of Helen Rogers Reid, Library of Congress, Washington, Series D, box 287.

⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, November 2, 1938, President's Personal File 2403. This letter was subsequently published in Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 577.

⁵William Allen White, "Annual Address by the President of the Society," Problems of Journalism : Proceedings of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1939, p.15.

Feed 20,000 Reds on N.Y. Relief Rolls";⁶ Hearst reporters are prevented, in the closing stages of the campaign of that year, from writing anything which might suggest that the re-election of Roosevelt is a possibility;⁷ stories circulate that the President has arranged for the Government to pay his mother \$100,000 for the use of her Hyde Park home as a summer White House;⁸ when the Albany Central Federation of Labor declares in favour of the President's Supreme Court plan, the Gannett-owned Albany Knickerbocker Press buries this important local news beneath a report that two out-of-town legal groups have opposed it, headlining its story "Two Bar Groups Rap Court Move";⁹ in the period of the war the activities of the isolationist press -- named specifically by the President in a radio broadcast in October 1944 as consisting of the McCormick, Patterson, Gannett and Hearst publications¹⁰ -- evoke widespread resentment among other sections of the newspaper industry and a stream of complaints from the public ("May I ask why

⁶Quoted in Edwin Emery, "William Randolph Hearst : A Tentative Appraisal," in Highlights in the History of the American Press, ed. by Edwin Emery and Edwin H. Ford (Minneapolis : University of Minneapolis Press, 1954), p. 325.

⁷Paul Ward, "Farley Captures Labor," Nation (October 31, 1936), 512, quoted in Rosten, "Washington Correspondents," p.51.

⁸Stephen Early, "Below the Belt," article in Early Papers, box 38.

⁹Seldes, Lords of the Press, p.208.

¹⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Address at Dinner of Foreign Policy Association," New York, N.Y., October 21, 1944, quoted in Public Papers and Addresses, XIII, 349.

you allow these frightful publications to continue to be printed and circulated among our people? This is not free speech. It is free suicide for our beloved country.")¹¹

To some of the more blatant examples of unethical press practice, the President himself drew public attention. On May 18, 1937, he read to reporters a communication recently sent by the McClure Syndicate to its 270 subscribers throughout the United States. The message quoted the authority of a "New York specialist high in the medical field" for a confidential story that the President had recently been found in a coma at his desk. "Medical examination," the report went on, "had disclosed the neck rash which is typical of certain disturbing symptoms." Urgent treatment was required. The President's recent trip, unaccompanied by newsmen, to "southern waters," and "the unusual activities of Vice President Garner," it was suggested, were related to the mystery illness. A second message informed editors that an official of the American Cyanamid Corporation had recently told a private gathering,

¹¹Ellen M. Carmichael to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 15, 1942, Papers of Lowell Mellett, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, "White House 1942" folder. See also, for example : Eleanor L. Lord to Lowell Mellett, March 15, 1942, Lowell Mellett to Eleanor L. Lord, March 24, 1942, ibid; Honorable Joseph H. Bryson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 10, 1942 (enclosing letter from Thomas L. Lewis to Joseph H. Bryson, August 8, 1942), President's Personal File 62; Beatrice de-Lima Meyers to Stephen Early, September 13, 1944, Official File 3242; "'Defeatist Bund' Stabs U.S. War Effort; Axis Propaganda Flourishes Uncurbed," Christian Science Monitor, March 10, 1942; "Antidote to Poison," Philadelphia Record, editorial, May 7, 1942, p.1.

in an outburst which was said to be "typical of the personal reactions [toward the Administration] of many right-wing leaders in business and finance," that "'the paranoic in the White House' is destroying the nation, that a couple of well-placed bullets would be the best thing for the country, and that he for one would buy a bottle of champagne as quick as he could get it to celebrate such news."¹²

In any history of press ethics in the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt, special chapters would need to be devoted to the Hearst press and to the activities of the Chicago Tribune. The multiplication of examples of the Hearst chain's journalistic practices serves only a limited purpose, but the prevailing tone of much of its opposition to the New Deal is captured in the following extract : writing in the Los Angeles Examiner on November 24, 1935, the Hearst organisation's financial authority, Robert H. Hemphill stated :

I do not know what catastrophe will be required to shock this nation into a realization of the enormous consequences which are planned and ARE BEING EXECUTED by the Federal Administration and its little band of fanatic adventurers....

This band of revolutionary radicals PROPOSE TO OVERTHROW THIS GOVERNMENT.

¹²Press Conference No. 367, May 18, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, IX, 368-71. Richard Waldo, editor of the National Whirligig, the McClure Syndicate publication which sent the two stories to subscribers, was subsequently expelled from the National Press Club and the Gridiron Club. The American Newspaper publishers' Association issued a special bulletin in May 1937, which publicised the incident fully. See James G. Stahlman to Stephen Early, June 3, 1937, memorandum, Stephen Early to Marguerite LeHand, June 4, 1937; Early Papers, box 38.

AND THEY ARE DOING IT!¹³

In October of the following year, in the New York American, Hearst referred to the President and his associates as "you and your fellow Communists." Included in the same issue, was a poem which began :

A Red New Deal with a Soviet seal
Endorsed by a Moscow hand,
The strange result of an alien cult
In a liberty-loving land.¹⁴

As happened with the Chicago Tribune, the more bizarre exploits of the Hearst organisation were often exposed by the chain's journalistic rivals. In 1938, when Hearst publications promoted the idea of special "Paul Revere" trains which would carry disgruntled citizens to Washington to protest against "the dictator bill" (a Roosevelt measure aimed at government reorganisation), the Chicago Herald and Examiner, the local Hearst organ, began its report : "Mobilized spontaneously [sic!], a great cross section of Chicago and Illinois was preparing last night to depart for Washington in personal protest against President Roosevelt's government reorganization bill," but, when the special rail cars departed the following day the Chicago Daily News estimated that only 350 Paul Reveres had rallied to the call, while a reporter from the pro-New Deal Chicago Daily Times, who searched the trains, was unable to find any. Subsequent inquiry by the Times.

¹³Quoted in Leo Rosten, The Washington Correspondents (New York : Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937), p.298 (footnote).

¹⁴Ibid.

did locate one man who had made the trip. "His name is Morris Stein," reported the newspaper solemnly. "He sells fruit and vegetables." The Herald and Examiner had described the departure of another Paul Revere thus:

Swinging onto the train as it pulled out of the station was Fred Brandstrader, representing a group of Evanston businessmen. Lacking baggage or tickets, he shouted: "Weather made it impossible for me to get home for my bag and I had to dash out of a conference and run for the train, but the defeat of this vicious bill should come first with every American."

The Daily Times commented:

Mr. Brandstrader got off the train at Englewood station. He denied shouting anything except the name Brandstrader. Mr. Brandstrader returned from the Englewood station to the Times office. He is a Times reporter. His real name is Karin Walsh.¹⁵

As blatant as anything produced by the Hearst press was the tendentious treatment of news by Colonel Robert McCormick's Chicago Tribune. Examples abound: for more than a week of the Presidential campaign of 1936, the Tribune made but a single reference on its front page to one of the candidates, who happened also to be President;¹⁶ when unsavoury practices were discovered in two Wisconsin cities, the newspaper headed its report: "Roosevelt Area in Wisconsin is Hotbed of Vice."¹⁷ Of the Tribune it has been said that the refusal to confine

¹⁵John Tebbel, The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst (New York: Dutton, 1952), pp.169-71.

¹⁶Quoted in Rosten, Washington Correspondents, p.274.

¹⁷Quoted, ibid.

opinion to its editorial columns is one of the newspaper's hallmarks,¹⁸ and, at whatever point its output is sampled, the quality seems similar. The presentation of news in an issue chosen at random from the period of the Presidential campaign of 1940 is instructive. A banner headline on its front page : "FLAW IN DRAFT LOTTERY TOLD," introduced a report that two eminent Chicago mathematicians had charged that the existing lottery system for selecting men for the draft was unfair, while other page-one headlines proclaimed : "Willkie Blames Roosevelt for Lack of Planes," "Business Ready for Prosperity if Willkie Wins," "G.O.P. Seeking a Dictatorship, Says Roosevelt," and "Political Hoodlums Hit Republicans with Violence and Threats." To complete the front page there was a dispatch ("Federal Agents Quiz Ohioan for Wiring F.D.R.") which claimed that a man who had sent a telegram to the President protesting about an order which conferred a captaincy on Roosevelt's son, Elliott, had been visited by secret service agents and "threatened with reprisal, if the incident was repeated," and a story of an alleged attack by Mayor La Guardia on a by-stander at an election rally to which the Mayor had gone to speak in support of the President ("Detroit Questioner He Roughed Up Sues 'The Little Flower'"). A cartoon on the front page featured a giant ballot paper, in the form of a stone

¹⁸Elmer Gertz, "Chicago's Adult Delinquent : the Tribune," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII, 3 (1944), 418.

slab, on which the space marked "Roosevelt" was being marked with a "x". Under the slab was a large cross marked "war," beneath which a tangle of soldiers was being pitilessly crushed. The cartoon carried the suggestive caption : "A Cross for the Backs of Your Sons." On page five of the same issue was a story headlined "Early Deserts Campaign; Hears Victim Will Sue," the substance of which was that the Press Secretary, "under fire... for kneeling a Negro policeman in an altercation near the end of President Roosevelt's campaign visit to New York," had chosen to remain in Washington rather than accompanying the President to Brooklyn, where he was to make a speech.¹⁹

As well as being suppressed and distorted, news might also, on occasion, be invented. On August 9, 1936, under the screaming headline "Moscow Orders Reds in U.S. to Back Roosevelt," the Tribune carried a report from its northern European correspondent, Donald Day, that the Russian Communist Party had directed its American counterpart to throw its weight behind the candidacy of Roosevelt and to work for the defeat of his opponent, characterised in the dispatch as a representative of "forces which opposed the development of class war and revolution in America." The origin of the story was subsequently shown by the rival Chicago Daily News, which exposed the hoax, to have been

¹⁹Chicago Tribune, November 2, 1940, pp.1,5.

a speech which Earl Browder, General Secretary of the American Communist Party, had made in Chicago the previous May. Browder's remarks had been reprinted by the Soviet journal Kommunistisches International, from which, in turn, the Day dispatch had been drawn. When, later in the campaign, the President visited Chicago for an election rally, the Tribune featured a front-page picture of a man collecting a large number of discarded Roosevelt campaign buttons from the street. But the collector, it was discovered by a rival newspaper, had been paid for his services by the Tribune, and the buttons had been supplied by that newspaper's own photographer.²⁰

Roosevelt's dissatisfaction with the treatment of news by the American press ran well beyond his obvious and understandable resentment against the tactics often employed by Hearst publications and by the Chicago Tribune. Even in the dispatches of the press associations, in which, considering the varying political affiliations of their clients, the practical need for impartiality and objectivity was supposedly much greater, the White House believed that distortion of news occurred. In an attempt to eliminate such distortion, Roosevelt maintained a close surveillance of the press associations' news output. At his direction, examples of objectionable

²⁰W. Cameron Meyers, "The Chicago Newspaper Hoax In the '36 Election Campaign," Journalism Quarterly, XXXVII (Summer, 1960), 356-64.

reports were collected by Stephen Early in a file labelled "A.P. -- News Stories Showing Distinct Bias Against the President and the Administration 1936 - 1938." Reports included in this file were criticised by the Press Secretary for being "without foundation," for being "slanted," for employing "free phraseology," for revealing "evil political intent... toward the Administration," or, in another instance, for seeing in a serious news story only "an opportunity to be funny or facetious and to hold the President up to public ridicule." Thus, for example, a dispatch from the Associated Press which was carried by the Washington Post on June 18, 1938, began :

The noted team of Corcoran and Cohen was hard at work yesterday trying to rescue the Administration from a power policy snarl....

The job entrusted to the two young Roosevelt admirers, Thomas G. Corcoran and Benjamin V. Cohen, is full of political dynamite."

Describing the report as "being more of an editorial than a news story," Early enquired of the two members of the Administration referred to in it whether the information in the dispatch was accurate. Their answer was that it was not.²¹

Material from this collection of journalistic transgressions by the Associated Press was the basis for

²¹See "Associated Press -- News Stories Showing Distinct Bias Against the President and the Administration, 1936-38," Early Papers; see also in this folder, Stephen Early to Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen, June 18, 1938, Thomas Corcoran and Benjamin Cohen to Stephen Early, June 27, 1938.

a series of complaints which Roosevelt made personally to Robert McLean, President of that news organisation, at a private meeting in October 1938. Having made general charges relating to the handling of news by the Associated Press, Roosevelt invited McLean to discuss with Stephen Early the contents of the file of clippings which the White House had assembled.²² In November of the following year the President directed Early to summon Washington Bureau Chief Brian Bell to his office to protest about an Associated Press report on the budget. On this occasion, Bell apologised for the story, which, he admitted, had conveyed the misleading impression that the Administration had been guilty of extravagance, and promised to publish a retraction. When Roosevelt, who was on vacation at Warm Springs, Georgia, failed to find any such retraction in the following day's issue of the Atlanta Constitution, the only newspaper which he had received, he sent word to the White House that the Associated Press be requested to furnish a list of the newspapers which had carried the correction.²³ The dispatches of the United Press were scrutinised with

²² Robert McLean to Stephen Early, October 10, 1938, Robert McLean to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 10, 1938, Stephen Early to Robert McLean, October 11, 1938; Official File 171.

²³ Memorandum, Stephen Early to William D. Hassett, November 22, 1939, memorandum, William D. Hassett to Stephen Early, November 23, 1939; Official File 171.

similar care : as Roosevelt observed in a memorandum to Stephen Early in April 1942, it was "worthwhile to check up with the U.P. occasionally in order that they may know they are being watched, if for no other reason."²⁴

However, when the President himself publicly denounced that press association for a story which he described as being "a culmination of other false news stories to which the attention of the United Press has been called by me and by my office on previous occasions," the United Press strongly defended its actions.²⁵

Nor is it uncommon in the literature of the period to find complaints that the comments of syndicated columnists had been omitted or selectively pruned in accordance with the predilections of their clients. In December 1935, when Drew Pearson and Robert Allen devoted part of their "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column to a discussion of the results of a poll showing that 69.7 per cent of their radio listeners favoured the President's re-election, the Hearst Washington Herald deleted that section of the column. Some time later when a second "Merry-Go-Round" column traced the decline in the President's popularity in the early part of 1935 and its subsequent recovery later in the year, the Herald reprinted

²⁴Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, April 30, 1942, Early Papers, box 24.

²⁵"Statement by the President, July 13, 1939," and "Statement by Hugh Baillie, July 14, 1939"; Official File 182.

the account of the former, but omitted any mention of the latter.²⁶ Suppression of columnists' comments was a charge made also against publications controlled by Roy Howard. "Within the last few weeks," declared Nation in May 1938, "the management of that journal [New York World Telegram] has deleted sections of columns which clashed with its editorial policy, dropped columns altogether, and in general introduced a reign of censorship and repression." Among the questions then put to Howard by the magazine were : "When Westbrook Pegler expressed sympathy for the Spanish Loyalists, why was his column ... omitted?"; "When Heywood Broun appealed for 'penny-postcards' to Congress in support of Roosevelt's recovery programme, why did the sentences containing this appeal vanish from his column after the first edition?"; "When Raymond Clapper berated President Roosevelt's critics during the reorganisation fight, why was his column so cut that it appeared as a hostile portrait of the President?"²⁷ In May 1940, the President himself intervened on behalf of pro-New Deal columnist Jay Franklin, instructing Stephen Early to write to George Backer of the New York Evening Post and J. David Stern of the Philadelphia Record informing them that he, Roosevelt, had noted the omission of Franklin's column and that he hoped that it might reappear.²⁸ Another who felt aggrieved by such practices was the columnist Walter

²⁶Rosten, Washington Correspondents, pp.275-76.

²⁷"Attention Roy Howard," Nation (May 14, 1938), 548.

²⁸Memorandum, William D. Hassett to Stephen Early, May 21, 1940, Early Papers, box 2.

Winchell, who, claiming that Eleanor Patterson's Washington Times Herald had suppressed nine of twenty-eight columns which he had submitted in a single month, inserted the following advertisement in the Washington News :

Attention Mr. and Mrs. Washington, D.C. : A certain Washington newspaper whose initials are T.H. omits considerable material from the column I write for the King Features Syndicate. The omissions were usually about certain so-called Americans -- pro-Nazis and pro-Japs.²⁹

The catalogue of press misdeeds can be extended. Roosevelt's charges, after the onset of war, of lack of patriotism on the part of certain newspapers were echoed by other critics of the American press,³⁰ as well as by sections of the press itself. Angered by Colonel Robert McCormick's constant criticisms of the conduct of the war,

²⁹Quoted in Charles Fisher, The Columnists (New York : Howell Soskin, Publishers, Inc., 1944), p.129.

³⁰The erudite and witty Augustus L. Richards, a retired New York lawyer of evidently ample means, conducted against such sections of the newspaper industry a vigorous crusade, assailing offending publications in lengthy telegrams, which were often masterpieces of invective. On December 10, 1941, Richards began a remarkable assault on Captain Joseph Patterson's New York Daily News which was to continue, almost without abatement, until the February 10 1942. Day after day, during that period, Richards dispatched telegrams, often running into several hundreds of words, commenting caustically on the editorial stand and treatment of news in that publication. Others to feel Richards' barbs were Colonel Robert McCormick, Arthur Krock, Roy Howard, and the editors of New York papers PM and the Sun. See numerous examples of Richards' letters in Papers of Augustus L. Richards, Group 31, boxes 1,2 and 3, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

the Chicago Daily News hit back, in March 1942, with a derisory series of cartoons, "The Adventures of Col. M'Cosmic," ridiculing McCormick's pretensions as a military expert.³¹ Later that year, a front page editorial in the Philadelphia Record entitled "Antidote for Poison," attacked "the spoiled darlings of American journalism" -- Colonel Bertie McCormick, Captain Joe Patterson, Mrs. Cissie Patterson, and "that everlasting 79-year-old adolescent, William Randolph Hearst," whose publications, it was pointed out, accounted for more than one-sixth of the national daily circulation. Examples of their "sixth column propaganda" were then reproduced.³²

Evidence to support the President's charge that, at the direction of newspaper owners, news stories were slanted against his administrations may also be found. A statement issued by the White House on August 15, 1935, reproduced a copy of a message which had recently been sent to all Hearst editors and Universal Service Bureaus. The message read :

The Chief [Hearst] instructs that the phrase "SOAK THE SUCCESSFUL" be used in all references to the Administration's Tax Program instead of the phrase "SOAK THE THRIFTY" hitherto used, also he wants the words "RAW DEAL" used instead of "NEW DEAL."

³¹See, for example : Chicago Daily News, March 4, March 6 and March 16, 1942. For copies of these cartoons see President's Personal File 426.

³²"Antidote for Poison," Philadelphia Record, editorial, May 7, 1942, p.1.

Such an instruction, the White House statement pointed out, amounted to "the deliberate coloring of so-called news stories, in accordance with orders issued to those responsible for the writing of news."³³ Commenting on the incident shortly afterwards, the Nation was more caustic :

It should ... prove enlightening to the rugged individuals in San Diego and Kalamazoo, to whom the typical Hearst red-baiting editorial is addressed, to learn that their daily journalistic bread is baked, sliced, and poisoned in a central office in New York.³⁴

More generally, the results of the investigations undertaken by Leo Rosten bear on this point. As part of his research, carried out during Roosevelt's first term, into the Washington press corps, Rosten sought the reactions of a selected group of reporters to statements which had frequently been made to him by some members of that group in his individual conversations with them. To the statement : "I am not aware of any definite, fixed 'policy' on my paper," forty-two of the seventy correspondents (or 60 per cent) who replied disagreed with the statement, twenty-three (or 32.8 per cent) agreed and five (or 7.1 per cent) were uncertain. With a further proposition : "My orders are to be objective, but I know how my paper wants stories played," forty of the sixty-six reporters (or 60.6 per cent) agreed, twenty-three (or 34.8 per cent) disagreed

³³White House Press Statement, August 15, 1935, President's Personal File 62.

³⁴Nation (August 28, 1935), 227.

and three (or 4.5 per cent) were uncertain.

Rosten went on to point out that policy was rarely enforced by orders from the home office but, rather, was maintained "through less conscious and more subtle channels : through a choice of personnel, through subjective adjustments on the part of reporters, and through the institutionalization of a scale of values within the organization." Washington newsmen, Rosten discovered, tended to work for organizations with the ethics and policy of which they agreed -- to the statement : "In general, I agree with my paper's political point of view," forty-nine of seventy-five correspondents who were surveyed (65.3 per cent) agreed, nineteen (25.3 per cent) disagreed and seven (9.3 per cent) were uncertain. Among the indirect means by which newspaper policy was perpetuated was the degree of prominence given to dispatches. One correspondent confided :

Policy orders? I never get them; but I don't need them. The make-up of the paper is a policy order....I give them what they want, and I can tell what they want by watching the play they give to my stories.

That this opinion was not an isolated one, was demonstrated by the responses of the seventy correspondents who recorded their reactions to the following statement : "It is almost impossible to be objective. You read your paper, notice its editorials, get praised for some stories and criticized for others. You 'sense policy' and are psychologically driven to slant your stories accordingly." Forty-two

(60 per cent) agreed with these statements, twenty-four (34.2 per cent) disagreed and four (5.6 per cent) were uncertain.³⁵

Rosten's findings support the idea that a majority of the Washington reporters whose views he sought were aware of the policies of the newspapers for which they worked and felt themselves to be under remote and indirect pressure to conform to those policies in the writing of their news dispatches; they do not support the idea that reporters were ordered, in an explicit way, to slant such dispatches in a manner which was unfavourable to the Roosevelt administrations.

Yet, although such dubious chapters in the history of the American press during the Roosevelt Presidency need to be written, that history itself was something more than a shameful chronicle of news-distortion and journalistic excess. For if the worst was clearly deplorable, the best was often admirable and the average probably unremarkable. It is significant, in this respect, that, while the composition of White House mail clearly revealed a degree of public disquiet over press tactics, there are indications that, during Roosevelt's Presidency, the press in general had not forfeited the confidence of the public at large. A Gallup poll in January 1938 found that seventy-three per cent of those surveyed felt that newspapers were fair to the

³⁵Rosten, Washington Correspondents, pp.220-25, 351-53.

Roosevelt Administration, as against twenty-seven per cent who believed them to be unfair. Eighty-five per cent of Republican respondents answered in the affirmative, but so did sixty-five per cent of Democratic respondents.³⁶ In a second Gallup Poll on the subject of press treatment of the Administration, conducted in October of that year, eighty-two per cent of respondents agreed with the proposition that the news columns in the newspaper of their choice treated the Administration fairly.³⁷ The following year, the August edition of Fortune carried the results of a more extensive survey of public attitudes toward the press conducted by the Elmo Roper organisation. Asked whether, in their experience, newspaper headlines usually gave them "an accurate idea of what really happened," 59.1 per cent of those questioned agreed that they did, while 29.4 per cent of respondents thought that headlines usually gave a misleading idea and 11.5 per cent gave qualified answers or expressed no opinion. So far as the news itself was concerned, 23.3 per cent agreed that it was "almost always accurate as to its facts," a further 45.1 per cent affirmed that it was usually accurate (a total of 68.4 per cent for these two categories), whilst 24.7 per cent thought that it was "not accurate in many instances," and 6.9 per cent gave qualified answers or did

³⁶ George H. Gallup, The Gallup Poll : Public Opinion, 1935 - 1971 (3 vols.; New York : Random House, 1972), I, 85.

³⁷ Ibid., p.120.

not know. The Fortune analysts observed, in relation to these figures, that less than 30 per cent of respondents considered themselves "habitually misled" by headlines and less than 25 per cent believed that newspaper stories were often inaccurate. Asked, further, whether they believed that the newspapers which they read had been too friendly or too antagonistic toward the President, 12.9 per cent of respondents considered that they had been too friendly, 23.1 per cent too antagonistic, 48.2 per cent agreed with neither proposition and 15.8 per cent did not know. Fortune concluded that "a net balance of 10.2 per cent"³⁸ believed that the press had been too hostile to Franklin Roosevelt.

These general conclusions were supported by Dr. George Gallup in comments which he made on a survey of public attitudes toward newspapers carried out by the American Institute of Public Opinion during the 1940 election campaign. "Evidence from the Institute's survey," Gallup stated, "indicates that, by and large, the newspaper readers of the country are satisfied that the press is fair and unbiased in its handling of political news." To the question: "Do you think the paper (or papers) you read regularly gave both Roosevelt and Willkie an even break in its headlines and news accounts of the Presidential campaign?" 54 per cent of those surveyed answered in the

³⁸"The Press and the People -- A Survey," Fortune, August, 1939, p.64.

affirmative, 36 per cent in the negative and 10 per cent were unable to offer an opinion. When the group comprising the 36 per cent was then asked which of the two candidates was favoured in the newspapers which its members read, approximately three quarters indicated that Willkie was so favoured. The survey found, also, that Roosevelt voters were generally more sceptical than were Willkie voters about the objectivity of the press in the 1940 campaign, 51 per cent agreeing that their newspapers had given both candidates an "even break," as against 60 per cent of Willkie voters, whilst 41 per cent of Roosevelt voters believed that their newspapers had not given the two candidates equal treatment as against 33 per cent of Willkie voters. But, even here, a narrow majority of supporters of the President believed that the handling of news had been fair, even though many of them must have been reading newspapers which opposed the President editorially. In an attempt to ascertain the public's opinion of the fairness of the press outside election campaigns, respondents were then asked whether, "outside of election years," the newspaper (or newspapers) which they read regularly was fair in its treatment of the Roosevelt Administration : 75 per cent said that they were, 12 per cent that they were not and 13 per cent did not express an opinion. A further question elicited the information that 72 per cent of Roosevelt voters considered that the newspapers which they read were fair to the Administration

between elections as against 16 per cent who did not and 12 per cent who did not know. Corresponding figures for Willkie voters were 81 per cent, 8 per cent and 11 per cent. Three in every four newspapers read by respondents were regarded as having given fair treatment to the Republican Party in the period between elections. Such evidence supports the suggestion that the incidence of objectionable press practices may have been localised rather than general.³⁹

Further, not only was Roosevelt's charge of widespread story-slanting at the behest of newspaper owners not borne out by Rosten's findings, but it was vigorously denied, on many occasions, by members of the press corps. "To hazard a percentage," United Press White House correspondent Merriman Smith has written, "Mr. Roosevelt was wrong more than 90 per cent about story slanting." Smith went on to assert that "not to my knowledge have I ever been 'ordered' to ask a question or slant a story by any newspaper boss in my life, from the United Press on down to the Athens (Georgia) Daily Times." And, he added emphatically, "The first time a boss says, 'Here, let's do a job on this guy regardless of the facts,' then I go back to my old job as night clerk of the Pulaski House in Savannah, Georgia."⁴⁰ Essentially the same point

³⁹See chapter by George H. Gallup in Freedom of the Press Today : A Clinical Examination by Twenty-Eight Specialists, ed. by Harold L. Ickes (New York : The Vanguard Press, 1941), pp.115-18.

⁴⁰Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, pp.23,25.

was made by newspaperman Walter Davenport in a comment on Roosevelt's frequent charge that reporters had to write as they were instructed on pain of losing their jobs. "Nothing that Mr. Roosevelt says," Davenport declared, "fetches more sustained denials from the correspondents than this."⁴¹

If the problem of arriving at an assessment of the general ethical standard of the American press during the Presidency of Franklin Roosevelt is excessively difficult, the task at hand is, fortunately, a good deal simpler; for the concern of the present inquiry is not so much with the ethics of the American press in general, as with the ethics of that section of the press of which Franklin Roosevelt had direct and reliable knowledge, and, more specifically, with an evaluation of the major criticisms which Roosevelt made of press ethics (and especially of his repeated assertion that stories were slanted against his administrations on the orders of newspaper owners) in the light of the evidence relating to those criticisms of which he was aware. Such evidence came, in the main, from press clippings and other information sent to the President by supporters and associates, and from his own extensive daily newspaper reading. So far as the first is concerned, many of the practices discussed above -- the instruction to Hearst editors in August, 1935, the circular distributed by the McClure Syndicate in October 1937, the contrived

⁴¹Davenport, "President and Press," (February 3, 1945), 47.

report by the Chicago Tribune in August 1936 that Communists in the United States had been ordered to support him -- were brought to the attention of the President.⁴²

Similarly, Early's record of the misdemeanours of the Associated Press was undoubtedly prepared on the President's instructions and scrutinised by him on at least one occasion,⁴³ and numerous clippings, collected by Stephen Early in a special file entitled "Below the Belt" would probably have been seen by Roosevelt.⁴⁴ Additionally, many letters of complaint about newspaper practices were sent by members of the public to the White House, and a percentage of these may have been brought to Roosevelt's attention. Of those of them which found their way into the President's Personal File, the Official File or the Stephen Early Papers, the great bulk relates to the practices of McCormick and Hearst publications and to what were considered to be unpatriotic activities by certain sections of the press during the war.⁴⁵ From evidence obtained from such sources, Roosevelt could have found support for his criticisms of the ethical standards of the American press, although, in the nature of the case, such evidence would have been one-sided, dealing only with short-comings and misdemeanours. The absence of indications

⁴²See above pp.250-51, 238-39, 243-44.

⁴³See above pp.244-46.

⁴⁴See "Below the Belt" folders and article with this title in Early Papers, box 38.

⁴⁵See President's Personal File 426, President's Personal File 62, Official File 846. See footnote 11 above for complaints about unpatriotic activities.

from these sources that the journalistic practices of large sections of the American press were acceptably high could not fairly have been taken to imply that such was not the case.

The second source of direct evidence relating to the ethical standards of the American press with which Franklin Roosevelt was acquainted was the handling of news in the newspapers which he read each day. To test the validity of Roosevelt's charges of widespread news-distortion in the American press against the evidence derived from this source, the writer constructed two comparative analyses. In the first, the texts of three important speeches made by the President during the 1936 Presidential campaign and three important speeches made during the 1940 campaign have been compared with the actual reporting of those speeches by the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day. In the second, a comparison has been made between the actual transcripts of the President's White House press conferences over the three-month period before the 1936 and 1940 elections with the front page reporting of these press conferences by the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day. Press conferences held during Presidential trips within these three-month periods were excluded from the sample because only a minority of the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day sent representatives to cover these trips.⁴⁶ Among the assumptions underlying these procedures

⁴⁶On the Presidential trip to Johnstown, Pa., Cleveland, O., Chautauqua, Binghamton, N.Y., Scranton, Pa., and Hyde Park, N.Y., between August 13 and August 15, 1936, for example, there were thirteen newsmen with the party, but, of the newspapers which the President read daily, only the

were : that a comparison between the actual and the reported would make the detection of story-slanting relatively simple and would greatly reduce the subjective element involved in evaluating the news reports in question; that a comparison of the treatment of the same speech or press conference by several newspapers would tend to throw instances of story-slanting into sharp relief; that, if news-distortion occurred, it would most likely have taken place in the period preceding these bitterly contested elections; that, on this account, the treatment of these important Presidential utterances would provide acid tests of the journalistic standards of the newspapers concerned; that, notwithstanding the preceding point, the reports sampled might be expected to be more generally representative of the standards of news reporting which prevailed in the newspapers examined. It was further assumed that Roosevelt would probably have seen the reports in question,⁴⁷ and that such reports might be expected to have influenced his

New York Times, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Herald Tribune were represented. See President's Diaries and Itineraries, President's Personal File 1-0 (3).

⁴⁷ On fourteen of the twenty-three occasions in question -- August 11, September 11, September 15, October 6, 1936; August 2, August 23, September 13, September 24, September 27, October 1, October 8, October 15, October 22, October 25, 1940 -- Roosevelt was at the White House on the mornings following the press conferences which have been included in the sample. On the remaining occasions, he departed on Presidential trips on the days on which press conferences were held. During such trips, it may be assumed, Roosevelt would have consulted some of the nationally-important daily newspapers which he habitually read. He may also have examined the treatment of important announcements made at press conferences after he had returned from Presidential trips. There is evidence that, even when he was away from the White House, Roosevelt had at least some of his daily newspapers (the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the Baltimore Sun and the Washington Post) sent to him with his official mail. See Bernard Asbell, When F.D.R. Died (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), p.10.

ideas on the prevalence or otherwise of news distortion in the nation's press.

In relation to each newspaper's reporting of each speech and each press conference, the following questions were posed : was the report, in terms of headlining and of selection and presentation of news, fair and accurate? Assuming this not to have been the case, then (a) in relation to newspaper accounts which showed a degree of bias against the President, was such bias (i) relatively mild, (ii) serious? And, in relation to newspaper accounts which showed a degree of bias in favour of the President, was such bias (i) relatively mild, (ii) serious? The results of the analyses of three of the newspapers -- the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune -- have been compared with those obtained, independently, by another person.

The speeches selected for comparative examination were, for the period of the 1936 Presidential election : the address by Roosevelt to the Democratic State Convention at Syracuse, New York, on September 29, the radio address on October 23 to dinners of businessmen held throughout the nation, and the campaign address at Madison Square Garden on October 31, and, for the period of the 1940 election : the President's address to the Teamsters' Union Convention, Washington, D.C. on September 11, his address on hemisphere defence at Dayton, Ohio, on October 12, and his radio address to the New York Herald Tribune Forum on

October 24. The results of the analysis of the newspaper treatment of these speeches are shown in table III.

Of a total of forty-seven examples of newspaper treatment of Roosevelt's speeches which were examined, twenty-six were fair and accurate reports of the President's remarks, three were mildly biased in his favour, five were mildly biased against him and thirteen seriously biased against him. A comparison of the gradings for the reporting of the Presidential speeches by three of the newspapers in the sample -- the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Chicago Tribune -- with those made independently by another person revealed a wide measure of agreement with five of the six reports by each of the three newspapers in question being graded similarly.⁴⁸

So far, at least, as their reporting of the six speeches in question was concerned, three of the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day -- the Baltimore Sun, the Washington Post and the New York Times -- maintained consistently high journalistic standards. The Baltimore

⁴⁸ Reporting by these three newspapers was examined also by Dr. C.M. Campbell of the Department of History in the University of Sydney. Differences occurred in relation to the reporting by the New York Times of the speech of September 11, 1940 (G.W., F; C.C., -M); the reporting by the Washington Post of the speech of October 31, 1936 (G.W., +M; C.C., F); and the reporting by the Chicago Tribune of the speech of October 23, 1936 (G.W., -S; C.C., F).

TABLE III: REPORTING OF ROOSEVELT'S SPEECHES BY NINE NEWSPAPERS DURING 1936 AND 1940 ELECTION CAMPAIGNS*

Speeches	Newspapers **								
	NYT	NYHT	CT	BS	WP	NYWT	NYS	NYJA	WTH
1936									
29 September	F	F	-M	F	F	F	-M		
23 October	F	F	-S	F	F	-M	-S		
31 October	F	-S	-S	+M	+M	n.a.	→S		
1940									
11 September	F	-M	-S	F	F	-S	-S	-S	F
12 October	F	F	-M	F	F	-S	-S	F	+M
24 October	F	F	F	F	F	-S	-S	F	F

*Abbreviations:

F, reporting fair and accurate; -M, mildly biased against the President; -S, seriously biased against the President; +M, mildly biased in favour of the President; +S, seriously biased in favour of the President; n.a., not available (the issue of the New York World Telegram in which Roosevelt's speech of October 31, 1936 would have been reported is missing from the holdings of this newspaper in the New York Public Library); blank space, newspaper not being published at that time.

** NYT, New York Times; NYHT, New York Herald Tribune; CT, Chicago Tribune; BS, Baltimore Sun; WP, Washington Post; NYWT, New York World Telegram; NYS New York Sun; NYJA, New York Journal American; WTH, Washington Times Herald. In all cases, the reports were contained in the first editions of these newspapers to be published after the speeches. Texts of all speeches were printed by the New York Times on the days on which the speeches were reported.

Sun's accounts of five of the six Presidential speeches came close to Roosevelt's ideal of straight, factual reporting. In the remaining speech, the occasional interpolation of interpretative remarks ("by far his most brilliant and impassioned plea for support"; "his [the President's] lance pierced every weak spot in their [his opponents'] armour"; "this address stands out as the most notable he has made in the campaign"; and a less than entirely dispassionate evocation of the mood of the gathering ("roar after roar of approval seemed to upheave the great audience that filled Madison Square Garden to the last square inch") constituted a bias in the President's favour, though, in the overall context of a report which accurately and fully reproduced much of the substance of the President's remarks, such bias was not serious. In all cases but one -- the radio address to the Herald Tribune Forum on October 24, 1940, the full text of the President's speech was carried by this newspaper. Of the six reports in the Washington Post, five were fair and accurate and one was mildly biased in favour of the President. Reports were generally characterised by their fullness and by an absence of interpretative or evaluative comment. The report which was mildly biased in the President's favour added to these characteristics what was held to be an insufficiently impartial description of the speech and of its impact ("The President...smashed with verbal hammer

blows [at the preceding Administration]"; "...his entire audience seemed to sway expectantly under his featherweight touches"). The texts of all six speeches were carried by the newspaper. In its rigorous elimination of comment from its news columns and in its accurate, comprehensive and impartial reporting of the subject matter of the President's six speeches, the New York Times was all but irreproachable, the only possible and very minor exception being a single comment in the report of the speech of September 29, 1936 ("Using every device of phrase and gesture in the manner he has mastered so well..."). All six speeches were reported fairly and accurately; in all cases the texts of the speeches were reproduced.

Somewhat less exacting in their journalistic standards were the New York Herald Tribune, the Washington Times Herald and the New York Journal American, although, in the latter two cases, as these two newspapers were not being published during the campaign of 1936, the sample of reports examined was small. Four of the New York Herald Tribune's reports of Roosevelt's speeches were fair and accurate and two were biased against him, one mildly and one seriously. An otherwise comprehensive and balanced report of the speech of September 11, 1940, was flawed by the derogatory comment that Roosevelt "had not been above taking a political potshot at his Republican opponents" by repeating "the allegation of some of his New Deal 'hatchet men' that subsidiary companies of the power firm formerly

headed by Mr. Willkie had hired 'labor spies'," and by the possibly accurate but essentially speculative remark that the President's promise to improve and extend the old-age pension system constituted "a bid for the votes of Townsend old-age pension advocates." Additionally, serious bias was evident in the headlining of the President's Madison Square Garden speech of October 1936, which contained a hostile accusation ("Roosevelt Fails To Make Direct Reply To Rival"), and which generally highlighted what might be thought of as the more provocative aspects of the President's remarks ("'Welcomes' Hatred of 'Forces' Opposing Him; Suggests Security Critics 'Emigrate'; Hopes 'Selfish' Foes With 'Lust for Power' Will Meet Their Master in His 2d [sic] Administration"). These exceptions aside, the front-page reports of the Herald Tribune were characterised by a comprehensive and accurate coverage of the substance of the President's remarks. The texts of all six speeches were printed by this newspaper. Generally, the accounts by the Washington Times Herald of the three speeches delivered during the Presidential campaign of 1940 showed little distortion of the content of those speeches, although there was some evidence of a sympathetic attitude toward the President ("Boldly and eloquently, the President warned his radio audience..."; "There was a note of rugged, challenging confidence in his voice.") On balance, two of the speeches were reported fairly and accurately, and one was reported in a manner which was slightly biased in the

President's favour. Treatment of the three speeches in the campaign of 1940 by the Hearst publication, the New York Journal American, was varied. The important speech to the Teamsters' Union on September 11 was largely ignored, the newspaper making only indirect reference to it in an article on page five entitled "Willkie Hits Class Theory of Roosevelt." Such treatment constituted serious bias against the President. Reporting of the speeches of October 12 and October 24, on the other hand, was full, adequate and characterised by extensive quotations from the originals, although the practice of combining the headlines for separate articles on Willkie and the President tended to produce results unfavourable to the latter. Thus, in a report of the speech of October 24, the headline : "Roosevelt Attacks Appeasers; Condemns 'Strategy of Terror'," was intermingled with "Willkie Again Links Rival to Czech 'Deal'; Charges President Wired Hitler." On balance, however, the reporting of the two speeches of October, 1940, was fair and accurate. The Journal American did not carry the texts of any of the President's speeches.

A relatively high degree of news-distortion occurred in the remaining three newspapers. The report by the New York World Telegram of the speech delivered on September 29, 1936 was an accurate and straightforward account of the substance of the President's address and of the reaction to it. The text of this speech was carried

by the newspaper. For the remainder, the speeches of October 23, 1936 and September 11, 1940, were reported fully and fairly, but were placed in inconspicuous positions in the World Telegram. The placement of the first of these speeches on page six of the newspaper revealed a mild bias against the President; the placing of the second on page ten of an issue which featured an attack on that speech ("Roosevelt Divided US Says Willkie; Aserts He Preaches Class Consciousness") on its front page indicated serious bias. The speeches of October 12 and October 24 were not reported by the World Telegram and on the days on which such reports might have been anticipated, front-page articles which reflected unfavourably on the President appeared, the first entitled "Willkie Fears War By Roosevelt Slip : Says Blunder May Put U.S. in Unprepared," and the second "How About 4th Term, And 5th, Willkie Asks..." Serious bias occurred in both cases. Of the six reports of Roosevelt's speeches carried by the Chicago Tribune, three were seriously biased against the President, two were mildly biased and one was fair and accurate. The account by the Tribune of Roosevelt's speech of September 29, 1936, which otherwise faithfully reproduced the contents of that address, quoting frequently from the original, was flawed by the gratuitous comment that the President had "ignored the charge of broken promises made against himself," and by the assertion that his failure to release the text of the speech in time for his opponents to formulate a reply on the same evening was "done on the

theory that the American people, if permitted to go to sleep after his speech without listening to a reply, would not tune in on answers to come." Notwithstanding these two statements, the bias against Roosevelt in this otherwise comprehensive report was considered to have been mild. Much more obvious was the bias in the Tribune's reporting of the speeches of October 23 and October 31, 1936. Although, in its account of the former, the Tribune did print, verbatim, a substantial portion of the President's remarks, the interpolation of a sarcastic reference to the Good Neighbour League, which had sponsored the talk, as "a 'nonpartisan' organization formed to cultivate the church vote," and the gratuitous juxtaposition of the sentence : "He made no mention of the NRA" alongside a reported remark by Roosevelt to the effect that the New Deal had taken a middle way in order to "weld together the broken pipes of the circulatory system" at a time when complete government control was being advocated by some, constituted serious bias against the President. So far as the speech at Madison Square Garden on October 31, 1936 was concerned, serious bias appeared in the Tribune's headline ("Roosevelt Talk Fails to Reply on NRA, AAA") and equally obviously, in the opening sentences of the report :

In the supreme forensic effort of his campaign for reelection, President Roosevelt tonight failed to give a specific answer to the challenge of Governor Alf M. Landon that he declare his future objectives.

He did not state definitely [sic] that he proposed to revive the unconstitutional agricultural adjustment act and the national recovery act if he is reelected.... He maintained silence... concerning the methods he will pursue to carry out his purposes.

The Tribune headlined its front-page account of the President's speech of September 11, 1940 to the Teamsters' Union : "F.D.R. Urges Labor to Keep Him in Power," and devoted a major section of what was a relatively brief treatment of this wide-ranging and politically important address to a discussion of a controversy over the payment for the broadcasting of the speech, and, more specifically, over whether funding by the union of the broadcast would constitute a violation of the Hatch Act which prohibited campaign contributions of more than \$5,000 by any organisation. Such treatment revealed serious bias against the President. Anti-Roosevelt bias in the Tribune's report of the speech of October 12, 1940 was observable in the newspaper's assertion that, although the President had intended his address to be non-political, it constituted "an answer to the charge of Wendell Willkie that the New Deal is seeking to bring the country into war," and in the observation that a tribute paid by the President to the Italian people of the Americas was "calculated to offset the deflection of votes among people of Italian blood who were angered by Mr. Roosevelt's phrase 'stab in the back' which he delivered in condemnation of Mussolini's entrance into the war." Bias in this case was mild. The report of the speech of October 24, which consisted of an almost verbatim account of the President's remarks, was fair and accurate. The texts of the speeches of September 29 and October 31, 1936 and September 11, 1940

were reproduced by this newspaper; that of October 12, 1940, partially reproduced. The treatment by the New York Sun of the six Presidential speeches was seriously biased against Roosevelt on five occasions and mildly biased against him on one. The gist of the report of the speech of September 29, 1936, conveyed in both headlines and story-lead, was that Roosevelt had been forced, presumably unwillingly, by insistent and widespread criticism, to repudiate Communist support. "Alarmed by the public reaction to the barrage of Republican attacks and effective criticism of the New Deal...", the report began, "Democratic leaders all over the country have for weeks been flooding the national headquarters with demands that the President make an immediate reply." Not entirely without inconsistency, the Sun went on to declare that such continuous attacks had forced Roosevelt suddenly to change his plans and to devote his speech before the Democratic State Convention "to Communism and other national issues, the widespread discussion of which had put the New Deal on the defensive." However, not all of the interpretative comment was unfavourable to the President ("It was one of the best speeches the President ever made. It met with an immediate and enthusiastic response from the crowds that jammed the convention hall"), and, in the remainder of the report, the substance of the President's remarks was fully covered. On balance, the report was mildly biased against the President. Of the other speeches, three -- those delivered on October 23, 1936, October 12, 1940 and October 24, 1940 -- were ignored by the Sun, treatment which

clearly entailed serious bias against Roosevelt. The report of the speech of September 11, 1940, which, in itself, was a full and accurate account of the President's remarks, was carried on the seventh page of an issue of the newspaper which featured, on its front page, a story headed : "Willkie Calls Roosevelt Inept." Bias against Roosevelt was serious in this instance. Headed optimistically "President's Vague Appeal to Class Hatred Scares Nation as 45 Million Prepare to Vote," and positioned beneath banner headlines which proclaimed : "Landon Charges Revival of NRA is Planned; Smith Accuses Roosevelt of Bigoted Speech," the account of the remaining speech, the address at Madison Square Garden on October 31, 1936, dealt only briefly with the substance of the President's remarks, but discussed at some length what were said to be mass defections of voters to Landon. Thus, serious bias against Roosevelt again occurred. The text of only one speech, that of September 29, 1936, was reproduced by this newspaper.

The results of such an analysis suggest that if the distortion of news by those publications which Roosevelt read each day was not widespread, it was by no means uncommon, although, it is also clear, such a practice tended to be localised in some publications, rather than being characteristic of all.

A comparison between front-page reports of the press conferences which Roosevelt held at the White House

during the three months preceding the 1936 and the 1940 elections with the transcripts of those press conferences, the results of which are shown in table IV, reveals relatively little direct evidence of distortion of news columns or of headlines. Of 108 front-page articles examined in this way only six were seriously biased against the President, and a further eight mildly biased against him. The remaining ninety-four reports were fair and accurate in their treatment of news emanating from Roosevelt's meetings with the Washington reporters. Gradings given to the reports in three of the newspapers -- the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times -- accorded reasonably well with those made independently by another person. Variations in gradings occurred in relation to three of the seventeen reports by the Washington Post, and two of the five reports by the Chicago Tribune. With the New York Times, gradings failed to correspond for five of the nineteen stories, although, in the case of three of these, the discrepancies resulted from differences of opinion as to whether page-one reports had been based on material from press conferences or whether such material had been introduced, incidentally, into reports which were based substantially on other sources.⁴⁹

⁴⁹The page-one reporting in the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times of the press conferences in question was graded independently by Dr. C.M. Campbell of the Department of History in the University of Sydney. Discrepancies are listed below:

Examination of the sample of front-page reports showed that, among the newspapers which the President read regularly, four -- the Washington Post, the New York Times, the New York Herald Tribune and the Baltimore Sun -- gave extensive coverage to press conference announcements : the twenty-three press conferences in the sample gave rise to seventeen page-one reports in the Washington Post, nineteen in the New York Times, fifteen in the New York Herald Tribune and seventeen in the Baltimore Sun. Treatment of news varied from newspaper to newspaper but, generally, the reports in these publications showed minimal evidence of the distortion of which the President was prone

<u>Date of press conference</u>	<u>W.P.</u>	<u>G.W.</u>	<u>C.C.</u>
September 6, 1940		F	-M
October 8, 1940		F	-M
October 22, 1940		F	-M
	<u>C.T.</u>		
August 25, 1936		F	-M
September 8, 1936		-M	-S
	<u>N.Y.T.</u>		
October 6, 1936		F	+M
September 6, 1940		-	F
September 13, 1940		-	F
October 1, 1940		-	F
October 15, 1940		F F	F -M

In the cases of the reports by the New York Times of the conferences held on September 6, September 13 and October 1, 1940, discrepancies were attributable to differences in opinion as to whether front-page stories of the following day were or were not based on press conference material.

TABLE IV: FRONT-PAGE REPORTING OF ROOSEVELT'S WHITE HOUSE
PRESS CONFERENCES BY NINE NEWSPAPERS FOR THREE-MONTH
PERIOD BEFORE 1936 AND 1940 ELECTIONS*

Date of Press Conference	Newspapers**									
	NYT	NYHT	CT	BS	WP	NYWT	NYS	NYJA	WTH	
1936										
August 11	F	-	-	F	-	-	-			
August 25	F	F -M	F	-M	F	-	-			
September 8	-	-	-M	F	-	-	-			
September 11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-			
September 15	F F	F F	-	-	F	-	-			
October 6	F	-	-	F	F	-	-			
October 27	F	F F	-	F -M	F	-	-			
1940										
August 2	F	F	-S	-M	F	F	F F	F	-	
August 16	F	F	-	-S	F	F	F F	F	F	
August 23	F	F	-S	F	F	F	F	F	F	
August 27	F	F	-	-M	F	-	-	-	-M	
September 6	-	-	-	-	F	-	F F	-	F	
September 13	-	F	-	-	F	F	F F	-	-	
September 24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
September 27	F	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
October 1	-	F	-	F F	F	-	-	-	F F F	
October 4	-	-	-	F	F	F	-	-	-S	
October 8	F	-	-S	F	F	-	-	-	-	
October 15	F F	F	-	F	-	-	-	-	-S	
October 18	F	F	-	F	F	F	-M	-	F	
October 22	F	-	-	-	F	-	-	-	-	
October 25	F F	F	-	F	F	F	F	F	F	
November 1	F	-	-	-	F	F	F	-	-	

* Abbreviations :

F, reporting fair and accurate; -M, reporting mildly biased against President; -S, reporting seriously biased against President; +M, reporting mildly biased in favour of the President; +S, reporting seriously biased in favour of the President; -, no front-page report. (For any one date in any one newspaper, the number of symbols corresponds to the number of page-one stories based on a press conference.)

** NYT, New York Times; NYHT, New York Herald Tribune; CT, Chicago Tribune; BS, Baltimore Sun; WP, Washington Post; NYWT, New York World Telegram; NYS, New York Sun; NYJA, New York Journal American; WTH, Washington Times Herald.

to complain. Without exception, the Washington Post⁵⁰ reports were factual, accurate and conspicuously free of tendentious or interpretative remarks. Evaluation of the page-one articles in the New York Times⁵¹ proved to be more difficult. Written, for the most part, by the Times' Washington Bureau correspondent, Charles Hurd, the reports not infrequently went beyond a straightforward narrative of Presidential announcements and press conference exchanges -- though such were invariably included -- to descriptions of the atmosphere of the press conferences and to observations derived inferentially from the President's answers or refusals to answer. On occasions, Hurd showed some animus against Roosevelt, usually prompted by the latter's refusal to answer reporters' questions. Thus, for example, in his report of the press conference of October 27, 1936, Hurd observed : "About 100 newsmen laughed at the [President's] jokes but received few definite replies to inquiries." Nor did Hurd hesitate to make clear to readers the fact that the President was practising evasion : when Roosevelt, quizzed at the same press conference about a remark alleged to have been made by his son, James, that the N.R.A. would be revived during the next Administration, refused to make a clear statement of his intentions, and

⁵⁰All reports on the front pages of the Washington Post which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

⁵¹All reports on the front pages of the New York Times which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

referred the correspondents, instead, to his recent campaign speeches,⁵² Hurd commented: "So far as reporters could recall, the President has not mentioned the NRA in any of his speeches in this campaign." What followed, however, was an impeccably precise and correct account of other press conference questions and the President's responses to them. On other occasions, this correspondent's obvious scepticism concerning the replies given to reporters by the President was clearly conveyed. At his press conference on August 16, 1940 Roosevelt announced that the United States Government was negotiating with Britain for the transfer of naval and air bases for the defence of the Western Hemisphere, but persistently denied that any transfer of destroyers to Britain was involved in the proposed agreement.⁵³ Hurd reported, on this occasion, that the President had "declined to admit that there was any connection between the negotiations and the desire of the British Government to purchase fifty or sixty over-age American destroyers," and followed up the remark with the observation that Prime Minister Churchill had recently renewed a request for the destroyers and the statement that "Only a few days ago, according to reports from London, President Roosevelt replied to the Prime Minister that he would be delighted to extend this and other aid." In such reports by the Times,

⁵²Press Conference No. 324, October 27, 1936, Presidential Press Conferences, VIII, 137.

⁵³Press Conference No. 671, August 16, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 123-27.

therefore, tension between reporter and President can be detected, a situation which, while it may not have pleased Roosevelt, may not have been reprehensible in journalistic terms. Thus, in the front page reports of the New York Times, press conference proceedings were reported fully and accurately, and there was no attempt to distort; there were, however, occasional attempts to point up inconsistency and evasion on the part of the President. Not without some misgivings, it was decided that such reporting of Roosevelt's press conferences by this newspaper had been fair and accurate, although it was appreciated that the President himself may not invariably have acquiesced in such a view. The New York Herald Tribune,⁵⁴ in its front page reporting, reproduced the substance of the exchanges which took place at the President's press conferences with great fidelity. Fourteen of the fifteen reports examined were fair and accurate and one was mildly biased against the President. Only very occasionally were there interpolated into what were otherwise full and unadorned accounts of proceedings, comments of an interpretative nature. A rare example occurred in the newspaper's report of Roosevelt's announcement to a press conference held on October 18, 1940 that he proposed to enter the election campaign to counter the campaign of falsification being waged by his opponents.⁵⁵ Though the

⁵⁴All reports on the front pages of the New York Herald Tribune which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

⁵⁵Press Conference No. 690, October 18, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 276.

President's statement had not mentioned his opponent by name, the Herald Tribune's reporter commented that correspondents "somehow got the idea that Mr. Roosevelt was shooting at Mr. Willkie." The Herald Tribune's report of a press conference held on August 26, 1936 contained the kind of speculative remarks to which Roosevelt frequently objected. Both veteran Virginia Senator Carter Glass and the President at his press conference having remained tight-lipped about the matters discussed at a recent meeting, the Herald Tribune's report dubbed the meeting a "peace conference" and asserted that Glass had received "reassuring promises of the White House course ahead on some subjects near to his heart." In the same report, the President's announcement of some relaxation in restrictions on P.W.A. spending⁵⁶ was interpreted by the newspaper as a gesture designed to pacify Secretary Ickes who, it was asserted, had been "smarting over a well-nigh complete blockade of his new P.W.A. program by White House regulations." Thus, slight bias against the President was in evidence.

Of seventeen front-page reports in the Baltimore Sun,⁵⁷ twelve were fair and accurate, four were mildly biased against the President and one was seriously biased against him. Where it appeared, bias took the form of a disposition

⁵⁶Press Conference No. 317, August 25, 1936, Presidential Press Conferences, VIII, 94-95.

⁵⁷All reports on the front pages of the Baltimore Sun which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

to emphasise inconsistencies in the policies of the Administration, or in the statements of its supporters, or to include carping and gratuitous criticism in news reports. Thus, after the President had announced, at his press conference on August 25, 1936, a liberalisation of crop-production loans,⁵⁸ the Sun's report pointed out that this constituted a reversal of Administration policy, the President having previously vetoed a crop production loan bill which had passed both houses of Congress. Similarly, the President's evasiveness at his press conference on October 27, 1936 over the future of the N.R.A.⁵⁹ led the Sun's correspondent to speculate, in an article on a forthcoming Presidential trip, that that would be "one thing he will not touch upon." In the same report, doubt was cast on the credibility of the President's son, who had been reported as having said that, if reelected, the President would seek a constitutional amendment in order legally to establish the N.R.A., and of the President himself, who publicly accepted an assurance that the remark had never been made. Observed the Sun : "James Roosevelt had issued a statement denying he had said anything of the sort, whereupon the newspaper produced a stenographic report of James' speech indicating the opposite." Nor did it seem essential for the Sun to have taken issue with the President's remark, made in the context of an explanation as to why he

⁵⁸Press Conference No.317, August 25, 1936, Presidential Press Conferences, VIII, 90-91.

⁵⁹Press Conference No.324, October 27, 1936, Presidential Press Conferences, VIII, 137.

had not directly backed a conscription bill prior to doing so at his press conference of August 2, 1940, that he had ended the practice of sending ready-made bills to Congress and that none had gone up from him for a considerable time.⁶⁰ "Apparently," observed the Sun's correspondent, "he overlooked the fact that his recommendation for executive power to call up the National Guard had been accompanied by a joint resolution giving effect to the message. That was less than a week ago." Serious bias occurred in the report of the press conference of August 16, 1940. In view of the President's repeated and explicit denials at his press conference that the transfer of destroyers to Britain was linked with negotiations for the acquisition of bases by the United States,⁶¹ both the headline of the report -- "Roosevelt Willing To Swap Destroyers for Air-Sea Bases" -- and the remainder of the Sun's report ("the President issued a slightly cryptic and deliberately vague statement announcing that the conversations for such an arrangement are actually under way")) constituted a distortion of Roosevelt's remarks to reporters, if not of the agreement being formulated between the two countries. The Sun's assertion that the President had "pretty well let the cat out of the bag" by himself mentioning destroyers took no account of the President's explanation that he had raised the issue in order to circumvent expected questions from

⁶⁰Press Conference No.666, August 2, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 84-85.

⁶¹Press Conference No.671, August 16, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 123-27.

reporters on this subject. Comparison with reports of this conference in the other newspapers studied shows that the Sun's correspondent was alone in placing such an interpretation on the President's remarks.⁶²

At the other end of the spectrum is found the Chicago Tribune⁶³ in which it might be concluded, though on the basis of an admittedly small sample, that distortion of new columns appeared to be the norm. Of five front-page reports of the Roosevelt pre-election press conferences, three were seriously biased against the President and one mildly biased against him. It was characteristic of this newspaper to discuss Presidential press conference announcements only in the context of anti-Administration articles. Thus Roosevelt's statement to reporters at a press conference on September 8, 1936 that the establishment of a "grid" system associated with the T.V.A. was under discussion⁶⁴ was linked by the Tribune with a story of a "row" between representatives of the New Deal and executives of the country's gas and electric utilities. The dispute was said to have "stirred" Italian delegates to the current

⁶²Bias, in this newspaper, seems to have been restricted to the reports of J. Fred Essary. Later dispatches from another correspondent, Gerard Griffin, were impeccable, which would indicate that, in this case, bias was a matter of personal style and attitude, rather than of newspaper policy.

⁶³All reports on the front pages of the Chicago Tribune which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

⁶⁴Press Conference No. 318, September 8, 1936, Presidential Press Conferences, VIII, 100-101.

world power conference, leading these representatives to assert that even the Fascist state still welcomed private ownership and operation of utilities. A "Grid" system, the Tribune's report had asserted, "involves the first step leading to government control of all utilities." Such treatment of press conference material amounted to mild bias against the President. At his press conference on August 2, 1940, Roosevelt, having been asked to comment about a feeling in Congressional circles that he was "not very hot" about conscription proposals then before Congress, repudiated the suggestion and took the unusual step of permitting direct quotation of his remarks to reporters to the effect that he was "distinctly in favor of a selective service bill" and "consider[ed] it essential to adequate national defense."⁶⁵ The Tribune reported the President's remarks in a story headlined "Draft Plan Hit by Woodring.... Warns of Perils in Compulsory Law" which gave much greater prominence to a statement by former Secretary of War, Harry H. Woodring, condemning the Administration's conscription programme as "a step toward totalitarianism." The article went on to suggest that Woodring's statement "proved the contention of opponents of the [conscription] legislation that the army was against it." Such treatment constituted serious bias against the President. Asked by Charles Hurd, a reporter from the New York Times, at his press conference

⁶⁵Press Conference No.666, August 2, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 89.

on August 23, 1940, to comment on a Senate suggestion that conscription legislation should be postponed and the volunteer system be given a further trial, Roosevelt declared himself to be "absolutely opposed" to postponement and asserted that, if the legislation was not passed "in the next couple of weeks," serious delays in "getting our team together" would occur.⁶⁶ The Tribune reported the exchange under the banner headline : "[Senators] Lash Roosevelt Draft Plea" and asserted, in editorial fashion, that the President's contention that the army would be short of manpower if the conscription bill were not quickly passed had been "accepted by the senate noninterventionists today as a bluff, which they promptly proceeded to call," and that, in pressing for early passage, the President had "indorsed the cry of eastern interventionist newspapers that the senate... is engaged in a filibuster." Serious bias against Roosevelt was evident also in the reporting of an exchange which took place in his press conference of ~~October 8~~, 1940 concerning his recent consultations with Admiral Richardson and Admiral Leahy. In answer to repeated queries as to the relationship between these conversations and the current crisis in the Far East, the President would say only that the conferees had been "just studying maps."⁶⁷ This exchange between President and reporters was reported by the Tribune

⁶⁶Press Conference No.674, August 23, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 143,146.

⁶⁷Press Conference No.688, October 8, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 259-60.

in the context of an article which suggested that "New Dealers," by pressing forward with warlike preparations, were moving to foment a crisis with Japan in order to obviate the danger of a two-ocean attack on the United States in the future.

For the remainder of the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day, the New York World Telegram⁶⁸ carried eight front-page reports based on the Roosevelt press conferences, and, without exception, such reports were fair and accurate and free of any attempt to present news in a manner which would have reflected unfavourably upon the President. However, its reporting of White House news may not have been representative of this newspaper's journalistic standards, since all the reports in question came from the United Press, one of the national news associations. Similarly, the four front-page stories based on Roosevelt press conferences carried by the New York Journal American⁶⁹ were obtained through the International News Services, and their fairness and accuracy could not, in these instances at least, be faulted. The New York Sun,⁷⁰ which maintained strong editorial opposition

⁶⁸All reports on the front pages of the New York World Telegram which will be discussed appeared on the same day as the press conferences to which they related.

⁶⁹All reports on the front pages of the New York Journal American which will be discussed appeared on the same day as the press conferences to which they related.

⁷⁰All reports on the front pages of the New York Sun which will be discussed appeared on the same day as the press conferences to which they related.

to New Deal policies, appears to have reported the President's press conferences with great fidelity and in considerable detail, eleven out of a total of twelve front-page stories on the President's pre-election press conferences having been fair and accurate. At his press conference of August 2, 1940, the President invited reporters to examine, with Press Secretary Early, some "perfectly cockeyed stories" concerning alleged delays in the construction of planes. The stories had, the President said, been "broken down, paragraph by paragraph, as to the insinuation and implication of the stories which are, completely, misrepresentation of the facts."⁷¹ Among others, the correspondent of the Sun, whose newspaper was directly involved, took up the challenge. In its account of the incident, the Sun carried in full Roosevelt's denial that the national defense aviation programme had become snarled in New Deal red tape and his assertion that, although the Government had not been able to sign contracts, manufacturers were, as a general rule, going ahead with production, before reporting that defence expert Robert Horton, to whom Stephen Early had assigned the task of discussing the offending articles with reporters, had been compelled to admit that the Sun's assertion that the Government had not been able to sign a single contract calling for the production of new planes was correct. Asked to substantiate his claim that, even if the facts of

⁷¹Press Conference No. 666, August 2, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 93-94.

the story were correct, its implications were unjustifiable, since army and navy officials had informed him that airplane manufacturers in general were pushing ahead with the assembly of materials without waiting for the formality of a signed contract, Horton, the Sun reported, had been unable to name one manufacturer engaged in such activity and had been unwilling to name the army and navy officials who had given him the information. Undoubtedly the story reflected unfavourably on the President but, it was decided, not unfairly so. On the other hand, mild bias did occur in a front-page report in the New York Sun on October 18, 1940 which dealt with the President's announcement that he intended to enter the election campaign to counter the campaign of deliberate falsification being waged by his opponents. Animus against the President appeared in the Sun's correspondent's reference to the disappearance of the "atmosphere of cocksure confidence" which had marked recent press conferences, in the statement that Roosevelt, "always the Showman," had "continued to cultivate carefully the appealing grin which is so characteristic of him" and the interpretation of the President's remarks as a politically-motivated attack on the Republican nominee, Willkie, whom the President, in his statement, did not name.

Of eleven front-page stories in the Washington Times Herald⁷² based on White House press conferences in the

⁷²All reports on the front pages of the Washington Times Herald which will be discussed appeared on the days immediately following the press conferences to which they related.

period before the 1940 election, two were seriously biased against the President and one mildly biased against him. A full and substantially accurate account of the important press conference held on August 27, 1940 was flawed by a gratuitous reference to Roosevelt as the "famed nemesis of big business" and by the assertion that he had "entered the controversy" over the nation's preparedness programme "with bitter relish." Although the press conference transcript confirms the assertion in the Times Herald's report that Roosevelt "virtually accused Willkie of playing politics with defense when asked for comment on the Republican nominee's proposal that one man should be put at the head of the program," it is also clear from that transcript that the President's remark was made in a jocular and off-hand manner.⁷³ On balance, this report was mildly biased against the President. More obvious was the bias in the Times Herald's report of the press conference on October 4, 1940 at which Roosevelt, on being asked by a reporter whether he had any reason to believe that Germany and Italy were working for his defeat in the coming election, answered by reading to the reporters a dispatch from a special correspondent which asserted that this was so. He refused to comment further on the matter.⁷⁴ Under the circumstances, the Times Herald's headline : "Axis Seeks His Defeat, Roosevelt

⁷³Press Conference No. 675, August 27, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 157.

⁷⁴Press Conference No. 686, October 4, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 251.

Declares," and the story-lead : "President Roosevelt told the American people in effect yesterday that any voter who casts a ballot against his 3rd term follows the wishes of Hitler and Mussolini," were not justified. The other instance of serious distortion occurred in the reporting of the press conference of October 15, 1940 at which the President announced that he had issued an Executive Order authorising the export of arms, machine tools, and other articles, the purchase of which by other countries had previously been forbidden under the Neutrality and Export Control Acts. Asked by a reporter whether the order had any connection with current conversations with Russia on the release of machine tools, the President replied "I suppose so -- yes; probably the same thing." Asked, again, whether machine tools would be available for Russia, Roosevelt replied : "In other words, the general idea is, if we don't need them for ourselves we turn them over to a friendly power." The exchange continued :

Q: And Russia is a friendly power?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think Russia is the mainspring in that.

Q: Just incidental?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.⁷⁵

Under the circumstances, the Times Herald's headline :
 "Soviet To Get Needed Tools from U.S.: F.D. Wooing Stalin
 From Axis; Calls Russia 'Friendly'," and two statements in

⁷⁵Press Conference No.689, October 15, 1940,
Presidential Press Conferences, XVI, 266-67.

the body of the report -- "Going out of his way to characterize the Soviet Union as a 'friendly power'" and "[the President] eagerly agreed Russia was 'a friendly power'" ~~to~~ were a perversion of the letter and spirit of the President's remarks. Strongly interpretative throughout, the Times Herald's report asserted, in another place, and without obvious foundation, that "yesterday's compromise represents an advance in the present British-American campaign to woo Stalin from the Axis powers."

Typically, however, where bias in the treatment of news emanating from Roosevelt's press conferences occurred, it consisted not so much in the unfair reporting and presentation of such news as in the failure to report it at all. In this respect, variations in their treatment of Presidential press conference news among the newspapers whose front page reporting has been sampled are striking and eloquent. Out of twenty-three press conferences held over the periods examined, the Chicago Tribune found material for only five front-page stories, (which, in any case, were not based wholly or even mainly on press conference material) as against nineteen for the New York Times, seventeen for both the Baltimore Sun and the Washington Post, and fifteen for the New York Herald Tribune. From sixteen press conferences held in the three-month period before the 1940 election, the Hearst New York Journal American derived but four front-page stories. While it is impossible to draw conclusions from a newspaper's treatment of material provided from any one or even from a small number of press conferences,

the persistent failure by a given publication to carry important Presidential news on its front pages can hardly be attributed to inadvertence or to occasional idiosyncratic judgement of relative news values. On these grounds, charges of bias apply also, though with less force, to the New York Sun and the New York World Telegram which drew no material for page-one stories from the President's press conferences before the 1936 election and from (in both cases) eight of the sixteen conferences held in the period before the 1940 elections.

On October 18, 1942, the Louisville Courier-Journal took Franklin Roosevelt to task for his criticisms of the American Press. Quoting a recent remark by Walter Lippmann that "he [Roosevelt] is so much annoyed with so many of us that his displeasure, like the rain, falls equally upon the just and the unjust," the Courier-Journal's editorial writer proceeded to discuss possible reasons for the President's hostility. Foremost among these, he suggested, was not the memory of Roosevelt's past treatment by the press, although this had been, by certain newspapers, and particularly during the campaign of 1936, blatantly unfair; but, rather, the restricted nature of the President's knowledge of the content of the nation's newspapers. "He probably doesn't know," the editorial writer surmised, "what newspapers outside of Washington, Baltimore, New York and Chicago, are saying or doing." Ignorant of the patriotic support which the press of America was giving to the war effort, unmindful of the fact that "there never was as small

a segment of it [the press] 'riding' him as there is today," the President was erroneously judging all sections of the press by its most partisan and disreputable units. "We suspect," the Courier-Journal stated, "it is not his long memory so much as his daily reading fare that keeps him irritated these days."⁷⁶

What the analyses of the reporting of the President's speeches and press conferences by the newspapers which he read each day suggest, however, is that, even in relation to his "daily reading fare," Roosevelt's charges of widespread and persistent distortion of news could not fairly have been sustained. What these analyses indicate, rather, is that the reporting of news emanating from the President's press conferences was fair and accurate in the vast majority of cases, that the reporting of the President's speeches was fair and accurate in a majority of cases, and that, where bias did occur, it tended to be localised in certain newspapers, rather than being characteristic of most.

The issue of the extent to which Roosevelt's assertion that story-slanting was characteristic of the American press was borne out by the evidence of which he was aware is not as clear-cut as was the question of whether Roosevelt exaggerated the extent of editorial opposition to his policies. Complaints received by the White House about the handling of news by Hearst and McCormick

⁷⁶"A Suggestion to the President As a Critic of the Press," Louisville Courier-Journal, editorial, October 18, 1942, p.2.

publications and about the lack of patriotic commitment on the part of certain newspapers during the war were numerous; the distortion which occurred in the reporting of the President's speeches was not infrequent. Yet, notwithstanding such considerations, there remains a gap between Roosevelt's statements about owner-inspired "story-slanting" and the actual journalistic practices of those sections of the press of which he had direct and reliable knowledge, and, in relation to this issue, as with the question of the extent of press opposition which he faced, it appears probable that Franklin Roosevelt, who so strenuously objected to the distortion of news, was himself distorting the record.

CHAPTER 7

NOTHING WOULD HELP HIM MORE THAN TO HAVE IT KNOWN
 THAT THE NEWSPAPERS WERE ALL AGAINST HIM

To contemporaries, the notion that Franklin Roosevelt possessed, toward the American press as a whole, a deep-seated antagonism was something of a commonplace. In August 1935, Roy Howard called the President's attention to a growing public awareness of that hostility, though his suggestion, on that occasion, that Roosevelt "re-emphasise his appreciation that all American journalism is not to be judged on the basis of its most partisan units" went unheeded.¹ Raymond Moley expressed similar misgivings. Having previously noted a tendency on the part of the President to comment angrily on newspaper articles and to show a perverse interest in stories which were critical of himself or his family, Moley became perturbed, in April 1936, over Roosevelt's apparent determination to attack the press, and, Moley thought, needlessly to provoke its hatred.² In a further observation on his antagonism, a "Kiplinger Washington Letter," published early in Roosevelt's second term, referred

¹Roy Howard to Stephen Early, August 9, 1935, President's Personal File 68.

²Raymond Moley, article in Saturday Evening Post, August 19, 1939, p.37, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.799; Moley, After Seven Years, pp.337-39. William Allen White was another who was concerned about Roosevelt's seeming preoccupation with and excessive antagonism toward the press; see above pp.174-75.

to his "growing irritation at the press," and complained that "almost every week there's some White House 'crack' at newspaper publishers as a class."³ Correspondents, too, drew attention to the President's truculence. Franklyn Waltman, writing in the Washington Post of July 1, 1937, referred to the "increasing contempt for the press" which had been displayed by the White House since the recent election and lamented that :

at virtually every press conference, the President makes some sally at the press. Proper questions, asked in good faith and courteously, are met with remarks obviously designed to make the questioner an object of ridicule.⁴

"The President's deepening offense at the press," declared Willard Kiplinger, in April 1938, after Roosevelt had made what editors considered a more savage attack than any he had previously delivered, "is a situation of public importance."⁵

Charges that Roosevelt was unreasonably antagonistic toward the American press continued to be heard. Addressing the New York State Society of Newspaper Editors in April 1940, Arthur Krock focused attention on the President's

³Kiplinger Washington Letter, July 3, 1937, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.817.

⁴Franklyn Waltman, "Politics and People," Washington Post, July 1, 1937; see copy of this article in Scrapbook, January 21, 1937 -- January 20, 1938, Early Papers.

⁵Kiplinger Washington Letter, April 23, 1938, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.808.

hostility, claiming that it was but one facet of a settled policy on the part of the Administration. Sounding a warning against possible attempts by the Administration to restrict the American press, Krock asserted that efforts in that direction "have already begun with a constant attempt to extol the radio and the news reels, to preach a class war against the press," while from the President himself had come "steady implications that the press is unreliable and often venal." Admitting to his audience that many previous administrations had "gone to war" against part of the press, Krock nevertheless asserted that they had been amateurs by comparison with the present one.⁶ In a column in the New York Times of February 22, 1941, Krock repeated his complaint :

The President and his chief aides have lost few opportunities to weaken public faith in the integrity of the news columns and the humanity, fairness or intelligence of the comment columns....The composite atmosphere is hardly one in which the press can feel sure of the disinterestedness of the authorities.⁷

An editorial on war censorship in the Peoria Journal-Transcript expressed a similar grievance :

It is relatively unimportant, whether or not President Roosevelt favors censorship. By his conduct he already has demonstrated his attitude toward the American press... is not particularly friendly. On many occasions he has denounced newspapers. His cynical assumption is that they are run from the bookkeeping room. On many occasions

⁶"Arthur Krock Sees Threat to Press," New York Times, October 8, 1940, p.12.

⁷Quoted In Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.829.

he, apparently, has subscribed to the thesis that publishers and editors are usually venal, or at least biased against social reform. Eight years of this has been the history of his relations with newspapers.⁸

The record of Franklin Roosevelt's charges against the press contained in the transcripts of his press conferences establishes the essential justice of many of these claims. If, in these conferences, the banter having been stripped away, and the release of information disregarded, attention is focused solely on the President's remarks about the press itself, the testimony of the transcripts of Roosevelt's conversations with the Washington reporters is eloquent on this point: the President, it becomes clear, hardly ever mentioned the press except to criticise it, and his criticisms were an insistent theme.

Hostility is evidenced, too, in Roosevelt's general reluctance to praise the press, and in his particular inability to do so unambiguously. In his radio address to the New York Herald Tribune Forum on October 26, 1939, he did pay an uncharacteristic tribute to "the majority of the press" because, during the critical international situation of the previous weeks, it had "tried to discriminate between fact and propaganda and unfounded rumor, and to give... readers... an unbiased and factual chronicle of developments." But he could not then resist adding that

⁸"Censorship is Secondary," Peoria Journal-Transcript, August 19, 1941. See copy of this editorial in Scrapbook, August 1, 1941 -- January 20, 1942, Early Papers.

"this has worked so well in international reporting that one may be pardoned for wishing for more of it in the field of domestic news."⁹ The same inhibition was shown yet more clearly in Roosevelt's tenth Fireside Chat of October 1937 in which he discussed the way in which the public was being educated about their government. "Five years of fierce discussion and debate, five years of information through the radio and the moving picture," the President declared, "have taken the whole nation to school in the nation's business."¹⁰ The omission was noted. "It is typical of him," wrote columnist Frank R. Kent, "that he should try to disparage the press by the sly intimation that it does not educate the people, while the radionand the moving pictures do."¹¹

The idea that, toward the American press, Franklin Roosevelt possessed a settled and deep-seated aversion is suggested by and consistent with certain of the results of this study, which reveal, on his part, a disposition to magnify the faults of the press and to depict it in highly unfavourable terms. Thus, investigation of the editorial treatment of the Roosevelt administrations by the American

⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Address to New York 'Herald Tribune' Forum," October 26, 1939, quoted in Public Papers and Addresses, VIII, 554-55.

¹⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt, "'A Fireside Chat' Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress," October 12, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 430.

¹¹Frank Kent, column in Columbus Dispatch, October 23, 1937, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.800.

press has demonstrated not merely that Roosevelt's assertion that "the overwhelming majority," or eighty-five per cent, of the press opposed him was an exaggeration in fact, but that it was hardly compatible with the record of press treatment of his administrations which was revealed either through his own daily newspaper reading or through the reports reaching him from the Division of Press Intelligence. Similarly, evidence concerning the colouration of news, which reached Roosevelt, should have indicated that the practice of "story slanting" by the American press, though by no means rare, tended to be localised, rather than endemic. Significant, also, in this regard, is the suggestion that Franklin Roosevelt exaggerated the extent of the opposition which he faced from newspaper owners, and the recognition that his blanket condemnations of newspaper owners as a class are not easily reconciled with his relations with members of that group as individuals.

Deep-seated hostility is suggested, also, by the extreme inflexibility of Roosevelt's views, by his reluctance to acknowledge press support where it existed, and by his indifference to it where it was offered. Nothing could shift him from his beliefs that the overwhelming majority of the American press was against him and that reporters were under orders to slant their dispatches against his administrations, assertions which he continued to make without apparent regard to changes in his relations with newspaper publishers as individuals or shifts in the known level of his press support. He enjoyed, though he did not

acknowledge, the general backing of the Southern and Negro presses;¹² the support which he received from weekly publications was consistently above that given by the country's daily newspapers;¹³ but these obvious advantages brought from him no favourable or appreciative comment. Indeed, there is a suggestion that when, early in his second

¹²Roy V. Peel and Thomas C. Donnelly, The 1932 Campaign: An Analysis (New York : Farrar and Rinehart, 1935), p.44, quoted in Ragland, "Roosevelt and Public Opinion," p.13. There was a heavy majority of Democratic and Independent-Democratic newspapers in the Southern States, see Editor and Publisher (September 26, 1936), 48. In the 1944 Presidential election, Roosevelt received substantial support in the South -- in Georgia, eighty per cent of the daily newspapers (eighty-three per cent by circulation) backed him; in Alabama, 86.6 per cent (eighty-four per cent by circulation); in Mississippi, 81.8 per cent (ninety-one per cent by circulation); in South Carolina, 71.4 per cent (forty-six per cent by circulation); see Editor and Publisher, (November 4, 1944), 9. John R. Skates, Jr., "A Southern Editor Views the National Scene : Frederick Sullens and the Jackson, Mississippi, Daily News," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1966) suggests that, although the loyalty of the Southern press may have been strained by the New Deal, its allegiance to the Democratic candidate was difficult to break. Initially enthusiastic about the New Deal, Sullens became increasingly disturbed by New Deal radicalism. He nevertheless supported Roosevelt in the Supreme Court fight and in all Presidential elections. See, especially, pp.136ff. and chapter IX. George W. Bain, who studied the attitude of a representative segment of the Negro press toward the New Deal between 1933 and 1938, found that the overall attitude was favourable. See George W. Bain, "The Negro Press and the New Deal Alphabet Agencies, 1933-1938," (unpublished Master of Arts dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1966), p.83. See, also, George W. Bain, "How Negro Editors Viewed the New Deal," Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Autumn, 1967), 552-54.

¹³Frank Luther Mott, "Newspapers in Presidential Campaigns," Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII (Fall, 1944), 357. Mott estimated that, in 1932, Roosevelt had the support of better than forty-one per cent of weeklies which took sides, in 1936 of over forty per cent, and in 1940 of over thirty-three per cent.

term, the President's attack on the Supreme Court and the Administration's increasingly anti-fascist stand induced the leading liberal journals to throw their weight behind the New Deal, Roosevelt treated their friendly overtures with indifference.¹⁴

Nor did what the press saw as an increasing measure of support for the Administration's foreign policies and its patriotic assistance to the war effort cause any apparent abatement in Roosevelt's resentment, or any modification of his views. From well before the outbreak of war, the President's foreign policies had received substantial backing from the American press.¹⁵ As the international crisis deepened, the business press, too, offered its cooperation : at the President's annual meeting with business paper editors in June 1940, he was reminded that a National Defense Committee had been set up

to keep in constant touch with your needs and desires, and to transmit these speedily to the hundreds of editors who are daily, weekly, and monthly counseling with the very business men, ...upon whom we will depend to carry out this great [defence] effort.

Roosevelt was then invited to suggest appropriate subjects on which editors of business publications might compose editorials.¹⁶ Yet, despite press cooperation in the war

¹⁴Paul Anthony O'Rourke, Jr., "Liberal Journals and the New Deal," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1969), pp.206-07, 230-32.

¹⁵See above, pp.208-10.

¹⁶Press Conference No.652-A, June 14, 1940, Presidential Press Conferences, XV, 569-70. See, also : Press Conference No.744, May 23, 1941, Presidential Press Conferences, XVII, 349; Press Conference No.903, June 11, 1943, Presidential Press Conferences, XXI, 381.

and defence efforts, as revealed by the surveys of the Division of Press Intelligence, by the attitudes expressed by representatives of the business press, and, later, by the success of the voluntary press censorship system,¹⁷ Roosevelt's attacks continued. Protest was frequent. When the President berated the press at his conference with reporters on February 21, 1941, for publishing statements made by General George C. Marshall to the Senate Military Affairs Committee and "leaked" by members of that Committee to reporters, columnist Raymond Clapper took him to task for his ingratitude : the President's attack, Clapper complained, had coincided with the release by the British Embassy of directly parallel information, and had occurred, moreover, at a time when the publishers had made a patriotic approach to the Government to offer their assistance in the defence effort. Clapper continued :

The newspaper world is responding as it has not responded in the last eight years to Mr. Roosevelt's leadership. Yet the press as a whole now has its morals and patriotism hauled into question for a decision of judgment although it made the same decision that the British embassy made with regard to parallel information.¹⁸

Clapper's complaint was echoed, later, by Editor and Publisher:

The persistent hectoring and sneering at newspapermen by the President is not deserved....The newspapers

¹⁷See above, chapter III, footnote 58.

¹⁸Press Conference No.720, February 21, 1941, Presidential Press Conferences, XVII, 140-48. Raymond Clapper, column in Columbus Citizen, February 28, 1941, quoted in Pollard, Presidents and Press, p.830.

are doing a valiant and effective job of forwarding the war effort....Recognition of that fact by the President in his public addresses would be far more appropriate than the sneers which so often mark his public references to newspapers and their ownership and direction.¹⁹

Roosevelt's disposition to minimize press support where it existed was vividly illustrated toward the end of 1944 when he was asked to sign a batch of letters thanking various newspapers which had backed him in the campaign of that year for their support. Newspapers to be favoured with such letters had been selected with great care. Instead of relying on the results of the survey of political allegiances conducted by Editor and Publisher, Paul A. Porter, Director of Publicity for the Democratic National Committee, had telegraphed State Democratic Chairmen to obtain the names of local newspapers which had fought for Roosevelt. To the names so obtained had been added those publications, listed by Editor and Publisher as supporting the President, whose actual allegiance to him the Division of Press Intelligence had been able to confirm after "culling hundreds of...clippings." As the Division of Press Intelligence had been able to check only a small fraction of the pro-Roosevelt newspapers on Editor and Publisher's list (because it subscribed to only a limited number of them), and as, where it had been so checked, that magazine's list had proved to be "one hundred percent correct," the list of newspapers which it submitted to the President, the

¹⁹"FDR Sneers at Press," Editor and Publisher (October 17, 1942), 23.

Democratic National Committee pointed out to him, substantially under-stated the level of his newspaper support. Under the circumstances, Roosevelt's reaction, on being asked to sign the first batch of letters of appreciation, is interesting : he objected that the number of letters was too great, refused absolutely to sign a letter to P.T. Anderson, Sr., President of the Macon News and Telegraph, and expressed reservations about signing several other letters because, he declared, the newspapers concerned "had been too bitter against the Administration." He then stated "very decisively" to Presidential Secretary William Hassett that he would sign no more letters and instructed Stephen Early to re-examine those which he had signed with a view to eliminating those publications considered to have been too hostile.²⁰

Although the scrutiny of the nation's press by the Democratic National Committee and the Division of Press Intelligence had been meticulous, the President's own standards, it seems, were more exacting.

At his annual press conference with newspaper editors in April 1939, Roosevelt read to the group one of a number of questions submitted to him beforehand by the editors. "Is your seeming dislike of the American press," one questioner had begun. "There ain't any," Roosevelt interposed,

²⁰Paul A. Porter to Stephen Early, November 15, 1944, Betty Wilson to Myrtle Bergheim, November 29, 1944, telegram, William D. Hassett to Stephen Early, November 30, 1944; President's Personal File 82.

before continuing with the question. "He starts wrong, I love it."²¹

Conceivably, few of them would have believed him.

The reasons for Franklin Roosevelt's apparently unyielding hostility toward the American press were the subject of considerable speculation by contemporaries. Complaining, editorially, in July 1943, that it was "not a dignified spectacle to see the President use his press conference time after time as a vehicle for flaying the free press of America," the Washington Post went on to pose a specific question: "The time has come," the newspaper declared, "to ask what is back of the President's onslaught." Rejecting the possibility that Roosevelt, by his attacks, was attempting to undermine the confidence of the people in the press, the Post speculated that the assault which had prompted its protest could probably be attributed to "the spleen of a man who is harassed by the delinquencies of his Administration" and was using the press as a whipping boy.²² Other suggestions were advanced. Following a bitter outburst at a press conference in December 1937, Editor and Publisher surmised that "his [Roosevelt's] snarl against the press... probably represented less of deep conviction than of transient disappointment in the result of the special session [of Congress]." "This fling at the press,..." the

²¹Press Conference No. 540-A, April 20, 1939, Presidential Press Conferences, XIII, 293.

²²"Scolding the Press," editorial, Washington Post, July 1, 1943.

publication concluded charitably, "is not of first-rate importance."²³ Alternatively, Robert L. Riggs, Washington correspondent for the Louisville Courier-Journal, wondered, in October 1942, whether the President's practice of "needling the press" may have had, for him, a therapeutic function, affording the Chief Executive both a method of relaxation and far greater pleasure than his other major hobby of collecting stamps.²⁴ A week later, Riggs' newspaper, in more serious vein, chided the President for his unintelligent criticism of the nation's press at a time when most newspapers had thrown their weight behind the war effort. It was not, the Courier-Journal speculated, the memory of newspaper opposition to early New Deal legislation, or his lingering resentment against the press for his treatment by certain sections of it in 1936, that accounted for Roosevelt's continuing hostility, but the restricted and unrepresentative nature of the President's own newspaper reading.²⁵

Such explanations aside, it is clear that Roosevelt sometimes projected onto the press the anger and resentment of

²³"Is It A De'press'ion?" Editor and Publisher (December 25, 1937), 26.

²⁴Robert L. Riggs, "Reporter-Baiter Roosevelt Makes a Hobby of Needling the Press," Lowville Courier-Journal, October 11, 1942. See copy of this article in Official File 36.

²⁵"A Suggestion to the President As a Critic of the Press," editorial, Lowville, Courier-Journal, October 18, 1942, p.2.

a determined and ambitious politician thwarted in some of his cherished schemes. A Presidential memorandum dating from the period of Roosevelt's attempt to purge "reactionary" elements from his own party, provides a striking illustration of this tendency. To Thomas Corcoran, in August 1938, Roosevelt dictated the following message :

Some well-known personality in Georgia, like the President of a University..., should be found to make a speech on the air along these lines :

If we were voters in Maine rather than in Georgia we would be well aware that there is one paper above all in the United States representative of the old-fashioned New England abolitionist thought. That paper is tied up with Wall Street.... It's the most Republican of all Republican organs in the United States. It's the Boston Herald. The Boston Herald is the most vociferous of all the papers in the United States in insisting on the importance of the return of Senator George to the Senate.

Everyone in the North knows the New York Herald Tribune -- ...the paper which represents the great absentee landlords who draw from the South the tribute which keeps the South poor. The New York Herald Tribune is laboring night and day to bring Senator George back to the Senate.

.....
Go through the list across the country, through the Chicago Tribune to the Los Angeles Times.

You Southerners, how do you like that -- your enemies in the North -- ...are praying for the reelection of Senator George.

Don't you sense the implications for all that Southerners are and believe in the support of Senator George by the abolitionists and the absentee Northern landlord. [sic]²⁶

Through this memorandum, Roosevelt was obviously seeking to counter hostile newspaper comment; he was also, displaying a bitterness that is startling, projecting his own frustrations

²⁶Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early and Lowell Mellett, August 20, 1938, Early Papers box 11.

and resentments, and attempting to project those of the South, onto certain sections of the Northern press which were opposing his "reforms."

More generally, the opposition of a substantial segment of the American press to the New Deal would undoubtedly have prompted a hostile reaction by Roosevelt to such criticism. On a quantitative basis, such opposition may have been much less than Roosevelt maintained; but the qualitative importance of its often abusive and violent tone could have produced over-reaction and exaggeration, with the President's hostility against some sections of the press carelessly spilling over, in the fury of his resentment, into a blanket condemnation of all. Given the stresses under which he worked, even the essentially trivial, may have assumed disproportionate significance. Examples of such abusive press comment may readily be uncovered : there was the joke in Time about the man who changed his name from Franklin Delano Stink to Joe Stink;²⁷ there was H.L. Mencken's description of the "New Dealers" as "flagrant and incurable asses," with Roosevelt "the greatest President since Hoover," being described as the "worst ass of all," who had "carried on his job with an ingratiating grin upon his face, like that of a snake-oil vender at a village carnival."²⁸ The

²⁷James Farley to Stephen Early, September 9, 1938, President's Personal File 3338. The offending item appeared in Time, September 5, 1938.

²⁸H.L. Mencken, "Three Years of Dr. Roosevelt," American Mercury, XXXVII (March, 1936), 263-64, quoted in Wolfskill and Hudson, All But the People, p.182.

President's lack of intelligence, declared a similarly offensive editorial in the (N.Y.) Highland Post was "probably prenatal" but "the flattery that fertilized of its purpose such a mind... can be traced to the cabal of Morgenthau, Lehman, Frankfurters and Cohens."²⁹ There were attacks, too, on the President's family, including, in 1938, a spate of critical newspaper comments on the activities of his sons. Under the heading "A White House Example," the Hearst Los Angeles Times pointed out that "sixteen times since March 26, 1934, the three sons of the President of the United States have made the front pages of the country's press for the manner in which they drive their automobiles."³⁰ But nothing could quite equal the distilled bitterness of the columns of Westbrook Pegler. Commenting on a statement by the President's wife, in support of national service, that "there would be the advantage that young men from all the different groups which make up the citizenship of the nation, would be thrown together," Pegler reminded his readers that "neither Mrs. Roosevelt nor her husband have [sic] set foot in a public school and, when she had young ones, she saw to it that neither did they."³¹

²⁹Quoted in Wolfskill and Hudson, All But the People, p.181.

³⁰"A White House Example," editorial, Los Angeles Times, March 26, 1934. See copy of this editorial and many other clippings on the same subject in Official File 1275.

³¹Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," Washington Times Herald, October 24, 1944. See copy of this column in President's Personal File 1403.

On another occasion, the columnist wrote : "Some readers of these dispatches have asked why I recently exposed the participation of the late Warren Delano, the President's grandfather, in the infamous opium smuggling trade, one of the sources of the Roosevelt family fortune." His explanation followed : "Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife have lived all their lives in extravagant luxury and snobbery on vile and guilty gains whose source they could not but have known."³² Editorial comment on the New Deal by certain sections of the American press often was of similar tone.³³

There may also have been, in Franklin Roosevelt's comprehensive assaults on the American press, a degree of political calculation that was at once more rational and more purposeful. His exaggeration of the amount of press opposition, his apparent over-estimation of the extent to which distortion of news occurred, and the general inflexibility of his views in the face of evidence which might have been expected to modify them, would then be interpreted as part of an attempt which aimed, by painting the American press in the worst possible colours, to put that institution on the defensive, to encourage introspection or timidity, and to blunt the sharp and politically-disconcerting edge of its criticism. If not precise calculation, political

³²Westbrook Pegler, "Fair Enough," Washington Times Herald, October 25, 1944. See copy of this column in President's Personal File 1403.

³³See, for example, the extracts of editorial comments from the Chicago Tribune and the New York Sun in Appendix A.

intuition might have convinced Roosevelt of the effectiveness of such a course.

It is unnecessary to deny the importance of such factors in order to appreciate that, as a close examination of his critique of that institution shows, Roosevelt's resentment against the press of America was both related to, and rationalised in terms of, his own conception of its necessary role in the democratic system and its failure, in his eyes, adequately to fulfil that role. Recognition of this fact throws revealing light not merely on the origin of Roosevelt's antagonism but also on the nature which, characteristically, it assumed. The press's essential task, Roosevelt evidently believed, was to act as a channel through which the best available information could flow from a pre-eminently well-informed government to an intelligent and democratically-minded people. In a letter on the subject of "a free press" to Frank D. Schroth, Editor of the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Roosevelt referred, by implication, to that role.

These times..., demand above all else truth in the news, for it is corollary of our democracy that the public can be depended upon to assess problems and policies at their true value if facts are presented as facts, and opinion as opinion.³⁴

That he saw the government itself as the major source of such information (and the press as sometimes failing to

³⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Letter on the Opportunities and Responsibilities of a Strong and Free Press," September 2, 1938, quoted in Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 509.

transmit it to the people) was clear from remarks he made in a radio interview with the Executive Director of the National Emergency Council, Lowell Mellett, in May 1939. Announcing the inauguration of a series of nation-wide radio reports by members of the Cabinet, aimed, among other things, at answering questions from the public on the work of their Departments, Roosevelt declared :

I like the idea of keeping the broadcasts entirely factual in character and the effort to answer the questions in the minds of the people.

.....
 It should be possible...through your broadcasts, to correct the kind of misinformation that is sometimes given currency.... In some communities it is the unhappy fact that only through the radio, is it possible to overtake loudly proclaimed untruths or greatly exaggerated half truths.

...they [the people] have a right to expect their Government to keep them supplied with the sober facts in every possible way. [Italics mine.]³⁵

Certain characteristic features of the Roosevelt critique of the American press are consonant with this view of the press's necessary function within the democratic system. Particularly is this true of the President's attitude toward "interpretation." Roosevelt's repeated strictures against this practice amounted, it is clear, to something more than the customary insistence on the separation of news and comment. To an extent, he was objecting, also, to what he correctly perceived to be a new development in the treatment of news, a change which

³⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, "A Radio Interview on the Government Reporting Factually to the People," May 9, 1939, Public Papers and Addresses, VIII, 308-09.

reporters also recognised, though they did not equally deplore. Looking back, some correspondents were able to fix the day in 1933 on which the United States abandoned the gold standard as the precise point at which the old journalism failed, for, having tried unsuccessfully to report intelligibly on that event, they had been forced to appeal to the White House for assistance and were provided with a government economist to help them prepare their dispatches. Increasingly confronted, from that time, with what appeared to them to be a growing complexity of events, reporters felt the need to explain and to clarify the matters about which they wrote, rather than merely to transmit a record of them to their readers -- which is precisely why Roosevelt's long "background" discussions at his press conferences were so greatly appreciated by them.³⁶ But Roosevelt could never accept the legitimacy of such interpretative efforts. Clearly, if the average man (and therefore the average newspaper reader) was, as Roosevelt affirmed, both reasonable and intelligent, interpretation by the press of information released by the Government for the edification of the average man was mere presumption. More importantly, in Roosevelt's view, by embellishing pure "facts" with extraneous and misleading comment, those within the press who interpreted were impeding the free and necessary flow of information from government to people, and threatening, in this way, to break a vitally important

³⁶William L. Rivers, The Opinionmakers (Boston : Beacon Press, 1965), pp.42-43.

informational circuit in the democratic system. The difference of opinion between Roosevelt and the reporters over the question of the legitimacy of interpretation in news columns was the subject of a series of exchanges between President and correspondents at a press conference in November 1934.

Q: Mr. President, do you think the ordinary -- I won't say the ordinary but the intelligent reader of a newspaper is in a position to form, to judge on a bare presentation of the facts?

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty close to it, yes.

Q: It is not from lack of intelligence but merely because they are out of the atmosphere in which it is occurring. I personally think that the reason the newspapers are going in for more interpretive writers is because there is an overwhelming demand for it.

Q: There is a demand for gossip.

Q: I am not referring to gossip so much. I am speaking of interpretation. They want the best opinion they can get, even if they read three or four in order to get different interpretations, on the ground that they want it from competent observers, particularly at a time like this when there is so much doubt.³⁷

But Roosevelt's antipathy to interpretation went beyond a fear that because of it, the channels of communication between government and people would become muddied. His objection to the practice derived, also, from his conception of his own Presidential role, and extended to editorial comments as well as to news columns. For, while, in theory, interpretation was legitimate if confined to editorial comment,

³⁷ Press Conference No. 156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 169-70.

in practice, Roosevelt strongly implied, the paucity of their information and the narrowness of their vision were almost certain to render the efforts of such petty interpreters inadequate. In his annual conference with newspaper editors in April 1938, Roosevelt reminded those present of their inability even to approach his own grasp of national events, or, by implication, his fitness to interpret them :

I am more closely in touch with public opinion in the United States than any individual in this room. I have a closer contact with more people than any man in this room. I get a better cross-section of opinion. You...cannot get a national picture the way I can.³⁸

To Franklin Roosevelt, all those within the press who attempted to interpret national events faced precisely the same kind of difficulty. Of reporters, he remarked : "There is not a newspaperman that comes into my office that understands the ramifications of the national problems," even though, he added patronisingly, they tried "awfully hard" and were "a grand crowd";³⁹ of the columnist Walter Lippmann, he declared : "In spite of his brilliance it is very clear that he has never let his mind travel west of the Hudson or north of the Harlem!"⁴⁰ In similar vein, he expressed sympathy for the editors of trade papers for "having to write editorials more than you know," on topics which, said

³⁸Press Conference No.452-B, April 21, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XI, 363-64.

³⁹Ibid., p.364.

⁴⁰Quoted in John Luskin, Lippmann, Liberty and the Press (University, Alabama : University of Alabama Press, 1972), p.94.

he, "I couldn't write on myself, knowing three times as many facts as you do";⁴¹ and, in a scornful reaction to editorial comment on his Quarantine Speech he pointed out to the Washington reporters that "there are no two of them that agree," and that "most [editorial writers] cannot visualise the thing at all."⁴²

In the President's derisive comments about the efforts of his rivals lay a further implication : because Franklin Roosevelt was at the heart of a vast information system, pre-eminently well-informed, and able to take a broad, national view of all problems, his own interpretations took on the character of "facts" which the press could do no better than to report.

The President's views did not go unchallenged. Indeed, it is probable that in no area was the discontinuity between the Presidential precept and what was regarded as legitimate journalistic practice as sharp as in this area of what Roosevelt referred to as "interpretative reporting." In the first place, the Washington reporters could not understand Roosevelt's distinction between interpretation and straight factual reporting. In the discussion with Charles Hurd, Ernest Lindley and other reporters in November 1934, Roosevelt began by equating "interpretation" with unwarranted speculation, and complained "that he frequently

⁴¹Press Conference No.275-A, February 14, 1936, Presidential Press Conference, VII, 131.

⁴²Press Conference No.400, October 6, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, X, 251.

read reports of what was in his mind or what purported to be decisions by himself which were not so." Challenged by the reporters over a charge which they clearly saw as applying to themselves, the President shifted his ground by claiming that he had been referring to the writings of columnists, though, as Charles Hurd later pointed out, none had been represented at the conference at which he had delivered his attack. Furthermore, Roosevelt's suggestion that the correct type of reporting consisted of "the retailing of the facts as announced" seemed, fairly obviously, to be aimed at the reporters to whom it was made, though, when the President was reminded that such handling of news would be little more than dissemination of government propaganda, he again shifted the focus of the discussion onto the shortcomings of gossip columns syndicated out of Washington. Hurd's final comment on the conversation -- that, following it, "the correspondents... carried out their work for the day by interpreting the President's reaction to the [Congressional] election results" -- reflected his own dissatisfaction with the President's attempted clarification of his position.⁴³ More generally, as one New York Times reporter was to point out, interpretation was inescapably involved in all stages of reporting : in the decision, forced upon a correspondent because of limitations of space, as to what information to include in a dispatch and what to omit; in the decision as to which information should be

⁴³Krock, Memoirs, p.186.

given primacy in the dispatch and which relegated to a less important place, and in the editor's decision as to the placing of the story in the newspaper.⁴⁴ The fact that Roosevelt himself often attempted to substitute his own judgements on the first two of these questions for those of the reporters did not mean that interpretation was not occurring, but merely that he was doing it. The President's injunction to "give them [the people] the facts and nothing else,"⁴⁵ a suggestion which, if followed, would apparently have ruled out attempts to explain developments and to translate events into intelligible or familiar terms, simply could not be reconciled, in the minds of the reporters at least, with his explicit suggestions as to how news should be presented, and with the very large amount of "background" and "off-the-record" information which he gave to reporters in order that they might correctly interpret Government policies and be capable of explaining them to the reading public.⁴⁶ The reporters, in other words, were not prepared to accept the idea that Roosevelt's own interpretations and "the facts" were one and the same. In a celebrated study of the handling of news about Soviet Russia in over one thousand issues of the New York Times between 1917 and 1920, Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz had concluded that "statements of

⁴⁴Quoted in Rivers, Opinionmakers, p.43.

⁴⁵Press Conference No.156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 167.

⁴⁶Krock, Memoirs, p.182.

fact emanating from governments and circles around governments as well as from leaders of political movements cannot be taken as judgments of fact by an independent press," and that "even more misleading than the official statement purporting to be statement of fact is the semi-official and semi-authoritative statement."⁴⁷ Many of Roosevelt's press conference utterances, and, most obviously, his very extensive "background" discussions, clearly fell within these categories, and such "facts," the correspondents were aware, had already been editorialized in the President's own interest. In resisting Roosevelt's demands that they abandon their efforts to interpret national events, the reporters were, in effect, rejecting both the President's claim to pre-eminence in this field and the essentially supportive and subsidiary role which Roosevelt, in accordance with his conception of the proper function of the press, wished to assign to that institution. They were unwilling to abandon the competitive aspect of news distribution, to permit the Government, in its own time, "to dish up its record with the most palatable sources of publicity," to accept a role which, were it to be followed, would have had the effect of preventing the release not merely of "imperfect" information, but of politically-embarrassing or, in its judgement, publicly-important

⁴⁷Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, "A Test of News," New Republic, XXIII, no.296, part II (August 4, 1920), quoted in Susan M. Kingsbury, Hornell Hart and Associates, Newspapers and the News : An Objective Measurement of Ethical and Unethical Behaviour by Representative Newspapers (New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), pp.211-12.

material which the Administration might have preferred to suppress. The desire, inherent in Roosevelt's ideal conception of the function of the press, to, in the words of Arthur Krock, "hamper the American press in its conception of itself as the eyes and ears of the public," was a potentially serious blow at its independence and integrity. As such, it was resisted.⁴⁸

Franklin Roosevelt's repeated criticisms of interpretation, criticisms which were related to his own conception of the press's role in the democratic system, were re-iterated with a confidence which can scarcely have been based on the logic of his position, and, while it is appreciated that acceptance by the press of his notions that, where interpretation was required, he was most capable of supplying it, and that none but his own interpretations were to be regarded as "facts" worthy of being reported, would have been to his political advantage, both his dogmatism and his inconsistency suggest that, to him, a belief in the impropriety of "interpretation" may have been not merely politically expedient, but axiomatic.

Related, also, to Roosevelt's conception of the necessary and proper role of the press in the democratic system and to his consequent hostility toward "interpretation" was his detestation of newspaper columnists. Many of their number, it is clear, he had reason enough to resent.

⁴⁸Krock, "Press vs. Government," pp.45-47.

Sometimes oracular, always opinionated (one of the more endearing qualities of Dorothy Thompson, it was said, was her ability to "rearrange the post-war map of the world between 10.30 A.M. and 12.30 P.M., with as little effort as another woman whipping up a sponge cake and looking forward to the next day's menu"),⁴⁹ they directed what was frequently a vituperative stream of criticism or abuse at the President and his administrations, and, not infrequently, at each other.⁵⁰ Several mass-circulation columnists, and, most obviously, Frank Kent, Westbrook Pegler, Paul Mallon, David Lawrence, Mark Sullivan, General Hugh S. Johnson, and, to a lesser extent, Walter Lippmann, resolutely opposed Roosevelt's policies and constituted, collectively, most formidable opposition to his administrations. Kent, whose column, "The Great Game of Politics," was syndicated nationally in 1934 and, by February 1938, appeared in 112 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 7,000,000,⁵¹ supported Roosevelt initially, but, becoming

⁴⁹Charles Fisher, The Columnists (New York : Howell, Soskin, Publishers, Inc., 1944), p.26.

⁵⁰Jay Franklin's descriptions of Dorothy Thompson as "the syndicated spokeswoman of the stiff-shirt Fascisti," and "the Florence Nightingale of the wounded Tory intellect," and Heywood Broun's comment, in relation to the same lady, that "if all the speeches she has made in the last 12 months were laid end to end they would constitute a bridge of platitudes sufficient to reach from the Herald Tribune's editorial rooms to the cold caverns of the moon," are examples. See Seldes, Lords of the Press, p.352.

⁵¹Margaret Marshall, "Columnists on Parade," Nation CXLVI (February, 1938), 246, quoted in Jane Turley, "A Study of the Syndicated Political Columnist in the Daily Newspapers" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1949), p.60.

progressively alienated from the New Deal, was, by the end of the President's first term, one of the Administration's bitterest opponents. From that time, in a daily column which, in the words of a contemporary, "reeks with bias and spleen of a superannuated newspaper man," he raked the New Deal with fierce and unvarying criticism.⁵² More vitriolic than Kent was Westbrook Pegler whose column, syndicated nationally in 1933, was featured, by February 1938 in 110 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 5,907,389.⁵³ Described by a fellow journalist as "one of the most consistently resentful men in the country," (a friend named a stretch of water at Pegler's country home "Lake Malice," and his small boat "Rancors Aweigh")⁵⁴ Pegler attacked the President with such dedication that a contemporary was moved to observe that "there have been very few offenses of the sort that can be laid to public officials -- libelous or non-libelous -- which Pegler hasn't charged against Roosevelt."⁵⁵ Also predominantly hostile toward the New Deal was Paul Mallon, whose column appeared, by 1938, in 200

⁵²Kelly, "Distorting the News," p.312; Fisher, The Columnists, pp.198-99; Eugene W. Goll, "Frank R. Kent's Opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal," Maryland Historical Magazine, LXIII (June, 1968), 158-71.

⁵³Quoted in Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," pp.18, 62.

⁵⁴Jack Alexander, "He's Against," in Post Biographies of Famous Journalists, ed. by John E. Drewry (Athens : University of Georgia Press, 1942), p.364.

⁵⁵Fisher, The Columnists, p.191.

newspapers with a total estimated circulation of 25,000,000.⁵⁶ Generally, though not wholly antagonistic toward the Administration before the 1936 election, Mallon moved, after that event, to a position of implacable opposition, and, in June 1939, was described by the redoubtable Harold Ickes, whom the columnist had recently attacked, as "perhaps the least credible columnist in the United States" and a man who "seems unable to resist fictional assertions, particularly where New Dealers are concerned."⁵⁷ Mallon had the distinction of being the only newsman ever to be barred from the President's press conferences when, in November 1940, he was informed that, because of inaccuracies in his column, he should consider himself unwelcome at future meetings with reporters.⁵⁸

More staid and more cerebral, if no less determined, in their opposition to Roosevelt, were David Lawrence and Mark Sullivan. By 1938, Lawrence's column appeared in 133 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 6,000,000; Sullivan's in fifty-four newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 4,000,000.⁵⁹ Though both

⁵⁶Quoted in Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," p.61.

⁵⁷"Paul Mallon's Propaganda Technique," Secretary of Interior File, Articles 1939, Papers of Harold L. Ickes, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁸"White House Bars Reporter, A While," New York Times, November 9, 1940, p.8; Philip S. May to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 14, 1940, Official File 36.

⁵⁹Quoted in Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," pp.61-62.

resolutely opposed the New Deal, Sullivan's relationship with the President was the more complex. Referred to as "the Grand Old Man of conservative journalism,"⁶⁰ he wrote with an urbanity and literary grace which, despite his disagreement with the columnist's opinions, sometimes earned the President's appreciation. In August 1942, Roosevelt read one of Sullivan's more felicitous comments, which was prompted by the failure of reporters to elicit any information from a member of the Administration, into the press conference transcript. His purpose in doing so was to ensure its inclusion in any history of those times which might be written -- a request which it would seem churlish now to ignore.

THE PRESIDENT: [reading from Sullivan's column] "The newsmen asked if Mr. Patterson had any comment.

"The question was asked in a manner which suggested that the questioner didn't really have much hope of an answer." -- (Laughter) -- which I think is very nice.

Then Mark goes on. He says this :

"By thus setting his expectations below his hopes, he escaped disappointment." (More laughter)

This is one of the grandest things I ever read.

(Continuing reading) : "Mr. Patterson said merely that he had no worth-while comment. If Mr. Patterson has no copyright on those few short words, 'no worth-while comment,' they could be advantageously used by some other Washington officials who face press conferences. If all officials were as immune as the impassive Mr. Patterson from feeling that courtesy or other motive requires them to satisfy the newsmen with something interesting or amusing -- in that event the quantity of words that go out of Washington would become at once diminished -- (Laughter) -- and more informative." (More laughter)⁶¹

⁶⁰Fisher, The Columnists, p.138.

⁶¹Press Conference No.842, August 21, 1942, Presidential Press Conferences, XX, 62-63.

Also temperate in tone, though generally critical or neutral in his attitude toward Roosevelt and the New Deal, was Walter Lippmann, whose column appeared, by 1938, in 160 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of over 8,000,000.⁶² An early supporter of the President, Lippmann took issue with him in 1935 over legislation to control holding companies, and over the "soak the rich" tax programme. Typically, the columnist tended to take neither a strongly positive nor negative position toward individual New Deal measures, but, having expressed initial, if qualified agreement, characteristically moved to a position of increasing opposition.⁶³ On the other hand, despite his general disagreement with New Deal policies, Lippmann frequently sent messages of congratulations to Roosevelt and had several private meetings with him.⁶⁴ More forthright in his objections was New Deal refugee General Hugh S. Johnson, whose column appeared, by 1938, in 67 newspapers with an estimated circulation of over 4,000,000.⁶⁵ In a reference to the General's journalistic style, which he resolutely employed against the Administration, fellow-

⁶²Quoted in Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," p.61.

⁶³David E. Weingast, "Walter Lippmann : A Content Analysis," Public Opinion Quarterly, XIV (Summer, 1950), 297-302.

⁶⁴See, for example : Stephen Early to Walter Lippmann, October 18, 1933, Walter Lippmann to Stephen Early, January 30, 1934, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Marvin H. McIntyre, September 10, 1935, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Grace Tully and Edwin Watson, April 8, 1943; President's Personal File 2037.

⁶⁵Quoted in Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," p.61.

columnist Westbrook Pegler declared that Johnson was "like Dempsey," for "once that bell rings, he knows nothing but punch, punch until something drops."⁶⁶

Despite this formidable array of journalistic opposition, however, Franklin Roosevelt was not, among mass-circulation columnists, without support, and, as with newspaper owners, the closeness of his relations with several of them as individuals is, on the face of it, surprising in the light of his comprehensive excoriations of all of them as a group. Walter Winchell, whose column was carried, by 1939, in 150 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 8,570,000,⁶⁷ was described by White House Secret Service chief Michael Reilly as "a great friend of FDR's, a frequent presidential visitor,"⁶⁸ and was unquestionably the President's most ardent admirer. To Roosevelt, he wrote in December 1933 :

Busy as you are, sir, I realize you haven't time to tune in on your New York correspondent -- me.

However, I want you to know -- how often I have mentioned you in an affectionate way on the radio and in my newspaper column, which is syndicated throughout the country.

Once one of my lines -- 'Be loyal to your President -- and remember that your FAITH is your Fortune!' was later used by a Kansas preacher as the title and theme of his sermon And there have been many such phrases in your honor.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Quoted in "Columnists and Calumnists," Guild Reporter, April 15, 1936, p.6.

⁶⁷See "Columnists and Calumnists," Secretary of Interior File, Columnists 1935-39, Ickes Papers.

⁶⁸Reilly, Reilly of the White House, p.143.

⁶⁹Walter Winchell to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 11, 1933, Official File 5547.

By October 1941, the columnist's enthusiasm had not diminished : a memorandum from Presidential Secretary Watson to Roosevelt relayed to the President an effusive telephone message from Winchell : "He said he wished he were here to give you 'a great big hug' for what you are doing for the country."⁷⁰ Another leading supporter of the President was Jay Franklin, whom Fulton Oursler, the editor of Liberty, once described unflatteringly as "a satrap for the New Deal."⁷¹ Appearing, by 1939, in thirty newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 4,140,000,⁷² Franklin used his newspaper column and radio broadcast to espouse Administration policies and objectives and became a confidant of the President. From 1941, this columnist supplied Roosevelt with intelligence gathered by an agency based in New York, which Franklin had set up with direct assistance from the White House. By these means, a vast quantity of memoranda, covering subjects ranging from labour unrest at home to estimates of the holdings of strategic materials by foreign countries, and including statements on attitudes within the business community and estimates of public opinion on various subjects, was forwarded

⁷⁰Memorandum, Edwin M. Watson to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 13, 1941, Official File 5547. See President's Personal File 5666 for many favourable articles sent by Winchell to Roosevelt's for the latter's attention.

⁷¹Fulton Oursler, Behold This Dreamer (Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1964), p.364.

⁷²See "Columnists and Calumnists," Secretary of Interior File, Columnists 1935-39, Ickes Papers.

to the President.⁷³ Equally dedicated, though less numerically significant support for Roosevelt was provided by Samuel Grafton, whose column "I'd Rather Be Right" appeared in the New York Post in 1939 and was later distributed by the Bell Syndicate.⁷⁴

Although there was some ambiguity in the relationship between Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen and Roosevelt (it has been alleged that, during his first term, Roosevelt suggested to General Douglas MacArthur that he file suit against the "Merry-Go-Round" column and its authors),⁷⁵ both columnists can be counted among the supporters of the President and his administrations. Appearing in over 600 newspapers with an estimated total circulation of more than 20,000,000,⁷⁶ Pearson and Allen's "Merry-Go-Round" column gave general backing to the policies of the New Deal and, it was charged, occasionally floated trial balloons for the Administration. The column, observed a contemporary, "has been regarded as a kind of White House pet and sniffed at accordingly in many circles."⁷⁷ The close alliance between Drew Pearson and Secretary Ickes was widely

⁷³Richard W. Steele, "The Pulse of the People : Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Gauging of American Public Opinion," Journal of Contemporary History, IX (October, 1974), 200. For many reports from Carter (Jay Franklin) to Roosevelt see President's Secretary's File, "J.F. Carter," Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁷⁴Fisher, The Columnists, p.259.

⁷⁵Pilat, Drew Pearson, p.141.

⁷⁶Fisher, The Columnists, p.216.

⁷⁷Ibid., p.211.

recognised -- in 1935 a journalist described the "Merry-Go-Round" as "a propaganda machine for the benefit of Harold L. Ickes," and, in a memorandum to the President in July 1941, Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles commented, in relation to a "Merry-Go-Round" column dealing with a dispute between Ickes and the State Department over the shipment of oil to Japan : "You can see the continuation of the Ickes - Drew Pearson combination from the attached clipping"⁷⁸ -- but with the President, too, Pearson and Allen enjoyed a "special relationship." In October, 1940, Allen, recently returned from a political survey through the Midwest, wrote to Roosevelt expressing alarm at the President's prospects in that area, urging "that from now on until election day you pound away with all your eloquence that you are for peace," and advising him to make a trip to Illinois and Indiana. "The great weakness of the campaign in the middlewest," Allen wrote, "is that it lacks the spark that you alone can give it to set it afire." In his reply Roosevelt thanked the columnist for his advice but pointed out that his "suggestion about going to the Middle West is, as Al Smith would say, 'outta de winder'," since it was necessary, in the light of the prevailing international situation, for the President to remain close to Washington.

⁷⁸Kelly, "Distorting the News," p.312; memorandum, Sumner Welles to Franklin D. Roosevelt, July 30, 1941, Roosevelt Memos. 1941, Early Papers, box 24. Ickes, Secret Diary, II, 699-700. Saul Padover, in a conversation with the writer in January 1975, confirmed that a close relationship existed between Ickes and Pearson.

He would, however, "explain this again and again to the Middle West and stress that this is a necessary precaution for a President to take in order that he may keep them out of war."⁷⁹ To Pearson, it has been alleged, the President was sometimes willing to supply exclusive information about proposed Administration initiatives, notably the recognition of Russia, and, occasionally to provide the columnist with damaging inside information about members of the Administration whom he considered to be disloyal.⁸⁰ The nature of the "special relationship" between the columnists and the President is suggested in a "personal and confidential" message to "Drew and Bob" which Roosevelt directed Stephen Early to deliver to Pearson and Allen in July 1941. It read :

I have been a good deal disturbed during the past few weeks because your column is carrying such a large percentage of stories which are not true. I know you won't mind my telling you of late your batting average has been near the bottom of the League.⁸¹

~~The~~ The list of columnists who, in some significant measure, supported or cooperated with Franklin Roosevelt, can be extended. Ernest Lindley, the President's biographer and friend, was said by one newsman to have "developed an outrageous and on the whole durable admiration for Roosevelt and the New Deal," though his general objectivity and his

⁷⁹Robert S. Allen to Franklin D. Roosevelt, October 19, 1940, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert S. Allen, October 22, 1940; President's Personal File 7112.

⁸⁰Pilat, Drew Pearson, pp.34, 157.

⁸¹Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, July 30, 1941, Roosevelt Memos. 1941, Early Papers, box 24.

propensity to offer occasional sharp criticism of the Administration were also recognised.⁸² Its appearance in thirty-five newspapers gave Lindley's generally pro-New Deal column an estimated total circulation by 1938 of 4,500,000.⁸³ Dorothy Thompson, whose column, appearing first in the New York Herald Tribune in 1935 was, by 1938, being syndicated nationally in 140 newspapers with an estimated circulation of 7,500,000,⁸⁴ began by being generally critical of New Deal policies but, in the context of a deteriorating international situation, swung her support behind Roosevelt in 1940. In the election campaign of that year she fought enthusiastically for the President through her column and also submitted material for use by his speechwriters.⁸⁵ The writings of Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner, too, were regarded by some as being supportive of New Deal policies and objectives. Debating this question with Arthur Krock in October 1936, Alsop had written :

"While you explain that you do not regard our stuff as "inspired" you do think that it "reflects" the New Dealers. I am afraid that I regard that as a distinction without a difference. So far as I know, we have never "reflected" anyone."

Alsop went on to describe Krock's belief that he and Kintner

⁸²Fisher, The Columnists, pp.290-91.

⁸³Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," p.61.

⁸⁴Ibid., p.62.

⁸⁵Ibid., p.45; Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.247; B.F. Throver to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 7, 1940, OF4818. See, also, a large number of articles by Dorothy Thompson in support of Roosevelt in Official File 4818.

were "working for the New Deal crowd" as being "without foundation."⁸⁶ The plausibility of these denials is not increased by certain correspondence between the columnists and members of the Administration. In May 1939, for instance, Kintner assured Secretary Morgenthau, who had been subjected to questioning by reporters over the source of articles which he and Alsop had written for the Saturday Evening Post, that "neither Joe nor I have ever told any one we had your cooperation, and in fact have denied it when people have asked us."⁸⁷ Some months later, Alsop wrote to the President's wife, whose cousin he was, suggesting that he and Kintner be allowed to interview Roosevelt in connection with some projected articles on the outbreak of war which they had been commissioned to write for the same magazine. Assurances were given by Alsop that the President's part in the articles would be concealed and that the finished products would be submitted to him before being sent to the Post. Alsop's request was successful and an article entitled "American White Paper," which he and Kintner prepared with the assistance of both President and State Department, was eventually published by the Ladies' Home Journal, the Post having rejected it.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Joseph Alsop to Arthur Krock, October 19, 1939, Early Office File, Papers of Joseph and Stewart Alsop, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁸⁷ Robert E. Kintner to Henry Morgenthau, May 4, 1939, Early Office File, Alsop Papers.

⁸⁸ Joseph Alsop to Eleanor Roosevelt, September 29, 1939, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 23, 1940, memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, April 23, 1940; President's Personal File 300.

Raymond Clapper, who, by 1938, was syndicated in forty-nine newspapers with an estimated total circulation of 3,653,395,⁸⁹ was another columnist who probably supported New Deal measures more often than he opposed them. Clapper's response to the early reforms of the New Deal caused a fellow journalist to describe him as "the Administration's best friend,"⁹⁰ but he later came to be recognised as "Washington's most judicious columnist"⁹¹ and "a resolute non-partisan."⁹² In a declaration of his journalistic faith, Clapper wrote to W.R. Donald of the Mitchell (South Dakota) Daily Republic, after Mitchell had asked him whether he would support Willkie in the 1940 campaign :

I am an independent writer and chain myself to no candidate or party. From day to day I try to report, add up, analyze and interpret developments from an independent point of view.... How it will add up toward the end of the campaign I don't know any more than I knew in 1936. For several weeks I was favorable to Governor Landon. As his campaign developed I lost my enthusiasm for it and favored the reelection of Mr. Roosevelt.⁹³

In his correspondence with his employer, Roy Howard, Clapper emphasised the same point.⁹⁴

⁸⁹Turley, "Syndicated Political Columnist," p.61.

⁹⁰"Exclusive Set Gathers Washington News," Literary Digest (March 6, 1937), 29.

⁹¹"Roosevelt's Blast at Pearson as Liar Climaxes Longtime Feud with Press," Newsweek, September 13, 1943, p.79.

⁹²Fisher, The Columnists, p.127.

⁹³Raymond Clapper to W.R. Ronald, August 28, 1940, Personal File, Diaries 1940-42, Clapper Papers.

⁹⁴See, for example : Raymond Clapper to Roy Howard, November 13, 1940, and January 16, 1941, Personal File, Diaries 1940-42, Clapper Papers.

Sufficient evidence can be found to show, therefore, that, while Franklin Roosevelt may have had to suffer the barbs of many of the nation's mass-circulation columnists, he also received, from others of the same group, a not insignificant measure of support. As he, himself, explained, however, his implacable opposition to newspaper columnists was quite uninfluenced by his relations with them as individuals, or the favourable treatment which he sometimes received at their hands;⁹⁵ it derived, rather, from his appreciation of their insidious influence on journalism as a whole⁹⁶ and from his appreciation of the threat which they posed to his own role and to that of the press within the democratic system. Not only did columnists encourage the regrettable trend toward interpretation in news columns, thus threatening to subvert the press's basic function as a vehicle for the transmission of facts to the people, but, quintessentially, they were, themselves, interpreters, presumptuous and manifestly incompetent rivals, who challenged his own rightful pre-eminence as the legitimate interpreter of the affairs of the nation.

Also consonant with his belief in the importance of straight, factual reporting, and his consequent hostility to interpretation, were Roosevelt's determination to scrutinise

⁹⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lowell Mellett, December 28, 1944, Mellett Folder, President's Secretary's File, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁶ Press Conference No.156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 167-68.

the press closely and his efforts to correct inaccuracies in news reports where they occurred. Sometimes such activities had an obvious political motivation; at other times, they did not. Well before he became President, Franklin Roosevelt showed a disposition to scrutinise the press closely and to correct misleading or otherwise injurious statements about himself. In the 1920's he was a subscriber to several press-clipping services,⁹⁷ and later, during his terms as Governor of New York, he made a daily study of a considerable quantity of news clippings and editorials relating to his own policies and performance,⁹⁸ and where he was dissatisfied, either sent or arranged for his associates to send, letters of complaint to the editors of offending publications. Thus, for example, in June 1929, he wrote with understandable concern to the Editor of the Elmira (New York) Advertiser protesting about editorial comments by that newspaper to the effect that he was "an exceedingly tired man" and that the Governorship was proving "a severe tax upon his strength, for he is by no means well"; in September of the same year he instructed his Secretary to "get local people to write letters to the Republican papers which are getting out deliberately false statements"; and in April 1930 he wrote to the Editor of the Lowville (New York) Democrat

⁹⁷ See News Clippings - Miscellaneous, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, 1920-28, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

⁹⁸ Ernest K. Lindley, Franklin D. Roosevelt : A Career in Progressive Democracy (New York : Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1931), p.33.

asking him to authenticate a statement recently made by that newspaper to the effect that, just after the election of 1928, he (Roosevelt) had "declared that Al Smith had been 'cheated' out of the presidency."⁹⁹ When the New York Telegram declared editorially, in September 1930, that Roosevelt had "shed tears with the farmers over their generally unhappy conditions," its Managing Editor was informed that "the contrary happens to be true for I congratulated the New York State farmers for being far better off than those in the west."¹⁰⁰ Sometimes, however, his complaints concerned more trivial matters. Special Assistant Samuel Rosenman was surprised when Roosevelt, who was resting at Warm Springs, Georgia, after the 1930 legislative session, arranged to have many editorials and news items clipped and sent to him and then "busily singled out those that were unfavorable,... and was ready to go to no end of trouble to correct any misunderstanding or error of fact." Roosevelt, Rosenman has recalled, "did this constantly -- sometimes about subjects that seemed to me quite trivial, and often with very unimportant newspapers." One example mentioned by the Governor's Assistant concerned an editorial in the Binghamton

⁹⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Editor, Elmira Advertiser, June 10, 1929, memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Mr. Crawford, September 18, 1929, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Editor, Lowville Democrat, May 14, 1930, "Attacks on Governor" folder, FDR Private Correspondence, 1928-32, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹⁰⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt to L.B. Wood, September 9, 1930, "Attacks on Governor" folder, FDR Private Correspondence 1928-32.

Press which had asserted that one effect of a proposed piece of legislation would be to create an open season for grouse that year. Roosevelt requested Rosenman to have Conservation Commissioner Alec Macdonald write to the newspaper repudiating this suggestion and expressing indignation at the thought that the Conservation Department would "encourage the extinction of ruffed grouse."¹⁰¹ The same attention to detail was evident on other occasions. In September 1930, Roosevelt complained to the editor that a story in the Rochester (New York) Daily-Democrat that he had attempted to have daylight saving made a State Law because differences in times in rural towns had inconvenienced him during a recent trip was "made out of whole cloth."¹⁰² In January of the following year, a letter which, though not signed by Roosevelt, bore, nevertheless, the unmistakable stamp of his style, attacked the Editor of the Chicago Post over an editorial on the recent inauguration ceremony. In its editorial, the Post had stated that, although "preparations had been made for a great outpouring of the people," the expected delegations "did not materialize; the amplifiers were not used; the assembly chamber was 'half empty'." Having branded these statements "completely false," Roosevelt went on to present "the simple facts" : the

¹⁰¹Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.40.

¹⁰²Franklin D. Roosevelt to Editor, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, September 15, 1930, "Attacks on Governor" folder, FDR Private Correspondence 1928-32.

Inaugural ceremonies had been kept as simple as possible, the cost having been reduced from \$21,000 to \$3,500; no guests from other States had been invited "except about fifteen personal friends of the Governor's"; far from being "half empty," the Senate Chamber had been "more than filled," since, although there were twenty-five vacant seats in the corner of one gallery, there had been "three or four hundred people standing up at the rear of the Chamber."¹⁰³ A few days later Roosevelt composed and had sent, though he did not sign, a letter to the Editor of the Houston (Texas) Post Dispatch concerning an editorial entitled "Roosevelt and 'The World'."

I think that I voice the feeling of the great majority of Democrats throughout the state... and also many Republicans [he wrote] when I tell you that the Editor of the New York World has... "had it in for" Governor Roosevelt for many years. Its present attitude is deliberately and constantly misrepresentative of the Governor. Its editorials misquote him and its news stories contain "unfriendly" stories.

The people of the State of New York take little stock in The World and do not regard it as a representative Democratic paper.

Similar letters were sent by Roosevelt to the Editor of the New York Evening Post ("Every time you stupidly, editorially misquote or misrepresent the Governor you gain for him more friends") and to the Editor of the Waltham (Massachusetts) News-Tribune which had stated, on June 27 1931 that "Governor Roosevelt does not know the a. b. c. of international

¹⁰³ Unsigned letter to Editor, Chicago Post, January 16, 1931, "Attacks on Governor" folder, FDR Private Correspondence 1928-32.

finance" and "is not quite sure where Germany is." "For your enlightenment," declared Roosevelt, in a letter which, once again he had someone else sign,

Governor Roosevelt not only went to school in Germany... but has been there many times since, and...is personally acquainted with a very large number of leaders in the political and financial worlds....In this respect he probably has a far wider acquaintance with international problems than the great majority of Americans in public life today.¹⁰⁴

Though the volume of such letters decreased sharply after he became President, Franklin Roosevelt's close scrutiny of the American press continued. Described by Arthur Krock as "the greatest reader and critic of newspapers that I recall in the White House,"¹⁰⁵ Roosevelt punctuated his press conferences with critical comments on the performance of the press which revealed, on his part, a surprisingly detailed knowledge of newspaper content. His claim, at one such conference in April 1937, that he had checked the content of "gossip columns" for a month and had discovered that the percentage of "absolute manufactured error" was as high as forty per cent, was scarcely believable but was nevertheless indicative of his disposition to monitor the press and of his continuing and, at times, almost passionate concern for its accuracy.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴Unsigned letter to Editor, Houston Post Dispatch, January 21, 1931, unsigned letter to Editor, New York Evening Post, February 25, 1931, unsigned letter to Editor, Waltham News Tribune, July 13, 1931; "Attacks on Governor" folder, FDR Personal Correspondence 1928-32.

¹⁰⁵Quoted in Clemow, "Recovery on Way," p.8.

¹⁰⁶Press Conference No. 360-A, April 15, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, IX, 308.

So, also, was his practice of summoning offending editors to the White House and requiring them to explain inconsistencies and inaccuracies in their publications. In September 1942, for example, Roosevelt called Edwin L. James, Managing Editor of the New York Times, to the White House to discuss editorial inconsistencies in the Times over the preceding two months. One of the matters to which James' attention was drawn was that, on August 27, the Times had congratulated Roosevelt for belatedly recognising that farm price stabilisation was impossible without wage stabilisation, whereas the newspaper itself had previously recorded his acceptance of that proposition on July 6. Furthermore, the President pointed out, in public statements on July 30, 1941 and April 28, 1942, he had made similar remarks. In February 1943, the editor of PM received a similar summons.¹⁰⁷

What seemed, at times, to amount almost to a fetishism by Roosevelt for straight, factual, even literal reporting was illustrated most graphically in a letter which he wrote to Henry Luce in November 1940. The subject of the letter was an article in Time which had described the election night at Roosevelt's residence at Hyde Park, New York. The

¹⁰⁷Memorandum, Stephen Early to Marvin H. McIntyre, September 1, 1942 (see also, at this location, analysis of material from New York Times editorials during July and August 1942 which was discussed with James), President's Personal File 675; memorandum Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, February 5, 1943, President's Personal File 6646.

article, Roosevelt declared, "is written with such a complete disregard of the facts that I must use it as an example." Announcing that he would confine his attention to the first column of the story and would not "go into the misrepresentation or deliberate falsehoods in the other columns either of this issue or of any previous issues," Roosevelt began a sentence-by-sentence analysis of the offending piece. The second and third sentences of the second paragraph had read :

Hyde Park House was dark, the big green shutters swung snug to the front windows -- from outside, not a crack of light showed from the library. Inside and out, the atmosphere was solemn, expectant, tense.

This sentence [sic], Roosevelt complained,

gives, of course, the impression that conditions in the Hyde Park House were different from usual. The shutters are, of course, always closed and the house is dark from the outside. The atmosphere inside was not solemn, and not tense. The adjectives are just the opposite of the truth. The adjective "expectant" was, of course, correct.

The first sentence in the second paragraph of the article had read :

In station wagons and long shining limousines came people in evening clothes, neighbors and friends.

That sentence, complained Roosevelt,

gives the impression that the people who came to the house were in evening clothes. A rather careful check shows that about ten per cent were in evening clothes...

Paragraph three had begun :

Apart from his household, alone at the mahogany table in the family dining room, sat the master mathematician of U.S. politics. Outside the room's closed doors was expectant silence.

In his letter, Roosevelt referred to the first sentence of this paragraph as a "deliberate falsehood"; he had been in the family dining room but "people in the 'household' were drifting in and out all the time." The second sentence contained "a double lie"; the only one of five doors to the room that had been closed was one leading to the hall and this had been closed to keep out the draught from the front door.

At the conclusion of a long and detailed critique, the President explained his major concern. Those who had first-hand knowledge of the events upon which Time reported would, after reading those reports, conclude that they were "based on deliberate misrepresentation instead of on facts." Gradually, increasing numbers of people would come to realise that they could not trust what they read. The article, he concluded, was typical of "a form of journalism which your President is perfectly willing to tell you he thinks of serious detriment to the future of successful democracy in the United States."¹⁰⁸

On the basis of Roosevelt's draft, a lengthier but more moderate statement of his criticisms was prepared by Lowell Mellett and William Hassett and sent under the former's signature to the publisher. In his reply, Luce, after

¹⁰⁸ Unsigned letter to Henry Luce, November 20, 1940, President's Personal File 3338. The article in question -- "The Presidency : Victory," appeared in Time on November 11, 1940.

confessing that he had had difficulty in deciding how to deal with the letter, pointed out that, as Mellett's complaints were directed at "the entire theory and practice of TIME," there was little purpose to be served by attempting to rebut the specific criticisms of the article in question. Though Mellett did not like Time, the publisher observed, many people not only did, but considered it to be "the major advance in journalism in our time." Declaring that a "gulf of profound misunderstandings" existed between them, he suggested that the questions raised in Mellett's letter might be discussed informally by them at a future meeting.¹⁰⁹

Roosevelt called the reply "slippery," pointing out to Mellett that the question of whether he (Mellett) liked Time or not was irrelevant since they could both agree that the magazine made "false reporting" attractive, and that the very mention by Luce of the desirability or otherwise of rebutting the criticisms of this particular story was an evasion. Declared Roosevelt : "George Washington did not rebut his father's objection to cutting down the cherry tree.

George Washington had the courage to admit a sin. Henry Luce lacks that ability!"¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Stephen Early, December 3, 1940, Lowell Mellett to Henry Luce, December 7, 1940, memorandum, Stephen Early to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 23, 1940, Henry R. Luce to Lowell Mellett, December 24, 1940; President's Personal File 3338.

¹¹⁰Memorandum, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Lowell Mellett, December 31, 1940, President's Personal File 3338.

Even allowing for Time's past journalistic misdemeanours, for the generally hostile attitude of that magazine and its publisher toward the President, and for the accumulated resentment to which these may have given rise, Roosevelt's attack was curious. The offending story had been based on the reporting of Felix Belair, who had been outside the Hyde Park house on election night and had interviewed a number of people who had been inside the house when the election returns came in.¹¹¹ Given that inaccuracies had occurred, they concerned matters which seemed trivial and politically innocuous, and, in relation to which, expressions such as "deliberate falsehood," "double lie," "wholly false" and "deliberate misrepresentation" hardly seemed appropriate, or in any way proportionate to the nature of the supposed offence. Nor had the story reflected any discredit on the President. The explanation as to why Roosevelt, in the full flush of his third term victory, and in a period of grave international crisis should have taken time to compose such a letter is not immediately apparent, unless, perhaps, one is to credit his assertion that, as a result of this and similar articles, the American democratic system was under threat. Seen in the context of Roosevelt's general critique of the American press, however, the letter to Luce was less peculiar, reflecting, as it did, Roosevelt's apparently obsessional concern over what the press was saying, no matter on how unimportant a subject;

¹¹¹Elson, Time Inc., p.443.

reflecting, also, his insistence on factual, even literal reporting, his assumption that, where mistakes occurred, they were never inadvertent, but always deliberate and representative of a settled policy on the part of the publication involved, and a conception of the role of the press which not only ruled out what to others seemed a modicum of harmless speculation, but saw such practices as constituting a threat to democracy itself.

Franklin Roosevelt's controlling ideas about and distinctive attitudes toward the American press may be thrown into sharper relief if they are set alongside those of the other major Administration spokesman on press matters -- Harold Ickes. Himself the target of much unfavourable press comment, Ickes set down his views about that institution in an extended series of public criticisms which he undertook with characteristic vigour and sustained with typical polemical ability.

Like Roosevelt, Ickes was concerned to stress the weight of press opposition with which the Administration was saddled, and the discrepancy between it and the level of popular support.¹¹² Like Roosevelt, too, the Secretary of the Interior professed to believe that an "increasingly alert and intelligent" public was becoming more and more critical of the press and drawing conclusions that would embarrass certain publishers "if they could only lift their

¹¹²See, for example, public statement by Ickes quoted in Mott, "Newspapers in Presidential Campaigns," p.348.

eyes higher than the safes in their counting rooms." Moreover, Ickes' description of a statement by the Wall Street Journal that a newspaper was a private enterprise "'affected' with no public interest" as "the most extreme formulation of the tory point of view with regard to the press" echoed sentiments that the President had also expressed.¹¹³ Reminiscent of the President, too, were the Secretary's full-blooded attacks on columnists. In an article written in June 1939, one of Mallon's attacks on him was described by Ickes as "a characteristic example of the sort of writing that has made him perhaps the least credible columnist in the United States." Mallon's technique, he wrote, "runs the whole gamut from mere insinuation to plain prevarication," his method being "to take a simple and in itself unimportant fact and weave around it a net of innuendos, idle gossip, insinuation, juxtaposition, weasel words, and implausible lies." The upshot was a column "remarkable for its ill temper and

¹¹³Harold L. Ickes, America's House of Lords (New York : Barcourt, Brace, 1939), Preface p.viii and p.10. Although Ickes was the nominal author of this book, both the research for it and the writing of it were the work of Saul Padover, Ickes' contribution being restricted to "a few critical comments here and there." Nevertheless, the comparison between Roosevelt's critique of the press and the one presented in the book is valid, given the purposes I have in mind, since (i) Ickes would certainly have approved of the opinions published in his name, and (ii) the views of Padover serve equally well as do those of Ickes as a means of suggesting which of Roosevelt's attitudes toward the press may have been distinctive. The authority for the statement that America's House of Lords was written by Padover is a letter by him to the writer, dated July 9, 1975.

mendacity." Having analysed twenty-eight sentences in the article to which these comments related, Ickes concluded that there were, among them, nine "major falsehoods."¹¹⁴

A similar article written by Ickes in June 1943, assailed John O'Donnell for having "smeared the WAAC's with as dirty and foul a rumor as ever found its way into America's public print."¹¹⁵ On another occasion Ickes described Arthur Krock as "the slyest and trickiest columnist of them all" and added that he was "also the most hypocritical, pretending a sobriety of judgment and a purity of motive that he does not possess."¹¹⁶

Nor did this indefatigable critic of the press hesitate to subject columnists to public ridicule. In a speech to the New York Newspaper Guild in April 1939, he referred to columnists as "that curious, endemic malady, which, in these modern days, has infected one newspaper after another," and mocked their pretensions in a poem which he recited to the gathering :

Wouldst know what's right and what is wrong?
Why birdies sing at break of dawn?
Ask the columnists.

¹ ¹¹⁴Harold L. Ickes, "Paul Mallon's Propaganda Technique," Secretary of Interior File, Articles 1939, Ickes Papers.

¹¹⁵Harold L. Ickes, "Funny Man O'Donnell," Secretary of Interior File, Articles 1943, Ickes Papers. O'Donnell had alleged that contraceptives were being distributed to the WAAC's.

¹¹⁶Memorandum, Harold L. Ickes to Saul Padover, May 29, 1939, Secretary of Interior File, Columnists 1935-39, Ickes Papers.

Who run the earth and sun and moon?
 Ask Thompson, Lawrence, Franklin, Broun,
 Just the columnists.

.

Who expound the Constitution,
 Adding circum to locution?
 Why, the columnists!

.

When F.D.R. you want to sock,
 Page Lippmann, Johnson, Kent or Krock,
 Page a columnist.¹¹⁷

Yet, unlike Roosevelt, who objected to columnists per se, Ickes was prepared to be discriminating in his criticism. "Of course," he wrote on one occasion, "there are good columnists and bad ones, . . . I do not indict all columnists."¹¹⁸ "I have always held you in great respect," he wrote to Mark Sullivan in June 1939, "both as an individual and as a journalist."¹¹⁹ Ickes, too, displayed a willingness to applaud the efforts of columnists, especially, it must be admitted, when they furthered his own political ends. To Westbrook Pegler, he wrote gratefully in November 1936: "I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the first-class operation that you performed . . . in your column yesterday. That was something

¹¹⁷See "Columnists and Calumnists," Guild Reporter, April 15, 1939, pp.1, 6.

¹¹⁸See typed sheets containing questions and answers to be used in Ickes' public debate on the press with Frank Gannett in Secretary of Interior File, Columnists 1935-39, Ickes Papers.

¹¹⁹Harold L. Ickes to Mark Sullivan, June 13, 1939, Secretary of Interior File, Navy 1940 -- Newspaper Criticism, October 1940, Ickes Papers.

that I had wanted to see done for a long time, and I am glad that the case finally came to the clinic of a doctor who could handle his scalpel and forceps and saw as dextrously as you."¹²⁰ In contrast to Roosevelt, too, Ickes was prepared to give public recognition to the columnists' role : in the preface to a collection of writings on the press which he edited, he drew a distinction between "calumnists," defined individually by him on another occasion as "an ex-reporter who wastes good white space to spread injurious gossip and disseminate prevarications and even unpublished libels,"¹²¹ and "columnists," and observed that his criticism of the former was "not to be understood as a reflection upon columnists in general." "Many columnists," ran the prefatory note, "who have replaced editorial writers whose influence has generally waned, are high-minded individuals and fine commentators....[who]...worthily serve the public welfare."¹²² Franklin Roosevelt would not have said that.

Ickes displayed a similar willingness to discriminate in his attacks upon publishers, allowing that, just as there were desirable and undesirable columnists, so were there

¹²⁰Harold L. Ickes to Westbrook Pegler, November 17, 1936, Secretary of Interior File, Editorials 1936 -- Family and Relations 1940, Ickes Papers.

¹²¹"Columnists and Calumnists," Guild Reporter, April 15, 1939, p.6.

¹²²Ickes, ed., Freedom of the Press Today, pp.12-13.

desirable and undesirable owners. Thus, in the preface to his book on the American press, the following statement, which paid an indirect though unmistakable tribute to some newspaper owners, occurs :

I have repeatedly said that in the United States we have many fine and honorable newspapers that honestly try to perform the public function for which alone all newspapers exist.¹²³

Individual publishers, too, were sometimes praised for their efforts. To Eugene Meyer Ickes wrote in February 1936 :

I think that the attitude ~~the~~ Washington Post has taken editorially on free speech, free press, academic freedom, etc. has been altogether admirable....

I wish more newspapers in the country felt the sense of obligation that the Post does....I feel that as a citizen I owe you my thanks for what you are doing.¹²⁴

One of a number of further examples of such letters was sent to John O'Rourke, Managing Editor of the Washington Daily News in March 1939. In this letter, Ickes expressed his appreciation of the publication of an editorial which sought to correct an earlier article based, the Secretary had claimed, on "a misapprehension of the fact." The correction, he noted, had been given similar prominence to the original error. "This," Ickes wrote, "is journalism of a high order."¹²⁵ This disposition occasionally to praise

¹²³Ickes, America's House of Lords, Preface, p.vii.

¹²⁴Harold L. Ickes to Eugene Meyer, February 19, 1936, Secretary of Interior File, Editorials 1936 -- Family and Relations 1940, Ickes Papers.

¹²⁵Harold L. Ickes to John T. O'Rourke, March 25, 1939. See, also, Ickes to Theodore Noyes, March 27, 1942, Harold L. Ickes to J. David Stern, November 6, 1937. All in Secretary of Interior File, Editorials 1936 -- Family and Relations 1940, Ickes Papers.

certain sections of the press was one which Franklin Roosevelt did not noticeably share.

Missing, too, from Ickes' critique of the press were the constant harping upon the idea that, where they transgressed, reporters were under orders from their employers to slant the news in an anti-Administration direction, and the intense concern over "interpretation" and over the dire results such a practice would have not only for the press as an institution but for the future of Democracy itself.

In criticising the American press, Franklin Roosevelt, it is clear, was working within a larger frame of reference.

There is a further point : more than a suspicion exists that, far from being perturbed by the opposition of the press, Roosevelt welcomed it. Raymond Moley has recounted a two-hour "nightmarish conversation" with Roosevelt in April 1936 which left him (Moley) with "the harrowing intimation that Roosevelt was looking forward to nothing more than having his 'enemies'... reelect him." Numbered among these enemies, it is important to appreciate, was the press of America. "Nothing would help him more," Moley has recalled the President saying, "than to have it known that the newspapers were all against him."¹²⁶ Others made similar observations. After interviewing Roosevelt in October 1937,

¹²⁶Moley, After Seven Years, pp.337, 339.

James Kieran of the New York Times gave this interesting description of the President's decision-making procedure :

"He looks at certain newspapers. If they are opposed to him, then he feels he must be generally correct. If they are with him, he becomes a bit suspicious."¹²⁷ Similarly, Merriman Smith, White House correspondent for the United Press, has recalled that Roosevelt "finally got to the point where he seemed to relish the fact that the majority of the daily newspapers of the country opposed him politically."¹²⁸ Such an attitude was consistent with Roosevelt's indifference to press support where it was proffered, his minimisation of it where it occurred, and his marked tendency to reject evidence, whether from his own newspaper reading, the Division of Press Intelligence, or other sources, which was inconsistent with certain basic propositions concerning the press, to which he appeared to be wedded -- as though the objective facts were irrelevant to his own perceptual field. The latter tendency was strikingly illustrated during a press conference in August 1938 when, after he had designated eighty-five per cent of the nation's press as "Tory" and therefore opposition press, a reporter drew his attention to a recent poll which had shown that 300 out of 800 of the larger newspapers in the country supported the Administration. His

¹²⁷James Kieran, "The President Listens In On the Nation," New York Times Magazine, October 3, 1937, p.1.

¹²⁸A. Merriman Smith, A President Is Many Men (New York : Harper and Brothers, 1948), p.92.

immediate response was an outright refusal to believe the figure.¹²⁹ Such an attitude was consistent too, with an apparent disposition on the part of Roosevelt to anticipate or even to invent press opposition where it did not exist. It has been demonstrated, for example, that his Quarantine Speech was not, as Roosevelt implied, instantly assailed in the American press as a whole,¹³⁰ a fact which must have been suggested to him by the reaction to the speech in the newspapers which he read each day,¹³¹ even had he not examined the break-downs of editorial opinion on this question supplied by the Division of Press Intelligence; which leads to the paradoxical suggestion that, to some extent, it may have been the relative absence of criticism of the proposal which the President found somewhat unnerving.

Thus, although Franklin Roosevelt repeatedly attacked the press for opposing him, the very opposition of which he complained was something which he was often able to contemplate not merely with equanimity, but with a degree of enthusiasm.

In summary, the emerging conclusions of this study are : that Franklin Roosevelt persistently exaggerated the

¹²⁹Press Conference No.478, August 23, 1938, Residential Press Conferences, XII, 42.

¹³⁰Travis B. Jacobs, "Roosevelt's 'Quarantine Speech'," Historian, XXIV (August, 1962), pp.483-502.

¹³¹See Appendix A for extracts of editorial comments on the Quarantine Speech by the newspapers which Roosevelt read each day. See also, p.196 above.

extent of press opposition which he faced and the extent to which calculated, proprietor-inspired distortion of news occurred; that he likewise exaggerated the extent to which newspaper owners opposed him, and, in his public statements at least, underestimated the degree of conflict which existed between himself and working journalists;¹³² that his blanket condemnations of newspaper owners as a class and of newspaper columnists as a group are not easily reconciled with his relations with members of both these groups as individuals; that, in these and other ways, Franklin Roosevelt manifested toward the American press as a whole, an antagonism which was deep and fundamental; that, by inference, this antagonism was only partly related to the actual press treatment which he and his administrations received; that, even allowing that the intensity of Roosevelt's antagonism toward the press may, to a considerable extent, have represented an understandably bitter reaction to the more virulent attacks upon him, or the considerable opposition to his policies, or be explicable in narrow political or tactical terms, its nature is more difficult to account for in these ways; that, in this regard, Roosevelt appears to have possessed a highly circumscribed view of the role of the press which its members

¹³²See, for example : Public Papers and Addresses, II, 38; Press Conference No. 360-A, April 15, 1937, Presidential Press Conferences, IX, 308; pp. 38, 87ff. above. Such statements tend to mask the considerable degree of conflict which occurred between Roosevelt and the Washington press; see above pp. 38, 87ff.

understood with difficulty and shared with reluctance; and that, in relation to all these matters, Franklin Roosevelt's ideas and attitudes were stereotyped, inflexible, and resistant not merely to substantial revision, but even, over the period of his Presidency, to detectable modification.

The tasks which remain are those of identifying the origins of the attitudes and opinions revealed or suggested by such conclusions; to reconcile, where it occurs, the apparently irreconcilable; to achieve, through such a reconciliation, a satisfactory and enlightening synthesis. What were the origins of Franklin Roosevelt's predominant attitudes toward the American press? Why did he hold so resolutely to a series of propositions -- about the extent of press opposition which he faced, about the nature of newspaper owners as a group -- which he ought to have known were untenable? What was the source of his confidence when he lectured the press, his rage when he indiscriminately attacked it? Why, at times, was he gratified by its opposition, and indifferent to its support? What lay behind his severely limited conception of the role of the press, his curiously inconsistent attitude toward "interpretation," his deep-rooted and disproportionate hostility which manifested itself so frequently and in so many ways?

In this writer's opinion, the answers to these questions lie deeply embedded in Franklin Roosevelt's political philosophy.

CHAPTER VIII

IS A JEFFERSON ON THE HORIZON?

On December 3, 1925, the New York Evening World carried a review of Claude G. Bowers' book Jefferson and Hamilton. The review was written by Franklin D. Roosevelt, and its tone was unrestrainedly enthusiastic. The value of Bowers' work, Roosevelt clearly implied, lay not in its originality, but in its relevance : its important message was one which he, himself, had sought to spread, when in a recent letter to a thousand Democratic leaders, he had drawn attention to "the difference between the Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian ideals for an American method of government," and to the need "to apply their fundamental differences to present-day policies of our two great parties." But a suggestion thus advanced in seriousness had been greeted with derision; for, in their comments on his letter, many editors had "launched sneers at the mere suggestion that Jeffersonianism could, in any remote manner, bear upon the America of 1925." The memory of that rebuff rankled : "I still boil inwardly," the reviewer declared, "when I think of these smug writers who, wish being father to the thought, deny that forces hostile to control of government by the people which existed in the crisis of 1790 -- 1800 could still be a threat in our day and land." Under the circumstances, therefore, Bowers' book was of the editors' criticism an historically-based rebuttal, and of Roosevelt's

own ideas an effective and timely vindication.

Having thus set the book firmly within the context of his own political beliefs, Roosevelt proceeded to call attention to some of the author's significant themes : to Bowers' depiction of Hamilton "in his true character of aristocrat and convinced opponent of popular government"; to his description of Jefferson as "the saviour of the deeper ideals of the Revolution"; to his account of "the rise of Hamilton to a position of supremacy and with it the control of the infant Government by the moneyed class." Roosevelt went on to trace the growing division in the Cabinet between the two men, with Jefferson "mistrusting the fondness of Hamilton for his Chambers of Commerce and his contempt for the opinion of the masses," while Hamilton remained "confident of the power of his leaders among merchants and aristocrats," but was "wholly lacking in understanding... of... the average human being who,... made up the mass of his countrymen." Roosevelt recounted, too, how Jefferson, in pursuance of his democratic goal, had begun "the mobilization of the masses against the autocracy of the few" -- a "colossal task" since, with Hamilton, "the natural aristocrat," was aligned "the organized compact of forces of wealth, of birth, of commerce, of the press," whereas his opponent had been able to count, for his support, "only on the scattered raw material of the working masses, difficult to reach, more difficult to organize." After a decade of struggle, the reviewer noted, Jefferson and his followers had finally triumphed, and, in a reference to that victory Roosevelt

wrote : "His [Jefferson's] faith in mankind was vindicated; his appeal to the intelligence of the average man bore fruit; his conception of a democratic republic came true."

The reviewer concluded on a note of expectancy :

I have a breathless feeling as I lay down this book -- a picture of escape after escape which this Nation passed through in those first ten years; a picture of what might have been if the Republic had been finally organized as Alexander Hamilton sought. But I have a breathless feeling, too, as I wonder if, a century and a quarter later, the same contending forces are not again mobilizing. Hamiltons we have today. Is a Jefferson on the horizon?¹

Although his depiction of Bowers' book as essentially a more fully-researched and carefully spelt-out statement of his own political convictions was not entirely without foundation, Roosevelt's account of the relationship between his own ideas and those of Bowers is nevertheless unreliable. He had not, as he stated in his review of Jefferson and Hamilton, taken occasion, in the circular letter which he had sent to delegates to the recent Democratic Convention, "to refer in passing to the difference between the Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian ideals for an American method of government," and to the need to "apply their fundamental differences to present-day policies of our two great parties." His attempt, in that letter, to differentiate between the parties had been based, rather, on the simple assertion that, while the Republican leadership stood for conservatism, the Democrats were "unequivocally the party

¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" New York Evening World, December 3, 1925, pp.21,29.

of progress and liberal thought."² The suggestion that the supposed differences between Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian ideals of government needed to be re-emphasised and applied to contemporary politics was made not in Roosevelt's circular letter to the Convention delegates on December 5, 1924, but in a letter to Senator J. Walsh, which purported to summarize the replies to that letter, and which, as part of a series of complicated manoeuvres by Roosevelt and Louis Howe aimed at bringing about a national conference of Democrats, was released to the press on March 8, 1925. Referring to the replies which he had received from the delegates, Roosevelt had written in his letter to Walsh :

My correspondents are overwhelmingly agreed that the Democracy must be unqualifiedly the Party representative of progress and liberal thought. In other words, the clear line of demarkation which differentiated the political thought of Jefferson on the one side, and of Hamilton on the other, must be restored. The Democracy must make it clear that it seeks primarily the good of the average citizen through the free rule of the whole electorate, as opposed to the Republican Party which seeks a mere moneyed prosperity of the nation through the control of government by a self-appointed aristocracy of wealth and of social and economic power. (Italics mine.)³

²For a copy of the circular letter see Franklin D. Roosevelt to Charles F. Murphy, December 5, 1924, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 8, Alabama folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

³Franklin D. Roosevelt to Thomas J. Walsh, February 28, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 7, Walsh folder. See also Alfred B. Rollins, Jr., "The Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt : His Career in New York Politics, 1909-1928" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1953), p.795.

But, clearly, Roosevelt's notions that the Jeffersonian-Hamiltonian dichotomy needed to be re-emphasised and applied to contemporary American politics were not "other words," a mere alternative formulation of the idea that the Democratic Party should be "unqualifiedly the Party representative of progress and liberal thought." On the contrary, in calling for such a political re-definition, Franklin Roosevelt had introduced into a letter, which otherwise consisted of a re-statement of the thinly-disguised programme of party reform set out in his original circular letter, what had become, for him, a new and illuminating idea.

Although the precise origin of this idea in Roosevelt's own mind is uncertain, it is significant that several of the respondents to his circular letter invoked the name of Jefferson to sanction their suggestions on party reform, and that some delegates placed direct emphasis on the need for the Democratic Party to re-emphasise Jeffersonian principles.⁴ The closest approximation to the Jefferson versus Hamilton theme, which Roosevelt, henceforth, would so

⁴See, for example : Matthew P. Andrews to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 18, 1924, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 1; Caroline Ruutz-Rees to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 15, 1924, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 8, Connecticut folder; Margaret Pike to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 17, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 8, Idaho folder.

enthusiastically espouse, came in a letter from M.W. Underwood of Michigan. Calling for the uniting of the Democratic Party "in opposition to that class of our people who believe,... that our Government should be controlled...by the few powerful financial interests, and special privilege [sic] class most of which have allied themselves with the Republican party," Underwood stressed the need for "united action in order to dethrone the few who are constantly using our Government and its legislative power to serve private ends." The Government could be brought back to the people, Underwood declared, only if "the historic Democratic party declare[d] its principles and what it stands for in plain and simple language, that the average man can understand." Candidates should therefore be selected who would carry out these principles and, to this end, the writer suggested, "it might be well for them to review the life and policies of Jefferson[,] Jackson, Cleveland and Wilson for the purpose of learning the practical application of Democratic principles to Governmental action."⁵ These ideas were similar to those subsequently expressed by Roosevelt in his letter to Walsh.

Even if the origins of his new-found political faith are uncertain, it is nevertheless clear that before 1925 Roosevelt did not adhere to its tenets, but that after

⁵M.W. Underwood to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 16, 1924, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 8, Michigan folder.

1925 he did. Roosevelt's political statements before 1925 evince little more than the blandness and insipidity of a vague progressivism. At his most platitudinous and politically vacuous, he told a Jefferson Day Dinner audience in April 1920, perhaps in a moment of self-revelation :

Never was there such confusion in the minds of the voters at large as to what the dominant parties stand for,... Let us not commit their [the Republicans'] error. Let us not, ... forget the necessity of standing clearly... for something.

Then, addressing himself to the question of what that "something" might be, he recalled some advice he had given to a group of naval officers before the war:

My earnest word,... is to urge you fearlessly to discard worship of all things that are old, and to adopt courageously anything that is new the moment that some new development of the present convinces you that the old way is no longer the right way.... Holding wisely to what is good in the past..., do not fear to cast aside what have proved to be mere shackles of convention and daringly to go forward.

"Gentlemen," Roosevelt declared to his Jefferson Day Dinner audience, "I know of nothing better that I can say now than that."⁶

It was a revealing admission.

Roosevelt's political ideas changed little between 1920 and 1924. In his book Whither Bound?, which was published in 1920, he conceived of the political process in

⁶Franklin D. Roosevelt, Speech at Jefferson Day Dinner, April 10, 1920, Speech File 116, President's Personal File.

precisely the same terms as he was to do, not only in his campaign speeches of that year, but also in his circular letter of December 1924 -- that is, as a struggle between "conservatives" and "liberals."⁷ This was the simple theme, also, of a newspaper article which Louis Howe sent to Roosevelt in February 1924, an article described by Howe as "the best thing I have ever read and ... exactly along our lines of thought." (Italics mine.)⁸

Unmistakable signs of Roosevelt's conversion to the idea that the essence of the political struggle was between the forces of Jeffersonianism and Hamiltonianism appeared, however, in 1925, not merely in his letter to Walsh, but also in correspondence with other political associates. Writing to Roosevelt in May of that year, Hollins N. Randolph, a lawyer of Atlanta, Georgia, said, in a reference to a request which Roosevelt had evidently made to him to write "a comparative history of Hamilton and Jefferson" :

I agree perfectly with you that the differences which exist today between the principles advocated by the

⁷Franklin D. Roosevelt, Whither Bound? (Boston : Houghton, Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1920), pp.15-16. For copy of circular letter see Franklin D. Roosevelt to Thomas J. Walsh, February 28, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 7, Walsh folder. See also : Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address, Chicago, August 11, 1920, Speech File 132, President's Personal File; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Final Pre-Election Statement, October 31, 1920, Speech File 233, President's Personal File.

⁸Memorandum, Louis Howe to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 12, 1924, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 6. See article by Edmund C. Shields, "Democrat Says Party Needs a Sound Policy," enclosed with this memorandum.

Democratic Party and the principles advocated by the Republican Party have come down to us because of the differences of opinion and viewpoint which existed between these two wonderfully great men.

Randolph accepted, too, Roosevelt's proposition that "it would prove helpful for all of us in trying to solve them [contemporary problems] to adhere as closely as we can to the principles of government which Jefferson advocated."⁹

Under the circumstances, the enthusiasm with which Roosevelt greeted Claude Bowers' Jefferson and Hamilton, when it was published later that year, is understandable. Here was precisely the kind of book for which he had called in his letter to Randolph -- an historical study which elaborated, in great detail, the rival conceptions of government which Roosevelt had come to believe were at the root of political conflict. Here, also, was a description of the first great battle for American democracy, of the alignment of opposing forces, of the organisational tactics employed. Bowers' book carried, too, the clear implication that the struggle which he so movingly had described had continuing relevance. To Franklin Roosevelt, to whom the book became a political bible and a blueprint for action,

⁹Hollins N. Randolph to Franklin D. Roosevelt, May 4, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 6, Randolph folder. See also : Franklin D. Roosevelt to W.C. Martin, July 20, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt to W.C. Martin, n.d., Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 4, Martin folder; Franklin D. Roosevelt to H.C. Hansbrough, July 22, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 3.

the publication of Jefferson and Hamilton seemed portentous, and his delight in its appearance was obviously unfeigned : "I felt like saying 'At last'," he had begun his review, "as I read Mr. Claude G. Bowers' thrilling 'Jefferson and Hamilton'."¹⁰ The book powerfully reinforced Roosevelt's emerging political ideas, clarifying his thinking and confirming his beliefs about the nature of political conflict. But, in all probability, it did more. For, in the skilful polemical hands of its author, the early struggle had not merely been depicted in ideological, but had been dramatized in personal terms -- with the struggle between rival conceptions of government being reduced, in essence, to the struggle between their two major protagonists. "The spirits of Jefferson and Hamilton," Bowers had written in the conclusion to his work, "still stalk the ways of men -- still fighting."¹¹ Thus, for Franklin Roosevelt, when he read the book, the task became not merely one of persuading his party to adopt and espouse Jeffersonian principles, but of finding a leader who could embody them. "Is a Jefferson on the horizon?" he had asked at the conclusion of his review; but to that question, it may be imagined, he had already formulated a simple and alluring answer.

The point was not lost on Bowers. "I wish I could tell you..." he wrote to Roosevelt, "how delighted I am at

¹⁰Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" p.21.

¹¹Claude G. Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton : The Struggle for Democracy in America (London : Constable and Company, 1925), p.511.

the revelations of yourself that appear in the review."¹²

In a letter to D.C. Martin, written shortly after his review of Bowers' book, Roosevelt succinctly expressed the ideas which had become the core and which were, to a remarkable extent, to define the ambit of his political thinking.

We are approaching a period similar to that from 1790 -- 1800 when Alexander Hamilton ran the federal government for the primary good of the chambers of commerce, the speculators and the inside ring of the national government. He was a fundamental believer in an autocracy of wealth and power -- Jefferson brought the government back to the hands of the average voter, through insistence on fundamental principles, and the education of the average voter. We need a similar campaign of education today, and perhaps we shall find another Jefferson.¹³

Repeatedly, in speeches in the pre-Presidential period, he re-emphasised these themes.¹⁴ "Thomas Jefferson," he informed a radio audience in April 1930, "represented a school of political thought, the principles of which are as applicable today as they were in the early days of the

¹²Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, December 2, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers Pertaining to Family, Business and Personal Affairs, 1882-1945, box 110, Review of Bowers folder, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

¹³Franklin D. Roosevelt to D.C. Martin, December 9, 1925, Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, box 4, Martin folder.

¹⁴See Franklin D. Roosevelt: Speech to Democratic State Convention, Syracuse, New York, September 27, 1926, Speech File 251; Speech, Acceptance of Nomination for Governor, October 16, 1928, Speech File 261; Speech to Democratic State Committee, Albany, New York, January 2, 1929, Speech File 302; Address at Democratic Victory Dinner, Hotel Astor, New York City, January 14, 1932, Speech File 458; Address at Jefferson Day Dinner, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 18, 1932, Speech File 473. All in President's Personal File.

country." Jefferson had believed in "the rule of the majority," and had opposed "the minority ... which sought to vest control of the new government solely in its own class." From the outset there had been "a sharp division in American political thought," and today, he and his listeners were confronted with "that same old conflict which ~~Thomas~~ Jefferson faced."¹⁵

Roosevelt's continuing commitment to the simple view of social and political conflict which he first elaborated in his letter to Walsh can be traced also through his relationship with Claude Bowers. Converted to Jeffersonianism while he was at high school,¹⁶ Bowers' enthusiasm for the new faith must have equalled, and may even have surpassed, Roosevelt's own. Linked by their adherence to its simple, yet comprehensive, propositions, the two became confidants and friends, and the tone of their correspondence makes it difficult to believe that Roosevelt's espousal of Jeffersonian ideas was undertaken merely for rhetorical purposes. When Bowers wrote to Roosevelt telling him of the growing success of Jefferson and Hamilton, Roosevelt suggested that a cheaper edition might be produced and sold door-to-door, a system of distribution which, he told the author, "sounds to me almost Jeffersonian

¹⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, Radio Address to Thirty Luncheons in Honor of Thomas Jefferson, April 12, 1930, Speech File 374, President's Personal File.

¹⁶Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Claude G. Bowers, August 24, 1954, p.7.

in its methods."¹⁷ Later, Roosevelt was to suggest that Bowers be included among the members of a Special Committee to be set up prior to the 1928 Convention so that the party might benefit from "his wonderful knowledge of ... its historic traditions."¹⁸ Roosevelt enthusiastically welcomed the publication of Bowers' second major work, The Tragic Era, which, its author told him, described how "the Jeffersonian republic was overthrown and the Hamiltonian established through the twelve year shameless use of Federal bayonets and a system of vterrorism [sic]." Although the new book was "political only in the sense that Jefferson and Hamilton [was] -- one draws conclusions as to today from it," Bowers predicted to Roosevelt that it would be "effective in those Southern States that went wrong last fall,"¹⁹ and, some months later, affirmed that the book had "played havoc with the Hoover plans in the South."²⁰

¹⁷ Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 19, 1926, Franklin D. Roosevelt to Claude G. Bowers, January 22, 1926; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers Pertaining to Family, Business and Personal Affairs, 1882-1945, box 110, Review of Bowers folder.

¹⁸ Rollins, "Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt," pp.803-04.

¹⁹ Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, March 29, 1929, Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 18, 1929, Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, August 6, 1929; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as Governor, Private Correspondence, 1928-32, box 15, Bowers folder; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Claude G. Bowers, April 3, 1929, Papers of Claude G. Bowers, Lilly Library, University of Indiana.

²⁰ Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, February 17, 1930, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as Governor, Private Correspondence, 1928-32, box 15, Bowers folder.

Roosevelt asked Bowers to deliver his nominating speech to the Democratic National Convention in 1932, and a discussion between the two of them of the style and content of the speech led Bowers to reflect that the candidate was "a thorough Jeffersonian," who appeared to show, however, a liking for the methods of Jackson.²¹ During the campaign of that year in editorials and speeches, Bowers was indefatigable in his efforts to explain the nature of the struggle which was taking place; after its successful conclusion he offered a predictable interpretation of a campaign which, he wrote, was "as fundamental in its meaning as that of 1800."²²

The same basic philosophy -- the ideas which

²¹Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Claude G. Bowers, August 24, 1954, p.89. See also Claude G. Bowers, My Life (New York : Simon and Schuster, 1962), p.241.

²²Claude G. Bowers, "Aftermath Meditations," New York Evening Journal, November 10, 1932; Records of Democratic National Committee, 1932-33, box 861, Bowers folder. Bowers compared the 1932 campaign with that of 1832 (Biddle, "a thorough aristocrat," had "looked upon the mass of the people with disdain"; the Bank and the Whigs "started a whispering campaign about Jackson's health"). In other writings, Bowers asserted that "Roosevelt, with a Jeffersonian estimate of agriculture has the will to save [it]"; that Hoover was "aristocratic," and Roosevelt "democratic"; that the differences between them were "as fundamental as the differences between Hamilton and Jefferson." See Claude G. Bowers, "Comparing Campaigns, 1832-1932," New York Evening Journal, August 24, 1932, Claude G. Bowers, Speech at Democratic Forum, Hotel Biltmore, October 12, 1932; Records of the Democratic National Committee, 1932-33, box 861, Bowers folder. The sympathetic alliance between Bowers and Roosevelt continued after Roosevelt became President; see, for example : Bowers, My Life, p.264; Franklin D. Roosevelt to Harry B. Hawes, September 15, 1936, President's Personal File 3947. When Roosevelt won re-election in 1936, Bowers cabled him : "Mine eyes hath seen the glory of the coming of the Lord the greatest victory for Democracy since Jeffersons and Jacksons." See cable, Claude G. Bowers to Franklin D. Roosevelt, November 4, 1936, President's Personal File 200-0.

provided the bedrock political faith, which, underneath the flexible and opportunistic tactics which he so often employed, was never shaken -- appeared in Franklin Roosevelt's discussions of American history. Although Roosevelt, as President, sometimes interpreted American history in terms of alternating periods of minority domination and majority control,²³ it was more usual for his compressed histories of the Republic to be organised around a discussion of persons rather than periods. As it had been in Bowers' Jefferson and Hamilton, the struggle between opposing forces and ideas was epitomised in the conflicts between individuals, with past Presidents being classified according to their attitude toward the crucial issue of whether the nature of government ought to be oligarchic or democratic. By these means, Roosevelt minimised the importance of political parties and boldly annexed to the Jeffersonian side the more revered Republican Presidents : "I think it is time for us Democrats to claim Lincoln as one of our own," he had written to Bowers in April 1929. "The Republican party has certainly repudiated, first and last, everything he stood for."²⁴ Roosevelt's Presidential typology was elaborated in numerous speeches. In his Jackson Day Dinner Address in January 1938 he observed that

²³See, for example : General Introduction, Public Papers and Addresses, I, ix-xi. See also Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Roanoke Island, North Carolina, August 18, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 328-32.

²⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Claude G. Bowers, April 3, 1929, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers as Governor, Private Correspondence, 1928-32, box 15, Bowers folder.

the average American rarely thought of Jefferson or Jackson as Democrats, or of Lincoln or Theodore Roosevelt as Republicans, but that each of these Presidents was evaluated in terms of "his attitude toward... fundamental problems." All great Presidents, Roosevelt asserted, respected "the right of self-government," and had had "faith in majority rule." Such men had recognised that, although the majority made mistakes, "rule by a small minority class unflinching makes worse mistakes -- for ...[it] fails to heed the problems...of all kinds and conditions of men," Such men recognised, too, that "in the long run the instincts of the common man,... work out the best and safest balance for the common good." Roosevelt then proceeded to "talk history" to his audience, and to explain how successive Presidents -- Jefferson, Jackson, and more recently, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson -- had each fought for what he referred to, with uncharacteristically ugly phraseology, as "the maintenance of the integrity of the morals of democracy."²⁵

There is no question that Franklin Roosevelt, as President, saw himself as being engaged in the same struggle that had confronted these earlier Jeffersonian presidents.

²⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1938, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 38-41. See also, for example: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Annual Message to the Congress, January 3, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 12-13; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Little Rock, Arkansas, June 10, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 197-98; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington D.C., January 7, 1939, Public Papers and Addresses, VIII, 62-68.

In his Jackson Day Dinner address, in January 1938, he made this point explicitly when he told his audience : "Once more the head of the Nation is working with all his might and main to restore and to uphold the integrity of the morals of democracy -- our heritage from the long line of national leadership -- from Jefferson to Wilson."²⁶ One consequence of such a view was that all opposition to Roosevelt, whether from political antagonists, or Supreme Court, or even, he sometimes implied, foreign powers, was classified and interpreted within this historical framework.²⁷ Since the applicability of his central ideas was universal, ("The underlying issue in every political crisis in our history," he told an election meeting at Chicago in October 1936, "has been between those who,...have sought to exercise the power of Government for the many and those,... who have sought to exercise the power of Government for the few." (Italics mine.))²⁸

²⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1938, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 44-45.

²⁷ See, for example : Introduction, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, xxi; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1938, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 41-42; Introduction, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, xlvii, lix; Introduction, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, xxi-xxii; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at University of Pennsylvania, September 20, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 436-39; Introduction, Public Papers and Addresses, VIII, xxv-xxvi.

²⁸ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address at Cleveland, Ohio, October 16, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 502.

the character of his opponents could never be in doubt.

It was the misfortune of the American press to be cast by Franklin Roosevelt into the role of collaborator with the forces hostile to the democratic control of America by its people. Why he originally designated the press as a Hamiltonian force is not clear but, as before, the replies to his circular letter of 1924 may have been crucial. Roosevelt's statement, in that letter, that one of the "fundamental truths" on which all the delegates would be agreed was that "publicity for fundamental party policy and for the dissemination of current information should be greatly extended," had provoked much comment.²⁹ In the most impassioned of the replies, which came from Margaret Pike of Idaho, the complaint was made that "from New York to the Pacific coast we have no press at all except here and there a paper of limited circulation." In the mean while, the writer complained, the opposition "spreads misinformation and misrepresents our position," a situation which prevailed "all over the West and Middle West," and which was unlikely to change in the immediate future since "business controls the press, and the Republican party seems to be the business man's party."³⁰ To Roosevelt, who was, at this time, identifying the Republican leadership with the

²⁹See, especially : letters to Franklin D. Roosevelt from J.F. Buchheit, January 27, 1925, Isaac S. Giles, December 13, 1924, Andrew C. Erwin, December 20, 1924, William J. Keefe, December 8, 1924, James Vahey, January 19, 1925, Alfred Lucking, January 2, 1925; Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, Replies to F.D.R.'s Circular Letter, December 1924.

³⁰Margaret Pike, to Franklin D. Roosevelt, January 17, 1925; Franklin D. Roosevelt, General Political Correspondence, 1921-28, Replies to F.D.R.'s Circular Letter, December 1924.

Hamiltonian minority against which he was required to do battle, Republican domination of the press may easily have been equated with Hamiltonian control.

Any disposition which Roosevelt had to see the press of America in an anti-Jeffersonian light would have been strengthened by the editorial reaction to his letter to Walsh, and, more particularly, to his suggestion that the differences between the original ideals of government needed to be re-emphasised. The tone of some of the comments which Roosevelt collected was not merely unsympathetic, but scathing. "The Hamilton doctrines have been swallowed hook, bob, line and sinker by the Democratic party," observed the Troy Times. "Why lug in Jefferson?" Roosevelt's suggestions, declared the New York Times, in an editorial which the Hudson Star reproduced, are nothing more than "cheerful patter"; the Democratic Party was "not likely to be strengthened by this sort of nonsense." In similar vein, the Syracuse Post Standard noted that the phrase "Jeffersonian principles" was "meaningless," and added unkindly: "Wait until the west learns that Mr. Roosevelt has his office in Wall Street!"³¹ The fact that, as he put it in his review of Bowers' book, many editors had "launched sneers"³² at Roosevelt's renewed attempt to establish an ideological basis

³¹ Editorials, Troy Times, March 9, 1925, Hudson Star, March 26, 1925, Syracuse Post Standard, March 12, 1925; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Papers 1920-28, News Clippings, box 13. See also editorial Amsterdam Recorder, March 11, 1925.

³² Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" p.21.

for party politics would not have encouraged him to believe that the press had changed its anti-Jeffersonian tune.

Other factors may have encouraged Roosevelt to include the American press in the compact of forces which were opposing the restoration of the control of government to the people. The otherwise remarkable success of Hamiltonian minorities might have seemed implausible, his struggle against them too easy, without their assumed domination of the means of communication. Moreover, in the book which so profoundly influenced Roosevelt's thought, Claude Bowers had written that, in the first great struggle for American democracy, "the major portion of the press was either militantly Hamiltonian or indifferently democratic," an idea which was echoed in Roosevelt's review of Bowers' work.³³

From 1925, Roosevelt showed a continuing disposition to depict the press in ideologically-hostile terms. "How can the good work [of organising the Democratic Party, as Jefferson had done, by disseminating facts] be reincarnated today," he enquired of Bowers in December 1925, "when the Republicans own all the campaign chests and most of the newspapers?"³⁴ The same concern was expressed in important speeches, and especially in his address to the Democratic Victory Dinner at the Hotel Astor, New York City, on January 14, 1932. Those in the young Nation, who had

³³Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton, p.140; Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" p.21.

³⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt to Claude G. Bowers, December 17, 1925, Bowers Papers.

opposed "the Hamiltonian principle," had, he told his audience, been confronted by a serious obstacle : "the 'machinery of publicity' lay almost wholly in the hands of the conservative, privileged group -- the political ancestors of the Republican leadership of today." To overcome that obstacle, Jefferson and his followers had been forced to organize "a deliberate campaign of education" aimed at "disseminating a knowledge of the fundamentals of government" to the people.³⁵ Since he then proceeded to urge that a similar educative effort was once again necessary, the implication, so far as the American press was concerned, was clear : that institution was once more under Hamiltonian control. Similarly, in the compressed histories of the Republic through which he sought, as President, to interpret the New Deal to the American people, Roosevelt was commonly to place the press on the side of those who had opposed the restoration of democratic control : against Jefferson were "almost all the newspapers and magazines of the day"; against Jackson, "all the nationally known press of the day, with the exception of three newspapers."³⁶

³⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Democratic Victory Dinner, Hotel Astor, New York City, January 14, 1932, Speech File 458, President's Personal File. See, also, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address Before Democratic State Committee, Albany, January 2, 1929, Speech File 302, President's Personal File.

³⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1938, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 39-40. See also : Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Roanoke Island, North Carolina, August 18, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 328-29; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 40.

Predisposed, as he was, to see the press, in simple, aggregate terms, as a hostile force, Franklin Roosevelt's reaction to press opposition to the New Deal, when it developed during his first term, was predictable : such criticism confirmed his expectations regarding the American press and established beyond doubt its anti-democratic orientation. Given his adherence to a rigid and intellectually circumscribed conception of the nature of political conflict, Roosevelt was not disposed to discriminate : evidence, whether from the Division of Press Intelligence or from his own daily newspaper reading, which at times revealed a substantial level of press support, was resisted as irrelevant to his perceptual field; the hostility of some owners became the hostility of all; the faults of a minority were attributed to the majority. Nor could the opposition of the American press have been considered by Roosevelt to be unusual or unexpected : if the press, traditionally, had been aligned against Jeffersonian Presidents, could Roosevelt, now that he had come to take up the struggle, expect anything different? Or, it might be asked, could he tolerate anything different, since the opposition of the press, like the support of the people, confirmed his own Presidential status? It is in this context that Raymond Moley's remark that "nothing would help him more than to have it known that the newspapers were all against him,"³⁷ and other indications

³⁷ Moley, After Seven Years, p. 337. See, also: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address at Madison Square Garden, New York City, October 31, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 566, 568. From Raymond Moley's account of his conversation with Roosevelt in April 1936, it is clear that the newspapers were among the enemies whose hatred Roosevelt welcomed; See Moley, After Seven Years, pp. 337, 339.

that Roosevelt, at times, either welcomed press opposition or was indifferent to press support, take on particular significance. With the press against him, on the other hand, he could see himself fulfilling an historical destiny, standing as other great Presidents had stood, against the Hamiltonian minority which once more threatened the American system of government. It was a scenario which was familiar, and deeply reassuring.

It is also within the context of Franklin Roosevelt's political philosophy that other puzzling aspects of his critique of the American press fall more readily into place. That philosophy rested on a theory of human nature which, categorising mankind into a majority group and a minority group, attributed reasonable decency and democratic instincts to the former and unremitting selfishness and autocratic tendencies to the latter. At times, Roosevelt seemed to imply that the autocracy of Hamiltonians was congenital (he once referred to Hamilton as "the natural aristocrat," and compared him with Jefferson, "the natural democrat");³⁸ more usually, however, he inferred that adoption of a belief in the rightness of minority control of government in their own interests was likely to occur in those who became wealthy and increasingly remote from ordinary citizens. It was a danger to which newspaper owners were particularly prone : "When the [newspaper] owner reaches a certain position

³⁸Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" p.21.

of affluence....," he confided to Josephus Daniels, "he begins to associate with other Americans in the same rarefied upper brackets. He decreases his association with the little fellow, he begins to believe that the Hamiltonian theory was correct."³⁹ Roosevelt's conviction that most newspaper owners had actually embraced such minority views was made plain when he implied that most were "Tories."⁴⁰

Erected upon these conceptions about human nature was a theory of democratic government -- a theory which postulated an essential role for himself and a limited, yet vital role for the American press. Because Roosevelt believed that "the mass of humanity does think," that it could "make up its own mind on the pros and cons of all public questions," that it "often originates [policies]"; because he was confident, too, that "in the long run the instincts of the common man,... work out the best and safest balance for the common good,"⁴¹ he favoured a governmental system based on the "aggregate judgment" of the many, rather than the selective wisdom of the few.⁴²

³⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt to Josephus Daniels, September 28, 1940, quoted in Kilpatrick, ed., Roosevelt and Daniels, p.197.

⁴⁰Press Conference No.478, August 23, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XII, 41.

⁴¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address, Yonkers, New York, November 1, 1928, Public Papers and Addresses, I, 69; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1938, Public Papers and Addresses, VII, 39.

⁴²See Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address, Yonkers, New York, November 1, 1928, Public Papers and Addresses, I, 70, 72; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at University of Pennsylvania, September 20, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 437-38.

(This belief in the superior wisdom of the many was described by Samuel Rosenman as "one of his [Roosevelt's] deepest convictions.")⁴³ In such a system, the people, reasonable and informed, initiated ideas or reached collective decisions; their representatives, sensing a demand for action, gave these ideas or decisions legislative form. In a radio address in October 1944, he drew a picture of such a system in action :

The American people have gone through great national debates in the recent critical years. They were soul-searching debates. They reached from every city to every village and to every home.

.
As I look back, I am more and more certain that the decision not to bargain with the tyrants rose from the hearts and souls and sinews of the American people.⁴⁴

It was a process which he contemplated with deep satisfaction and even with wonder. "It is amazing," he wrote to Carl Sandburg one month later, "that the independent voters of America -- an increasing number of them -- many of them without real education -- do have that final ability to decide our fate and the country's fate 'in the deep silence of their own minds'."⁴⁵ The statement recalled a sentence written fifteen years earlier in his review of Bowers' Jefferson and Hamilton : "Jefferson's faith in mankind was vindicated; his

⁴³Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.225.

⁴⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, Radio Address at Dinner of Foreign Policy Association, New York, October 21, 1944, Public Papers and Addresses, XIII, 349.

⁴⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt to Carl Sandburg, December 3, 1940, quoted in Manfred Landecker, The President and Public Opinion (Washington : Public Affairs Press, 1968), p.33.

appeal to the intelligence of the average voter bore fruit."⁴⁶

Two of his own important functions within such a system were, he believed, to inculcate a knowledge of its fundamentals and to act as its informational hub. The educative function was one which, he believed, had been performed by all Jeffersonian leaders,⁴⁷ and again and again Roosevelt was to make reference to his own efforts in this field and to celebrate his success. Thus, as his first term drew to a close, he declared that one of its two great achievements had been "the rebirth of the interest and understanding of a great citizenry in the problems of the Nation."⁴⁸ Similarly, on returning from a trip through the country in 1937, Roosevelt announced that his "outstanding impression" had been "the general understanding on the part of the average citizen of the broad objectives and policies"⁴⁹ which he was about to recommend to an Extraordinary Session of Congress, a remark of which Samuel Rosenman has written :

It was an "impression" that gave him particular pride, for he felt that his previous fireside chats and other

⁴⁶Roosevelt, "Is There a Jefferson on the Horizon?" p.29.

⁴⁷See, for example : Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jefferson Day Dinner, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 18, 1932, Speech File 473, President's Personal File; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 40,44.

⁴⁸Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 41.

⁴⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat" Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress, October 12, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 430.

speeches were largely responsible for the people's lively interest in the affairs of their government.⁵⁰

His second vitally important function, which, like the first, had relevance to Roosevelt's expectations regarding the American press, was to act, as he himself put it, as "the most important clearing house for exchange of information and ideas." He was required, he believed, to collect information from the people, to sift, refine and interpret it, and to convey it again to them so that President and people could jointly reach decisions. The clearest expression of these ideas came in Roosevelt's Jackson Day Dinner Address in January 1940.

Many years ago it had become clear to me that, properly availed of, the Governorship and the Presidency..., could become the most important clearing house for the exchange of information and ideas, of facts and ideals, affecting the general welfare.

In practice, as you know, I have tried to follow out that concept. In the White House today we have built up a great mosaic of the state of the union from thousands of bits of information.

Then, referring to his own cherished role as the nation's pre-eminently well-informed interpreter, he said :

There is a deep satisfaction in pursuing the truth through the medley of information that reaches the

⁵⁰Rosenman, Working With Roosevelt, p.171. For further examples see : Franklin D. Roosevelt, Campaign Address, Yonkers, New York, November 1, 1928, Public Papers and Addresses, I, 67; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address before American University, Washington, D.C., March 3, 1934, Public Papers and Addresses, III, 121-22; Franklin D. Roosevelt, First "Fireside Chat" of 1935, April 28, 1935, Public Papers and Addresses, IV, 133; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address on the Ninth Anniversary of the New Deal Farm Program, March 9, 1942, Public Papers and Addresses, XI, 143.

White House, the overstatement, the half-truth, the glittering generality, the viewing-with-alarm, and, equally, the pointing-with-pride.... And there is the philosopher's satisfaction of trying to fit that particle of truth into the general scheme of things that are good and things that are bad for the people as a whole.⁵¹

This circulation of information between President and people was vital : "The constant free flow of communication among us -- enabling the free interchange of ideas -- forms," Roosevelt told a radio audience in October 1940, "the very blood stream of our nation."⁵² Indeed, the success of the governmental system to which Roosevelt was committed was conditional upon such an exchange taking place : "Jefferson realized," Roosevelt declared in January 1940, "that if the people were free to get and discourse all the facts, their composite judgment would be better than the judgment of a self-perpetuating few." (Italics mine.)⁵³

In carrying out these perceived aspects of his Presidential role, Roosevelt's identification with Thomas Jefferson, or, rather, with the Bowers-Roosevelt conception of Jefferson, was extraordinarily close. "I can picture the weeks on horseback," Roosevelt told a Jefferson Day Dinner audience in April 1932, "when he [Jefferson] was traveling into the different states of the Union, slowly and laboriously accumulating an understanding of the people....

⁵¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, January 8, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 31-32.

⁵²Franklin D. Roosevelt, Radio Address to New York "Herald Tribune" Forum, October 24, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 498.

⁵³Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, January 8, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 30.

drinking in the needs of the people in every walk of life,... giving to them an understanding of the essential principles of self-government." Jefferson, he declared, "knew at first hand every cross current of national and international life... [and] understood the yearnings and the lack of opportunity -- the hopes and fears of millions."⁵⁴ It was necessary, said Roosevelt in a Fireside Chat in October 1937, that "anyone charged with proposing or judging national policies should have first hand knowledge of the nation as a whole," which was why "again this year I have taken trips to all parts of the country."⁵⁵ It was remarkable, he also observed after the same trip, how deep was the people's knowledge of their government and its objectives.⁵⁶

Roosevelt's sense of identification with Jefferson went further. He felt that, like America's third President, he enjoyed a relationship with the people which was intuitive.

⁵⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jefferson Day Dinner, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 18, 1932, Speech File 473, President's Personal File.

⁵⁵ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat" Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of Congress, October 12, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 430.

⁵⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Fireside Chat" Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress, October 12, 1937, Public Papers and Addresses, VI, 430. Roosevelt's emulation of Jefferson, whom he described as "laboriously accumulating an understanding of the people" and "drinking in the needs of the people in every walk of life," may be seen too, in his repeated reminders to his radio audiences of his desire to hear from them, in his belief that letters from farmers, miners, small shopkeepers or clerks were a better index of the people's state of mind than were those from corporation executives, statesmen or financiers, and in the disproportionate attention which he devoted to letters from the poor and uneducated. See Leila A. Sussman, "Voices of the People : A Study of Political Mass Mail" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957), pp.78-79, 113-14.

Of Thomas Jefferson, Claude Bowers had written, in the book of which Roosevelt so strongly approved :

He intuitively knew men,... In his understanding of mass psychology he had no equal. When a measure was passed or a policy adopted in Philadelphia, he knew the reactions in the woods of Georgia without waiting for letters and papers.⁵⁷

Referring, at a press conference in November 1934, to his conviction that the people were beginning to lose confidence in news reports because of the growing number of interpretative stories, Roosevelt told the reporters : "I have a sort of sixth sense about the public and they are beginning to lose it [confidence] more and more."⁵⁸ This feeling -- what Frances Perkins described as Roosevelt's sense of "being one with the people, of having no... barriers between him and them" -- was one which gave him deep satisfaction. "The truth is," Frances Perkins has written,

that he liked to broadcast to "my friends".... Among his deepest satisfactions was the evidence that when he did explain matters to the people, they understood and supported him and took the necessary action to solve a problem.⁵⁹

Shown, on one occasion, a pastel drawing by Kosciusko of Thomas Jefferson, Roosevelt was reported by Arthur Krock to have been "captivated by the resemblance to himself." It was a predictable enough reaction from one who had modelled himself so closely on America's third President.⁶⁰

⁵⁷Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton, p.107.

⁵⁸Press Conference No.156, November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 167.

⁵⁹Frances Perkins, The Roosevelt I Knew (New York : The Viking Press, 1946), p.72.

⁶⁰Columbia University Oral History Project, Interview with Arthur Krock, April, 1950, pp.45-46.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSION

Just as the fundamental antagonism of Franklin Roosevelt toward the American press, and his disposition to exaggerate the extent of its opposition, were outgrowths of his Jeffersonian political philosophy, so also were his highly circumscribed conception of the ideal role of that institution and the form which his critique of it characteristically assumed. Roosevelt believed that the mass of the people were naturally democratic, able to decide the great issues of the day provided that they were in possession of the requisite "factual" information, convictions which he thought of himself as sharing with Jefferson. "Jefferson believed," Roosevelt reminded a radio audience in 1930, "that when the people were wholly informed on any issue, the decision of the majority would be right."¹ "Jefferson realized," he repeated in 1940, "that if the people were free to get and discourse all the facts, their composite judgment would be better than the judgment of the self-perpetuating few."² As President, Roosevelt, who formed the centre of a vast informational

¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, Radio Address to Thirty Luncheons in Honor of Thomas Jefferson, April 12, 1930, Speech File 374, President's Personal File.

²Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, January 8, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 30.

system, who was in constant, intimate (and intuitive) contact with the people, was manifestly the best source of the factual information on which the people and, ultimately the democratic system relied. If his obvious function was to provide such information, that of the press was to act as a vehicle for its transmission to the people. Though limited, the task which Roosevelt thus allotted to the American press was therefore crucial. As Claude Bowers had written in the book which so strongly had influenced Roosevelt's thinking : "Believing that the people, in possession of the facts, would reach reasonable conclusions, he [Jefferson] considered newspapers as a necessary engine of democracy."³

Like this major task, the other functions which Roosevelt assigned to the American press were supportive and subsidiary : the press could contribute to national debates and assist in disseminating a knowledge of the fundamentals of democratic government.

It was his conviction that the American press was failing to perform such functions which increased Roosevelt's dissatisfaction with that institution and compounded his resentment. By "slanting" news in accordance with their own anti-democratic predilections, the press's Hamiltonian proprietors were obstructing the transmission of facts; by distorting or ignoring his statements, they were hampering

³Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton, p.108.

his efforts to spread democratic knowledge. Jefferson, faced by a hostile press, had been forced to undertake "the superhuman task of disseminating a knowledge of the fundamentals of government to the masses of the people";⁴ Roosevelt, opposed by the same force, had to embark on a similar campaign, which he conducted over the radio and on his periodic trips through the United States. In yet another respect the press was falling short. In theory, newspapers could play a legitimate part in national debates, contributing editorial ideas, stimulating discussion; in practice, because of their established Hamiltonian character and the effective domination of editors and working reporters by the proprietors, they did not do so : "Five years of fierce discussion and debate, five years of information through the radio and the moving picture," Roosevelt declared in a Fireside Chat in October 1937, referring to an impression gained on a recent trip that the people now understood government policies and broad objectives, "have taken the whole nation to school in the nation's business"⁵ -- but the press of America was missing from the list of institutions which had assisted in this process.

Against the background of Roosevelt's Jeffersonian assumptions about human nature, about the ideal system of

⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Democratic Victory Dinner, Hotel Astor, New York City, January 14, 1932, Speech file 458, President's Personal File.

⁵Franklin D. Roosevelt, A "Fireside Chat" Discussing Legislation to be Recommended to the Extraordinary Session of the Congress, October 12, 1937, 430.

government and about his own role and that of the press within such a system, Franklin Roosevelt's critique of the American press can be comprehended. From a conviction that "if the people were free to get and discourse all the facts, their composite judgment would be better than the judgment of the self-perpetuating few,"⁶ arose his insistent demand for straight, factual, even literal reporting. "Write factually, truthfully, simply," he advised in 1938. "The American people are sufficiently intelligent, if given the facts, to draw their own conclusions -- to form their own opinions";⁷ "Do you think the ordinary -- ... intelligent reader of a newspaper is in a position to form, to judge on a bare presentation of facts?" a reporter asked him in 1934. "Pretty close to it," he answered, "yes"; "Give them," said he, "the facts and nothing else."⁸ From his Jeffersonian assumptions about human nature and his related conception of the process by which national decisions ought to be reached, flowed, also, his antipathy toward the growing tendency to introduce "interpretation" into news reports. If "fact" was to be confused with "interpretation," a crucial informational link

⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, January 8, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 30.

⁷ Franklin D. Roosevelt to Joseph Pulitzer, November 2, 1938, President's Personal File 2403.

⁸ Press Conference No. 156 November 7, 1934, Presidential Press Conferences, IV, 169, 167.

between President and people would be threatened, the system of government would be jeopardised, democracy itself might be at stake. These convictions he expressed during an address at Temple University, Philadelphia, in 1936 :

In our ability to keep pure the sources of knowledge, in our mind's freedom to winnow the chaff from the good grain..., in our willingness to face the details of fact... -- in all of these lie our future and our children's future.⁹

A similar apprehension lay behind Roosevelt's letter to Henry Luce in 1940. "This is a form of journalism," he told the publisher, in a reference to the article which had inaccurately described the rather trivial election-night activities at Roosevelt's Hyde Park home, "which your President is perfectly willing to tell you he thinks of serious detriment to the future of successful democracy in the United States."¹⁰ Finally, from Roosevelt's perception of his own role as the most important clearing-house for the exchange of information and ideas flowed his dissatisfaction with other interpreters of the nation's affairs -- editorial writers and columnists -- whose efforts he considered puerile on the one hand, preposterous on the other. Since he had "built up a great mosaic of the state of the union from thousands of bits of information," had pursued the truth through this "medley of information," and had attempted "to fit that particle of truth into the general scheme of things that

⁹Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Temple University, Philadelphia, February 22, 1936, Public Papers and Addresses, V, 84.

¹⁰Franklin D. Roosevelt to Henry Luce, November 20, 1940, President's Personal File 3338.

are good and that are bad for the people as a whole,"¹¹ he, as President, was pre-eminently equipped to interpret the affairs of the nation. He alone, as the people's representative, could take a truly national view. "I am," he told a group of newspaper editors in April, 1938, "more closely in touch with public opinion in the United States than any individual in this room. I have got a closer contact with more people than any man in this room. I get a better cross-section of opinion." Because their business was "a local one," they could not "get a national picture" the way he could. "You cannot understand," he assured them, "no matter how hard you study the thing." And, he added comprehensively, "there is not a newspaperman that comes into my office that understands the ramifications of the national problems."¹² He made essentially similar criticisms of newspaper columnists, whose vision, based on incomplete information, he considered necessarily limited and distorted. Even Walter Lippmann, a serious writer, had "never let his mind travel west of the Hudson or north of the Harlem!"¹³ "I wish sometime," Roosevelt said of Lippmann on another occasion, "that he could come more into contact with the little fellow all over the country and see less of the big rich brother!"¹⁴

¹¹Franklin D. Roosevelt, Address at Jackson Day Dinner, January 8, 1940, Public Papers and Addresses, IX, 31-32.

¹²Press Conference No.452-B, April 21, 1938, Presidential Press Conferences, XI, 363-64.

¹³Quoted in Luskin, Lippmann and the Press, p.94.

¹⁴Quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt, Vol.II : The Coming of the New Deal (London : Heinemann, 1960), p.546.

It is Franklin Roosevelt's Jeffersonianism which illuminates the more puzzling aspects of his relations with the American Press. Associated with that system of political and philosophical beliefs were his antagonism toward the press in general, his narrow conception of its role, his disposition to monitor it closely, to correct even trivial faults, his insistence on factual reporting, his hatred of interpretation, his antipathy toward correspondents, editors and columnists, who, by interpreting and speculating, were impeding the flow of facts from the President to the people, and seeking to pre-empt his own role as the prime source of information for the people. Related to the ideological basis of his attitudes, moreover, were the general inflexibility of his views, the equanimity with which he sometimes regarded press opposition, his apparent indifference to proffered press support. Roosevelt's Jeffersonian beliefs help to explain, too, why he over-estimated the opposition of the newspaper owners and under-estimated the opposition of the correspondents, as he sought to make both conform to what were, to a degree, preconceived ideas as to what his relations with the press had to be; why he continued perversely to insist that reporters were under orders; why, having associated the owners with finance ("the counting room") and wealth, he looked upon them as being unfit to edit newspapers in the cause of democracy. Roosevelt's commitment to Jeffersonian principles had a more practical outcome, for powerful ideological conviction, no less than superb political skill, strengthened his hand against his opponents. Just because his battles with the press of America were

fought within a frame of historical and ideological reference which its members could only partly understand, and under rules which often they could but dimly perceive, Franklin Roosevelt so often became, for that institution, such a formidable and baffling opponent, so that, in this way, Roosevelt's Jeffersonianism affected not merely the pattern of his relations with the American press, but the results of his encounters with it.

In a comment on the outcome of those encounters Arthur Krock has written : "Genial, charming, shrewd and daring, he [Roosevelt] meets the press on his own ground and wins most of the battles."¹⁵ The judgement is persuasive. As President, Franklin Roosevelt bound the reporters to him, winning their affection and offering them benefits too great to be ignored, and then flayed the press through them, using them again and again to strike at the newspaper owners; he enforced his rigid and often unrealistic standards, and used the press to get to the people, leaving the owners to protest, ineffectually, through their largely unread editorial columns.

Merriman Smith, White House correspondent for the United Press, once remarked :

Mr. Roosevelt was good and he knew it. He was superbly confident that he was the best political strategist known in American history. He knew for a fact that he could outguess and outmaneuver his opponents. And he did, time and again.¹⁶

The press of America was no exception.

¹⁵"Arthur Krock Sees Threat to Press," New York Times, October 8, 1940, p.12.

¹⁶Merriman Smith, Thank You, Mr. President, p.63.

APPENDIX A : REPRESENTATIVE SENTENCES FROM EDITORIALS BY
A SELECTED GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS ON CERTAIN
EVENTS DURING ROOSEVELT'S PRESIDENCY.

Abbreviations : NYT, New York Times; NYHT, New York Herald Tribune; CT, Chicago Tribune; BS, Baltimore Sun; WP, Washington Post; NYWT, New York World Telegram; NYS, New York Sun; NYJA, New York Journal American; WTH, Washington Times Herald; F, favourable comment; U, unfavourable comment; GD, general discussion.

Election 1932

NYT (9/11/32) : "To their [the people's] appeals for safe guidance it is certain that Franklin D. Roosevelt will respond with the best that is in him." (F)

NYHT (9/11/32) : "What was recorded was a blind protest against forces of destruction that defied precise analysis and for which there is no simple remedy -- save time. In the mood of yesterday's voting there was room for neither patience nor reflection." (GD)

CT (9/11/32) : "Gov [sic] Roosevelt's election had been anticipated. The evidences of it were sufficiently plain before the voting began." (GD)

BS (9/11/32) : "But Mr. Roosevelt has not only the immense popular verdict of a weary and disillusioned people; he also has the immense task of drawing the Government away from reliance on magic and of setting it into earlier paths of reason and sanity. In that task he will find his own sound training supplemented by the will of the people." (F)

WP (9/11/32) : "Now that the hard-fought campaign is over, men and women of all parties have a patriotic duty to perform in supporting the new administration in its efforts to put a speedy end to national adversity. No political maneuvers should be undertaken for the purpose of hampering the new President in his work for all the people." (F)

NYWT (9/11/32) : "To President-elect Roosevelt we extend our congratulations. His will be the most elective office in the world. He will serve during an unprecedented crisis. He will need the support of all good citizens. That support will be given." (F)

NYS (9/11/32) : "It is impossible to quarrel with fate. But it is possible to quarrel with a man who takes the decree of fate as a personal compliment, who believes that the policies which he declared during the campaign were responsible for his success." (U)

First Inaugural Address 1933

NYT (5/3/33) : "If in the Inaugural Address of President ROOSEVELT anything is lacking, it is not courage." (F)

NYHT (5/3/33) : "We think there must be general agreement that the new Executive of the nation speaks with courage and confidence, like a true leader who realizes the difficulties before him and faces them unafraid." (F)

CT (6/3/33) : "In this spirit the American people, regardless of party or condition, of doctrine or diverse opinion, loyally salute the new President and government." (F)

BS (5/3/33) : "It is the mood, the spirit of President Roosevelt's inaugural address that counts, and the spirit is good. It is fine." (F)

WP (5/3/33) : "With the American people behind him, supporting a united Congress capable of exerting tremendous emergency powers, President Roosevelt can not fail to bring the country safely through its crisis." (F)

NYWT (4/3/33) : "The most ignorant citizen realizes that he must trust to the President. Only the President has the position of leadership, the power." (F)

NYS (4/3/33) : "Most important of all, perhaps, the new President has the wish of every good American that he may find the way... to an era of full employment, balanced budgets and new confidence." (GD)

First Fireside Chat 1933

NYT (14/3/33) : "His simple and lucid explanation of the true function of a commercial bank; his account of what had happened, why it had happened, and the steps taken to correct the mischief were admirably fitted to cause the hysteria... to subside." (F)

BS (13/3/33) : "Mr Roosevelt undoubtedly means what he says when he declares his intention to protect worthy State banks in small communities.... Keep up the pressure on Washington, to be sure, but don't expect miracles that will save every bank." (F)

WP (14/3/33) : "Much confusion of mind relating to the bank situation was removed by President Roosevelt's admirably clear address Sunday night." (F)

NYS (13/3/33) : "Anybody who read or listened to President Roosevelt's week-end statements on the bank situation and did not understand is beyond instruction. Anybody who understood and was not convinced is beyond convincing." (F)

End of Special Session of Congress 1933

NYT (17/6/33) : "Not the laws themselves but their administration and effect will be the ultimate test." (GD)

CT (17/6/33) : "The people have seen a rush toward state socialism which might have Fascism or communism at the end of the road." (U)

BS (17/6/33) : "These were heroic achievements, the banking and budgetary policies, and they gave the American people more standing room on solid rock than they had known in three years." (F)

WP (17/6/33) : "The law is on the statute books. Its administration is about to begin. The outcome will be awaited with eager interest." (GD)

NYS (16/6/33) : "In the immediate wake of legislation which violates precedents and traditions and which boldly enters new fields it would be a rash thing to say whether this has been a wise or unwise Congress." (GD)

Stock Exchange Regulation 1934

NYT (10/2/34) : "The specific provisions of the measure now proposed may in many respects be open to criticism. But at least it is free from the dangerous possibilities involved in the recurrent proposals of the past for the virtual conducting of the Stock Exchange by the Government." (GD)

NYHT (10/2/34) : "The social philosophy behind the Federal securities act,...is one that deserves the highest commendation; but,...the language of the act...implies such severe and unnecessary penalties for failure,...to discharge these responsibilities that it defeats the purpose of the legislation." (GD)

WP (11/2/34) : "Viewed as a whole... the bill is... a middle of the road program." (GD)

NYWT (10/2/34) : "Our initial reaction is that it is an excellent compromise between the hands off school and the straightjacked advocates." (F)

Congressional Elections 1934

NYT (8/11/34) : "Momentary self-congratulation must pass quickly into a deep sense of responsibility and resolution." (GD)

NYHT (7/11/34) : "As for President Roosevelt, he stands in a position of unprecedented power and acclaim. That he may use his power justly and wisely in the future is the prayer of every American regardless of party." (GD)

CT (8/11/34) : "In effect, these critical times find the United States with a one party government with authority to do exactly as it pleases." (U)

BS (8/11/34) : "Mr. Roosevelt must even now be counting noses to gauge the efficacy of a veto. The reflective sections of the electorate, for their part, can hardly view the prospect of such a strangely assorted Congress, united mainly by devotion to the public till as the ideal source of a campaign fund, without gratitude for the existence of the veto power and hope that Mr Roosevelt will not hesitate to use it." (GD)

WP (7/11/34) : "Thus the political picture changes as the Roosevelt Administration swings into the second half of its assured term....Its sweeping electoral triumph does not mean that plain sailing is ahead for the New Deal. On the contrary, its most difficult period is now at hand." (GD)

NYWT (7/11/34) : "The Democratic conservatives in alliance with the G.O.P. remnant will fight with the Progressives for control of legislation. That struggle, rather than yesterday's election, will determine the next step in the New Deal -- backward or forward.

And on the results of that battle, President Roosevelt will decide how far he can go in carrying out the New Deal." (GD)

NYS (7/11/34) : "The part to be played by the Republican minorities in the Senate and House of Representatives is not going to be an important one, yet for all the weakness of their numbers they must do what they can to offer an intelligent opposition party." (U)

Invalidation of NRA 1935

NYT (28/5/35) : "The evidence is now clear that the Supreme Court will not permit the Federal Government to usurp or encroach upon the constitutional rights of 'indestructible states'." (U)

NYHT (28/5/35) : "He [the President] is shown after 2 years, by the unanimous decision of the Supreme Court, including all its most liberal and progressive members, to have been leading the country down a blind alley." (U)

CT (29/5/35) : "Each of these decisions [of the Court] checks autocracy and each one of them sustains the form of government constituted by the constitution." (U)

BS (28/5/35) : "At first glance the Schechter case decision would seem to leave the Administration's major recovery experiment without a leg to stand on.... Further study may reveal, however, that more than this can be saved out of the wreckage, and there is little doubt that the Administration will try to save everything it can." (GD)

WP (28/5/35) : "Thus whatever interpretation is placed upon the decision in the Schechter case, it serves warning that the era of administrative law-making under loose legislative grants of power, and the effort to invade the field of law-making reserved under the Constitution to the several States has come to an end." (U)

NYWT (27/5/35) : "The NRA has not reformed capitalism overnight, nor changed it into a happy live-and-let-live system. But with all its frailties and failures it has built a bottom to wages, greatly reduced working hours, virtually abolished sweatshops and freed more than 100,000 child workers from mines, shops and mills." (F)

NYS (28/5/35) : "Yesterday's decision of the Supreme Court came as a thunderstorm and marvellously cleared the air. They told Congress and the President what these have long needed to be told with authority -- that extraordinary conditions do not create or enlarge constitutional power." (U)

Horse and Buggy Press Conference 1935

BS (16/1/35) : "And Mr. Roosevelt might well remember that, under the Constitutional system which offends him, this country has so used its natural resources as to produce a standard of living which makes our doles bigger than the normal wages of millions in other lands, who enjoy the benefits of the centralized governments to which he calls attention with such admiration." (U)

WP (1/6/35) : "Anyone who keeps the perspective of our history in mind must therefore be dissatisfied with Mr. Roosevelt's assertion that the Supreme Court decision in the Schechter case takes the Nation back to "the horse and buggy stage" which governed our economic life when the Constitution went into effect. It would perhaps be more reasonable to say that this decision takes the Nation back to the first, and of late much disregarded, principles of our system of government." (U)

Campaign Address, Madison Square Garden, October 1936

NYT (4/11/36) : "Too often, as in his campaign speech on Saturday night, he has impulsively used words that cause cold chills to run down the backs of his friends and supporters." (U)

NYHT (2/11/36) : "'Divided we fall,' says the old American maxim.... It is impossible to read Mr. Roosevelt's words of hate without realizing the vital truth of the saying." (U)

CT (1/11/36) : "Mr. Roosevelt's speech in Madison Square Garden last night was the speech of a man who was beaten and knew he was beaten." (U)

WP (1/11/36) : "He has perhaps unconsciously exerted his great powers of personal charm to appear before the American people as 'the leader' -- ominous title -- who alone stands between them and the elements in th [sic] body politic which he demagogically portrays as viciously hostile to the national welfare." (U)

NYWT (4/11.36) : "There was a strong punitive note in his Madison Square Garden speech -- the part about welcoming the hatreds, and about being the master from now on. As human beings we can understand. But as citizens we were gald to hear the calmer and the tempered tone of his final fireside talk." (GD)

NYS (2/11/36) : "The fact, of course, is that Mr Roosevelt is not angry because the employee finds out that his pay is to be taxed.... No, Mr.Roosevelt is vexed because the news was broken before the election. The New Deal intended to hide this tax on the workers." (U)

Election 1936

NYT (4/11/36) : "President Roosevelt asked the country for a vote of confidence. He has received it." (F)

NYHT (4/11/36) : "The triumph is plainly not for the Democratic Party.... Rather it is a rising vote of confidence in a man. If that man interprets it as a grant of power to lead the nation where it seems to him best to lead it, we do not see how those who voted for him can complain." (GD)

CT (4/11/36) : "Millions who voted for Mr. Roosevelt are due for a sharp awakening and it should not be long delayed." (U)

BS (4/11/36) : "Friend and foe should recognise that ... The President commanded support from a great body of voters who believed in the motives and in the general attitude of his Administration.... But it does not follow that Mr. Roosevelt should be given blind support in the future." (GD)

WP (4/11/36) : "The task ahead will be less easy if the President mistakes the nature of the mandate granted him.... he will be wise not to misinterpret his great popular triumph." (GD)

NYWT (4/11/36) : "Whether he lives up to the magnitude of his chance, as he has in this first four years, will be determined, we believe, in a very large degree by whether he has within him that rare capacity to rise above those perfectly human impulses which prevent most great men from attaining the full measure of their opportunity." (GD)

NYS (4/11/36) : "But the New Deal's expenditures on relief were its most paying investment. Whether the money went into PWA, WPA, or direct relief it was effective. The recipients were assured that the largess would stop flowing if Mr Roosevelt was beaten." (U)

Second Inaugural Address 1937

NYT (21/1/37) : "The result was an address which, in its appeal to the good-will and steadfast virtues of his fellow citizens, must have fallen upon their ears as a message of hope and healing." (F)

NYHT (21/1/37) : "The inaugural itself followed closely the tone and content of the first message to the new Congress. Being briefer, it was even more general in its terms.... Raising the standard of living was the goal announced in the field of economics. But as to the ways and means of achieving this admirable end there was no attempt at definition." (GD)

CT (22/1/37) : "It would be a bitter irony if in his anxiety to correct lesser abuses Mr. Roosevelt should invite the destruction of individual liberty in America." (U)

BS (21/1/37) : "Mr. Roosevelt's second inaugural breathes high purpose, but it leaves one asking what is the precise meaning?" (GD)

WP (21/1/37) : "Four years ago the President fulfilled his promise to speak 'with candor and decision' on the problems before the Nation. His address yesterday was lacking in both these qualities." (U)

NYWT (20/1/37) : "Roosevelt won re-election by a tough-minded disregard for... obstacles....consolidating and extending his gains will win for him a pedestal in history." (GD)

NYS (20/1/37) : "President Roosevelt becomes today the first President of the United States whose term has been cut short by constitutional amendment and the first to assume office in January." (GD)

Reorganisation of Judiciary 1937

NYT (7/2/37) : "But the consequences of this action will be to disturb profoundly the balance of power on which American democracy has been founded." (U)

NYHT (6/2/37) : "In this one hundred and sixty-first year of the independence of the United States, President Roosevelt has brought forward a proposal which, if enacted into law, would end the American state as it has existed throughout the long years of its life." (U)

CT (7/2/37) : Shall the Supreme court [sic] be turned into a personal organ of the President?" (U)

BS (6/2/37) : "Mr. Roosevelt's recommendations to Congress concerning the Federal judiciary are a scheme to pack the Supreme Court of the United States. He seeks in this manner to weight the highest court in the land in favor of his own theories of constitutional interpretation." (U)

WP (6/2/37) : "Deprived of camouflage, the President's proposal is that the Supreme Court should be packed by the addition of six members selected by him, and, presumably, certain to take the same casual attitude toward constitutional interpretation which characterizes Mr. Roosevelt himself." (U)

NYWT (6/2/37) : "And he may as well expect that it will be attacked as an attempt to usurp powers and fashion the judiciary to fit the New Deal -- attacked, and justifiably so, even by friends of the New Deal." (U)

NYS (6/2/37) : "The surprise message to Congress, stripped of verbiage inserted for camouflage purposes, is nothing but an attempt to make over the Supreme Court of the United States to his own liking." (U)

Quarantine Speech 1937

NYT (6/10/37) : "At least it can be said that an eloquent voice has expressed the deep moral indignation which is felt in this country against policies of ruthlessness and conquest." (F)

NYHT (6/10/37) : "His world audience no doubt thinks that much of his speech had reference to Japan. But he did not say so. His talk of 'quarantine' may be construed as an indorsement of economic sanctions, but he did not mention them.... Since these are things to be done, without concern for any one leader's views, this seems the time to stress them." (GD)

CT (6/10/37) : "He readopted the foreign policy of Woodrow Wilson, the policy which brought the United States first into armed conflict with Mexico and then into the world war." (U)

BS (7/10/37) : "The words which the President used at Chicago do not imply a reversal of our policy... but rather a continued movement along lines which are already rather well marked out." (F)

WP (6/10/37) : "Not since the days of Woodrow Wilson has an American President made so strong a plea for effective international co-operation in behalf of peace as was voiced by Mr. Roosevelt in Chicago yesterday." (F)

NYWT (6/10/37) : "To Americans the President's speech is a reminder as well as a warning. It reminds us that we cannot live unto ourselves alone, and warns that mere wishing will not suffice to keep us safe." (F)

NYS (6/10/37) : "If Mr Roosevelt had no further thought than to give voice to moral indignation, he chose an unfortunate manner and time. The note he struck was hectoring and supercilious." (U)

NYJA (7/10/37) : "Any sober analysis of the foreign reaction to the President's amazing speech must tell us that we are making DANGEROUS ENEMIES for America hand over fist; and that we are making international alliances of extremely DOUBTFUL VALUE to us." (U)

Fireside Chat 1938

NYT (26/6/38) : "More openly and directly than in any of his earlier messages, the President rebuked labor, as well as capital.... To be sure, the President's analysis at this point leaves much to be desired." (GD)

NYHT (26/6/38) : "But to make it sound so plausible and so easy to understand, to convey an air of complete fairness and warm human kindness while using every underhand trick to mislead and prejudice the listener! These are the arts of political magic at its peak." (U)

CT (27/6/38) : "Mr. Roosevelt spoke as the fuehrer." (U)

BS (26/6/38) : "Mr. Roosevelt delivered himself of a rousing campaign speech on Friday night. In its subtle appeal to the emotional and unthinking, in its cloaking of arrogant self-righteousness in the garments of simple modesty, in its distortion of the views and attitudes of opponents, it was a masterpiece." (U)

NYWT (25/6/38) : "We do not regard this as one of the President's greater speeches. Most of it was political. It conveyed the impression that Mr. Roosevelt is pretty campaign-conscious just now....But we don't want to be captious. The notable point is that Mr. Roosevelt, in that portion of his address which touched on the thing of most immediate importance to the national welfare, did hang the welcome sign on the door to cooperation." (GD)

NYS (27/6/38) : "Anybody who has hugged the idea that President Roosevelt has learned a lesson from the New Deal's record of extravagance and failure ought to be disillusioned by this latest exhibition of his state of mind." (U)

Repeal of Arms Embargo 1939

NYT (11/9/39) : "The country will welcome the definite assurance that the President intends to call Congress into session." (F)

NYHT (12/9/38):: "The President is probably wise to meet the issue now, to take the chance and to rely on public opinion to see that more filibustering tactics are not permitted." (F)

CT (13/9/39) : "Can the United States keep out of war by entering it?" (U)

BS (14/9/39) : "Mr. Roosevelt has acted with a proper promptness in calling a special session of Congress to meet on September 21, for the purpose, chiefly, of amending the present unsatisfactory neutrality law." (F)

WP (12/9/39) : "The essential inadequacy and potential danger of the law, from the viewpoint of our own interests, stand clearly revealed by this situation [the entry of Canada into the war and the fact that the embargo therefore extended to that country]." (F)

NYWT (14/9/39) : "It is devoutly to be hoped that light, not heat, will prevail in the special session of Congress which the President has now called." (GD)

NYS (13/9/39) : "It is necessary to differentiate between a day in 1936 when there seemed no likelihood of a general war in Europe and a day in 1939 when the war is on. This newspaper, which never could see the wisdom in the misnamed Neutrality Act, cannot find it wise now." (F)

NYJA (13/9/39) : "We must be ONE HUNDRED PER CENT FOR AMERICA. And that hundred percent can only be achieved by keeping the present embargo on arms to all belligerents." (U)

WTH (13/9/39) : "A considerable bloc of anti-Administration Senators and Representatives are expected to oppose any change in the Neutrality Act.

"We hope they will carefully consider the fact that if they go through with their plan, and win, and the Neutrality Act goes on containing the arms embargo clause, then we shall be in effect working for Mr. Hitler in this war against Canada, our good friend and neighbour to the north." (F)

Third Term Nomination 1940

NYT (18/7/40) : "But both he and his party must now recognise that there are large numbers of independent voters to whom the doctrine of one man's indispensability is distasteful." (U)

NYHT (18/7/40) : "By maintaining his mastery to the last the President killed of all competition. The delegates come to ratify a command, not to reach an independent decision." (U)

CT (20/7/40) : "It [the third term] needed a war and along with it the strange doctrine that only one man could save the country." (U)

BS (20/7/40) : "In the opinion of Mr. Roosevelt himself, and of the men who framed for him his latest platform, the President who fails completely in his promises to manage the public finances prudently becomes The Indispensable Man to reign over us." (U)

WP (19/7/40) : "There is no question of the sincerity, but there is real room for doubting the good judgment, of any man who believes, and indeed virtually says, that he is indispensable to the national welfare." (U)

NYWT (19/7/40) : "And so far as we are concerned -- despite the critical situation in which our country now finds itself -- we prefer what Thomas Jefferson said to the eloquence from the oval room. Jefferson wrote, toward the end of his second term :

'If the principle of rotation be a sound one, as I conscientiously believe it to be with respect to this office, no pretext should ever be permitted to dispense with it'." (U)

NYS (19/7/40) : "We had thought that President ROOSEVELT'S statement on a third term nomination, as relayed through Senator BARKELY, was the ultimate tax on human credibility. But we were wrong. Mr ROOSEVELT'S speech of acceptance, held up until he could jam his candidate for Vice-President down the convention's throat, outdoes the proxy statement." (U)

NYJA (20/7/40) : "But they [the American people] are not compelled to accept the fallacious judgment that NO OTHER AMERICAN than Mr. Roosevelt can adequately and patriotically serve the country as its president without shattering our historic safeguard against prolongation and perhaps perpetuation of power in a potential dictatorship." (U)

WTH (21/7/40) : "The biggest resemblance that we can see [between 1864 and 1940 elections] between the two cases is the fact that nobody but the people wanted either Lincoln or Roosevelt to run again; and that the people had their way both times." (F)

Destroyers for Bases 1940

NYT (4/9/40) : "But we do believe that this is a step in the direction of more active participation with Great Britain in the defense of a common stake in the Atlantic, and we think that in all frankness it must be recognised as such, both for the risks it holds and the advantages it offers." (GD)

NYHT (4/9/40) : "These steps will not and can not put the country in the war. They are rather a kind of last chance for maintaining it at peace." (F)

CT (4/9/40) : "Any arrangement which gives the United States naval and air bases in regions which must be brought within the American defense zone is to be accepted as a triumph." (F)

BS (4/9/40) : "Our policy has been dictated not by any deliberate or even concealed maneuverings, but by the march of events in the world in which we find ourselves.... it is to our advantage to keep Great Britain's supply lines open." (F)

WP (4/9/40) : "It is to President Roosevelt's credit that he has seen fit to take such action. Attorney General Jackson's opinion is not likely to be accepted as the final word on the technical legality of the transaction, but the results will doubtless win the approval of the great majority of Americans." (F)

NYWT (4/9/40) : "Had the war debt been used in the trade, instead of the destroyers, the transaction might have smelled sweeter -- in view of the legality angle....
But we don't think much of the contention that our defence has been weakened, net, by giving up those boats. We believe that we will be infinitely stronger." (GD)

NYS (4/9/40) : "Regardless of American sympathy for Britain, regardless of the protective value of the bases, Mr ROOSEVELT'S method in this transaction must invite distrust." (U)

WTH (4/9/40) : "The fact is, though, that the deed has now been done, and we don't see how it can be repealed. We hope it will be for well, and think there is good reason for hoping so." (F)

Election 1940

NYT (6/11/40) : "We disagree with the decision that has now been made....To Mr. Roosevelt, in victory, we offer our congratulations and our pledge of willing and unreserved support." (GD)

NYHT (6/11/40) : "But it would be uncandid and misleading for us to pretend that there can be confidence and trust in the following years to come....There has never been a President elected to a third term before. What the effect of this break of our oldest tradition upon the character and outlook of the President who had successfully violated it will be time alone can tell." (U)

CT (7/11/40) : "...an election controlled by the influence of the party in power and the man in office." (U)

BS (6/11/40) : "The American people have spoken and the American people will abide by the will of the majority, in good spirit and in loyal effort." (GD)

WP (6/11/40) : "Mr Roosevelt faces a mighty task.... The hopes and prayers of all Americans are that he will act with vigor and courage and generosity in leading the Nation in the difficult and crucial days that lie ahead." (GD)

NYWT (6/11/40) : "Without pretending that we are happy [sic] as we would have been had our man won, we repeat the words of another loser :

"Whoever is elected," said Alf M. Landon, "will be my President." (U)

NYS (6/11/40) : "We have no congratulations to offer on the overthrow of a great tradition, or on the retention of socialistic philosophies and policies of squander." (U)

NYJA (6/11/40) : "The Hearst newspapers hope most earnestly and sincerely that Mr. Roosevelt will make the very most of his exceptional and unprecedented opportunities, will distinguish himself in the service of his country, and will justify the confidence so many millions of Americans have expressed in him." (GD)

WUH (6/11/40) : "Big Business' attempt to put one of its own men in the White House has been defeated by a decisive majority of American voters; and the Champ is still the Champ." (F)

Third Inaugural Address 1941

NYT (21/1/41) : "This [inaugural message] was a straightforward and deeply stirring reaffirmation of faith in democracy." (F)

NYHT (21/1/41) : "He spoke, perhaps naturally for the occasion, in eloquent generalities. With no desire to question the effectiveness of his peroration may we point out the contrast offered by the appeal to industry made the day before by Mr. William S. Knudsen?" (GD)

BS (21/1/41) : "He sought in this day the mighty inspiration which Lincoln, in another pregnant hour, achieved in the address at Gettysburg. It was a sound instinct which guided Mr. Roosevelt." (F)

WP (21/1/41) : "President Roosevelt must have refreshed all Americans with the story of their birthright." (F)

NYWT (20/1/41) : "From us, the people, Mr. Roosevelt has a right to expect the same tireless effort and the same tolerant sympathy that we ask of him. With firm resolution to do all that we can to help make this third term his best term, for himself and for our country, we pledge you, ladies and gentlemen --

The President of the United States!" (GD)

NYS (21/1/41) : "Mr ROOSEVELT was never more graceful or tactful than in this speech -- on account of what he forbore to say as well as on account of what he actually said." (F)

NYJA (20/1/41) : "Today's inaugural has been conducted in fullconformance [sic] with the American tradition. Franklin Delano Roosevelt has stood before his people as all American presidents have done, and has taken sacred oath." (GD)

WTH (21/1/41) : "His record for the last eight years, when you look at it dispassionately, is one of starting things, working furiously to get them done, and getting them done somehow." (F)

Fireside Chap September 1942

NYT (9/9/42) : "The President has taken a grave position that cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged." (U)

CT (9/9/42) : "If the constitutional lawmaking power does not yield to the executive by October 1, the executive says he will take matters in his own hands and rule by decree, the way Stalin and Hitler rule." (U)

BS (8/9/42) : "For the sake of the republic Congress must pass the price control legislation for which the President asks." (F)

WP (8/9/42) : "The message should prove to be most effective. It was written without bitterness or personal reproach, although it necessarily amounts to a powerful indictment of Congress for its refusal thus far to make economic stabilization possible." (F)

NYWT (8/9/42) : "Prompt action... can avert any necessity for the President to use executive powers to set aside the act of Congress which now prevents effective control of prices.... Congress should go further than the President asks it to go." (F)

NYS (8/9/42) : "Military experts have taught the public what a pincers movement is. Members of Congress may learn what it feels like, for one arm of the President's pincers movement, directed against public opinion, may make itself felt in letters, postal cards and wires to members of Congress." (GD)

Annual Message 1943

NYT (8/1/43) : "But the review of the war and the diplomatic avoidance of controversial issues summed up to, in short, was an endeavor to present a picture... of world developments, and to impress on the new Congress that it may have 'the historic privilege of helping greatly to save the world from future fear'." (GD)

NYHT (8/1/43) : "The President's annual message rises, with great force and dignity, to the solemnity of the hour in which it is delivered." (F)

CT (9/1/43) : "Our want of military results... points to the necessity of taking the strategic direction of the war out of the hands of the armchair Napoleons of Washington and placing it in the hands of a professional military man. [General MacArthur]." (U)

BS (8/1/43) : "With his assurance that victory in the war is our first goal and that victory in the peace is the second, President Roosevelt stated the case as his countrymen in general must wish it stated." (F)

WP (8/1/43) : "The hope of mankind for an ampler as well as a free life will be rekindled by a speech which deserves to be ranked with the most inspiring of the President's texts." (F)

NYWT (8/1/43) : "His message, in content factual, held to the achievements and broad purposes that unite us as a people. A sober report, it was lightened by a justified hope of victory." (F)

NYS (7/1/43) : "The President gave almost equal emphasis to a review of the past year, achievements in production, conditions on the home front, the probable turn the war will take and the long look ahead to the days after the war." (GD)

WTH (8/1/43) : "And those are the high highs [sic] of the President's picture of the state of the Union and of his hopes for the future of the Union." (GD)

Fourth-Term Nomination 1944

NYT (12/7/44) : "Nowhere, either at home or abroad, will there be surprise over the President's announcement that he will accept re-nomination." (GD)

NYHT (11/7/44) : "According to a recent Gallup poll, the younger voters show the greatest percentage of Roosevelt supporters. Why should they not? Most of them have never known any other leadership since childhood." (U)

CT (12/7/44) : "Mr. Roosevelt is a man of insatiable ambition and vanity. He wants reelection ... because he cannot tolerate the thought of any other occupant in the White House." (U)

BS (12/7/44) : "But was it necessary for Mr Roosevelt to put on the uniform of Commander in Chief when he made the announcement? Mr Roosevelt has shown a growing tendency to look upon himself, and to speak of himself as 'Commander in Chief' rather than President of the United States. These references, ... practically obliterate the wise and necessary distinction between the civil and the military functions of the Presidency." (U)

WP (12/7/44) : "And the generality, far from regarding the election as an opportunity of keeping the same Commander in Chief, will, we believe, weigh carefully the rival merits of the two contenders and their parties on the assumption that this election is incomparably momentous." (GD)

NYWT (12/7/44) : "This complex that he is the only man fit to be President in these times, which has destroyed an American tradition and denied his party younger leadership, is Mr Roosevelt's chief strength and worst weakness. The virtues of perpetual one-man rule are obvious. But so are the vices." (U)

NYS (12/7/44) : "Tradition and sound judgment supported the custom whereby Presidents until now served two terms only. Once that precedent was broken, fourth terms, fifth terms, even tenth terms become conceivable." (U)

NYJA (12/7/44) : "The President thus persists in his old pretence that while he personally yearns for retirement and relief from responsibility, he must yield to the mandate of the people. It is an absurd pretense." (U)

WTH (12/7/44) : "He [Roosevelt] is a consummate politician and has worked himself into the position of being the indispensable man for the Democrats." (U)

Election 1944

NYT (8/11/44) : "To achieve that victory [in war], let us close our ranks now behind a President who has been returned to office by the process of a free election." (F)

NYHT (8/11/44) : "Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing some time if a party, either party, would admit that its candidates had certain imperfections, that its record was not wholly above reproach and that some of its issues were pretty flabby stuff." (GD)

CT (9/11/44) : "The circumstances suggest conflict within the Democratic menage at not distant date." (U)

BS (9/11/44) : "Mr. Roosevelt's victory is large enough to give him a certain mandate from the people. But it is also restricted enough to prove the vitality of the two-party system in this country." (GD)

WP (8/11/44) : "The people have spoken. Mr. Roosevelt has been voted into the Presidency for a fourth term.... The occasion calls for felicitations. We offer them unreservedly." (F)

NYWT (8/11/44) : "We, who twice supported him and twice opposed him, accept the verdict with good grace. Though he was not our candidate, he is our President, and we wish him good health and great success throughout his next administration." (GD)

NYS (8/11/44) : "The job immediately ahead of all of us is to support the Administration in so far as we believe it to be right, criticize it when we believe it to be wrong, stand with it in a united front for the common cause of winning the war." (GD)

NYJA (9/11/44) : "The result is accepted in the traditional AMERICAN spirit -- the spirit of giving it every chance to work out for the best, and of supporting it as long as the best interests of the country are thereby served." (GD)

WTH (9/11/44) : "We don't pretend to like the outcome of this election. We were against the Fourth Term from the first whisper of it." (U)

Yalta 1945

NYT (13/2/45) : "Though they [the agreements] may disappoint some individual expectations, they justify and surpass most of the hopes placed on this fateful meeting." (F)

NYHT (13/2/45) : "Those all over the world who have been looking to the conference... for mutual understanding, for clarity of purpose and for a concrete decision amid the tempestuous issues of the war's great climax have not been disappointed." (F)

CT (14/2/45) : "Congress will certainly want to withhold any action on it [the League of Nations proposal] until there is some indication of extent [sic] to which the spirit of the Yalta announcement is followed in reconstituting Europe." (GD)

BS (13/2/45) : "Thus a path out of the present intolerable jungle has been hewn -- with what consequences the world must wait to discover. It is a devious path; but it is a path, and it is perhaps the most heartening touch-stone of good faith that the declaration provides." (F)

WP (13/2/45) : "The President is to be congratulated on his part in this all-encompassing achievement." (F)

NYWT (14/2/45) : "While Stalin won most of the Yalta political decisions at the expense of the Atlantic Charter, he agreed to better military cooperation. Despite a net political loss, there were important military gains." (GD)

NYS (13/2/45) : "Clear, concise and informative, the joint report on the conference at Yalta is by long odds the best that has come out of any conference since President ROOSEVELT and Prime Minister CHURCHILL met at sea to formulate the Atlantic Charter." (F)

WTH (14/2/45) : "The declaration which came out of the Crimea conference contained considerable tosh about how this war is preparing all mankind to enjoy freedom from fear and want; as specified in the Atlantic Charter. The Atlantic Charter never was anything but a conversation at sea between Churchill and Roosevelt, and all mankind is not going to be free from fear and want in the foreseeable future. But that is Roosevelt's story, and he is stuck with it, and is evidently going to stick to it." (U)

APPENDIX B : COPY OF PRELIMINARY SUMMARY OF DIVISION
OF PRESS INTELLIGENCE WEEKLY ANALYSIS FOR
THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 26 -- OCTOBER 2, 1941.

SUMMARY

Editorial support of the Administration's foreign policy and national defense efforts shows marked strengthening in the attached detailed analysis of the Press Intelligence Bulletins of the past week. The President's request for reconsideration of the Neutrality Act received a favorable press. A majority of editorials which discuss arming of merchant ships favor such action. Comment on the President's "Freedom of the Seas" speech and policy of aid to allies continued to receive general support. Aid to Russia was given encouraging endorsement despite considerable reluctance on ideological grounds. Secretary Knox's announcement of convoying was generally considered unavoidable and wise but there was certain misgiving as to possible eventualities. Sentiment began to appear for recognition of Free France and severance of relations with Vichy.

Isolationists received extensive editorial criticism, with comparatively little support. Comment on Lindbergh's position increased threefold, with 95% critical. Wheeler received adverse comment but with condemnation of egg-throwing during Billings speech. Hoover's Chicago speech was an exception, about 60% of editorials calling it a calm analysis of our international position, 40% saw lack of decision and failure to understand world situation. Rep. Fish's declaration-of-war proposal was given scant endorsement.

President's report on lease-lend efforts to date was generally criticized; some, however, thought it encouraging. Praise of Stettinius appointment to speed program was unanimous. Majority favor more lease-lend funds and full aid to Russia. Volume of comment on movie propaganda probe tripled with 99% disapproving.

Comment on fiscal and tax matters shrunk slightly in volume, with main emphasis on reduction of non-defense spending and general approval of new tax bill. Praise of retailers' campaign to boost defense stamps and bonds was widespread. Editorial writers were greatly alarmed over spreading of defense strikes and small business problems resulting from priority operations. Secretary Ickes continued to be the target (193 editorials) for criticism of gasoline restrictions. Secretary Morgenthau was widely commended for inflation warnings. Sentiment on his proposal for 100% tax on profits in excess of 6% showed the majority

against the proposal, with those seeing merit in the plan predicting difficulty in application. Bernard M. Baruch's price control testimony won general approval. Opinion on bill itself was varied, with need of control generally recognized. Installment buying restrictions found common support. Writers all laud accomplishments in production of merchant ships. Comment continues generally critical on President's articles in Colliers; all regret reviving of controversies during present emergency.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Democratic Party, National Committee of.

Early, Stephen T.

Hassett, William D.

Howe, Louis M.

Mellett, Lowell.

Moore, R. Walton.

National Committee of Independent Voters for Roosevelt
and Wallace.

Richards, Augustus L.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. : Papers Pertaining to Family,
Business and Personal Affairs, 1882-1945.

_____ : Papers as Assistant Secretary of the Navy,
1913-20.

_____ : Papers, 1920-28.

_____ : Papers Pertaining to the Campaign of 1924.

_____ : Papers Pertaining to the Campaign of 1928.

_____ : Papers as Governor of New York, 1929-32.

_____ : Papers as President, Official File, 1933-45.

_____ : Papers as President, President's Personal
File, 1933-45.

_____ : Papers as President, President's Secretary's
File, 1933-45.

_____ : Papers as President, Press Conferences, 1933-45.

Rosenman, Samuel I.

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Alsop, Joseph and Stewart.

Clapper, Raymond.

Ickes, Harold L.

Murdock, Victor.

Reid, Helen Rogers.

White, William Allen.

Lilly Library, University of Indiana, Bloomington, Indiana.

Bowers, Claude G.

PUBLISHED PAPERS, LETTERS, PRESS CONFERENCES AND WRITINGS
OF FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

Carmichael, Donald Scott, ed. F.D.R. Columnist : The
Uncollected Columns of Franklin D. Roosevelt.
Chicago : Pellegrini and Cudahy, 1947.

Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D.
Roosevelt. 25 vols. New York : Da Capo Press, 1972.

Day, Donald, ed. Franklin D. Roosevelt's Own Story. Boston,
Little, Brown, 1951.

Nash, Gerald D., ed. F.D. Roosevelt, Englewood Cliffs,
New Jersey : Prentice Hall Inc., 1967.

Rauch, Basil, ed. Franklin D. Roosevelt : Selected Speeches,
Press Conferences, and Letters. 2nd ed. New York :
Rinehart and Company Inc., 1960.

Rosenman, Samuel I., ed. The Public Papers and Addresses
of Franklin D. Roosevelt. 5 vols., New York : Random
House, 1938; 4 vols., New York : The Macmillan
Company, 1941; 3 vols., New York : Harper and
Brothers, 1950.

Roosevelt, Elliott, ed. The Roosevelt Letters. Vol.I, 1887-
1904; Vol. II, 1905-1928; Vol.III, 1928-1945.
London : George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., 1950, 1952.

Roosevelt, Franklin D. Looking Forward. London : Heinemann, 1933.

_____. On Our Way. New York : The John Day Company, 1934.

_____. Whither Bound? Boston : Houghton, Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press Cambridge, 1920.

Rosenau, James N., ed. The Roosevelt Treasury. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company, 1951.

NEWSPAPERS

Baltimore Sun

Chicago Tribune

Christian Science Monitor

New York Herald Tribune

New York Journal American

New York Sun

New York Times

New York World Telegram

Wall Street Journal

Washington Post

Washington Times Herald

Apart from detailed examination of the newspapers listed above, the output of the American press has been extensively sampled through an examination of the following sources in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library : the Special Reports and Weekly Reports of the Division of Press Intelligence, the many newspaper clippings which are to be found scattered throughout the Roosevelt and Early Papers, and the collections of press clippings in the President's Personal Book and the Stephen Early Scrapbooks. Where specific editorials, news reports or signed articles have been drawn upon, this has been indicated in footnote entries.

ORAL HISTORY SOURCES

Columbia University Oral History Project. Glen Rock, New Jersey : New York Times Microfilming Corporation of America. Interviews with : Bowers, Claude G.; Childs, Marquis W.; Krock, Arthur; Stern, J. David.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS

Alsop, Joseph and Alsop, Stewart. The Reporter's Trade. London : The Bodley Head, 1960.

Baldwin, Hanson W., and Stone, Shepard, eds. We Saw It Happen : The News Behind the News That's Fit to Print, by Thirteen Correspondents of the New York Times. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1939.

Bowers, Claude G. My Life. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1962.

Burns, James MacGregor. Roosevelt : The Lion and the Fox. London : Secker and Warburg, 1956.

_____. Roosevelt : The Soldier of Freedom, 1940-1945. London : Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

Chennery, William L. So It Seemed. New York : Harcourt Brace and Company, 1952.

Childs, Marquis W. I Write From Washington. New York : Harper and Brothers, 1942.

Creel, George. Rebel At Large. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1947.

Davis, Kenneth S. F.D.R.: The Beckoning of Destiny, 1882-1928. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1971.

Drewry, John E., ed. Post Biographies of Famous Journalists. Athens : University of Georgia Press, 1942.

_____. More Post Biographies. Athens : University of Georgia Press, 1947.

Field, Marshall. Freedom Is More Than a Word. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1945.

Flynn, Edward J. You're the Boss. New York : The Viking Press, 1947.

- Freidel, Frank. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Vol.I : The Apprenticeship. Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1952.
- _____. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Vol.II : The Ordeal. Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1954.
- _____. Franklin D. Roosevelt. Vol.III : The Triumph. Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1956.
- _____. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vol.IV : Launching the New Deal. Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1973.
- Gumpert, Martin. First Papers. New York : Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941.
- Hassett, William D. Off the Record With F.D.R. New Brunswick, New Jersey : Rutgers University Press, 1958.
- Hofstadter, Richard. The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It. London : Jonathan Cape, 1962.
- Hoover, Irwin H. Forty-Two Years in the White House. Boston : Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934.
- Ickes, Harold L. The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes. Vol.I : The First Thousand Days, 1933-1936. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1953.
- _____. The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes. Vol.II : The Inside Struggle, 1936-1939. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1954.
- _____. The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes. Vol.III : The Lowering Clouds, 1939-1941. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1954.
- Hurd, Charles. When the New Deal Was Young and Gay. New York : Hawthorn Books, 1965.
- _____. Washington Cavalcade. New York : E.P. Dutton and Co. Inc., 1948.
- Johnson, Gerald W. An Honorable Titan : A Biographical Study of Adolph S. Ochs. New York : Harper and Bros., 1946.
- Kilpatrick, Carroll, ed. Roosevelt and Daniels : A Friendship in Politics. Chapel Hill, North Carolina : University of North Carolina Press, 1952.
- Kiplinger, Willard M. Washington Is Like That. New York : Harper and Brothers, 1942.
- Kramer, Dale. Heywood Brown : A Biographical Portrait. New York : A.A. Wynn, Publisher, 1949.

- Krock, Arthur. Memoirs. London : Cassell and Company, 1970.
- Lash, Joseph P. Eleanor and Franklin : The Story of Their Relationship, Based on Eleanor Roosevelt's Private Papers. London : André Deutsch Limited, 1972.
- Lindley, Ernest K. Franklin D. Roosevelt : A Career in Progressive Democracy. New York : Blue Ribbon Books, 1931.
- _____. Half Way With Roosevelt. New York : Viking Press, 1936.
- _____. The Roosevelt Revolution : First Phase. New York : Viking Press, 1933.
- Ludwig, Emil. Roosevelt : A Study in Fortune and Power. Trans. from German by Maurice Samuel. New York : Viking Press, 1938.
- Lundberg, Ferdinand. Imperial Hearst : A Social Biography. New York : Random House, 1936.
- Martin, Kingsley. Editor : A Second Volume of Autobiography, 1931-1945. Hutchinson, 1968. Harmondsworth, Middlesex : Penguin Books, 1969.
- Michelson, Charles. The Ghost Talks. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1944.
- Moley, Raymond. After Seven Years. Lincoln : University of Nebraska Press. First Bison Book printing : March, 1971.
- Oursler, Fulton. Behold This Dreamer. Ed. and with commentary by Fulton Oursler Jr. Boston : Little, Brown and Company, 1964.
- Perkins, Frances. The Roosevelt I Knew. New York : The Viking Press, 1946.
- Pilat, Oliver R. Drew Pearson : An Unauthorized Biography. New York : Harper's Magazine Press, 1973.
- Reilly, Michael and Slocum, William J. Reilly of the White House. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1947.
- Rollins, Alfred B. Jr. Roosevelt and Howe. New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Roosevelt, Elliott. As He Saw It. New York : Duell, Sloan and Pearce Inc., 1946.
- _____. and Brough, James. The Roosevelts of Hyde Park : An Untold Story. London : W.H. Allen, 1974.

- Roosevelt, James and Shalett, Sidney. Affectionately F.D.R. : A Son's Story of a Lonely Man. New York : Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959.
- Roosevelt, Nicholas. A Front Row Seat. Norman : University of Oklahoma Press, 1953.
- Rosenman, Samuel I. Working With Roosevelt. New York : Harper Brothers Publishers, 1952.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. The Age of Roosevelt. Vol.I : The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933. London : Heinemann, 1957.
- _____. The Age of Roosevelt, Vol.II : The Coming of the New Deal. London : Heinemann, 1960.
- _____. The Age of Roosevelt, Vol.III : The Politics of Upheaval. London : Heinemann, 1961.
- Smith, A. Merriman. A President Is Many Men. New York : Harper and Brothers, 1948.
- _____. Thank You, Mr. President. 2nd ed. New York : Harper Brothers, 1946.
- Stern, J. David. Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1962.
- Stiles, Lela. The Man Behind Roosevelt : The Story of Louis McHenry Howe. New York : The World Publishing Co., 1954.
- Sullivan, Mark. The Education of An American. New York : Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1938.
- Swanberg, W.A. Luce and His Empire. New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972.
- Tebbel, John. An American Dynasty : The Story of the McCormicks, Medills and Pattersons. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1947.
- _____. The Life and Good Times of William Randolph Hearst. New York : Dutton, 1952.
- _____. The Marshall Fields : A Study in Wealth. New York : E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1947.
- Tugwell, Rexford G. F.D.R. : Architect of An Era. New York : The Macmillan Company, 1967.
- _____. In Search of Roosevelt. Cambridge, Massachusetts : Harvard University Press, 1972.

_____ . The Art of Politics as Practised by Three Great Americans : Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Luis Munoz Marin and Fiorello H. La Guardia. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company Inc., 1958.

_____ . The Democratic Roosevelt. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company Inc., 1957.

Tully, Grace C. F.D.R. My Boss. New York : Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.

White, William Allen. The Autobiography of William Allen White. New York : The Macmillan Company, 1946.

PERIODICALS

Adams, Franklin P. "Freedom of the Press." New Republic, XCIV (February 9, 1938), 15.

Alexander Norman. "Not Fit to Print." Nation, CXL (January 16, 1935), 75-77.

Anderson, Paul Y. "Hoover and the Press." Nation, CXXXIII (October 14, 1931), 382-84.

"Answering Mr. Michelson." Editor and Publisher (December 12, 1942), 3.

"Associated Press Members Comment on U.S. Suit." Editor and Publisher (November 21, 1942), 1.

"Attention Roy Howard." Nation, CXLVI (May 14, 1938), 548.

Bain, George W. "How Negro Editors Viewed the New Deal." Journalism Quarterly, XLIV (Autumn, 1967), 552-54.

Berchtold, William E. "Press Agents of the New Deal." New Outlook, July, 1934, pp. 23-30, 61.

Bleyer, William G. "Freedom of the Press and the New Deal." Journalism Quarterly, XI (March, 1934), 22-35.

Boorstin, Daniel J. "Selling the President to the People." Commentary, XX (November, 1955), 421-27.

Borg, Dorothy. "Notes of Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech." Political Science Quarterly, LXXII (September, 1957), 405-33.

Brandenburg, Earnest. "The Preparation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Speeches." Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXV (April, 1949), 214-21.

- Brandt, Raymond P. "The President's Press Conference." Survey Graphic, XXVIII (July, 1939), 446-49.
- _____. "The Washington Correspondent." Journalism Quarterly, XIII (June, 1936), 173-76.
- Bromley, Dorothy D. "The Newspaper and Child Labor." Nation, CXL (January 30, 1935), 131-32.
- "Brooklyn Eagle's Writer Firmly Contests White House Interview Denial." Editor and Publisher (January 3, 1925), 3-4.
- Broun, Heywood. "Broun's Page." Nation, CXLIII (July 18, 1936), 75.
- _____. "Not the Type." Nation, CXLI (August 21, 1935), 218-19.
- _____. "Roosevelt Show Up the Press." Nation, CXLIII (October 31, 1936), 522.
- _____. "Walter Winchell's Tooth." Nation, CXLII (January 8, 1936), 47.
- _____. "Your Face is Familiar." New Republic, XCVII (December 21, 1938), 199.
- Brown, Ashmun. "The Roosevelt Myth." American Mercury (April, 1936), 390-94.
- Butler, James J. "Mellett May be U.S. Press Chief Although He Doesn't Want Job." Editor and Publisher (May 16, 1942).
- _____. "Newsmen Fight Back in Breach with FDR On 'Rhine Frontier'." Editor and Publisher (February 11, 1939), 1.
- Canham, Erwin D. "Democracy's Fifth Wheel." Literary Digest, CIXX (January 5, 1935), 6.
- Cantwell, Frank. "Public Opinion and the Legislative Process." American Political Science Review, XL (October, 1946), 924-35.
- Carroll, G. "Dr. Roosevelt's Propaganda Trust." American Mercury (September, 1937), 22.
- Casey, Ralph D. "Republican Propaganda in the 1936 Campaign." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (April, 1937), 27-44.
- Chambers, Clarke A. "F.D.R. Pragmatist - Idealist : An Essay in Historiography." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, LII (April, 1961), 50-55.

- Childs, Marquis W. "I've Got This Thing Simplified :
Private Interview With F.D.R., April 7, 1944."
American Heritage, VIII (April, 1957), 38-39
- "Christmas Trees in August : The President and the Press,"
Newsweek, September 11, 1944, pp.40-41.
- "Chronic Liar." Time, September 13, 1943, pp.19-20.
- "Columnists and Calumnists." Guild Reporter (April 15,
1939), 1,6.
- "Columnists Study New Deal Trend; Whether Roosevelt Will
Veer to Right or Left." Literary Digest, CXXII
(November 21, 1936), 9.
- Clapper, Raymond. "All Eyes Are Turned on Washington."
Editor and Publisher (January 13, 1934).
- _____. "Cuff Links Club." Review of Reviews (April,
1935), 47-50, 69-70.
- _____. "All Eyes Are Turned on Washington." Editor
and Publisher (January 13, 1934).
- _____. "Why Reporters Like Roosevelt." Review of Reviews
(June, 1934), 14-17.
- Clemow, Bice. "F.D.R. Retains 'Open' Conferences." Editor
and Publisher (March 2, 1935), 9.
- _____. "Recovery on Way, Capital Corps Feels." Editor
and Publisher (December 29, 1934), 8.
- Corey, Herbert. "The Presidents and the Press." Saturday
Evening Post, January 9, 1932, p.25.
- Cornwell, Elmer E. Jr. "Coolidge and Presidential Leadership."
Public Opinion Quarterly, XXI (Summer, 1947), 265.
- _____. "Presidential News : The Expanding Public Image."
Journalism Quarterly, XXXVI (Summer, 1959), 275-83.
- _____. "The Press Conference : A Study in Institutional-
ization." Midwest Journal of Political Science.
IV (November, 1960), 370-89.
- Dabney, Virginius. "The Press and the Election." Public
Opinion Quarterly, IV (April, 1937), 123.
- Daniels, Jonathan. "What I Learned About Washington."
Saturday Evening Post, March 30, 1946, p.82.

- Davenport, Walter. "The President and the Press." Collier's, Part 1, January 27, 1945, pp.11-13; Part 2, February 3, 1945, pp.16-17, 47.
- _____. "You Can't Say That." Collier's, February 15, 1941
- "Drive to 'Smear' Press Critics of FDR Charged." Editor and Publisher (August 15, 1942), 7.
- "Dusk at Santa Monica." Time, March 13, 1939, pp.49-56.
- Early, Stephen T. "Below the Belt." Saturday Evening Post, June 10, 1939, pp.7,111-13.
- _____. "Washington Correspondents." Liberty, February 24, 1940,
- "Editor and Publisher as Teacher Again." Guild Reporter (December 15, 1941), 12.
- "Editors Denounce and Cheer President's Letter Urging Passage of Coal-Control Bill." Literary Digest, CXX (July 20, 1935), 11-12.
- Essary, J. Frederick. "President, Congress and the Press Correspondents." American Political Science Review, V (November, 1928), 902-09.
- _____. "The Presidency and the Press." Journalism Quarterly, XIII (June, 1936), 177-81.
- _____. "Uncle Sam's Ballyhoo Men." American Mercury, XXIII (August, 1931), 419-28.
- "Exclusive Set Gathers Capital News." Literary Digest (March 6, 1937), 28-30.
- "FDR Ignores Protest on Trip Censorship." Editor and Publisher (October 10, 1942), 41.
- "FDR Says Some Publishers Interfere With War Effort." Editor and Publisher (October 3, 1942), 7.
- "FDR Sneers at the Press." Editor and Publisher (October 17, 1942), 23.
- Frisch, Morton J. "Roosevelt the Conservator : A Rejoinder to Hofstadter." Journal of Politics, XXV (May, 1963), 361-72.
- "Gain in FDR Press Support Shown by Second E and P Survey." Editor and Publisher (October 26, 1940), 7, 42.

- Gallup, George, and Robinson, Claude. "American Institute of Public Opinion -- Surveys, 1935-1938." Public Opinion Quarterly, II (July, 1938), 373-98.
- Gertz, Elmer. "Chicago's Adult Delinquent : The Tribune." Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII, 3 (1944), 416-24.
- Goldberg, Harvey. "Heywood Brown : Radical Journalist." Monthly Review, VII, Part I (January, 1956), 353-65; Part II (February, 1956), 420-25.
- Goll, Eugene W. "Frank R. Kent's Opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal." Maryland Historical Magazine, LXIII (June, 1968), 158-71.
- Gosnell, Harold F. "Does Campaigning Make a Difference?" Public Opinion Quarterly, XIV (Fall, 1950), 413-18.
- "Government's Control of the Press." Nation, CXLV (September 13, 1937), 2283.
- Grider, J.H. "President's Press Conference." American Mercury, XLIX (October, 1944), 481-87.
- Haight, John McV. "Roosevelt and the Aftermath of the Quarantine Speech." Review of Politics, XXIV (April, 1962), 233-59.
- Harding, T. Swann. "Informational Techniques of the Department of Agriculture." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (January, 1937), 83-96.
- "Herald Tribune Answers Attack by FDR." Editor and Publisher (November 12, 1938), 10.
- Herrick, J. "With the Reporters at the Summer White House." Literary Digest, CXVI (August 12, 1933), 9.
- "Is It A De'Press'ion?" Editor and Publisher (December 25, 1937), 26.
- Jacobs, Travis B. "Roosevelt's Quarantine Speech." Historian, XXIV (August, 1962), 483-502.
- Johnson, Gerald W. "Schlesinger's F.D.R." Atlantic, CCVI (October, 1960), 71-73.
- Johnson, Hugh S., General. "The Newspapers and N.R.A." Problems of Journalism : Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1934.
- "Journalism's Blue Eagle." New Republic, LXXVIII (March 4, 1934), 118-19.

- Kelly, Eugene A. "Distorting the News." American Mercury, XXXIV (March, 1935), 307-18.
- Kintner, Robert E. "The S.E.C. Dictatorship." American Mercury, XXXVIII (June, 1936), 180-87.
- Krock, Arthur. "Press Vs. Government -- A Warning." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (April, 1937), 45-49.
- "Krock Tells N.Y. Editors of Moves to Curb Press." Editor and Publisher (October 12, 1940), 10.
- Lawrence, David. "Reporting the Political News at Washington." American Political Science Review, V (November, 1928), 893-902.
- _____. "The Lost Right of Privacy." American Mercury (May, 1936), 12-18.
- Mann, Robert S. "Capital Corps No Propaganda Victims, Writers Tell Journalism Teachers." Editor and Publisher (January 4, 1936), 3-4, 12.
- Manning, George H. "Capital Corps Hopes for New Deal." Editor and Publisher (March 4, 1933).
- _____. "Hoover Liberalizes Press Conferences," Editor and Publisher (March 9, 1929), 7.
- _____. "Joslin Suggests News 'Consultations'." Editor and Publisher (September 19, 1931), 7.
- _____. "Liberalizing of President's Contacts With Press Hoped For from Hoover." Editor and Publisher (January 12, 1929), 5-6.
- _____. "New Deal For Press Corps Begins At Once." Editor and Publisher (March 11, 1933).
- _____. "President Candidly Consults Reporters in Advance of Budget Announcement." Editor and Publisher (January 6, 1934), 3-4.
- _____. "President Hoover and White House Corps At Odds Over News 'Leaks'." Editor and Publisher (July 11, 1931), 15.
- _____. "Strained Air Pervades the Press Circle as White House Leak is Sought." Editor and Publisher (July 18, 1931), 10.
- _____. "White House Ban on Bank Parley Upset by Correspondents." Editor and Publisher (October 10, 1931), 5-6.

- Martin, J.B. "Colonel McCormick of the Tribune." Harper's, October, 1944, pp.403-413.
- Meyer, Eugene. "Address." Problems of Journalism : Proceedings of Annual of American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1934.
- "More Needling." Editor and Publisher (January 15, 1938), 22.
- Mott, Frank L. "Newspapers in Presidential Campaigns." Public Opinion Quarterly, VIII (February, 1944), 349-67.
- "Mr. Hoover's Refusal to be 'Humanized'." Literary Digest, CX (July 25, 1931), 8.
- "Mr. Roosevelt 'Ungags' the Press." Literary Digest, CXV (March 25, 1933).
- Myers, W. Cameron. "The Chicago Newspaper Hoax in the '36 Election Campaign." Journalism Quarterly, XXXVII (Summer, 1960), 356-64.
- "New Deal For Press Praised By Henning." Editor and Publisher (June 10, 1933), 54.
- "New York Times, In Late Stand, Backs FDR." Editor and Publisher (October 21, 1944), 22.
- "News and Comment From the Nation's Capital." Literary Digest (August 18, 1934).
- "News and Comment From the Nation's Capital." Literary Digest (June 16, 1934), 13.
- "News Regulation in Washington Seen as Step to Coordination." Editor and Publisher (April 7, 1934), 10.
- "Newspapermen Play Important Roles in Hot Presidential Campaigns." Editor and Publisher (July 11, 1936), 4.
- Nicholas, H.G. "Roosevelt and Public Opinion." Fortnightly, CLXIII (May, 1945), 303-08.
- "N Y Post Defers Spy Series After 'Rebuke' by FDR." Editor and Publisher (July 2, 1938), 6.
- "On Soft Ground." Editor and Publisher (October 29, 1938), 18.
- ^{Pew, Marlen}
Pew, Marlen. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (February 28, 1931), 70.
- _____. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (April 8, 1933).

- _____. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (May 20, 1933), 40.
- _____. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (September 26, 1936), 48.
- Pollard, James E. "The White House News Conference as a Channel of Communication." Public Opinion Quarterly, XV (Winter, 1951-52), 663-78.
- Pratt, Fletcher. "Propaganda Captures the Newspapers." American Mercury, XLIV (August, 1938), 450-58.
- "President and Press." Nation, CXXXVIII (March 7, 1934), 263-64.
- "President and Press." Time, July 24, 1939, pp.35-36.
- "President Gives Krock Exclusive Interview, But Takes Parity Vow." Editor and Publisher (March 6, 1937), 42.
- "President's Letter Splits Press and Clergy." Literary Digest, IX (October 5, 1935).
- Ragland, James. "Merchandisers of the First Amendment : Freedom and Responsibility of the Press in the Age of Roosevelt, 1933-1940." Georgia Review, XVI (Winter, 1962), 366-391.
- "Reporter Roosevelt." Time, March 21, 1938, pp.55-56.
- Robb, Arthur. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (October 26, 1940), 52.
- _____. "Shop Talk at Thirty." Editor and Publisher (October 10, 1942).
- Rogers, Lindsay. "President Roosevelt's Press Conferences." Political Quarterly, IX (July, 1938), 360-72.
- "Roosevelt's Blast at Pearson as Liar Climaxes Long Time Feud with Press." Newsweek, September 13, 1943, 79.
- "Roosevelt Slaps Press; Gannett 'Resents' Slur." Editor and Publisher (October 28, 1944).
- Roper, Elmo, Jr. "Neutral Opinion on the Court Proposal." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (July, 1937), 17-20.
- Rossiter, Clinton L. "The Political Philosophy of F.D. Roosevelt : A Challenge to Scholarship." Review of Politics, XI (January, 1949), 87-95.

- Rosten, Leo C. "President Roosevelt and the Washington Correspondents." Public Opinion Quarterly, I (January, 1937), 36-52.
- "Roy Howard Arrives." Guild Reporter (August 1, 1938), 4.
- Sanford, Fillmore H. "Public Orientation to Roosevelt." Public Opinion Quarterly, XV (Summer, 1951), 189-216.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M., Jr. "Roosevelt and His Detractors." Harper's, June, 1950.
- Seldes, George. "Barton, Barton, Barton and Barton." New Republic, XCVI (October 26, 1938), 327-29.
- _____. "Roy Howard and His Papers." New Republic, XCV (July 27, 1938), 322-25.
- Sharp, Willis. "President and Press." Atlantic Monthly, CXL (August, 1927), 239-45.
- Sheridan, Will. "Washington Closeups." The Independent, July 24, 1943.
- Sherman, Maurice S. "The Editor and the Columnist." Public Opinion Quarterly, IX (Fall, 1945), 279-282.
- "60% of Dailies Support Dewey; Roosevelt Backed by 22%." Editor and Publisher (November 4, 1944), 9, 68.
- Smith, I.R.I., and Morris, J.A. "My Fifty Years in the White House." Saturday Evening Post, January 22, 1949, p.28.
- Steele, Richard W. "The Pulse of the People : Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Gauging of American Public Opinion." Journal of Contemporary History, IX (October, 1974), 195-216.
- "Super Press Bureau." Editor and Publisher (January 2, 1937), 28.
- Sussman, Leila A. "FDR and the White House Mail." Public Opinion Quarterly, XX (Spring, 1956), 5-16.
- _____. "Mass Political Letter-Writing in America : The Growth of an Institution." Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (Summer, 1959), 203-12.
- "The President and the Press." Christian Century (March 21, 1934), 382-83.
- "The President and the Press." Time, July 12, 1943, pp.68,70.

- "The Press and the Campaign." New Republic, LXXXVII (July 22, 1936), 311-12.
- "The Press and the People -- A Survey." Fortune, August, 1939, p.64.
- "The Press Loses the Election." New Republic, LXXXIX (November 18, 1936). Supplement.
- "The Troubled Press." Fortune, February, 1952, p.124.
- "They Don't Laugh to be Polite." Literary Digest (August 17, 1935).
- "Threat to a Free Press." Nation, CXXXIX (October 24, 1934), 467-68.
- "To Newsmen Who Know Dewey Best He's Not A Choice for Anything." Guild Reporter (May 15, 1944), 3.
- Tugwell, Rexford G. "The New Deal : The Progressive Tradition." Western Political Science Quarterly, III (September, 1950), 390-427.
- _____. "The Progressive Orthodoxy of Franklin D. Roosevelt." Ethics, LXIV (October, 1953), 1-21.
- _____. "The Two Great Roosevelts." Western Political Quarterly, V (March, 1952), 84-93.
- Twohey, James S. "An Analysis of Newspaper Opinion on War Issues." Public Opinion Quarterly, V (Fall, 1941), 448-55.
- "Uncle Sam, Publisher." Editor and Publisher (October 24, 1942), 24.
- Villard, Oswald G. "Issues and Men : Lack of Influence of the American Press." Nation CXLIII (November 21, 1936), 603.
- _____. "Issues and Men : President in a Dangerously Emotional State of Mind." Nation, CXLVIII (February 11, 1939), 178.
- _____. "Issues and Men : State of Journalism." Nation, CXLVII (August 27, 1938), 206.
- _____. "Propaganda and the President." Nation, CXL (April 3, 1935), 379.
- _____. "The Press and the President." Century (December, 1925), 193-200.

Wechsler, James A. "Publishers Are Betrayed By Their Men in Capital." Guild Reporter (August 15, 1944), 1

Weingast, David E. "Walter Lippmann : A Content Analysis." Public Opinion Quarterly, XIV (Summer, 1950), 296-302.

"When Ickes Met the Gang." Guild Reporter (February 1, 1939), 1,6.

"White House Attacks W.R. Hearst For Hostility to New Deal." Editor and Publisher (September 26, 1936), 11.

White, William A. "Annual Address by President of the Society." Problems of Journalism : Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1939.

"White House Corps Urged to 'Strike'." Editor and Publisher (August 18, 1928), 22.

Williams, Margaret H. "The President's Office of Government Reports." Public Opinion Quarterly (Winter, 1941), 548-62.

Wilson, Richard. "Reporting the Washington News." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCXIX (January, 1942), 127-31.

OTHER BOOKS

Alsop, Joseph, and Catledge, Turner. The 168 Days. Garden City, New York : Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1938.

Asbell, Bernard. When FDR Died. New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961.

Bagdikian, Ben H. The Effete Conspiracy and Other Crimes of the Press. New York : Harper and Row, 1972.

Bell, Jack. The Splendid Misery : A Study of the Presidency and Power Politics at Close Range. London : T.V. Boardman and Company Limited, 1960.

Bellush, Bernard. Franklin D. Roosevelt as Governor of New York. New York : Columbia University Press, 1955.

Berger, Meyer. The Story of the New York Times, 1851 -- 1951. New York : Simon and Schuster, 1951.

Bird, G.L., and Merwin, F.E., eds. The Press and Society : A Book of Readings. New York : Prentice Hall, Inc., 1951.

- Bowers, Claude G. The Tragic Era : The Revolution After Lincoln. Cambridge : Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929.
- _____. Jefferson and Hamilton : The Struggle for Democracy in America. London : Constable and Company, 1925.
- Byrne, Donn. An Introduction to Psychology. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall Inc., 1974.
- Canham, Erwin D. Commitment to Freedom : The Story of the Christian Science Monitor. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1958.
- Cantril, Hadley, ed. Public Opinion 1935-46. Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1951.
- Carter, Douglass. The Fourth Branch of Government. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1959.
- Childs, Marquis M. and Reston, James, eds. Walter Lippmann and His Times. New York : Harcourt Brace, 1959.
- Clapper, Raymond. Watching the World. New York : Whittlesey House, 1944.
- Conkin, Paul K. F.D.R. and the Origins of the Welfare State. New York : Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1967.
- Cornwell, Elmer E. Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965.
- Desmond, Robert W. The Press and World Affairs. New York : D. Appleton-Century Company, 1937.
- Einaudi, Mario. The Roosevelt Revolution. London : Constable and Company, 1959.
- Elson, Robert T. Time Inc : The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1923-1941. New York : Atheneum, 1968.
- Emery, Edwin, and Ford, Edwin H., eds. Highlights in the History of the American Press. Minneapolis : University of Minneapolis Press, 1954.
- Emery, Edwin. The Press and America : An Interpretative History of Journalism. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962.
- _____, and Smith, Henry Ludd. The Press and America. New York : Prentice-Hall, 1954.

- Festinger, Leon. A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. Evanston, Illinois : Row, Peterson and Company, 1957.
- Fisher, Charles. The Columnists. New York : Howell, Soskin, Publishers, Inc., 1944.
- Fried, Albert. The Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian Traditions in American Politics. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company Inc., 1968.
- Fusfeld, D.R. The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origins of the New Deal. New York : Columbia University Press, 1956.
- Gallup, George H. The Gallup Poll : Public Opinion 1935-1971. 3 Vols. New York : Random House, 1972.
- Geddes, Donald P. Franklin D. Roosevelt : A Memorial. New York : Pitman Publishing Co., 1945.
- Goldman, Eric. Rendezvous With Destiny. New York : Vintage Books, 1959.
- Graham, Otis L. Jr. An Encore for Reform : The Old Progressives and the New Deal. New York : Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Greer, Thomas H. What Roosevelt Thought : The Social and Political Ideas of Franklin D. Roosevelt. East Lansing, Michigan : Michigan State University Press, 1958.
- Hohenberg, John. Free Press, Free People. New York : Columbia University Press, 1971.
- Ickes, Harold L. America's House of Lords. New York : Harcourt, Brace, 1939.
- _____. Freedom of the Press Today: A Clinical Examination by Twenty-Eight Specialists. New York : The Vanguard Press, 1941.
- Johnson, J. Percy H., ed. Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals. Philadelphia : N.W. Ayer and Son, 1941.
- Kingsbury, Susan M., Hornell Hart and Associates. Newspapers and the News : An Objective Measurement of Ethical and Unethical Behaviour by Representative Newspapers. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1937.
- Kinnaird, Clark, ed. The Real F.D.R. New York : The Citadel, 1945.
- Kobre, Sidney. Development of American Journalism. Dubuque, Iowa : Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1969.

- Landecker, Manfred. The President and Public Opinion. Washington : Public Affairs Press, 1968.
- Lasswell, Harold D. Nathan Leites and Associates. Language of Politics : Studies in Quantitative Semantics. New York : George W. Stewart, Publisher, Inc., 1949.
- Lee, Richard W., ed. Politics and the Press by George Gallup Jnr. and Others. Washington : Acropolis Books, 1970.
- Lippmann, Walter. Interpretations. 1931-32. Selected and edited by Allan Nevins. New York : The Macmillan Company, 1932.
- Luskin, John. Lippmann, Liberty, and the Press. University, Alabama : University of Alabama Press, 1972.
- McCoy, Ralph E. Freedom of the Press : An Annotated Bibliography. Carbondale : Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.
- MacDougall, Curtis D. The Press and its Problems. Dubuque, Iowa : Wm. C. Brown, 1964.
- McPhaul, John J. Deadlines and Monkeyshines : The Fabled World of Chicago Journalism. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey : Prentice Hall, 1962.
- Michael, George. Handout. New York : G.P. Putman's Sons, 1935.
- Morris, Joe A. Deadline Every Minute : The Story of the United Press. Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957.
- Mott, Frank L. American Journalism : A History, 1690-1960. 3rd ed. New York : Macmillan, 1962.
- Nafziger, Ralph O., and White, David, eds. Introduction to Mass Communications Research. Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1958.
- Nafziger, Ralph O., and Wilkerson, Marcus M., eds. An Introduction to Journalism Research. Baton Rouge : Louisiana State University Press, 1949.
- Newton, V.M. Jr. Crusade for Democracy. Ames : Iowa State University Press, 1961.
- Nimmo, Dan D. Newsgathering in Washington : A Study in Political Communication. New York : Atherton Press, 1964.

- Peterson, Merrill D. The Jefferson Image in the American Mind. New York : Oxford University Press, 1962.
- Phillips, Cabell, et al., eds. Dateline Washington. Garden City : Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1949.
- Phillips, Cabell. The New York Times Chronicle of American Life From the Crash to the Blitz, 1929-1939. New York : The Macmillan Co., 1969.
- Pollard, James E. The Presidents and the Press. New York : Macmillan, 1947.
- Price, Warren and Pickett, Calder M., compilers. An Annotated Journalism Bibliography, 1958-1968. Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1970.
- Rivers, William L. The Opinionmakers. Boston : Beacon Press, 1965.
- Roazen, Paul. Freud : Political and Social Thought. New York : Vintage Books, 1968.
- Rosten, Leo C. The Social Composition of the Washington Correspondents. Chicago : University of Chicago Libraries, 1937.
- _____. The Washington Correspondents. New York : Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1937.
- Rothberg, Ignaz. The Newspaper. New York : Staples Press, 1946.
- Seldes, George. Lords of the Press. New York : Julian Messner, Inc., 1938.
- Sigal, Leon V. Reporters and Officials : The Organization and Problems of Newsmaking. Lexington, Massachusetts : D.C. Heath and Company, 1973.
- Talese, Grace. The Kingdom and the Power. New York : The World Publishing Co., 1969.
- Tebbel, John. The Compact History of the American Newspaper. New York : Hawthorne Books, 1963.
- Villard, Oswald G. The Disappearing Daily. New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1944.
- Wehle, Louis B. Hidden Threads of History : Wilson Through Roosevelt. New York : Macmillan, 1953.
- Weisberger, B.A. The American Newspaperman. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1961.

Wolfskill, George and Hudson, John A. All But the People : Franklin D. Roosevelt and His Critics, 1933-1939. New York : The Macmillan Company, 1969.

REPORTS -- PUBLISHED

A Free and Responsible Press. Report of the Commission on Freedom of the Press. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Chafee, Zechariah, Jr. Government and Mass Communications : A Report from Chicago. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1947.

OTHER UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Bain, George W. "The Negro Press and the New Deal Alphabet Agencies, 1933-1938." M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1966.

Beard, Earl S. "Human Nature in Politics : A Study of Walter Lippmann." Ph.D. dissertation, Iowa State University, 1954.

Carlisle, Rodney P. "The Political Ideas and Influence of William Randolph Hearst." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1966.

Cronin, Morton. "Four American Columnists : A Study in the Partisan Anatomy of David Lawrence, Walter Lippmann, Drew Pearson, George Sokolsky." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1953.

Gamer, Robert E. "Consensus : Poland to Pearl Harbor." Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1965.

Gibson, Robert C. "Political Attitudes of Selected Business Periodicals : 1935-55." Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1962.

Jensen, James R. "The 'New Conservatism' of Fortune Magazine." Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1956.

Lydon, Susan Gordon. "Franklin Roosevelt and the Press, 1932-1940." Senior Paper, Vassar College, 1965.

Nelsen, Clair Everet. "The Image of Herbert Hoover As Reflected in the American Press." Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1956.

- O'Rourke, Paul A. "Liberal Journals and the New Deal." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1969.
- Ragland, James F. "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Public Opinion, 1933-1940." Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1954.
- Rinn, Fauneil J. "The Presidential Press Conference." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1960.
- Rivers, William L. "The Washington Correspondent : Significance for Government." Ph.D. dissertation, American University, 1960.
- Rollins, Alfred B. Jr. "The Political Education of Franklin Roosevelt : His Career in New York Politics, 1909-1928." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1953.
- Skates, John R. "A Southern Editor Views the National Scene : Frederick Sullens and the Jackson, Mississippi Daily News." Ph.D. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1966.
- Sussman, Leila A. "Voices of the People : A Study of Political Mass Mail." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1957.
- Turley, Jane. "A Study of the Syndicated Political Columnist in the Daily Newspaper." Masters thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1949.
- Williams, Dorothy G. "The Treatment of the Second Roosevelt Administration in Three Popular Magazines." Ph.D. dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate Library School, Chicago, 1947.