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Indian Federation of
Working Journalists
Souvenir
Fourth Annual Conference
July-1955

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JULY 1955

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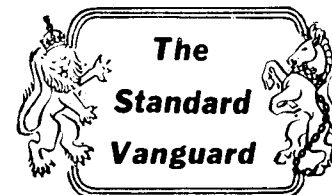
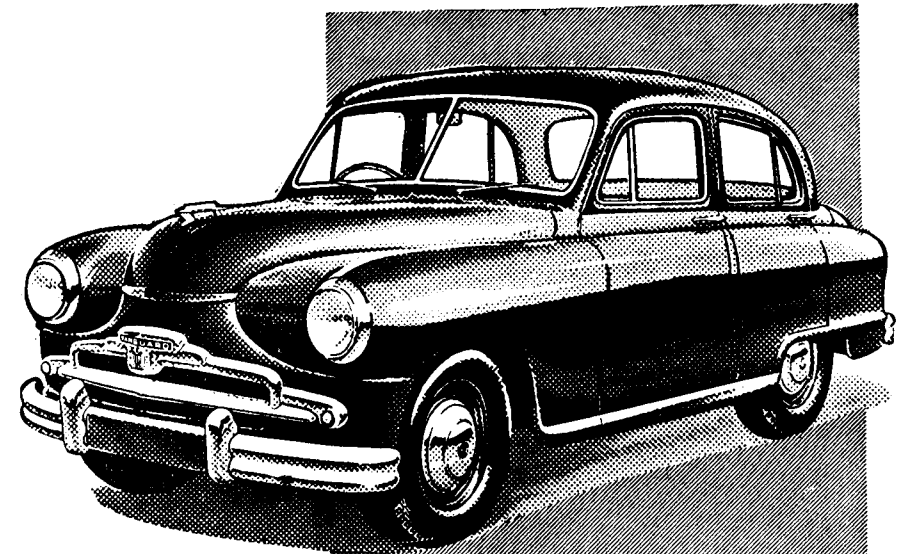
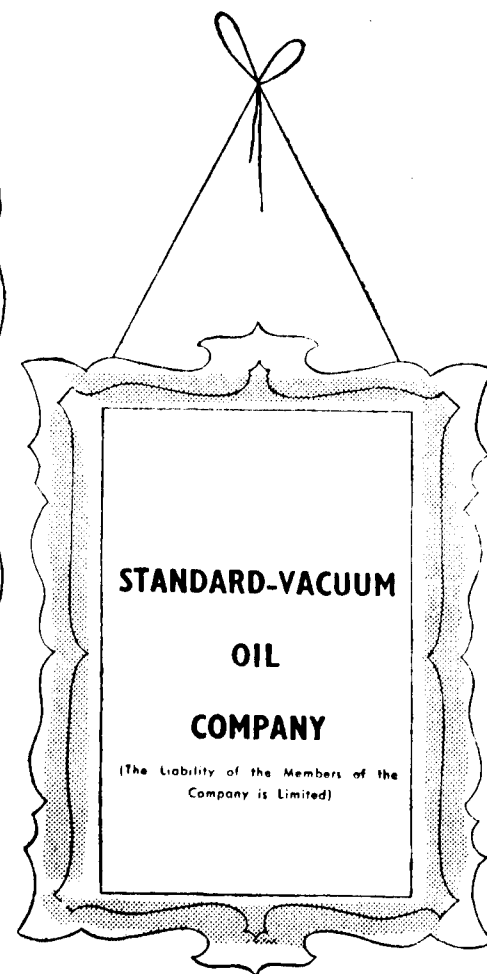
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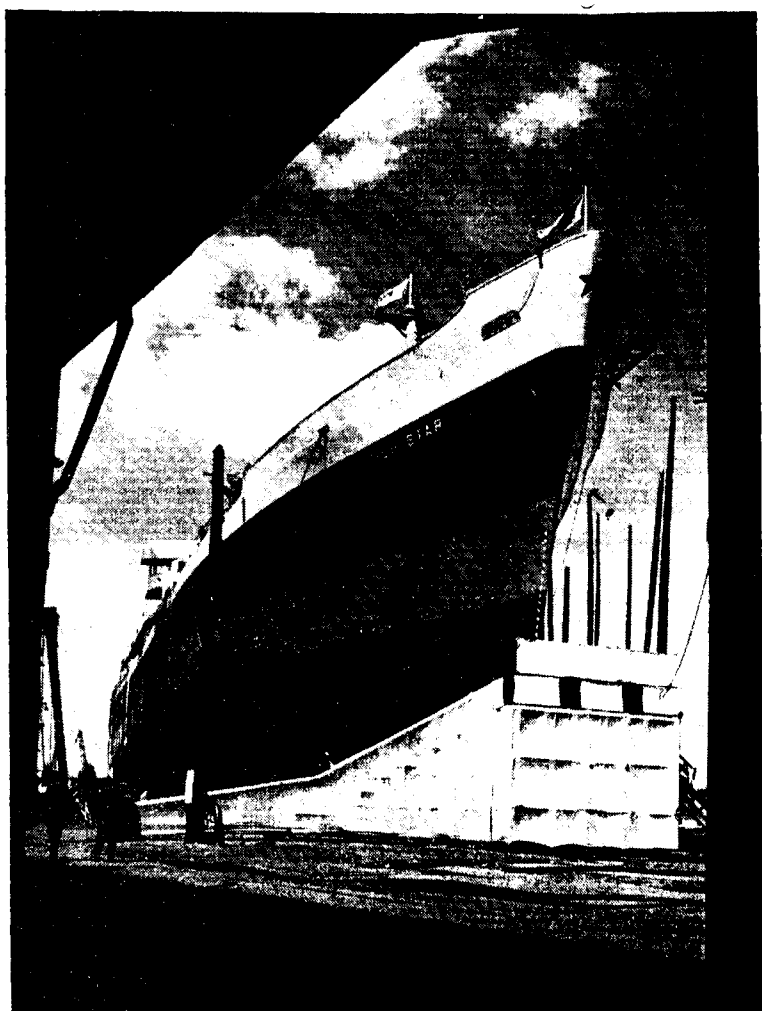


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I.F.W.J. SOUVENIR

JULY 1955

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OUR THANKS

The Madras Union of Journalists sincerely thanks the many donors who gave us their generous help, the Government of Madras, the Corporation and other institutions for their ready co-operation in making the Fourth Annual Conference of the I. F. W. J. a success.

The Souvenir Committee of the M. U. J. gratefully acknowledges the prompt response of all advertisers and others, which helped us greatly in producing this Souvenir.

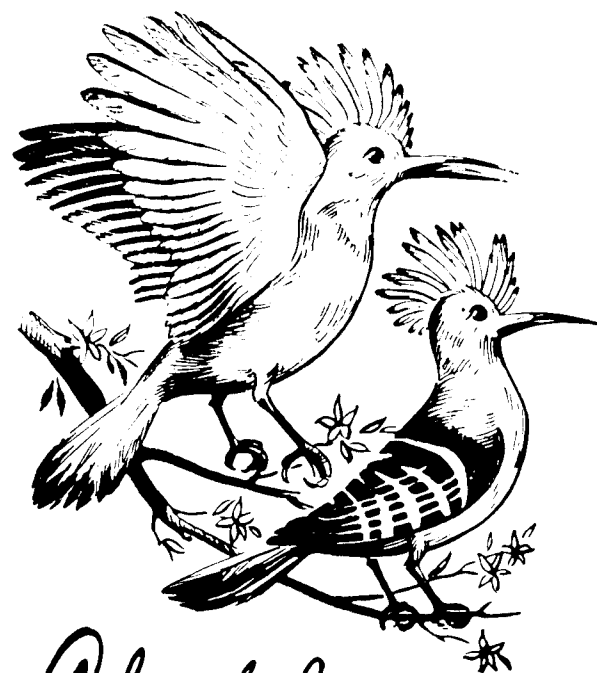
Our thanks are also due, among others, to contributors of the various articles, the management and workers of the B. N. K. Press, Ltd. and to Mr. S. S. Kalathil, artist, who designed our cover page.

—The Souvenir Committee

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INDIAN FEDERATION OF WORKING JOURNALISTS

FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MADRAS

JULY 1955

MESSAGES

Dr. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,

Vice-President of India:

I am glad to know that the Indian Federation of Working Journalists are having their Fourth Annual Conference in Madras this month. I hope the conference will discuss not merely the rights, but the responsibilities of working journalists. They have served the country well and deserve every encouragement. My best wishes for the success of the conference.

Mr. U. N. DHEBAR,

President, Indian National Congress:

The working journalists in India have to their credit a service extending over more than four decades. In the days of the struggle, it was the working journalist who brought the news of the epoch-making events that took place in India to the doors of the common man, running about from place to place, whatever the season, whatever the climate, whatever the discomforts, whatever the inconvenience. In the post-freedom years, he has to play an equally important role. He has to carry the message of reconstruction and all the activities that are going on in India to the people. His work will be exacting both in point of time and energy. I wish the people of India appreciate the role of the working journalist and extend to him the necessary co-operation and give him their sympathies and good wishes.

Dr. B. V. KESKAR,

Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Government of India:

I am glad to learn that the Fourth Annual Conference of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists is to be held in Madras some time in July. Journalists occupy an important position in the modern world and their position has been recognised. Recently, the question of the condition of working journalists has attracted the attention of both the Government and the country. The Press Commission has devoted a large part of its Report to that subject. I am

sure that the difficulties and grievances of journalists will be looked into and remedied. I can assure them that Government would do whatever is possible regarding this matter. I also hope that in view of the important role that they play in society, the Federation will see that journalists discharge their duties conscientiously and according to the highest standards of journalistic ethics.

Mr. KHANDUBHAI DESAI,

Union Labour Minister :

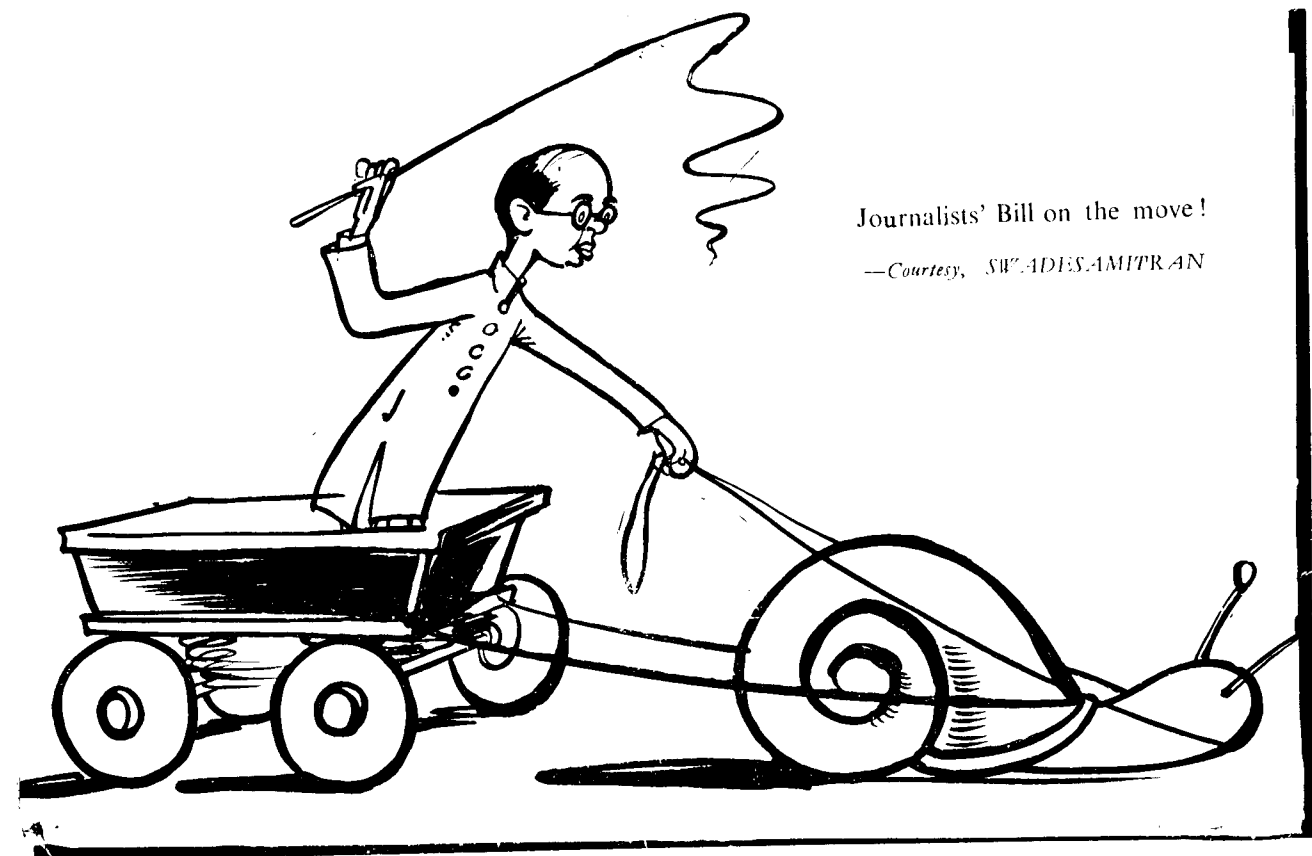
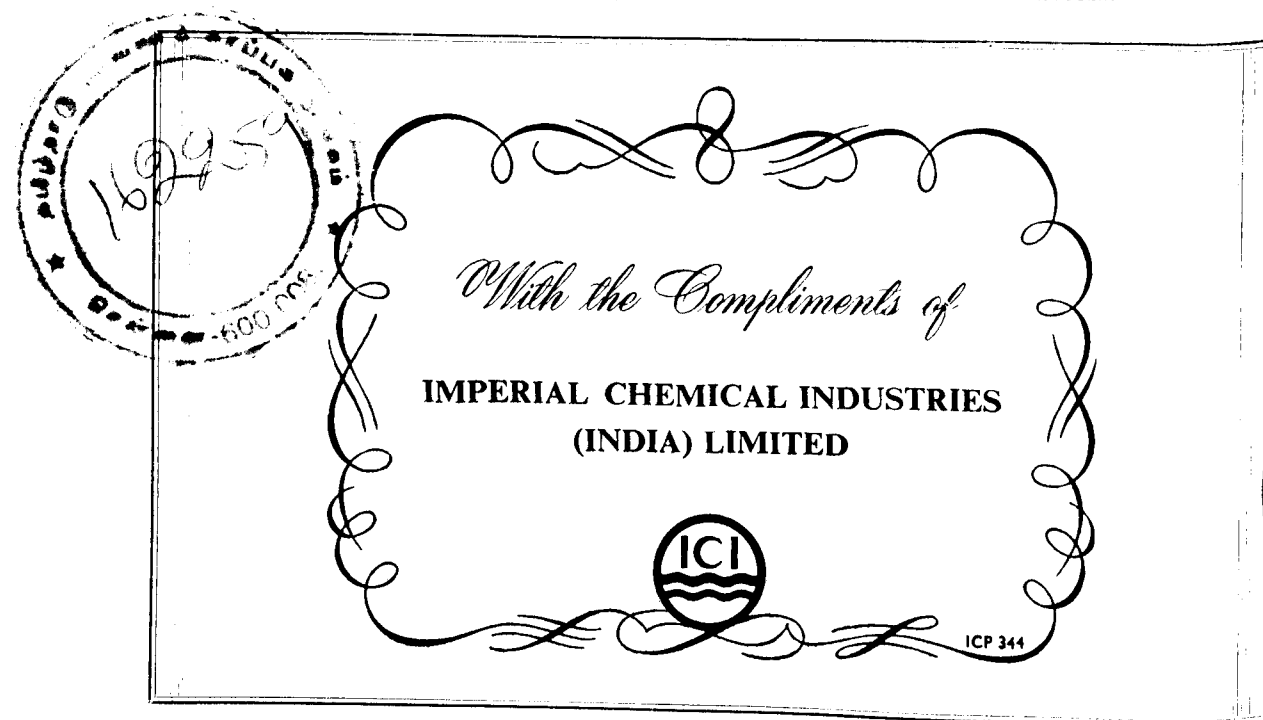
I am glad that your Union is publishing a Souvenir on the occasion of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists. In the Democratic Republic of our country journalism has a decisive voice in moulding public opinion on sound and democratic lines. We all know that even with limitations the Indian journalists have played a great role in the fight for Independence. I am confident that they will not fail in using their pen to help build the New India of our dreams. I wish your conference success.

Dr. C. P. RAMASWAMY AIYAR,

Vice-Chancellor, Banaras University :

I am glad to learn that the Fourth Annual Conference of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists is to be held in Madras from July 16 to 18.

Having acquired a first-hand knowledge of the living conditions and prospects of working journalists in the course of my work on the Press Commission, I am fully convinced of the need for the formation and successful working of such a Federation as yours. I wish the conference all success.



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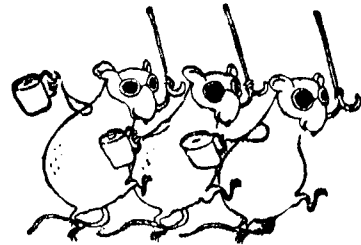
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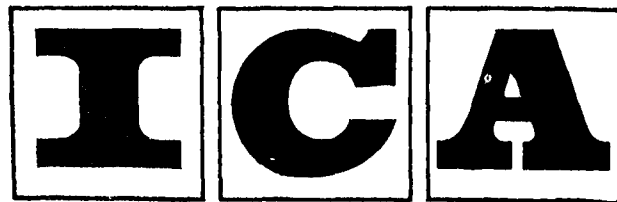
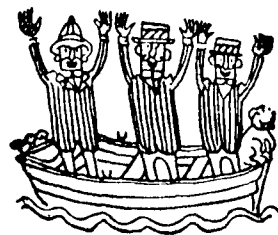
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MARCHES ON . . .

— BY A WORKING JOURNALIST —

THE fourth annual conference of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists at Madras marks the end of one chapter in the history of the working journalists' movement in the country. Though it is the fourth annual conference, in another three months the Federation will have completed five years of existence.

Right from the late thirties, leaders of the profession had been pleading for the formation of an all-India organisation to voice the opinions of the profession. In the beginning, the urge for such an organisation was just to have another platform for the purpose of voicing opposition to the foreign government's attacks on the liberties of the subject.

The growing industrialisation of the country, the flow of capital into the newspaper industry, the awareness of capital that control of the Press, though it would not give direct dividends, would yield indirect and much more valuable dividends in the shape of a "doctored" public opinion, the war and its opportunities for easy profits, and the slow encroachments on editorial freedom by the proprietorial interests brought about a disillusionment in the working journalist. The formation of the AINEC in 1940 amidst a fanfare of trumpets, its failure to safeguard editorial freedom, the meagre emoluments recommended by the AINEC for journalists and the imprimatur it gave to the discrimination between English language journalists and Indian language journalists helped to unite the working journalists and make them turn increasingly to trade unionism.

Ere long trade unions of working journalists

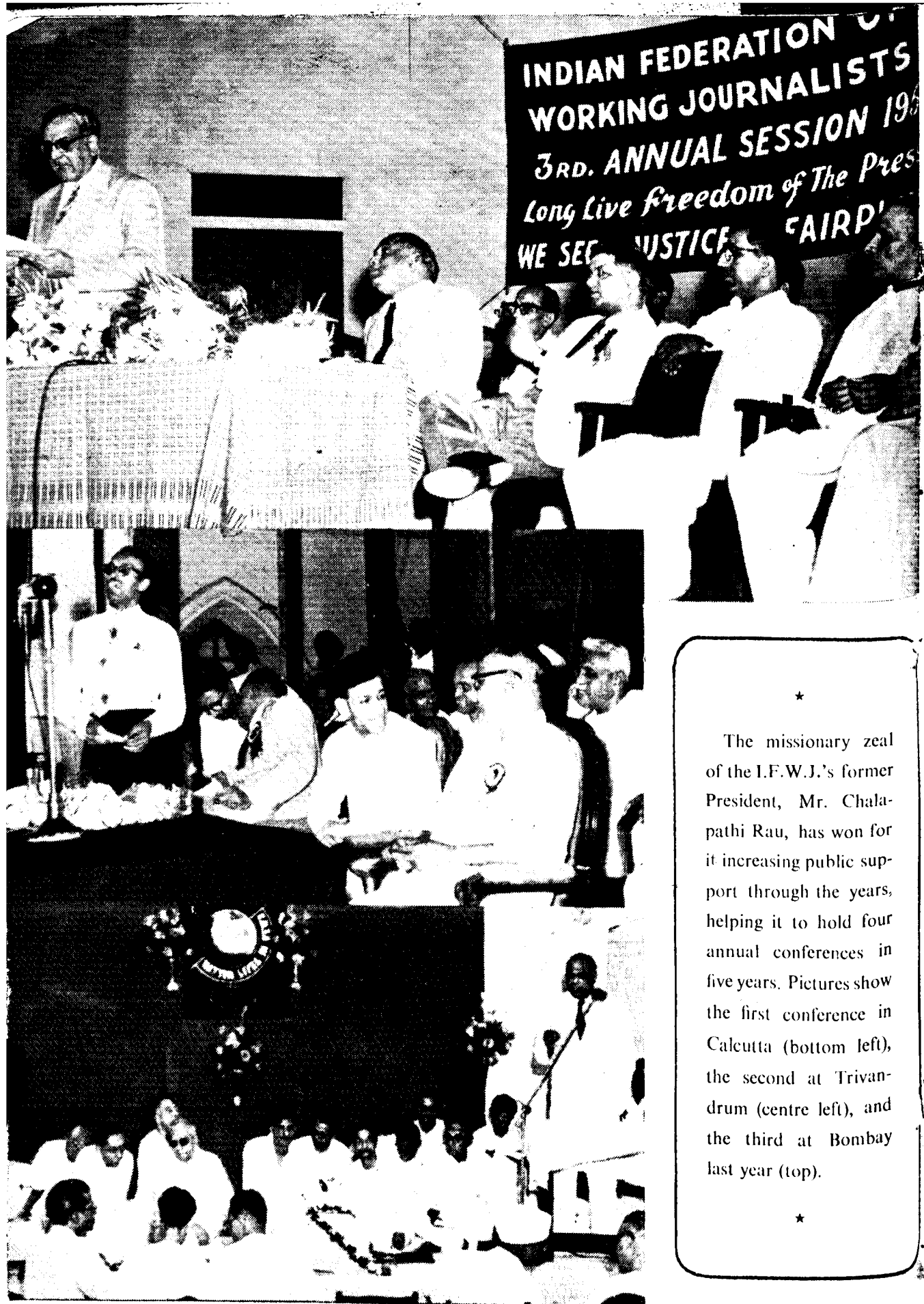
came into being in Bombay, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Simultaneously also arose the move for uniting all working journalists into one all-India organisation. In October 1950 representatives of over 23 journalists' organisations met in a convention in Delhi under the presidentship of Mr. M. Chalapathi Rau and decided to form the Indian Federation of Working Journalists. Meeting at Bombay six months later, the representatives decided to organise themselves on trade union lines.

Since that day, the Federation has been marching from strength to strength under the able leadership of Mr. Chalapathi Rau.

From the beginning the Federation has been well aware that raising of professional standards and status was inseparable from the problem of improving the economic conditions of journalists. The Federation can proudly claim that it has been the only organisation which has shown equal concern over the deteriorating working conditions of the journalists and the economic difficulties of the smaller and independent papers in the face of ruthless and unfair competition; it has opposed equally vehemently encroachments on the freedom of the Press by the Government and the legislatures.

The setting up of the Press Commission with wide terms of reference, as suggested by the Federation, the comprehensive enquiry by the Commission, despite the non-cooperative attitude of the proprietors, and the monumental report of the Commission are some of our notable achievements.

It was largely due to the Federation's efforts that the Press (Incitement to Crime)



★

The missionary zeal of the I.F.W.J.'s former President, Mr. Chalapathi Rau, has won for it increasing public support through the years, helping it to hold four annual conferences in five years. Pictures show the first conference in Calcutta (bottom left), the second at Trivandrum (centre left), and the third at Bombay last year (top).

★

Bill shed some of its reactionary features. Since then, the IFWJ has been opposing the periodic extension of the life of the Act. The Federation also opposed with partial success the proposal of the Government to give public servants a privileged position in respect of defamation, and make that offence cognisable.

STRONG PROTEST

Thanks to the Federation's strong protest and its submission of a memorandum to the Joint Select Committee of Parliament, backed by oral evidence and lobbying, the proposal was dropped. A subsequent move to enable States to launch prosecutions in such cases was also opposed, with the result that certain amendments had been carried out in the Bill which would mitigate the rigours of the proposal, including the one for payment of compensation.

The enactment of the Working Journalists (Industrial Disputes) Act is another major achievement to the credit of the Federation in the legislative sector.

Ever since the formation of the Federation, a number of individual cases have been taken up, and fought before tribunals and courts with varying degrees of success. A number of these were fought at provincial levels while two cases were fought at the centre through our standing counsel. The first was the case of the employees of the "Vishwamitra", of Kanpur. Though the employees won the case in the Supreme Court and some of the monetary benefits were recovered, the employers have been successfully evading the implementation of many portions of the award. The U.P. Government, whose attention has been repeatedly drawn to this, has not, however, taken any action.

The other case fought in the Supreme Court was that of Mr. V. N. Sinha of the "Searchlight" of Patna, who was dismissed from service following his trade union activities. The Court dismissed the case on technical grounds.

I. F. W. J. SOUVENIR, JULY 1955

When the "Times of India" and its two associate papers closed down their Calcutta editions in 1953 the Federation took up the cases of the employees and brought them before the two Houses of Parliament. Largely due to its efforts, the West Bengal Government appointed a tribunal. The award of the tribunal giving retrenchment compensation to the employees has just been upheld by the Labour Appellate Tribunal.

In 1955, the "Vishwamitra," of Delhi declared a lock-out when the employees had moved the payment of wages authority about the delay in the disbursal of wages. At the instance of the Federation, the dispute was referred to a tribunal which upheld the employees' cause. In the meantime, the management leased out the press to a third party.

Just after the signing of the Press Commission's Report last year, the management of the "Times of India" tried to forestall the implementation of the Report and sought to introduce a one-sided contract. The Federation took up the case and thanks to the intervention of the Central and Bombay Governments the contract was withdrawn.

One of the first things that the Federation did was to adopt a code of conduct at its convention in Delhi in October 1950. In one or two instances, units of the Federation had been able to persuade members to exercise some restraint particularly on occasions of communal tension.

A proposal was made to the Federation in 1953 for sponsoring a scheme for "training" senior Indian journalists at the Syracuse University in the United States. The scheme was rejected by the Federation after careful consideration of some of the conditions attached to it. Later, the AINEC attempted to sponsor the same scheme and called for trainees. The IFWJ, however, took up the matter with the Government of India and drew its attention to the objectionable aspects of the proposal. The scheme was ultimately rejected by the Government.

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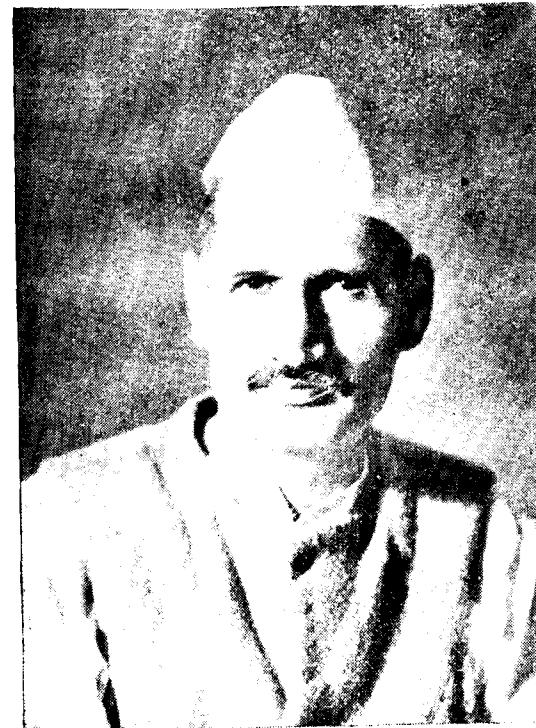
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OUR NEW PRESIDENT



Mr. BANARSIDAS CHATURVEDI

SIXTY-THREE-YEAR-OLD Banarsidas Chaturvedi, President-elect of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, is a Hindi writer and journalist of over 40 years' standing. Born in Ferozabad, in Agra district in U.P., he graduated from the Agra University and started life as a teacher in the Government High School, Farrukhabad. Later, he was appointed professor of Daly College for Chiefs at Indore, where he was a colleague of Mr. Sampurnanand, now Chief Minister of U.P. While at Indore, he wrote three books on the problems of Indians overseas. Mr. Chaturvedi gave up his job at Indore in 1920 to join Mr. C. F. Andrews in Santiniketan. He readily agreed to Gandhiji's invitation to work at Sabarmati Ashram in 1923. He was a professor in Gujarat National College. He visited

East Africa as a representative of the Indian National Congress to study the problem of Indians overseas. Due to differences on the question of compulsory spinning Mr. Chaturvedi left Sabarmati in 1925 and worked as correspondent for the Leader, Allahabad, besides free-lance writing. He was appointed editor of Vishal Bharat founded by Mr. Ramanand Chatterjee in 1927. He was also in charge of the Indians Overseas section of the *Modern Review* till 1937. On account of some domestic dislocation, he had to leave Calcutta for Tikamgarh, where he edited Madhukar, a Hindi fortnightly, from 1940 to 1946. He was elected member of the Council of States from Vindhya Pradesh in 1952.

Mr. Chaturvedi was the secretary of the Reception Committee at Indore when Mahatma Gandhi presided over the All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan in 1917 when he decided to launch the Hindi movement. He was the President of the Mathura session of the All-India Hindi Journalists' Association and presided over the first U.P. Hindi Journalists' Conference, a trade union organisation, at Kanpur in 1942. He was appointed member of the Subrahmaniam Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference which went into the question of salary scales for working journalists. He was the President of the Vindhya Pradesh Journalists' Union and presided over the U.P. Working Journalists' Conference in 1954.

Well-known among his publications are Pravasi Bharatvasi, Twenty-one years in Fiji (written on behalf of Mr. Tota Ram Sandha), Hamare Aradhya, Sansmaran, Rekha Chitra, Sahitya Aur Jeevan, and Satyanarayana Kaviratna. Mr. Chaturvedi is considered the best sketch writer and biographer in Hindi and was awarded a prize of Rs. 1,200 by the U. P. Government last year.

★
Greetings and best wishes

to the

MADRAS UNION OF JOURNALISTS

and to the

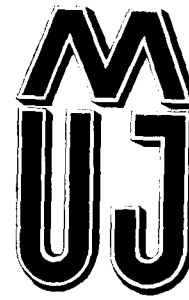
*Delegates to the Fourth Annual Conference
OF THE I. F. W. J.*

From

The Swadesamitran

Madras - 2

★



From Strength ... TO STRENGTH ...

BY C. N. CHITTA RANJAN (GENERAL SECRETARY)

WITHIN six months of its inauguration, the Madras Union of Journalists is today in the proud position of being the only organisation in the State competent to speak on behalf of the working journalists here. Over 85 per cent of the journalists employed in Madras City's eight newspapers, news agencies and leading periodicals are on the rolls of the Union, and from the sympathetic interest shown in the Union's progress by non-member working journalists it is evident that cent per cent membership is only a matter of time. In two districts most journalists have come into the Union, and the response in the other districts is distinctly encouraging. And although the M. U. J. is among the most recent additions to the great fraternity of the I. F. W. J., it is among the most active units of the Federation.

The idea of journalists organising themselves on trade union lines is not new to members of the profession in the City. As far back as April 1949 a resolution was moved by the progressive elements in the Southern India Journalists' Federation to convert it into a trade union; it was hotly debated for several hours, but in the end the mover had to withdraw it. With that, interest in that organisation began to flag. Deteriorating service conditions gradually led to members of the profession losing faith in annual get-togethers and pious resolutions without sanctions of any sort. But prejudices and fear of possible victimisation stood in the way of a trade union taking shape straightaway.

These fears and prejudices, however, gradu-

ally disappeared as the Indian Federation of Working Journalists, with its all-India compass, developed within four years of its birth into a force to be reckoned with. The Press Commission's finding, on the basis of incontrovertible evidence, that working journalists organising themselves on trade union lines was an inescapable necessity ended the last lingering doubts, and on October 25 last year 15 journalists gathered at the Mahajana Sabha Hall, Mount Road, to bring into being the Madras Union of Journalists. Within two weeks, the Union, eighty strong, adopted its constitution and rules. And by the time it was formally inaugurated by the State Chief Minister, Mr K. Kamaraj, on January 29 this year, its strength had grown to 140. The Chief Minister's forthright remarks on the need for the Union and advice to the members of the profession to stand united and unwavering if they wanted fair treatment from their employers helped many still outside the Union to make up their minds. Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's exposition, at a meeting to mourn the death of Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha, of the reasons that compelled the Press Commission to plump for trade unionism cleared any doubts that were still left.

The moment the Union was formed it was decided to affiliate the M. U. J. to the I. F. W. J., and this decision was immediately translated into action by sending an observer to the Bombay session of the Federation. The manner in which the M. U. J. responded to the call of the Federation to observe December 1, 1954, as "Implementation Day"

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brought the two close together long before actual affiliation, which took place on January 30 this year. Registration of the Union under the Trade Unions Act had taken place two days earlier.

The M. U. J. was extremely fortunate in having had Mr. Pothan Joseph to preside over its first conference. Apart from the inspiring address he delivered, he was most helpful in guiding our deliberations and we are grateful to him for it.

Even before the formal inauguration of the Union, correspondence had been initiated with working journalists in newspaper industry centres in the mofussil like Madurai, Coimbatore, Kozhikode and Mangalore, with a view to formation of branches in those towns. The response has been most encouraging, and we have no doubt that before long the M. U. J. will have on its rolls every working journalist in the State.

Having brought working journalists into a single, purposeful organisation, the M. U. J. faced the task of developing closer contacts among members of the profession who normally had few opportunities of meeting one another and exchanging ideas. The problem was one of finding a habitation for the Union, and naturally this had to be done at the headquarters first. So far an oilman stores in Triplicane, run on a cooperative basis by a number of journalists, had provided a postal address for the Union. After a hunt we found an open terrace close to the nerve centre of the City and, erecting a thatched shed over it, converted it into the nerve-centre of the journalistic profession in the City.

The next step—that of providing recreational facilities—followed. Indoor games were provided at the Union premises, in addition to newspapers and magazines. We have also opened a small library with gift books and hope to expand it in course of time into a complete library in the fullest sense of the term.

The Club was formally inaugurated by Mr. Shanmuga Rajeswara Sethupathi, Minister

for Public Works, on April 2 this year. The Minister agreed with our President's suggestion that we should have facilities for outdoor games as well and promised to help us secure such a place in the Government Estate, Mount Road.

The Club is a beehive of activity, and all members make it a point to spend some time there. This naturally has helped them to get closer to one another and thus has promoted consolidation of the Union.

The strength of the Union today is over 200, and the membership is increasing. This strength is reflected in the manner in which our infant Union has undertaken to play host to an all-India conference at short notice. Every member of the Union, and even many a non-union journalist, has been at this job with vigour and enthusiasm. Every one of them has made the success of the conference his or her personal business. The conference has indeed served the great purpose of showing us how much we can achieve by united endeavour.

Conditions in the newspaper offices in this State are deplorable. Many offices have no scales of pay, and those that have do not implement them. In leading newspaper offices in the City, increments have been withheld for two years and more. Probationers who have completed over twice the period fixed are yet to be confirmed. In one office the axe has come down on two members of the staff, one with 27 years service and the other with six years service. In most establishments elementary amenities like conveyance for reporters working late into the night and a rest-room for night-duty sub-editors are not provided. The Union has to strive to set right this state of affairs and that can be done only by standing united ourselves and by strengthening the I. F. W. J.

A survey of the past year inspires us with hope for the future. Many hurdles lie ahead, but with the unity that is growing in our ranks there is little doubt that we will forge ahead.

FROM PAVEMENT TO HUT

UNTIL about six months ago, newsmen in Madras City had no place where they could meet, chew the cud or just relax after their daily rounds. It was a problem with nary a solution in sight. They made a shop famous on Mount Road—not that they bought up all the stuff there—by making the pavement in front of it their rendezvous after 11 in the morning. Even information officers were known to make an appointment with reporters there. Rain or sun, that is where they kept their dates—a pavement on Mount Road. It was a sad state of affairs.

Before the Madras Union of Journalists was formed (80 per cent of the journalists in the City are now on its rolls) there was an arrangement at the S. I. J. F. Press Club for reporters to meet. But that arrangement broke down after a three-month experiment. Later, when the M. U. J. was formed reporters were still without a meeting place.

One of the first objectives of the M. U. J. was, therefore, to provide a club which would be open to all, even non-union members. (One of the objectives of the Union, according to its constitution, is to promote *camaraderie* among journalists). So we set about the task of finding suitable premises in a central locality. It was not an easy job. Either the rent was too high or the place too small; a good building was usually too far away. As the Union started from scratch as far as resources were concerned, the question of finance presented a major problem. We had to live within our means; we had to carry on our union activities, committed though we were to opening a club and providing at least elementary amenities. Finally, we pitched on a place in Narasingapuram St., a stone's throw from Mount Road—and you don't have to throw very hard.

We landed on an open terrace!

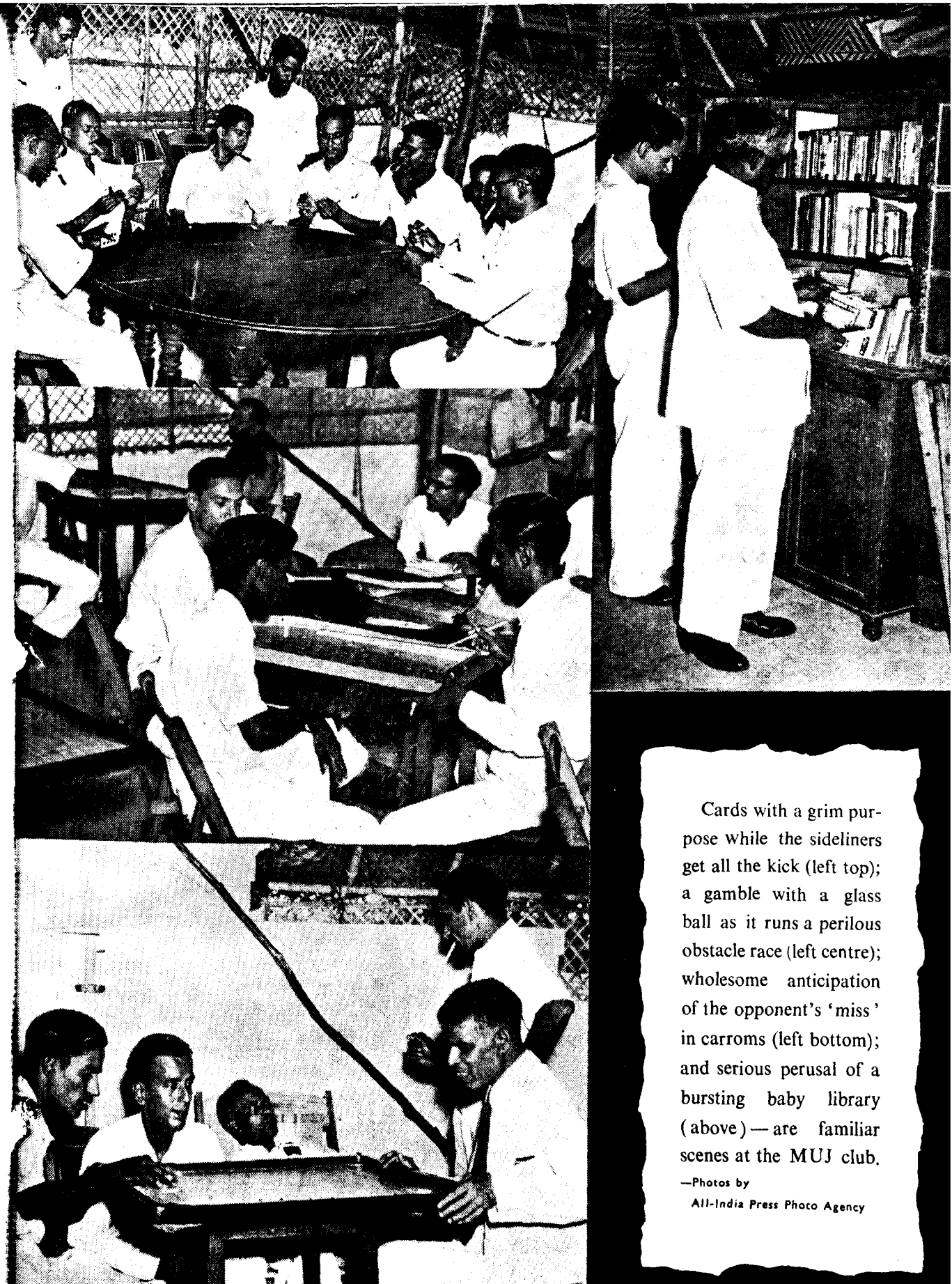
Undaunted, we decided to erect a shed on it. Now we have our own rendezvous—we have moved from pavement to hut. And it will not be long before we move into our own pucca building, if everything goes according to our plans.

Meanwhile, we have furnished the present place in a modest way; we have provided elementary amenities. Members and others came forward with token donations for easy chairs and indoor games equipment. The U.S.I.S., the B.I.S. and the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society have donated books and periodicals. There is chess, carroms, bagatelle, cards for those who like to play these games. We have drawn up plans for more games. For all that we need more funds and more space. We have been able to collect some donations towards increasing the amenities. We have vision and hope. We will march on; we are already on the way from hut to building.

You are the sentinels of public interest. You reflect and mould public opinion. You disseminate knowledge and educate people. If your minds are preoccupied with such considerations as how to make both ends meet and if your lives are full of suffering, that will naturally be reflected in the work you do. If your minds are confused and overburdened, your presentation of events will tend to be coloured by your personal suffering. That is why I say that in the interests of the people themselves you should be kept above want and be enabled to discharge your duties properly.

—MR. K. KAMARAJ

I. F. W. J. SOUVENIR, JULY 1955



Cards with a grim purpose while the sideliners get all the kick (left top); a gamble with a glass ball as it runs a perilous obstacle race (left centre); wholesome anticipation of the opponent's 'miss' in carroms (left bottom); and serious perusal of a bursting baby library (above)—are familiar scenes at the MUJ club.

—Photos by
All-India Press Photo Agency



PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

..... *Misters all*

• By •

POTHAN JOSEPH

In the business of advertising, attention must be arrested and that requires the presentation of contrasts. In railway publicity, for instance, it would be boring to fill space with pictures of locomotives or station masters at Bhowani Junction. In the Burmah-Shell campaign, so ably conducted by Mr. P. G. Rose, the drama revolves round a white-teethed rodent, hat on, with scenes of pumping oil, since such technique would run into the pattern of catalogue production carrying no surprise events. For the same reason, an article in a souvenir number of the Indian Federation of Working Journalists should not, I feel, be dominated by the Rajadhyaksha Report or the continuous pledge of Minister Keshkar that the Government's intention is to implement the recommendations, unawed by vested interests or by managing editors who are their own employers and employees at the same time, in sweet alternation. It has often occurred to me that in certain matters of presentation and taste there should be uniformity in the columns of papers. For instance, on the use of the prefix "Mr." or "Sri" there should be common agreement amongst papers produced in English and in Indian languages. (I forego, with regret, the happy and honest *panchama* word "vernacular", out of deference to Jawaharlal Nehru).

In the name board of the Central Secretariat, the honorific is "Sri" which, apart from being a token of respect in all parts of India, could also be construed by philologists of future ages as a symbolic abbreviation in three letters (SRI) of the highly moral appellation "Satyagrahi". Since the voicing on

the letter "S" in English differs as between "song" and "sugar", the practice in the North is to give body to the sibilant by printing it as "Shri", the feminine being "Shrimathi", though the soul-mate might better be described as "Shrewmathi". In the case of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the handle "Maulana" has been meticulously preserved whilst most Muslims have "Shri" substituted for "Janab" which Mahatma Gandhi had respectfully used. In the print of a bare name, the right course is to adhere to the custom of the language adopted by a newspaper, but I believe a vigilant regard for the promotion of Hindi brought the difference between "Mr." and "Shri" into the court circular of New Delhi. When C. R. was Governor-General, the court circular mentioned "Mr." as the title for all commoners indicating no communal distinction as in the use of "Janab" for our Muslim compatriots.

GOOFISH

The rule in the issue of a court circular in my time had stated that it should be printed in the exact form given on pain of the Military Secretary withholding the hand-out in the event of any alteration in the editing. Exactly as given, the paper used to print the stuff, once an important branch of daily information telegraphed by the Associated Press to all parts of the country. After Swaraj it is more important to know whom the Prime Minister received in the daily traffic of events rather than the names of guests at tea in Rashtrapathi Bhavan. After C. R.'s time, "Shri" replaced the generic "Mr.",

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MEMBER A. B. C. IN INDIA

THE LEADING PUBLICATION SOUTH OF THE VINDHYAS.

but now that Governor Mahtab has dropped the circular altogether, there is less embarrassment caused through this species of cultural dissemination in the land. In the two main English-edited newspapers in Calcutta under Indian ownership, the term "Sri" has been adopted, an illustrious rise in the ladder since the new abbreviation had at least displaced the old mockery "Babu" with its insulting association traceable in expressions like "Babu English" and "Babu Jabberjee". The *Statesman* rightly sticks to "Mr." And grammar, usage and correctness demand in the context of English editions the practice prevailing in the English language itself. In Acharya Kripalani's paper *Vigil*, the ineptness of vernacularisation is carried to the extent of editorials speaking about "Shri Eden" and "Shri Churchill", though there has been no occasion for reference to "Lindlithgow Prabhu" since that nobleman is no longer in the land of the living. Incidentally, the misplacement of "Shri" has been extended to the length of describing say Mr. Justice Seshadri as Shri Justice Seshadri, a clear malapropism. The solecism calls for expunction by a plain resolution of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, hoping that it would be respected as mandatory. I am orthodox enough to believe that we shall be in better company regarding the use of honorifics in English diction if we notice the custom of papers like the *London Times* where the names of foreign statesmen are invariably printed in the English language without any persiflage demonstrative of origin, that is, with the plain prefix "Mr."

RAJYAPAL

Ours is a free country where no pressure can be brought on the way an individual chooses to describe his own esteemed self. In the Lucknow court circular, Mr. K. M. Munshi commits the originality of designating himself as "Shri Rajyapal," so impressive of Sanskrit scholarship, but down in the South, Gover-

nor Sri Prakasa sedulously refrains from the goofiness of "Shri" in spurious proof of patriotism and Oriental culture; he is content to be known as a classical Cambridge man with "Mr." in his Guindy court circulars. I should have expected some temptation for patriotic pluming in the *Hindustan Times*, edited by Devadas Gandhi, but it adheres to "Mr." in good tradition. The reason, I believe, is that Editor Devadas Gandhi retains his childhood-ear for English and refrains from the jar of "Shri" or "Shriman." It must be remembered that Mahatma Gandhi's style of life in South Africa was fairly at par with the patrician vogue of Motilal Nehru in Anand Bhavan, the resident staff containing European tutors and governesses. Deep down in my heart, the main cause of my admiration for Gandhiji at first was that he could strip himself of all the luxury of a born aristocrat and a prince among men by personal achievement; but the point is that Devadas Gandhi, brought up in such surroundings, retains his sensitiveness in the appropriate use of "Mr." in the compositions of his editorial columns in the *Hindustan Times*. In Bombay the less boorish papers, printed in English with some flair for the language, preserve the correct mode of "Mr."

Sometimes when we are advised that an Indian Ambassador (or even the Prime Minister abroad) signed his name in Hindi, a keen thrill is presumed to ensue, but then a signature has no particular language; it can be any form like the mark of Mr Bill Stumps in "Pickwick Papers," just a cross or a convex scrawl. Like lower organisms, a signature has neither specific shape or sex. Coming back to the use of the prefix "Mr." in English-edited papers, it would be well not to turn gawky by tearing away from the listening idiom, so to speak, of the original language itself. The difficulty comes from the sense of the inferiority complex implied in a retreat. For instance, I often feel that Editor Altaf Hussain of *Dawn* must be suffering from a predicament

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of his own creation. When India was partitioned, he denied the name "India" to three-fourths of the territory, and insisted on calling it "Bharat". Some Satyagrahis on our side clamoured for designation, "India that is Bharat" in the first Article of our Constitution just as the Pakistan Constituent Assembly thought much of the invocation of "Allah, the Merciful". The result is that under the hobgoblin of consistency, *Dawn* has in its fulminations to speak of Bharat and Bharatis, and not of India and Indians though international usage and U.N. literature testify to India being India and Indians being Indians. The Editor remains stuck, fearing that correction might be taken for a climb-down. An interesting incident was the late Mr. A. A. Hayles's substitution of the title "Sri" in place of "Mr." in the *Mail* reserving the prefix "Mr." on racial grounds, as against "Sri" for the rest, I believe, in a fit of absent-minded "nativisation". Staunchedly he stood by his unfortunate innovation until the very end, pertinacity being one of Mr. Hayles's outstanding characteristics. He insisted on an M. P. being known as "M.U.P." but escape soon came after his lamented death at the close of forty years of service in India. During a month's period of mourning, the "M.U.P." and "Sri" business was reverently upheld by his successor, Mr. Allan Taylor, who later restored the "Mr." and hauled down the "M.U.P."

flag to the relief of readers and the recovery of circulation. Nobody's dignity or prestige for consistency stood glaringly compromised by the change after a convenient gap.

Why that purist in English language, Khasa Subba Rau, should have plumped for the crudity of "Sri" in his *Swatantra* I cannot divine, but again I take it that after stepping into the little puddle of a *gaucherie*, he probably thinks any stepping out might be noticed even by the common man whom he habitually befriends. Editorial probity is, for him, the most unpurchaseable thing in the world but why persistence in an egregious mistake? Fortunately he is on six months' tour abroad, and a gap has arisen, my beloved daughter in the profession Santha Rungachari officiating on his behalf. I should deem it a memorable contribution if Santha quietly starts putting in "Mr." in place of Subba Rau's ill-judged addiction to "Sri" by way of patriotic flummery. It would be a change towards correctitude and respectability. Tinkering with linguistic forms does not advance national individuality and I request that Editors who have gone astray on this issue should restore "Mr." and get rid of an outlandish aberration. He should be thankful to Santha for rectification, remembering the scriptural saying: "Some have entertained angels unawares."

*And for a' that and for a' that
Men shall be Mist'ers for a' that.*

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.....A Tribute to the Late Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha

(Extracts from the speech delivered by Dr. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar when he addressed a meeting of the Madras Union of Journalists, convened to mourn the death of Mr. Rajadhyaksha in the second week of February last).

ALTHOUGH Mr. Justice Rajadhyaksha was a very dear and intimate friend of mine, I learnt to admire and respect him more after being associated with him in the work of the Press Commission. He never went into a subject unless he had gone through all the available authorities. He was a diligent student, and it was really his diligence that undermined his health. It was with considerable hesitation that he accepted the appointment as Chairman of the Press Commission at the instance of Dr. B. V. Keskar and the Prime Minister.

Mr. Rajadhyaksha had astonishing industry, monumental patience, profound legal insight, consummate devotion to duty and an inflexible sense of justice and fairplay, all of which made him what he was. In fact, he had overburdened himself with work, and that was perhaps the cause of his end. After the strenuous work on the Press Commission, Mr. Rajadhyaksha was overburdened by the tremendous responsibility of the Bank dispute adjudication business. Personally, I would plead guilty in having persuaded him to accept this work, and I am really very sorry for it in the light of what has happened. In the work of the Press Commission, the contribution of Mr. Rajadhyaksha was unique and was by far the largest single contribution made by an individual. When the Press Commission started its

work, my whole outlook and attitude altered because my idea had been until then that there was very little to justify the utilisation of Labour legislation in favour of working journalists. It had always been held that working journalists were creative artists and that they should not be banded with people who work under compulsion or under contract and that they should not be members of trade unions. As evidence accumulated before the Commission, Mr. Rajadhyaksha and myself, who were originally very much against what may be called regimentation of working journalists into a trade union organisation and who were also against the application of the ordinary Labour laws to them, found that the exhibitions of good treatment were so few and the general conditions of working journalists so precarious, fitful and liable to unforeseen casualties that, unless they were adequately and fairly protected, there was no possibility of ending that sense of complete frustration which seemed to envelop the minds and souls of working journalists. It was with the conviction that journalists should not get into workmen's organisations and that Labour and industrial legislation should not be applied to them that we started work on the Commission, but as evidence gathered before us we had to agree with Mr. Chalapathi Rau, who had taken the other side with remarkable

L. F. W. J. SOUVENIR, JULY 1955

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clarity and fervour, and come round to that view.

There have been unjust criticisms against the recommendations of the Press Commission. Not one of the recommendations we have made, not one decision we have arrived at is one which is not borne on the wings of a complete case made out on the basis of the evidence given before us, documentary and oral. The Commission has been accused of partiality and popularity seeking. But the whole point is we discharged our duties not as politicians but as men vested with judicial and moral responsibility, and we did not take a single step without there being some evidence at the back of it.

Mr. Rajadhyaksha, with his wonderful equanimity and freedom from any temper, became most conspicuous in this regard. We were insulted more than once in the course of our labours. In spite of all that, largely on account of the inflexible judicious temper

of Mr. Rajadhyaksha, we did not lose our patience but were able to do justice even to those who lost their patience with themselves and us.

It is not for me to speculate on what will happen to the recommendations of the Press Commission. The Government seem to have already accepted the recommendations regarding working journalists *vis-a-vis* their employers and in relation to the right of collective bargaining. I trust that they will accept the recommendation with regard to the Press Council which I consider absolutely fundamental.

...The journalism which comes from the pen of frustrated and embittered men cannot by its very nature be healthy and robust journalism. Mr. M. C. CHAGLA



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Working Journalists And Trade Disputes

By C. RAGHAVAN (Secretary, IFWJ)

THE enactment of the Working Journalists (Industrial Disputes) Act on March 12, 1955, is a significant development in the trade union movement among working journalists. It places at the disposal of working journalists a machinery for the settlement of collective disputes between them and their employers over conditions of service. There is, however, some misunderstanding among many journalists about the scope of the Act and the rights and privileges it confers on working journalists.

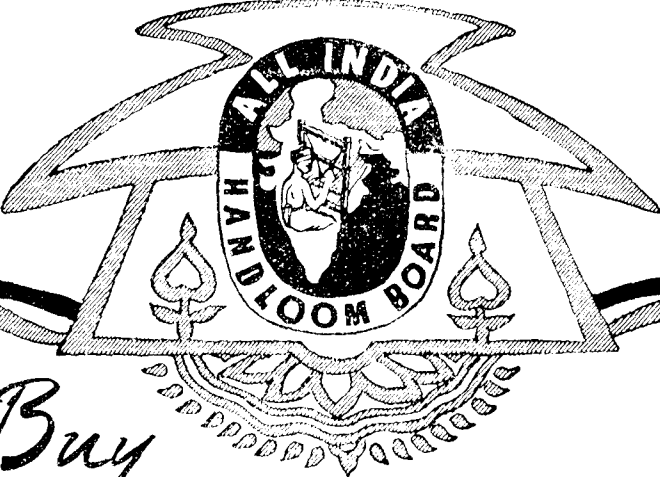
By Act I of 1955, the Industrial Disputes Act is to apply to working journalists as it applies to workmen. Probably as a sop to those who fight shy of being called "workmen" Parliament has not said that a working journalist is a "workman" but has only said that the I. D. Act will apply to working journalists as it applies to workmen.

WORKING JOURNALIST

Who is a working journalist? A working journalist, for the purposes of this Act, is "a person whose principal avocation is that of a journalist and who is employed as such in, or in relation to, any establishment for the production or publication of a newspaper or in, or in relation to any news agency or syndicate supplying material for publication in any newspaper." The definition includes an illustrative (but not exhaustive) list of categories coming under it—editor, leader-writer, news editor, sub-editor, feature-writer, copytaster, reporter, correspondent, cartoonist, news photographer and proof-reader.

There are, however, two exceptions, namely, persons employed "mainly" in an administrative or managerial capacity, and persons who, employed in a supervisory capacity, exercise functions "mainly" managerial in nature. The definition is an improvement on that of workmen in the I. D. Act, in that even supervisory categories (with some exceptions) are brought within its scope. The qualification of administrative or managerial functions by the word "mainly" is also significant. It will be a question of fact in each individual case. Those performing some administrative or managerial jobs incidental to their real journalistic work will not come under the exception. The use of the word "mainly", instead of the generic expression "primarily", might also mean that what has to be looked into is the quantum of the different jobs performed by an individual, and not their generic nature.

The I. D. Act comes into the picture when there is an "industrial dispute." An industrial dispute is "any dispute or difference between employers and employees, between workmen and workmen, or between employers and workmen regarding the employment, non-employment or the terms of employment or conditions of labour of any person." The definition is wide enough to bring all sources of friction between employers and their workmen or trade unions within its scope. (The question of recognition of a union is, however, not an industrial dispute according to some rulings). An individual dispute between a workman and his employer is not



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an industrial dispute and will be governed by the ordinary laws of tort; but it will become an industrial dispute the moment that individual grievance is taken up by a body of workmen. A body of workmen can certainly take up the question of termination of service of a workman and demand his reinstatement. Questions concerning wages, allowances and other emoluments, bonus, leave, hours of work, facilities and amenities to be provided, intensity of work and workload, punishment and other disciplinary action, these and other matters can be the subject matter of industrial disputes.

The Act provides for the setting up of various authorities for the settlement of industrial disputes—Conciliation Officers or Boards of Conciliation, Courts of Inquiry and Industrial Tribunals. These may be set up by the appropriate government, which, in the case of the newspaper industry, is the State Government.

THE PROCEDURE

Let us see what happens when a union has certain grievances about the conditions of employment of its members. It will discuss them in its executive and general body meetings and formulate what it wants to be done. These will become the "demands" of the Union and will be forwarded to the employer or employers by the Secretary of the Union. It will be couched in polite language. Even if they are in the form of "requests", they are "demands" and form the genesis of an industrial dispute. Care has to be taken in the formulation of these demands and their presentation to the employer, as they will form the basis for future discussions not only with the employers but before other authorities too. The Union Secretary, while forwarding the "demands", will also request that the employer might meet the Union across the table to discuss the demands.

When the demands are received, if the employer is wise—most Indian employers

unfortunately are not, except those who have found from practical experience that it does not pay in the long run either to go through adjudication or strike or even maintain a state of tension or demoralisation in the establishment—he will send for the leaders of the Union and discuss things with them across the table. If both sides show a spirit of accommodation and an agreement is reached, then the terms of the settlement are put down on paper and both parties affix their signatures to it.

CONCILIATION

If the employer does not call for the Union representatives or if direct negotiations do not yield any fruit, the Union may move the conciliation officer or the appropriate Government. On receipt of such an application, or of his own accord, the conciliation officer may begin conciliation proceedings to settle the dispute. He may meet both parties, direct them to appear before him separately or collectively, and he may take such other steps as he deems fit to investigate the nature of the disputes and the merits of the claims on both sides. If he finds a meeting ground between the two and is able to bring about a compromise, he will record the terms of the settlement and report to Government.

If no settlement is reached in conciliation proceedings, the officer should report to the Government as soon as may be after the close of the proceedings. This report should be submitted within 14 days of the commencement of the conciliation proceedings by him.

TRIBUNAL

If the conciliation officer reports failure, the stage is set for the next step. If the Government is satisfied (it is purely a subjective satisfaction) that an industrial dispute exists, or if it apprehends one, it may refer the dispute to a tribunal, of its own accord or on application by any of the parties to the dispute. This is a discretionary right of the

State. If the Government declines to intervene, the workmen may have no alternative but to strike.

However, if both parties to the dispute, either separately or jointly, move the Government for reference to a tribunal, then the Government must refer it. It has no discretion left.

When a dispute is referred for adjudication, the tribunal should hear the dispute as expeditiously as possible and submit its award to the Government. The award must be published within a month. The tribunal can take evidence at any stage, and also examine the books of the employer, though some of the information it obtains or gets may be treated as confidential.

Industrial Tribunals have much wider powers than ordinary courts. They are not bound by principles of Res Judicata; questions can be reopened time and again. There is nothing like a case law, as is understood in civil courts, though decisions in other cases

may be, and are in practice, a guidance. Contrary to accepted canons of civil jurisprudence and law of torts between master and servant, an industrial tribunal may give an award which may have the effect of creating a new contract between an employer and his workmen.

A workman or body of workmen can be represented before a conciliation officer or tribunal by another workman, authorised in this behalf, or an officer of a registered trade union. While this is the general principle, some State enactments, particularly the Bombay and Madhya Pradesh Acts, provide in detail about representative unions and appearance of workmen before tribunals.

APPELLATE TRIBUNAL

An appeal will lie against a decision of an industrial tribunal to the Labour Appellate Tribunal on substantial questions of law or when the award involves matters relating to wages, bonus or travelling allowances,

contributions by an employer to the pension or provident fund, gratuity, classification by grades, retrenchment of workers, or any other matter that may be prescribed. An award of a tribunal will take effect 30 days after its publication, but if an appeal has been filed, the Appellate Tribunal may stay the award. The award, or, if it is modified by the Appellate Tribunal, the modified award will take effect 30 days after the decision has been pronounced.

An award is binding for one year, but the appropriate Government may terminate an award earlier, or extend it by periods not more than one year at a time, and not exceeding a total period of three years. Even after the expiry of the period of an award, it will continue to bind both parties unless it is terminated by either side after giving two months' notice.

While it is the duty of the Government to see that an award is implemented—and it can prosecute the employer for non-implementation—the monetary benefits arising out of an award can also be recovered by an individual workman just like any other debt owing to him.

The Act places certain obligations on both parties. During the pendency of conciliation or adjudication proceedings workmen may not go on strike, nor can employers declare a lock-out. No strike may be called or a lock-out declared during the time an award or settlement is in force in respect of matters covered by the settlement or award. These are penal provisions whose infringement attracts punishment.

VALUABLE RIGHT

Once the privilege of adjudication has been granted, the workman has a very valuable right. During the pendency of the conciliation or adjudication proceedings, his conditions of service applicable immediately before the commencement of such proceedings may not be altered to his prejudice, nor can he be

discharged or punished by dismissal or otherwise. If this right is infringed, the aggrieved workman, without the intervention of the Government, can move the tribunal before which the proceedings are pending, and the tribunal can pass orders.

All the above, except probably the last one, are merely privileges. But by the amendment of 1953 (Act 43 of 1953), for the first time a very valuable right has been conferred on workmen. It is the retrenchment and lay-off benefits. Under the retrenchment provisions, no workman can be "retrenched" without satisfying some conditions: (i) the principle of "last-come-first-go" must be applied, (ii) the names of the retrenched workers should be kept on a register and they should be given the first chance when a vacancy arises or when new hands are recruited; and (iii) compensation must be given on the basis laid down in the Act.

The law provides that the retrenched workman should be given one month's notice pay and 15 days gratuity for every year of service, calculated on the average of the last three months' wages (basic salary and allowances together). These benefits are to be in addition to the normal retirement or other benefits provided by the employer.

"Retrenchment" for the purposes of the Act does not have its ordinary meaning, but means "termination by the employer of the services of a workman for any reason whatsoever, otherwise than as a punishment inflicted by way of disciplinary action". It will not, however, include voluntary retirement of the workman, or retirement of the workman on reaching the age of superannuation, if the contract of employment between the employer and the workman concerned contains a stipulation in that behalf or termination of the services of a workman on the ground of continuous ill-health.

It has been held that every one of these are "objective" conditions and can therefore

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be subject to the scrutiny of tribunals. Whether there is any need for retrenchment can also be the basis of a dispute. (Incidentally, that right was first conceded in a case involving the workmen of "Vishwamitra", Kanpur, which the IFWJ took up and fought successfully right up to the Supreme Court). Also, the benefits granted are individual rights and as such the workman concerned can himself move, without the intervention of a government or a union, for the collection of his dues under the above provisions. The law is not, however, clear—the question is still before courts—whether non-fulfilment of the conditions makes the alleged retrenchment void and gives the workman the right of reinstatement (with arrears of pay and all that) or it gives him only a right to collect his dues.

'MAGNA CARTA'

The enactment of the Working Journalists (Industrial Disputes) Act was rightly des-

cribed by Mr. R. Venkataraman, M.P., during the debate in the Lok Sabha, as the "Magna Carta" of working journalists. He was, however, misunderstood by many (probably because of a not-too-close acquaintance with English history), who pointed out that the I.D. Act conferred only privileges, and in any event only provided a machinery and did not settle their grievances.

The British obtained the Magna Carta from King John, but it took them several centuries and many a battle (including one in which a King was beheaded) before they obtained in practice what had been given on paper. If working journalists stand united and strengthen their organisations, and if the unions are active, reasonable and judicious, I have no doubt that before long many of their demands will be met, for no government or society embarking on large plans of reconstruction can afford to keep intellectual workers like journalists discontented and suffering from a sense of oppression.

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U. N. Draft Code ——— ————— For Journalists

ATTEMPTS to convene an international conference of news enterprises and journalist associations to finalise the text of an International Code of Ethics for Journalists have been given up for the present by the United Nations. This subject has been before the UN and its subsidiary bodies in one form or the other for the last several years. Under the direction of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General addressed various international and national organisations twice seeking their views on the calling of such a conference. The response to the UN Secretary's communications was poor; only 51 news enterprises and associations expressed themselves in favour of such a conference. Of the organisations addressed in India, only the United Press of India news agency and the Indian Federation of Working Journalists replied welcoming the idea of a conference. The UN General Assembly, at its session in December, 1954, reviewed the question and decided to take no further action except to circulate the draft code to the organisations concerned.

The following is the text of the draft Code:—

Preamble:

Freedom of information and of the Press is a fundamental human right and is the touchstone of all the freedoms consecrated in the Charter of the United Nations and proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and it is essential to the promotion and to the preservation of peace.

That freedom will be better safe-guarded when the personnel of the Press and of all other media of information constantly and

voluntarily strive to maintain the highest sense of responsibility, being deeply imbued with the moral obligation to be truthful and to search for the truth in reporting, in explaining and in interpreting facts.

This International Code of Ethics is, therefore, proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for all engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information and in describing contemporary events by the written word, by word of mouth or by any other means of expression.

Article I:

The personnel of the Press and of all other media of information should do all in their power to ensure that the information the public receives is factually accurate. They should check all items of information to the best of their ability. No fact should be wilfully distorted and no essential fact should be deliberately suppressed.

Article II:

A high standard of professional conduct requires devotion to the public interest. The seeking of personal advantage and the promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare, for whatever reason, is not compatible with such professional conduct.

Wilful calumny, slander, libel and unfounded accusations are serious professional offences; so also is plagiarism.

Good faith with the public is the foundation of good journalism. Any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate should be spontaneously and imme-

diately rectified. Rumour and unconfirmed news should be identified and treated as such.

Article III:

Only such tasks as are compatible with the integrity and dignity of the profession should be assigned or accepted by personnel of the Press and other media of information, as also by those participating in the economic and commercial activities of information enterprises.

Those who make public any information or comment should assume full responsibility for what is published unless such responsibility is explicitly disclaimed at the time.

The reputation of individuals should be respected and information and comment on their private lives likely to harm their reputation should not be published unless it serves the public interest, as distinguished from public curiosity. If charges against reputation or moral character are made, opportunity should be given for reply.

Discretion should be observed concerning sources of information. Professional secrecy should be observed in matters revealed in confidence; and this privilege may always be invoked to the farthest limits of law.

Article IV:

It is the duty of those who describe and comment upon events relating to a foreign country to acquire the necessary knowledge of such country which will enable them to report and comment accurately and fairly thereon.

Article V:

This Code is based on the principle that the responsibility for ensuring the faithful observance of professional ethics rests upon those who are engaged in the profession, and not upon any government. Nothing herein may, therefore, be interpreted as implying any justification for intervention by a government in any manner whatsoever to enforce observance of the moral obligations set forth in this Code.

THE FEDERATION AND ITS IDEAL

BY MANINDRA NARAYON RAY

THE Indian Federation of Working Journalists gave the lead to members of the journalistic profession to organise themselves in trade unions in order to be able to secure adequate wages and decent conditions of work. The emergence of the organisation thus was followed by a sharp controversy over the propriety of the journalists adopting trade unionism as the means to secure redress of their grievances. Many veteran journalists thought and wrote that, as journalists were members of a learned profession, it would be derogatory to their dignity to organise in trade unions and thus go down to the level of the factory workers. The federationists naturally replied that far from being dishonourable it was the only cure for the snobbery betrayed by opponents of trade unionism and, of course, added that there was no hope for the journalists to get a fair deal if they did not first acquire the legal right to enter into collective bargaining with their employers like any other body of wage-earners.

EDUCATING THE PUBLIC

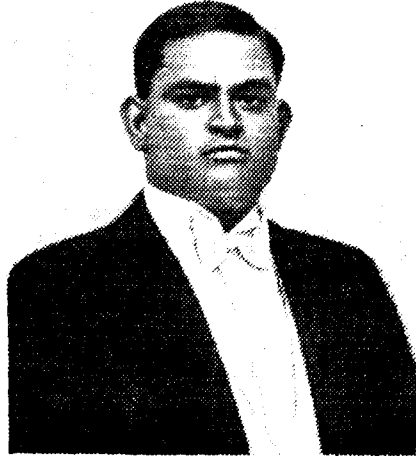
Side by side with this controversy have gone on the attempts on the part of the Federation and its units to educate the public on the degree of exploitation to which the working journalists as a class remain subject, and occasionally to fight in courts on behalf of particular members over some specific instance of exploitation. The effect of our movement in such a form has no doubt been quite satisfactory so far. But there is no denying that our emphasis on trade unionism has largely obscured other aspects of the Federation's movement.

The present article is intended to emphasise that there is no irreconcilable conflict between trade unionism and zealous guardianship of the political and cultural attributes which are collectively described as journalism. By becoming a trade union an organisation of journalists does not automatically cease to be a professional body. The Indian Federation of Working Journalists itself did not intend trade unionism to supersede all other aspects of the movement which the professional journalists have been carrying on since the dawn of Indian journalism, for safeguarding the freedom of the Press as the means to defend the rights of the people and for improving the standard of journalism itself in this country.

ALL-EMBRACING

The all-embracing philosophy of our movement was powerfully, though succinctly, expressed in the comprehensive resolution which the Federation unanimously adopted at its Calcutta session in April, 1952, in which the demand was made for the appointment of a Press Commission to enquire into the conditions of the Press in India, with a view to improving its place, status and functioning in the new democratic set-up. The very terms of reference of the proposed Commission which the Federation suggested and which were in fact adopted by the Government with no material alterations, were clearly indicative of the vast sweep of the approach of the Federation's movement to the tasks before it. It should be noted that the conditions of employment of working journalists were recommended as but one of the subjects of enquiry by the proposed Commission. The

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Federation's emphasis was more pronounced on the desirability and necessity of a searching enquiry into such aspects and problems of the Indian Press as the control, management and ownership and financial structure of newspapers; the working of the monopolies and chains and their effect on the character of newspapers; the effect of holding companies, the distribution of advertisements and such other forms of external influence; the standard of journalism and the means to improve it; freedom of the Press; and, also the adequacy of newsprint supply and the promotion of indigenous manufacture of newsprint and printing and composing machinery. Had our movement been wholly or even mainly concerned with fighting the employer for improvement of the conditions of work of the employees our organisation would not have suggested such diverse matters for investigation at the risk of their overshadowing the subject of our supposedly main concern.

CONTROL OF NEWSPAPERS

In tune with the spirit of our original demand, a greater part of the preliminary memorandum of the Federation was devoted to the criticism of the control and financial structure of newspapers, with a view to exposing their baneful effect on the character and the quality of the newspaper. The subject of freedom of the Press was discussed chiefly from the standpoint of our basic ideal and if the Federation pleaded for the removal of the official control of the Press in any form it was for the purpose of strengthening the urge for self-control in individual working journalists and self-regulation of the Press, in the sense of the application of subjective self-control objectively to the whole field of Indian journalism. Even the exposition of the working conditions in the newspaper industry was made with a view to the exposure of the highly deleterious effect of the commercial control of a body of profes-

sional men trained to perform a public service, and improvement of working conditions was demanded largely for the purpose of enabling these professional men to perform their duties efficiently and conscientiously.

Even a cursory analysis of the evidence tendered before the Press Commission by the Federation and its units would show that we did not seek the improvement of the working conditions of journalists at the cost of the higher values symbolised in the Press. The best and the surest means to ensure good pay and better prospects for workers would be to demand free play for the economic forces which, in the sphere of industry as a whole, constantly aid bigger units to grow bigger at the cost of the smaller firms and thus ensure concentration of wealth and increased profits to a few big units with their concomitants of better wages etc., for the workers employed by those concerns. But the Federation demanded exactly such conditions as would prevent the growth of monopoly, promote decentralisation and diffusion of the industry and encourage the appearance of provincial and district newspapers to represent the different facets of public opinion but with reasonable prospects of success as commercial undertakings.

NOTE OF WARNING

On the purely professional side, the Federation put the highest emphasis on the necessity for the formulation of a Code of Professional Conduct and for the creation of an expert body with statutory authority and powers to enforce the Code and to function as the guardian of the character and quality of the Press as an instrument of public service. Viewed in the correct perspective it should be clear even to a superficial observer that the Federation's case for the improvement of the working conditions of journalists was of secondary importance.

The comprehensive outlook of the Federation was powerfully expressed by its President,

L. F. W. J. SOUVENIR, JULY 1955

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Sri M. Chalapathi Rau, who at a meeting of the Federal Executive held in Delhi in August, 1954, felt called upon to sound a note of warning against any of the journalists organisations showing excessive preoccupation with any particular recommendation of the Press Commission. He was speaking with reference to the demand made by the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference for the immediate setting up of the Press Council, and he pointed out that the Press Council went with the other recommendations of the Press Commission and would be ineffective and useless if it were brought into existence without effect being given to the other recommendations of the Commission. The warning has its applicability to every other recommendation of the Commission, including the series relating to the working conditions if the same were to be taken in isolation from the rest of the recommendations.

The Federation as an organisation has faithfully followed the lead of its President. At the last Bombay conference it passed as many as four resolutions dealing with the different sets of recommendations of the Press Commission and left no room for doubt that it was as keen on the implementation of the principle of price-page schedule or equitable distribution of Government advertisements, as on the setting up of the Press Council and the Press Institute for the raising of the standard of journalism. If the Bombay conference demanded the implementation, with certain modifications, of the recommendations relating to the working conditions of journalists, it also emphasised that it considered the reorganisation of the ownership, management and structure of the newspaper industry and news agencies to be equally essential. In laying down the priorities it bracketed the proposed Newspapers and Periodicals Act with the recommended Act to establish a Press Council.

A change, however, seems to have come after Bombay. Emphasis appears to have

shifted from the general to the particular relating to the working conditions of journalists. The rank and file of our movement are showing a degree of impatience with the delay in the implementation of Section "T" of the Press Commission's Report, which impatience has been largely reflected also in the resolutions of the Federation's Executive. The common human frailty in our membership has received the utmost encouragement from the attitude of the Government, who have shown some concern during the year about the lot of working journalists. An impression has been created that the Government are anxious to implement at least some of the recommendations of the Press Commission relating to the working conditions and it has been strengthened by the actual enactment of the Act to extend the scope of the Industrial Disputes Act so as to cover working journalists also.

The present writer, though not lacking in appreciation of what has been done and what is being promised, scents, however, a danger in the piecemeal approach of the Government towards the recommendations of the Press Commission. Whether or not there is a method in the madness evident in Delhi, the current policy of the Government is capable of diverting the attention of working journalists from the whole of the recommendations of the Press Commission to a part thereof. In fact, such diversion to some extent has already been effected and to that extent our movement has fallen from the ideal it had set before it at its inception. That is the danger against which the present article is intended to be a warning. By cultivating excessive preoccupation with the working conditions we run the risk of being untrue to the fundamentals of the profession of public service which journalism is. In that way we will give to the critics of our movement the much-desired opportunity to have the last laugh.



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A Vanished Race

Giants who set up great Traditions

BY S. P. THIAGARAJAN

PART TWO of the report of the Press Commission, which purports to be a "History of Indian Journalism," is a remarkable compilation. Faulty in its architectonics, inaccurate in places, grievous in its omissions, and very often a thing of shreds and patches, it is nevertheless a work of patient research, which will doubtless be useful for a more informed student of Indian journalism. It has, however, one merit. It is a reminder to the present-day journalist and the public of the splendid traditions to which Indian journalism is heir and of the integrity and high-souled seriousness of the men who, with no thought of any material reward, built up this mighty instrument for the education and political advancement of their fellows.

The idealism and burning devotion to public good which actuated the early begetters of Indian journalism is a marvel. The learned Vice-Chancellor of the Banaras University spoke recently of "the days of the great journalists." And he was right. Great they undoubtedly were in every way, great in faith, great in integrity, great in the courage of their convictions. The Press was in those days in charge of men of outstanding abilities to whom "public and private virtues were the token and passport for social intercourse and active leadership. They were scrupulous to inculcate principles of conduct which have a deeper origin than in the pleasures of the senses." They were also fortunate in living at a time which might be

called the Indian Renaissance and they contributed in no small measure themselves to the quickening of the pace.

All over India men began to think, not of course communally and clannishly—these were later accomplishments—of the deeper problems of life with great eagerness. They did not take life in a spirit of levity or seek to solve its riddles as if they were crossword puzzles. Nor did they think that the escapades of the Hollywood celebrities constituted the only worthwhile news. They never

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bespattered their pages with pictures of fallen angels - male or female - whatever their particular contribution to the interpretation of the fine arts. They were by no means Pharisees, for they had a fine taste for the sublime and the beautiful. Only they thought that these were not to be cheapened by exposing them to the vulgar eye but deserved to be enjoyed in prayerful adoration. And who that has witnessed the contemporary epidemic of cultural pageants and music carnivals, with their glare of lights and blare of loudspeakers, will not agree with them? They bore in mind the severe criticism of Swami Ram Tirtha that newspapers take man away from Nature's God. Consequently they strove their best to adopt and advocate a high moral tone and often acted as public censors.

Those days are fast becoming a memory. It seems worth while trying to catch some of the lineaments of that by-gone era. Very obviously much of my present ground can only relate to Madras.

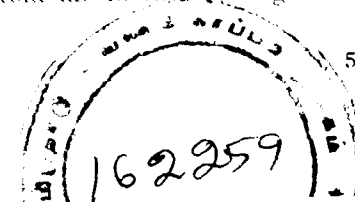
VAIDYARAMAN

On the strength of certain articles of mine in the daily Press on State aid to industries, an issue that provides perplexities even today, Mr. G. A. Vaidyaraman appointed me sub-editor on his monthly, “The Wealth of India”. The late eminent economist, Prof. V. G. Kale, used to contribute current comment for the journal. He was little known even in Madras, and when known it was most often as the elder brother of Mr. G. A. Natesan. For the greater part of his life he was an overworked official in the Finance Secretariat of the local Government. Yet he has his sure place in any list of the great journalists of the country. Few outside an intimate circle know that he was responsible for the founding and the early progress of “Indian Review”. Even now its crisp editorial comment in the opening years are worth turning over. For 14 months we lived

the life not indeed of master and employee but of an elderly mentor, placing the rich stores of his and the warning lessons of a life rich in experience of men and affairs at the service of callow youth. I know not if, excepting Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, Mr. Vaidyaraman had anyone to excel him in this human relationship towards employees. In fact, in many other matters his likeness to Mr. Iyengar stands out: for he also abhorred statements out of relation to well-tested and sifted facts.

It was no surprise to anyone that, different as their ways were, these two had genuine regard for each other. It was while walking along the Marina at Madras, as Bipin Chandra Pal was conquering the waves with his stentorian eloquence in 1907, that Mr. Iyengar casually consulted Mr. Vaidyaraman over likely sub-editors. The result was that V. S. Ramaswami Sastri, younger brother of the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, was diverted from Law to journalism. And the other great Assistant Editor of “The Hindu”, the late K. P. Viswanatha Iyer, was also a choice of Mr. Vaidyaraman. To him also Mysore owes Mr. C. Hayavadana Rao. The place was first offered to Mr. S. K. Sarma, a well-known journalist and student of monetary problems. But the latter preferred Law. Mr. Vaidyaraman had his place in the small but effective band of public men who made Indian Public Finance their especial province. Prominent men like Dinshaw Wacha Srinivasa Sastri, Vaman Govind Kale and C. Y. Chintamani held him in high regard and cared to take note of his views.

Of “The Hindu”, and particularly of Mr. S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and his very brilliant successor in the editorship, more is to be said. “The Hindu” is somewhat of an institution in the South. I was too young to know much of its editorial side in the days of G. Subramania Iyer, which even then had touched the pinnacle of power. But the veteran once told me in the evening of his



days, when he came to his district to propagandise what was then called the New Movement, that his colleagues on "The Hindu" were worth their weight in gold. Of one of them, Dewan Bahadur Karunakara Menon, I have pleasant recollections, having had to spend one whole day with him in connection with a political conference staged by what went for a short time as the Madras Presidency Association intended to combat the then rising Justice Party. He ended finally as a Travancore official. There were horrified comments in those days as this was considered a fall from grace. That he was a journalist of fire and enthusiasm he demonstrated when under his own steam he ran the "Indian Patriot" for a short period in Madras.

KASTURI RANGA IYENGAR

Its present position "The Hindu" owes entirely to the genius of Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar: his successors have worthily carried

out those technical excellences which he was the first to discern and adopt in Madras. He had been a Government servant, and later a practising advocate, and was reaching out to his fiftieth year when he bought "The Hindu" which was then tossed on a sea of financial trouble. Though so newly come into the ownership of the most powerful journal in Madras, Mr. Iyengar showed himself a journalist *par excellence*, and an efficient manager to boot. What often struck his staff was his objectivity in news and his scrupulous fairness in the appraisal of policies and personalities. His own editorials were models of the judicial approach,—a fair presentation of the opponent's case with nothing omitted or slurred over, the arguments against marshalled in formidable array, and then the conclusion emerging with flawless, impersonal logic. Very often he could not forbear the temptation to quote from one of his favourites, Burke, Bright, Mill, or Morley,

to enforce an argument. He was master of the apt phrase, as when he improved an impetuous sub-editor's article, which stated that the Liberals were dovetailing into the official corps for "lack of occupation". "Occupation" he changed into "insight", and what a difference in dignity and poise!

He had another very excellent quality, now sadly missed in most editors. He did not mind his sub-editors placing freely before him views opposed to his own. He so thoroughly put us all at ease. He never asked his sub-editors to write on topics whereon he thought they held views opposed to his own or the policy of the paper. The respect he paid to the individuality of the staff deserved, and was paid back in, the profoundest regard for him by his staff.

It came about that, later, he took to his bed, wherefrom he followed both his paper and current events with greater severity but less eccentricity than Lord Northcliffe. Now and again "The Hindu" took a view opposed to his own; for in later life he all but embraced extreme Gandhite positions. His was a growing, not static mind; and he always abhorred narrow provincial points of view. This became most embarrassing at the time of the Delhi Special Congress, when the Mahatma made Das his attorney and retired from the direction of the Congress. Sub-editors had an unpleasant surprise when they were asked to troop up to Farm House one by one on successive mornings to hear his criticism and admonition of "The Hindu" supporting the compromise. Though in the ultimate "The Hindu" as an institution triumphed over its editor, he never allowed an angry word to pass his lips. I have never seen or heard of an editor-proprietor so keenly alive to the wisdom of treating his staff as members of one fraternity.

The incident above described had a curious sequel. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, "the stern covenanter of the South," was then stamped-

ing the countryside making speeches of great power stressing the No-Changers' position. Though in those days he used to be described as "the solitary raven croaking from Salem," "The Hindu" nevertheless published the full text of his speeches. At Nagpur, in one of his speeches, C. R. delivered himself of words to this effect, as irrelevant as they were mischievous: "My esteemed friend, the editor of "The Hindu", I am sorry to say, is lying ill in his bed. But his leader-writer goes on writing in a bantering tone. Banter is hardly the right mood in which to approach these serious questions." When a similar remark was made in "New India" by Dr. Besant, suggesting that the editor, ill and in bed, held views contrary to those expressed by his understudies editorially, "The Hindu" smote her hip and thigh and only her mangled remains were to be seen. The sub-editor who edited the copy and came across this sentence took it to the officiating editor, Mr. S. Rangaswami, who evidently was sought to be hit at. The latter simply said that it must go all as spoken and without excision: and so did the whole go in. It was seldom the practice of "The Hindu" to shut out unpleasant references to itself from its columns.

S. RANGASWAMI

And when Mr. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar died in 1923, there never was any doubt about the succession. Of S. Rangaswami it is difficult for this writer to speak without considerable emotion. He was *non-pareil* and was too early lost to the country within three years of his assuming the editorship, when barely 40 years of age and as he was reaching out to the full maturity of his astonishing powers. He it was more than anyone else who made the literary reputation of the paper, though often by his allusive language he seemed to delight in playing hide and seek with the reader. Of satire and irony he was a brilliant master: even those who winced under the lash of his pen admired the brilliance of his

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style. He was called 'martial law officer.' Yet it was not a drum-head court-martial. He was scrupulously fair. And it was all produced with effortless ease in the matter of a few minutes. The penetrating power of his intellect was seen in the weekly summaries of World War I, wherein he went to the heart of campaigns in areas and over a terrain to which he was such an utter stranger: and rarely were his forecasts falsified by events. The crisp vigour of his language was a reflection of his own robust and masculine intellect. In the daily converse of office or life he shewed himself singularly free of those smallnesses, jealousies and rancour that are the bane of life. One instruction of his on assuming the editorship is a reminder of the kind of chief he was and what he expected of his colleagues. Sub-editors must not wait to be told, he said: they have been sufficiently long in this office to know the needs and policy of the paper. Though the Indian Liberals came in for the severest castigation at his hands, he remarked to an old colleague that they were at any rate gentlemen; this in reference to current controversies when the Swarajists were hurling epithets like "liar" at one another.

MADRAS STANDARD

It would be ungracious to omit any reference to Dr. Besant. The "Madras Standard" was the first among Indian newspapers in Madras to aim at brightness and enterprise. It had first under G. Subramania Iyer and later that genius G. Parameswaran Pillai, "a trait which characterised some of the successful newspapers of England." In vivacity it is doubtful if it has since been equalled in this country. And no wonder. For it was able to enlist the literary sympathies of Mr. Eardley Norton, whose spicy comments on current affairs were as good as a nervine tonic. It had also that born humorist, Dr. T. M. Nair, contributing pen portraits, the like of which we have not come across since

his death, though there is no lack of pale imitators of A. G. G., at his flattest. (Dr. Nair by and by set up a tabernacle of his own under the flag "Justice" as the organ of the new non-Brahmin movement in Madras. That was a tragic commentary on the clannishness of those who then monopolised public life in Madras). Sir Dinshaw Wacha for long wrote a Bombay letter to the 'Madras Standard' which used to be lapped up with the same avidity as the Bombay letters to "Capital" of Calcutta. Sir Dinshaw, by all records, seems to have been an active Madras journalist: for he long wrote the monthly diary for 'Indian Review' under the *nom de plume*, "Rajduari."

Dr. BESANT

By and by, in spite of the well-meant labours of Raman Pillai and Ramasesha Iyer, the "Standard" fell on evil times. Finally in 1915 it came into the capable hands of Dr. Besant, who then threw herself into the Home Rule agitation. The paper itself was re-christened "New India." It used to be said of her that she showed such unwearying industry and attention to detail that nothing went into the paper without her satisfying herself about it. This side of her work this writer never knew personally. But the 'New India' was the first among our newspapers to overreach the 10,000 limit in subscribers; and it always eschewed advertisements of intoxicants.

It fell to this writer once to interview her in connection with the agitation she was promoting over her Commonwealth of India Bill. She was all kindness and handed over to me a pull of what was to be that evening's editorial and said it contained the answers to all possible queries. The question was put to her why, she being an ex-President of the Congress and hence a member of the A. I. C. C. she should not work through the Congress instead of diverting the energies of the all too few earnest public workers we had. Immedi-

ately her manner changed, and as was written at the time, "Dr. Besant withdrew as if fearing cerebral agitation."

Here the reader will perhaps excuse a final word. After 17 strenuous years of undaunted fight for people, in spite of some unlucky aberration, "New India" ceased publication in 1933. Yet such is the *camaraderie* in Madras journalism that no newspaper thought it worth while to commemorate the passing away of a one-time stout-hearted fighter in the popular cause, whose buoyancy, energy and persistence were truly marvellous.

THIRU VI. KA.

Of far different calibre was Thiru V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, who died a little over two years ago. It is appropriate that his name should come after Dr. Besant's. He was connected with the first trade union movement in this country sponsored by B. P. Wadia of the Theosophical Society. He was the fine flowering of ancient Tamil culture, and though he edited a Tamil daily and a Tamil weekly, later converted into tri-weekly, he worked also in far roomier fields. A genuine humanist, he discarded nothing appertaining to man. 'My name is Million,' he might well have said adapting a European saying. A teacher of Tamil, of whose nuances, literary and philosophical, he was an unrivalled master. He drifted into journalism as the result of the non-co-operation movement. When by and by he abandoned his daily newspaper and started his "Nava-sakti", I came into contact with him, mainly through our common attachment to S. Srinivasa Iyengar. To his tri-weekly I used to contribute a weekly causerie every Tuesday: for it was his earnest hope that I would return to Tamil journalism. Then I found that his approach to public questions was entirely humanistic. Compassion was the keynote of his philosophy. Tamil journalists we have in plenty but seldom are we likely to come across one like him steeped in the ancient

wisdom of the land, who fashioned Tamil into a perfect instrument for analysing modern ills and devising remedies for our race.

I rather think that the late Syed Abdullah Brelvi was another like Kalyanasundara Mudaliar. Though not among his colleagues, my connection with him had been constant and close for nearly 25 years. Only those who were his daily companions in the arduous task of producing a daily newspaper can speak with authority born of inside knowledge of his place and function as editor. But I always think of the "piety of his speech," using the phrase in no theological sense. He always ingeminated peace, wherever he went. Shy and retiring by nature, he was reticent where his personal life was concerned. Yet, when a colleague lost his father, Brelvi did not think for a minute, in spite of the doctor's stern interdict, of climbing two floors to condole with him. As an editor he never allowed even the tallest politician to interfere with his staff or his duties. Through his long career he had befriended the cause of working journalists, of whom indeed he considered himself one. He never soiled his pages by partisan propaganda, by distortion or suppression, a remarkable achievement when we think of it seriously. It was characteristic of his life and purpose that almost the final deliberate act of his life was to write a moving appeal to the Governor-General, C. R., whom his Union was entertaining at the Taj Mahal Hotel, in which he avowed his conviction that 'a free and independent Press is as essential to a democracy as democracy is essential to the existence of a free and independent Press.'

GOPINATH

Before these random jottings are concluded, I should not fail to mention that excellent man, friend and citizen, Gopinath Srivastava, the real begetter of the Indian

Federation of Working Journalists. He had run in harness in his early days with that interesting journalist, C. S. Ranga Iyer, on the "Indian Daily Telegraph." Gopinath's blithe candour of approach to all public questions and his noble quality of equanimity endeared him to his friends. Though on the surface the most equable of men, he was vital heat in things worth waxing hot over, and he never abandoned or compromised his principles. He was the only Congressman, probably, who, though not selected as a candidate, refused to run up to Delhi, refused to nurse any private grievance of his, but most uncomplainingly and assiduously worked to bring about the success of the Congress candidates in the elections. He was above all the wide-eyed, the wide awake journalist who always put truth in the first place. He filled with distinction many positions in the public life of Uttar Pradesh before he was so prematurely cut off.

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THE BRITISH PRESS

BY SUNDER KABADI

THE British people since the war have read the smallest papers in the world, but they read more of these than any other people. For every 1,000 persons, 598 copies of daily papers are sold, compared with 461 in Luxembourg (second on the list), 440 in Australia and 356 in the United States.

If you want to read the newspaper with the largest circulation in the world you have to come to Britain—unless you are an overseas subscriber. This paper, which specialises in printing extensive reports of crime, divorce court proceedings, and the seamy side of sex, is "The News of the World", which was founded in 1843. Its net sale every Sunday is a million copies, which means that it is read by probably 16 million people. On the other hand, the average number of pages in British newspapers today is eight to 12, compared with over 24 in the United States. While circulations have been expanding since 1921, the actual number of publications has dropped by about a quarter. The Press as a whole consists of 146 daily newspapers, 18 Sunday papers, over 1,300 weekly papers, and nearly 4,000 periodicals.

GREAT INFLUENCE

The national Press in Britain wields a tremendous influence on the life of the people, because the daily newspapers that are printed in and around Fleet Street circulate into the homes of a vast majority of the people living in all parts of the country. This concentration of mass-circulation newspapers in a few hands does not occur in any other democratic country to anything like the same extent. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, a recent survey showed that there were 1,383

daily newspapers, and in France also the number runs into hundreds.

More even than Parliament itself, the British Press is responsible for inculcating that strong sense of nationhood in the British people. If the British Press changes its outlook on a certain major issue—it is a process,

A figure familiar in Fleet Street takes a bird's-eye view of the world's best organized newspaper industry and assesses its influence on public opinion ..

of course, which takes several months or even years—then the British people, generally speaking, follow suit. We saw this happen in the case of the transfer of power to India. When I first came to London, those who actively supported the Indian independence movement among the British people were a minority. The vast majority, taking their cue from the national Press, regarded Gandhi—if they regarded him at all—as a dangerous, comic figure, the leader of a movement whose activities were inimical to the best interests of India.

Some of the same newspaper proprietors, editors and foreign correspondents who were responsible for or wrote millions of words to impress this picture of Gandhi on the mind of the British public are still holding controlling or influential positions in the British Press. But in 1947 they changed their mind about the Indian independence movement. Some were quicker to make the change than others. Eventually, however, they all came round to the view that Indian independence

was a great thing and that all the leaders of the Indian independence movement were great figures, including Gandhiji. The British public, which, like all other publics only thinks about these things in its spare moments after work and play, also takes this view today.

The national Press in Britain, which is largely Conservative in ownership and outlook, is always *en rapport* with the Government of the day on supreme issues, whether Government is Socialist or Conservative. Each newspaper has its peculiar idiosyncrasies, of course, and sometimes a powerful paper, even "The Times", on occasions, will attempt to challenge the posture or attitude in world affairs taken by Whitehall. "The Times", for example, in 1938 at the time when there was a growing spirit of opposition to the policy of appeasing the Nazis, came out with a famous editorial in which it expressed the view that the Sudetenland should be ceded to Germany if the partition of Czechoslovakia was the only way to avoid a war with Germany. Everyone was amazed at this demonstration of "original thinking".

A MODERN MIRACLE

The production of the British national press is certainly, as the Royal Commission on the Press described it in 1947, a "modern miracle". To give a picture of the changing world scene 24 hours in eight pages is no mean achievement, especially when some of the space has to be devoted to sport, films, gardening, beauty hints, high society gossip, crosswords, cartoons, motoring, and other regular features of the modern popular newspaper. For his few coins the British reader gets the most expensive popular paper in the world. This is made possible because mass-circulations enable working costs to be rationalised and the cost per column-inch to advertisers to be raised to what we would consider fabulous sums. In Britain today advertisement managers do not have to move

out of their palatial offices. Advertisers have to take their place in the queue that is begging for space. When the Independent Television Authority switches on its stations this autumn, newspapers may feel a drought.

NEHRU KNIGHTED!

A feature of British journalism which one takes for granted but which is certainly not universal is the insistence on accuracy. I don't mean accuracy in the report of facts or news, but accuracy in printing it. A printer's error in a British national paper is something which attracts attention. A downright mistake in a matter of fact will not be quickly forgotten or forgiven. They are rare, but they do occur as when the "Manchester Guardian", on 11th June 1955, under a picture of Nehru at the Kremlin during his Russian visit, described the Indian Prime Minister as "Sir Jawaharlal Nehru"—and knighted him twice in the space of three lines. That famous editor of the paper, C. P. Scott, must have winced in his grave.

With such high standards of production and presentation to maintain, the importance of securing trained, experienced and reliable journalists has attracted increasing attention from those who control the mammoth-circulation papers. The vast majority of the journalists working on national newspapers and agencies come through the mill of the suburban and provincial Press. University education is a recommendation for a direct entry into Fleet Street, and is almost a *sine qua non* for such specialised posts as foreign correspondent, leader-writer or diplomatic correspondent. But the financial rewards of journalism have been far outstripped by the high salaries that can be earned in commerce and industry.

When I first came to London, the prospects of a youngster entering Fleet Street newspaper offices from school and working his way up were better than they are today. By 1952 the need for a journalistic training school had

become so apparent that an agreement was reached to provide for the training and education of junior journalists in newspaper offices.

THE NATIONAL UNION

The British Press is probably the most highly organised in the world, as a profession and as an industry. On the employers' side the most important organisations are the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, whose members are proprietors of London national daily and Sunday papers, the Newspaper Society, whose members are proprietors of provincial daily and weekly papers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society, and the Periodical Proprietors' Association. On the editorial side there are the National Union of Journalists and the Institute of Journalists. The N. U. J. has a membership of about 12,650 working journalists, but editors who have powers of dismissal are

excluded. The Institute of Journalists, which has a membership of some 2,800, admits editors. Free-lance journalists can join either of these organisations, which are something more than trade unions since they are keenly interested in the status of the Press and the ethical standard of journalism.

Editors also have their own Guild, which aims, among other things, at sustaining the dignity of editorship and safeguarding the professional status of editors, at protecting rights and freedom of the Press and at improving the education and training of journalists.

The men who print the 13 million daily copies of the national papers and the 30 million Sunday papers are also powerfully organised, as the newspaper stoppage which they brought about this Spring made plain. Their strike cost Fleet Street about £5 million.

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drew to the fact that the historic division between labour and capital, between employer and employee, is as deep in the Conservative pillars of the Fourth Estate as in any pure and simple industrial enterprise.

The Press Commission took the view that the Press was a "service", but although the first newspaper was printed in London in 1765, no way has yet been discovered of firmly harmonising the two elements that provide this service, those who own it on the one hand and those whose varied skills, talent and experience alone make it possible on the other.

TWO CATEGORIES

I have generalised so far about the British "Press," but no one who has worked in London for any length of time as a journalist can fail, in discussing this great profession, to point out that what are known as the national papers of Britain fall into two distinct categories, the

"popular" papers on the one hand, and the serious journals on the other.

The serious papers in Britain have no equal in the world. I have sometimes wondered what it would be like to live in Britain if everyone read "The Times" or the "Manchester Guardian". Britain would then, as far as the people's awareness of the world in which they lived was concerned, be a really adult nation. But the fact has always been that the vast majority of the people prefer to look at the world through the eyes of the 'Slick, know-all, breezy foreign correspondent who circumnavigates the world every few months for his popular paper, through the eyes of the columnist who rubs shoulders with royalty and film stars, through the eyes of the crime reporter who presents them with as many gory details as he can find about the latest murder. The reader of the popular press wants his editorials to be short, pungent and snappy. The popular paper has a style that is a strange blend of snobbery and vulgarity. I think it was Mr. Herbert Morrison who, defending the popular Press on one occasion, asked what was wrong with a little vulgarity in newspapers. The test which a newspaper should be able to stand up to, in my opinion, is that there should be something in it worth reading by the time the next day's issue has appeared on the streets. But if people lingered too long over their papers, they might not want to buy a fresh one every day. Perhaps this is the secret formula for producing a paper that will sell by the million. For, in America, where they have the highest living standards in the world, people buy fewer papers. Those papers however, are of such dimensions and variety that even to glance through some of them takes more time than to read a British popular paper from end to end. Every nation gets the papers that it wants and we must leave it at that.

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Freelance Journalism In India

by

C. H. V. PATHY

JOURNALISM in this country started as a mission, developed into a profession, and has today degenerated into a trade. But curiously enough, while those who own newspapers have amassed tidy fortunes, with a few exceptions, the plight of those who ply their pen for a living is not at all enviable. I am not taking into consideration those "arrivists" in newspaper offices who stick like leeches even after reaching superannuation, but the writer, pure and simple, who has to hawk his article to hard-boiled editors. Aside from the army of scribblers who take to writing to the Press as a hobby, there are many clever men to whom opportunities are denied. Some of them are young men from Universities, bubbling with enthusiasm and new ideas, others are those thrown out of the profession for no fault of their own.

The lot of freelance writers is certainly known to editors and managing authorities of newspapers and news magazines and periodicals. Yet, strangely enough, the freelance continues to be the Cinderella of Indian journalism. One can count the successful ones on one's fingers. They are R. K. Narayan, S. K. Chettur, P. D. Tandon, K. Rama Rao, Bernard Fonseca and Mulk Raj Anand. This list is not comprehensive but it illustrates the fact that contributions from them are accepted because some of them have made their mark as editors, while others are well-known writers of books which have won fame. One Mr. D. V. Rama Rao, writing a few months ago in "Swatantra", has drawn attention to the fact that, though he tried his hand at freelance journalism, out of 80 articles of his which were published in various newspapers

and journals, payment was made only for five. Mr. Rao got Rs. 30 for three of his contributions and Rs. 10 for two articles published in a well-known Telugu daily. Thus, his total bag for 80 articles, spread over half a dozen years, was the magnificent sum of Rs. 40. I am sure he must have spent much more than that on stationery, postage stamps, typing charges, etc.

Down South in Coimbatore, there is the sad story of Mr. Nilkan Perumal, once a fertile freelance writer who averaged over Rs. 1,000 a month, but is today languishing because there is no paying outlet for his writings. He can put his hand to anything, from an arresting profile of any leading personality, Indian or foreign, to a serious travel article. Mr. Perumal once ran "Oriental Weekly" of Calcutta and later virtually edited "Whip", another Calcutta weekly. He has also more than a dozen books to his credit. If he had been in Europe or the U.S. he would be rolling on velvet.

EDITORS' ATTITUDE

In western countries, seasoned newspapermen are always in demand whether associated with a newspaper or not. They are paid heavy sums and get special assignments. Here, on the other hand, an editor thinks he is obliging a penman by publishing his contribution. The fault is, however, not entirely the editor's, because amateur scribblers in their covering letters state that they do not expect payment. They are satisfied with seeing their names in print. The journalist who depends on his pen for a living has a right to demand that his work must be rewarded. Was it not Dr. Johnson who said that nobody except a

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blockhead ever wrote for anything except money?

I have experience of half a dozen newspaper offices and can vouch for the fact that even in the best of them there is no system. A good many newspapers and journals never acknowledge receipt of articles, even when stamps are enclosed for the purpose. Some contributions, which are topical, are retained for months and sent back when it is not possible to find alternative markets. There are some newspapers which publish articles but deny voucher copies to the writer. It is not as though some flourishing newspapers cannot give scope to writers of promise. But they have their set prejudices and predilections. They care more for the glamour of by-lines. For instance, if a Masani writes on socialism, or a Dr Matthai on economics, or a Rajaji on politics, they are always given preference.

One of the saddest aspects of Indian journalism is the intrusion of "big guns"

into pastures which ought to be reserved for professional writers. One Governor writes a regular fortnightly feature article to several newspapers, and he insists on payment. No doubt the money goes to an institution in which he is interested, but that is another matter. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya still bursts into newspapers on special occasions. Mr. K. Santhanam contributes occasionally. Sardar K. M. Panikkar has still the itch to write profusely. What chance has a poor penman like me against these giants?

'SYNDICATES'

Another unsavoury feature is the invasion of stuff from foreign syndicates. Some of the articles are no doubt well written, but since syndication takes place on a mass scale, newspapers have to pay only a nominal fee.

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I wrote an article on Mr. Churchill on the day of his exit from Prime Ministership and offered it to an editor. He pulled out his drawer and showed me three first-rate articles supplied that day by the local British Information Service. He had not to pay a pie for using any or all of them.

When the Press battle begins in Parliament, I hope some M. Ps. will draw attention to this aspect of journalism.

COPYRIGHT LAW

Before concluding, I have to mention in passing the law of copy-right as it relates to freelance writers. While from the provisions in the copyright law it appears that copyright, unless specifically conveyed, belongs to the author, some of the editors

adduce the plea that all articles published in their journals belong to them, whether payment is made or not. It is a very strange stand and the position has to be clarified.

The only way to improve the lot of the freelance writer is to develop an organisation on professional lines. Mr. Pothan Joseph, still as brilliant as ever, gave a talk the other day, in the course of which he said that editors must not only pay for the articles they publish but pay adequately. When they make more than Rs. 300 for a column of advertisement matter, what harm is there in paying a contributor a tenth of that sum?

The freelance journalist will have a better deal only when "scissors and paste" journalism which flourishes in several journals and newspapers even today is given a decent burial.

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International Federation of Journalists

● BY S. A. S. ●

IN April last year I had a brief opportunity to watch an international journalists' conference at work at Bordeaux, France. I was present only on the opening day of the three-day conference of the International Federation of Journalists; but a good deal of enlightening and enlarging experience was packed into that day.

The first thing one noted was that our hosts had the French genius for hospitality but they were realistic in discharging the obligations of hospitality. They had booked hotel rooms for the fifty odd delegates and observers who attended the Congress, but the bills were sent to the guests for payment. Units who invite our Federation to hold its annual sessions in their territory may find it difficult to adopt such a strictly businesslike way of treating the delegates; but, I think, they might feel encouraged by the Bordeaux example to relate hospitality to material means.

In other respects, economy of means was not an ideal that the Bordeaux gathering had set before itself. What the hosts saved in hotel bills was lavished on the mechanics of the meeting. They had a corps of trained interpreters to give simultaneous translation of the speeches in four languages—French, German, Dutch and English. The technique of simultaneous interpretation is now fully developed and has become an indispensable adjunct of international gatherings. It seemed an expensive luxury for a small meeting, but it undoubtedly speeded up the business enormously, and, what seemed more important, it established a kind of linguistic equality, which is prized even more there than in India.

The Congress began with the usual preliminaries, which contained no hint of the fanatical flavour that came later with the presidential address. The President was Mr. C. J. Bundock, an Englishman. (He has been re-elected for another term.) He is an embattled anti-Communist, and he obviously reflected the prevailing mood at the gathering. He declared that the International Federation of Journalists "is not concerned with questions of political philosophy and ideological conflict." Yet, the next few sentences of the speech fairly sizzled with an angry denial of admission to East European journalists on grounds which were political and ideological no less than they were professional or constitutional. He said with fierce emphasis that the Press in these countries was a gramophone Press and, therefore, must be resolutely barred from membership. He seemed to tell East European journalists: "We don't bother about political and ideological conflicts. But you have no political or ideological freedom in your countries, and you shall have no freedom to join this club of free nations." Like other men with strong opinions, the President seemed unconscious of the inner contradictions, much less the comicality, of inflexible ideological antagonism.

KNOTTY GREETINGS

An official report recently received of the proceedings on the second and third days of the Congress shows that the meeting anticipated by a few days the situation which arose later at the Geneva conference. There, the Americans found themselves in embarrassing proximity to the Chinese, and the

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American Secretary of State knew no other way of meeting the situation than to refuse to meet or shake hands with the Prime Minister of China. The Bordeaux meeting seems to have tied itself into a knot over a telegram of fraternal greetings sent by the International Organisation of Journalists of Prague, an organisation composed of East European journalists, whom the Bordeaux gathering had treated as untouchables and unapproachable. The telegram invited journalists of the world to "do everything in order to know each other better, to investigate and disseminate truth, and to promote better understanding among the peoples." The immediate response to this telegram came from a delegate from Austria who denounced it as Communist propaganda and suggested that the Congress should ignore it. A Dutch journalist, on the other hand, pointed out that not to reply would be to fall into the trap and give ammunition which could be used against the I. F. J. It was better in his opinion to send a reply and make it clear that the Federation was actively engaged in improving conditions of journalists and in the maintenance of Press freedom. After a lengthy debate, it was decided by 34 votes to 30 that a reply be sent in the form of a statement, which reaffirmed the Federation's devotion to the defence of Press freedom and of the moral and material rights of its members; expressed regret at the absence of liberty of Press in totalitarian countries; and insisted that all journalists, arrested and imprisoned because of their belief in the freedom of Press and Information, should be released at once.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A document presented to the Congress was a report on economic conditions of journalists in Europe, America, and Australia. It referred, among other things, to developments of a kind not unknown in India. For instance, in many countries the newspapers have a poli-

tical character, and journalists working on them are of the same political opinion. This makes it often difficult for them to find a fresh job in case of dismissal or of downfall of a paper.

Again, in some countries, a tendency is developing to recruit journalists mainly for routine work and to rely on outsiders for special information and comment, and for leading articles. This is detrimental to oppor-

Whether a reviewer can afford to read the book he is reviewing depends on how much he will be paid for his review. Sometimes the blurb on the dust jacket must suffice; and as this is always laudatory, authors are fortunate when the reviewer gets no farther.

—BERNARD SHAW

tunities for advancement of journalists. In France, serious complaints have been recorded. On the death of a civil servant, eight newspapers mentioned that he had been a regular contributor. As a result of such reliance on outside or official experts, newspapers run the risk of publishing one-sided and officially coloured views and of becoming involved in private interests in the case of economic and financial information.

The Congress in one of its resolutions observed that economic conditions imposed on the majority of journalists are not yet commensurate with the importance of their work or their responsibilities. To us in India, this has a familiar ring. But in appearance the delegates to Bordeaux were far from the lean and hungry types hammered into shape by chronic material shortages. By Indian standards they were lush specimens of prosperity. In their tail coats and striped trousers they looked more like bankers and company promoters. They were a contrast to the bankers and company promoters who are mistaken for journalists in India, because they bear the outward stamp of poverty commonly associated with journalism.

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BOMBAY LED THE WAY

BY
G. N. ACHARYA

... the genesis and growth of the first journalists' association organised as a trade union in the country —

THOSE were the days when Gandhiji strode the Indian national stage like a colossus. Everything had its place and functions only as part of the mighty tide of nationalism. Journalism was more a mission than a trade; nor was newspapering an industry. The journalist was first a patriot and the profession was only a means—the end being the country's freedom. The alien rai had looked with suspicion at any association of the 'natives.'

But a group of journalists, then young, felt the vital necessity of having their own association. And in 1923 the Journalists' Association of India was formed. No record of the actual date of the beginning of this Association is traceable, except that it was founded in 1923 and at the spearhead of the movement was the late Syed Abdullah Brelvi. From this evolved the Bombay Union of Journalists, the first organisation of journalists as a trade union.

The forerunner to the Journalists' Association of India was the Press Association of India, started by the late Mr. Benjamin Guy Horniman. It came into existence on December 31, 1915. It, however, does not seem to have made much progress, and with the departure of its founder, it floundered.

Soon after its birth, the Journalists' Association of India was seeking the blessings and protection of the Mahatma. The blessings were necessary to make it live and gather momentum. Mr. Brelvi even tried to induce Gandhiji to accept the presidentship of the Association. Obviously, Gandhiji did not want it tied down to him. His letter refu-

sing the request, written from Poona on Feb 19, 1924, is worth quoting in full for its historical interest.

Dear Mr. Brelvi,

Your letter is embarrassing. I suppose I am not even a member of the Association, unless somebody has paid you the subscription and entrance fee on my behalf in my absence. I do not know, too, whether I can be properly described as a journalist. Thirdly, if the President is supposed to do any work for the Association, you might as well expect active work for the Association from me. Then, think what will be the Association's position and mine if, while non-co-operation is going on, the Association promotes a deputation to a Governor or a Viceroy. Shall I not be found wanting on such an occasion? Everything considered, therefore, I suggest that for this occasion at least the Association should drop me. I need hardly say that I deeply appreciate the honour proposed to be done to me.

Yours sincerely,
(sd) M. K. GANDHI.

Gandhiji had apparently a shrewd idea that by retaining its character as an independent organisation, the Association could play a vital role in support of the nationalist movement. We find, for instance, that in May 1930 the Association was organising a conference under the presidentship of Mr. A. Rangaswami Iyengar to protest against the Press Ordinance forbidding publication of news of the Satyagraha Movement and pre-censorship of news. For a quarter of a century encroach-

ments on the freedom of the Press was the preoccupation of the Association, and protest meetings and resolutions its main function.

Mr. Brelvi was also concerned about working conditions and there was some correspondence between him and Mr. Sacchidananda Sinha in 1929. But nothing came of it.

Leading lights of the profession were closely connected with the Association. Not all of them might have been worried about the subscription as Gandhiji was. In Bombay, Mr. B. G. Horniman and Mr. Kamakshi Natarajan were presidents for long spells of time. Outside Bombay, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani and Mr. T. Prakasam — the only one of the group of veterans fortunately with us now—vice-presidents for shorter or longer periods. Mr. Brelvi was always the Chairman of the Executive Committee till the day of his death — except for a brief period of 14 months when he kept himself out.

It was the affluence of war time, when proprietors paid excess profits and wages went up in every trade and profession except journalism, that induced other thoughts among journalists. The first of these was voiced by Mr. Pothan Joseph in his inimitable style. Speaking to the new graduates of the Punjab University Department of Journalism on May 23, 1943, he said, "Call me a Bolshevik but I tell you that reform and relief together with standardisation of journalism as a career in India cannot come through the meetings of proprietors and editors as they function now. The man who gave £ 10 for Milton's Paradise Lost owed him more than he paid. What we call the Anglo-Indian papers deserve credit for the standard they have been setting up in the treatment of their staff as members of a learned profession and for respecting talent. But the beggarliness of profiteering concerns, run by some Indian financiers, is beginning to debase scales of payment. How I wish

some magnates were content with their six per cent or 12 per cent interest on their investment and left the balance of gains to men who labour for them accumulating goodwill by proxy. The journalist is a creative craftsman, and the rule of man exploiting man for material aggrandisement is cruel in the field of journalism."

ONE ORGANISATION

The second thought that stirred uneasily was the absence of a united organisation that could speak for journalists all over India. Mr. Brelvi himself voiced this feeling in an address to the annual session of the Tamil Nadu Journalists' Federation at Madras on January 9, 1944. He called for the formation of an "All-India Federation of Journalists' Organisations in different parts of the country" which should be "an effective organisation to protect their interests." Early attempts at setting up an all-India organisation were wrecked by parochialism. Bombay patriots felt that their association as the first in the field should continue to be "all-India." I remember of an editor from a certain State to whom the question was posed at a party. Stirring his tea cup from the outside — because he was very short-sighted and didn't see his spoon was outside the cup — he drawled: "Oh, that is easy; you merge your association with ours." A third line of reflection slowly taking shape was that the only salvation of the journalist was in trade unionism. All these feelings boiled over at one memorable general body meeting of the Association on December, 14, 1944. The year before the Association had appointed a committee to collect facts and figures about wage scales and suggest a minimum scale and secondly to suggest a method by which a National Union of Journalists could be formed. At

one of the sittings of the committee it had tentatively decided to suggest a minimum of Rs. 100 for English newspapers and Rs. 75 for Indian language newspapers. There was trouble at the next sitting of the committee over the discriminatory scales. It was ultimately decided to refer the matter to Mr. Brelvi who was then President of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference. He advised that we should demand a national minimum of Rs. 125 without any kind of discrimination. The committee accepted this view and a statement containing this and a number of other recommendations was issued by the Executive Committee in the form of a report. (It is a significant coincidence that the national minimum recommended by the Press Commission is just exactly the same, Rs. 125.) One sentence from this report has some current relevance in view of the still lingering doubts and hesitations that stand in the way of a fully integrated organisation of working journalists for the whole of India. The report said: "Although geography, language and local interest may divide journalists from one another, there is, no doubt, one thing in common, namely, the miserable plight — barring a few honourable exceptions — of working journalists all over the country. We may differ in other respects, but from the economic standpoint we are one. We need urgent improvement. We also need the machinery for united action to secure such improvement."

It happened that about the same time the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference had also appointed a sub-committee to go into the question of salary scales. That committee not only recommended a lower minimum, but two minima involving again the hated discrimination.

Just about then, the annual meeting of the Association was called. Some members draf-

ted a resolution. All their anger was poured into it. It was signed by a large number of members. It demanded conversion of the Association into a trade union. The Executive Committee considered it on the day of the annual meeting and Mr. Brelvi was opposed to the adoption of any such resolution. When this fact was known, the member, whose name had been put down as the mover, would not move it. And nobody would touch it. Finally, a member stood up and just said, "I move it." It was as if unconsciously a switch had been pulled and released some unseen force. There was a lot of shouting, a lot of confusion, a lot of angry exchanges. And when the resolution was put to vote, only Mr. Brelvi and Mr. K. Srinivasan ('Stalin') raised their hands against the entire house.

Then came the election of the Executive Committee. Mr. Brelvi declined to serve. A number of names were proposed and accepted without the veterans in it. The new committee at once set about converting the Association into a Union. Constitutions were studied and drafts prepared. By this time Mr. Brelvi and Mr. Srinivasan also became reluctant converts to trade unionism. They came into the picture again, and helped in launching the Union. Mr. Brelvi was the first Chairman of the Executive of the Bombay Union of Journalists. The BUJ had shed the false halo of an all-India body and was ready to take its proper place in a genuine federation of journalists' unions. The BUJ is now a part of the Federation. Its affiliation is firmly embodied as a clause of its constitution.

From an organisational point of view, it is possible to claim that the BUJ has moved in the right direction. It is even possible to claim that it has led the way in the formation of trade unions all over the country.

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NATURE WRITING' FOR THE PRESS

By M. KRISHNAN

EIGHTEEN years ago Mr. A. A. Hayles told me that he liked my first attempt at a magazine article but could not use it because his paper had circulation mainly in South India and readers here were not interested in Nature. He suggested my sending the article to a North Indian paper.

I thanked him for his advice and took it; that article was the first of many I wrote for the North Indian paper he suggested. I also told him that the slogan of his paper ('Where goes the road or rail, there goes the Madras Mail') seemed in need of modification if its circulation was so southern. But I did not tell him what I felt in my heart of hearts, that he was mistaken in thinking readers here were not interested in the most familiar creatures around them. Subsequently, many editors have told me much the same thing, that there is no interest in Nature in the South, but I think they are mistaken. It is natural for people to be interested in the common plants and animals of the country, and the taste for Nature belongs to no age-group or nation.

May I explain the last sentence? Speaking of a large part of the South, of the Tamil country, it is easy to see that natural history has not been deeply, or even eagerly, studied here, and I do not think the position is different in other parts of South India. The language proves this. There are no specific names in Tamil for many common birds and beasts, and for many native plants, no term by which such widely and patently different animals as deer and antelope can be distinguish-

shed. In a smaller area, much poorer in fauna, in England, there is and has been greater enthusiasm for Nature than anywhere else. In recent years eminent field experts like the bird-photographer, Eric Hosking of Sweden, the animal behaviour specialist, Dr. Tinbergen of Holland, and the German recorder of wild voices, Ludwig Koch, have found scope and recognition for their work in England that they could not in their native lands, a fact that speaks of the English people's great zest for Nature.

I don't suppose there is any such person as 'an average Indian', but I am not suggesting that we have, as a nation, anywhere near a quarter of the enthusiasm for Nature that the British have. This will, naturally, directly affect the scope for Nature writing in South India, particularly as a live interest in plant and animal life is more typical of the illiterate rustic than of educated people, and it is the educated people that read newspapers and magazines.

MAJOR DIFFICULTIES

Nor is this all. Let me list all the major difficulties in the way of Nature writing for magazines straightaway. A big handicap is the fact that in southern regional languages there is hardly any natural history, so that the diction and idiom of the writing and the familiar terminology will have to be popularised and verified, and this calls for a far deeper knowledge of the language than writers in the regional languages usually possess; and the load of morphological detail cannot

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be avoided till readers are familiar with the looks of common creatures.

A further difficulty arises over illustrations. Whatever the language of the writing, good photographs or really good drawings are essential for illustrating the articles, and these are hard to get. People who do Nature photography or drawing for a living are just non-existent in India — no one can live by selling a dozen photographs or drawings in the year, and I doubt if a Nature photographer sells as many.

The last major difficulty that occurs to me is the unfortunate faith of editors in their judgment of readers. The readers who like articles on natural history topics do not, as a rule, write in to tell the editor about their preference. The editor knows quite well that in our country readers write to him mainly to ventilate grievances, but he is still apt to judge things by the letters he gets or does not get. I have had personal experience of this.

I did four or five bird notes for a Tamil magazine and received over 20 letters from readers whom I did not know, all of them complimentary. Then the editor told me that he saw no point in continuing the series, as he had not received a single appreciative letter (or even a critical letter.)

I knew that the readers who had written to me had obtained my address from his office, but he did not know about their letters and I saw no need to inform him. I agreed with him that in the circumstances the best thing would be to discontinue the series—the circumstances I had in mind rather featured the rate at which he had paid me.

From the editor's point of view, there is a further and very real difficulty, the dearth of contributors whose natural history can be trusted. It is utterly wrong for people who have not done some scientific and very earnest Nature study to write Nature notes. It is necessary for the writers to be authentic naturalists, the more informed scientifically

the better, but experience of field work is quite essential and they should write as far as possible from their observation to sustain the articles with live interest and lend them some worth and authenticity. Book-lore can never be the inspiration for any worthwhile piece of Nature writing, though books are vitally important for verifying field observation and for providing the writer with an adequate background. Particularly must the tendency to present Nature to readers in simplified sections be avoided—nothing can create a greater distaste for Nature.

I feel very strongly on this point. I know Nature writing for the Press is not a paying proposition, but this does not justify slipshod, dishonest, pretentious work. Whoever writes about animals and plants must know his subjects at first hand and have a sound knowledge of them. Further, he must be sufficiently educated, scientifically, to be superior to sentimental anthropomorphism. And he must have skill in writing, so that he can communicate his observations without being tiresome or seeming to lecture. The man who knows to write, but whose natural history is vague, must be firmly discouraged; he is safest behind bars.

There are all these difficulties, but they can and should be overcome. I am positively certain (of course I go mainly by a feeling that I have in saying this, that is why I use such emphatic language!) that there are thousands of readers in the South really interested in Nature and wanting readable but reliable articles, particularly in the regional languages.

Much can be done if only editors and others who determine what shall go into the magazines and how contributors should be paid realise that Nature notes do really interest readers—not merely occasional notes on exotic freaks but regular news of the native wild life.

Yes, that is the word I have been searching for laboriously, 'news.' Gossip of the com-

monest birds, beasts and plants of the country, written by someone who can be trusted ("a usually well-informed source" or, better still, one unusually well-informed) must surely appeal to readers, especially when good photographs or drawings illustrate the text and make identification easy for the layman.

Perhaps professional zoologists, botanists and photographers, in collaboration with a seasoned writer who knows how to present things attractively (but who will manfully resist the temptation to take the facts from the pundits and do the articles himself) can produce the sort of Nature writing that will create a less silent demand for such writing. Naturally these people will have to be paid adequately, but I am all for every kind of contributor to every kind of magazine being paid sumptuously—it is the editors and proprietors that have such narrow-minded view on payment.

Nothing worth doing was ever easy, and I trust I have made it clear that the attempt to convey authentic news of our wild life is no simple undertaking. Clearly, the first step is to convince the editors and proprietors of magazines that here is a field, practically unexploited in the South, rich in promise. This job, the job of convincing these difficult people, is something that an individual can never attempt; however, it is well within the legitimate activity of an organisation of journalists. I think this is a job which any body of South Indian journalists should take on, more as a patriotic endeavour than as anything else, for I am unable to comprehend a patriotism that is only linked with human politics and which ignores the fauna and flora of the country. How any body of journalists would set about the job is a thing on which I have no constructive ideas, but I should think that plenty of persuasion would work.

Reflections on REPORTING

By N. VEMBUSWAMY

The reporter is the eyes and ears of the Editor. There is a lot of talent available for this very important limb of the profession. While all this is generally accepted, one may wonder why speeches are extensively reported only in the Madras Press.

THERE are as many views on what may be called good reporting as there are varieties of people seeking publicity. Some are born to get publicity, many acquire the art of getting publicity and others thrust themselves on you to get publicity.

Whatever the shade of the publicity hunters, they are all coloured by the same brush. Exceptions apart, their ability to assess the quality of reporting is in direct proportion to the degree of importance they get at the hands of the reporter. The willingness and not the capacity to report or the propriety of reproducing any speech in full is regarded as the be-all and end-all of the reporter's existence, particularly in Madras, where associations, leagues and unions have a mushroom growth and public meetings are an obsession with them. I wonder whether anywhere else the reporter has the "privilege and pleasure" of looking forward to covering at supper time a young men's meeting or cultural gathering, attended mostly by people on the wrong side of 60. The duration of the function generally equals that of a *Kalakshepam*, for which again Madras is famous. On top of it all, the organisers write to editors of newspapers directly "to send a representative and report the proceedings in full." Despite the high-sounding platitudes about the dignity and grandeur of the journalist's calling, nobody ever appears to bestow a moment's thought on the plight of the reporter whose ordeal

starts only after a meeting is over. After enjoying the full quota of his sleep at night, the secretary of the association eagerly turns the pages of the newspaper early in the morning to spot the report on the previous night's meeting. Does he know what it meant to the reporter? Does he know when the reporter got back home and had his meal? Does he know that the reporter has to be back again in the office for his relentless round of duty in the morning? There seems to be an impression that reporters live in a sort of "Fiddler's Green", all jolly fellows. But you must ask the reporter: he will ardently wish that none of his sons should ever take to this thankless job.

The latest craze is the holding of Press conferences. Anyone who takes into his head that he has a view to put across for the benefit of the public, say in support of the rhythmic method or in praise of a new ball-point marvel without ink, or if one decides to have good publicity for the *Arangetral* of an alleged danseuse or for the inauguration of some kite-flying business, he knows how to organise it—that is to arrange a Press conference somewhere in the ante-room of a forlorn house, or a hotel where tea may be served or lunch provided in accordance with the size of the purse and the mood of the party out for a boost. There is no fear of punctuality, because so long as there is hope of publicity, the thing may be stretched to suit

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M.A., F.I.A., F.S.S., (London) A.S.A.
General Manager

all conveniences. The reporter on whom a mass of material is dumped and who makes use of it in extenso rises in the estimation of the presiding deity at the Press conference. It may be even suitably acknowledged by a discreet letter written to the Editor with an eye on publicity for his next outing.

The "interview" may be deemed to be a minor edition of the Press conference. Here, it is not even considered necessary to meet the Pressmen. To send a written note requesting the Editor to publish it in the form of an interview is not uncommon with some although many a note of that kind may not see the light of day. Any X, Y or Z thinks he has a right to be interviewed by the Press and feels elated when he sees a report in the paper. But he is not so happy when what he has said lands him in trouble, or becomes the subject matter of a serious controversy, once it is published. In fact, he will have no qualms in disowning the "interview" itself, or the particular "version" which, according to him, is "distorted."

It is a sad commentary that Indian journalism, which had its origin in lofty ideals and noble endeavour during the days of the fight for freedom, should have received a setback in the post-Independence era, and the daily newspaper should be obliged to print all the stuff passing muster under one high-sounding name or the other. The sin is not all on one side. The over-enthusiastic newsmen have also to share the blame for their contribution. That apart, it is high time newspapers cried halt to the reporting of speeches, Press conferences and interviews, masquerading as news, which are in reality nothing but so much of propaganda piffle and publicity stunt. It is imperative that newspapers should evolve certain principles whereby reporting of meetings should be restricted to a few well-defined categories and the Press conferences confined to high personages associated with the Government or leading non-official organisations. It must

be possible to subject the instrument of interview also to such control by the newspapermen themselves bringing into play a sense of proportion and balanced judgment. It means that they should depend upon their own commonsense. It is unfortunately true that many a printed interview will not bear scrutiny as a news item.

This naturally leads me on to the role of the reporter himself, who has a responsibility to set a high standard. While it may not be in his power to avoid a meeting or a conference of any sort, he can certainly dispense with the interview if it is not worth while. Even in the case of a meeting or a Press conference it is open to him to deal with it on merits. Then there is the problem of the general conferences, annual and otherwise, which are held in galore. Oftentimes these conferences are no more than glorified public meetings and in some cases they even lack the characteristics of a well-attended public meeting. Give them a short shrift and they will not get repeated.

It may be said it is the man who pays the piper that can call the tune and it is not the province of the reporter to decide what is good or bad. Yes, the man who pays the piper, on ultimate analysis, is the reader who is not interested in the effusions of individuals or mass shows called conferences, except to the extent they afford a glimpse into the inside of things or trends of events. What is required is ample discretion in the news hawk to mirror to the public the picture that he actually sees and not the one that is drawn to deceive the unwary. Absence of this discretion or any interference with it will result in *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. If the reporter is given a free hand and he keeps himself within the bounds of decency and decorum, the public can be assured of true objectivity and fair presentation of facts. This means that journalists and newspapers should steer clear of pressure groups.

The official the news and the Reporter

—BY T. RAJARAM

SINCE the attainment of independence the relationship between the Government and the Press has considerably improved and there has been co-operation between the two organs of public service. But there are still unnecessary impediments which the journalist has to overcome in his task of collecting news.

No doubt Press conferences by Ministers and other high dignitaries of the Government help the journalist a lot to interpret governmental policies and actions. But they do not give scope for enterprising journalists to show their individuality in presenting news and focussing public attention on particular problems. There should be ample scope for Pressmen to contact departmental heads with unfettered freedom; and they should be given all facilities to get the information they want.

Various kinds of restrictions are imposed on subordinate officials; some of them are quite unwarranted and uncalled for in the present set-up. Even to get minor and harmless news, Pressmen have to wade through a number of offices before they get a 'clearance' for the release of a particular news item. It is not helpful or even advisable to get all the news from one source only at the top. From experience, it has been found that by the time an interesting piece of news travels from one department to another and finally

reaches the top level, it is shorn of all details and something insipid emerges in the form of a hand-out. If the Pressmen want further details on receiving this official version, a regular hunt is made to find out the particular files or to get at the official concerned which is generally a wild goose chase.

There are needless gag orders on district and subordinate officials not to disclose information to Pressmen even though it might be mere statistics. Such restrictions should be removed altogether and there should be complete freedom for Pressmen to approach any of the officers to gather information. There is another type of officers who have not yet shed their complex of the pre-Independence period. They would insist on written requests for getting information. Recently, I approached a Government of India official for information on certain subjects. He insisted on a written request which was also produced. Thereupon, he said, he would refer to his immediate superior at Delhi, who fortunately gave permission to make available all the particulars. When approached again, the official wanted another written request for furnishing the information!

In these days when there is a plea for all-round decentralisation of administration, a thorough change of attitude towards the Press is necessary. A free Press is a source of great strength to a democracy.

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THIS NOCTURNAL JOB . . .

—BY R. NARASIMHAN

“**T**HEY were passing through the Strand as they talked, and by a newspaper office, which was all lighted up and bright. Reporters were coming out of the place, or rushing up to it in cabs; there were lamps burning in the editors' rooms, and above where the compositors were at work; the windows of the building were in a blaze of gas.

“‘Look at that, Pen,’ Warrington said. ‘There she is... the great engine... she never sleeps.

She has her ambassadors in every quarter of the world—her couriers upon every road. Her officers march along with armies, and her envoys walk into statesmen's cabinets. They are

ubiquitous. Yonder journal has an agent, at this minute, giving bribes at Madrid; and another inspecting the price of potatoes at Covent Garden.’”

It is to be feared that the honest Mr. George Warrington has been the unwitting instrument by which many young persons have been misled into journalism in India. The reader will note that he speaks casually of the Press “never sleeping” almost as if it were an inestimable virtue which somehow places it above other professions. One would have thought that the denial of an elementary necessity would have deterred most persons from entering journalism, but such is the perversity of human nature that it apparently does not enter into their calculations at all when they come to weigh their

chances in the career. Yet before six months have passed these same persons are to be found in sack cloth and ashes.

Night duty is an integral part of journalism in India and, as the grim Jeremiahs assure us, everywhere else in the world. This very fact disqualifies journalism from being considered an aspect, possibly inferior and degenerate, of letters. For, while scholars of old were said to have spent days and nights over their studies, the allocation of the dark

hours for this purpose may be reasonably dismissed as a figurative expression. This is nothing less than tragic, for it is as a form of literature that journalism appeals to young men who had lately studied in colleges and who de-

sire to continue a career of study and thought. When they believe that they have found a haven in the daily Press, they are merely being misled.

MISERABLE LIFE

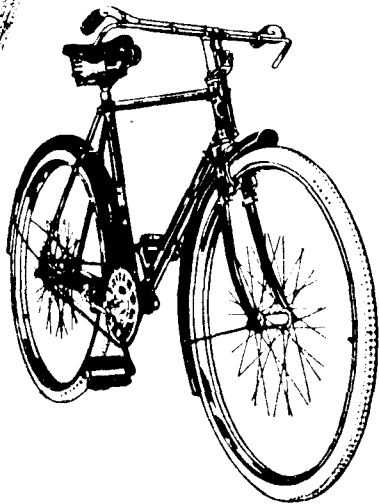
For, night duty poisons journalism. It appals the veteran quite as much as the novice. The first week of night duty is possibly exhilarating; there is a sense of power in keeping awake while the other sluggish and less intellectual mortals are merely drugged in sleep. But this highfalutin does not survive two weeks of reality. It is not long before night duty is revealed in all its horror.

The period of night duty is looked forward to with terror and dismay. The prospect gains in miserable squalidness as it approaches

I. F. W. J. SOUVENIR, JULY 1955

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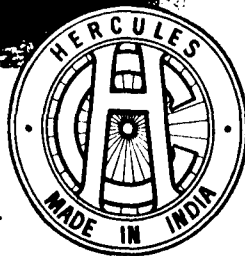
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nearer and nearer. The predestined victim feverishly counts the days of grace available before the misery descends on him. I can tell from the face of a colleague who is afflicted with night duty what time, short or long, must elapse before he is swallowed up in darkness. If he is gay with febrility, it may be taken that he has just concluded a period of it. If he is preternaturally gloomy or surly, according to his natural disposition, it is an infallible sign that before a few days have passed over his head he will be assisting at the production of a morning issue. Thus, in anxiety for the future and sense of miraculous but purely temporary relief from a danger which has lately passed, the sub-editor passes a miserable life, short, nasty and brutish.

SENSE OF OPPRESSION

Not less unwillingly than the boy who unhappily picks his way to unwelcome school does the sub-editor prepare himself to go to office of a night. A sense of oppression weighs heavily on him. Around him are signs and sights of rest. There is everywhere that animated talk which the inconsiderate people who had worked during day indulge in before going to bed. The quiet book is not for the sub-editor nor peaceful music. When he has conquered the nearly insurmountable obstacles to transport provided so gallantly by the Madras city bus service he arrives at office where the "blaze", so eloquently but misleadingly rhapsodised about by Warrington, of light blinds him for a moment. After recovering himself he sits down to his nightly task with an air of powerful doggedness. The hours pass by on wings or on leaden feet according to the degree of misery which possesses him. The release comes in the morning. As he leaves the office the great roar of the rotary machine appears to him an evil sound rejoicing in his sorrow and tribulation. It represents a triumph over humanity and its kindly amenities. As its jaws work in thunderous rever-

beration it seems to stamp into dust with devilish glee sleep, rest and recreation.

Actually, however, it is not release that he achieves when the sub-editor leaves office. It is only then that his greatest trial lies before him. Stated in simple terms, the problem is how to coax sleep during the hours of day which follow. How difficult this is can be appreciated only by those who have attempted it and failed. To sleep during the day (as opposed to the natural *siesta*, which belongs to a different category altogether) is to defy the laws of nature. The few lucky individuals sleep; the many others toss and heave in their beds the livelong day. Sunlight oppresses them, the noises of the day wound them, they start at the slightest sound. Books

One must not forget that even journalists are human and have human needs. No one can give of his best unless he works in decent living and working conditions. A lawyer or a doctor only starves if he has no work to do. But a journalist starves even when he works and works hard.—MR. M. C. CHAGLA

are denied them. Sport is physically impossible. It is life in death which they endure. The heavy hours pass, evening comes on, soon night falls and the miserable man sets out again for night duty which ensures another period of travail the next day.

I have not exaggerated the terrors. They are being experienced daily; the morning paper is but the tomb of serenity and peace of mind of four or five hapless individuals. There comes a time in the life of a sub-editor when he proudly feels that he has assisted at the presentation of stirring and memorable items of news. His exaltation is short-lived; the attendant circumstance that he "presents" them when normally he ought to have been sleeping suffices to poison the most inspiring sentiment.

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The Film AND THE PRESS

• By •
N. V. ESWAR

THERE is so much in common between the film and the Press. Both are media of expression; they try to show facets of life to the people in general and thus educate them into leading an "informed" life.

Yet, it is strange that both these media which have similar objectives look askance at each other. Both put on something like an air of superiority, and there is an undeclared war between them. Each tries to tell the other that it and it only is all-pervading. Films maintain that pictorial representation leaves a greater impression on the public mind than the printed word. On the other hand, the Press claims that the opposite is true. According to it, words sink into the mind, whereas there is not much of a chance for fleeting images to abide in memory. Much has been said on this controversial point and I have no wish to add to the confusion.

It is paradoxical, however, that indirectly at least the film hopes for a word of approval from the Press. It is difficult to imagine where the film would get to without the Press. The very coming into existence of the film is declared and that fact kept before the public by the Press. A film's success generally depends on the kind of notice it gets in the Press.

There are of course some who like to believe that films will attract audiences by themselves. This belief was well entrenched in the minds of producers a decade ago. They considered it a waste of time to humour the Press or have anything at all to do with it, at

any stage of their production. However, wisdom dawned on film producers as time passed.

Instead of being treated as a nuisance and a Peeping Tom, the Press came to be treated more or less as an adjunct of the film. This concession was of course made on the ground that the Press was necessary only as an aid in selling the film. Each film studio came to have a publicity department of its own, and today the publicity department's main job is to get the co-operation of the Press in not only publicising their wares, but also selling their products in attractive wrappings.

Studios no longer rely on their own copy to sell their pictures. They look for the write-ups of the Press to put their pictures across to the public. In other words, advertisements are only a bait to hook the much-valued write-up. But the Indian producer is still not wholly convinced, as his American counterpart is, that the picture is yet to be produced that will sell by itself.

Though I do not deny that word of mouth publicity is still a greater force in popularising a picture, I am still sure that not even the loudest word of mouth publicity will do any good to the film about which the Press has said nothing. It would be a miserable flop.

What has been said so far may give the idea that the Press comes in only as a medium of advertisement in relation to the film. That is but a superficial view of the function of the Press. Advertisements only publicise the existence of certain films and where they run at the moment; they only provide information.

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They do not prompt the general public. The write-ups tell the people which of these films could or should be seen. The Press guides the public in selecting the picture they would go to see. In my view, this latter function of the Press is the most important. As a matter of fact, I believe it is the duty of the Press to guide the general public in the matter of selecting and seeing films for their own good. It should be clear that the Press is expected to prescribe certain films generally to tone up their drab life, much like a doctor would prescribe health resorts and tonics for bucking up a patient's health.

There is, besides, the other function of the Press which is to tell the film producers what is good and popular. The producer by listening to the voice of the Press which reflects that of the silent film-goer, is enabled to make his film popular. There may be some publications here and there which overdo this role and lampoon films without reason or rhyme. But such publications would easily be "found

out" by the intelligent film-goer and their influence reduced.

A decade ago all film producers were agreed that, because they had advertised in a paper that paper should not say anything bad about their picture. I have seen film critics being removed from their jobs, because they express an honest but unfortunate opinion about some pictures. I myself have had such experience. I am, however, not bitter because of that. But the film producer should realise that he is doing an injustice to himself and to the film-goer, for whose entertainment he professes he is making pictures, by muzzling honest Press criticism.

The attitude of the film producer has been: "I give you sustenance to keep your publication running. You do me dirty by condemning the very picture you advertise for me!". This attitude has of course undergone a change and there is a general feeling among film interests that the Press should have its unfettered say.

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HOW THE NEWS CAME

BY "BELVEDERE"

"The wood has entered my soul", wrote Charles Lamb while reminiscing about his days at the desk of the East India Company. A similar feeling generally overtakes a sub-editor who toils day and night correcting copy. However, there is no denying the fact that there are also moments of thrill for him: not only when he gives a striking heading and when he displays a good news story but also when he deals with an outstanding event.

THEY were days of struggle soon after the birth of Pakistan. The Press of both countries quickly reacted to the sad happenings in the wake of partition and the tension continued for a length of time. Abuses and jaundiced writing were the order of the day. Both India and Pakistan passed through a period of crisis as it were. Kashmir had been invaded and the freebooters partially beaten back. The migration of people across the border in search of a new hope and security was on. Hyderabad's future was uncertain and the Razakars had taken control of the State. In these circumstances there happened two outstanding events. One was Gandhiji's decision to go on a fast unto death and the other Mr. Jinnah's death. It is interesting to record how these two incidents were reported.

* * *

Most of Gandhiji's major pronouncements were made at his daily prayer meetings. For those who saw the great crowds that gathered to see and hear Gandhiji in Madras in 1946 it was a shock to see the small number of people who turned up at the prayer meetings in Delhi in 1947 at the

Bhangi Colony and later at Birla House. The authorised version of Gandhiji's speeches used to be made available to all newspapers at Delhi and, I believe, even API (as it was then known), by a special correspondent of the United Press of India, with the result that the number of Pressmen at the prayer meetings was insignificant.

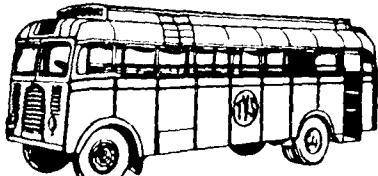
Gandhiji's decision to go on a fast unto death was kept a closely guarded secret at Birla House. I had heard later that only Dr. Sushila Nayar knew about it. Gandhiji announced his decision at a prayer meeting—on his silence day. The script, which was very short, was read at the meeting by one of his associates.

But for the 200 odd people and the handful of reporters who were at the meeting nobody knew of it. I was working on the interim shift in a Delhi newspaper. At about 6-30, our staff photographer rushed in to announce Gandhiji's decision. The face of the Dak paper was immediately changed and work went on with vigour. Meanwhile, the Editor sent for me and asked for details. Whatever I had I gave him. He wanted to know if we had an official report from our staff man; I said no one was usually assigned, at which he worked himself into a temper. From the next day a reporter was sent to Birla House. The A. P. I. sent their flash at 8-30. The sentence read, "Mahatma Gandhi has decided to go on a fast unto death from tomorrow, *it is learnt*". (Italics mine). Three hours after the announcement, the news was still in the 'it is learnt' stage. AIR and the BBC also repeated this sentence in their news bulletins. AIR used to record Gandhiji's prayer meeting speeches but as it was

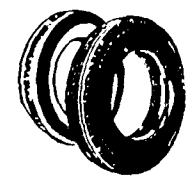
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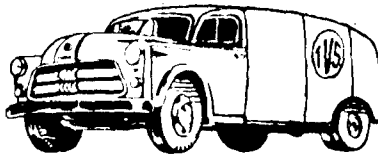
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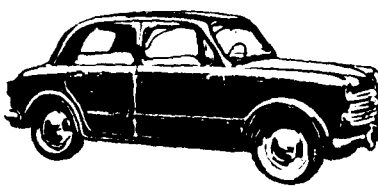
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Gandhiji's silence day, the radio people were absent at the meeting.

The news of Mr. Jinnah's death came in a somewhat surprising fashion. There were indications in Press despatches from Karachi that the Quaid-e-Azam was unwell. Beyond that, there was no trace of a belief that his end could be so sudden.

On the other hand, the Government of India seemed to know more. Newspapers were flooded with pictures of the various personalities connected with the freedom movement, including photographs of Mr. Jinnah, from the P. I. B. A smart colleague of mine smelt something in this and proceeded with writing a seven-column biographical sketch of Mr. Jinnah. The matter was set up and kept ready for use, with blocks of pictures etc.

During those days, the A. P. I. used to send at about 8 p. m. a schedule of important

news items expected to land. Among the items mentioned was, "An important announcement from Karachi". My colleagues got busy racking their brains. One brightly suggested that Hyderabad would have acceded to Pakistan. That, we all considered, was the most probable. Until 12, we were watching out on the creed, but nothing of importance from Pakistan turned up. We reminded the API office in Delhi, requesting them to hurry up. They could not help us very much, for they said they would ask Bombay. We reminded them again at 1 and 2, but nothing came out. At 3-10 a.m. we got a flash from Karachi, "Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah is dead."

Most of us were in the Press giving finishing touches to the morning edition. The colleague who was deputed to keep watch on the creed came down panting for breath and showed us the message. We published as much of the announcement as possible, redu-

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I. F. W. J. SOUVENIR JULY 1955

cing the old first-lead story. The back page was immediately scrapped and substituted with the ready-made obituary note—a full page. We had scored over all other newspapers.

We knew nothing of the write-up. There were many passages which should not have found a place. We heard later that the Pakistan Government had lodged a protest with the Government of India drawing their attention to the tone of the obit.

India launched police action against Hyderabad two days later. Of course, the Government of India did not wait for Mr. Jinnah's death to take this action. We had heard rumours even a month before that police action was imminent.

* * *

Well, there are thrills also in a sub-editor's work, but the general trend is on the boring side.

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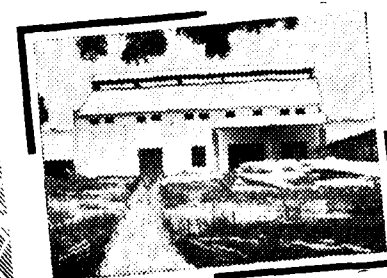
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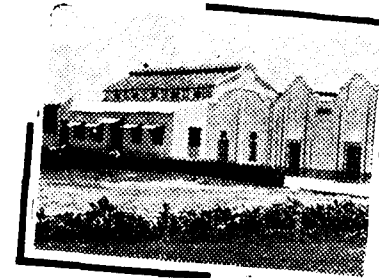
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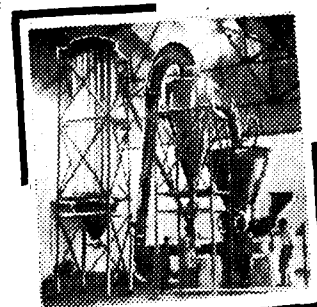


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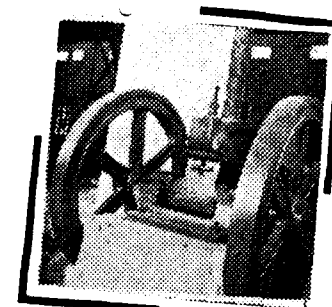


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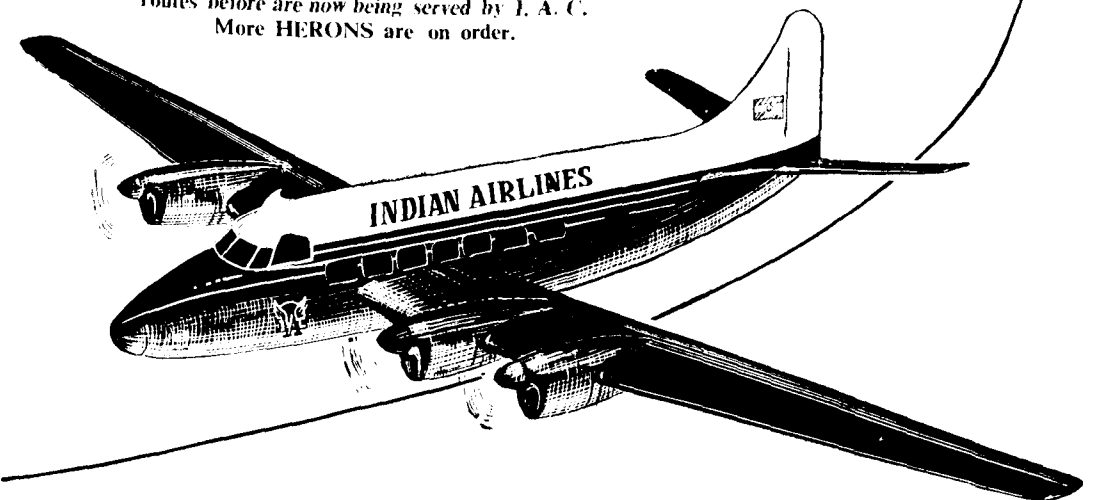
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