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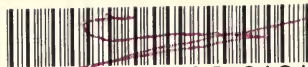


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RADIO IN WARTIME

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# *Radio In Wartime*

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*By*

*Sherman H. Dryer*

DIRECTOR OF RADIO PRODUCTIONS,  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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## PREFACE

Radio is a friendly business. But it has been my observation that radio likes itself almost to a fault. From that point of view, it bears a strong family resemblance to the show business which fathered it. But more than a decade of close association with radio in all its whimsies leads me to suspect that radio can afford to throw away the mirror and look at itself in the flesh. As a crystal set, radio was a novelty and it had some leave to cut a caper or two. Now radio has long passed its majority, and, while it may regret that it was never spanked in its youth, it may not be amiss for it to sit down soberly in the confessional and look for absolution.

It would be presumptuous to pretend that this book speaks for the conscience of radio. That might beg the question, for who is to say whether radio has a conscience. Certainly the literature of radio cannot be called on to prove it. Nowhere does radio's Narcissus complex show to prettier advantage than in its own published works. Sometime that has to come to an end, and what better time than now, when radio faces a man-sized wartime responsibility?

Radio needs critical appraisals—not because radio is all wrong, but because no human invention can pretend to more than the counsels of perfection. Radio can afford to be criticized because it can no longer afford not to be. And it is an ironical fact that radio must look to its family



for that criticism. Nobody else possesses the necessary technical insight. This fact, as much as any other, will serve to explain much in the present work. My hope is that this book will be regarded as a tentative approach to a critical evaluation of radio's new role, that it will promote a better understanding of an instrument which possesses a tremendous potential for building in society an appreciation of the hazards and obligations of war and the ultimate peace.

In writing of one's friends, it is easy to fall into extremes, to go from adulation to utter condemnation. It is quite another matter to squint hard from the inside and maintain a nice intellectual equilibrium. This was the problem, and it accounts in part at least for the presence in the book of views other than my own. In asking seven distinguished persons to review different chapters from their specialized points of view, the last thought in my mind was to stage a cut-and-dried debate which might in any sense pretend to say the last word on the subject. In fact, the reader who assumes from the contrary views expressed here that the critical evaluation of radio has been exhausted, would be missing the entire purpose of these chapters. If he cannot find stimulus for further discussion, he might better trust to casual bull sessions in the radio production laboratories for his radio education.

Although the views in each chapter are my own, I must express my deep appreciation to several persons whose encouragement and practical assistance have been invaluable—to William Benton, Vice-President of the University of Chicago, for his friendly and energetic encouragement; to John Howe, my associate in the Radio Office, and to William Costello, an old classmate now with *The Air*

*Edition*, the *Chicago Sun*, for their critical readings and sharp questions about all of my ideas; to Laura Johnson, for her assistance in the typing and preparation of the manuscript; and to Brownlee Haydon, editor of the *University of Chicago Round Table's* transcript, for his careful editorial reading.

And I should like, also, to declare my thanks to the spirit and influence of the University, which has had a profound effect on my ideas, my attitudes and my perspective about radio and its fundamental responsibilities. Coming from commercial radio, where one asks *how*, to the University, where one asks *why*, is a healthful and sobering experience. I recommend it to my colleagues in the industry.

SHERMAN H. DRYER

*The University of Chicago*



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## *Part One*





# I

## *The Battle Begins*

Radio—one of the most potent weapons of psychological warfare—has yet to be used with full effectiveness on the home front.

Like the legendary steed, radio is riding off furiously in all directions. When the first news of Pearl Harbor came at 2:30 Eastern time on Sunday, December 7, 1941, it had no war plans, no war policies ready. In the months which have passed, radio has been too busy galloping to bother much about where it is going or why it is going there.

No friend of radio can view this condition with equanimity. He has the choice of speaking up or keeping quiet. His criticisms may contribute to the solution of the problem, but if he keeps quiet the industry's publicity riders will continue to extol the gallop as a patriotic exercise in the public service.

The sincere critic of radio is a rarity. When he does speak, he is either ignored or bombarded with statistics.

showing that 118 hours of national broadcast time were devoted to "education" in the last seven months, that nineteen symphony concerts "delighted music lovers everywhere" and that, anyway, less than half of all air time is sponsored—"the rest is pure public service." The only exceptions are the very few critics who command pages in the public press and who write temperately and charmingly. The dean of this coterie is Robert J. Landry of *Variety*, whose commentary follows this chapter. Landry is like the stern but loving father who, when wielding the strap in the woodshed, can say, "This hurts me more than it does you," and get away with it.

It is, of course, a sad observation that in the twenty-five years of its life few serious or critical books have been written about radio. The literature of radio is divided into two main parts: anthologies of "best" broadcasts, or vocational texts—*How to Write for Radio*, *Radio Direction*, *How to Become an Announcer*. Neither of these categories has been concerned with fundamental matters of radio policy or organization. Their effect has been to feed the pride and prejudice of the industry, and to confirm its modest judgment that it is doing a very good job indeed.

The public, with the exception of occasional vested or pressure groups, has been critically apathetic about radio. Millions of the public listen, and they are entertained or relaxed or even informed by what they hear. Technically, radio is doing such a good job that few people question whether the ends toward which the technical efforts are being directed might not be better. And by "better" one does not mean "highbrow." Radio is a mass medium,

and so must appeal to a variety of tastes and interests. But in wartime, words like "ends" and "better" begin to take on a meaning of peculiar and relevant importance to every listener, even if that listener does not realize it. And it is the wartime meaning of "ends" and "better" with which this book is concerned.

Almost a year before Pearl Harbor, several leading executives told this author that "if war ever comes, radio's job will be threefold—to maintain normal program schedules and entertainment standards; to provide prompt and adequate news; to support the war effort by plugging government appeals and airing morale programs."

These objectives seemed to be accepted as all-inclusive. There was little recognition that they represented the beginning, not the ends, of wartime service. When Pearl Harbor came, no efforts were under way to build the machinery to implement these policies fully. The industry, up to the very moment of war, was concerned with selling time and building larger audiences. Under the pressures of war, it has, of course, been compelled to make certain readjustments.

No one can properly examine the problems of radio in wartime without a certain amount of background. As a preface to the chapters which follow, six factors deserve attention—radio's failure to plan, the government's legal relationship to the industry, the Office of War Information, the influence of government program authority, censorship and radio's business prospects.

1. *Planning.* Why was it that radio had no M-Day plans ready for *der Tag*? The reasons are deep-rooted in the nature of the business. First, radio is highly com-



petitive, and competition is the antithesis of industrial cooperation. Moreover, broadcasters have a deep faith in their ability to adjust to emergency situations—and war is regarded as an emergency, a departure from normalcy. Further, there is no precedent for planning on a grand scale. Some may disagree with this last point. They declare that most programs are planned, and since planning programs is radio's chief activity, it may be said that planning is natural to the industry. But *scheduling* is not planning—booking procedures have little to do with matters of policy or with evaluation. Finally, radio maintains its peacetime “standards” by “don’t” codes. Radio said to itself: don’t produce horror programs for kiddies, don’t use profanity, don’t treat any religion in an unfavorable light. About war it had said nothing. Radio ignored the fact that war requires carefully implemented “do” codes—*do* clarify issues, *do* interpret the significance of events, *do* help guide listeners to constructive action.

2. *Government.* Such collaboration as may exist in the industry has been brought about largely by government. The three major government agencies which have to do with radio are the Federal Communications Commission, the Defense Communications Board and the Office of War Information.

The F. C. C. is a regulatory agency which allots wavelengths and licenses new and old radio stations to serve in “the public convenience, interest and necessity.” The ambiguity of these six words has raised the question of whether the Commission may, as one of its functions, evaluate program policies and content in passing on

applications for license renewals. William Paley, president of CBS, says that "[This phrase] can be asserted to mean programs deemed desirable by the Commission, or its Chairman if he is strong enough, or by the party in political power. I say to you now that a resourceful Commission so-minded might well devise ways to seize control of every phase of radio broadcasting regardless of the prohibitions and the silences in the present statute on which we have relied so heavily in the past. This is a danger and a very real one. The very announcement by the Commission that as a matter of policy it will not look with favor on broadcasting of a certain type, will be enough to have programs of that type off the air all over the country in twenty-four hours. For will not that pronouncement automatically be construed as giving definition to 'public interest, convenience, or necessity'? Must not that definition have a strong bearing on license renewals? Such public announcements of policy by the Commission which might get unfavorable public reactions are not even necessary, if the Commission sets out to shape and control this vital medium of communication. A quiet word to broadcasters could well be enough." <sup>1</sup>

The Defense Communications Board was established September 24, 1940, by Executive Order. It has five members: the Chairman of the F. C. C., who serves as Chairman; the Chief Signal Officer of the Army; the Director of Naval Communications; the Assistant Secretary of State in charge of International Communications; and the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury in charge of Treasury

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<sup>1</sup> William Paley, testimony before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, May 6, 1942.

Enforcement Activities. Responsible only to the President, the board was instructed to draw plans to meet the wartime radio requirements of the armed forces, of other government agencies and of industry—with the requirements of national defense as a primary consideration.

The Office of War Information's radio division carries on the work first delegated to the Office of Facts and Figures. The O. F. F. was established on October 7, 1941. It set about immediately to coordinate all government requests for broadcast time, and to establish a series of allocations for government messages and war themes. On June 13, 1942, the O. F. F. was absorbed by the O. W. I., which continues its functions. Chief of the O. W. I. radio section is William B. Lewis, former CBS vice-president in charge of programs. The O. W. I. policy is to seek the "advice and counsel" of the government and the industry in determining how best to utilize radio. Meetings with industry and advertising representatives are held frequently.

The influence of these three government agencies on radio is direct and obvious. The industry plans nothing and creates nothing without watching the government out of the corner of its eye. No inside observer of broadcasting can be oblivious of this fact—that the initiative in broadcasting has passed from the industry to Washington. "The D. C. B. says this," "The F. C. C. says that," "I was talking to someone at the O. W. I. and he told me——" Everywhere in radio the tendency is to service the government, follow its directives, and build programs that will please Uncle Sam.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See p. 50 for a further discussion of radio-government relations.

3. *The Office of War Information.* This is the most important of all government agencies to radio in wartime, for it is concerned exclusively with the quantity and quality of programs. As the government's information agency, it provides facts and directives to the industry to help guide production planning. Thus, a few months after the outbreak of war, each station was supplied with a *Radio War Guide* chart, which listed the types of government messages and war themes to be emphasized on the air.

## CURRENT PRIORITY RANKINGS

	<p>AA This material is "rush" and should be allotted about 50 per cent of the total "program units" you can use for War messages (a spot announcement or a 15-minute show are each considered one "program unit").</p>	<p>This material is of A major importance and should be allotted about 30 per cent of your available "program units."</p>
<p>NATIONAL (This material is for use by all stations)</p>	<p>Recruiting for Naval Services: Navy, Marines, Merchant Marine, Coast Guard</p>	<p>Automobile and truck pooling (WPB and Department of Agriculture)</p>

CURRENT PRIORITY RANKINGS (*cont'd*)

<b>NATIONAL</b> <i>(Cont'd)</i>	Recruiting for Army Production drive in- formation (WPB) Price Control (WPB- OPA) Salvage of rubber (WPB) Sale of War Bonds and S t a m p s (Treasury) USO (until July 4)	Gasoline rationing (WPB-OPA) Labor recruitment and training for War industries (State and local of- fices of the U. S. E. S.) Need for nurses (Fed- eral Security Agency) Civilian enrollment for voluntary serv- ice (Office of Civil- ian Defense) Recruiting of ship- yard workers (Maritime Com- mission, and State and local offices of the U. S. E. S.)
<b>REGIONAL</b> (This material is for use only by sta- tions in indi- cated areas)	Grain storage (De- partment of Agri- culture) Areas: Corn Belt, West Coast, Great Plains	Bureau of Reclama- tion (Department of the Interior Areas: West of Denver Farm labor shortage (Department of Agriculture) Areas: To be indicated by State and local of-



CURRENT PRIORITY RANKINGS (*cont'd*)

REGIONAL ( <i>Cont'd</i> )		<p>rice of the U. S. E. S.</p> <p>Increased supplies of farm products vital to war (Department of Agriculture) Areas: All farm regions</p>
	<p>B This is supplementary material and should be allotted no more than 20 per cent of your available "program units."</p>	<p>C This material should be used only if material in the preceding classifications has been adequately presented.</p>
NATIONAL (This material is for use by all stations)	<p>Salvage of scrap metal, rags (WPB-OPA)</p> <p>National nutrition drive (Federal Security Agency)</p> <p>First aid information (Office of Civilian Defense)</p> <p>Child welfare in wartime (Department of Labor)</p> <p>Information on the other American</p>	<p>Conserve electric power (WPB-OPA)</p> <p>Conservation of household equipment — refrigerators, stoves, etc. (Office of Civilian Defense and Department of Agriculture)</p> <p>WPA concerts (Federal Works Agency)</p> <p>Civil service war jobs</p>

CURRENT PRIORITY RANKINGS (*cont'd*)

NATIONAL ( <i>Cont'd</i> )	Republics (Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs)	(Civil Service Commission)
REGIONAL (This material is for use only by stations in indicated areas)	<p>Bonneville power program (Department of the Interior) Areas: Oregon, Washington, Idaho</p> <p>Forest fire prevention (Department of Agriculture and National Park Service) Areas: Rocky Mountains, West Coast, and Appalachian region</p> <p>Victory food specials (Department of Agriculture) Areas: To be indicated by Department of Agriculture direct to stations concerned</p>	<p>Mine safety (Department of the Interior) Areas: Appalachian — Coal; Rocky Mountains — Metals</p> <p>Grazing Service (Department of the Interior) Areas: Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, Idaho</p>

The *Radio War Guide* was planned as a stop-gap measure until the O. W. I. worked out a permanent procedure for the guidance of local stations in handling government

messages. Two charts were issued. "We asked local stations to include these topics on their schedules—leaving the treatment up to them—in any available time they wished to devote to government messages." <sup>3</sup>

In September, 1942, the O. W. I. announced the organization of a permanent *Local Stations Allocation Plan*, whereby each station broadcasts a definite number of government messages daily. All stations are classified in one of three groups: "Non-network Affiliates," which carry 25 messages per day; "Regional Network Affiliates," which carry 20 messages per day; "Basic Network Affiliates" (NBC, CBS, MBS, Blue), which carry 15 per day. "All messages will be locally produced and presented any time the station chooses, and can be carried either on local sustainings or commercials. . . . Eventually, each station will carry approximately 25 government messages per day. . . . Under this plan we will furnish specific topics weekly and will thereby furnish stations with timely messages of greatest importance to the government." <sup>4</sup>

In order to avoid duplication in government messages during station break periods, all stations carrying network programs are provided weekly with a booklet titled *Network Allocation Plan*, which lists the schedule of government messages for the week. The first page contains this ungrammatical admonition:

Get this schedule alongside your own schedule for these same days and space government messages on your own programs so as to provide an even distribution of messages

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<sup>3</sup> Spencer G. McNary, O. W. I. Radio Bureau. Personal correspondence.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



throughout the day and to avoid an undue repetition of the same message.

Thereafter, follows the list of announcements for each network, in this fashion:

### BLUE NETWORK

(All time EWT)

MONDAY (date)	PROGRAM	MESSAGE
8:15 - 8:30 a.m.	Pages of Melody	10% Club (War Bonds)
10:45 - 11:00 a.m.	Chaplain Jim	10% Club (War Bonds)
3:00 - 3:30 p.m.	Prescott Presents	Fats. Salvage
8:00 - 8:30 p.m.	Sustaining	10% Club (War Bonds)
10:00 - 10:30 p.m.	Counter-Spy	Coast Guard

The O. W. I. also releases from time to time a *Radio Background Material* series of pamphlets. Most of them are factual and statistical outlines on such topics as conservation, the United Nations, salvage, etc. However, occasional issues deal editorially with broader topics. For example, on July 15, 1942, *The Unconquered People* was issued. It contained stories of anti-Fascist heroism by peoples under Nazi rule. A cover note declared that "this is background information dealing with a major issue of the war and produced so that radio may (1) more completely mirror life in wartime and (2) aid its government with specific information problems. Its use is entirely optional. . . ."

The background materials of the O. W. I. reflect the deficiencies of most programs which treat of the war, and are worth passing study in light of the thesis that

one of radio's chief functions should be to clarify, interpret and inform. *The Unconquered People*, as a typical example, recounts isolated stories of resistance to the Nazis in occupied countries. The pamphlet notes that "small, individual acts of sabotage may seem futile. But their true power can be understood if they are seen as one ripple in a mighty ground swell of resistance." It ends with this paragraph: "When the British Commandos landed recently in France, local Frenchmen mistook them for a full-scale army of liberation. Swiftly turning on the Nazis, they seized German arms and produced hidden weapons. This is the shape of things to come." The picture one takes away after reading *The Unconquered People* is that of an occupied Europe ripe for revolt, well-organized in underground movements, fairly well armed for the day of liberation. No information is given about the size or power of the German forces; about the millions of conquered people who have neither the will nor the means to revolt; about the Quislings and pro-Axis sympathizers; about the enormous difficulties of defeating the enemy except by means of a second-front offensive. In short, the picture is optimistic, incomplete, and melodramatic. The sending of material such as *The Unconquered People* to all radio stations can be expected to have no result other than to encourage an outcropping of programs which feed the wishful thinking that the defeat of the Nazis will ultimately be largely accomplished by peasants and local patriots armed with pitchforks and old rifles. The fundamental questions about the conquered countries which cry for clarification and interpretation are not

treated. The pamphlet is neither research nor analysis; it is a feature-story kind of supplement, providing materials for dramatization but not enlightenment.

One of the pressing needs for wartime radio is the establishment—either by government or, preferably, by the radio industry—of some office to provide a voluminous and competent literature on the interpretation and clarification on all major themes and issues of the war. *The Unconquered People* is a step in the right direction, but it is too typical of peacetime radio procedures—concentrating on dramatic elements rather than on vital background materials and fact content.

4. *The influence of government program authority.* This has not been conducive to bettering the quality of wartime radio fare. First, it often deadens sharp and creative talents. Government directives and suggestions are often regarded as outlines for programs. An industry anxious to serve government shifts many of its energies from originating ideas to polishing and applying other people's ideas. Second, radio now accepts government approval of specific programs as proof that the programs are truly effective and significant. That is to say, the function of self-criticism and evaluation has been transferred to Washington. Who are the men in Washington who pass these judgments? For the most part, they are drawn from the industry and are in government service as specialists and technicians. They are not experts in morale, public psychology or government policy. They are assigned the job of cajoling and peppering-up the industry in order to elicit program cooperation from it. Unless programs are obviously and frightfully bad or ineffec-

tive, they get the nod from the Washington leaders, who believe they can achieve less by captiousness than by slapping the industry on the back and inspiring it to keep punching away. Further, the O. W. I. has been understaffed and overworked. Its personnel had neither the time nor the facilities to listen much to the radio nor to think about and evaluate what few programs they heard. They approve many of the industry's program ideas and scripts in quick fashion, and thereafter rely upon the station or network to report on how things are going. The producers naturally present reports in the most favorable light, with the result that the industry and government are coming more and more to rely upon statistical charts which reveal how many programs or hours or minutes have been devoted to government directives and themes. The critical function has largely been superseded by a bookkeeping function. There are few standards against which to evaluate program content, no adequate machinery to provide writers and producers with anything more than superficial background materials and data. As a consequence, fundamental clarification of war issues, facts and problems is singularly lacking from many broadcasts. Third, local stations feel at a disadvantage because they are isolated from the important Washington contacts. Unable or unwilling to exercise initiative, and with Washington assuming greater importance daily in determining radio policies, the local stations tend either to mimic the format, content and approach of network programs, or to limit themselves to innocuous war-effort broadcasts—martial music, interviewing military personalities, airing recordings or scripts



canned in Washington, or making naive patriotic appeals and inspirational noises.

5. *Censorship*. Radio has never before been subject to official censorship. It has always, of course, exercised self-restraints of one sort or another; but these never warranted the portentous dignity of the ten-letter word. Yet, obviously, censorship is a necessary evil in time of war. There were some early hopes expressed that government censorship could be avoided, inasmuch as the industry had voluntarily established certain "don't" codes shortly after Pearl Harbor. News programs were the first to be affected. Stations and networks began to establish rules of procedure and selection within a week after the war began, largely as a result of public and military protests against excited presentations and the occasional broadcasting of rumors and enemy-inspired news. The National Association of Broadcasters issued a wartime guide. Among other things, it listed sixteen "do not" rules:

DO NOT broadcast rumors, "hot tips" or "unconfirmed reports," no matter what their source. "Hot tips" and rumors may burn your fingers. If you have the slightest doubt on any story, check with your press association. It is better to have no news than to broadcast false or harmful news.

In this connection, a word of caution on news flashes. A good practice is to wait a few minutes after the first flash until you are perfectly satisfied from the following story that the flash is borne out.

Radio's speed of light is cause for caution.

DO NOT broadcast news which concerns war production figures unless such news is *officially* released by the government.

DO NOT broadcast the movement of naval or any other vessels.

DO NOT broadcast news about the movement of troops or personnel either outside or within the continental limits, unless it has been released *officially* by the War or Navy Departments.

DO NOT broadcast the location of vessels, either under construction or about to be launched.

DO NOT broadcast figures of Selective Service enrollments and inductions.

DO NOT broadcast personal observations on weather conditions. Watch sports broadcasts for this. A late night or early morning comment that "it's a fine, clear night (or morning)" might be invaluable information to the enemy. Stick to official weather reports your station receives from your local weather bureau.

DO NOT broadcast such imperatives as "Attention all men! Report to your local Civilian Defense headquarters tonight at eight." (Announcements may be requested in that manner. They should be changed to qualify the source at the beginning such as: "The local Civilian Defense Committee requests all men, etc.") Reserve such "attention compellers" for important war purposes.

DO NOT overestimate American power nor underestimate the enemy strength and thereby tend to create complacent confidence. Stick to the facts as presented in official releases.

DO NOT allow sponsors to use the news as a springboard for commercials. Such practices as starting commercials with "Now some good news, etc.," should *never* be permitted. Also it is important that such news-phrases as "bulletin," "flash," "news" and the like be used only in their legitimate functions. Do not permit, "Here's good news! The Bargain Basement announces drastic reductions, etc."

DO NOT use any sound-effects on dramatic programs, commercial announcements or otherwise which might be confused by the listener as air raid alarms, alert signals, etc.

DO NOT try to second-guess or master-mind our military officials. Leave this for established military analysts and experts, who are experienced enough to await the facts before drawing conclusions.

DO NOT broadcast any long lists of casualties. This has been specifically forbidden.

DO NOT permit speakers, in discussions of controversial public issues, to say anything of aid to the enemy.

DO NOT broadcast location of the plants engaged in the manufacture of war materials unless approved by the government. This applies to emergencies such as explosions, sabotage, etc., unless such reports have been approved by the government or cleared at the source by press associations.

DO NOT take chances with ad lib broadcasts, on the street or in the studio. An open microphone accessible to the general public constitutes a very real hazard in times of war. Questions should be prepared and approved in advance and extreme care should be exercised to avoid the asking of questions which would draw out any information or answer which would disclose matters or information of value to the enemy.

Any questions regarding the war or war production might make trouble.

On December 16, 1941, the President appointed as Director of Censorship Byron Price, executive news editor of the Associated Press. One of Price's first acts was to appoint John Harold Ryan, vice-president and general manager of the Fort Industry Company—which operates six radio stations—as Assistant Director of Censorship in charge of radio. On January 16, 1942, a Censorship Code



for radio was released; five months later a revised code was issued. It made official most of the industry's voluntary rules.

The Censorship Code (see Appendix) affects some program details but not program policies; and it affects the details negatively—what *not* to do. The censorship is concerned primarily with news programs and the broadcasting of specific items of information. But news programs are only a small part of radio's full schedule.

The real opportunities for radio lie in what other categories of programs *might* and *should* do. Here censorship offers no guidance. In the area of positive action the responsibility is radio's exclusively. And here the industry's thinking is conditioned by two things. First, in wartime it is preoccupied with "don'ts." Censorship and caution have so impressed themselves that most program ideas are *first* scrutinized from the angle of what they should not do or say. Second, radio is still wedded to the peacetime idea that entertainment is its prime function. Hence, it next scrutinizes programs from the angle of likely audience response. Now both of these predispositions delimit sharply the likelihood of effective positive policies emerging, for they are restrictive, not creative, influences. As a consequence, programs are increasingly serving the war effort in one of these ways: by simply inserting war plugs in the body of a program; by weaving occasional war references into dialogue; by originating programs at military camps or training posts, thereby providing an opportunity for passing comment on "our armed forces"; by setting dramatic programs against a

background of war or sabotage, but in no other way changing the cops-and-robbers formula; or by producing special "morale" programs which generally garnish known events and information with music, sound effects and large casts.

All of these techniques are radio costuming. With a few notable exceptions they are peacetime radio fare dressed up in khaki. They make us aware of the existence of war, but they seldom inform us about the facts and issues of the war. Information and clarification are the chief areas in which positive and creative contributions might be made by radio.

The industry has a crossed-finger attitude toward censorship. While the trade press extols radio's "splendid spirit" and "high sense of responsibility," management is suffering from a mild censorship neurosis, which springs from suspicion that radio is being discriminated against in favor of the press, and the fact that occasional veiled threats are being tossed radio's way. On the former count, the industry is sometimes the victim of its medium, for items approved for press release are often denied radio. The reason was graphically expressed by Ryan: "Remember, too, that you do not know the power of your 250 or 1,000 or 5,000 watts (station power). A manager of a West Coast radio station was in my office the other day. Eight years ago he was a telegrapher on a ship operating in China waters. At night-time, when standard broadcast channels cleared, he could pick up 287 United States broadcasting stations across those thousands of miles. And his receiver was a one-tube unit. That was eight years

ago—and modern transmitters are much more efficient.”<sup>5</sup> But the irksome thing to radio has been the number of apparently unreasonable discriminations, rather than those traceable to the fact that radio is no respecter of international boundaries. Significant in this regard is the fact that a trade publication with the prestige of *Broadcasting* editorially commented as follows:

“Yet another incident, which causes some wonder as to whether newspapers are being favored over radio, is reported from St. Louis. There a live-wire station executive and commentator learned that a St. Louis boy who was at Pearl Harbor during the attack was back home on leave. The local Naval public relations officer authorized an interview, with the script to be checked. But before clearance came for the air, the same story broke in a St. Louis newspaper—the result of an interview evidently arranged by Naval Intelligence. The whole episode, we are told, was ‘shot through with preferential treatment for the press.’

“This is only one of a number of instances of suppression by radio of material cleared for newspapers. Several radio people have commented that radio is being played for a sucker, while the harder-boiled press is being treated with deference.”<sup>6</sup>

The big rub comes from the word “voluntary” in the second paragraph of the Censorship Code (see Appendix). “One would think,” said an eminent broadcasting executive, “that a voluntary code would be treated in a

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<sup>5</sup> J. Harold Ryan, “The Test—Can The Enemy Use It?” *Broadcasting*, February 16, 1942.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

fraternal spirit." But, he went on to say, as soon as the amenities of voluntary cooperation are given their verbal due, "along comes some official who lets it be known there's an iron fist in the velvet glove." Presumably he had reference to remarks like those of Byron Price at the 1942 convention of the National Association of Broadcasters: "In fact, it is not too much to say that the success or failure of voluntary cooperation in broadcasting will depend upon the degree of control which patriotic broadcasters exercise over the operation of their stations. There will be errors of judgment, of course; such confusions are inevitable under any voluntary system. What we should be more deeply concerned about, however, is the error which results, not from faulty judgment, but from thoughtlessness or carelessness. We have now been at war for five months. Surely no broadcaster can any longer plead unpreparedness. . . . The affirmative aspects of your war contribution—and it has been a very great contribution—may not be the direct responsibility of censorship, *but* censorship has a strong interest in it. For one thing, the more militantly you take up the torch, the sooner the war will be over, and the job of censorship ended. . . ."

Criticism of censorship has been quiet and back-room. The industry's public statements usually emphasize that radio is doing everything possible to serve the nation and abide by government rules. But on May 9, 1942, Edward R. Murrow, one of CBS's crack newscasters, and chief of its London office, attacked American censorship in a network talk:

"The basic problem of news and information here is

the same as it was and is in England: the chiefs of the fighting services will not release information, and there is no civil authority able and willing to tell them to do so. No one would risk a single life for a headline or a radio news bulletin. But this war is being fought in people's minds as well as on the battleground, and we cannot afford to create doubt unnecessarily, cannot permit the suspicion that incompetency and mistakes may be hiding behind a barrier of silence. I'm not maintaining that that position now exists, but the duplication and the contradictions of agencies charged with the dissemination of news in Washington may give rise to unhealthy suspicions. . . .

"It's not in the habit of Americans to rely upon the government for their news, but in wartime much of the vital news can come only from that source. The complaint that I have heard from newsmen throughout the country is not at all based upon the fact that the news is bad. They understand that only victories can change that. Their complaint is based rather upon the fact that the machinery for the dissemination of news and information is cumbersome, contradictory, and confusing. Our problem in this regard is infinitely more difficult than that of our enemies. The concept of the closed mind is something to which they devoted a great deal of attention before the war began. Debate, discussion and criticism concerned them not at all. But the right to read what we like, to listen without fear, are things that we're fighting for. In wartime, phrases are used and accepted without very much critical examination of the phrase itself. We have heard much in recent years of total war. Part



# INDUSTRIES USING NETWORK RADIO—1941



EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS 2 MILLIONS OF GROSS CLIENT EXPENDITURES

—National Broadcasting Company

of its meaning should be, and must be that the people shall be given total information concerning their war so far as it is commensurate with military safety."

6. *Business prospects.* They look good for wartime radio. Of course, the business trends may change sharply as a result of unforeseen circumstances. But the crystal ball the first year after Pearl Harbor foreshadows prosperity. Audience ratings have gone up. For example, night-time listening during the first three months of 1942 was ahead of the 1941 months by 4 to 8 per cent—and 1941 was a record year. The spread has held, roughly, for the 1942 season.

Eighty per cent of radio's advertising revenue comes from four principal commodities—foods, drugs, toiletries, tobacco. None of these has thus far been seriously threatened by materials shortages or priorities. Even the advent of food rationing will leave a field for competitive merchandising. The automotive industry, on the other hand, which has been hard hit, accounted for only 2.9 per cent of radio's revenue in 1941 and 3.7 per cent in 1940. Household goods adversely affected by wartime priorities and conversion—refrigerators, radio sets, etc.,—never accounted for more than 2 per cent of the industry's advertising.

Moreover, increases in the wartime national income are going largely to middle and lower income groups—to the chief purchasers of radio-advertised commodities. In England, the sale of various kinds of proprietaries rose greatly as a result of two conditions already beginning to manifest themselves in the United States—strained living and working conditions and a shortage of doctors and hospital facili-



ties. Cigarette consumption always rises in periods of emergency and stress. And several companies affected by shortages, nevertheless can be counted on to continue institutional advertising in order to keep their trade name alive and to reduce taxes. For example, both Ford and General Motors continue to sponsor expensive network programs.

What will be the effect of this prosperity on radio? In the year prior to Pearl Harbor, not a few worried voices were raised predicting a financial set-back for the industry "if war comes." Marketing and research analysts tried to cheer up the industry with three arguments—institutional advertising would probably increase somewhat, as business shifted from sales to goodwill appeals; all business would probably suffer, so that, relatively, radio's position might not be too adversely hit; government advertising was a possibility—this last point invariably was followed by references to the British government, which accounts for 17 per cent of all British advertising expenditures. Translated into annual American advertising, 17 per cent would equal about \$350,000,000. However, the "probably, perhaps and maybe" prognosticators have been proven wrong on all three counts, and radio still finds itself conducting a thriving business in a striving economy.

From the point of view of radio's responsibilities and opportunities in wartime, this condition has debit as well as asset significance. The assets are obvious: better talent, better productions, better entertainment and news services can be offered. Radio will not have to strip the tinsel from its microphones, and the free enterprise character

of the industry "is saved," as one executive put it. (He feared that if radio ever became financially pinched, Uncle Sam might foreclose.) But the possible debits ought also to be considered. Prosperity nurtures complacency and self-satisfaction, and this is no time for radio to beget either. Income is no adequate criterion of public service rendered. War demands of radio more than traditional functions. This is a period in the growth of radio when, if it is to stay free, it must prove its right to freedom. It must prove its value in the emergency—a value which cannot be measured in dollar-volume nor in the number of news, entertainment and "morale" programs broadcast. Programs, not radio time, are the new basis of value. Radio must prove itself—in a period when non-essentials have no value at all—an essential to the preservation of our way of life. In short, radio must demonstrate its effectiveness as a medium of *education* far more convincingly than ever before.

While prosperity makes for self-satisfaction, adversity makes for the application and exercise of ingenuity. The success story of American enterprise has never had many chapters written by businesses after they've become successful. Enterprise—the very word—connotes talent applied after two strikes have been called. The possible debits of radio's fortunate economic future can be turned into assets only if it abandons the old way of doing things for a new way of seeing things.

## COMMENTARY

*By Robert J. Landry*

Radio Editor, *Variety*

American radio in wartime ought, I think, to be seen in international perspective. To begin with, we ought not to pay our enemies undeserved compliments. It has become a cliché that Goebbels is the great genius of publicity. From this facile assumption stems the corollary assumption that German radio somehow does much more for Germany than American radio does for America. Is not a jolting reply to Goebbels' genius and Goebbels' radio the simple reality that the first would be merely nasty and the second only an electronic echo of this nastiness if both were not given horrid menace and meaning by the constant support and partnership of the whole elaborate organization of Nazi terror? Friedrich of Harvard has clearly seen this oneness of Goebbels and Himmler. We mislead our thinking if we segregate Goebbels and his radio from the whole of Nazism and grant him a certain tainted prestige based on supposed successes. He does not deserve such acclaim. He would be but a journeyman public relations counsel without the party machine. He is abjectly dependent upon terror as a prerequisite for his magic act.

I think we should be cautious never to sell democracy short by any tacit admission that a free people with a demonstrated gift for self-government can be led to reaction under any circumstances by nothing more than demagogic lies. A working democracy expels palpable untruths as a healthy kidney expels alcohol. If lies alone could engineer a social reaction, fascist conspirators would not so painstakingly instruct

their street gangs and secret police and armies in the arts of torture and assault.

Each nation develops, I think, a radio system and a radio ethic that may be accurately predicted by its pulse and temperature. National characteristics create the radio system, not radio the national characteristics. We are not surprised that the British Broadcasting Corporation reeks of gentlemen, Oxford accents, a certain unconscious air of landed estates and the best schools. Nor was it surprising that the sardonic, shoulder-shrugging Frenchmen mocked and neglected radio until too late. Nazi ideology exalts two points: one, that only the State counts; two, that all methods helping the State are justified. Knowing this, surely we needed no powers of divination to accurately predict how Nazi radio would develop.

Of course, American radio had no plans for war. We had no blueprints, no spare antennae, no passwords, no sealed orders. Above all, we had no corps of propaganda masterminds standing by complete with directives for psychological blitzkriegs. To have possessed these things would have been, in a very subtle sense, profoundly un-American. Yet, in saying this I do not dispute the thesis of Sherman Dryer that American wartime radio has been inexcusably dilatory and feminine in certain respects, that there has been rather too much of vanity and career politics, that the closed mind and the hostile attitude has all too often been typical. In counter-propaganda on the home front there has especially been an excess of daintiness and timidity.

The attitude of our northern neighbors, who regularly listen to American broadcasts, is worth reporting. Canadians, I find, do not share the impression that our American wartime radio is being badly managed. Rather, they tend to envy us the growing amount and character of our hard-hitting, mood-creating programs. They wonder if they themselves



should not have adopted similar persuasion in French Quebec. Canadians wryly note that despite our bitter lend-lease debates, which they followed over the air, we have had no conscription embarrassments but have instead swiftly passed from peace to war footing. Our quiet, realistic acceptance of sharing, salvaging, scrimping, suffering, seems as mature after eight months as Canadian equivalents after three years. Much of these American results the Canadians attribute to American radio programs.

The argument will continue for years in the United States as to whether certain of our "morale" broadcasts or series of broadcasts were truly explosive or merely damp firecrackers. Some of them were damned as highbrow, hopelessly ensnared in starry free verse. *Variety* counted in one war program two dozen esoteric words, including colonnades, bivouac, secretariat, inconsolable, servitors, valorous, barricades. The ordinary man in the street never uses and probably doesn't understand such language. Nor, apart from the words themselves, does he use or understand the intellectual thought-patterns they imply. These things, as far as they seeped into radio, were impractical for selling the war to the masses. Indeed, they might conceivably have had the exactly opposite effect.

The war has already revealed various cases of over-refined persons of pronounced artistic and literary prejudices who have had the primary selection or the ultimate decision on war propaganda material. If we have had fine phrases, impeccably punctuated and designed to win the war by lofty thought alone, it is also true that we have had "sweet" and "cute" and well-bred war posters gently chiding us, instead of starkly scaring hell out of us, about inflation.

What we have been seeking in radio obviously is the happy medium between the exquisites and the extraverts who wish to dramatize the Nazis in the act of tearing the nails off the

toes of recalcitrant clergymen. We hear talk of "documented atrocities" or the appeal to loathing by a flat-toned recital of facts, slightly understated, item by item, but reaching a crescendo of passionate contempt. Inch by inch our war broadcasts have moved away from the phoney neutrality work-habits that produced such absurdities of radio policy between September, 1939, and December, 1941. For example, the network policy that spies and saboteurs could be pictured fictionally only if the story took place in the last war.

Quantitatively the sheer number of war programs is surely impressive. On the four coast-to-coast networks, CBS, NBC, Blue, and Mutual, a recent tally showed these weekly totals: 202 newscasts, 173 war commentaries, 54 war sermon-type programs, 29 pick-ups from army camps, 15 government programs, 120 war-slanted, advertising-sponsored entertainments. These figures overwhelm us with a conviction that no American with a radio set and unimpaired hearing can escape saturation. This is not to deny that the contents of many war programs are shallow, cursory, without any great power to move people into action. But at least the machinery is in operation, the programs are being broadcast, the telling force of mere repetition is working. A special wartime radio showmanship survey conducted by *Variety* between May 15 and June 15, 1942, clearly revealed: (1) that the minority of programs were using ingenuity, skill, and passion in serving the war; (2) that the majority of programs were making routine gestures of little originality, warmth or thoughtfulness.

In short, radio programs were like people generally—most of them tended to be inert, only a handful tended to reveal vigor and gusto.

The confusion about radio propaganda is a shared confusion. It is everybody's failing. If the industry had no war plan, and for the reasons Sherman Dryer has outlined, it is

equally true that the government had none. Even its agencies didn't stay put when organized. In the course of eight months one of the early government programs, *You Can't Do Business With Hitler*,<sup>7</sup> was successively "presented" by the office of Emergency Management, the War Production Board and finally the radio branch of the Office of War Information. Actually, jockeying for key propaganda jobs has consumed a scandalous amount of government time. Also, any lack of imagination or daring among broadcasters as regards war programs is certainly matched and surpassed by the hesitant, vacillating, pussyfooting attitudes typical of many government radio liaison men.

Not altogether forgotten, either, by the broadcasting leadership, is the presence in Washington of advertising-haters and men who cherish the ambition to capture a bridgehead one day, whether in war or peace, on private enterprise's side of the river. All these things are enigmatic, vague, nebulous, but people who know their way about always sense the pressure.

To the extent that professional radio criticism exists in the United States, I believe it has been very influential in war program production. Especially in the first six months after Pearl Harbor there were radio production tendencies that a detached critic could point out better, perhaps, than anybody else. Preaching to the already converted had to be discouraged. It was a waste of precious radio time. Hero-worship where the President was concerned was sometimes tactless since it did not make it easier for political disagreements to be submerged. There were widely assorted problems of emphasis. Sour notes, propaganda lines of possible repercussions, mental pictures that were not in focus—all these things came within the province of the professional critic, the man

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 9.



of great patience, listening hour after hour, and listening all the way, not dialing out when bored.

This great, far-flung, variously controlled radio system of ours in the United States needs criticism for its own good and for the continuing safety of our form of government. War conditions only magnify the dangers. It has been well said that American Fascism, if it ever comes, will call itself anti-Fascism. Its sponsors will be expert, make no mistake, in radio technique. They can only be met by persons of opposite sentiments equally expert in radio technique. We would be safer, I think, if the nation possessed large numbers instead of handfuls of professional radio critics and if many, instead of just a few, newspapers and magazines published, and hence dignified, radio criticism. Hidden away in the annual outpouring of programs are ideologies, slants, tangents, every kind of self-interest, a ceaseless bombardment. These need to be reviewed by knowledgeable professional listeners.

Unfortunately, few newspaper publishers can rise above their own bilious attitude toward a competitive medium. We have yet to see any one metropolitan daily experiment to discover whether, over here, as in London, full-scale radio criticism comparable to the best dramatic, music and film criticism might not be a circulation asset. Thus far the radio critic is hailed only in theoretical conversations.

It is obvious, too, that the nation as a democracy and radio as an industry would both benefit from a critical literature. The book-shelf of radio is heavy enough in sheer pounds of paper and boards but amazingly skimpy in intellectual content and challenge. In short, I do not hesitate to say that, among other forms of criticism, radio needs more analytic volumes such as the one you are now reading.

## *The Secret Weapon*

Radio is a secret weapon. The secret is how to use it as a weapon. We still have not discovered that secret, nor has any other country. For all the ballyhoo about the power of radio on the psychological front, there is virtually no evidence to substantiate the claims that the microphone is as effective or important a weapon as a bombing plane or a panzer division.

Nothing is to be gained by romanticizing radio. It is simply another medium of communication, and its advantages over the printing press and the cinema, while great, are neither world-shaking nor likely to influence the outcome of the war decisively. It is true that radio does not respect national boundaries and makes it possible, for the first time in history, for enemies to communicate easily with each other. But this is true also of the airplane, which has no respect for national boundaries and "communicates" more effectively with the enemy than radio ever can.

If, as some insist, this is a radio war, it is so only in a *mechanical* sense. The important differences between the mechanical functions of radio and its creative and editorial functions must not be overlooked. Modern armies use radio as a mechanical instrument to communicate between ground and air forces, between tank battalions and headquarters, between units of a fleet and shore bases. In this narrow sense, World War II is a radio war, and radio is clearly an important weapon of warfare. But *creatively*, editorially, radio is an art, a business and a science, in that order of importance. By this definition, radio consists of programs—and programs are creative things representing a dexterous employment of items like sound effects, music, drama, and the human voice, for the purpose of putting over ideas, information and entertainment, or to elicit concerted action from listeners. This function of radio is called broadcasting; and in these terms, it can be said that if there were no broadcasting whatsoever, radio itself would yet be an important weapon on the battlefield.

On the psychological front, however, radio is still a secret weapon, because the most effective formula for war-time broadcasting has not been identified, despite the claims of reporters washed back to our shores by the wave of war in Europe who have told us that "Hitler broke French courage with his broadcasts," that "Radio Berlin softened up the resistance of Europe," and that the battle of words raging between European belligerents is "cracking enemy morale" or "building allied resistance" or "inspiring the conquered to revolt" or "confusing the Axis." Radio is not infrequently regarded as a magic

medium which alone can inspire, arouse, incite, activate, and influence people. This represents altogether too much faith in the power of propaganda and the power of radio. While there is some evidence that immediately preceding and during the early stages of the war in Europe, the *Deutsche Rundfunk* tried to sow confusion and apprehension among enemy populations, the broadcasts were almost exclusively lies, accusations and exhortations in the form of direct "news" and commentators' statements. This is essentially a mechanical utilization of radio. The Germans were not the only specialists in *geistiger Krieg*. As the intensity of war increased, and the belligerents aimed their radio weapons directly at each other, talks and "news" increased in quantity. Concomitantly, drama, music, skits, and *creative* exercises of the broadcast function decreased.

There is little evidence to support the thesis that broadcasting was effective against enemy countries in Europe after the outbreak of war. Speeches and news, not drama and music, were the radio bullets most frequently used. Even the British Broadcasting Corporation "in the haste of carrying through war orders became essentially a newscasting system. News on the radio and in the press was word for word identical. Between the radio intervals phonograph records were used to fill in."<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, there is widespread support for the use of shortwave radio against enemy countries. But whatever America may broadcast is likely to be largely ineffectual. American broadcasts are beamed to Europe on shortwave.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert J. Landry, *Who, What, Why is Radio*, Geo. W. Stewart, publisher.

German and British broadcasts to Europe are on the standard wave, which is easily received and relatively free of static. Very few people, either in Europe or America, ever listen to the shortwave. In America, where there are ten to fifteen million radio sets with shortwave bands, only about one-quarter of American listeners have reported receiving shortwave from abroad. Numerous studies reveal that only about 10 per cent of this latter group ever listen to shortwave, and that most of them listen irregularly only "to see if I can really get Europe." Under such conditions the propaganda they hear seldom takes hold, because its effectiveness depends upon frequent repetition. Although there are no statistics on European shortwave listening, it is likely that Europeans listen even less than Americans.

One justification of American shortwave broadcasts to Europe is this: "If there are only a few receivers at the point of reception, it still may be that a great many people are reached, because the man who receives may be writing a pamphlet that he'll circulate in his own country; or he may actually be the head of a rumor-chain in a totalitarian country, which circulates all sorts of news that he gets from the outside."<sup>2</sup>

Note the word "news." All foreign broadcasts are suspected of being propaganda, but news programs are less open to this suspicion and are the best way to communicate with enemy countries. An obvious "phoney" quality attaches to entertainment and dramatic programs, because

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<sup>2</sup>Harold D. Lasswell, "Radio In Wartime," *University of Chicago Round Table*, May 17, 1942.



the broadcaster doesn't take the time to dress up propaganda when the death penalty is hanging over the heads of listeners.

Another handicap of American shortwave radio as a war weapon is the lack of a free press in the enemy countries. A free press is often an aid to the broadcaster, for it helps to carry his propaganda to a secondary audience. In this regard, the American press has been of inestimable help to the Axis, for it prints regularly "news" received from enemy radio stations. While many papers note that the "news" is from an enemy source, and hence open to question, studies have shown that the average reader accepts the "news" uncritically because it is printed in a newspaper which he trusts. Our enemies, by controlling the press, deprive us of an agency which would help immeasurably in the spreading of our messages.

Hence, instead of expending great effort on shortwave broadcasts to the enemy, it would be vastly more profitable to concentrate on the home front. Broadcasts to the enemy have a negative purpose—to bewilder, to confuse, and to frighten. On the home front, however, the great creative potential of radio may be used to inspire, influence, and emotionalize public response. Creative radio can exploit "plus symbols" to significant advantage. The audience of entertainment and dramatic programs is ready-made, receptive to interpretation and directives. We know our own people better than we can ever know our enemy. We can communicate with the home front on the standard waveband, and exploit listeners' loyalties to radio and to specific programs.

Of all the nations on earth, none is so radio-conscious as the United States, which has 37 per cent of the world's radio stations. There are almost four times as many radio stations in the United States as in all Axis nations combined, and nearly twice as many radio receivers.

U. S. stations .....	924
Axis " .....	271
U. S. sets .....	56 million
Axis " .....	33 "

In the United States there are 425 sets for every thousand persons, but in the Axis nations there are only 62 sets per thousand—nearly seven times as many sets per thousand in the United States as in Axis nations.

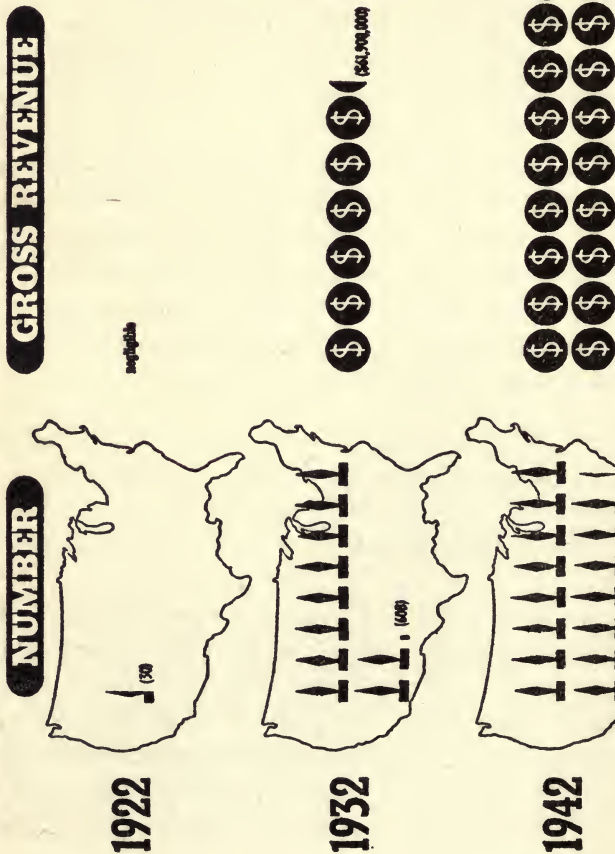
There are 25 regional networks and four national networks in the United States. These national networks serve 552 stations, or 59 per cent of all stations.

The Blue Network .....	116
Columbia Broadcasting System .....	118
National Broadcasting Company .....	129
Mutual Broadcasting System .....	189

If American radio is to use these facilities to perform an effective wartime service on the home front, it must evaluate itself in terms of the job to be done. It must develop hitting power capable of inspiring people to participate fully in the many tasks created by the war.

Can radio do this? "No studies have yet discovered any major changes in public opinion which can be attributed

# U. S. BROADCASTING STATIONS



Each symbol represents 60 stations

EVERY FIGURE NOTED ON SHEETS SHOULD BE  
 RECORDED IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER

—National Broadcasting Company

to radio.”<sup>3</sup> If radio is to realize its potential effectiveness as a wartime weapon, it must clarify the meaning of many of the concepts and dispositions to which it has held in peacetime.

One of these concepts is that radio is dedicated to the public interest. Radio serves the public by broadcasting programs which interest the public, but radio has yet to prove that what interests the public is in the public interest. Particularly in wartime. The concept of serving the public interest is, of course, a commendable one, and should not be abandoned or changed, but recognized and enforced.

After examining briefly the record of broadcasting “in the public interest,” we may see more clearly how radio must approach the problem of serving the public interest in wartime.

The fact that three hundred daytime serials have large female audiences proves little except that millions of women listen to daytime serials. It does not follow that the content and emphasis of the programs is in the public interest, or that the programs properly influence public opinion. There is evidence that they fail on both counts. “Actually the ‘soap operas’ carefully refrain from exercising any such influence. The settings are middle class [and] are used to lend glamor to the middle class settings rather than to play a role of their own. All problems are of an individualistic nature. It is not social forces but the virtues and vices of the central characters that move the events along. People lose jobs not for economic rea-

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<sup>3</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, “Effects of Radio on Public Opinion,” from *Print, Radio and Film in a Democracy*, The University of Chicago Press.

sons but because their fellow men lie or are envious. A simple black and white technique avoids any insoluble conflicts. No other effect than the reinforcement of already existing attitudes can be expected from such programs.”<sup>4</sup>

In the field of education, American radio has also been delinquent. The industry has established Public Service divisions and has opened its microphones to many notable personalities and programs. But no one who has observed radio's educational policies can deny that “public service” broadcasting is just a highfalutin name for secondary sales promotion. The industry bears the expense of the programs for five reasons: (1) They increase the popularity and use of radio in general; (2) They keep the station on the air and thus increase the station's prestige and enhance its value for commercial programs; (3) They give the station an opportunity to feature certain programs that might attract an advertising client; (4) They enable the station to qualify under the “public interest” clause contained in its license; (5) They build goodwill, by sometimes putting on programs of sufficient quality to quiet the rebellious voices of those who would otherwise protest at programs designed for lower levels of intelligence.<sup>5</sup> With few exceptions, educational programs have the status of “fillers”; their budgets are low compared with those of sponsored programs; their production is usually inferior; their tenure is precarious; their hours

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<sup>4</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *op. cit.* For a defense of daytime serials, see “Washboard Weepers,” by Max Wylie, *Harper's*, November, 1942.

<sup>5</sup> These five points are from Hadley Cantril and Gordon W. Allport, *The Psychology of Radio*, Harper & Brothers, p. 41.



are not often guaranteed. "The broadcasting companies speak tenderly of the educational sustaining programs which they provide without profit to the stations comprising their network. Yet during the period of greatest 'radio attendance,' from 7 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. each evening, we find few such programs. These most valuable broadcast hours are now owned almost exclusively by advertisers of drugs, foods, soft drinks, cigarettes, soaps, and beauty preparations. We have yet to hear of a network terminating the time-contract of a national advertiser in order that it may supply the nation with a half-hour sustaining program of intellectual significance." <sup>6</sup>

In addition to enforcing its definition of "public service," radio must abandon the belief that entertainment in itself is a primary contribution to the war, if it is to maximize its effectiveness as a weapon. Entertainment has its place even in wartime broadcasting, and the problem is to put it in its place. Wartime broadcasting is most successful when it stimulates interest, resolve and *active response*. Entertainment is considered successful if it piques interest, ignores resolve and elicits applause, a rather inactive form of response.

Radio will probably be compelled to make fundamental changes in its policies and administration before it succeeds in its wartime role. Radio is "the people's instrument. It reaches all, and, therefore, must serve all. [But there is] abuse of the fact in terms of the misleading cliché that radio must therefore 'give the people what it

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<sup>6</sup>Bernard B. Smith, "What's Wrong with The Broadcasters?" *Harpers*, June, 1942, p. 86.

wants'. . . ." <sup>7</sup> In peacetime, radio's subservience to mass taste probably assures the retention of mass loyalty. In wartime, however, radio faces the responsibility of stimulating the public—prodding it, pulling it out of set attitudes and tastes and responses. While it is still a question whether radio is disposed to or capable of doing this, Norman Corwin, one of its most able technicians, thinks radio will deliver. "Before this war is over, radio, as a craft, will have learned how to speak to the people. . . . Sooner or later . . . there is bound to come a whole new understanding of the function and the power of this medium." <sup>8</sup> The danger is that this understanding may come too late for the industry to be able to save itself as a private and independent enterprise. If this seems an unwarranted apprehension, it may be well to remember that war is no respecter of persons or institutions, and to note the trend toward a wider exercise of government controls over all phases of our national life.

Today radio is on trial before the American public in more ways than one, although there seems to be little evidence that many in radio really believe this to be so. In the first weeks of war, programs were interrupted all day long with news flashes, or by excited commentators who replaced scheduled programs. Commercial announcements were often in bad taste. "Here is a late, important news bulletin—use Smith Brothers cough drops. . . ." Radio did not clarify; it confused. It did not inform; it alarmed. As a colleague of mine expressed it, "The war was

<sup>7</sup> Charles A. Siepmann, "Radio and Education," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, Vol. IX, 1941, No. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Statement in acceptance of the 1942 Peabody Award.

handled as if it were a Big Ten football game, and we were hysterical spectators."

A few days after December 7, radio began to realize that this inept handling of news was undercutting its hard won reputation with the American people. "We knew," declared a key broadcasting executive, "that we were on trial. No one had served any papers on us, but we were in court just the same. The jury was everyone with a radio. We were bewildered. We had pride in our news organization. We had the capacity to tell the people what we knew as quickly as we knew it ourselves. And they didn't like it. They wanted editorial judgment in our handling of news—yes, they wanted that more than the news itself, I guess." Today, radio is still on trial. No papers have been served, but the men of perspicacity in radio realize that they must "take the current when it serves, or lose our venture." There are many ways, aside from the alert and honest handling of news, to use radio creatively as a wartime weapon.

Commissioner Fly has remarked that radio "is threading its way through its first war. No signposts, no precedents, nor helpful experiences from other wars are standing as guides to the future; hence, radio's area of service in this World War is unexplored. Its course is fraught with many difficulties, trials and dangers and, therefore, the steadiest hand and the coolest eye must be at the helm as the course is charted and pursued." But whose is the steady hand and the cool eye at the helm? The stations and networks are competing with each other for business, power, and prestige, and with what strength they have left they are boxing with the government. "For the better

part of a year the radio industry has been in turmoil. One of the great networks has brought suit against another; the Federal Communications Commission has charged that the entire existing system of network broadcasting is monopolistic in character and has taken steps to curb it; two of the broadcasting companies in their turn are carrying to the Supreme Court a suit to enjoin the application of the Commission's network rules; the U. S. Department of Justice has brought suit against those same companies under the terms of the Sherman Anti-Trust law; a number of Congressional committees have conducted independent hearings on various aspects of the controversy, and a member of the Rules Committee of the House of Representatives has proposed that Congress investigate the Federal Communications Commission, charging that its chairman 'is guilty of a monstrous use of power and is rapidly becoming the most dangerous man in the government.'"<sup>9</sup> The result is an haphazard approach to the task of broadcasting instead of a planned and coordinated effort based on what Mr. Bernays in his commentary on this chapter calls a grand strategy. There seems need for the voluntary organization of the industry to exploit its opportunities effectively.

More than fifteen thousand programs are broadcast daily in the United States! For the most part they are conceived and produced independently and when they refer directly to war problems they are often based on superficial information. The efforts of the technicians are directed toward capturing and holding audience interest. This is a job they know how to do. But in the areas of

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<sup>9</sup> Bernard B. Smith, *op. cit.*

information and clarification they are inexperienced and do not render fully effective service.<sup>10</sup> The directives of the Office of War Information are no adequate substitute for this deficiency. Taking the easiest way out, broadcasters have resorted to the indiscriminate use of spot announcements and "plugs." These random shots, aimed at transmitting specific bits of information—"Buy Bonds," "Turn in your scrap rubber"—will be no more effective on the home front than they would be on the battle front unless they are coordinated strategically with all the resources at the disposal of a general staff.

Facing these problems, radio must also face the necessity of solving them. Sooner or later it must accept the pragmatic compulsions of war and resort to the realities of a high command. When that realization dawns, how should radio's general staff be set up? Why should the industry voluntarily organize it? Isn't some form of government control to be preferred?

Any alternative to a voluntary industry board would not be well received by American radio, which, after all, is an enterprise operated by private individuals and corporations. There are some who advocate outright government ownership of radio and others who favor stringent government control, but their reasons are rooted in special social attitudes and philosophies which are incidental to a war situation. It may be that such proposals ought to receive serious consideration in peacetime, but any violent reorganization of radio in wartime would run the real risk of jeopardizing the effective use of radio as a war weapon. If radio cannot establish and coordinate an

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<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 4.

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effective strategy by itself, however, it is not beyond possibility that government control, although probably not government ownership, will result.<sup>11</sup>

Already radio is subject to more government control than any other medium of communication. Individual stations operate under government franchise. Let us examine the significance of this important detail. There is no constitutional guarantee of the freedom of radio as there is for the press. Hat in hand, every two years, station owners must show cause to the Federal Communications Commission why their licenses should be renewed. The license to operate a station is granted in the "public interest, convenience and necessity."<sup>12</sup> What this ephemeral phrase means depends to no small extent upon the personal judgments of the members of the seven-man commission "who quarrel with the broadcasters, with the radio lawyers, with Congress and with themselves."<sup>13</sup> In wartime, or in periods of national emergency, the President can take over all or certain facilities of the broadcasting industry. In zones of military operations (areas placed under the command of the military), stations are subject to the commandant's orders and instructions. The government has no such authority over the press and cinema. The former is protected by the first amendment to the Constitution, the latter has the same protections

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<sup>11</sup> If this happens, it will be because of the failure of leading broadcasters to recognize their problems and solve them.

<sup>12</sup> "The possession of the frequency is a trusteeship, which involves more of duty than of right. The right is that claimed by the one person (i.e., the broadcaster); the duty is owed to the millions." James Lawrence Fly, "Regulations of Radio Broadcasting in the Public Interest," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1941.

<sup>13</sup> Robert J. Landry, *op. cit.*

against government encroachment as any other privately owned and managed business enterprise. Uncle Sam has a foot in the doorway of radio. Under the pressures of war the industry is doubly apprehensive that he may walk into the house and sit down at the table.

For example, *Variety* reported the statement of Neville Miller, head of the National Association of Broadcasters, before the Interstate Commerce Commission hearings on proposals to overhaul the Federal Communications Act:

"Miller recited the worries hanging over average station owners in view of the regulators' tendency to exercise supervision over the most intimate details of management, the danger of being driven out of business because of minor missteps, the assumption of questionable power, and the discrimination between different classes of applicants."<sup>14</sup>

Mark Ethridge, however, declares that "No broadcaster with whom I have talked has ever questioned either the wisdom or the desirability of having the government regulate the broadcast industry. On the contrary, all of them recognized that without regulation there would be utter confusion and even anarchy of reception, and undoubtedly some bad practices. Most of them sum up their own attitude with 'We want to be regulated, but not run.' "<sup>15</sup>

A wartime government agency which has been given a program priority classification by the Office of War Information needs only to name the kind of program it wants and the industry jumps to provide the time, and

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<sup>14</sup> *Variety*, April 22, 1942, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Mark Ethridge, "The Government and Radio," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, January, 1941, p. 109.

frequently the talent and direction, if at all possible. One eminent radio executive said: "The government information officials hardly even hint since war. They really order us to deliver—or else." A government information official, in referring to the recalcitrance of one network to follow through on his suggestion for a network dramatic program, declared, "I told the network boys they'd better deliver. This is war and radio has a responsibility to cooperate with us. I told them they weren't more important than the government and I implied they were just setting up reasons which might some day justify our taking over the industry."

When asked "What was the outcome of your 'negotiations'?" he replied, "Oh, they gave us the program."

The radio-government duel is an admixture of personal feuds, loud talking and violent prejudices. Probably 50 per cent of the trouble is simply American rebellion against red tape and officious administrators (on both sides). The other 50 per cent of the trouble arises from such questions as: What constitutes "public service, convenience and necessity?" Is a government agency capable of determining policies? Can a private industry, dependent upon mass advertising, develop a wise and fruitful conception of social responsibility?"

These and related questions are seldom critically examined by either radio or government. The first Japanese bomb cleared some of the stumbling blocks to rapprochement. The industry and the government found themselves in the same trench. For the duration they must make the best of it together.

Radio knew that it must shoulder arms or face really

stringent government control. There are influential persons who favor such control immediately. They argue that government is the only agency capable of articulating policies essential to victory. Under such direction, they say, radio would render a fuller public service than its peacetime predispositions would permit. Under the pressure of war, radio ought to think less about what people *want* to hear than about what they *ought* to hear. Radio need not worry too much about whether it offends special interests. The habits of courageous leadership thus engendered might carry a fuller comprehension of social responsibility into post-war broadcasting.

These arguments have some validity. For private radio is conservative, and its conservatism interferes with the realization of its potential as a weapon. The industry's predisposition is to play safe, and to avoid even the slightest risks of offending pressure groups or so-called public opinion and taste. This limits its capacity to create, to criticize, and to lead public opinion.

"Prejudice definitely limits radio discussion in a democracy. Certain subjects distasteful to the sentiments of large groups simply are not going to be heard. This is a sort of negative, uninspiring democracy that progressives may, and perhaps ought, to deplore. But the fact of the intimidation of prejudice must be recognized."<sup>16</sup>

The industry defends its conservatism as an inevitable consequence of its being licensed by the government under an authority which exceeds simple traffic regulation. The industry is being pushed from behind by

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<sup>16</sup> Robert J. Landry, *op. cit.*



Uncle Sam, and is marching off to war with crossed fingers. This is of advantage neither to radio, the government, nor to the public which both serve. It establishes mutual handicaps and reservations which permit neither to function efficiently. There have been too many words and too little action toward resolving this situation. The war offers radio a magnificent opportunity to act, and the result of that action ought to be the voluntary organization of a board of grand strategy. Radio enjoys a high measure of public respect and confidence, and now is the propitious moment to capitalize on this confidence before government takes the initiative away from the industry.

If more stringent government controls were to be introduced, they would probably take one of two forms—either an executive agency established to operate directly under the President or an agency to operate under the Office of War Information. The former “would be extremely difficult to organize in such a way as to convince the people at large that the broadcasting channels were not being used for partisan purposes. Even the fairest administrator would be subject to continuous charges of abuse. He would appear to be very similar to a member of the Cabinet. This would affect civilian morale most adversely. Brief reflection will convince one that even the President would be losing under such a set-up, for the President will have all the time he wants on the radio, under any conceivable type of organization. As supreme commander of the armed forces of the United States in time of war all the broadcasting channels will be at his disposition. By putting the programming service directly



under his control, he raises the spectre of partisan influence without any corresponding gain.”<sup>17</sup>

To place radio officially at the disposal of the O. W. I.—which is itself an executive agency—would raise fears of propaganda, and might be as difficult administratively as the first method.

The conclusion seems inescapable that the voluntary establishment of an industry board of strategy offers the most helpful solution under the circumstances. Such a board would not presume to dictate “the propaganda line.” The government is the final arbiter in this matter. But if radio can form partnerships with private morale experts delegated by the government, there is no apparent reason why it cannot appoint such experts on its own responsibility, not only to cooperate with government agencies but to supplement and clarify official instructions to the industry. Such a board could eliminate much of the wasteful competition in programming between radio stations and networks. Radio’s effectiveness could then be judged not by the number of spot announcements or programs sandwiched into standard schedules, but by the active response of the audiences. The board would require authority, and an elastic budget, and its personnel would have to consist of extraordinarily competent and courageous men.

The opportunities (and limitations) of such a board are inherent in radio at all times. Like beggars in a kingdom, they have always existed, but have seldom been to court or been granted an audience. A coordinative board would

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<sup>17</sup> Carl J. Friedrich, “Controlling Broadcasting in Wartime,” *Studies in The Control of Radio*, No. 2, Harvard University, November, 1940.

have no choice but to consider these opportunities and limitations and endeavor to meet the challenges which they represent in the environment and circumstance of war.

Radio listening is one of the easiest of all habits to acquire. No education or training is needed. Radio reaches parts of the population which other media of communication cannot reach. Radio has become a frequent substitute for reading, the theatre, movies, lectures, and social gatherings. Because radio is trusted by the public, it has an enormous head-start as an effective weapon on the home front. In August, 1939, the *Fortune* Survey asked, "If you heard conflicting versions of the same story from these sources, which would you be most likely to believe?"<sup>18</sup> The results were:

Radio press bulletin .....	22.7	per cent
Radio commentator .....	17.6	" "
Authority you heard speak .....	13.0	" "
Newspaper editorial .....	12.4	" "
Newspaper news item .....	11.1	" "
Newspaper columnist .....	3.4	" "
"Don't know" or "depends" ....	19.8	" "

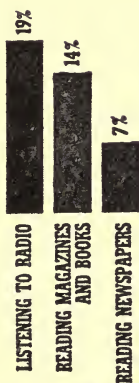
There are three possible reasons why radio bulletins which come from press sources (i.e., radio *press* bulletin) should be regarded as twice as reliable as similar items

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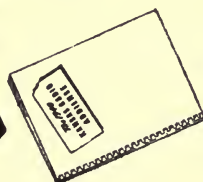
<sup>18</sup> Approximately 60 per cent of all stations have newspaper associations—i.e., they are either owned by newspapers or provide free news time in exchange for ads and space in the newspapers.

# MEASURING THE INTEREST IN RADIO

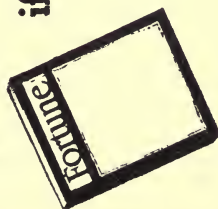
which activity do you prefer most?



which is your chief source of news?



if necessary—which would you give up?



printed in newspapers: (1) The human voice commands respect and trust. (2) Radio reports can be quickly "verified" by turning to other stations. (3) There has been a slow growth of the skeptical conviction that "you can't believe all you read in the newspapers."<sup>19</sup> Radio has on the whole handled the news with honesty if not always with reserve, while newspapers have been discredited by the actions of a few powerful publishers.

The movies also play second fiddle to radio. *Fortune* also asked, "If you had to give up either going to the movies or listening to the radio, which one would you give up?" Only 13.9 per cent said "listening to the radio," whereas 79.3 per cent replied, "the movies."

This opinion may arise not only because radio is an open sesame to the world's news, but because it is a free box seat at the theatre. A unique aspect of radio is that it elicits a high degree of empathic response from the listener. Radio exploits the imagination more than any other medium of communication. Radio listening is a participating activity—the hero is as the listener imagines him, and the countryside is the listener's conception of a countryside.

A corollary factor is the intimacy, the rapport if you will, which radio establishes between its programs and the listener. Radio brings personalities into the home of poor and rich alike. The President joins *your* family in

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<sup>19</sup> William B. Benton, on the *University of Chicago Round Table*, "Radio in Wartime"—"I'm told that a man in one of the government offices has developed figures that tend to prove that 60 per cent of the people of this country get their information from radio in contrast to only 20 per cent who get their information from the press and 20 per cent who get their information from both press and radio."

the living room and says: "My friends. . . ." The announcer says, "Do *you* want shining, bright teeth? Go to *your* drug store. . . ."

The human voice is an important element in the mass appeal and stimulation of radio. "Again and again in our case studies, respondents mention the human voice as if it were of special importance:

"It is more *interesting* when a person talks to you.

"I like the voice. It is *nearer* to you.

"A voice to me has always been more *real* than words to be read.

"I like to hear a voice better than reading. It's more *exciting*." <sup>20</sup>

And H. V. Kaltenborn, the popular radio commentator, says: "From my own experience in writing and speaking on politics, I know that 99 per cent more persons will react to your speaking than to your writing." <sup>21</sup>

Against these assets must be balanced certain limitations of radio. As easily as they tuned it in, listeners can abandon a program which does not please them or which contains opinions with which they disagree. This obvious fact has challenging implications. It represents the key to the purity of radio. Points of view or opinions likely to annoy or offend *any* listeners were seldom condoned by radio in peacetime. In war, radio must seek to elicit concerted action from the people, must therefore abandon the pursuit of what interests the public and emphasize

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<sup>20</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and the Printed Page*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, p. 181.

<sup>21</sup> H. V. Kaltenborn, "Radio and Political Campaigns," *Education on the Air*, Ohio State University Press, 1932.



broadcasts in the public interest. Radio is faced with a dilemma, for if it presumes with any frequency to run counter to the habits and preferences of its audiences, it risks the loss of the very assets which make it such a potent instrument. Yet if radio does not run this risk, if it continues to rationalize the lax conventions of peacetime, it runs the infinitely greater risk of failing in its plain responsibility.

Circumstances have partly resolved the dilemma. The war has created a new community of interest on the part of the public. It establishes emergency mores to which the population subscribes overwhelmingly. In war, people do and say and read and listen to things which in peacetime would not interest them. The facts and issues of the war are paramount in the public's interest. Consequently, radio audiences are more disposed to listen to programs which influence their lives and thinking. War creates a disposition toward unity and makes it possible to broadcast many things which in peacetime might offend or annoy groups of the population. As a simple example of this unity, the public which demanded a balancing of interventionist and non-interventionist opinion in discussions of international topics before the war, would not tolerate opposition to government policy on the air today. The public regards this policy as reasonable and proper. So it is with virtually all matters relating to the general conduct of the war. Radio has not been emasculated by this fact but instead assumes an active and necessary role as democratic critic of details and procedures.

There are other limitations of radio which cannot be so readily resolved. They rest upon fundamental issues,

rather than upon a misunderstanding of the public mind. The most important of these limitations is the fact that radio depends upon advertising for its existence.

Nearly half of all programs are commercially sponsored. With the profits from these, radio underwrites *all* of its other broadcasts. This reliance on advertising places limitations on radio which in wartime are particularly troublesome. Advertisers are traditionally conservative. They must build goodwill and sell goods. Almost from habit, radio applies these conservative policies to virtually all of its non-sponsored programs. We have already discussed the lack of logic behind this policy as it applies to wartime broadcasting. One can understand the reluctance of an advertiser to say anything which might in any way "offend" public opinion; but one cannot readily condone the carrying over of this reticence to sustaining programs. Further, radio's big job is to elicit concerted action from the public, action for the war and in support of its sundry claims upon them. An advertiser's primary aim, on the other hand, is to elicit customer action directed toward the purchasing of his products or service. When the nation's claim and the advertiser's claim upon the public are not able to coincide in a given program or series, the advertiser's claim can generally be expected to win out. For it is not the radio industry personnel which writes and produces sponsored programs—it is nearly always the personnel of the advertising agencies. As technicians, the staffs of advertising agencies are frequently superior to the technicians in stations and networks; but the fundamental difference between them is in the realm of their respective alle-

giances. The radio industry is nominally dedicated to serving the public interest, convenience and necessity, while advertising owes its allegiance not to the public interest but to the product and its manufacturer. While radio has some control over what advertisers may broadcast, no one intimately associated with American radio will deny the influence of advertising agencies upon radio policies.

In addition to writing and producing the sponsored programs, the advertising agencies determine "not only what the people of the country shall listen to, but also—in accordance with his [i.e., the sponsor's] own market problems and at variance, frequently, with the public interest—precisely what sections of the country are going to be permitted to hear a specific broadcast."<sup>22</sup> Further, the purchasing power of the advertiser succeeds in monopolizing the best program days and hours for commercial purposes. There are undoubtedly some sponsored programs which serve not only Mammon but the wartime public interest, but these have been few. If radio were to build a series of effective and necessary wartime programs, it would find it difficult to secure a broadcast time when the maximum potential audience is listening. Except in the summer months, when many advertisers go off the air, sustaining and public service programs must take second- and third-rate periods. Radio should either declare certain key spots as not available for sponsorship and produce some of its own wartime public service programs at that time, or it should sell certain key hours only upon the condition that the advertiser develop and produce a

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<sup>22</sup> Bernard B. Smith, *op. cit.*

war program which meets with the approval of the industry's board of strategy, or that he sponsor an approved program which has been developed by radio.

Advertising domination of radio results in the concentration of coverage in "densely populated areas where large audiences and big profits can be realized. Rural listeners are penalized, have relatively inferior service and choice. Competition runs counter to public service in respect of program balance. Duplication of programs on different wave lengths is monotonously evident through the day and night. Concern for profits leads to a concentration on programs judged to be most popular. Minorities are neglected and even the limited potentialities of listeners with the lowest intelligence are seldom exploited. There is a monotony of entertainment, even though that entertainment masters at times greater resourcefulness and skill than anywhere on earth. Further, the large expenditures which radio involves tend, as in industry, towards centralization of control. The advantages are obvious. Resources become available which could not otherwise be afforded. But the disadvantages, which receive less advertisement, are serious. That culture is most enduring which is native, which springs from the soil. Culture cannot be distributed by mail order. It is in this sense above all others that New York is not America; still less is Hollywood. As radio becomes centralized, the role and status of local stations diminish. They become increasingly the retail distributors of a large central store." <sup>23</sup>

Admittedly, one of the most difficult problems to be

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<sup>23</sup> Charles A. Siepmann, *op. cit.*



solved by a radio board of strategy would be how to use local stations effectively. The establishment of a local subordinate counterpart of the national board in every important community would be helpful. Local stations must coordinate their efforts no less than the networks and metropolitan stations. One of the weaknesses of the present efforts of the Office of War Information is that directives flow from a centralized office to decentralized (local) stations. As we have said, there is an increasing tendency for local stations to rely upon Washington instead of upon themselves. Scripts written in Washington are aired in local communities, often without regard to whether the content or form of the scripts is likely to be effective locally. Few local stations have sufficient staff, money or facilities to produce effective dramatic broadcasts. For polished productions they generally rely upon electrical transcriptions or, if they are outlets, network programs. A great need exists for flexibility in the information transmitted to local stations which would permit stations to adapt broadcasts to their facilities and local needs and interests.

Local stations can play an additional role of extreme importance to democracy and to the maintenance of American radio as a people's instrument—by realizing the importance of *two-way* communication. The tendency exists in radio at all times, but especially in wartime, to render only the one-way service of communicating to the *people*. Procedures are needed whereby the people can communicate to their *government*. Gallup and Fortune polls and special field polls of the O. W. I. Bureau of Intelligence are a step in the right direction, but they substantiate rather than fulfill the need for a less formal



and more human kind of communication. The local stations can function effectively in this area because they know their communities—their needs, prejudices, and opinions. A detailed and well-planned procedure should be established to assure a constant exchange of reports within defined areas and on a national scale to communicate the ebb and flow of public opinion and attitudes to stations and government. This is an essential requisite to the planning of any radio strategy on a national, regional, or local basis.

Agriculture and labor represent but two of a number of special problems to which radio so far has devoted insufficient attention and thought, and they represent one of the first items on the agenda of any board of strategy. As Mr. Siepmann states, "rural listeners are penalized" by radio and have a relatively inferior service and choice of programs. In war, everyone knows that agriculture is an essential industry; but the nation at large has little or no comprehension of agriculture's key place in the national effort, and farmers themselves have not been made to feel or understand sufficiently their status as "soldiers on the land." The local stations can best communicate with the farmers; the networks can best inform urban areas about agriculture's role. Here is need for a coordinated local-national strategy for which at present no effective machinery exists. As for labor, unpublished studies by certain official and private agencies reveal that in several vital production areas the workers have little sense of participation in the national effort. They still feel that they are working for their bosses and not for Uncle Sam. They have only a narrow employee-employer concept of

their tasks. This attitude is a threat to morale among the men on the production-front. Radio has an assignment here that requires intelligent and courageous handling, and it can be effectively carried out only with coordinated direction by men who know the facts.

The secret of radio as a weapon can be cracked if radio is able effectively to inform people and clarify issues. The remainder of this book is concerned with the challenge that lies in that problem. At the outset, it must be understood that information without clarification, or attempts at clarification without adequate information, will fall short of the goal. There can be no doubt that Americans are a news-hungry people, but how well we digest our news is another matter. The Office of War Information has defined six areas in which real public understanding is essential if we are to elicit concerted action from the people for the war effort.

1. *The Issues*—what we are fighting for.
2. *Sacrifice*—what we must give up to win.
3. *The United Nations* and peoples—our brothers-in-arms.
4. *The Enemy*—the nature of our adversaries.
5. *Work and Production*—the war at home.
6. *The Fighting Forces*—the job of the fighting men at the front.

That people do not understand these things has been determined by exhaustive polls of public opinion, and confirmed by community leaders and specialists in opinion throughout the country. Many of these studies cannot be quoted because of their official nature, but others of proven reliability—such as the Gallup and Fortune

polls—can be; and all may be summarized for the sake of discussion.

### 1. *The Issues*

We are fighting to defeat our enemies and crush predatory militarism. We don't want to be pushed around by international gangsters. We were attacked and had to fight.

BUT we are not agreed on what the peace should be. We are divided on post-war international cooperation. We are not clear on just what constitutes the justice and morality of our cause. We think the *leaders* of our enemies and not the *peoples* are at fault. We cannot agree on the basic causes of the war.

### 2. *Sacrifice*

We know that war is expensive in blood and treasure and we say we are ready to give up our standards of comfort as the need arises.

BUT we toy with the idea that the war will last only a year or two longer and that we won't have to give up *too much*. We are confused about rationing, shortages, civilian production, man-power control. Congress plays politics with Selective Service. On a voluntary basis we are not co-operating sufficiently on bond purchases. We do not really understand the powerful economic *f o r c e s* at work which will ultimately

cut our living standards greatly. We hope against hope that the pinch will somehow never come.

### 3. *The United Nations*

We admire and applaud the heroic defense of the Russians and the raids of the British Commandos and air forces. We praise China's five-year war against Japan. We take pride and hope in the fact that most of the world's population is on our side.

BUT there is widespread dissatisfaction with the British, whom we suspect of trying to muddle through instead of fighting through. We applaud Russia with crossed fingers, and are suspicious of the Kremlin and Communism. We have faith that China will fight on and that we don't need to help her too much. We are race-conscious, and in the same breath castigate the "yellow bastards" of Japan and embrace our Chinese allies. We are confused as to the global implications of the war.

### 4. *The Enemy*

We are sorry for the Italians and make them the butt of our jokes. We respect the German military machine and power and realize that the Japanese are a shrewd and unscrup-

BUT we still believe that when we can lay our hands on the Japanese we'll take 'em good and proper. We clutch at the idea their lines are over-extended. We think a small military clique is

ulous foe. We know that victory over the Axis won't be too easy. We are shocked by the regimentation and cruelty of the Axis. We are determined to crush the enemy.

leading the nation and that a few tough defeats will cause trouble at home. We believe the Japanese are cowards when they meet real opposition, and that their low standard of living will ultimately trip them up. We believe to a large extent that Nazi Europe is seething with revolt and that the peoples of Europe may yet overthrow Hitler for us. We believe Hitler is responsible for the trouble, and if Hitler dies, maybe peace can be made. We do not really understand the forces and issues of fascism except on the naive level that they are brutal and regimented.

### 5. *Work and Production*

We understand that in a total war (a phrase we are fond of using) everyone probably has a job to do. We understand that America is the United Nations' arsenal and that our factories hold a key to victory. We know that our production can outstrip Axis pro-

BUT we are suspicious of high wages for labor and distrustful of unions. We know that profiteering by management is going on. We do not understand fully the importance, the place or role of agriculture in the total effort. Millions of us fail to see how *our*



duction. There is widespread belief that our equipment is the best in the world.

jobs help the war. We are not aware of the very serious problems in transportation, and believe unwisely that production alone may win for us. But we have a better understanding of the need for work and production than we have of any of the other five points.

#### 6. *The Fighting Forces*

We admire our sailors and soldiers and are cocky about their ability to win victory. We believe they are the best-equipped in the world. We trust our military leaders, and have made heroes of several of them, MacArthur for example. We understand that all elements of the military must be coordinated as a fighting unit.

BUT we are largely ignorant of the elements of strategy, tactics and logistics. We believe our military forces are the best—but we do not know why. We are sharply divided on the question of air power—its place and management. We temper our trust in our military leaders with transient suspicions of their judgment and competency. We do not understand the reasons for a large army nor the extent to which it will disrupt civilian life. We suspect that the military aren't always putting the best abilities of soldiers to the best use.

The need for information and clarification is clear. The responsibility for this service does not rest exclusively upon radio, but radio probably offers the best single means of reaching the public.

## COMMENTARY

*By Edward L. Bernays*

Counsel on Public Relations and author, associated with the United States Committee on Public Information in World War I

“Public Relations, advertising and public opinion work are all war industries and ought to be mobilized. I doubt if the government will mobilize them adequately.”

That pertinent comment was made by a distinguished Harvard professor of psychology on the Censorship and Propaganda Number of *The Saturday Review of Literature* which I edited recently. The eminent psychologist might have included radio in the list. There was general agreement by experts in the field who contributed to that issue that a grand strategy in the field of ideas was needed, that arms and armaments must be supplemented to win the war efficiently. Ideas are weapons too, and the mobilization of idea weapons is an important part in building up morale on the home front, winning over neutrals and deflating enemy morale.

From an historical standpoint, there is no question that the collapse of Germany in the last war was due, in part, to the breaking down of morale on the German home front, as there is no doubt today that much of Hitler's success in his early bloodless victories was due to the effective use of idea weapons. In fact, to “divide and conquer,” a basic technique of the Nazis in their propaganda, may be ascribed some of these early victories of the Nazi regime.

I know, of course, that there are many who maintain that propaganda never won a war. In the *New York Times* recently, Simeon Strunsky said, "there is still reason to doubt that propaganda ever decided a war, or even won a battle. A few well-loaded aircraft carriers or a substantial column of tanks nicely supported by overhead fighters and bombers are a much more comfortable fortress in which to place our reliance." There are those who maintain that what we need are only fighting men and fighting ships and fighting guns. It is not to be denied that we need them. But there is inevitable truth in the fact that fighting men and fighting guns need the people back on the home front to support them, that the enemy needs a strong home morale itself to be able to fight effectively, and that the attitudes and consequent actions of neutrals are important factors to any nation engaged in war. These truths, it seems to me, are self-evident and dispose of those who may attempt to minimize the importance of psychological warfare.

No one knows just how important psychological warfare is to total warfare or to total victory any more than anyone knows the exact relative importance of airplane, ships and infantry to victory. We know, however, that in total warfare today, we fight on a total front, that in modern warfare the total front consists of three inter-related fronts—military, economic and psychological. In order to achieve victory in total warfare, these fronts must be integrated. The psychological front is an agent of integration which strengthens the other two fronts and welds all three into the necessary effective whole.

In a democracy all activities do not move ahead at an even rate of speed. Some parts of our system move more slowly than others. There are lags in some of our attitudes and actions as compared with others. In the aviation indus-

try, there is little time lag in the use of science and invention. In older industries, new inventions are not employed until years after they have been found practicable. There are time lags in warfare, too.

A military commentator once said that every war is fought with the weapons of the last war. Of some of our military weapons—the modern airplane—this is, of course, not true. In our psychological warfare, we are not even using many of the weapons of the last war. Certainly, as Mr. Dryer says, we are not using the psychological weapons available to us for this war—the radio, for instance—to the limit we can or should.

In using these psychological weapons which are at hand, it is obvious that we should not use the brutalitarian, totalitarian methods used by our enemies. Our psychological weapons should reflect in every way the democratic pattern—truth and honesty. But they must also have unity and integration. What we need is what Max Lerner pointed out recently when he said: "We have had all manner of information agencies set up, and yet altogether they do not add up to a bold and affirmative attempt to use democratic persuasion here and abroad as a form of political warfare."

There is no disagreement by experts in and out of government as to the potency of this psychological warfare. There is general agreement that a unified effort toward building our psychological ramparts here and abroad is sound. There is agreement that ideas as weapons must go hand-in-hand with our military planning and economic strategy; that the available intellectual resources of the nation in the field must be called upon to do this work. And there is more than agreement—an actual effort is being made in this direction by a number of able people in Washington and elsewhere to meet these goals.

But there is a tremendous difference between recognition of these facts and reality in accomplishment. The appointment of Elmer Davis to head the Office of War Information is looked upon as a hopeful sign that this important job of centralized psychological warfare will be carried on in this country.

There is no question as to the potency of radio—the method of psychological warfare discussed in this book—in affecting the attitudes and actions of the public. This has been shown in all the countries of the world in which radio has been developed.

What this book discusses is the relationship of our own radio broadcasting in this country to the all-out effort. The shortwave radio, either as it affects the people in this country or as our shortwave radio affects people in other countries, is one phase of the question which must be left for discussion some other time. It seems fairly obvious, furthermore, that the shortwave problem is of minor importance within the United States since, statistically, there are so few shortwave listeners. This phase has been over-emphasized in discussions about radio's role in the war.

Radio broadcasting in this country must go all out for the war effort. Every program—commercial, sustaining, governmental—of all the radio stations in the United States must fit into a balanced pattern of broadcasting aimed at an over-all effect on the listener to strengthen his morale. Broadcasting is too important a tool in psychological warfare to be used on any other basis than that of completely fitting into the war effort.

A balanced ration in broadcasting does *not* mean the elimination of private ownership of broadcasting stations, of sponsored commercial programs that delight people, or of government programs. Nor does it or should it mean the



cutting off of criticism of the war effort. These are all-important for us today. It *does* mean that the effectiveness of radio broadcasting to the war as a whole must not be measured by hours or half-hours—Army hours, or whatever they may be. Effectiveness must be measured by everything the listener hears.

The radio broadcasting industry ought to follow such a procedure. If it doesn't, the people, in their own interest, may insist that the government do the job. And here there is also agreement in most quarters that to make of radio a government function would have grave dangers to our present system of radio broadcasting. The industry must handle itself. Will it face the issues and resolve them, or will it wait until it is too late? Will it act in its own and the nation's best interests, or will it wait till the crisis arises and then try to do what it can on a catch-as-catch-can basis?

The leading article in the August, 1942, *Readers Digest*, "Radio's Plug-Uglies," vigorously attacked the industry for its commercial spot announcements. Here is a case in point that illustrates that radio did not anticipate public reactions. Yet it was in the cards that the public would move for vigorous action in the matter of the commercial plug-uglies. Such journals as *Variety* repeatedly called attention to the abuses that had grown up. And six million copies of a highly respected medium went out to the world to proclaim this shortcoming of the industry and inflame public opinion so that the enemies of the industry could move in.

The gentlemen who control the destinies of the American system of broadcasting are either blind to trends in public opinion or deaf to complaints. And what is true about the plug-uglies is true about the present-day relationship of radio to aiding the war effort.

The need is for balance in broadcasting. This balance

will include, of course, entertainment and escape programs and war programs, factual and inspirational. But an hour's war program here and there does not meet the need and cannot meet the need. People's attitudes are conditioned also by what comes immediately before or immediately after such a program. Nor do spot announcements about this or that government activity, no matter how well written, meet the need.

We must and will win the war we are in. Radio can make an important contribution. We cannot permit the contribution of radio broadcasting to rest on casual hours or minutes begged competitively, borrowed, bought or offered for war purposes.

The over-all effect of broadcasting on the listener is what counts. The effect of one good program on a listener can be cancelled by another program, or by a commercial. Too much emphasis in a day's programming on one idea, or too little on another, can affect the net impact greatly.

We do not measure education of the student by this or that course in the curriculum. We measure education by its total effect on mind and character over a period of time—four years in college, for instance. Only *by balance* in all broadcasting can we achieve the real value of radio in strengthening the full understanding of our people in our cause, in bringing all the people to this belief in and desire to support the war for survival.

Today, there are scattered attempts by networks and individual stations to do this—due proportions of public service, entertainment, classical music, etc. The industry as a whole does not act in coordination. The main basis of judgment is still the cash register—the whim of the big shot on top or the fear of offending a pressure group.

Such an attitude of mind has to go if the industry expects

to maintain the American broadcasting pattern. In war, broadcasting as usual is out.

Good war programs like the *Army Hour* are not enough. Priority charts to broadcasters or stations are not of major moment. But the end result can still be accomplished if the radio broadcasting industry acts as a unit and of its own volition names a board of strategy which will include experts in psychology, public opinion, radio programming and communications to set up blueprints for a balance of entertainment and escapism, of war information and, of course, criticism, and a line to follow as to timing, proportion, content, theme, emotion and reason.

This board, naturally, will need to be in touch with government officials who know the war situation and what action the national interest demands of the people. This is not regimentation. It is enlightened self-interest, survival, common sense, intelligent planning. It will not mean the elimination of the present system or of its stress on entertainment. It will mean that radio's effectiveness in the war will be measured not by half-hours or hours, but, to use Dryer's expression, like education, by its whole effect on the mind and character of the individual. Only by such an over-all effort can we achieve the real value of radio to the war victory. We must mobilize radio—our second great national air power.

## *The Ammunition*

Even the best weapon is ineffective if its ammunition is weak. Programs are the ammunition of radio and it is the industry's job to make them potent. This can be accomplished by programs built to inform the public and clarify the issues and problems surrounding the six points earmarked for attention by the government. But there are some handicaps to overcome before even a beginning can be made.

The Strategy of Truth—which is the label attached to a policy inaugurated under the O. F. F.—is a handicap because it is respected literally. Archibald MacLeish defined it in these words: “A democratic government supplies truth and not lies, and it supplies truth and not lies which is relevant to the decisions to be made. It engages, in other words, in a Strategy of Truth, a phrase that we have been fond of using here in Washington, and a phrase that I believe makes sense.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Archibald MacLeish, “Propaganda: Good and Bad,” *The University of Chicago Round Table*, March 1, 1942.

Truth is a word loaded with virtue. Propagandists throughout history have appropriated the word, but not the policy, for their use. The evidence so far, however, seems to substantiate the conclusion that in this war the government is determined to adopt both the word and the policy. This will enhance the integrity of our officialdom, but it is a moot question whether it will enhance either the efficiency or effectiveness of our efforts to elicit concerted action from the public. We may revere truth as an ethic without trusting it as a shibboleth.

In defining an information policy for a democracy at war, what shall be told? How shall it be presented? Does telling the truth automatically elicit the desired response and resolution? What is the relation of the Strategy of Truth to propaganda?

Harold Lasswell says that "actual propaganda, wherever studied, has a large element of the fake in it . . . Sir Campbell Stuart . . . has written that only truthful statements should be used in propaganda. This seems, in the light of practice, an impracticable maxim."<sup>2</sup> The difference between propaganda and truth thus seems a legitimate starting point for an analysis of the reasons why a Strategy of Truth is a handicap which must be overcome before radio can make its ammunition potent. First we must recognize that the *masses* are the target of propaganda, whereas the *public* is the target of the Strategy of Truth. The more the public—composed of groups with differing prejudices and backgrounds—becomes similar in outlook and habit, the more it approximates the concept

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<sup>2</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques in the World War*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., p. 206.



of the masses. In Chapter 2 the argument was advanced that with the coming of war the public developed emergency mores tending to make it act and respond as a unit. In short, war tends in some ways to make a mass of the public. The propagandist endeavors to accelerate this trend, to make the job of manipulating public opinion and action easier. The Strategist of Truth, on the other hand, is concerned less with furthering this process than with providing relevant information on the assumption that the public will respond in the right direction.

In a warring democracy the choice between operating information policies on the propaganda level or the Strategy of Truth level is difficult to make. "Military writers were among the first to see how greatly the displacement of simple obedience by democratic assertiveness complicated the problem of eliciting concerted action. Propaganda is one means of mass mobilization which is cheaper than violence, bribery or other possible control techniques."<sup>3</sup> However, the differences between the effect on the people of propaganda and a Strategy of Truth may be more apparent than real. We have said that *all* propaganda winks at truth. There are certain devices and rules which make propaganda effective. Successful propaganda emphasizes extremes and seldom admits a middle ground. It compels the propagandist to select part of the truth and dress it up in black or white. But a part truth is also a part lie. Another propaganda device is the slogan. A slogan is supposed to represent truth in a nutshell. People who quote a slogan seldom understand reasons or arguments behind it and probably cannot be said to understand its truth.

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<sup>3</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *op. cit.*

Propaganda tends to concentrate on a few points. Hitler says that "propaganda is the art of simplification." Yet an argument often remains true to the degree it is not simplified.

This leads to the conclusion that "there is always in the propagandist some crucial concealment, some relevant duplicity. He sees all the cards, you do not. And the card he is not showing you is the very card which, if you saw it, would deflect you from the belief the propagandist intends you to have or the action he wills you to take."<sup>4</sup> Now let us apply this definition of propaganda to the six points which radio is expected to handle satisfactorily, using the formula of the Strategy of Truth. Can any one of these problems be tackled—as radio usually tackles them—exclusively on the expository level? Each point must be placed in proper perspective to the war and to the other five points to inspire understanding and action. The global aspects of this war require an exposition of innumerable interrelationships necessary to the orientation, enlightenment and inspiration of the public. In the process there will be an inevitable emphasis on extremes, a great deal of over-simplification, and the use of slogans and other symbols of brevity.

Radio cannot employ its full potential to these ends if its creative function is hamstrung by a literal application of the Strategy of Truth. It is dependent upon the use of emotional devices and the exploitation of listeners' imagination. This is clearly indicated by studies which

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<sup>4</sup> Max Lerner, "Propaganda In Our Time," *The New Republic*, August 26, 1940.

show that almost 88 per cent of network time is devoted to programs other than news, talks and commentary:

1. Commentators, news and talks .....	12.8	per cent
2. Variety broadcasts .....	16.2	" "
3. Audience participation .....	20.8	" "
4. Music .....	21.6	" "
Semi classical .....	3.7	per cent
Familiar .....	5.1	" "
Popular .....	12.8	" "
5. Drama .....	28.6	" "
Melodrama .....	7.0	per cent
Comedy .....	9.7	" "
Straight drama .....	11.95 <sup>5</sup>	" "

Radio has demonstrated that its most effective appeal is on an emotional level. If the percentage of time devoted to music is also deducted on the basis that its airing is not a creative function of radio, there still remains two-thirds of radio time devoted to creative programs. Dramatic programs, which comprise more than one-fourth of all radio broadcasting, are most adaptable to the needs of war.

Frequently, the line between information and drama is a thin one. For example, *The March of Time*, *This Is War! Report To The Nation*, *Three Thirds of the Nation*,<sup>6</sup> and other similar dramatic programs are based upon facts and "truths." The question is to what degree dramatized facts retain their purity. No small amount of fictional detail and emphasis must be added in dramatization. Does this enhance the effectiveness of the truth, or dilute it?

<sup>5</sup> From *Broadcasting Magazine*, 1942 Year Book, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Examples of some of these scripts are included in later chapters.

The answer rests upon the skill, the integrity and the purpose of the technician and the strategist. They must ask: What are we trying to say? Is it our purpose to use facts only as prods to a directed emotional stimulation of the listener? Or are we using our skills to make the truth more palatable, and thereby help the listener to digest the facts?

The devices and techniques of radio are related to the content of programs; radio is a great deal more than a public address system, and cannot always disseminate truth on the simple expository level, as can the press in reporting news. There is a difference between the selection of news as a radio *device* and the conception of news as a *policy* basis for all informational programs. The former may help make specific programs effective, but the latter precludes the effective use of radio as a propaganda medium. The handicap this represents is clearly illustrated in MacLeish's statement that "a democratic government is more concerned with the provision of information to the people than it is with the communication of dreams and aspirations, the furbishing of ideals, and so forth. . . . The duty of government is to provide a basis for judgment [on the part of its citizens]; and when it goes beyond that, it goes beyond the prime scope of its duty." <sup>7</sup>

This point of view assumes a capacity for comprehension and interpretation of events which the public is probably not capable of exercising. Except for understanding the war production problem, the American peo-

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<sup>7</sup> Archibald MacLeish, "Propaganda: Good and Bad," *The University of Chicago Round Table*, March 1, 1942.

ple seem to be vague and confused on the six fundamental issues of the war. They do not know what fascism is; they abhor fascists because they are brutalitarian rather than because they are totalitarian. The "provision of information" to the nation so far has been a buckshot blast of labels, items, events and reports which are seldom interpreted and hardly ever clarified. Is this because interpretation and clarification is considered to be the "communication of dreams and aspirations, the furbishing of ideals, and so forth. . ."? The proponents of the Strategy of Truth, fearful that they will be called propagandists, appear unwilling to recognize that an effective public response probably can be inspired only by a vigorous application of the stuff dreams are made of; in short, by going beyond the limits of a purely news policy.

The handicap under which radio here works stems from the fact that the government stands out as the symbol and the touchstone of the people's aspirations, ideals and dreams. The government, therefore, is expected to provide the directives and the drives by which radio will give voice to the deep and inarticulate expressions of the people. But the unpleasant fact is that public support cannot be mobilized on an exclusive diet of truth, news and information, which is all the government offers. The communication of dreams, aspirations and the furbishing of ideals is needed, too. And this in turn requires a judicious admixture of propaganda, for propaganda endeavors to convert initial decision into mass concurrence and united action.

Man's ability to reason, properly exploited, is the technician's ally in so far as it makes it possible to rationalize



to the individual that *his* concurrence with his fellows is the result of personal decision. But it is a mistake to suppose that the intellectual approach in itself assures any propaganda being effective. The control-box of mass action is in the emotions—fear, hate, jealousy, love, and ambition. “We find that in Germany, the hub of Hitler’s propaganda-technique in his fantastic rise to power was precisely this emotional appeal, a cold-blooded generating of ‘emotional’ hate based upon the emotional discontent of the German people, which in turn was rooted to the *fact* of economic dislocation. He played upon this discontent not by objectively feeding it ‘facts’—the ‘facts’ he selected were often distorted or ignored altogether—but by appealing to the emotions.”<sup>8</sup>

Walter Wanger says that “national morale needs emotion.” He adds that “communism has faith, Naziism has passion, democracy has reason.”<sup>9</sup> If this is true, then to attain the proper emotional response, our propaganda must be one part Nazi, one part Soviet and one part democratic—for surely we will not succeed as propagandists if we cannot project faith and passion as much as reason.<sup>10</sup>

Belief is emotional in its roots. Feeding on faith, and unsupported by reason, beliefs can most easily be exploited by the application of emotional devices. The technician persuades one to believe in an idea based substantially on truth or fact without transmitting either

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<sup>8</sup> Ernest B. Shenkin, “Why Our Propaganda Creaks,” *Common Sense*, April, 1942.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Wanger, “Morale and The Movies,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1941.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Morale.

the whole truth or bare fact itself. The Strategists of Truth have had too great a respect for the simple truth and too little for adorned truth.

Of course, any use of propaganda requires a shrewd evaluation of public reaction. Gilbert Seldes says in his booklet, *"Proclaim Liberty."*

. . . if our leaders believe that total effort could be achieved more quickly by lies than by truth, it would be their obligation to lie to us. In total war there is no alternative to the most effective weapon. Only the weapon must be effective over a sufficient length of time; the advantage of a lie must be measured against the loss when the lie is shown up; if the balance is greater, over a period of time, than the value of the truth, the lie still must be told. If we are a people able to recognize a lie too fast for it to be effective, the lie must not be used; if we react "correctly" to certain forms of persuasion (as, say, magazine ads and radio commercials), the psychological counterparts of these should be used, at least until a new technique develops.<sup>11</sup>

This war is being fought against ruthless enemies. The *Herrenvolk* of the West and the Sons of Heaven in the East have a long and documented record of plunder and cruelty. To spotlight their brutalitarian character is not to hide our own faults in the shadows.

But the faults of the democracies are not faults of the dream or of the spirit. The peoples of the democracies are imbued with the spirit of freedom; and freedom was the dream which in their waking hours they sought to realize. This widespread belief in freedom and in the dignity of

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<sup>11</sup> Gilbert Seldes, *Proclaim Liberty!* The Greystone Press, 1942, p. 61.

man is the quintessence of the democratic faith with which emotions may be stirred, and from which the elementary inspiration for democracy's propaganda may be drawn. The beliefs of men cannot be encompassed in a news flash, or contained in a barren fact. The technician of democratic propaganda must emotionalize the intrinsic truths to use them effectively.

But in the execution of this task he can respect no single fact, no truth, so much that he will refuse to alter it, if it does fit into the total emotional pattern he is designing. This is less Machiavellian than practical. It is probably the only tactic that will make effective a strategy of democratic propaganda. For what is needed is propaganda *for* the truth, not a strategy *of* the truth.

Before this can be accomplished, however, radio leaders and the government will have to make a radical change in their thinking, and abandon their fears about propaganda. As men with difficult jobs to perform, they recognize that "successful propaganda depends upon the adroit use of means under favorable conditions. A means is anything which the propagandist can manipulate; a condition is anything to which he must adapt."<sup>12</sup> Before the means can be determined, the conditions favorable to propaganda must be set up. But they may exist already; and if this is so, every moment lost while the radio industry delays in organizing its board of strategy is an opportunity lost to make the medium an effective war weapon. It is a tragic fact that the mere fear of being called propagandists inhibits the leaders of both radio and government.

Americans are suffering a mild neurosis on the subject

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<sup>12</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *op. cit.*

of propaganda, probably as a result of the exposures of propaganda tricks perpetrated upon them in the last war. "We live in a propaganda age," people said; and there was general acceptance of the definition of propaganda as "a method utilized for influencing the conduct of others on behalf of predetermined ends." Hence, "every articulate person with a purpose is a propagandist. From this viewpoint [it is] fair to state that ours is an age of competing propagandas."<sup>13</sup>

This conception of propaganda, of course, contributed only to confusion and skepticism about all arguments, all causes, all presentations. To define "every articulate person with a purpose" as a propagandist was to make useless any effort rationally to analyze and employ propaganda.

Consequently, the fear is widespread that the average American is no longer susceptible to propaganda. Our enemies' use of propaganda has led many to assume that it can be employed only for base ends, and that the choice facing us is distinct—either *everything* shall be propaganda or *everything* shall be truth.

I wonder whether the time hasn't passed when you could talk about "good" propaganda and "bad" propaganda? I wonder, in other words, whether our enemies haven't so slimed that word by their misuses and abuse of it that it is no longer possible to consider it as having any affirmative content. . . . I think the American people are probably pretty right in feeling that the word can't be laundered; you can't wash it clean. . . .<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> All quotations in this paragraph are from Dr. Clyde Miller's and Eduard Lindemann's introduction to *War Propaganda in the United States*, Yale University Press.

<sup>14</sup> Archibald MacLeish, *op. cit.*

But there is less objection to using propaganda in war-time than at any other time. The last twenty years, which witnessed a remarkably successful propaganda campaign to persuade people to learn how to detect and debunk propaganda, have helped to equip America for the job. Because they believed in its effectiveness, Americans studied its techniques in order to understand and resist it. It is probable that these people are now in favor of an intelligent American propaganda policy. Moreover, we believe that we have the technical skill to perform the job with extraordinary success. The *Saturday Evening Post*, in a lead editorial titled "The Nazis Learned From Us" declared that "our advertising men know more about propaganda technique than the Germans and Japanese can ever hope to learn,"<sup>15</sup> and the newspaper *PM* asks:

What are your criteria? Indoctrination of people with new ideas? Skillful selection of truth [*sic*] to make a favorable picture? Breadth of conception and perfection of details? Understanding of the people to whom propaganda is addressed? Understanding of the methods and media? By not one of a dozen yardsticks can European propaganda match the American propaganda which has been directed for a generation by the [advertising skills] of American big business.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence seems to indicate that the public will support reasonable uses of propaganda to inform them on the issues of the war, and to arouse and inspire their latent emotional dispositions. No one advocates or would accept

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<sup>15</sup> Issue of April 11, 1942.

<sup>16</sup> From an editorial by Ralph Ingersoll, March 25, 1942.



an official propaganda ministry. Nor can truth be thrown out of the window. Instead, it is only necessary to recognize that a literal application of the Strategy of Truth is no longer in order, because it restricts full, creative expression, particularly in so far as broadcasting is concerned, and because it places a premium upon the mere statement of facts and reports rather than upon efforts to interpret them and clarify their meaning and significance. Lasswell, in his commentary on this chapter, properly emphasizes that "truth is often best communicated where emancipation from the literal is most complete."

Ideally the shift from a Strategy of Truth to a propaganda *for* the truth should be made as an official decision, so there can be no misunderstanding either as to its aims or purpose. This would permit the planning of an efficient administrative organization to instruct the various media and define responsibility in clear and precise terms, so that confusion and excesses would not result. But there is reason to believe, with the war a year old, that no such decision will be forthcoming. If so, events may make the decision, and a propaganda policy, like Topsy, will just grow up. There has been no war in modern times which has failed to compel recourse to the manipulation of truth to elicit mass response and action.

A warring democracy, after all, is not dedicated to committing suicide. Yet it may do so if it will not employ every possible means to insure its survival. Admittedly this often compels decisions which in normal times we would never dream of making, and actions we would refuse to condone. But war changes not only maps, it changes the premises and habits of thought and con-

science. We have evacuated Japanese who are American citizens from certain areas of our coasts. Necessity compelled suspension of the democratic tenet that no one group of citizens shall be discriminated against for race, creed or color. Laws and legal opinions were found to clothe the policy in legitimacy; but the moral question remains to prick men of conscience who refuse to bow to expediency, who would risk a Fifth Column for a principle.

By one road or another, then, we shall probably come to the use of propaganda. Where shall we turn for knowledge about it? Are there any precedents to guide us, a democracy, in the best way to handle a dangerous ammunition? Does World War I hold any secrets radio can borrow? These will be the first questions of interest to radio, an industry which grew up in peacetime.

World War I holds few lessons which radio can apply in its propaganda. Let us examine the reasons. Everyone knows that the radio and motion picture were in their infancy twenty-five years ago; but today, the microphone is a nation's ears, the camera its eyes. Our peoples are dependent upon prompt and complete communications to a degree unprecedented in world history.

Only since the Twenties has there been any serious American study of propaganda. Initially, in the United States, the study of manipulating symbols and slogans was the concern of advertisers who evaluated success on the basis of audience response. Then a few scholars began writing about the broad, contextual areas of propaganda—on "morale" and its factors, on "principles," on "purposes," on "strategy"—social scientists, political scientists,

academic journalists, psychologists. Virtually none of these scholars were professionals in the field or technicians creating daily for a communications medium. Yet the technician is of immeasurably greater importance to the success of current propaganda than he ever was to the success of earlier propaganda. Prior to the 1920's, print was the principal medium of communication. The first World War was a paper and ink war. The technicians were journalists. Newspaper policies, attitudes, standards and prejudices dominated the strategy of propaganda and its execution. The best job was one told briefly, factually, occasionally "documented" with photographs, real or faked. The ingenuity of the technicians was usually applied not to how information should be told, but to *what* should be told. They originated slogans, wrote feature stories, and in the area of atrocities went on imaginative sprees. They were the censors, too; and, as a result, devoted most of their talents to what we call strategy. Their appeals were aimed primarily at the minds of people even when they wished to arouse emotions. The first World War's propaganda was "a concession to the rationality of the modern world. . . . It [was] sophisticated to the extent of using print; and he that takes to print shall live or perish by the Press. . . . All [was] conducted with the decorum and trappery of intelligence."<sup>17</sup> But World War II demands some different standards for propagandists. The movies and particularly the radio have entered our lives. Both of these media are infinitely more powerful agencies of communication than the press. This war is not a paper and ink war. It is more than anything a

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<sup>17</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *op. cit.*

war of spoken words, and the packaging of words in the paraphernalia of broadcasting. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say this is a war of sounds—the human voice set on a stage of music, sound effects and other devices. Already the radio has arrogated to itself what was in the first war the exclusive service of the press—the dissemination of news. Radio reports news more quickly and the public regards it as freer from prejudice than the press by a vote of more than two-to-one, according to a *Fortune* survey.<sup>18</sup>

But radio and the movies have given to World War II media of tremendous *emotional* power which do not necessarily depend for effectiveness upon cold appeals to reason. The use of the human voice plus radio's ability to exploit the listener's imagination make it an instrument heavily dependent upon the technician. Because its primary function prior to December 7 was entertainment, its technicians had the say-so over most of *what* was said on the air as well as over *how* it was to be presented. This never was the case in the press, where news reporting kept editorialization to a minimum, and where even *how* stories were to be written had become almost a stereotype.

Broadcasting is an art, not a trade. It packages its products for emotional rather than rational impact. Radio dramatization, even when based upon facts, impresses the listener first of all in an emotional way. The commentators are neither neuter nor neutral; they are men, and whether they endeavor to inform or exhort listeners they elicit an emotional response from them.

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<sup>18</sup> See p. 56.



The scholars and "experts" who in the Twenties began to write about propaganda and its principles wrote in the frame of reference of paper and ink techniques. And while they promulgated principles and theories, the radio and movies were introducing new potentials and new techniques and new influences which were to revolutionize the concept of propaganda.

Consequently, the literature on propaganda is of small value to radio; for the industry knows that in so far as its medium is concerned there can be little discussion of strategy divorced from techniques, and the experts and scholars in propaganda strategy are with very few exceptions ignorant of radio's techniques and production problems. It is easy to say that "we quite rightly minimize the so-called 'techniques' and 'devices' of propaganda as such. They are of minor importance. The all-pervading problem at the moment is the setting in which any technique will be used, the claims and objectives which any technique will be called upon to implement."<sup>19</sup> But the difference between the execution of a policy in print and its execution by radio may be the difference between success and failure. The printed page can be edited and re-edited until every word is just right, until the story as it will meet the eye and impress the reader appears perfect. But a broadcast, no matter how it appears in script, has no life or personality until it meets the microphone. The simplest statement of fact may suddenly become a loaded editorial if the music which introduces or backs it is of the wrong emotional texture. An actor may have

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<sup>19</sup> Hadley Cantril, "Propaganda for Victory," *The New Republic*, February 23, 1942.



an inflection which antagonizes listeners and jeopardizes the effectiveness of the message. The engineer may fade a voice a moment too soon, and the climax to a reasoned appeal reaches no one. There is no second chance on the air. A broadcast has but one life.

In these matters the technician assumes a crucial responsibility. He is dealing with perhaps a score of devices, groups and personalities, any one of which can have the effect of sabotaging the editorial purpose of the broadcast. A competent network technician can maintain an average high quality of production, and may generally be capable of interpreting and executing policy instructions adequately. There are greater risks with the personnel of local stations, whose production competency is frequently less than good. But the important principle is that broadcasting is surcharged with emotional dynamite; that it exploits imagination; that its popularity and appeal rest upon the ingenuity with which it presents its material; and that it pays a premium to creative talents who are adept in presenting ideas effectively.

This means that the strategists, the policy-makers of any propaganda must, in this war, come to know radio techniques and work closely with the radio technician. It does not necessarily mean that the technician must work closely with the strategists. He may be of inestimable assistance to the strategists by pointing out production pitfalls and by recommending effective techniques, but the first need is for the strategist rather than the technician to determine the over-all policy to be followed.

The technician, however, possesses an additional asset. Propaganda today must not appear too obviously manipu-

lative. Unless propagandists can steer between the Scylla of being ineffective by virtue of being too cautious and the Charybdis of being disbelieved because of crudely projected words and ideas, they will neither be trusted nor believed. Thus the key to effective propaganda to-day rests to no small extent upon the skill of the technician.

Inevitably, double leadership will generate conflicts. The technician's "primary concern is to find the symbol or argument that will work, [and therefore he] concentrates only on the relation of his device to his end."<sup>20</sup> The technician's sense of hunch and his personal judgments select the symbols or arguments that will work in relation to the whole effect he is instructed to put over. He does not select symbols or arguments for their intrinsic truth, so that his final creation may be a mixture of part truths and part invention. At this point he finds himself in conflict with the strategists who insist that the truth be respected for its sake alone. If this latter viewpoint prevails, the effectiveness of the effort may be impaired or destroyed.

A practical working arrangement between the strategists and the technicians must result in a relaxing of the strategists' insistence that the truth be literally pursued. Integrity in this situation must be sacrificed if success is to be obtained.

This is how wartime radio should function. At the top should be the industry's board of strategy. It would concentrate on: (1) ideas, imagination, creative drives, editorial program policies; and (2) the gathering and

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<sup>20</sup> Max Lerner, *op. cit.*

defining of data and information and the preparation of outlines and blueprints of how to handle clarification and information. In collaboration with this board would be the liaison experts of the federal government. Under the board, and closely integrated with it, would be the technicians, who would use the materials made available to them as the bases for programs. The government now "may be said to call the tune, while [radio] provides the orchestration. Stated another way, the plan assigns moral leadership to the government and its specialists, and *the function of projection and interpretation* to radio and its specialists." <sup>21</sup>

Thus, today, the responsibility for interpretation is radio's. But radio is not manifesting "the daring, imagination, pugnacity, enthusiasm and higher artistry which seems still to be largely absent from our psychological warfare. These qualities are beyond workaday committees and mere passive willingness to cooperate." <sup>22</sup>

Radio is not delivering because, for one thing, it is apprehensive that if it exercises its full imagination and emotional power it will violate the Strategy of Truth. Lasswell says, in his commentary, that this is a misconception and ought to be cleared away. He is right, and offers certain principles which the industry will do well to study carefully. For when this apprehension has been dispelled, radio can begin to function more effectively as a home-front weapon.

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<sup>21</sup> Italics mine. Quoted from "Imagination Needs 'AA' Rating, Too," *Variety*, April 22, 1942, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

## COMMENTARY

*By Harold D. Lasswell*

Director, Experimental Division,  
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Give up the Strategy of Truth for the expedient lie—or for any policy with a similar name? No, definitely not.

There is enough truth in the Strategy of Truth to justify its continuation. A democracy does differ from despotism in fundamental ways, and one of the ways is that the question of truthfulness can always be raised in a democratic state. What our Chief Executive says can be challenged by the Congress, and what is challenged by the Congress can echo across the broadcasts of the country. In Germany, Hitler is infallible; it is worth a man's neck to doubt it. In America, we can, must and will keep the right to tell the President, or the Cabinet, or the heads of the independent agencies that they are wrong.

Dryer says that the Strategy of Truth has had some adverse effects on the contribution made by radio to the war. If this is so, our duty is to figure out ways and means of preventing the degree of ill effect that is found. Dryer thinks that the nub of the matter is that specialists who work on the radio confuse truth with exposition. They are in the habit of asking if a news report is true, but they do not ask if a dramatic skit is true; hence, in the hot pursuit of truth they quit dramatizing—and to quit using drama is to give up the most effective means of communication by radio. If Dryer is right, several misconceptions ought to be cleared away.

It is a misconception that the standard of truth in communication applies only to expository statements. The truth

standard applies to every form of expression, whether poetry or prose, comment or drama.

The *Strategy* of Truth in communication calls for the *tactics* of clarity and vividness. Consider the problem of putting expository material into proper tactical form. The news announcer says: "Tobruk has fallen to the Axis." Assume that this comes from an official anti-Axis source; hence it is probable that the event occurred. Does this exhaust the problem of truthfulness in communication? By no means. How can the newsman get the truth across to the listening audience? Unless we get the truth across, we are not engaged in truthful communication.

If the newscaster buries the Tobruk sentence in a long series of reports of less importance to the war effort, he has distorted truth. If he has skipped over the Tobruk item in a colorless voice, and given it no more emphasis than a local motor accident, he has not told the truth. He has not brought out the connection of the detail with the reality of which it is a part. He has failed to put the item in proper order as a means of elevating the significant above the trivial. He has not made use of his voice to convey proper signals to the audience. In short, such a news announcer has not used the means at his disposal to complete an act of truthful communication.<sup>23</sup>

The job of the news commentator is in many ways simpler than that of the newscaster. The commentator has more freedom to select and arrange topics. He has more leeway in playing up or playing down individual items. The commentator can use many sentences to accomplish what the newscaster must convey in the intonation of a phrase.

Literalness is not to be confused with truth. Details may be literally correct, yet the net effect of the communication

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<sup>23</sup> See p. 148 ff.



may be false. Of this the most glaring example is the broadcasting of special events. Early in the war the Nazis took the microphone to the front and sent back the sounds of battle to the folks at home. Soldiers were interviewed in the thick of the fighting, and announcers and commentators described what was going on before their eyes. At first glance, one might declare that this was the most truthful kind of radio reporting, since it guaranteed full participation by the listener in real events exactly at the moment of their occurrence. But not so fast. When listeners are assailed and excited by the noises of combat, they may get an altogether distorted idea of the importance of certain events. They may be over-impressed with land operations, and forget the prowling submarine and destroyer fleet; or they may overlook the inventor or the housewife who pushes aside her misgivings, and writes a cheerful note to the soldier at the front. Modern war is too vast to be understood by eye-witnesses; it is only at central headquarters that a picture of total operations can emerge. The Battle of the Coral Sea could not be comprehended without a flood of reports distributed over days and originating in hundreds of places.

Perhaps it is worth remembering that truth is often best communicated where emancipation from the literal is most complete. This may be true of a dramatic show. Consider a broadcast in which news receives imaginative treatment. The opening scene may be a street in Cairo, suggested by the sound effects appropriate to a busy oriental metropolis. A newsboy may shout in a strange accent, "Tobruk has fallen!" and the script may portray in quick succession the reactions of a British general, a German spy, and a series of other characters. The element of literal truthfulness is at a minimum. Nobody pretends that the actors are speaking the lines of specific newsboys, generals or spies. Yet the audience may

grasp the meaning of the fall of Tobruk far more fully than when the matter is treated in long-winded technical broadcasts.

No doubt it is the freedom from literalness that gives to some dramatic writers, actors and directors the illusion of being emancipated from truth. Properly understood, however, specialists on imagination are not privileged liars. They are specialists on certain ways of making and arranging statements. *What* they say need be no different from what is said by the newscaster or the commentator. They all may say: An important military reverse has taken place. *How* they say this depends on technique, technique of handling the potentialities of the medium—words, documentary sounds, sound effects, music.

The upshot is that no act of communication is complete until the audience understands what is said, and no communication of truth is complete until it gets across to the audience.

We cannot know if we are telling the truth by radio until we find out if the audience understands what we are trying to say. To find out what the audience thinks and feels, we must use the proper methods. These methods have been developed by psychological and social scientists; and they are being adapted to many practical problems by market analysts, propaganda analysts, advertising researchers, and other technicians. These methods include brief poll interviews and prolonged, intensive interviews. All the methods of studying attitude are applicable to the task.

There needs to be the closest possible harmony between those who specialize in putting symbols on the air and those who specialize in what the audience makes of them. And the study of the radio audience must include the nation as a whole. What the American people learn from radio cannot

be found out by haphazard study of individual programs, stations or chains. The picture of reality—true or false—that is provided by radio is built up day by day, week by week; the distortions of today may be remedied tomorrow.

Here is one example of the need of an inclusive check-up on the total output and effect of American radio: One great war danger is inflation. To prevent and stop inflation, we must cut down public purchases of consumer goods. Our radio industry is paid by advertisers to urge people to buy such goods. Hence the commercials are saying to the American public, in effect: "Buy consumer goods in spite of the war." Obviously this tends to lose the war. Is this effect nullified by the programs that condemn inflation, urge the purchase of war bonds, and recommend the cutting down of purchases? These basic questions cannot be properly answered unless research has been directed to *what* radio as a whole is saying to *whom* with *what effect*. And effect, it may be remarked, is more than whether people like the program, or whether they dislike inflation. Effect includes overt buying habits.

Our democracy will not get an adequate communications policy by repeating any slogan that stops further thought on the subject. The Strategy of Truth calls for the tactics of clarity and vividness; and these tactics cannot be applied successfully unless a properly organized intelligence function provides scientific and continuous information about the thoughts, feelings, and overt acts of the public.

Yes, we want the Strategy of Truth. But we want it so well executed that we will not make of "truth" a word of opprobrium, or the Strategy of Truth a stratagem of hypocrisy.



# 4

## *The Target*

Propaganda is two-sided. On the one side are the technicians, on the other are the people who are the target of propaganda. The technician cannot do his job effectively if he does not understand the people—who they are and what they think. If he understands his target, he can design his ideas, symbols and forms to elicit the response and action desired.

Democratic morale is the product of procedures different from those used to build morale in a dictatorship. If the morale of an individual is defined as confidence in one's ability to cope with whatever the future may bring, and the morale of a nation as clear and fixed goals for the majority, confidence in leadership, and cooperation among the population—it becomes clear that such procedures as would make confident the peoples of submissive Germany would never work in the United States.

There is a popular story which dramatizes the difference between American morale and that of a totalitarian

people. Three generals, one a German, one a Japanese and one an American, were boasting of the qualities of their men. "My men are so well trained," said the German, "that they obey implicitly." And to prove his point he called to one of his men and ordered him to jump off the cliff. The soldier saluted, said, "Yes, sir," and jumped.

"My men, too, have excellent morale," said the Japanese, and ordered one of his soldiers off the cliff. The soldier saluted, said, "Yes, sir," and jumped.

Then the American general called to one of his soldiers and ordered him to jump. The soldier saluted—and asked, "Why?"

In a totalitarian nation the individual "identifies himself with his leader, yields up his own responsibility, his own conscience, and a large part of his intelligence. An almost trance-like state results which must be sustained by the trappings, the myths, the hocus-pocus appropriate to hypnotism."<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, political leaders are not venerated, although many of them are respected. The President is a frequent scapegoat. His policies are attacked and he is often criticized on a very personal level. "That man in the White House" is a popular exclamation. In the first year after Pearl Harbor Congressmen were frankly worried about public criticisms of their activities. The *Congressional Record* is filled with speeches about "those who are concertedly endeavoring to undermine the people's faith in representative government." The Dies

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon W. Allport, "Liabilities and Assets in Civilian Morale," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, July, 1941.



Committee issued a report on the matter, blaming it as usual on Communists. And, as usual, it was not the Communists but Joe Doakes, citizen, who was being heard from. Doakes is a problem, because he is neither docile nor inarticulate.

In wartime, this is both an asset and a liability. It is an asset because it represents a strength of national character, and ultimately makes for efficient teamwork. It is a debit to the extent that it aggravates points of friction and division, and gives us few standard symbols to hang onto in time of emergency. The independence of Doakes has made us a people of destructive critics. We are *agin* things more than we are *fer 'em*, as the pattern of our elections demonstrates. "In the process of becoming self-reliant, Americans have lost respect, docility and trust in relations to their leaders. Our habit of unbridled criticism, though defended as a basic right, brings only a scant sense of security to ourselves in an emergency and actively benefits the enemies of the nation."<sup>2</sup>

To the propagandist in wartime these are serious matters, for they aid and hamstring him simultaneously. He must perpetually operate in the field of nice decisions, and usually depends heavily upon his sense of hunch. He has no coercive instruments with which to elicit concerted action from the people. No SS men follow through for him. His auditors are at one and the same time recalcitrant and cooperative. They are cooperative in their desire for his direction and inspiration; but they are recalcitrant because they suspect all propaganda, even though they respect its power.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Where hunch operates, the technician becomes somewhat more important than the strategist. While the strategist deals with the over-all task of determining what shall be told the people, it is the technician who decides how this shall be packaged. And the people's suspicion of propaganda is first directed at how things are told them. They are quick to resent spoon-feeding techniques or obvious manipulation. No matter how soundly conceived may be the policy or strategy, it can fail if the technician is insufficiently skillful. His aim, therefore, is to put over the strategy without revealing his tactics.

In radio, these difficulties are multiplied, for several reasons. The listeners to any one broadcast may run into the millions, whereas the readers of any one newspaper issue run only into the thousands. As was pointed out in the previous chapter, a broadcast must also succeed the first time. Second, because radio's impact on listeners is an emotional one, its manipulations are likely to be more obvious than those of other media. Third, there are no criteria wherewith to judge the effect of a broadcast until after it is aired. Movie producers can sample reactions by a few sneak previews before small audiences, and newspapers can, if necessary, issue a new edition to narrow the audience of a propaganda faux pas.

The specific problems of radio in terms of the components of morale deserve detailed attention.

1. *A good morale in a democracy requires that public opinion be informed.*<sup>3</sup> This means more than keeping

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<sup>3</sup> These components of morale were formulated by the Office of Public Opinion Research, and were treated at length by Hadley Cantril, "Public Opinion in Flux," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1942.

pace with the headlines; it means understanding fully the issues and principles at stake in the war. Radio's news machinery is well-gearred to cover current events. It has the advantage of instantaneous communication. Within minutes after Washington or London releases a communiqué, it is being aired to the nation. But radio is not adept at clarifying or interpreting news. The principal devices for clarification are commentators and forum or discussion programs. Many radio commentators are men of doubtful competence, and those whose broadcasts are sponsored are under the pressure of winning larger audiences, which frequently conditions the tone and emphasis they adopt. Virtually all of them endeavor to be topical and timely, and therefore have little time to digest the news, think carefully about it or do adequate research and background work. Discussion and forum programs often lack the money and personnel necessary to supply participants with preparatory materials. Participants are usually chosen because they have differences of opinion or recognized names rather than because they have special knowledge. Most of them, like the commentators, place a premium upon timeliness, and with similar results. The general effect is to emphasize debate and controversy in order to solicit audience attention, and they succeed all too frequently in creating disrespect for talk and inquiry, a dangerous service to render democracy in time of war.<sup>4</sup> Democracy is predicated upon faith in the judgment of the common man, and operates upon the assumption that if he has the facts he will be of informed opinion

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<sup>4</sup> News and commentators are discussed more fully in Chapter 5, discussion and forum programs in Chapter 6.

and capable of reaching a sound judgment. This is the basis for the Strategy of Truth. But it does not square with the real situation, for people are subject not only to facts but to opinions and pressure groups. Facts and news are used to implement opinions in any immediate situation; they seldom change opinions except cumulatively over a period of time. Doubts and confusion exist in the public mind when people do not know what to do with the facts and news they have. They are then receptive to emotional arguments and appeals. The Nazis, in their drive to gain and hold power, skillfully exploited this habit of the mass mind. A democracy does not change the condition by paying literary tributes to "the social judgments of the common man." It can influence the condition to its advantage only by presuming to lead opinion.

The challenge exists for radio to clarify and inform Americans on the objectives of the war—the positive objectives of maintaining and building democracy at home, establishing the basis for a solid peace and world order, and comprehension of the rights and obligations of freedom, no less than the negative objectives of defeating the enemy and crushing tyranny.

2. *Morale depends upon the extent to which the people agree on objectives.* Objectives can be defined only on the basis of information and an understanding of events and issues. An uninformed or confused people cannot readily agree on objectives; hence, communication is the thread which gives integration to opinion. Objectives in wartime are usually enunciated first by responsible leaders, or appear clearly from dynamic or sudden

events. Pearl Harbor was an event which established the defeat of the Axis as an immediate objective. Aid to Britain, on the other hand, was a pre-war objective which the country supported under the leadership of the President. An embargo on the sale of war materials to Japan was favored by the public more than a year before Pearl Harbor, as the result of the constant efforts of opinion-making groups and individuals in the nation.

However, there are other war objectives upon which public agreement is necessary, but upon which there is little understanding. These are stated in the six points of the O. W. I. on page 66, and reveal that there is greater agreement on negative than positive objectives. This is another manifestation of the American propensity to be *agin* rather than *fer*.

One of the major morale tasks, consequently, is to inform and to clarify opinion on positive objectives. This cannot be done exclusively on the basis of news and facts, but requires the furbishing of ideals and a comprehension of basic and fundamental war issues. To render service here, radio, as earlier chapters have indicated, must set up a board of strategy dedicated to tough thinking and supplying the resources with which its technicians can handle these issues and principles adequately.

3. *Morale depends upon the faith men have that their objectives can be obtained, and on their determination to achieve the objectives at whatever cost is necessary.* There seems little doubt that the American people are confident of ultimate victory and seem more than willing to pay whatever cost is necessary to achieve victory; hence, in this regard their morale may be considered good. But



this attitude must be solidly founded; and the responsibility to serve effectively on all morale fronts increases for radio and all media. The high morale of the American people must be implemented and supported. The job is a continuing one, and cannot succeed if only sporadic or uncoordinated efforts are made.

Cantril adds that the "morale of both citizen and soldier is determined more by his confidence in ultimate victory than by his belief in the righteousness of his cause." There are two ways by which communications can strengthen this kind of belief. One is on the level of a cheer-leader, and the second is on the level of information. Radio is providing factual information to the extent censorship will permit, and is doing a good job in informing the public of the tremendous enterprise in which it is engaged by programs of the type of *The Army Hour*.<sup>5</sup>

But creatively, in its specially written and produced dramatic "morale" broadcasts, radio generally is too exhortative, making a loud noise about victory but offering unconvincing evidence. Of course, all broadcasts properly assume a United Nations victory. But a "beat the drum, boys, and light another flare" treatment is probably not most effective. We have only to look to Europe for proof. American correspondents who were interned in Italy and Germany when war came, upon returning home reported that enemy morale on some levels is extremely low because the constant assumption of victory by the radio and other media backfired on the people with news of re-

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<sup>5</sup> This program describes our fighting forces.

verses in Russia, the R. A. F. bombings of Germany and the entry of the United States into the war.

4. *It is important that the citizen have a realistic picture of the job ahead to attain objectives.* Cantril on this point supports the third principle by adding: "Methods of indirection and sugar-coating are grim reminders of a former war and are recognized today as methods of totalitarian states."

In other words, the people must receive more than exhortations to victory and more than facts about progress toward victory. They must receive frank clarification and perspective; in short, they must be prepared for reverses. Efforts must be made to forestall public shock. Americans have never lost a war. Transient military reverses, consequently, may tend to be exaggerated and magnified; whether magnified or not, they ripple down the whole structure of all the factors contributing to morale and undermine them. Confidence in victory, in leadership, in procedures, is shaken. Timid souls may begin to wonder whether the sacrifices are worth it. The X per cent of divisionists and pro-Axis sympathizers are encouraged; their propaganda is strengthened.<sup>6</sup>

The fall of Tobruk in June, 1942, was a greater shock than Singapore. The people had not been prepared for this defeat; they had been somewhat prepared for Singapore. The fault here rested squarely on the British government censorship, which restricted information on the true situation. But there are areas where the failure of media to analyze, clarify and interpret known facts and

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<sup>6</sup> Gordon Allport, *op. cit.*, estimates that to 10 to 15 per cent of our population, the superficial solutions of totalitarianism have an appeal.

make sound prognostications may affect public morale as adversely as misguided censorship. It is in this area that radio faces a challenge.

Because people are optimistic it does not necessarily follow that they are complacent. But complacency is rooted in optimism, and may be nurtured by it. One of radio's services, if it properly clarifies the issues of the war, will be in earmarking the areas of legitimate from the areas of unfounded optimism. This means that any board of strategy should have at its disposal all possible facts about the war effort—military, production, morale—to aid it in determining how shots can be most effectively aimed and fired.

5. *Morale depends upon confidence in leadership.* In war, people may agree upon objectives without having the capacity or opportunity to decide how those objectives may best be achieved. As a result, there is great reliance on leadership.

Leadership cannot be sold across the counter. The right to lead must ultimately be earned by the individual himself. People judge their leaders by many criteria; the most important, however, is how well they deliver. An informed public is better able to determine the merit of its leaders than an uninformed public, because it knows what to expect from its leaders.

Confidence in leadership is not greatly furthered by publicity-agent methods. The perpetual extolling of eminent public men as heroes and mortal gods does not seem a wise propaganda policy. Competent leadership deserves respect but not worship. The power of the press and radio to elevate personalities above the people's level

is well known. In war, the pressures to create heroic leaders are often irresistible to circulation-minded editors and Crossley-minded broadcasters. In the early stages, before his hour of decision is struck, any public figure who receives expressions of public confidence because of radio and other publicity-agent methods seems to symbolize a good morale. But a symbol means little if what it represents is devoid of worth or merit. It is not enough in war to have symbol leaders; it is imperative to have competent leaders, and the people must know and understand why those leaders are competent and really believe that they *are* competent.

Radio is the perfect medium to introduce the leaders of the country to its people. While radio is used by the President, Donald Nelson and others, it is not used with sufficient frequency or acumen. A major service radio could render the nation would be to persuade the nation's principal leaders to report to the country at regular intervals, simultaneously over all networks and available independent stations. For example, the President might speak every month; Donald Nelson every fortnight; the Secretary of Navy and War, once every week; the Secretary of State once monthly or every six weeks; most important of all, Elmer Davis, director of the Office of War Information, twice weekly, officially clarifying current news and its significance.

By this procedure of opening its microphones to key leadership, radio would contribute effectively to the building of morale. It could then cease broadcasting maudlin dramatizations about leaders; its commentators and forum programs would discuss what the leaders said and the



ideas they advanced, rather than eulogies and bar-room gossip about their work and their plans.

It may be well to note at this point that leaders are in a different category from soldiers and civilians. Radio is generally doing a good job in its presentation of individuals, in and out of uniform, who have performed dangerous or heroic tasks. It is doing a good job more because of circumstance than of policy. Heroes are scarce at the outset of a war but increase in number as time goes on. They are given recognition because of jobs done. The jobs take precedence over personalities. In the process of extolling the person, radio inevitably must discuss the job. This emphasis on accomplishment is important as is the de-emphasis on personalities.

6. *Morale depends also on the extent to which people feel their allies in distant lands are carrying on, too.* The first requisite, of course, is complete information about one's allies. Radio is doing a noteworthy job of spot news coverage, which would be even better if local censors used their sense more and scissors less. But as has been said before, news is not enough. The refrain, "clarification and interpretation," is struck up once more.

We know that the American people are the targets of doubts and fears about their allies, doubts and fears which are spread and fed by divisionists and defeatists—and by misguided patriots. Anti-British sentiments are strongly entrenched in many parts of the country, communism is distrusted and feared, and unless carefully handled may carry over into suspicion of our Russian allies. Max Lerner has pointed out that "a recent publication of the Office of Facts and Figures shows clearly how closely the



divisionists and defeatists have been following the propaganda line of the Axis. They spread distrust of our great allies, Britain and Russia. They say that even if we should win the war, we shall have to fight Russia afterwards. They speak of the bleakness of the post-war prospects. They talk of how inevitably we must, by fighting a war against fascism, become fascist ourselves, and how the President and the Administration represent threats of a dictatorship. These people can only be called conditional Americans.”<sup>7</sup>

Radio’s attempts to clarify opinion on Russia have been on two principal levels—one, the dramatization of the battles of the Red Army and, particularly, of the guerrilla tactics of the peasants; and two, statements by commentators that since communism has never really been attained in Russia it is not to be feared. Gabriel Heatter, on his broadcast of June 26, 1942, to demonstrate that, even though we are allies of Russia, we’re not disposed to communism, quoted a *Fortune* survey revealing that Americans didn’t favor public ownership of railroads or banks. That kind of discussion nurtures the fears that Russia is a threat to our way of life, and thereby undermines faith in our ally. Since no one had ever seriously advanced the idea that the United States was becoming communistic, Mr. Heatter’s straw man was something of a surprise.<sup>8</sup>

The anti-British sentiments in America are, ironically, fed largely by the British themselves and in many ways

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<sup>7</sup> “What Can Be Done Now to Improve War Morale?” *Wake Up, America* forum, Blue Network, May 24, 1942.

<sup>8</sup> For a further discussion of Russia, see Chapter 8.

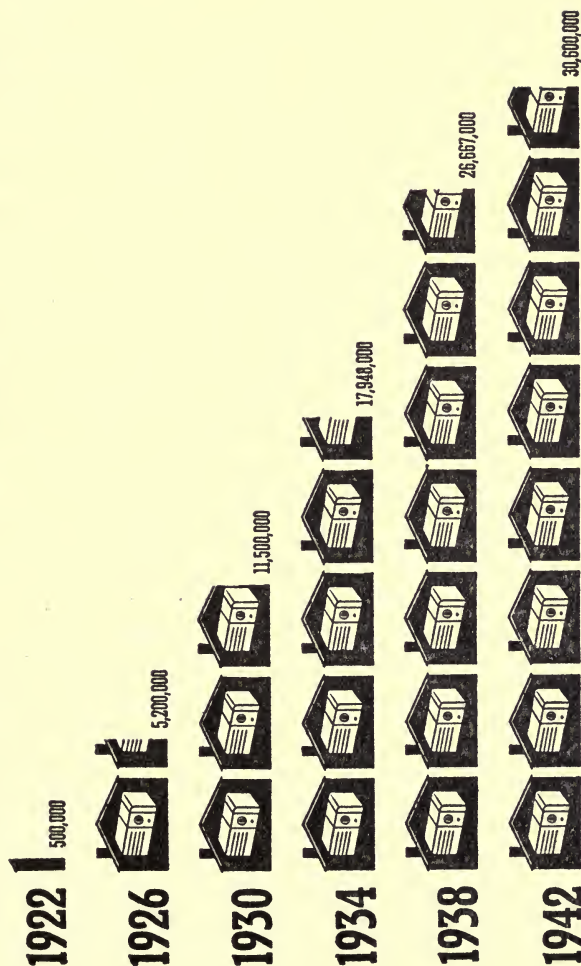
are more difficult to dispel than fear of Russia. The defeats in Malaya, Europe and the Near East created doubts about British military leadership. The India question worries many American liberals. Canada's reluctance to enact conscription did not help British public relations. Debates over Lease-Lend which spotlighted the fact that Britain could not produce enough in the long run to match the Axis, excited some to say that the United States was underwriting a losing venture.

Radio had, and has, a unique opportunity to clarify the facts. Few Americans, six months after Pearl Harbor, knew that there are fewer than two hundred people in Britain today who, after taxes, have \$10,000 a year to spend; that the British equivalent of fifteen million American women are serving either in the armed forces or war industries; that 80 per cent of Britain's wartime output is being shipped abroad, and that, as of mid-June, 1942, every second tank made in Britain was being sent to Russia. A great deal more of this kind of information should get on the air.

In one way, radio has helped to build confidence in the British. Our network correspondents in London have succeeded in making that city and its people familiar to Americans. We have respect and admiration for the courage of the average Englishman. We know that England is on our side, that the English are, thanks to radio, our neighbors and friends.

*7. Morale depends upon the extent to which the country is unified for a common effort, and the extent to which the individual feels himself a functioning part of that effort.* In total war, every citizen has a role to per-

# 9 OUT OF 10 U. S. HOMES HAVE RADIOS



EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS 4 MILLION RADIO HOMES

—National Broadcasting Company

form. Millions of our people are performing vital roles without realizing it. One of the principal needs of the country, therefore, is a technique for telling these frustrated citizens that what they are doing is important and that there are ways to make it more important.

At the outset of any modern war, propaganda concentrates its efforts on the man behind the gun and the man behind the man behind the gun. That is, only the soldier or the defense worker is singled out for attention and praise. The purpose, of course, is to increase quickly the ranks of two essential groups; but in the process, the great majority of citizens, whose participation in the war effort is less direct, feel themselves to be out in the cold. As time goes on, unless special attention is paid to these groups, the morale of the entire nation will be affected. There are two things which must be made clear to this "outsider"—one is that his job is not the only test of his value to the nation, because his free-time defense activities are important, too; the other is that, doing his job, even if it is not a defense job, forestalls emotional and economic disruptions.

Here radio can speak to the average citizen only in general terms. It cannot tell each individual what to do, or how to do better what he is doing now. Advice or education on participation, unlike clarification on issues and principles, cannot apply with equal effect to all listeners. Hence, radio's best service can be in three areas, no one of which, if treated alone or even sporadically without the others, will be sufficient. (1) Announce specific tasks which all can conceivably perform at any given time—"Salvage rubber," "Buy bonds," "Save waste paper

and fats." This is the spot announcement function. But spot announcements are not enough. (2) Encourage the individual to seek out war effort participation on his own responsibility. This requires that the public be told about nation-wide organizations like the Office of Civilian Defense, the YMCA and YWCA, the Red Cross, USO, etc., and about the need for many special civilian services. A network "recognition" series, broadcasting reports of civilian war accomplishments, would help. But even recognition and general information are not enough. (3) Local stations should broadcast about people in their community. The more participation can be brought home to the people, the better. Opportunities and suggestions translated into local communities are more easily understood. An example of this kind of service is that broadcast over WMT and KENT, Iowa, titled *Listen, Iowa's Own Newspaper of the Air*, which tells stories of what Iowans are doing for the war.

*How to air what directives* is a number-one headache for radio. Listeners are eager to be told what to do—but they resent general exhortations to "Do something!"<sup>9</sup> Part of radio's dilemma arises from its failure to recognize certain facts about its audience: the largest listening group is composed of persons in the lower economic and cultural levels. The "mass" base of radio is very wide. "For each sex and age group the people without college education listen more than those with college training."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a critical discussion of the techniques of directives, see Chapter 8.

<sup>10</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and The Printed Page*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce.



More than thirty million American adults are not educated beyond the fifth grade. And, economically, more than a tenth of our population have incomes of about \$25 a month. The majority of those who listen to the radio have incomes below \$1500 a year.

Yet a year after the war, the majority of network war dramatizations were being packaged on a "highbrow" level. The most striking example was *This Is War!*<sup>11</sup> The commentators, who are in an excellent position theoretically to advise listeners, appeal almost exclusively to the upper income group and to educated listeners, as do most forum programs. Variety programs, which reach the largest audiences, generally limit their directives to spot announcements and exhortations. The best job of incorporating directives into the body of programs, and illustrating to listeners what they can do, has been done by the daytime serials. The motherly souls are busy saving fats and waste, the heroines are active in the Red Cross, the problem child's character is being reformed by his salvage activities. The tragedy is that on other counts the daytime serials are generally not socially commendable, and what they contribute on one hand they partially undermine on the other.

So much then, for the seven yardsticks of good morale and what radio can do about them. Let us now measure our morale liabilities and assets against those yardsticks.

*Liabilities.* We have referred previously to our habit of destructive criticism, how it deprives us of a sense of security in crises and of a sense of respect for our leaders. Other liabilities are these: (1) We are a heterogeneous

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<sup>11</sup> Chapter 8.

population. We have forty million immigrants or first-generation Americans living frequently in isolated groups. (2) We have just come through a depression, and during the last twenty years most of us have, at some time or other, questioned the ability of democracy to solve its economic problems—an attitude which was absent in 1917. (3) We take our basic liberties for granted. We know we would have no liberties if the Axis won, but we can't really conceive of defeat. (4) We are a nation of factions. The Nazis know this, and Hitler is reported to have said that his Divide and Rule methods would be most successful in America. Labor-baiting, antisemitism, political cleavages, are examples of this. (5) Most important of all from the propagandist's point of view is what Allport calls the "cynicism of the deadly parallel." What are we fighting for? That it is to make the world safe for democracy is more true today than it was in 1917. But can we use this slogan? Certainly not. We are, as Allport says, "still smarting with humiliation at our failure to attain the goals we fought for a short generation ago. . . . Memory is a millstone weighing down impulses of indignation, of self-sacrifice, of patriotism. It is an irony of fate that those slogans most appropriate to the present need were used in 1917-18 and cannot possibly be employed again."

*Assets.* (1) We have a capacity for realistic judgment, aided by a free press and radio, and honed by depression, disillusionment and criticism. We respect facts and are learning how to clarify issues and doubts with them. (2) We have a national habit of intense cooperation, once we achieve some measure of agreement on objectives. (3) We

have a profound hatred of tyranny and persecution. This is one of our greatest assets, rooted in tradition. (4) Americans have a sense of humor. "This subtle asset," says Allport, is valuable for two reasons—"humor accompanies self-insight and, like it, makes for a sense of proportion having a marked sanifying effect. Second, humor pricks what is pompous, reducing it to dust. A sense of humor is necessary to the attainment of a maturely integrated personality wherein knowledge, values and a sense of proportion are well blended." (5) Americans are an inventive people. They have mastered mass production and have great confidence in the skills of their industrialists and scientists. Further, Americans boil over with ideas and "angles." They are fixers and doers. (6) All this adds up to the fact that American morale has enormous potential strength. In many ways, because it draws upon a citizen's whole personality and upon many facets of our group life, democratic morale is more total than totalitarian morale. Public opinion polls reveal that a unity of national purpose is emerging. Hundreds of voluntary war-effort groups have sprung up. They represent democracy in action. The potential is beginning to find outlets.

Thus the American people are elusive as the target of propagandists. They have a morale of great potential; the propagandist's job is to help them realize their potential more speedily than they probably would without his help. Whatever strategy may be determined upon for the technician to follow, it cannot ignore the fact that much of its effectiveness will depend on how that policy is packaged.

What may the radio strategist, and more important, the technician, define as rule-book standards for communication to the people? Consider these:

DON'T simply appeal to our heritage of liberty and self-reliance. To forty million Americans this heritage is still in the school books (which they haven't read).

DO, on the other hand, establish the challenge and the promise and the power of the future. Tomorrow must be anticipated with hope rather than apprehension, if today's morale is to be high.

DON'T sugar-coat the crucial events and issues of the war. Avoid a "policy of optimism." It is destructive of morale to mis-emphasize, or deliberately avoid recognition of, the basic issues. Dorothy Thompson says that "only those amongst us possessed of the intuition of superb imagination understand [them]."

DO manifest imagination, knowledge and pugnacity in treating events and issues. This means not only the airing of facts and data, but the placing of facts and data in the perspective of history, and the forces of our times. The American people have a capacity for realistic judgment—help them to exercise that capacity.

DON'T, in the process, exaggerate successes or play down defeats. Not only will this create distrust of your medium, but it paves the way for public disillusionment when reverses occur. To learn suddenly that you have been fooled allows the debris of a shattered complacency to create a mountain of frustration.

DO give the facts and the most frank and realistic appraisal of them. To do this, radio must establish high



standards of competence and experience for the commentators who face its microphones, and make data, analyses and directives on the background and meaning of events and issues available to all technicians.

DON'T exhort listeners to "Do something!" Avoid the moral flagellation technique.

DO tell listeners *what* to do, *where* to go, *how* to make war-effort contacts. Be as specific as possible in directives; establish guide-posts to action. Otherwise frustration results, and the morale of millions suffers.

DON'T overemphasize self-reliance. Although broadcasts establish a close rapport with the listener, there is danger that individuals will respond by undertaking war activities which they can do alone. Such activities, while important, do not maximize group participation and so may peter out after a while.

DO emphasize the need for group enterprises, which accomplish bigger things than the mere saving of string or fats. In peacetime, individual enterprise and initiative is socially commendable, but in war the individual serves best who is a part of a larger organism. Discipline and a sense of mutual responsibility are civilian morale assets and should be encouraged.

DON'T assure listeners that doing their jobs well is enough. While in total war each has a place, and the maintenance of normal activity has its important value, concerted action cannot be elicited by giving social status to those who do just enough or simply do what they enjoy doing most.

DO strike the note that in war each should do what



he can do best, not what he likes to do best. Victory is achieved by full utilization of skills and talents.

DON'T Hollywoodize leaders by making all of them heroes or supermen. Emphasis on a man's personality, while dramatic and replete with human interest, tends somewhat to nurture a *Feuhrer-Prinzip* attitude. Glorification of individuals probably contributes little to public morale, and may even be destructive of it by widening the breach between the common man and his leaders.

DO recognize and applaud the acts of leadership. Accomplishment is the supreme test of leadership. Morale is built when the people respect and trust their leaders for what they do, not for what they say or wear or because they "came up from the grass roots."

DON'T concentrate exclusively on negative objectives. A steady diet of broadcasts against the enemy, against tyranny, against defeat, is bad preparation for the fuller responsibilities which will face the nation when the war ends.

DO pay due regard to positive objectives. Herein lies one of the major opportunities—and responsibilities—of radio. Morale is bettered when people fight *for* something as well as *against* something. The peace, war aims, problems of post-war reconstruction, the challenge of world order, the Four Freedoms, the opportunity for democracy to flourish and spread—these are a few potent objectives. As William Paley, president of CBS, has said, "Radio has a job to do in preparing the world for peace."

DON'T treat of the enemy only in a hysterical or bitter fashion.<sup>12</sup> A propaganda based on this technique is naive,

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapters 8 and 9 for detailed discussions of the enemy on the air.

and will not prove effective. The listener is usually sophisticated enough to resent excessive emotionalization. His morale is not improved if what he hears about the enemy is presented in a way that seems not to respect his own ability for discrimination and analysis.

DO be more free in the use of satire and humor in broadcasts about the enemy. As Allport says, "especially vulnerable to humor are the pomposities of the racial myth, the joylessness of *Kraft durch Freude*, the excessiveness of *Ordentlichkeit*, Nazi travesties on science, and the contradictions of Hitler's speeches."

DON'T become personal about enemy leaders, or paint them always as satanic and brutal. This technique has all the weaknesses of the "don't" above, and misdirects antagonism against persons instead of the ideas, forces and philosophies of the enemy. The CBS series on *The Nature of The Enemy* was an example of what *not* to do—the program on Yamamoto, to illustrate, referred to him variously in terms of "his own bloody deed," a "kind of slippery beast," "this man's stench is not a pretty one," "wrinkled and beady eyes," "he is no bandy-toothed raper of women." The need is to take advantage of American hatred of persecution and tyranny and decry this policy of Axis governments.

DO clarify the nature and meaning of fascism as a social, political and economic force. This is an area in which great public education is needed. It is not Hitler or Yamamoto or any of a dozen other *individuals* who are our real enemies; our real enemy is fascism and we ought to know what it is.

DON'T evade recognition of the divisionist forces at work in the United States simply because divisionists buy toothpaste, too. The Hitler tactic of Divide and Rule cannot get far if our people understand fully the implications of antisemitism, labor-baiting, Negro persecution, and smears against the Administration and the armed forces.

DO expose and explain the dangers of divisionism. Analyze the forces which bring about division; show how they can be checked; inspire the spirit of militant democracy at home.

DON'T use the devices, manipulations and slogans of the last war. William Ernest Hocking says that the morales of the first war were "morales of emotions, epithets, slogans, songs, none of which are much in evidence today. . . . [But] the men who today are called to face war are not for the most part the same generation that fought in the last war, but they have absorbed that earlier generation's reflection. . . . Epithets leave us not alone cold, but suspicious of their user. Oratory hangs heavy in our ears . . . [for] we have intelligence and we have consciences." <sup>13</sup>

DO interpret the democratic stake in victory. Whereas propagandists in the last war succeeded in eliciting concerted action with naive slogans and devices, today we must give substance and meaning to issues. We ask "Why?" We take our liberties for granted. We demand explanation and evidence for the position that they are truly endangered from without and within.

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<sup>13</sup> William Ernest Hocking, "The Nature of Morale," *American Journal of Sociology*, November, 1941.

DON'T limit discussion of our allies to emphasizing the fact that they're fighting the same enemies and that their fight is heroic. These techniques have a limited use. They may inspire us, and encourage respect for the courage of our allies but they do not eliminate the doubts and questions which many people have.

DO answer, sincerely and frankly, these doubts and questions. Bring them out into the open. There are valid answers. Give them. Point up the positive elements of our union with our allies.

## COMMENTARY

*By Max Lerner*

Professor of Government, Williams College

May I begin with a confession which may, at the very start, make the reader doubt my fitness to comment on a chapter on morale? I find the entire concentration upon morale a bit unhealthy, a symptom of diseases in the body politic reaching farther than the cluster of attitudes and loyalties which we call "morale." There is something a little hypochondriac in our preoccupation with our own patriotic temperature. A healthy political organism fights because it must fight to survive, and because it has something to survive for. To the extent that the political organism is unhealthy, it walks about in an atrabilious haze, feeling its political pulse at frequent intervals and asking itself whether it has values and how deeply it believes them.

The view I present is not a pleasant one, and it may not even be a true one. But I think it is truer than the ponti-

fications of the morale doctors. Mr. Dryer has as little of these doctors in his make-up as a man can humanly have and still be professionally concerned with the relations of the radio to public opinion. I like his hard-headedness in this chapter; I like his economy of words; I like his swift, staccato manner in summarizing the components of a healthy morale and drawing a trial balance of American liabilities and assets. His closing list of "do's" and "don't's" is as good a *vade mecum* for the radio practitioner who wants a rule-of-thumb guide as any I have seen.

Yet behind the rule-of-thumb must be a set of principles, behind the guide book an ethic and a social theory. Even behind the generalizations about the nature of morale with which American social psychology has furnished us and which Mr. Dryer admirably summarizes, there must be a conception both of the nature of the good state and the nature of the political animal in it. If I am troubled by this chapter, it is because I do not find in it any such clear conception; and, in an implied way, I find parts of a profusion of them.

I should have liked Mr. Dryer to say more clearly than he does that the quality of a nation's morale in wartime is the residual product of its whole history—of its achievements and frustrations, of its imaginative fervor and of the burning sense of injustice and inequality which that history has projected. I should have liked him to say that morale is in its simplest term the health and strength of the national will, and that the national will in turn depends upon the healthy functioning of the basic institutions of the society, and the creative strength of its leadership. I should have liked him to say that any nation which carries within its heart the split between the impulse toward equality and the habit of acquisitiveness, the impulse toward justice and the habit of discrimination, the impulse toward democracy and the habit



of capitalism, will show a similar split when it confronts the crisis of its existence. I should have liked him to say that a nation which has so far forgotten its own revolutionary tradition that it cannot wage a revolutionary war in a revolutionary age may not have what it takes to survive such a war and such an age. I should have liked him, finally, to say that the political animal is so far more than an animal that he has in him a sense of heroism and a hunger for greatness; that sharp crisis will evoke both unless the restraints against them are too deep-rooted and ingrown; and that the sufficient task of the morale-creators in a crisis is by the contagion of their words and acts to create a national will which is a unity not because of rhetorical flagellations but because the obstacles that lie in the path of men's collectivity have been largely removed.

What I like least of all in this chapter is its title, "The Target." It is, we are told, the people who are the target of propaganda. The technician, we are again told, must understand the people because if he understands the target he can act so as to get the desired response.

I don't like this whole idea of the people as the target of the radio propaganda mechanism. It implies the attitude of a manipulator. I know that the radio technician takes a sort of cold-blooded and hard-headed pride in stripping himself of all sentimentality about his radio audiences as a target. But one can be hard-headed and still be wrong, just as one can be a humanist without being a sentimentalist.

The technician-audience relationship is not one- but two-sided. However, technicians by and large seldom understand this. It is the product of the habit we have formed of seeing all mass communication as a form of propaganda. I deny that all mass communication is propaganda. I assert that while the opinion industries of today are actually largely propa-

ganda agencies, they need not be so. One of Mr. Dryer's injunctions is that the radio technician should shoot the truth at his target even if it hurts. Presumably, the reason one should shoot the truth and not a lie is that the target will feel better—that is, have sounder morale—if the truth is shot at it. This implies, of course, that the truth should be directed at the target not for the basic health of the body politic but for reasons of subjective attitude—not because the truth is actually better than a lie but because in the long run it will work better.

This evades also the question of how the technician discovers the truth. Since much of what passes over the radio is in the nature of opinion rather than indisputable fact, the best the technician, as a technician, can do is to allow for a competition of opinions on the radio. It must not, however, be an unrestricted one. It must be kept within the boundaries of what is healthy and not poisonous for the body politic—that is, within the boundaries of political tolerance. To set these boundaries is the province not of radio companies nor radio broadcasters, but of the state. Within those boundaries I submit that neither the radio technicians nor the state has thus far discovered any better method than the honest competition of opinions. And in this competition the state should flinch as little as anyone from putting the force of conviction behind its doctrines.

This leads us to a puzzling question. Why is it that the idea of mass communication as propaganda has spread so swiftly among the technicians of American public opinion? It gives most of them, of course, the feeling of tough-mindedness. Yet I should like to suggest that behind the tough-mindedness is a form of naïveté. It was the Americans who first developed the lie in mass communication on a large scale (advertising) although without seeing its implications. It was

the Europeans who took it up from there and developed the lie for political purposes. And the Americans have now in turn discovered the nature of the political lie, or the political myth, and are enthralled with it. Our enthrallment is partly the effect of novelty upon ignorance; only our ignorance here was originally a self-cultivated naïveté. We first developed the lie in large-scale advertising of unwanted commodities. Thus we pursued the arts of the lie for profit, and since everything depended upon having the lie unknown to the prospective recipients of the products, and known only, as in Plato, to the ruling élite, we never clearly understood the social danger of the lie in mass communication. When that understanding finally came, it swept over us like a prairie fire.

Another reason we are enthralled with the idea of mass communication as propaganda is that we have never learned to place any real limits upon mass communication. Our naïve conception of freedom of the press as all-sufficient, and of the political animal as wholly rational, and of coercion as exclusively governmental and physical rather than social, has led us to attempt the practice of *laissez faire* in the opinion industries. The results upon public opinion have been to develop a cynicism on the part of the manipulators and a resistance on the part of the audience. It has all been a sort of game in which the manipulator studies his target and seeks to break down its resistances, and the audience—bewildered by what is true and what is false—creeps finally into the shell of considering everything equally as propaganda.

That this has been true of the radio more than the other mass communication industries needs very little underlining. Print, as a commodity, has lost its quality of novelty, and with it much of its force. Film, as a commodity, has not yet moved into the realm of opinion but is still content to operate among

the conventions of living. But the human voice over the radio has both the white magic of seductiveness and the black magic of hidden dangers. As a result, the game of technician and audience is intensified.

Nor have we helped matters by the way we have treated the radio. We have not dared to strip it of its character of private property, nor to make it explicitly a subject for public control. Neither, on the other hand, have we dared leave it wholly without control. Hence we have resorted to something which is neither control nor yet lack of control, leaving the relationship of the radio to the state a wholly ambiguous one. As a consequence, no one knows in whom responsibility and authority lie, and because no one dares take responsibility, there is no one to put behind the power of the radio the full force of moral and intellectual conviction. Big business actually controls the radio, yet it does not dare use it openly as an instrument of control, lest the Damocles' sword of the F. C. C. should fall upon it. The F. C. C. has legal power vested in it, but dares not use it and be accused of dislodging private property and making propaganda. Labor has neither any control over the radio nor any confidence in it. The middle class, both rural and urban, and the housewife and the youngsters have the uneasy sense that if they move out of the area of soap operas and dance music and quiz programs, they will be lost on uncharted seas. And so they stay in the snug harbor of cultural standardization on the lowest levels.

To sum up, these seem to me to be the basic and social and psychological components of what is known as the problem of morale. First, there can be no healthy morale unless the social organism is itself healthy and unified and is not split by schizophrenic contradictions. To adopt a phrase of Randolph Bourne's, morale is the health of the state. Second,



there can be no healthy morale unless the potentials of the human being toward heroism and greatness are given release. That means, thirdly, that we will not have a healthy morale so long as we regard the radio audience as a target and the technicians as manipulators. And it means, fourthly, that we must somehow break the dilemma we have got into, of fearing equally to place administrative controls on mass communication and fearing also the communication which is thus left uncontrolled. This dilemma can be broken, fifthly, only by a people which knows, by reshaping for the future the traditions of the past, what the good and true values in life are. Sixthly, this implies reliance on the state as the great educational agency with respect to the radio as with respect to other educational media. This implies also a leadership, both political and intellectual, which has the imaginative daring to reach for the good life, the scope to encompass it amidst all the complexities of our society, and the honesty and directness to communicate it to the people.

There are no special problems of war morale. The political animal at war is like the political animal in peace, only he functions on a tenser and more heightened level. The only thing special about war in this regard is that it makes the false conceptions of politics and opinion more dangerous, and by its imperative thrusts toward survival it tends to clear away much of the institutional deadwood that lies in the path of the future.



*The problems of radio in wartime fall into two areas—(1) general principles, with which we have dealt thus far; (2) the application of these principles. The chapters in Part One and the commentaries which accompany them present no irreconcilable differences of opinion on general principles.*

*Mr. Lerner, in leveling his sights at the rationale of propaganda, concludes with great good sense that there are no special problems of war morale. In the abstract, few will disagree with him. However, we must recognize that the purely pragmatic problem of winning the war is paramount to even the finest abstraction. Within that frame of reference, propaganda ceases to be a subject for moralizing and becomes instead a highly malleable tool capable of being employed against the enemy and what he represents. It is in this sense that those who work with radio must regard their medium. To them, radio in a war setting is reduced to a technique of generating ideas, casting them into programs, and airing them as artfully as possible. One cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that radio lives in a workaday world—and it is this fact alone which excuses the essentially pragmatic approach of this volume.*

*Students of the problem will perceive the same difference of degree, rather than kind, in Mr. Lasswell's anxiety to free radio from the chains of literalness. The difference is, in fact, one of emphasis rather than opinion. Mr. Lass-*

well, by insisting that literalness is not essential in communicating truth, is merely reinforcing the contention that, since a radio program cannot tell the whole truth, its function in the realm of propaganda is to select the elements which will best serve the wartime interests of the nation. There is a fine shade of distinction here—essentially one of language. Like Mr. Lerner, who regards truth as necessary to “the basic health of the body politic,” Mr. Lasswell favors truth with Yankee horse-trader logic—because it works better. Most Americans like the same species of logic—but when we are honest with ourselves we also accept the corollary that our efforts must be made to work within the confines of a particular environment. In the radio technician’s environment, truth, like many other creative elements, is a device; and the degree to which it is not literal must necessarily be a matter of creative judgment.

Mr. Landry and Mr. Bernays—both of whom appraise radio from relatively more mundane observation posts within the perimeter—reflect a concern for essentially practical problems. Mr. Bernays would employ “our second great national air power” to the fullest as an instrument of psychological warfare. To do that, he supports the proposal for an industry board of strategy, partly because it is a democratic proposal and partly because it would seem to promise greater effectiveness. Mr. Landry deplores the mutual distrust which has existed between the radio industry and the government, the fear on the one hand of federal encroachments and on the other of radio’s power to influence. He implies—what must be obvious to all—that these distrusting must be resolved as

*the first step toward making radio effective in wartime. Both agree that fundamental criticism of war programs may ultimately translate itself into reforms which will make programs impressive in quality no less than in quantity.*

*There is uniform agreement that radio in wartime faces a deep and crucial challenge—the task of mirroring our strengths and assets and of crystallizing our convictions and hopes and determined abilities.*

*In translating general principles into specific program applications, radio faces its ultimate test. Part Two examines the manner in which radio is evolving programs to meet the challenge of a wartime environment.*



## *Part Two*





## *News and Commentators*

The word "news" as it is used in broadcasting requires definition. In 1938 the F. C. C. reported that about one-tenth of all broadcast time was devoted to news bulletins and reports. If special events—such as meetings and sports—are included in the definition of news, the figure becomes about 17 per cent. If talks by the President, various government officials, and newsworthy persons is included, the figure probably would rise another 6 or 10 per cent. In wartime, special events and talks are likely to be of more news significance than in peacetime. Should they therefore be considered as news broadcasts? In addition, there are dramatized programs ostensibly based upon the news, like *The 22nd Letter*, which dramatize "documented" stories of anti-fascist activity in conquered countries, or *The March of Time*, or *An American in London*, Norman Corwin's dramatized "report" from England's capital during the summer of '42. News, it seems, may be found in many types of programs. For our purpose,

however, we shall consider news broadcasts to be those primarily concerned with the airing of bulletins and reports. Commentators—who not only report news events but interpret them—will be discussed later in this chapter.

Radio has partly displaced the newspaper as a primary medium for the disseminating of news. The reasons are several. Radio can report news more quickly and more often than the press; and it reports to *you* in your home. Radio news costs nothing. A flick of a dial and it is yours. Further, one can do other things while listening to radio news. A minimum of concentration is required.

Radio news is more trusted than news published in a newspaper. For one thing, there are no headlines to angle or color reports. The factor of the human voice, as we have said elsewhere, elicits the respect and confidence of the listener. On-the-spot radio news pick-ups make for a sense of participation in the events themselves. Moreover, radio, because it is licensed by the government, does not indulge as much in editorializing stories as do newspapers. It is more neutral, more reportorial. Time cannot be expanded; newspaper pages can be. Limitations of time compel radio to brief its news and to concentrate on the heart and relevant facts of a story.

The O. F. F. Bureau of Intelligence, in a confidential memorandum titled *American Attitudes Toward War News* (excerpts from which were printed in the June 22, 1942, issue of *Broadcasting* magazine), reported that "in the present war, radio has challenged both the prestige and the power of the press. In the reporting of news, it has rivaled, in a number of respects surpassed, the newspaper.

More than half the American people now regard radio as their prime news source. In the months of January, February, March and May, the Bureau of Intelligence asked a national cross-section of the public: 'Where do you get most of your news about the war—from talking to people, from newspapers, or from the radio?' Radio was chosen over newspapers consistently by nearly two to one."

Dr. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, director of the Office of Radio Research of Columbia University,<sup>1</sup> found that persons who rely upon newspapers as their primary source of news generally live in urban centers and are in the upper educational and economic levels of the population. The newspaper is preferred by these people because it is more detailed in its reporting and tends to give a more complete picture of events. On the other hand, those who rely primarily on radio for their news usually live in rural areas and are in the lower educational and economic levels of the population.

It is obvious, then, that news broadcasts are one of radio's major services—a service which is of particular importance in wartime. Compare, for example, the *Fortune* survey findings on page 56 which were made in peacetime, with those of the O. F. F. In response to the question, "Do you have more confidence in the war news on the radio or the war news in the newspapers?" 46 per cent chose radio as against 18 per cent for newspapers.

The trust which radio enjoys, however, springs largely from the nature and circumstances of the medium rather

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<sup>1</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and The Printed Page*, Chapter 5, Duell, Sloan and Pearce.

than from any peculiar factors of news policy or administration. The occasional tendency of radio to crow about its superiority implies that the industry believes it has in some way advanced the science and art of news-gathering and selection. The fact of the matter is that radio news is drawn largely from press sources; and that even in the few cases where radio gathers some of its own news, its preparation is not much different from the preparation of a story from the press. Radio is used mechanically, not creatively. There are virtually no special skills required for presenting radio news which are not found in any good reporter.<sup>2</sup>

The operation of radio news in wartime "is not essentially different from what it is in peacetime. We simply have to apply the same judgments and the same skills to new problems—we have to be as energetic and resourceful as possible in keeping the radio audience informed; at the same time, we have to see to it that we do not broadcast information of military value to the enemy and that we do not cause unnecessary and useless anguish, suspense, or confusion among our own people."<sup>3</sup>

How well does radio report the news? Let us examine the operations of news periods—five-, ten-, and fifteen-minute programs which almost every station broadcasts regularly as a part of its daily schedule. The first fact which impresses us is that their news coverage is scattered. Programs seek breadth rather than comprehension—va-

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<sup>2</sup> The mechanical power of radio to reach great masses of the people simultaneously, and to disseminate news quickly, are its chief claims to distinction.

<sup>3</sup> Paul W. White, director of News Broadcast, CBS, "A Memorandum to the CBS News Organization."



riety rather than lucidity. In effect, they attempt to do in the equivalent of two columns of newspaper type what the newspaper does in several pages. And they operate without the mechanical advantages of newspaper typography and display. The newspaper, for example, can gather heterogeneous items into space relationships which are both pleasing and intelligible to the eye. It can concentrate foreign news on a page or group of pages, national news on another, and local on a third. Even headline types, by their size and juxtaposition, can be employed to illuminate the news and develop relationships between different stories. Radio often fails completely to juxtapose related items. In many cases, such juxtaposition can only be accomplished by a thorough understanding of the points of similarity and difference, of the related factors which underlie events having their origin in widely disparate circumstances. To the radio listener, who hears a story only once—and then perhaps imperfectly—it is an impossible task to relate these transient auditory impressions without intelligent assistance from the newscaster.

The reasons for radio's failure to live up to its possibilities in news broadcasting are varied. One has already been mentioned—the fact that time is not elastic. The first rule of the radio news editor is condensation—the skillful selection and compression of the voluminous reports flowing in over press association teletypes. Condensation, contrary to the usual practice, cannot be said to consist merely of throwing certain stories in the waste basket. This is simply suppression. Necessarily, the radio news editor must concern himself with selection, but it requires a high degree of judgment to know what news is

inconsequential and what news should be reduced to the existing limitations of time to take its place in a rounded presentation of the day's events. How well is this judgment exercised?

Before we can begin to answer this question, we must recognize that the typical news listener does not read the newspaper—or, indeed, listen regularly to the radio—with the interest and appetite of the professional editor whose job it is to know all the news. The typical news listener takes his news on the run, with the result that he gets a grab-bag selection. He is informed—but confused. It would seem, therefore, that radio news programs, if they are to be effective—particularly in wartime, when an *interpretation* of events is of crucial importance—must improve the organization of the news they broadcast. This involves a responsibility which is too seldom observed in radio news rooms—the job of assembling in lucid form a series of events which in themselves may be directly related but which in their presentation can, if badly handled, be made to appear wholly separate and apart from each other. Nor should it be assumed that the relating and interpretation of news requires the intrusion of comment and editorializing, or the expression of opinion by the reporter or commentator. It can be accomplished on the level of straight reporting—but, as everyone who listens to news programs knows, this is not often done.

The techniques by which it could—and should—be done are no secret. They are the stock-in-trade of the experienced working journalist, and they are available to any novice who understands the basic elements of his responsibility. But there is a point at which the stereotyped

formulas of newspaper writing must be tossed overboard and new variations introduced. The stock pattern of the newspaper story—the whole story in the lead, then a repetition of the story with supplementary details, and finally a comprehensive recapitulation—cannot be relied on for the radio listener. He needs a “story” in the true sense of the word. He needs, and can best understand, a narrative—a running account into which are woven a sequence of events all sorted into their proper perspectives in time, place and significance. Merely to state a series of cold facts leaves him at best with an imperfect grasp of data which lack a frame of reference and meaning. It is radio’s job in news reporting to set events into such a background. How is this to be done? Assume that the listener wants to know first of all what happened—he does. Having presented that (what newsmen usually refer to as a “spot lead”), the next task is to place it in its proper perspective, to develop such antecedent events as may be pertinent. Aside from crime and similar stories of a “one-time” nature, most news events have a background of events or personalities or geography or whatever it may be which contributes to their significance. Unless the element which makes it worth broadcasting is described, why clutter up the air with it? Thus, there should follow after the statement of the event itself, a variable pattern of supplementary information which may include any or all of the following: (1) antecedent events, (2) supplementary facts, figures, quotations, references to similar events from which lessons might be drawn, etc., (3) implications of the event, (4) such prognostication as

may be pertinent, handled with extreme caution and preferably in terms of parallel events.

Let us illustrate the difference between news reports handled in traditional newspaper (and unfortunately, radio) fashion, and the treatment which is possible in the light of the foregoing suggestions. Since our discussion revolves primarily around wartime news reporting, this sample will be pertinent.

CAIRO, July 28.—(UP)—Imperial troops of General Sir Claude Auchinleck's eighth army inflicted heavy casualties on the Axis in hand-to-hand fighting on the northern end of the desert front and took a substantial number of prisoners, dispatches said today.

The South Africans and English, attacking from the east, and the Australians, driving south from their positions around Tel El Eisa, squeezed the Axis troops in a limited pincers operation, United Press staff correspondent Henry Gorrell reported from the front.

As press association reports go, this is good reporting. The correspondent has observed all the traditional niceties of his craft. He has all the sources identified, all the initials correct, all the operations specified in their admissible detail. But, for all that, it reads like a press agent hand-out—puffy, vague, prim and unintelligible. It will do very well for the top story on page one of the first edition, but try reading it aloud to someone! Try presenting it as most radio stations do, as a report on the progress of the war in the Egyptian desert. And then try something like this, keeping in mind that the figures

preceding each statement refer to the four points listed above as a pattern for supplementary information:

(2) While the main strength of the German army is concentrated on the Russian campaign, (3) Marshal Rommel in the Egyptian desert continues to fight a holding action. Sharp fighting has spread along the El Alamein front; the British have straightened out another kink in their line with a limited offensive, and a few Axis prisoners have been taken. (3) But, while they have pinched off the tip of another minor salient in the German lines, the British attack appears to be designed primarily to keep Marshal Rommel on the defensive. (1) Similar actions have been in progress for nearly two weeks, with the attack shifting from sector to sector (3) as General Auchinleck seeks to force the dispersal of enemy mechanized units. (1) For several days, there have been indications that Axis troops have been feverishly digging in to protect themselves against a major attack. (2) Both sides are said to be rushing reinforcements into the El Alamein line, (4) but there is nothing to indicate that either side has obtained the superiority in either men or machines to risk a decisive action at this time.<sup>4</sup>

Compare these two versions of the same story, and ask yourself which would carry more meaning if you were to hear them over your loudspeaker. The second account omits two factual items: the scene of the action (south of Tel El Eisa), which the average listener has never heard of anyway, and the designation of the "imperials" as

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<sup>4</sup>In the preparation of these examples, the author acknowledges the assistance of William Costello, news analyst of *The Air Edition*, the *Chicago Sun*.



Australians, South Africans and English, which has been reported on several dozen previous occasions. As a substitute for these inconsequential facts, we have at least two supplementary facts which outline the background of conditions under which the battle is progressing, we have two antecedent circumstances which are pertinent, three logical inferences and a reasonable appraisal of the course of action which may be expected to ensue in the next few days!

Virtually no news programs utilize the recommended pattern. As we have said, they prefer to parallel newspaper coverage. Perhaps this can be attributed to the fact that most radio news employees have worked on newspapers or have studied journalism courses designed to meet standard newspaper requirements. The normal distribution of news in a fifteen-minute program, for example, may be something like this:

Foreign .....	4 minutes
Washington .....	3½ "
Domestic .....	3 "
Local .....	2 "
Feature (or sports) .....	1 "

Often such a pattern is insisted upon by the sponsor. In any event, the listener gets capsules of information without regard for the value and significance of the news. And this brings us to another common deficiency of news programs—failure to select and weigh events on a "value basis." To illustrate: On a certain day, a speech by the President to Congress may well deserve the program's full time if it is to be reported adequately or properly

interpreted. But because of the program's traditional grab-bag pattern, the speech is given only half of the "Washington" time. The listener gets in addition a number of miscellaneous items, none of which are related to the most important news event of the day. In wartime this kind of news handling may be regarded as truly serious and a matter for public concern. That the concern does not manifest itself is probably due to the fact that the listener believes he is an informed person because he has heard a great many items of news.

Why does radio permit this kind of news reporting? Is it a result of laziness? To render the full wartime service of which they are capable, radio news departments would have to work much harder, much longer, and think more to develop higher standards of news reporting. Instead, the old way of doing things continues. It is defended on four counts. For one thing, it permits the establishment of routines. The news department adjusts itself to these routines and presumably maximizes its efficiency. Further, it permits a division of work. The various categories of news enumerated above can each be assigned to a different staff member who concerns himself only with that field. This is said to develop specialized talent. Moreover, it permits the fullest use of news skills—that is, writing and condensation. However, in this process the substantive and interpretive content of the news may be lost, for it requires no research activity, nor does it require the men with the news skills to have an informational background fitting them for interpretative functions. Finally, most radio news departments are understaffed. They have

no time for the additional effort of digging up background and research data.

This last is the most important point of all. Little improvement in the handling of wartime news can be expected from understaffed departments. A great many—probably most—stations have insufficient personnel trained in news operations. Frequently, staff announcers or other technicians pinch-hit as newsmen. Thus it is a common studio practice to “gather” news by the simple expedient of scissoring the teletype news to fit the news period and broadcasting it verbatim.

Those stations fortunate enough to have an adequate news staff use its members primarily as rewrite men. A story received on the teletype machine is rewritten into an informal “radio style.” The difference between the rewrite man on a newspaper and one in a radio station is striking. A rewrite man on a newspaper is at the top of the reportorial hierarchy. At the bottom is the cub reporter. Next, the reporters on general assignment. Then come the reporters who rate special assignments, feature writers and by-line writers. Seated beside the city editor is the rewrite man, who takes the bare facts of stories which are reported to him and writes a full and interesting account—drawing from a rich background of experience and knowledge. On a newspaper, the rewrite men are usually promoted to that job after years of leg work. They have experience and proved and tempered judgment. But in radio, almost everyone is a “rewrite” man—in quotes. He rewrites, but seldom with the background or competence of the newspaper rewrite man. He

is, rather, a specialist in superficial paraphrase and an expert in the dexterous use of the scissors.

The radio newsmen, unless he has had previous newspaper experience, is incapable of gathering the facts for a good story. He works in an office where there is no hierarchy of skills.

It is difficult for radio to hire people who have the necessary combination of writing skills *plus* reportorial or editorial background and training. For radio, unlike the newspaper, does not train its own news staffs. It employs no cubs and, except for a few network correspondents, no general or special assignment people. When one comes to work for a radio news department, he begins almost at once to feed his work to the microphone. There is great need, if radio is to realize its potential as a weapon on the home front, to employ persons not only of superior skills, but of superior educational backgrounds—men who can see the significance of events and who are able to appraise them.

The environment in which American radio news programs operate is different from that in other countries. Where radio is a government monopoly, news policies are enunciated and controlled by government. Censorship is a constant factor. Compulsory news programs and announcements are traditional. In the United States, where radio is in private hands, it is government-licensed but not government-controlled. The industry, in wartime especially, is sensitive to government hints and directives, and even goes out of its way to solicit government ideas and suggestions for programs and services. But this relationship is a voluntary one. Consequently, American



radio news policies and programs are determined and administered by the individual stations and networks. Where the government exercises compulsion—as in the Censorship Code—it is in the area only of suppression, not of dissemination.

Considering the system and the circumstances surrounding the news operations of radio, the industry has done a good job of not broadcasting the “wrong” things. But it has done a poor job of realizing its full capacity for doing the right things. Radio newsmen are specialists in exclusion. What war demands is specialists in inclusion. Only such men can render the needed service of clarification and interpretation of the events and issues of the war.

There is no doubt that the public wants this kind of service. The O. F. F. reported that “a marked general preference was expressed for radio news programs combining information and interpretation; 62 per cent of the sample said they would rather hear a radio program which told facts and commented on them; 32 per cent said they would rather hear a radio program that just told the facts of the news.”

The significant word is “commented,” for it implies that the public believes it cannot receive information *and* interpretation except through a commentator voicing his own interpretations and opinions. While the commentator is not an essential device for obtaining news interpretation, he has acquired popular status and satisfies the public’s hunger for wanting to know the *why* as well as the *what* of the news. No one has ever counted the number of news commentators, but three or four hundred is



probably a conservative estimate. A great many local stations employ their own commentators; sponsors employ others; and each of the networks has several who broadcast either on a sustaining or sponsored basis.

The commentator is a phenomenon of the era of rapid communication. Radio, the telegraph, and the telephone have, within the past half-century, removed the barriers of isolation from the world. In this war, with allies drawn from every corner of the world, with battles going on in strangely foreign lands, the average American regards news bulletins as communiqués to his parlor headquarters. Kharkov may mean more to him for a while than Washington or New York; Argentina's policies may concern him more than those of his home State. But the growth of communication has been so rapid that the education of the people has not really kept pace with it. We are largely ignorant of the problems and attitudes of other peoples. We read and hear about other nations and become familiar with the names of some of their leading personalities and cities and develop an international vocabulary but we still have little understanding of the fundamental background of international events.

Many of us turn, therefore, to professional wise men—commentators and journalists who learn for us, think for us and—when they presume to recommend public policies—often act for us. The radio commentator is the most important and influential of the lot, for he can personally speak to thousands and sometimes millions of us—reaching in five or fifteen minutes more people than the readers of all the Sunday newspaper editorials put together.

One of the most interesting things about commentators is the fact that the people who listen to them know little about their competence. Who are the commentators, and by what right do they presume to interpret the news and advise the public? Radio has established no universal qualifications which commentators must meet before the microphone is opened to them. The networks have various standards, but they are not uniform. In the last analysis, the employment by a network of a commentator rests upon the personal judgment of the chief of the news division. The network chiefs are well-qualified men. Most local stations, however, have no standard qualifications for news commentators. Sponsored commentators are sometimes selected by an advertising agency—which hardly seems qualified to make such determinations.

Fifty people, selected at random, were asked by the author, "Why do you think the radio commentator to whom you most frequently listen is really qualified?" Thirty-one persons replied to this effect, "The station wouldn't permit him to broadcast unless he were." Eleven replied, "He sounds as if he knew what he was talking about." Of course, this sampling has no scientific validity, but it is significant nonetheless. The prestige of most commentators probably does spring from these two things—the people's general trust in radio's integrity and the factor of the human voice.

A general criticism of commentators is that they tend to take themselves too seriously. As one respondent put it, "They seem to carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. They seem to think the world hangs on their words." This is simply a critical expression of the manner

in which many commentators speak. They frequently assume a pompous air because they believe it makes them sound authoritative. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Raymond Gram Swing and Elmer Davis (prior to his appointment as director of the O. W. I.) were specifically commended by several respondents as superior commentators because they "speak so unemotionally and aren't impressed with their own importance."

The question of whether or not commentators should be sponsored has troubled some friends of radio for a long while. The coming of war makes it more relevant than ever before. Sponsors are not interested in commentators if they are unable to attract large audiences. This fact has challenging implications. For one thing, the commercial bug bites many sustaining commentators who, hoping some day to secure a sponsor and the higher fee that would guarantee, become more concerned with attaining a high Crossley than with maintaining a high level of competence. Further, the commentator who is already sponsored is under constant pressure to retain or expand his audience. Because the products of a sponsor may be boycotted if the commentator "goes too far," there is a disposition to "take care." A competent commentator (and there are some) thus may have to sacrifice his integrity or his better judgment to expediency. The concern of the sponsored commentator is often, how best can I please? This places him more in the position of a performer than of a clarifier, and may dictate irresponsibility in the treatment of certain events.

Gregory Zeimer, a commercially sponsored network commentator, has said, "Why did the news commentators

comment on the Tokyo bombing before we had any actual communiqués? Supposing we hadn't? After all, we newspaper people on the air are not as independent as some of you think. After all, we have our stations, we have to please our station. Then we have to please our sponsors. Then we have to please the public. Now we are trying to do all three things at the same time, and heaven help us if we guess wrong on any one of them. The question was brought up, Why did we tell the people about this bombing? I did because I felt everybody wanted to hear about it, and if I hadn't I would have a dozen or a hundred letters asking me if I was asleep. I felt my sponsors at the same time wanted that. That brings up, of course, the whole question of the sponsor. I am not going to open that question.”<sup>5</sup>

The selection and the emphasis given news by commentators is another matter for concern. The angling of news is equally as important as the selection of news. Yet many commentators, as any critical listener knows, tend to out-talk their information and knowledge, with the result that the interpretation of events is warped. The pressure to maintain audience interest frequently results in a tendency to “blow up” and exaggerate the importance or significance of an event. As one critic declared, “In effect, many commentators are comparable to an early edition of a newspaper—some trivial event is inflated to make a banner that will sell the paper. So some commentators inflate to catch or hold listeners. Either their news judgment or their integrity is bad.” Raymond Gram Swing,

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory Zeimer, remarks at the *Institute for Education by Radio*, Ohio State University, May 3, 1942.

in a 1942 summer broadcast, expressed concern on this point. "If we are not constantly reminding ourselves that we really know very little, we will fall into the habit of reaching firm conclusions just as though we knew a great deal."

It was not uncommon during the first six months of war to hear people say that the public was complacent or that they did not realize the seriousness of the war. If this analysis of public opinion was correct, one of the causes may have been the disposition of commentators to present news in as optimistic a light as possible. To the question, Should commentators be optimistic or pessimistic in their analyses of news, H. V. Kaltenborn, the NBC commentator says, "On the whole, I should say that the American people respond more effectively to an optimistic, wholehearted outlook than they do to gloom and despair, and so for my part I am as optimistic as an intelligent individual who makes some study of the problems can possibly be." <sup>6</sup>

In wartime, an effective response cannot properly be measured by whether one "feels better" as a result of hearing good news, but must be measured in terms of the action in support of the war efforts which it invokes. The commentators have a public responsibility to treat events with neither optimism nor pessimism, but as neutrally as possible.

CBS frowns upon the word "commentator" and prefers to have their staff commentators called news analysts. They insist that this is no play upon words. Robert S.

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<sup>6</sup> H. V. Kaltenborn, remarks at the *Institute for Education by Radio*, Ohio State University, May 3, 1942.



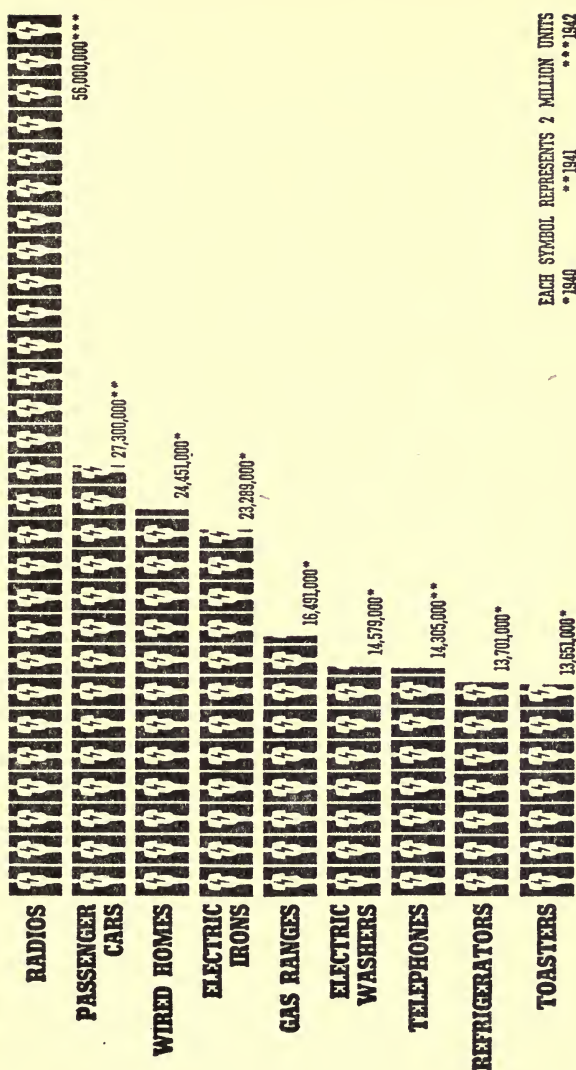
Wood, CBS' assistant director of news, defines the difference in these terms: "Take any subject that you care to, and we will give you both sides of it, not from our personal feeling in the matter, but strictly on the basis of the most advanced opinion that we can get from authorities in every field on which the subject touches. Commentators, on the other hand, are inclined to get emotionally involved in their subjects, tend to get away from the factual side of things; whereas a news analyst is obliged to stick strictly to his facts and give you both sides of the question." Paul White adds that "to permit any one individual (i.e., a commentator) a regular platform from which he could guide or attempt to guide the nation's thinking might constitute a fearful peril."

Soon after the outbreak of war, representatives of CBS, NBC and Mutual <sup>7</sup> prepared a memorandum on war news coverage. One of its paragraphs reads: "News analysts are at all times to be confined strictly to explaining and evaluating such fact, rumor, propaganda, and so on, as are available. No news analyst or news broadcaster of any kind is to be allowed to express personal editorial judgment or to select or omit news with the purpose of creating any given effect, and no news analyst or other news broadcaster is to be allowed to say anything in an effort to influence action or opinion of others one way or the other. Nothing in this is intended to forbid any news broadcaster from attempting to evaluate news as it develops, provided he substantiates his evaluation with facts

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<sup>7</sup> The Blue Network was, at the time, affiliated with NBC and was represented by that network at this meeting.

# RADIO - MOST POPULAR FAMILY SERVANT



EACH SYMBOL REPRESENTS 2 MILLION UNITS  
 \*1940 \*\*1941 \*\*\*1942  
 —National Broadcasting Company

and attendant circumstances. His basis for evaluation should, of course, be impersonal, sincere and honest."

This is a high-sounding declaration. On the whole, the commentators (or news analysts) employed by the networks have made a more or less successful effort to live up to it. The same, however, cannot be said for sponsored commentators. Further, the declaration was subscribed to only by the networks, not by local stations, and local sustaining and sponsored commentators violate virtually every one of its conditions with shocking regularity.

If radio is to serve as an effective medium for the clarification of news in wartime, certain recommendations might be applied to commentators. First, they should not be sponsored, in order that the temptations and dispositions which sponsorship nurtures will be eliminated. Second, there should be as rigid a measurement of ability and competency to interpret the news as there is for the ability to teach in a good university. This will have the immediate good effect of reducing the number of commentators on the air, of raising the status of those who remain, and will immeasurably strengthen radio's right to the confidence in its integrity which the public manifests. The foregoing, of course, should apply to networks and local stations alike. The adoption of these rules would move radio a long step nearer to serving fully the public interest in wartime.

Although the burden of responsibility rests upon newscasters and commentators, the listener cannot be excused from carrying part of the load. Some very sensible suggestions for listening to newscasts and commentators in wartime have been prepared by A. L. Chapman, director

of the Bureau of Research in Education by Radio of the University of Texas. Excerpts follow:

"1. *Listen to every word.* It is important to hear everything that is said on a newscast. Whereas it is possible to re-read printed matter, the radio news program is heard but once. It is also heard at the speaking rate of the newscaster, not a rate determined by the listener. When reading, persons skip over words—this is even more likely when listening to war news in a room where there are distractions. The words "not" or "possible" may alter the entire meaning of a sentence or a whole newscast. Either pay strict attention to the newscast or do not listen to it. In a recent speech by President Roosevelt he coughed several times, yet only one in five of the members of this writer's class recalled that he coughed during the broadcast. Some of the class members even argued that he didn't cough or clear his throat at all during the speech.

"2. *Check the radio news with newspaper accounts of the same news items.* The newscaster is forced to select the content of the newscast from many available news items. This causes him to discriminate and condense. It might be that the newscaster has omitted a part of the wire service report which would make the item more meaningful to the listener. By reading a newspaper account of the same news item, additional information can usually be obtained. It is, of course, preferable to read an account of the same event as reported by several news services. The printed word is also quite different from the spoken word. When news items are presented by radio the newscaster puts the force of the human voice into it. Intonations, pauses, changes in tempo, and other



speech techniques used by newscasters sometimes affect the meaning of news stories to such an extent that a reading of the newspaper accounts give a different interpretation to the same news item.

"3. *Note the source of the news.* A report of an official United States Army communiqué, read verbatim, is quite different from a report from the "usually reliable" sources. The countries at war with us go to extreme ends to divide us. It has been shown time and time again that news items are used by the Axis countries as a means of propaganda. In truth, the general recognition of this fact has caused the Axis nations to "plant" news stories in neutral countries such as Switzerland and Sweden to lend credence to these propaganda releases. Some newscasters, in reporting items released in Axis countries, emphasize their unreliability; still, there are some newscasters who do not make it clear that Axis news releases are apt to be untrue or misleading.

"4. *Don't report radio war news as facts.* When something heard on a newscast is reported to others, it should be told as something heard on a newscast, not as a fact. Because an account of some event is heard on a newscast does not necessarily make it a fact. Even though the original listeners heard the account perfectly, when it is reported to succeeding individuals it becomes colored by the interpretations of the various recounters of the report. This is, of course, assuming that the original listener heard the radio news account perfectly and accurately. This was illustrated by the effects of the Martian Invasion broadcast by Orson Welles: some of the most hysterical



persons were those who did not hear the broadcast but were told about it by others who heard the radio program.

"It is hoped that Americans will not regard radio newscasts as their authority for truth, as has been the custom with so many people who, when asked how they know something is true, reply simply, 'I read it in the newspaper.'

"5. *Regard opinion and conjecture as such.* The opinion of an individual when heard on the radio is just as much an opinion as when the individual expresses the same opinion to you face to face. Likewise, the opinion of President Roosevelt is the expression of an opinion in the same way that the expression of an opinion by John Doe is only an opinion. President Roosevelt's opinion may be the best opinion available, but because the highest authority states an opinion is no reason why it should be regarded as a fact. This caution is especially applicable to news commentators who frequently express their opinions relative to the future progress of the war."



# 6



## *Discussion Programs*

The most basic of our democratic traditions is the right of the citizen to speak his mind. The Constitution guarantees a free press—a recognition that an *informed* opinion is necessary for a democratic society. If radio had existed 150 years ago, the Constitution probably would have protected its freedom, too. For radio, even more than the press, is essential to the smooth functioning of that two-way communication between government and public opinion without which no democracy can long endure. Radio brings the problems and issues of government into the home. It has made every living room a seat in the legislatures' gallery.

It is perhaps significant that none of the world's dictators came to power by use of the radio. Hitler and Mussolini preferred street marches, mass meetings, pagentry and the press to reach the people. If Hindenburg had gone on the air, would Hitler have become Chancellor? If Hitler had gone on the air—would the people

have accepted him so complacently? These are fascinating questions, for the microphone is almost surgical in the way it reveals a man and his ideas. Radio does not permit one to get away for long with mere words alone. And it is no contradiction that Father Coughlin or Huey Long attracted large radio audiences. When the test of their appeals came, both men lost. They had followers, but they were never real leaders. They put on a show but they did not put up ideas or raise issues—the microphone revealed their deficiencies. Nor is President Roosevelt an exception. His effectiveness results not merely from the quality of his voice and the techniques of his address—he is the President of the United States and he has something to say. If he were not the President, if he had never been President, and had nothing to offer the microphone except unctuous words, he would probably be no more effective than was Father Coughlin or Huey Long. He would be labeled “slick and smooth,” and probably be suspect because of it.

There is wide misunderstanding of the efficacy of “techniques” in straight talk on the air. The simple fact is that to a radio speaker the medium is essentially an intimate public address system, and affords no opportunities for special techniques that are not available on a platform before a small group. One either can speak well or he cannot. He either can advance an argument logically or convincingly or he cannot. There are no radio production skills which can create the appearance of logic or conviction when neither exists.

Only on the creative dramatic level can radio deceive and camouflage. Only on the dramatic level can emotion

be fully exploited; only on the dramatic level can devices and manipulatives be employed to divert attention from content.

Because straight talk is the least susceptible of all types of broadcasts to intellectual distortion, it is one of the most adaptable to furthering communication between government and the public. In wartime particularly, talk must be encouraged and improved.

The improvement of talk on the air can best be accomplished by wider and more effective use of the discussion type of program. We must draw a line between discussion programs and talks by individuals. The discussion program is one over which radio can legitimately exercise some production and policy control. But radio can have less to say over talks by individuals. Once a person is permitted to broadcast, what he says and how he says it is largely his own business, provided only he does not violate "good taste" or the laws of slander. If an individual's talk is not logical, if it is not very informative, if it fails to clarify—there is little the station or network can do about it. But a discussion is a *program*—the fact that two or more persons are involved and that they are talking toward some constructive end makes it necessary to exercise some form of preliminary planning, some direction or leadership or formalization; hence, the station or network has an opportunity to exert some measure of control over its content and production.

The discussion program is disciplined talk. Potentially, it may be radio's most effective tool for public clarification of war issues and problems. But only potentially. No discussion program as yet has hit upon the

right combination of procedures and personnel to achieve clarification of issues with consistent success. The challenge to discussion programs has been well stated by Lasswell. "Democracy depends on talk. The methods of talk need to aid in the discovery of a sound public policy. If the practice of discussion does not create a sense of achievement there is contempt for talk."<sup>1</sup>

How to avoid contempt for talk should be a matter of supreme concern to all who produce discussion programs. But it is not. Almost every producer is convinced that his program is creating respect for talk. Their publicity, their literature, their writings—all contain the argument that "through the meeting of intelligent minds" listeners will be "enlightened" and "informed" in "the democratic way of free speech." Producers who say such things are deceiving themselves and the public. The discussion programs which are broadcast today, seldom succeed either in informing or enlightening listeners; they generally specialize in controversy and emphasize differences of opinion; they usually reach no conclusion; and they frequently confuse the listener on crucial aspects of the topic.

Let us examine certain dubious premises upon which some discussion programs operate.

1. *The topic should be stated in the form of a question, so that at least two opposing points of view may be heard.* This premise is rooted in these assumptions: that the side which can win an argument represents the better policy; that the listener is capable of evaluating the merits of

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<sup>1</sup> Harold D. Lasswell, *Democracy Through Public Opinion*, George Banta Publishing Company.



an argued case; that there are at least two sides to the question, and that one is right and one is wrong; that controversy makes for maximum listener interest. Not one of these assumptions is correct.

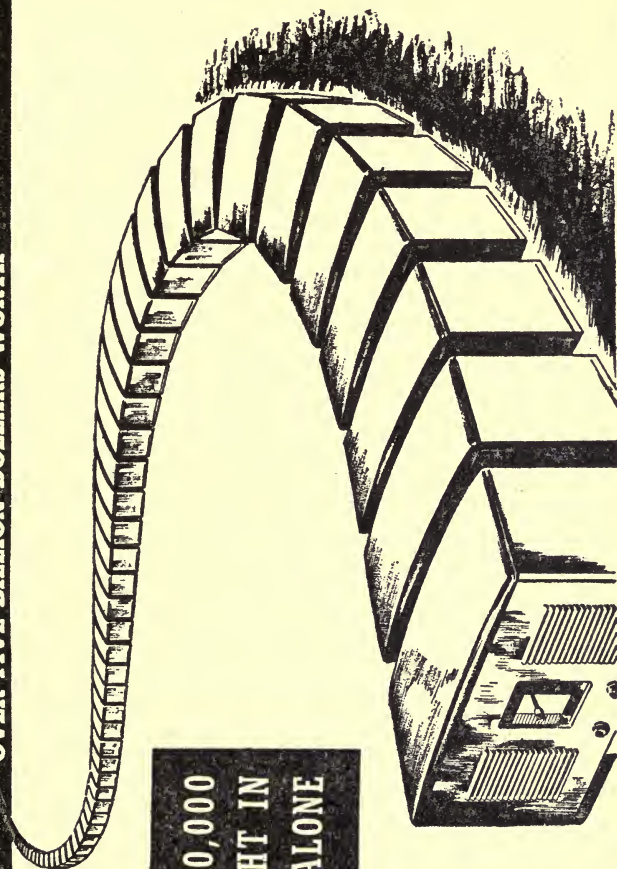
Because a participant is skilled in the use of words and rhetoric, it does not follow that his conclusions are correct. The debate method places a premium upon rhetorical tricks. The participants parry and thrust, not with the intention of clarifying the issue, but in order to win the argument. They play to the gallery, and not to the issue. They tend to advance easy answers to difficult questions, because easy answers can be readily grasped by the listener.

Are listeners always capable of evaluating the merits of an argued case? By its very nature we have noted that argument at once confuses and over-simplifies. A shrewd judgment of the merits of a case requires the listener to cull something from both sides and then to arrive at his conclusions by hard thinking. There is little time for such cogitation during a vigorous debate on the air. Few people listen to the radio with full attention or concentration—they may be distracted by a telephone call, by the comments of other listeners, or by the act of lighting a cigarette. And they are also distracted from the issues by the debater's smart language, by his rapid recitation of "evidence," by his tone, his verbal thrusts, and by rhetorical questions he may ask. The listener can not go over the arguments and compare them, as he might re-read a page in a book. He must evaluate instantly or later from imperfect memory. Few people have the ability to do either, even when valid evidence is given them.

# 97,000,000 RADIOS BOUGHT IN 19 YEARS

OVER FIVE BILLION DOLLARS WORTH

13,800,000  
BOUGHT IN  
1941 ALONE



—National Broadcasting Company

To determine how many sides there are to a question is as difficult as deciding how many angels can dance on the point of a pin. Every question contains within itself several sub-questions which must be answered before the larger question can be discussed intelligently. A procedure which poses two or more sides to a question, consequently, begins with the handicap of a multiplicity of questions. Moreover, the arbitrary dissection of a question into two or more specific parts implies to the uninformed listener that these are the only facets of the issue. The result is a tendency to see crucial issues as "either-or" or as "either-or-and." Only in isolated instances is this actually the case. Hence, the very statement of a topic in the form of a two- or more-sided question misinforms some listeners at the outset. The subsequent discussion succeeds only in strengthening the initial misconception. The solution is to avoid the question-mark in the statement of topics. For example, instead of "Is Our Morale Good?" as a topic, "American Morale" is to be preferred. The question implies that American morale is either good or bad, whereas it may be both good and bad in a score of different ways. The statement of a topic, rather than of a question, permits participants to contribute their varying points of view without the obligation to defend a given position. Instead of a black and white picture of the topic, an understandable survey of the facts related to the topic may be presented.

One of the most prevalent of misconceptions is that radio audience interest is maximized by controversy. The basis for this misconception is difficult to find. Apparently it stems from two facts—first, controversial dis-

cussions generally elicit a large number of letters; and second, technicians like the "show" and excitement of controversy and assume that the audience likes it, too. The error of the technician lies in confusing the experience of audience response to dramatic programs with audience response to discussion programs. The former is theatre, the latter is not. Theatre aims to excite and entertain, but good discussion aims to inform and clarify. The techniques of one can not be applied to the other. On the mail count, such evidence as we have reveals that discussions which draw the largest mail—debates—seldom attain the highest Crossleys. There is little correlation between mail and Crossley. Partisans are voluble writers, but the number of people who are partisans or who feel strongly on any one question are in a minority in most audiences.

Controversy distracts. It is argument surcharged with emotion. Controversial discussions have a high amount of interruption; they elicit obviously extreme statements from participants—statements which the sophisticated listener at once suspects; they often become noisy; and sometimes they prompt mutual discourtesies. In addition, such programs keep listeners at an emotional pitch, at which thoughtful evaluation of program content is impossible.

2. *Topics should keep abreast of the headlines.* There can be no doubt that listeners want to hear the latest news and that they are anxious to have events interpreted immediately. "When [we] entered World War I the American people were frankly ignorant. At the beginning of World War II they were informed and confused. They



were doped with information like opium eaters; they had to have each day their quantum of facts. Any attempt to curtail the dose was immediately felt and resented. But at the end of the day's indulgence they were no wiser than before; they lacked discernment; they had no clue for telling important from unimportant items; they had no sure scale of values, no compass for finding their way through the blinding downpour of fact and counter-fact, assertion and denial." <sup>2</sup> Discussion programs which specialize in being topical frequently add to this kind of confusion. They become a panel of commentators or newscasters.

Is it the function of the discussion program to encroach upon the territory of the news commentator? The answer is no. The discussion program has a different function to perform. Its job is to get behind the issues and to the fundamentals of the news. Its job, ideally, is a deeply educational one. And this means that it should deal with values and with policies consistent with values. It should ideally be concerned with justice, morality, and integrity, and should evaluate events in the light of these. But it cannot evaluate if it breathlessly runs abreast of events. A good discussion program should deal with matters that are perpetually timely, not with events of transient importance.

Now all discussion programs violate this principle to a greater or lesser extent. Either the government suggests that a certain current topic be discussed, or some

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<sup>2</sup> Edgar Ansel Mowrer of the Office of War Information. *Informing the Citizen in a World at War*. Address before American Library Association Conference, Milwaukee, June 22, 1942.



organization offers to make available an eminent personality provided a specific current topic is chosen, or the producer is unable to resist the temptation of a spot-news topic which will capture listeners' interest. But, in the long run, a discussion program best serves the public interest and its own reputation to the degree to which it respects the principle of basing its discussions upon fundamentals.

During the first few months of war, most discussions shied away from topics of current news significance. Their wartime policies were undefined, they feared censorship, they leaned over backwards to avoid giving "aid and comfort to the enemy." Thus the first impact of the war was to inspire a series of programs which began with areas of agreement rather than areas of disagreement. Participants approached the topic from differing but not different points of view. They funneled their knowledge and opinions, so that the listener was able, to an unprecedented degree, to hear a rounded discussion. Almost without exception, in the first few months after Pearl Harbor, discussion programs were more informative, more calm and interesting than they had generally been before—or have been since.

As time went on, it became apparent that censorship was nothing fearful, that disagreements and criticism did not aid and comfort the enemy, that wartime discussion policies could be virtually the same as peacetime policies. And so most discussions are today back at the old stand, doing their old business.

3. *Experts and big names are to be preferred as participants.* Americans have always looked up to "experts"

and to people of prominence. We respect the man with the "know-how." And we like stellar personalities and people who have "arrived." Both of these types spell success and ability, which have always rated highly in our society. It is not surprising, therefore, that discussion programs should go out of their way to parade such people before their microphones. Not only do they permit one to say "Our programs bring you *recognized* authorities," but "Here is a chance for you to hear a man who needs no introduction. . . ."

Now all experts are not well-known, and all well-known persons are not experts. This truism contains the seed of trouble for discussions which are expert-conscious and big-name conscious. Public note tends to become the standard for evaluating competency. Everyone who listens regularly to discussions on the air can probably recall half a dozen recent programs which featured experts and big names—and which succeeded admirably in getting nowhere. It is true, of course, that a number of programs can also be recalled on which non-experts and people whose names were not known participated, and which got nowhere, too. But, as a general observation, it is probably true that discussions by "big names" are less effective than those which use lesser-known but well-informed participants.

If experience and personal observation are any guide, we might advance these as reasons why the experts and the big names have a bad record. First, they suffer from the four faults of the expert stated on page 314. Often they are men of limited outlook and too specialized ability. Further, they usually have a vested interest in their ex-

pertness. Unless they are men of rare integrity or imbued with a high sense of the values of academic scholarship, they are disposed to sell *themselves* as experts rather than sell their ideas. They often tend to make statements which they expect their reputation rather than reason to sell. Finally, they are disposed to hyper-caution in their remarks, in order to avoid public criticism by the press or other experts.

The participant who is informed, intelligent and sincere, but who is neither an expert nor a big name, is the best broadcast bet. He generally is prepared for the discussion by conscientious study and consultation rather than by confidence in his own omniscience. And he is more likely to discuss his materials in terms of values and policies consistent with values. In short, a good mind is a better risk for radio than a good name.

These three principles—upon which most radio discussions are planned—have one element in common: they are “audience bait,” and therefore they are widely accepted. But they are seldom wisely followed. Bait alone is not enough. It may attract, but it cannot hold, listeners. In the long run, the audience of any program will grow in size and loyalty in proportion to the effort of the program to provide three things, in this order—information, clarification, stimulation. Most radio discussions, like most other programs, concentrate on the last and pay only passing attention to the other two desiderata.

In peacetime, the failure to concentrate equally on each of these three objectives may be a matter of relative unimportance. But in wartime the situation cannot be viewed so casually. An informed and intelligent public

opinion is a requisite to victory and to the writing of a sound and enduring peace. Hence, the failure of radio to employ its vast potential to the end of public education is virtual sabotage of the national interest. There is less excuse for the discussion program to concentrate on stimulation than for any other type of program, for it is, by its very appeal and format, dedicated to information and clarification. Its appeal is to the mind. It has no dramatic, no musical, no sound-effect pitfalls into which it can stumble. The discussion program can be effective on a higher level because its appeals are on a level above those of other programs.

Why, then, do not most discussion programs concentrate upon information and clarification? It is not because their producers willfully do not want to serve them. Apparently it is because they do not know how to serve them.

This raises the question of techniques and procedures. It might be well to examine those of the five best-known programs—*The Town Meeting of the Air* (Blue Network), *People's Platform* (CBS), *Wake Up, America!* (Blue Network), *American Forum of the Air* (Mutual), and *The University of Chicago Round Table* (NBC).

All except the *Round Table* do not: (1) have long preliminary meetings between participants; (2) provide participants with research materials; (3) afford an opportunity for disciplined rehearsal of the discussion; (4) render leadership and assistance in the preparation and broadcast of the program; attempt to summarize or conclude their discussions; (5) make an extraordinary effort

to select topics which are perennially rather than currently timely.

*Town Meeting*, *Wake Up, America!* and the *American Forum* are broadcast before large audiences and conclude with questions submitted by members of the audience. The *People's Platform* and the *Round Table* are broadcast from small studios, and no audience is present.

Except under special circumstances, the effectiveness and importance of discussion programs may be judged by the number of people who listen week after week over a period of time. For several years the *Round Table* has had the largest audience of any discussion program. Since mid-1940, when procedures of research, preliminary meetings, rehearsals, etc., were inaugurated, the *Round Table's* Crossley has risen from 1.3 to a high of 9.9, and its network increased from 40 to more than 100 stations. Its Crossley during that period has often been double that of the *Town Meeting* or the *People's Platform*, and at times has exceeded their combined ratings. It has consistently been from twice to four times as high as the ratings of *Wake Up, America!* or the *American Forum*.

This record established by the *Round Table* deserves examination because of the special importance of discussion programs in wartime. The *Round Table* now operates on the basis of the following principles:

1. *Spontaneity is best achieved by adequate preparation.* Thirty minutes on the air is too brief a time to speak effectively on a difficult topic unless one is well prepared. The participant who has his ideas and data well organized tends to be more at ease, tends to speak more freely, and more competently.



2. *Controversy for its own sake handicaps discussion.* Participants are invited because they are assumed to have something worthwhile to say. They cannot succeed if they are asked to generate artificial disagreements, for they become, in such a circumstance, actors rather than participants; the listener soon discerns that the argument is phoney and is likely to tune out. The participants will have wasted their time and the program will have wasted the network's time. If the listener stays on, for some reason or other, he takes away with him a disrespect for talk and opinion.

3. *The listener prefers to be talked to rather than at.* This is the chief reason for the absence of an audience. *Round Table* participants frankly recognize that people all over the nation are listening to them. They endeavor to include the listener in the discussion. They say, "If you are a listener in the Midwest—"; "Every farmer listening to us knows—"; "A man in New York City has written us to enquire—." This traditional *Round Table* pattern, of course, is in its favor. The *Town Meeting*, on the other hand, utilizes radio as a public address system to pick up a hall meeting. The listener is an eavesdropper—or, as *Town Meeting* would prefer to put it, a present but unseen and unheard member of the Town Hall audience.

4. *Listeners are intellectually stimulated only when information on, and clarification of, the topic are advanced.* The *Round Table* insists that "intellectually" cannot be divorced from "stimulated." Thus it rules out emotional stimulation. To this end, participants are discouraged from *trying* to disagree, from injecting labored humor,

from posing rhetorical questions. They are encouraged and helped to incorporate facts relevant to the question under discussion, and to explain *why* and *how*. A listener is unlikely to be intellectually stimulated unless he is given tools for further thinking.

5. *Technical discussions of military strategy or tactics should be avoided.* Although in wartime there is great public interest in military matters, no fruitful purpose is served by technical discussions of strategy or tactics. For one thing, censorship is most strict on military details, and it is unlikely that the participants will have either relevant or timely information. Moreover, there is a tendency on the part of the military expert—and only an expert can engage in a technical discussion—to rule out from his comments any except military considerations; whereas public enlightenment might better be served by placing any given strategy or tactic against the backdrop of foreign relations, national psychology and long-run considerations of morality and international commitments. Finally, discussions encourage arm-chair strategy on the part of listeners. In wartime, the military have enough headaches without being subjected to popular kibitzing on technical matters.

6. *Topics which compel guessing about the future should be avoided.* Events which have not occurred provide nothing to which information or clarification can be applied. There is a great need in a warring nation for intelligent discussion of fundamentals. This does not mean, of course, that the likely consequences of certain public policies cannot be discussed on the *Round Table*; it does mean, though, that probable consequences

shall not be the exclusive or major emphasis of the discussion, and that when discussed they shall have been preceded by the setting of a firm foundation of information and interpretation of past or present policies.

7. *The participation of journalists and professional commentators should be infrequent.* The Round Table is the only discussion program which has this as one of its strict principles of operation. The rule was adopted about six months before Pearl Harbor as the result of experience which had shown journalists and professional commentators generally incapable of contributing fundamental information or clarification to the program. As specialists in dealing with peripheral issues rather than with prime issues and their causes, they are reporters, not analysts or scholars; and it is seldom that they discuss their knowledge within a frame of values. Further, journalists and professional commentators have their own opportunities to be heard.

8. *A university-sponsored program has special obligations and responsibilities.* What this means can perhaps best be illustrated by quoting from the University of Chicago's "Policy Memorandum," which was submitted, at the government's request, to the O. F. F. shortly after Pearl Harbor:

"The Round Table is distinctive because it is a university program.

"The Round Table is not a 'discussion program' in the ordinary radio-trade use of that term. It is not a commercial program. It is not a network conducted or sponsored sustaining program. It is a university program—originated by the University of Chicago, administered

by the University, produced by the University, and presenting scholars from Chicago and other universities as regular participants.

"Hence, the Round Table on the air is the University of Chicago. Of course, it is only one part of the University, but to millions of Americans it is the only part of the University they know intimately; further, it is that part of the University best adapted to disseminating widely Chicago's political, social, and economic scholarship.

"What does this mean? It means, that as a University is a special kind of institution, with special obligations and principles, so to that extent at least the Round Table is a special kind of radio program—different from discussion programs which are sponsored, produced or administered by institutions or businesses which are not universities.

"The ideal of the great universities is dedicated to enlightenment and truthseeking. The University of Chicago was founded to pay dividends in knowledge, not profits. Its mission is to make truth felt and to influence men to think and act rationally. The University's goal is to try to comprehend long-range problems, to determine the fundamental factors in all things, and to maintain constantly a sound perspective and point of view in light of man's knowledge and history and experience.

"To vast numbers of our population, a university is the best symbol our society affords of integrity, of social responsibility and of knowledge. Any radio program produced and sponsored by a great university thus has an



extraordinary kind of responsibility if it is to live up to the ideals of a university.

"Thus, the Round Table radio program differs from those programs produced by the networks as a public service and for institutional prestige; thus, although perhaps on occasion the Round Table has been too much influenced by the size of its audience, yet in fact the size of audience is only a by-product of its efforts. . . ."

Some of the *Round Table's* eight principles the producers of other discussion programs probably regard as sound policy for their programs, too—numbers one, two, and four particularly. (Number eight, of course, must be ruled out, for it applies only to the *Round Table*.) But the *Round Table* is the only discussion program which has evolved the machinery to realize its objectives.

*Research.* About a week in advance of a broadcast, each participant receives a Research Memorandum. Bound in a light-board cover, the Memorandum contains a 2,000-word article on the background of the topic; a statement describing why the topic was chosen; excerpts from the replies of fifty listeners to a Radio Office letter asking "What do you want to know about Sunday's topic?"; a *suggested* outline; ten or twelve articles on the topic carefully selected from popular and technical periodicals and books; several pages of relevant, authoritative statistics; a brief memorandum prepared by participants or leading authorities on the topic; an envelope-page containing transcripts of previous *Round Table* broadcasts on related topics. All of these data are supplementary to the participants' own special knowledge, and



all are sharply relevant to the topic to be discussed. The Memorandum can be read in from two to four hours. It helps refresh participants on facts and ideas, gives them late and authoritative data, and provides a minimal pool of information for each of them.

*Preliminary meetings.* These are usually held Saturday evening. Participants meet for dinner and spend the evening in informal conversation. Because of the Research Memorandum, they come to the meeting with a fairly clear idea of the major issues with which the broadcast probably will deal. Dinner serves to acquaint them with each other. After dinner, participants get down to business, cooperatively draw up a topical outline for use on the air. Definitions are agreed upon. The *Round Table* thinks no good purpose is served by having participants argue about definitions of terms on the air. Facts are agreed upon. Those which are suspect are not used on the air. This enhances the validity of what data are broadcast.

*Rehearsal.* This takes place about two hours before air time. Prior thereto, participants spent about an hour re-checking their outlines (which have been typed for them), making their own notes in the margins. The rehearsal, which is conducted as if the discussion were on the air, is recorded. The recording is played back and criticized—by the participants for content and ideas, and by the Radio Office staff from the technical standpoint. This procedure is called “verbal proofreading,” and frequently results in a reorganized outline. Without exception, in the first eighteen months that the rehearsal recording was used, the air program has been from two to ten times

better than the rehearsal, in the opinion of participants themselves. And the criteria of "better" are: information, clarification, stimulation.

No one who listens regularly to the *Round Table* will claim that it is a perfect discussion program. The quality of programs varies greatly. Probably not more than twelve or fifteen of the *Round Table's* fifty-two yearly broadcasts would be classed "A" programs by the University. But as a result of its techniques and preparations, the *average* of all *Round Tables* has been raised. Today, there are more "A" programs than there were two years ago, and there are a greater number of "B" programs, very few "C."

The significant thing about the *Round Table* is its sharp rise in popularity, which seems to prove that listeners desire and are capable of appreciating mature and serious discussions specializing in information and clarification. Dr. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, who conducted a study of *Round Table* listeners, reported that "the informational content of the program is, for regular listeners, more important than other features, such as dramatic effects, personality of the speakers, etc. . . ." <sup>3</sup>

The *Town Meeting*, in a statement titled "Purpose of *Town Meeting*," says that "through the honest clash of authoritative opinions, it is our hope that our listeners will be stimulated to do more thinking, studying and discussing of the question, and that they will emerge from the experience with objectively reasoned opinions." The *People's Platform* statement declares that "the pur-

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<sup>3</sup> Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Radio and The Printed Page*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, p. 11.

pose of the program is to provoke thought on the part of the listeners, and the general philosophy of the program is that if you want to get people to do some real thinking, it's best accomplished by approaching them in a light manner. If they feel they have some great decision to make, more often than not, they stop thinking altogether and just worry."

But a clash of opinions and a light manner are not the best formulas for effective discussion programs. Each represents a preoccupation with format and superficial techniques. Each of the leading discussion programs has a traditional format. No one suggests that they be changed. But change and improvement are needed in the pre-broadcast routines and preparations. These need not be those used by the *Round Table*—the rehearsal recording, for example, would be of little value to programs like *Town Meeting* or the *American Forum*, which solicit questions from the audiences. However, it would seem essential for discussion programs to arrange lengthy preliminary meetings between participants, to iron out matters of detail and definition before going on the air. Research aids would immeasurably increase the informational and clarification content.

Despite the fact that the networks contribute free time, the production of a good discussion program costs money. A thousand dollars a program or more can be spent profitably. For example, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has subsidized the improvements in the *Round Table* by an amount nearly that great. So important, potentially, are discussion programs that the money spent on them—which, after all, is only 5 per cent of the cost of the

most expensive radio shows—is socially well worth it. The industry might underwrite at least the costs of all pre-broadcast services.

Further, the discussion program, particularly in wartime, deserves some special publicity attention by the industry. For not only does it represent the function of talk—of special importance in democracy in wartime—but it appeals more than other types of programs (if audience surveys are valid), to local leadership especially in small city and town communities. The function of two-way communication is thus well-served by discussions. One very effective publicity procedure would be that of cross-announcements—i.e., publicizing at the conclusion of each discussion program's broadcast, the topics, networks and hours of the other discussion programs. This mutual publicity would serve to introduce millions of listeners to all of the programs. At present, a competitive attitude exists on the part of the networks—which would not permit such cross-announcements to be made.

The American public appears now to be ready for a more serious, informative, "intellectual" type of discussion on the air than most professional radio people have hitherto realized. Public response to the *Round Table* reveals that even the unschooled and the "unintelligent" will rise to the challenge of a well-produced serious discussion, will tune in, stay tuned in, and will profit from listening to it.

To illustrate the work being done at the University of Chicago, the transcript of a representative *Round Table* program is included here.

## THE POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE POST-WAR WORLD

### PARTICIPANTS

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MR. CRAVEN: "Political reconstruction" is a challenging—and a mouth-filling—phrase. What does it mean?

MR. JESSUP: I would put the emphasis on the word "reconstruction." To me that means rebuilding, or building anew, the international structure in which we live. Obviously, we do not want to build again the kind of international structure we had before the war, because that produced the war. Obviously, also, we can't stop where we are, because that's chaos.

SIR NORMAN: I want to emphasize the primacy of *political* reconstruction. If we can't get a stable political order, we can't get anything. If we don't get order and peace, "a pint of milk a day" is simply going down the drain. Political order is the instrumentality through which a better social and economic order is made possible.

MR. CRAVEN: Yes. But talk of peace and political reconstruction after the war may seem sadly premature this morning, when the whole world to its farthest corner is at war.



Yet the fact remains that, wherever men fight or silently resist oppression, they dream of peace and a better world which will justify their sacrifices. And we have bitterly learned that preparation for peace is as vital as preparation for war. We have learned that sane and practical political reorganization requires about as much preliminary thought and planning as war itself.

MR. JESSUP: I think the reasons we need to discuss these problems were well brought out by the ROUND TABLE last week, in the first of this series.<sup>4</sup> They stressed the reasons we should discuss these points today, just as Secretary of State Hull stressed them a few weeks ago, and as they were stressed again this morning by Elmer Davis, of the Office of War Information.

MR. CRAVEN: We must remember that political reconstruction today means considerably more than merely manipulating political organization. Governments have been busy, the last few years, trying to secure for men greater safety, greater economic and social security. New Deals have occupied the attention of nations for a long period. Even if we're just going to talk about political reconstruction, we cannot ignore those social and economic problems.

In spite, however, of the complexity which I am suggesting, there are some clearly defined questions that we must face:

ANNOUNCER: *We won the last war, but we failed to win the peace. Why? What are the secrets of our failure to make the last peace work? Are there any lessons from history that*

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<sup>4</sup> In August, 1942, the Round Table presented a series of four programs on the post-war world: (1) *Should We Discuss the Next Peace Now?* (2) *Political Reconstruction*; (3) *Economic Requisites of a Durable Peace*; (4) *The Challenge of the Four Freedoms*.

*may help guide us to make a better peace when this present war ends?*

MR. JESSUP: Yes, we failed. And there were good reasons for it. Most of them aren't secrets at all. But they do need stressing. They need to be stressed over and over again. And I would suggest that one of the points which we must always keep in mind is that we failed because we didn't have a proper mental attitude. We failed to take account of realities. We thought we could have both peace and complete insulation from the rest of the world.

SIR NORMAN: Wasn't this the fundamental cause: that, in lesser or greater degree, we all repudiated the principle by which alone any peaceful society, whether of nations or of persons, can possibly be maintained? That principle is that the power of all shall be used for the defense of each. It's the principle that the community as a whole shall defend its members. Unless this principle, in one form or another, can be embodied in international arrangements, there can be nothing but anarchy.

If, when a citizen of the United States was murdered, the citizens as a whole declared it no affair of theirs, if they refused to pay taxes for an expensive police system to interfere in the quarrels of others, as they might put it—if that were the general view, what would be the chances of the survival of any law, of any order?

MR. CRAVEN: I think one of the reasons we have had those attitudes was our reaction to the last war. We came to the conclusion that the war had been a failure—that it had been without purpose. We came to the conclusion, in general, that war is a thing that sensible men would not indulge in. We called it the war to end all wars and decided that at last permanent peace had been achieved. Therefore, because we

disliked the experience so greatly, we ran away from the whole problem.

MR. JESSUP: I think another important aspect was the reaction against idealism. I don't want to seem cynical, but don't you think it is true that we came to feel that peace was just a matter of having a proper sentimental attitude? We didn't realize that it was a question of hard-boiled politics.

MR. CRAVEN: I grant you that. But when we came to believe that we had fought without purpose, when we came to the conclusion the whole thing was one great blunder, when the historians set to work to prove that nobody was guilty, we put ourselves in a frame of mind in which we were unwilling to carry forward, consciously and persistently, the effort for international peace. We were unwilling to make the sacrifices.

SIR NORMAN: Can't we best determine the cause of the failure by the events themselves? The peace began to go to pieces when Britain and America refused to ratify the agreement to defend France against Germany. It was then that France began to take her own measures of defense. Those measures included mistreatment of Germany, with plans for French invasion.

I recall a conversation with Dr. Simon, one of the early representatives of the Weimar Republic in London, after the Armistice, when we were discussing the prospects of peace in Europe. "Do the plans of the Allies," he asked bluntly, "include the defense of Germany if she is attacked?" It wasn't possible to say that they did. "In that case," retorted Simon, "there will be no peace." When finally we did hesitatingly embody this principle of mutual and reciprocal defense in the Locarno treaties, the rot had already gone too far. We would defend neither France nor

Germany. And this shunting of our obligation, this evasion, was in fact what broke down the peace.

MR. CRAVEN: I'd like to pile on top of that some concrete things also: the impossibility of the reparations that we placed on Germany; the demand that they be paid in gold—when they should have been paid in goods; the insistence on that war-guilt clause in the treaty. Those were things that laid the foundations for some of our troubles.

MR. JESSUP: Let me add to the catalogue the inconsistency which, I think, ran all through the peace policy. There was at first an insistence on vengeance, and then later a constant vacillation between vengeance and conciliation. And in this country there was our own failure to take part in the general measures which were devised for some form of international cooperation.

SIR NORMAN: I think the lesson of the whole thing is this: We shall have to be careful to profit by the failure of the last peace and to take the next step at the right moment. If, when we come to make the peace, we find that certain nations are "jumping claims" and if we let this disturbance go on—because perhaps the disturber has a good deal to say for himself—then the peace will go to pieces. It will be our job to prevent violence. The policeman has nothing to do with the rights or wrongs of a murderous dispute; it's not his business to be the judge. It is his business to see that violence is not used.

MR. CRAVEN: We should remember, also, that there were, both in England and in France, men who were willing to sacrifice the national and the international good for the sake of their own class interests. Fear of communism, on the part of persons in Germany and out, permitted Hitler



to go ahead with his program. He would not have been able to act if he had not had the sanction of some of these powers.

But, after all, we can't get any place by simply pointing out our mistakes. We ought at least to decide where we start in our program for correcting the mistakes we made after the last war:

ANNOUNCER: *When this war ends and the diplomats sit down to write the treaties, what are some of the basic principles they should follow to insure a just and enduring peace—one that won't breed a third World War?*

MR. CRAVEN: I do not believe there is such a thing as a permanent, an enduring peace. Peace is like liberty—we keep it at the price of eternal vigilance. If, after we have made a peace, we permit the things that produce war to continue, we shall only live to fight in the next generation. There is no such thing as a static, permanent peace.

MR. JESSUP: I think Mrs. Dean put your point very well in a recent article, when she said: "It should not dismay us in the least to live in a changing world. Our task is not to prevent change, but to use it, and to see that conflicts which are bound to occur are settled by peaceful means."

SIR NORMAN: Yes, but isn't there something more? We must each be prepared to accept—as part of this surrender of sovereignty—some measure of foreign authority. Long before the war's over there's certain to be a supreme political council of the twenty-eight nations, a unified command. Some of the authority of each nation will have passed into the hands of a body which, as a nationalist might put it, is made up mainly of foreigners. If we can't consent to be ruled in some measure by foreigners—to be commanded by



foreigners, as Australian forces are now commanded by General MacArthur—then obviously we cannot get the degree of unity which is indispensable not merely to future peace but to the winning of the war.

MR. CRAVEN: And we must remember that in the modern world there is an interdependence that did not exist in the days before modern industrial and technological changes. What happens to the least man in the farthest corner of the world is now a matter of importance to all of us. And if we permit aggression in the farthest corner of the world, all of us will have to help pay the bill.

MR. JESSUP: That's quite true. But I would like to point out that even in the last war we finally came to a unified command only in a military sense. It's much harder to accept restrictions on freedom of action in the economic field. But we must also come to that.

MR. CRAVEN: I agree with that, and I think we must also learn to tolerate peoples who differ from us.

MR. JESSUP: In other words, we mustn't have any "master-race" theory.

MR. CRAVEN: That's exactly it. And we must understand that other peoples have values.

MR. JESSUP: Just to summarize, as far as we have gone, the basic principles of this peace must include: unity among the United Nations; then acceptance of the notion of the interdependence of peoples and the end of the attitude of isolation; then the question of the surrender of national sovereignty, or the restriction on individual freedom of action; the necessity of toleration; the avoidance of the notion of a "master-race." All these are among the basic principles that we must adopt.

MR. CRAVEN: Yes. But sound principles and attitudes are not enough. We face certain very concrete problems:

ANNOUNCER: *What about Germany and Japan? How should they be dealt with? And what about the small nations of Europe—Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the others? Should their pre-war boundaries be restored? And, finally, what about India and China and the so-called "white man's burden?"*

MR. CRAVEN: I think we must first recognize the fact that there's a very serious difference of opinion in regard to the treatment of Germany. There are those who would completely exterminate the German people. At the other extreme there are those who say Germany must be dealt with just the same as the other peoples at the peace table.

MR. JESSUP: I think the idea of extermination is absolutely impossible. The American people aren't going to stand for an actual wiping-out of great numbers of Germans, even assuming that that would provide a solution. And if we are not going to exterminate them, then we must find some way of building them back into the international society.

SIR NORMAN: The whole idea of extermination, apart from any moral consideration, is perfectly impossible. To exterminate eighty million people is a physical absurdity.

MR. CRAVEN: But, on the other hand, aren't we going to punish someone? Aren't we going to hold someone responsible?

SIR NORMAN: Yes. I would make a very clear distinction between individual leaders, to whom we can attach a definite responsibility, and the people as a whole. We are faced with the fact that there are in Germany men who have com-

mitted crimes against civilization—against every possible code. They must not simply escape. They must be brought to trial and, if convicted, must be punished.

MR. CRAVEN: Aren't you making that old distinction between leaders and peoples, which didn't prove sound after the last war?

MR. JESSUP: We didn't hang the Kaiser.

SIR NORMAN: The distinction is this: we can punish leaders, but we can't punish peoples. The punishment of peoples would be too indiscriminate. We couldn't, for instance, include the children.

But what we can do is to help revise the ideas of the people as a whole by bringing home to them the immense guilt of the leaders they have sanctioned.

MR. JESSUP: What about the occupation of Germany?

SIR NORMAN: There must be a relatively prolonged occupation of Germany.

MR. CRAVEN: As a historian of the South I tremble a little at that. Remember the occupation of the South just after the Civil War. I'm not so certain that it added anything to our permanent peace, that it healed the differences between the sections. I'm inclined to believe that some of the bitterness of the present day can be traced to that occupation.

MR. JESSUP: As a northerner, I agree with you entirely about the iniquity of northern occupation of the South. But there can be good occupations. For instance, the Rhineland occupation by the American army, after the last war, really was welcomed in Germany. And the same was true of the occupation of Thrace by French and Italian forces.

MR. CRAVEN: What about the matter of political reconstruction with reference to Japan? Are we going to treat Japan differently from Germany?

SIR NORMAN: No. I believe we should treat Japan according to the same principles. I think the occupation of Japan should be mainly by the Chinese.

But haven't we skipped a point? What we're able to do with Germany will depend on what we're able to do with the other nations of Europe. If we can't get some sort of unity between the non-German states of Europe—and, in the case of Japan, between the non-Japanese states of Asia—then the last word won't be with us at all. It will be with Germany. If the other states quarrel with one another, Germany will be able to do just what she has done since the first World War—play off one against the other.

MR. CRAVEN: To get back to the question of the Japanese, why do you think the Chinese should be the occupying nation?

SIR NORMAN: Because the Chinese understand the Japanese better than we do—they are nearer to them. Moreover, the Chinese have shown that they have no passion for retaliation. The very fact that they wouldn't much care to occupy Japan is one of the reasons they should do it.

MR. JESSUP: By all means let the Chinese take the responsibility for much that is to be done in Asia, instead of going back to the old scheme of the Western nations trying to rule out there.

MR. CRAVEN: Much of our trouble after the last war came out of Middle Europe, and the question of nationalities and nationalism there. Can we overlook those countries that Germany has overrun—like Poland and Czechoslovakia and the others?

MR. JESSUP: Of course we can't overlook them. But I would suggest that the solutions there must be determined partly by the views which the Russian government will have. We can't ignore the importance of the Soviet Union in those solutions, particularly in that area.

MR. CRAVEN: Are we going to deny those people self-determination?

SIR NORMAN: Self-determination must be limited everywhere. No one can get freedom unless he is prepared to surrender some freedom for the purpose of the organization of all.

MR. CRAVEN: Since those people are not able to protect themselves, we're going to demand that they cooperate with one another and with the other nations as the price of their freedom and national existence.

SIR NORMAN: We should offer them a bargain. We should say in effect to Norway, or Czechoslovakia, or Greece: "It's obvious that you can't stand by yourself against a great power like Germany. None of us can. We, the twenty-eight nations, offer to help you in your defense. But, obviously, if your air forces and navies and economic reserves are to be at your own disposal, we are entitled to certain things in return."

MR. JESSUP: But when we apply those notions to the Far East, let's not go back to picking up the "white man's burden." Surely the fiction of white supremacy in the East is gone forever, and personally I'm very glad of it.

SIR NORMAN: I quite agree. It should be a bargain for mutual assistance on the basis of a broadly equal status—all nations enjoying the same rights, and all assuming the same obligations.



MR. CRAVEN: It seems to me that the problem is intensified in the Far East because of the concentrations of population and the enormous economic richness there.

In what we've been saying we have implied all along that some means of implementing our program must be found:

ANNOUNCER: *After the last war we had the League of Nations. Do you think it should be set up again when this war ends? Do you think that some kind of international organization will be necessary? What about an international police force to make the next peace work?*

MR. JESSUP: We can't possibly, in the time available to us, draw up a constitution for an international organization or even to suggest the outlines. We can't even discuss the details of the plans that have been suggested, like Clarence Streit's "Union Now."

SIR NORMAN: Out of the existing war machinery, we have to devise something which will serve in fact as a police force, although it may not have that name.

MR. CRAVEN: You would recognize separate stages in the development of the world of the future. There would be a stage in the beginning in which we should take care of the problems of restoration and policing, and so forth. Then you would look forward to a later period in which we should strive for this thing that we probably want more than anything else—permanent peace.

MR. JESSUP: Elihu Root made that same point after the last war, pointing out that there are these two jobs. One is finishing up the present war and getting things back into a state of more or less normal functioning. The other is the job of building a permanent peace. They're separate tasks. They've got to be handled separately and not confused.

MR. CRAVEN: You would envision, then, a rather long period of armistice?

MR. JESSUP: Yes. On that I agree with Vice-President Wallace, with the recent book of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Gibson, and with the recommendations of the Commission To Study the Organization of Peace. Others have argued against a long armistice on various grounds. But it seems to me that the arguments in favor of it are clearly ones that should be taken into account and observed.

SIR NORMAN: Wouldn't we find in practice that the length of the armistice period would depend partly on the rapidity with which we could achieve pacification? Someone calculated that at one period after the last Armistice twenty-two wars, of one kind or another, were raging in different parts of the world.

MR. CRAVEN: It seems to me that perhaps the most fundamental question of all is whether or not we're going to use force for the purpose of securing the peace. And, if we are to use force, where is it to be centralized?

SIR NORMAN: It will begin with the political council in Washington, as a continuation of the method by which the war will have been waged. Its first purpose will be to prevent violence, or, as I prefer to put it, to help defend the victim of violence. But it must not remain the possession of a few specially favored nations who will in fact give the decisions politically. Its task will be that of the policeman—to make peace possible in order that reason and discussion can intervene.

MR. JESSUP: I agree that the notion of an international police force is very attractive, but I do distrust the analogy to the domestic police force. I've yet to see any scheme for

setting up an international police force which would really provide anything different from the old, traditional system of the "divine right" of a few great powers to tell everybody else just what they're to do.

SIR NORMAN: Well, you had an illustration of how power can be used and developed into law in the history of your own Monroe Doctrine. That was unilateral. It was the United States, plus the British navy, which, without consulting the Latin-American states, provided that they would be protected. If it had stopped there, it would have been evil; but it didn't stop there.

MR. JESSUP: But, as long as we kept to the Monroe Doctrine, we couldn't have a Good Neighbor policy. We've achieved the Good Neighbor policy by giving up the old idea of the Monroe Doctrine. I hope to see a generalized Good Neighbor policy rather than a generalized Monroe Doctrine.

SIR NORMAN: My point is that you couldn't have had the Good Neighbor policy until you'd had the Monroe Doctrine.

MR. CRAVEN: In the case of the Monroe Doctrine in the Western Hemisphere, there was one powerful nation and a number of less powerful nations. That simplified the situation considerably in contrast with what exists in Europe. The European problem includes many strong nations and many weaker ones.

SIR NORMAN: Yes, but during a great part of the time that the peace was disintegrating in Europe there was one strong nation—the British Empire. If Great Britain had adopted a Monroe Doctrine, defending Article XVI of the League, then I believe we might have had peace.

MR. CRAVEN: We cannot deal in theory. We must deal in fact and get down to realities. The very point, it seems to me, where we can start to build a better world is in the return to the League of Nations. I'm willing to start at least with the League of Nations. I believe that it failed not because of inherent weaknesses but because it did not receive the support of the nations that should have been behind it.

MR. JESSUP: But, when you use the term "League of Nations," it seems to me you're using a label which arouses misconceptions in the minds of a lot of people. I take it you mean in general some form of international organization with the machinery for handling technical and other questions, not necessarily that same body.

SIR NORMAN: The League failed not because it was defective in its constitution but because those who ought to have worked it refused to do so.

MR. CRAVEN: I do not believe that the League had a chance. It seems to me that the principles of the League were valid: compulsory arbitration, a period of cooling off, a provision for sanctions—by which nations that refused to abide by the decisions of the group were to be dealt with in an effective manner. We did not give those principles a chance. What was lacking was not the machinery but the spirit behind the machinery. Given that spirit, I think we can get some place.

MR. JESSUP: By all means let's experiment and go forward slowly. I don't think people ought to get the idea the whole thing's a failure because perfection is not reached in one moment.

SIR NORMAN: I think that the main care of the moment is that the twenty-eight United Nations shall remain united

—that we do not somehow manage to drift into frictions between, for instance, Britain and the United States, which will make all these future anticipations of no avail.

MR. CRAVEN: I think there is also necessary some sort of international body that can act for the nations and attempt to build the international spirit.

We seem to agree that we failed in the last peace because we were unwilling to accept responsibility and make the sacrifices necessary to keep peace. We tried to keep all our sovereignty. We refused to use force. We let problems develop which led directly to war and did nothing about it. We failed more from lack of sound attitudes than from lack of machinery. The new peace that we're talking about must be based on new attitudes and on a reinforced machinery with which to implement our program.

It seems clear that we must face the future with both fears and hopes. Our problems are difficult. We must profit by our experience and keep ever alert, to secure a world ruled not by passion but by reason.



## *The Dramatist*

The radio dramatist assumes a new importance in wartime, because drama is best adapted to exploiting the potential of radio as a weapon. No amount of talking by one man, no colloquy between any two men, no round-table discussion could explain the rubber shortage as effectively as *Three Thirds of The Nation* (see Chapter 9), nor give voice to the inarticulate feelings of a people as effectively as *To The Young* (see Chapter 8). Drama has the asset of emotional appeal, and if properly handled, succeeds not only in informing or clarifying, but in inspiring as well.

This is not to say that radio would necessarily realize its wartime potential if all broadcasts were dramatic, since no one format can guarantee effectiveness. But of all the types of programs on the air, those of a dramatic nature hold the richest promise of eliciting concerted action. Drama is best able to utilize the devices and creative opportunities of radio; it addresses itself not only

to the listener's mind but to his emotions; it establishes empathetic participation by the listener. The technician can employ his specialized talents on a dramatic program in a way not possible with other types of programs. He can be persuasive with an eloquence and impact beyond that which ordinary speech can achieve. He has editorial instruments which cajole where words alone fail, which excite when ideas cannot, which convince where argument does not. He has these advantages *if* he has something important to say *and* knows how properly to handle his medium.

Only a small proportion of dramatic radio programs find anything important to say about the war. There are few technicians who know how to handle the dramatic format effectively despite the fact that too many of them use it. Drama seems to hold a special fascination for the industry's creative personnel, because virtually all other types of programs use radio primarily as a mechanical, not as a creative, medium. Every Tom, Dick and Harry wants to try his hand at drama with the result that about 30 per cent of radio time is devoted to dramatic programs—although probably not more than 10 per cent of them are worth while, either technically or in terms of content.

After December 7, the dramatic format became the pet of the would-be propagandists and "morale experts" of the industry. Realizing its potential as a radio weapon, they gave drama increasing attention and air time. The effect of these programs on listeners, with few exceptions, cannot be said to have been happy. The almost unlimited opportunities for emotional manipulation have generally been exploited with neither restraint nor judgment. In-

creasingly, dramatic programs are exhortative, confusing, and exciting without purpose or point. They are being used as emotional stimulants, without strategical direction; their techniques are becoming substitutes for ideas, and they are becoming soap boxes from which to harangue the multitude.

Before December 7, good dramatic programs were probably no more numerous than they are today. But the standards of judgment have changed. Wartime makes us more sensitive to shortcomings because war makes all things more vital, and failure to succeed becomes a much more serious matter. Today, dramatic programs deal predominantly with war problems. Some, like Arch Oboler's *Plays For Americans* and various government programs, concentrate exclusively on war themes; others, like *The Adventures of the Thin Man*, while basically intended for entertainment, weave war references and war adventures into their plots. Prior to Pearl Harbor, nearly all radio drama sought to provide escape and amusement, and seldom dealt with serious ideas. As Norman Corwin declared, "The issues in the past five years . . . have been kept from the people, whether willfully, accidentally, or out of a strange, almost emasculated, sense of neutrality. 'We shall not discuss Fascism. We shall not put on a program which offends any group.' Well, I can imagine the crude laughter of the board of strategy of Axis propaganda at such a policy."<sup>1</sup>

Today, radio drama, whenever it impinges upon the war, relates itself intimately to our lives through the issues

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Corwin, "Radio Drama In Wartime," symposium at the Ohio State University Institute for Education by Radio, May 5, 1942.

and problems with which each of us is greatly concerned. And we are disposed to listen not, as in the past, simply because we want to be entertained, but because in addition we want to be inspired and informed about things and told how we can contribute to victory. Consequently, we are no longer just casual listeners; we are eager listeners. And we are particularly responsive to dramatic programs. Drs. Hadley Cantril, Gordon W. Allport and Merton Carver of Harvard University, in an interesting study in 1937, found that facts, narrative and abstract material were "better understood and more interesting over the radio than when read on a printed page," that people remembered directions better, and that "material presented over the radio has a greater power of suggestion."<sup>2</sup> Being more interested, listeners are more critical. But note that the basis of critical perception is not confined to matters of dramatic technique—to whether the music is good or the sound effects realistic or the actors well cast or the script entertainingly written. Criticism now extends also to *what* is said. Lack of content cannot be camouflaged for long.

Dramatic programs are broadcast in one of four categories of sponsorship—(1) commercial; (2) government; (3) station (or network); (4) collaborative between the station and a group, (as *Dear Adolf*, which was sponsored by NBC and the Council for Democracy). Of these, only the government and collaborative programs seem to have any defined standards of content—the government, because it has agencies in touch with trends of public opin-

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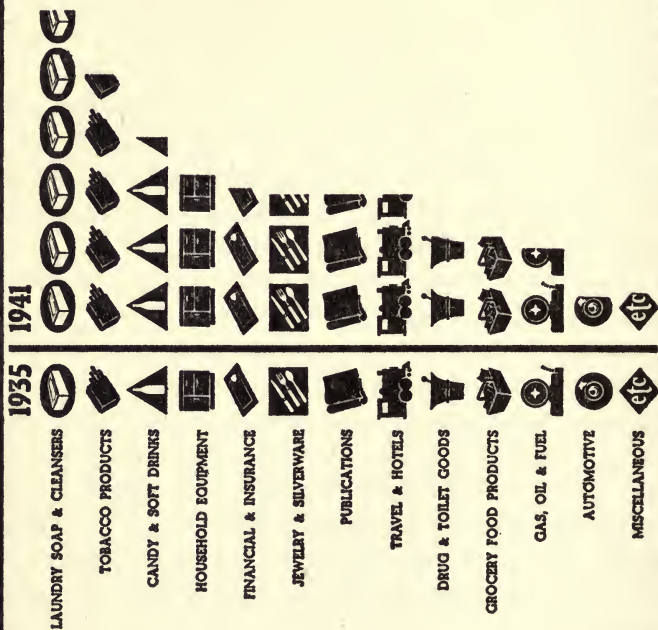
<sup>2</sup> "The Truth About The 'Harvard Findings.'" Columbia Broadcasting System, 1937.

ion and because it has a responsibility at least to inform the public about its major wartime activities; the groups which collaborate, because they are organized for a definite service or propaganda purpose and know how best to gather data and angle inspiration for their ends. The circumstance which elevates both of these categories above commercial and industry-sponsored programs is that they are organized and have agencies or personnel whose business it is at least to scratch for content and data. Their interests are not primarily literary, because they have something to say. They are on the right track, and it may be assumed that in time both the government and collaborative programs will become better, and will devote even more thought to planning and content.

Commercial sponsors are less likely to air dramatic programs dealing with ideas or the clarification of problems and issues. Their primary goal is to entertain and to sell products. The *Cavalcade of America* or *Cheers from the Camps* represent about as far as one may expect them to go. Inspirational programs or old plots replanted in wartime locales or situations (heroines kidnaped by Nazi agents instead of by gangsters) will be their maximum endeavor. This observation is not meant to be critical. There is much to be said for fencing off crucial wartime content themes from sponsorship—assuming that sponsors might really be willing to handle them. Of all those who broadcast, sponsors are the most desirous of winning large audiences, of airing what interests the public. They are least willing to deviate from the established way of doing and saying things. They are motivated by the interests of showmanship; they are predisposed



# NETWORK CLIENT EXPENDITURES BY INDUSTRIES



to use big dramatic names and stars; they can least afford to "take sides"; they dislike programs which try to "educate" listeners, on the ground that a listener is a real or potential customer and customers are neither won nor retained if ever they feel they are being talked down to or urged to act by a vested interest. And there are other reasons in addition to these of attitude. The technicians of the advertising agencies are specialists in selling, but their ability to sell does not vest them with the ability to clarify issues or determine a frame of values. Advertising on the air is seldom more than skillful and packaged exhortation. Those who claim, with *PM* and the *Saturday Evening Post*,<sup>3</sup> that American advertising genius is the best pool from which to draw our propaganda and information personnel, overlook the fact, obvious to laymen, that ideas are more potent in wartime than mere words. There are, of course, areas of wartime propaganda where advertising technicians can be, and are, helpful—in developing "buy bonds" and "collect scrap" slogans and plugs. But this is the spot-announcement level of firing, and if radio is to be an effective weapon it cannot shoot BB's—it must shoot high explosives.

This brings us to a passing consideration of the typical dramatic fare produced by the industry. Two weeks' intense listening in Chicago and one week's in New York to listed wartime dramas on local and network stations revealed four principal patterns: (1) The cops-and-robbers formula, best typified by CBS' *The 22nd Letter*, dramatizing stories of underground opposition in Axis-

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<sup>3</sup> Page 89.

conquered countries and the Blue Network's *Alias John Freedom*, the tale of a modern Robin Hood forever getting in the Gestapo's hair, and *Counter Spy*, the adventures of a government agent combating enemy spies. (2) The helpful-hints formula, usually found in programs directed to women or children. A busy housewife collects fats and tin; a ten-year-old boy gathers scrap rubber in his wagon; old Aunt Elmira bakes a victory cake without sugar, while chatting on about the war "which surely upsets a body. . . ." (3) The inspiration formula, in which the exploits of heroic soldiers or seamen are dramatized, or in which a selfish or unpatriotic person is made to see that the war is a noble and just cause. (4) The report formula, best typified by CBS' *Report to the Nation* and WBBM's (Chicago) *The Midwest Mobilizes*. Documentary in format, programs in this category usually review events in government or on the production front.

In many cases these programs are technically excellent. Now and then they are vehicles for humdrum but perhaps important information, and sometimes they even succeed in clarifying the antecedent factors which make it important. Often these programs are tailor-made to the specifications of some government agency seeking to educate listeners in a new phase of its program. But there are other instances in which entertainment values are manufactured out of whole cloth to capitalize on the general trend of public interest. Almost always the characters who walk before the microphone in these dramatic productions are motivated by an eagerness to help win the war. Where they fail dramatically is not in their intention

but in the tattered straw from which they are created. These programs are not the best radio is capable of offering, but there is too often a tendency to regard them as the best radio can afford to offer. After studying these programs, one is reminded of Max Wyllie's comment after preparing his *Best Broadcasts of 1939*, "The experience was a considerable chore because it was necessary to eat so much stale popcorn before finding a prize."

A large part of the reason for this can be found in the idea that radio drama must entertain and provide escape, and that listeners must be given the kind of dramatic fare represented in the *Lux Radio Theatre* and other programs which are enormously popular. Applied to wartime, this is the argument that what interests the public is *ipso facto* in the public interest. Arch Oboler, one of radio's leading dramatists, suggests that the effort to reach large audiences with every program "should not be repeated at this time of crisis. . . . We should decide the level of the audience we are trying to reach and write to that level, and the Crossley be hanged." He urges that "those dramatists who have proven their ability to reach mass audiences be given the job of reaching the mass audience," and that those dramatists who can reach the upper levels be given the job of writing to them.

There is little doubt, as we mentioned earlier, that the constant effort to attain large Crossleys is a handicap to creative radio. For one thing, it discourages experimentation with novel and untested patterns and appeals. Technicians who want to win large audiences are disposed to employ the dramatic devices and techniques which programs of tested popularity use.

Crossley rates relative popularity, but cannot measure relative worth of programs. The subjective evaluation of radio's wartime public service can be determined best by men who are familiar with the problems and issues confusing the public, and who understand the methodology of clarification.

The dramatist, the technician, even if he aims his efforts at a select audience, seeks to make that audience as large as possible. Depending upon his skills, his integrity as an artist, or his purpose in writing, he may establish limits of taste or content beyond which he will not go to enlarge his audience; but within the creative framework he accepts, all of his ingenuity and talent will be concentrated in an effort to maximize his potential audience.

The stumbling block in Oboler's comment on Crossleys is the word "proven"—"choose dramatists who have *proven* their ability to reach mass (or select) audiences. . . ." To the industry, what constitutes proof? What, indeed, but their Crossleys? By its very nature, a mass audience is very large; a select audience is always limited. But it does not necessarily follow that a limited audience is always select—it may be a pocket-edition of a mass audience, representing a cross-section of economic and educational levels. Corwin directed all and wrote many of the *This Is War!* programs which attained a Crossley of around 20, mostly in the upper income and educational groups. Yet the government desired to make this series a mass series. If the government, with its great facilities for studying audience, could not aim at its desired audience, how can we be sure that the industry



can? It may be argued that Corwin's personal talents are highbrow, and that it was inevitable his audience would be select; but Corwin also wrote and produced the *Bill of Rights* program which attained the highest Crossley of any dramatic program ever broadcast—more than 60. This can hardly be regarded as a select audience. In short, so long as proof of ability is measured by audience response exclusively, radio will be seriously handicapped in realizing its potential.

There is the further misconception that radio technicians as a group are competent to arouse public response—a point of view based upon the advertising idea that the ability to sell is the same as the ability to clarify and inform. We have said that, to maximize its effectiveness, radio drama must contact listeners emotionally. Most dramatic programs, however, exercise neither discrimination nor restraint in the application of emotional devices. One vitriolic critic says that “[Radio] undertakes to dramatize heroism, battle, patriotic dedication, and the last full measure of devotion. In ninety per cent of its product so far, however, it has achieved only a rich hamminess of content made worse by the resonant falsity of an announcer who heard too many Fourth of July orations when he was a boy and, as an adult, has listened too reverently to the March of Time. The average radio dramatization of heroism presents its heroes shrieking, bellowing, sobbing, moaning, and expressing nobility through a succession of sneezes, belches, and other explosive sounds intended to inform us that the emotions are too grand or too awful for words to convey. Then at the end, an ululating baritone mushy with pumped-up

pity or unfelt awe tries to draw the whole thing to a fine point of inspiration by producing bugle tones on the vocal cords.”<sup>4</sup>

To such protests against over-emotionalization, the usual reply is “How is it possible to over-emotionalize the terrors which our enemies represent? How is it possible to over-emotionalize the implications of what defeat for us would mean? How is it possible to over-emotionalize the challenge to patriotism which the war represents?” In their enthusiasm for the emotion-rousing capacity of radio drama, technicians often fail to realize that there exists a point of diminishing returns when listeners begin to rebel against dramatic pressure. Up to that point listeners may be completely under the sway of the dramatist. One more adjective, one more exaggeration, and the structure may collapse under the weight of its emotionalization, leaving the listener cold and perhaps disillusioned. Radio cannot be said to be emotionalizing when it reports the news that the Nazis burned Lidice and executed all of its male inhabitants; but it exposes itself to that criticism if it broadcasts a supercharged drama of the burning of Lidice, with imaginative re-enactments, complete with “angry music” and brutal sound effects and hammy actors. It is not radio’s job to gild the lily or to cheapen the solemn heroism of a valiant people by inflammatory theatre.

These three dicta—give the audience what it wants, radio’s technicians have the skill to sell issues, indiscriminate emotionalization is the formula for effective drama—

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard DeVoto, “Give It To Us Straight!” *Harpers Magazine*, August, 1942.

are the prevalent misconceptions which seem as much as any to be holding radio back from realizing its full potential. There is need for a sharp definition of the responsibilities of the dramatist as an artist and the dramatist as a pleader.

We have tried to establish the principle that the determination of program content and its strategic policy, must be made by competent public policy-makers, and not by technicians. War conditions the circumstances under which radio policy is determined. In wartime, the public, because of censorship limitations, has very limited horizons. The technicians, except a handful of those in government service, have little more knowledge than the public of the facts necessary for policy determination. A program policy based upon the judgment of technicians, under these circumstances, becomes a policy of the blind leading the blind. Since it is clear that all technicians cannot be included in the inner circle of government, it seems reasonable to contend that they cannot be left to determine propaganda policy.

It may be maintained that this principle applies only to documentary or factual dramatic programs, and not to the regular dramatic shows. But how is this dramatist story-teller—one who is on the air on a sustaining basis, using radio drama to express his own philosophy and point of view—to adapt his programs to national radio policy, strategy, and public interest?

First, we must recognize that these dramatists are not propagandists in the sense in which we have defined that word elsewhere. They do use radio to express their own viewpoints in the pattern of a human interest story, which

differs from the documentary approach of such programs as *Three Thirds of the Nation*. They insist that they speak for themselves alone; that they deal with fictional characters and situations. There is no crucial concealment, no relevant duplicity. Second, they are not bound by the limits of the Strategy of Truth. As dramatists dealing with the war, they are radio's closest approximation to a propaganda for the truth. If they are extraordinarily competent, as are Oboler and Corwin, they give expression to certain philosophical observations about the war and its impact on the lives of people. Third, they are specialists in inspiration; if they handle their skills badly, in a manner which we shall describe shortly, their programs degenerate into exhortation. But their motives are inspirational, for unlike the dramatists of information and clarification, they have no obligation to broadcast directives to the listener, and so are not in the position of having to recognize his presence, nor to regard him as someone to be directly spoken to and instructed.

These men hold a different status from that of a Schoenfeld broadcasting programs like *In This Strange Land* under a government aegis,<sup>5</sup> or from a Corwin producing an "official" government series.<sup>6</sup> The dramatists broadcasting on a sustaining basis are sponsored, if that word may be employed, only by themselves and by the station or network whose facilities they use. They do not have Uncle Sam as a patron; no official prestige attaches to their efforts. The listener takes them for what they are—dramatists with a personal angle on things; he does not

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 9.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 8.

read into their programs the wisdom of leadership or directives of government.

Does this place the sustaining dramatist outside the area of radio's strategy, outside considerations of public interest? The sustaining dramatist shoulders a tremendous responsibility—he is permitted relatively free use of a medium which can reach millions of people; if he broadcasts on a network, he can have, as Oboler says, "in a single half-hour a larger audience than Shakespeare had in a lifetime."<sup>7</sup> And, as a dramatist, he employs that form of radio art which is probably the most effective in its impact upon listeners. By what claims are these dramatists given such an opportunity? It is because they are skilled technicians; because they know or are presumed to know how to tell a story well; because they can hold an audience's attention; and because, ostensibly, they are the artists who confer on radio the label of art. It is not because they know or are presumed to know the intellectual and emotional needs of the public, nor because they understand the policies which should influence the use of radio in wartime, nor because they are wise men or leaders.

In peacetime, the purpose of radio drama is to entertain and the plots and ideas of programs, even of those that are intended to be serious, have little or nothing to do with what one might call essential national policy; nor are peacetime programs permitted to carry the torch for political, social or economic policies, nor to urge listeners to pursue a specific course of action. But war-

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<sup>7</sup> Arch Oboler, "The Art of Radio Writing," *Fourteen Plays by Arch Oboler*, Random House.



time dramas which ignore the war or do not presume to recommend or inspire action are in the minority. War has transformed radio dramatists from men with a plot into men with a message and a cause. This is an important point because the dramatists, whose claim to the microphone rests upon their being artists with the rights and privileges of expression to which artists in a cultural democracy are entitled, cease to be artists the moment they champion a cause and endeavor to win listeners to its support. Let us examine the reasons why this is so.

The artist has as his exclusive aim entertainment through the device of telling a story, whereas the dramatist who endeavors to influence response in support of his cause has persuasion as his exclusive aim. One is artistic and one is political in objective.

Does this mean that the artist cannot take sides, or that he must close his eyes to the facts of a situation, or that he must write only of things that do not relate to or affect people? Not at all. An artistic drama is an imaginative narrative; it is fiction. But fiction is not a synonym for falsehood. It can deal with truth, and the mere fact that it does not imitate the pattern of a newspaper story does not make it false.

Fiction illuminates facts by the narrative technique. But its aim is entertainment, not persuasion. In the process of illumination, it deals frequently with social questions, almost always with moral ones—with right and wrong, justice and injustice. Thus fiction can be significant—socially and morally significant. An artistic dramatist cannot be morally neutral—he takes sides; he cannot be indifferent about moral or social values. This

being so, why is it not the artist's function to solicit support for his position? Because if he is truly an artist, he *elicits* support for his *moral* position by his skill in illumination; but if he *solicits* support for the political end of his story, he is no longer an artist but a pleader or exhorter. How far, then, can the artist go? Apparently he is required to make very nice distinctions. What are the limits beyond which he cannot go without losing the rights and privileges of expression essential to an artist? This is the crux of the issue. The artist must abide by the limits of responsibility which are the quintessence of his artistic function: he cannot be didactic; he cannot become a teacher or a preacher; he cannot write what are really speeches and excuse them as drama simply because several characters rotate the reading; he cannot advocate a solution for an issue or a reform or recommend a way of action. If he does these things, he has gone beyond the limits of artistic expression.

We must draw this distinction between the dramatist who broadcasts as an artist and the dramatist who broadcasts as a pleader. The latter, it seems, should be subject to certain standards of competency. He is really a radio commentator—except that he uses the artifices of drama to put over his pleadings. He is given virtually free use of the microphone; it is up to the industry to withdraw that privilege from any except dramatists who broadcast as artists or who have outstanding competence.

No one who listens to wartime dramatic programs with any frequency, either on local stations or networks, can fail to be aware of the abuses which many sustaining dramatists commit. Under the cloak of entertainment

they hide emotional clubs which they employ to excite and arouse listeners to "Do this!" or "Do that!" or to drive people to action on behalf of various war efforts or policies or programs. Unlike documentary programs, they fail to clarify issues or problems; unlike programs like *The Bill of Rights*, they do not inspire on a high level nor bear the official approval of the government. Their net effect is to nurture a sense of frustration, for their exhortation and emotionalization lacks coordination and direction. Often they succeed only in further undermining public respect for radio. These programs, and the dramatists who produce them, should be brought under the wings of radio's board of strategy, so that the capable technical talents which they possess can be mobilized behind radio's wartime effort.

The problems concerning the responsibility of the dramatic pleader are more easily solved on the network than on local stations. Networks have no problem in filling time with well-produced programs, and they have adequate budgets with which to buy sustaining talent. Many local stations, however, have neither sufficient staff, money or facilities to fill sustaining periods with quality programs. They rely too frequently on amateur and free talent and often open their microphones to would-be dramatists who merely want "radio experience." Thus listeners are sometimes subjected to the harangues of technicians of doubtful skill and intellectual competency who advance their own conceptions of morale and propaganda themes and presume to lead and influence American public opinion and action.

A further complicating factor in permitting dramatists

to broadcast without requiring them to meet any standards accrues from the fact that series, as opposed to single programs, soon drain dry all but the most prolific and versatile talents. A thirty-minute radio script is the equivalent of one-third of a three-act play. In thirteen weeks the series dramatists must write four full three-act plays! After the first few programs the dramatist, in the effort to meet his deadline, usually tends to become increasingly superficial both in his themes and treatments.

All of this adds up to the recommendation that radio should develop rigid standards and requirements for its dramatic pleaders—that those who are given air shall have their programs coordinated with a general plan of strategy, and that the programs shall primarily be on the level of information and clarification rather than of exhortation; and that dramatists who broadcast as artists shall be required to conform to the limitations imposed by their medium on this form of art.

We may perhaps see more clearly the difference between the dramatic pleader and the dramatic artist by reading one of Oboler's *Plays for Americans*—an inspiring and significant piece entitled *Ghost Story*. Here, in a handful of minutes, Oboler delineates the character of Joe, a factory worker, who is eager to see action as a soldier. Without any exhortation or speeches to the audience the importance of the men on the factory front is dramatized through the mouths of the ghosts of workers from foreign lands. The drama makes a point which is not limited to the factory-front frame of reference—its emotional impact succeeds in dramatizing the importance of everyone's helping at his job, and the importance of

time and work on the home front. Underlying the drama is the moral proposition that every man who fails to serve his country and his fellow men by doing his job well and conscientiously is a social criminal, so to speak. The dramatic devices which Oboler uses are legitimate and effective, and all who heard this program must have left their radios with the feeling and knowledge that they had participated in a moving work. The complete script follows:

### GHOST STORY

#### SIGNATURE MUSIC

ANNOUNCER: The National Broadcasting Company presents: *Plays for Americans*, by Arch Oboler. (*Pause—one beat*) As a further contribution to the war effort, NBC brings you a limited series of new plays dedicated to people of goodwill everywhere who believe in the inherent dignity of man—who fight together now for a better world for all. This is a war of men and ideas, and these are plays of the men and ideas that make up our America of today. As the fourth drama of this series we bring you Mr. Oboler's new play, *Ghost Story*.

JOE: I'm sittin' here in the factory by my lathe, so a guy sticks a microphone up in front of my nose and he says I should talk to ya. This is goin' on the radio, so I'm talkin' to ya. Let me warn ya first. An' this ain't one of those phony warnin's like the mystery guys do—ya know, like the kids go for when they start with this, "Ya better turn off the radio! Blood! Blood! Blood!" This is *me* talkin' and I'm just a guy who works for a livin' like you mebbe do—



with his hands. But if you're a wise guy I'm tellin' ya—don't listen no more. Go on, tune in somethin' else. There's music someplace else, or there's some guy sellin' somethin', or some guy wishin' he was sellin' somethin', or a dame doin' fancy singin'—there's plenty you can tune in. But—if ya wanta hear about somethin' that happened last night that—that mebbe never happened to another guy in all the time that guys like me has been gettin' born and livin' and dyin' in this world—well, jus' sit and listen. (*Quickly*) I'm six foot one, one hundred eighty-three pounds, twenty-four, no wife, no dependents—there you got it. . . . I said it fast, didn't I? Well, I got practice. Yeah, in front of my Draft Board. I tol' them. I tol' them plenty. And they tol' me.

SOUND: *Fade in a murmur of committee behind*

VOICE: Joe, what's the matter with you—we're your neighbors! Your friends!

JOE: O. K. Listen to what I'm sayin'!

VOICE: But, Joe, we got our orders from Washington. Anybody essential to National Defense we gotta defer!

VOICE: Yeah, we gotta defer you. You're a master mechanic. (*Fade*) We gotta defer you.

JOE: You understand? Master mechanic! Me! So, they don't draft me. I'm single—I got too much health—no dependents—I got no use for Japs or Nazis or that Duce guy—I'm looking for a fight—an' they don't draft me! O. K.—I go to the Army. . . .

VOICE (*fade in*): But you're part of an essential industry.

(*Fade . . .*) Son, part of an essential industry.

JOE: I go to the Navy—Marines—

VOICES: Essential industry.

Essential industry.

Essential industry.

Essential industry.

Essential industry.

JOE: How do ya like them potatoes! I want to fight—I *can't* fight! I'm tellin' ya! I got outta there and I'm ready to slug the first guy that looks at me! Essential industry! What kinda double talk's that? They want essential—what's more essential than a guy who wants to get in there and fight! What's a war! Guy's fightin', so how about me? *How about me?* There ain't no answer. No. The big shots lay down the law and a guy like me, he's sunk. Now, wait a minnit, wait a minnit! If you're thinkin' "What's this guy blowin' off about? Is he tryin' to tell us what a great guy he is? A hero with red blood an' hair on his chest an' all that mallarky?" No, mister, no hero. This is just a story of me—a guy who wanted to fight, but no soap, essential to war industry—a master mechanic—gotta stick behind that lathe, watchin' the machinery go 'round because Pa was a master mechanic and made a master mechanic outta me! So it's back behind the machine, Joe Dunham, and shut up and keep your nose clean! Ain't you heard—you're essential to the industry! The guys at the plant start givin' me the rib.

VOICES: Hi, ya, General!

What's cooking, Admiral?

How goes it in the trenches?

How many Japs did ya knock off today, Major?

JOE: Yeah—the rib—but that's not botherin' me. Only one thing's botherin' me. Guys are on ships and guys are in tanks an' airplanes an' fox holes in the jungles fightin'—and me, I'm workin' from nine to five behind a lathe—yeah, nine to five. . . . I read about them guys at Pearl Harbor—I read about them guys with MacArthur—I read about men fightin' in China and alongside them Dutchmen

and pretty soon I can't take it no more! I gotta get outta the factory! I don't want a lathe—I wanna tommy gun in my hand! I don't wanna caliper and micrometer in my hand—I wanna be sightin' along a rifle barrel—yeah, at a Jap, pressin' a trigger! So everybody thinks I'm nuts. My girl—

GIRL (*off*): You're makin' more money than you ever did in your life.

JOE: My friends—

VOICES: Come on—whadda ya wanna stick your neck out for? You're nuts! That's what you are—you're nuts! Go on, make dough—(*Fade*) have fun—

JOE: Yeah—everybody. So for weeks it's nine—(*Whistle sounds far, far back*) to five. (*Factory whistle far, far back*) Nine—(*Factory whistle far, far back*) Five—(*Factory whistle far, far back, continuing with a long beat in between each blast, far, far back, far behind*) Every day—every morning—every night—nine to five—nine to five—sit by the lathe—stick the castings in—out with the old one—in with the new one—nine to five—nine to five—over and over—safe as in a crib—(*Intensely*) I couldn't take it! Not me! Nobody could keep me there! I made up my mind! Yesterday! My last nine to five! My last sittin' there safe as in a crib! Behind the machine! Yeah—last nine to five. All day long the usual rib—

VOICES (*back*): Hi, Joe, where's the Army!

Say, how goes it in the Halls of Montezuma?

How many battleships did you get today, Lieutenant?

How's the ammunition holdin' out, Colonel?

JOE: But yesterday it didn't make much difference. I had it figgered down to three one-hundred-thousandths! Shut off the lathe—punch that time-clock for the last time—take that lunch pail and walk—keep walkin' and ridin' straight an'

far from any factory and any lathe—walkin' and ridin' to some spot where Joe Dunham, master mechanic, just wasn't anymore—and Joe Smith, private, got himself a gun! So yesterday at the factory, with the lathe turnin'—(*Fade in sound of lathes back behind*) Five o'clock. (*Sound of factory whistle far, far back*) Turned off my lathe—(*Click of lathe dying down*) For the last time!

VOICES: So long, soldier Joe!

See you tomorrow, Major!

See you tomorrow, General!

JOE: No—they wouldn't see me tomorrow. Not them or the factory or the lathe. I felt good thinkin' that. I felt good ridin' home—an' I felt good seein' *her* for the last time—

GIRL (*fade in*): Gee, Joe, I'm glad you stopped being a fool about it! Gosh, after all, you're sittin' on top of the world! Got everything you want, haven't you, Joe. (*Giggles*) Joe, don't . . . Joe . . . Joe . . . (*Fade*) Joe. . . .

JOE: I got away from her early. O. K. Finish. Her—the factory. . . . Back to my room—pack my things—yeah—couldn't wait— Get out quick that night. So I packed quick—then I saw that somethin' was missin'! Something—(*In discovery*) Yeah, my pipe! Where had I left . . . ? Then I remembered—on the shelf next to my lathe in the factory! You know how a guy feels about his pipe—O. K. Pack everything else—take a suitcase and on the way to the bus station stop off and pick up my pipe! Then—on my way (*Slowly*) I *had* it all figured out. . . .

WATCHMAN (*back*): What's the matter, Joe—forget somethin'?

JOE: Yeah, I remember—Fogarty, the night watchman—did I forget somethin'. Yeah. . . . I went into the plant. (*Sound of echoing footsteps continuing back behind*) Quiet in the plant—kinda dark—Two o'clock in the mornin'—seven more hours until the next shift came in—my shift. And I wouldn'

be there. I felt swell. I yelled out (*Yelling . . . echo chamber*) *I won't be here!* (*Sound of footsteps*) I kep' walkin'. Cold in the machine shop—cold and dead—that certain kinda' dead that machines have when they ain't runnin'. . . . Then—(*Door back*) Door to the part of the shop where my machine was. . . . (*Closing door*) Went in. (*Puzzled*) Night light on. . . . But that hummin'—machine runnin' . . . (*Sharply*) at my machine! Yeah! What—who—a guy sittin'—at my lathe! Yeah—workin'! Two o'clock in the mornin' like I said—and a guy workin' at my machine! . . . (*Down*) I get kind of, how do they say. carried away like even when I talk about it. O. K. I'll tell ya about it straight from now on—as if you—yeah, *you*—had been there with me. . . . (*Echo back*) Hey! Hey, you!

SOUND: *Sound of running—fading in close—sound of lathe in and back behind*

JOE: What are you doing there at my lathe? What's the big idea? . . . Hey, I'm talkin' to you. . . . Shut off that machine. . . . I'm talkin' to you!

RUSSIAN WORKER (*in Russian*): Go 'way—I'm busy!

JOE: What did you say? Listen, guy, I'm talkin' to you! . . . What the devil are you doin' at my lathe this time of the night? Who let you in?

RUSSIAN WORKER (*in Russian*): I told you, go away!

JOE: Eh? What kind of language is that?

RUSSIAN WORKER (*in Russian*): Go 'way!

JOE: Now, listen here, you, talk plain American! Who said you could use my lathe? Yeah—who said so? . . . O. K., guy, you're askin' for it. I'm gonna find Old Fogarty an' if you ain't here legitimate I'm gonna personally take you by the —

WATCHMAN (*fade in*): Find what you was lookin' for, Joe?

JOE (*in surprise*): Huh—who—



WATCHMAN (*fade in full*): What's the matter with you, Joe?

JOE: Fogarty—

WATCHMAN: Yeah—sure—who you think's makin' the rounds tonight—a general or mebbe a admiral?

JOE: Lissen, I was just comin' to get ya!

FOGARTY: Yeah?

JOE: Sure! This guy—where'd he get an O. K. to work this time o' night?

FOGARTY: Huh?

JOE: *Listen* to me, will ya? This guy—what's he doin' here?

FOGARTY: Huh?

JOE: You dumb son of a gun!

FOGARTY: Now jest a minnit—

JOE: I'm talkin' to you—listen to me! Who gave this guy the right to work my lathe this hour of the night? Go on tell me—who?

FOGARTY: You nuts?

JOE: Answer me will ya? Who is this guy?

FOGARTY: You drunk?

JOE: *Will ya answer me?*

FOGARTY: You—you better go get some sleep, Joe. I got no time to stay in here talkin' foolishness to you. I gotta make my rounds—(*Fade*) pull my boxes. . . .

SOUND: *Lathe running.*

JOE (*slowly*): O. K. . . . So you can have the machine, Mr. Polski or Ruska or Svenska or whatever kind of a foreigner ya are! Why should I care? (*Fade*) I'm gettin' out of here, anyway.

WORKER: Yes, I know. . . .

JOE (*fade back in*): What did ya say?

WORKER: Please—I must work—I cannot talk.

JOE: Wait a minnit—I don't care what kind of rush order

you're gettin' out—I wanna know about *this*! What do ya mean ya know about me?

WORKER: You go—I know!

JOE: But *how* do ya know? That's what *I* wanna know!

WORKER: I cannot talk—I must work—I told you, comrade.

JOE (*irritably*): Don't comrade me! . . . Hey, what you workin' there? Why—them's one of the castings I'm machinin'—Listen, that's *my* work! You ain't doin' anything new—you're just chis'lin' in on my work!

WORKER: Yes—your work. All of us!

JOE: All of us? What are ya talkin' about?

WORKER: All of us. . . . (*Fade*) All of us. . . .

SOUND: *Fade out sound of lathe with above*

JOE: I'm goin' to ask *you* sittin' out there somethin'. Have you ever been scared? Naw, I don't mean the scare that comes to you when you ain't got enough money to pay the rent, or the automobile mebbe nearly goes off the road, or you're gonna lose your job, or somebody bigger'n you starts to take a poke at you, or you read the headlines and you start thinkin' about your kids. Those are bad enough scares—but I'll tell you somethin' worse—the scare that comes to ya in a place that you know real well—like your own room—or your own basement—or your own attic—or the place where you work—where everythin's the same—and yet there's somethin'. . . . The guy at my lathe said, "Your work—all of us—all of us"—an' the air was all of a sudden cold . . . and I didn' want to turn my head . . . I didn't want to . . . turn my head. . . . (*Fade in sound of machines*) Then I heard—lathes—lots of them runnin'—all of them—(*Bring in sound of machinery behind*) I turned my head. The machines all over the shop workin'! Runnin' in the dark—and then there was kind of a light and then I saw—yeah, it was all right! Guys workin'! Yeah

—the new shift! That was it—later than I thought—the new shift! . . . (Voice flattens) But I didn't know any of these guys! Not one! Every lathe runnin' and me not knowin' one of 'em. What was this! Had they fired everybody and put in a lot of scabs? . . . I'll tell ya.

SOUND: *Fade in sound of lathe machines continuing behind*

JOE: Hey! You! Hey! Who are these guys?

RUSSIAN WORKER: I told you—we must work!

JOE: But you said they was workin' for me! Yeah! For me! What do ya mean for *me*!

RUSSIAN WORKER: Ask them.

JOE: Huh?

RUSSIAN WORKER: Go—ask *them*!

JOE: O. K. . . . You! Yeah, I'm talkin' to you! That's Max Marran's machine. What you doin' workin' *his* shift?

POLE (*flatly*): For you. . . .

JOE: Huh? What did ya say?

POLE: I work for you.

JOE: What do ya mean for me? I never asked you to work for me!

POLE: Please let me work.

JOE: No! Ya gotta answer me! What do ya mean, you're workin' for me?

POLE: I am Polish.

JOE: So what? What's that got to do with workin' for me?

SOUND: *Fade sound of machinery*

JOE: He didn' answer me. Bent back to the machine and kept on workin'. Didn' answer me. All right—so I went to the next machine, where Mike Rogan always used to work.

SOUND: *Fade in sound of machine again*

JOE: You! You tell me! Who gave you this job? What is this, a new shift?

CZECH: I'm working for you.

JOE: Hey, wait a minnit! You too? Who ever asked you to work for me?

CZECH: I'm Czech.

JOE: So you're a Pole, so you're a Czech, so I'm nuts! What gives here? Hey, you! *You* over there! You got some sense! *You* tell me!

VOICE: I am Serb.

JOE: What is this? You guys talk like the—the League of Nations! What's what you are got to do with me?

POLE: We cannot work when you talk.

JOE: So I'll keep on talkin'! Who cares if ya work?

SOUND: *Machinery cuts dead*

JOE: The minute I said that—the machines stopped. Yeah —everyone of the fifteen or twenty guys reached over and pulled the switches on the lathes and turned around slow and sat there lookin' at me. An' it was kinda dark and all their faces and all their eyes. . . . And then the first one started talkin', and he said:

RUSSIAN (*fades in*): You asked us why we have to work. Yes —we will tell you. Each of his own crime (*Fades*), each in his own way. . . .

JOE: Crime? What—? And then the one who said he was Polish got up from the lathe, stood there, and started to talk. . . .

MUSIC: *Behind*

POLE (*fades in*): My name is Joseph Rozanski. I lived in the largest city in my country, Warsaw, I had an education much above my station in life because my father was a very scholarly man and he taught me many things. I became an apprentice to a machinist, and soon I was working in a factory and making a good living. I met a girl—I loved her—we got married—we had three children. Life to me was

good. I had my work—my family—and that was enough. Trouble in the world? I did not care. I had what I wanted. I was working in the factory when the bombers of the Germans came. Just before the first bomb hit, I remember I was thinking, "Tomorrow I will take the family to the country for fishing." My family is in the country now. The Germans were very careful on their first bombings. Poland was first—it was important to show the rest of the world what the bombers could do. My family is in the country—under the ground. Trouble in the world? I did not care. I had what I wanted. That was my crime.

MUSIC: *Out.*

JOE: He sat down—and his eyes stayed on me. And then the one who called himself a Czech got up.

CZECH (*fades in*): My name is Anton Warshak. I lived in Praha. Praha was very beautiful. I worked for Skoda. It is one of the great factories of the world for munitions. Small guns and great artillery and shells and bombs and naval artillery and anti-aircraft guns—the finest in the world. When Munich came, I said, "What does it matter—as long as I can sit at my machine and can work, what does it matter?" Then the Germans went into Sudetenland and I said to the other workers, "You see—that is all they wanted! What was Germany for the Germans. . . ." I was a great fool. Soon they were in Praha. Soon we at the machines were slaves and they were the masters. Czechs are not good slaves. But I said to the others, "Let us stay at the machines and work—good work." But they said, "No—the Germans will use the machines against our friends." I said, "Czechoslovakia has no friends!" While the others worked slowly and badly and did many acts of sabotage, I kept on working as always. I made the ma-



chines that are killing those who *are* the friends of my Czechoslovakia. That is my crime. . . .

MUSIC: *Out*

JOE: And he sat down and another stood up and spoke—

MUSIC: *Behind*

FRENCHMAN (*fade in*): My name is Paul Renée. I lived in Pordais, which is a factory town fifty kilometers from Bordeaux. You see my hands—ever since there have been machines there has been a Renée whose hands have known how to do wonders with iron and brass and steel. I owned a small factory and of all the workers I was the best. I made little things—most unimportant—and most profitable. Life was very good and very secure. I laughed when I heard that the foolish *Allemands* were marching again. The Maginot Line of fortifications—had the Nazi madmen forgotten the Maginot Line? Yes, between them and my factory was always the great Maginot Line! That was my strength—(*Voice flattens*) But there was no strength in *me*—only in the thought that there was concrete and steel to protect me! So I went on making profitable things with my machines—amusing—beautiful—profitable things. . . . The Maginot Line . . . I forgot that in this war there was no protection in defense . . . there was only the protection of the will to win. I forgot that. It was my crime.

MUSIC: *Out*

JOE: He sat down and what was in his face was in *all* their faces—pain—yeah, pain like they were hurt—pain like as if they couldn't stand it any more! And then the Russian was on his feet, and this is what he said.

MUSIC: *Behind*

RUSSIAN (*fade in*): I—yes . . . I will speak. I lived in a Union of Workers. For many years my people had starved and had struggled for a dream that each passing year

brought closer to reality. A union of men no one of whom had too much . . . no one of whom had too little. . . . To make this come true we put our lives into the machines that turned our soil and drilled into it . . . into the machines that would change our nation in one man's lifetime from a place of great stupidity and great inequality into a worker's paradise. But, most of all, the machines worked to make the other machines of war, for there was an enemy of all workers crouching beyond our borders, an enemy we knew would reach out a hand of friendship and strike with the other. Yes, the machines of war, and always our leaders told us that the skill of one worker at his machine gives strength to a hundred soldiers! For bravery in this new war, they told us, would not be enough—when the enemy has more airplanes in the sky than you have, when his guns outshoot yours, when his tanks go faster than yours, then brave flesh alone and the strength that is within a free man is not enough, for the bombers do not think of freedom and the tanks do not think of freedom, and it is the bombers and the tanks and the guns that win the war. This our leaders told us and then the war did come, and at first I was very brave as I sat at my machine and sang the songs of the workers. But the enemy came closer and closer—and his Stuka bombers were in the sky, and his Panzer divisions closer and closer—and I began to have great fear. They were strong, the enemy. No one had stopped them. *Could* they be stopped? . . . And then the sound of their guns was in the air—but our leaders told us to keep working! Our soldiers would turn them back! The machine *must* keep working! But my hand on the machine was like water! Our soldiers stop them? No! No one could stop them! I left my machine! I left the factory! I ran! We were lost! All of us lost! . . . I left

the machine . . . in a Union of the Workers. . . . My crime was the greatest of all.

MUSIC: *Out with above*

JOE: And when he stopped talking, he just stood there—they all just stood there looking at me. I said:

JOE (*back—slight echo*): Why do you stand there looking at me? All of you! Why do you tell me these things?

SOUND: *Eerie effect behind*

CZECH: We heard you were going away.

FRENCHMAN: It would have been a great loss.

POLE: So we came to do your work.

RUSSIAN: Once *we* were workers.

SOUND: *Effect out*

JOE: The Russian said that—he stood where he was, but suddenly his words were all around me.

SOUND: *Effect behind*

RUSSIAN (*in very close*): Once *we* were workers.

SOUND: *Effect out*

JOE: Were . . . workers? *Were?* And then, as if they knew what I was thinking—they began to speak.

SOUND: *Effect behind*

VOICES (*in unison*): Dead.

SOUND: *Sharp intake of breath by Joe*

CZECH (*with great simplicity*): Do not be afraid, America. We were workmen.

POLE: I died at my machine.

FRENCHMAN: I died in my factory.

CZECH: They stood me against a factory wall and shot me.

VOICES (*in unison*): Dead. . . .

JOE (*with great difficulty*): You—dead—come to help—me?

RUSSIAN: Come, comrades! To work!

VOICES (*echo*): To work.

**SOUND:** *Click of various switches and whine of various machines starting—fading back slowly behind*

**JOE:** And the machines began to work again—and they sat behind the machines—the dead! You hear me—the dead! Sitting at the machines and working with their dead hands for me—Joe Dunham—for *me!* The dead showing me what to do! I couldn't look at them! I fell to my knees—to the floor! And through the floor I could feel the machines running—the machines!—for *me!* (*Bring up sound of machines as transition—cut cold on cue with factory whistle. Joe says calmly:*) Then the factory whistle blew time for the new shift, and I woke up, and I pulled myself up off of the floor—and there was nobody there. Nobody . . . only, next to my machine, there was a big pile of finished work—of machined castings—that never was there before. And I went over and touched them—and they were real—as real as the words I'd heard. . . . When I started telling you all this, you remember I told you if you were a wise guy not to listen any more. I was a wise guy, too, but last night dead men did my work for me. That's all I know. Dead men did my work for me. And one of them said that one worker at his machine gives strength to a hundred soldiers. And another one said that just being brave in this war is not enough. You got to have guns and ships and tanks. O. K. O. K. Now if you don't mind—go away. I got my work to do.

**SOUND:** *Click of switch—whine of machine starting—hold as transition—segue into musical curtain.*

**MUSIC:** *Musical curtain*

## COMMENTARY

*By Arch Oboler*

NBC Writer-Director

Somewhere, down in Hell, sits a fat little devil heating up special molten glass-lined rooms in preparation for the arrival of numerous radio network executives, advertising agency department heads, manufacturers of assorted objects advertised over the air waves, and—radio writers. They have earned a place in Hades, these assorted gentlemen connected with the radio industry, because the devil in Hell alone knows what measure of responsibility is theirs for the national indifference with which pre-war America contemplated the destruction of republican Spain, German rearmament, Munich, and all the other fatal steps which led to our eventful Pearl Harbor.

For surely a medium as admittedly potent as radio in the evaluation and determination of values could have been as effective pre-war as during the war, could have aroused national indignation and strengthened weak Congressional backbones so that we would have faced our enemy, not at the time of our enemy's choosing, but at the time of our own choice, with an armament and a mobilized man-power that would have either prevented the catastrophe or at least have shortened the duration.

But the deed is done, and we must leave the "why antagonize them," "why stick our necks out," "it's none of our business" gentlemen to their eventual meetings with Lucifer—and their present sessions with their own consciences as they contemplate the war casualty lists.

Of far greater concern to all of us, certainly, is what we



can do in the here and now. To say that the radio dramatist, in wartime, has responsibilities is to say what has become frighteningly apparent to every writer who has picked up a pen since December 7. For, where the pre-war playwright emotionalized his listeners in terms of love and dove and moon and June (and if he did it badly no great harm was done), now his lack of skill or befuddled thoughts may hinder the war effort to an unpredictable extent.

I therefore subscribe wholeheartedly to Mr. Dryer's thesis that, during wartime, the radio dramatist cannot function with the freedom of his Muse; he must always circumscribe his basic themes with what is the national war policy.

But—as long as the dramatist stays within these wartime limitations, he must be given complete freedom in terms of his artistry. That is to say, no government agency should have the right to state how the artist should *express* his theme—the moment bureaucracy inserts itself, the result is an artistic level determined by who has the loudest voice or the most brass buttons at the conference table.

It became quite obvious, in the days following December 7th, that Washington was full of brass hats who for years had secretly fancied themselves undiscovered Shakespeares, and who jumped into the problem of telling the dramatist “how to reach the people,” with all the eagerness of a Hollywood producer haranguing on his pet plot to a congenitally shy playwright.

Fortunately, this interference has not been too extensive among the dramatists of artistic stature, largely because the latter, long before the war, learned how to circumvent the amputation of their progeny by the inhibited playwrights among the advertising agency men and network executives with whom they had to do business.

I note that in the above paragraph I spoke of “radio dra-

matists of mature stature"; that brings us squarely to the fact that wartime radio has revealed an unhappy lack of writers with sufficient competency effectively to dramatize wartime issues. There are many available who can put the facts, say, of the winning of a battle into dramatic terms, but when it comes to what is even more important, the dramatization of the *issues* of the struggle, there is an appalling lack of talent upon which to call.

The fault lies not with an insufficiency of potential abilities, but with the fact that those writers who by this time would have grown into the full stature of their art were never developed, due to the cowardice of pre-war American radio in facing social issues. The result? Wartime radio is forced to turn to playwrights who are not particularly good technicians—and so are unable to say what should be said with complete effectiveness.

Since the records of radio hold so few technically, experimentally, and intellectually fitted dramatists, it follows that the government agencies entrusted with the problem of coordinating the war radio effort should and must conserve, allocate, and, above all, vigorously champion these artists, for on these few playwrights (and Mr. Dryer's words certainly underline their potential importance for good or for evil in the war effort) falls a tremendous burden; difficult, indeed, is their task of inspiring without bathos, of illuminating without exhortation.

This need of governmental championing of the playwright struck me forcibly, early in my *Plays for Americans* series, when I discovered a tendency among certain government radio officials to run for cover whenever the thesis of a particular play of mine was such as to arouse in anger the undercover Fascist, or the professional moralist, or the self-seeking sensationalist.

For example, early in the war, after careful study of the principles of German psychological warfare, and after a great deal of evaluation of official on- and off-the-record attitudes toward the emotions of anger and indignation with which wars are fought, I wrote a play titled *Hate*.

The story concerns a Norwegian minister who had stood between the German soldiers who had occupied the small village, and his flock.

He had told his people not to resist and not to hate—that if only they had faith, in time they would have understanding of all that which has happened to them.

But in the weeks that follow, weeks of growing oppression and finally murder, Pastor Halversun discovers that his belief that in time the conqueror will be conquered from within himself, is false; these conquerors come with all the terrible weapons of science—with a scientific plan for a horrible future of slavery.

And so, finally, after committing a terrible act of violence himself, Pastor Halversun speaks to his God: "But I am a minister of God!" Then he cries out in agony: "A minister of God! The God of life, the God of mercy, the God of peace. . . . of hope. . . . Almighty God, I killed a man because I saw that if he and his lived, there was no hope! I saw a world where unspeakable wickedness rode to power on the backs of monsters of steel, and always these monsters were theirs alone, and so the power was always theirs! I saw the death of the human spirit before their guns and on their gallows and under the knives of their surgeons and the poisons of their chemists. I saw a world changed in just a handful of lives from a place of everlasting hope for all men, to a great cattle yard where they were the masters, and men, bred to stupidity, struggled and died without protest, without memory of man's past, without hope for the future! Without hope

for the future—and he threw the words into my face, and suddenly within me there was the hate that had been within my son, the hate that I have seen on the faces of my neighbors as they had seen the bread torn from their mouths! For my bread, O God, had been faith, and hope for all mankind, and this man was taking that from me, from us! ‘And the Lord spake unto Moses, go unto Pharaoh and say unto him, thus sayeth the Lord, let My people go that they may serve Me!’ But they will not let us go, O Lord! Not for a thousand, not for ten thousand years! There is no peace with them—there is only hate, a hate that must rise within us, too, and never rest until their wickedness is gone from the earth!”

Shortly after the broadcast of this play, at a meeting of the Institute for Education by Radio at Columbus, Ohio, I spoke on this “must we hate our enemies” thesis. My remarks were reported in the press somewhat in the manner of the man who said, “I beat my wife at bridge,” and then saw what he said printed in the local paper—with the “at bridge” deleted.

Instead of a factual analysis of the complete broadcast and subsequent speech in terms of their meaningfulness in giving six million people what was, for most of them, the first understanding of the German plan of total conquest, there was an unhappy tendency, on the part of minor officialdom, to run screaming in the other direction, disclaiming either an interest in, or a concern for, the entire matter. In other words, these men of “official” radio performed in wartime, exactly in the manner of the often-described sponsor who runs for the cyclone cellar the moment “controversy” in the form of an anonymous letter rears its head.

The conscientious dramatist in wartime does not write alone—at his side are all the peoples of whom he is a part and whose battle he is part of. He deserves the complete support of all government agencies in this all-out fight.

For without this morale reinforcement he cannot function creatively to the limit of his abilities; certainly, as the days of this war go on, the demand for his skills will increase. The law of diminishing returns catches up with the documentary; facts, no matter how cleverly presented, soon lose their emotional effectiveness.

But the art of the competent dramatist has endless facets; upon the dramatist, then, will increasingly fall the burden of bringing to the people, both thru intellect and basic emotions, the issues of why we fight and must keep fighting.



## *This Is War!*

On the evening of St. Valentine's day—February 14, 1942—American radio put aside lace and sentiment and got tough.

NARRATOR: What we say tonight has to do with blood and with love and with anger, and also with a big job in the making. Laughter can wait. Soft music can have the evening off. No one is invited to sit down and take it easy. Later, later. There's a war on.

These words, preceded by "Music: ominous," at 7 p.m. Eastern War Time came through the loudspeakers of twenty million American radios—and introduced the first of an historic thirteen weeks' series of half-hour dramatic programs entitled *This Is War!*

On three counts this series represented radio's first big bang as an effective weapon. (1) The programs were broadcast simultaneously over all four national networks

—the largest national hook-up ever used for a radio series. More than 700 of America's 924 stations broadcast it. The programs were also shortwaved to the rest of the world, in as many as seven foreign languages, by the Office of the Coordinator of Information and the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American affairs. (2) The contents of the program were formulated in close collaboration with the Office of Facts and Figures, "and thus accurately reflected national policy."<sup>1</sup> (3) The series was frankly recognized by the government, the radio industry and by the public as a pioneer effort of wartime radio "departing radically in style and character from any previous program formula, in an attempt to make an honest and convincing presentation of the issues of the war to America."<sup>2</sup>

The series was produced by H. L. McClinton, an executive of N. W. Ayer and Sons, advertising agency, and was directed by Norman Corwin, a writer-director of CBS. Corwin is one of radio's brightest lights. His skill as a director is exceeded only by his talent as a writer. Carl Van Doren calls him a modern Marlowe. *Life Magazine* referred to him as "radio's top dramatic genius." Corwin's script style combines mockery and poetry; he has established a pattern of radio treatment which many other writers have copied. Of the thirteen *This Is War!* programs, Corwin wrote six himself and had an important hand in the script treatments of many of the others. As director, he defined the "character" of each episode and combined music, sound and voice in a manner which gave

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<sup>1</sup> "A Summary Report" on *This Is War!* by H. L. McClinton.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*

a kind of continuity to what was otherwise a series of not too well related dramatic episodes. Corwin was appointed director of the series for several reasons. He had written and produced over CBS for twenty-six consecutive weeks a series entitled *26 By Corwin*—original scripts and productions. He had demonstrated his capacity to work under extreme pressure, and had proved his versatility and capacity for creative imagination. Further, he had written and produced the now-famous *Bill of Rights* program, which was broadcast on all four networks and climaxed with a fireside chat by President Roosevelt. This program was a remarkable dramatic expression of the meaning of civil rights, and as a "morale broadcast" for democracy is probably the best single program ever aired in the United States. Corwin, also, has a long and sincere record of antagonism to anything which smacks of Fascism, and this was regarded as an essential requisite for the man who was to handle America's first war-effort radio series. A few years before the war, Corwin had written and directed *They Fly Through the Air*, a half-hour poetic drama about the bombing of cities. Although no nationalities were specifically mentioned in the program, every listener knew that the bitter commentary was directed against the Italians who bombed Loyalist Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. Later, Corwin directed the CBS series *Pursuit of Happiness*, one of the few "democracy theme" programs aired during America's period of pre-war neutrality. It was on this series that the famed "Ballad For Americans" was introduced.

*This Is War!* was divided into thirteen separate episodes.

America At War  
The White House  
Your Navy  
Your Army  
The United Nations  
You're On Your Own  
It's In The Works (Production)  
Your Air Forces  
The Enemy  
Concerning Propaganda  
Smith Against The Axis  
To The Young  
Yours Received and Contents Noted

The final program acknowledged listeners' letters and replied to the most frequent comments and criticisms.

The "series" could be so called only because it was aired under the canopy of the *This Is War!* title, and because it was broadcast simultaneously over all networks for thirteen consecutive weeks. But otherwise the programs were related only in so far as Corwin's style of direction gave each a similarity in character with the others. Hollywood actors starred on most of the programs, but no central character appeared throughout the series. If Alexander Woollcott (or some other distinguished voice) had acted as narrator throughout, the series would have had more obvious unity. Another, and more surprising, dereliction, was the absence of any uniform opening identification or theme. Instead, each program opened "cold" with a dramatic effort to capture listener attention—a brief vignette or a series of questions and statements peppered into the microphone. This, notwithstanding

radio's experience that a series generally gains if its openings are uniform.

The official character of the series was underlined by a letter from President Roosevelt which Archibald MacLeish read at the outset of the first program. The President expressed the belief that "the cooperation of these networks and stations will make it possible to carry across our continent from one shore to the other a fuller comprehension of the nature of the War in which we are engaged and the nature of the labor we must undertake, the sacrifices we must undergo, and the dangers we must endure to win it."

Mr. MacLeish then added his own "appreciation"—

"Our enemies in this War have made one use of radio. The United Peoples are making another, and a very different use—a use which will meet the Axis strategy of lies with the United People's strategy of truth.

"The Nazi party began its activities years ago by turning the radios against the people of Germany as other revolutionists might have turned machine guns. Later, and after the revolution had been pushed through in Germany, the Nazis swung their broadcasts against the peoples of Europe. Finally, after Europe had been over-run, they wheeled their beams west across the Atlantic into South America and even into the United States. Their purpose at all stages of the game has been to confuse and to deceive—to trick and corrupt and cajole their own people and to trick and frighten and confuse the peoples they have marked for conquest.

"They will discover before this War is over that truth is indeed more powerful than deceit, and that with the radio, as with many other instruments whose use our enemies have perverted, the skill as well as the courage and determination



of this people is far greater than our enemies have imagined—far greater than they had hoped—far greater indeed than they may come to fear. . . .”

Almost without exception radio critics praised the opening shot in the series. The most lengthy commentary was *Variety's*,<sup>3</sup> which described the program as “a hypodermic of emotional vitamins,” a broadcast “written, acted and directed with angry intensity . . . a tough-talking, spade-calling, spine-walloping propaganda of pugnacity. Indeed, *This Is War!* is not for those charming people who consider it bad form to speak too harshly of the Nazis. . . .”

Summarizing the effects of the series, McClinton details a few “isolated but, very dramatic stories of audience reaction. One of these was a report, from a man who was crossing the Rockies in the club car of a train during the first broadcast. He described the gripping effect of the program upon the passengers, and the dead quiet which followed the opening of the broadcast. Never, he wrote, had he seen a group of people more obviously moved by a radio program, and added that the porter was so profoundly affected by what he had heard that he stood guard at the radio set, prepared to increase the volume whenever the train entered a tunnel, so that not a word of the program should be lost.”

The criticisms leveled against *This Is War!* by some newspapers, some public personalities and a few listeners, were generally on two scores—first, the programs were propaganda, because they were “government sponsored or

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<sup>3</sup> *Variety*, February 18, 1942, p. 26.

at least inspired," although McClinton's "Summary Report" notes that "some listeners were confused about the actual sponsorship of the series," because the programs were intended to be "compulsory listening since they were broadcast on all stations." Second, there was criticism that "they preached hatred" and "made our enemies seem like beasts."

The impropriety of inspiring "hatred" of the enemy was mentioned most frequently in critical correspondence from listeners. The objections to the "propaganda" aspects of the series came generally from the press, and may have stemmed from apprehension that the series indicated increasing activity by government in the field of public information. As a first example of official "propaganda," *This Is War!* was destined to receive a certain amount of criticism. But it is interesting to note that virtually none of the other government-sponsored programs—*The Army Hour*, *Three Thirds of the Nation*, etc., have been so criticized either by the press or listeners. In the opinion of some, the really irksome thing about *This Is War!* was the circumstance of its being broadcast simultaneously on all four networks. To many, this smacked of the Goebbels technique—listen, *or else!* American radio listeners are accustomed to making their program selection from many choices, and only under unusual circumstances—a presidential fireside chat, for example—will they accept *directed* listening. "But when Americans see this powerful medium [radio] increasingly regimented, its freedom curtailed, its critical functions abrogated, and both its entertainment and its educational features permeated with propaganda—especially a

propaganda of hate—they feel uneasy. The shadow of something sinister disturbs them. They know, of course, that our federal administration acts with the best of motives, that there is nothing of Hitler's demonic quality in Mr. Roosevelt. But they ask, 'Are we not permitting a precedent here that can be turned by a later administration to mischievous use?' " <sup>4</sup>

Radio itself took a crack at *This Is War!* when Professor Colwell, on the *University of Chicago Round Table*, said, "I was very much interested in the reaction of one of my neighbors, who is a devout church member, to this program. Her reaction was that it was wrong of the government to point that particular program in the direction in which it was pointed. She felt that it was an exhortation to hatred, and as a member of a Christian Church she could not hate nations, and that to insist on hatred as essential to morale is a shortsighted and an inefficient way of building up morale." <sup>5</sup>

A later program in the series, entitled *The Enemy*, replied to the *Round Table's* remarks: "Now we could spend the rest of the night re-enacting horrors committed by the stumblebums set up in power by the Axis. There are enough authenticated brutalities stacked away in the files to make your blood boil from now till Victory . . . enough photographs of raped women and mangled chil-

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<sup>4</sup> Fred Eastman, "Hate, Radio and Morale," *Christian Century*, May 27, 1942, p. 695.

<sup>5</sup> "What Should The Churches Do In War?" *University of Chicago Round Table*, February 15, 1942. Participants: Ernest C. Colwell, Dean of the Divinity School, University of Chicago; Charles Clayton Morrison, Editor, *Christian Century*; Robert Redfield, Dean of the Division of the Social Sciences, University of Chicago.

dren and piled-up corpses to nauseate even a round-table expert who fears that discussion of the enemy might arouse hate. And of course, we mustn't do that, must we?"<sup>6</sup>

What about *hatred* as a wartime theme for dramatic radio programs? This is a crucial question to be answered in the planning and execution of any effective propaganda or informational policy.

Psychologically, hatred is rooted in fear. An enemy not feared is seldom hated; he is, rather, regarded with contempt or anger. To Americans, the Germans and "Japs" are anonymous peoples rather than hated enemies. Hatred is a blind and simmering emotion; it is usually directed against a specific person or a group of persons whose relation to oneself has been or is intimate. None of these conditions obtain for any except a very few Americans.

One does not hate merely upon being exhorted to do so. One hates only because one cannot help it. Propaganda which attempts to *produce* hatred against the enemy by describing him in terms and in a manner contemptuous and scornful is naive. Effective propaganda, on the other hand, will build the conviction that the enemy is evil or malign judiciously, a bit at a time, through detailed reports, rumors, insinuations or charges about the enemy. A prejudice grows fat by feeding itself with its own justifications. A man with a prejudice soon hears himself advancing "reasons" to justify his attitude. A public mind conditioned in this way has some of the chemistry of hatred. But for the hatred itself to generate,

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<sup>6</sup> "The Enemy," *This Is War!*, broadcast April 11, 1942.



fear must be added; this is likely to come only by the propaganda of action—that is, as a reaction against an increasingly real menace from the enemy.

Although the technician is not concerned about whether the end for which his propaganda is used is good or bad in a moral sense, but only about whether it is good or bad in terms of effectiveness, the strategist cannot avoid the consideration of such moral issues. Should radio be used as a medium for incitement to hatred?

Stephen Fry of the British Broadcasting Corporation says that it is not BBC's policy to foster hatred, for the British as a people seem unwilling to hate the Germans, and do not respond to exhortations to hatred.<sup>7</sup> This squares with the general opinion of psychologists that hatred is an individual, not a group or national, reaction. Thus, some British citizens may hate the Germans, but, as a people, the British do not hate, and resent appeals to hatred.

It follows, therefore, that the utilization of a mass-appeal agency like radio for creating hatred results in too many wasted shots. The percentage of people predisposed to hatred, and likely to hate after an exhortative appeal, is probably too small to justify the effort of a radio hate offensive. The first argument against the use of radio for this end is thus a practical one. But if radio could succeed, there is a further consideration to be weighed. Hatred affects the haters only a little less than the hated. The strategists cannot close their minds to the fact that someday the war will end and a peace will have to be

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Fry, remarks at the 13th Institute for Education by Radio, Ohio State University, May 5, 1942.



written. Democratic victors can lose the next peace as they lost the last one if they permit a spirit of vindictiveness to hold sway over their judgments. The men who will write the peace at a green table will be the emissaries of democratic peoples, and responsive to a high degree to the wishes of those peoples. If the democracies are fired with hatred, it is probable that they will set the groundwork for a third World War.

Yet few students of propaganda deny that, whatever moral or practical arguments may be raised against incitement to hatred, it will nevertheless be attempted. The line between such incitement and the general use of propaganda is too nice a one for most to determine. Archibald MacLeish says that the government is "not in the business of exciting hatred." He contends that "there is a clear difference between the hatred of persons and the hatred of evil."<sup>8</sup> But when *This Is War!* paints the enemy as stumblebums, murderers, liars, and criminals, is the effect to excite hatred against evil—or against the "Japs" and Germans as a people? The delineation seems academic rather than real. The fact is apparent that no propaganda, no Strategy of Truth, can approximate effectiveness without encroaching upon areas of hate-incitement. No propaganda can condone, nor can any information deny, the acts and record of our enemies.

It is hardly enough, however, to say that critics perceived certain shortcomings in the nation's first official war propaganda program. Mistakes were inevitable, and we can be grateful that they were not more serious. What is

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<sup>8</sup> Archibald MacLeish, in a letter to the Religious News Service, quoted in the *New York Times*, Sunday, June 7, 1942.

more to the point is that the series gave us a new perspective from which to evaluate future programs of a similar nature. It places squarely before us the responsibility of asking: What, now, are the principles upon which to predicate an effective use of wartime radio drama?

First, as in all wartime radio programs, whether dramatic or not, every effort must be made to avoid using devices, representations, manners of presentation which recall the naive propaganda of the first World War. Today, propaganda, to be effective, cannot appear obviously manipulative. The greatest skill must be exercised to avoid making audiences feel they are being talked down to, or that their intelligence and capacity for discrimination is not recognized.

The two most frequent violations of this principle are: supercilious references to the enemy, and egocentric allusions to the American people and their war effort. Such presentations are immediately distrusted by mature listeners, for they paint the enemy black and ourselves white in too obvious a manner. They are categorical assertions, assertions which do not square with the information and reports about the enemy or about our own war effort with which people are familiar. For example, listeners know very well that the enemy is formidable, and that he must not be underestimated. Americans are unlikely to make that one of the ten mistakes which in December, 1941, the British Institute of Public Opinion hoped the United States would not make—"Don't make our mistake of underrating the enemy." Listeners think Hitler is an evil man and the German people would get rid of him if they could—i.e., the German *people* aren't

our real enemies. Similarly, listeners believe that the Japanese are exploited by a military clique, and that the gay and carefree Italian people want neither Mussolini nor the German Army running their country, and only the Caesar complex of Hitler and Il Duce keep Italy in the war at all.

In his fireside chat of December 9, 1941, President Roosevelt declared, "Powerful and resourceful gangsters have banded together to make war on the whole human race." In his message of February 6, 1942, he said, "The militarists in Berlin and Tokyo started this war." Both of these statements gave substance to the widespread American opinion that the *leaders* of the Axis countries, and not their people, are our enemies. The premiere program of the CBS series *The Nature of The Enemy* began with these words: "We say today that we're not fighting the German people—we're fighting the men who lead them." The Gallup poll confirmed this attitude when it reported that "only 6 per cent consider them [the Germans] the chief enemy; an overwhelming majority [70 per cent] blame the German government," and that "only 10 per cent think the Japanese people are our chief enemy; 64 per cent say it is the [Japanese] government."

As America's war effort progressed, the extensions of rationing, increases in taxation, constant exhortations and advice to save and skimp, coupled with statements from the President and other officials that America needs more ships, planes and guns, gave pause to listeners who heard exuberant and cocky radio assertions that "Americans are wonderful people, aren't we?" Supercilious references

to the enemy and self-satisfied allusions to ourselves are neither consistent with the facts about our enemies or ourselves, nor are they psychologically adapted to a war situation which the common man, according to the *Fortune* survey of May, 1942, knows will be long, brutal, hard-fought. "One cannot but have a feeling that blowing our own horn is not the best way of preparing the public for a long-drawn-out struggle; that self-contentment and self-adulation are not what the country needs just now. In the long run they will not make for morale. . . . Vilifying your enemy is almost as bad as under-rating him. Obviously it reflects upon the cause, however good, when its upholders find it necessary to resort to things like this. They may appeal to the baser instincts of a crowd and afford an outlet to pent-up hate and anger; nonetheless, they are bound to be taken as an evidence of our own feeling of insecurity in regard to the war, to say nothing of the reflection upon our conduct."<sup>9</sup>

Yet this first principle was violated frequently throughout *This Is War!* The policy, if it may be called that, was established in the very first broadcast. American perfection was threaded in the story of *America At War*—

We didn't want this war, but now we've got it and we're going to hang onto it. Anybody who thinks we're fooling and that we're fighting a popgun war, with Sundays and holidays off and business as usual, has two more guesses coming.

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Ordinarily, we Americans are affable enough. We've never made killing a career, although we happen to be pretty good

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<sup>9</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, "The War and Our Manner," *Christian Century*, June 3, 1942.

with a gun. We never felt we were that inferior. It's only people with a thumping inferiority who go around convincing each other they're a superior race.

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We were educating our people, giving them a decent slant of things, trying to see that the hungry got fed and the jobless got work, trying to remember the forgotten man, trying to deal out a better deal around the table.

\* \* \* \* \*

A sentimental people; a sympathetic people. . . . We show it and we act it and sometimes we even sing about it—not songs of complaint or hate, not *Horst Wessel-leider*, but compassionate songs, songs for the under-dog, songs for the poor man in the rich country. . . .

The middle section of the script turned the verbal spotlight full on the enemy. "He is these things—he is this—" said the narrator.

1ST TROOPER: *Sind sie Kurt Oestermann?*

KURT: *Ja. Was ist los?*

2ND TROOPER: *Weiter wollen wir nichts wissen.*

BIZ: *Two shots*

1ST TROOPER: *Heil Hitler!*

2ND TROOPER: *Heil Hitler!*

1ST TROOPER: *Gehen wir.*

MUSIC: *In*

NARRATOR: The enemy is Murder International, Murder, Unlimited; quick murder on the spot or slow murder in the concentration camp; murder for listening to the short-wave radio, for marrying a Pole, for Propagation of the Faith, for speaking one's mind, for trading with a non-Aryan, for being an invalid too long. The enemy is the assassin with



the swagger and the smoking gun; the stumblebum set up in business by the patron state.

And the enemy is this—

NARRATOR: The enemy is laughter over the bleeding stump, the cold smile of the officer who stands watching while the hostage digs his own grave, the coarse joke over the girl just raped. The enemy is the torture gag, worked out with patience and a kind of humor, officially approved, given the nod by the High Command, given the go-ahead by the big boss at the big desk at the far end of the long room.

“What is the enemy?” asked the narrator. “The enemy is a liar, also. A gigantic and deliberate and wilful liar, lying blood-red lies, and proud of it. What is a big lie, worthy of the enemy?”

GERMAN: *Wir werden keinen anderen Pfad beschreiten als den der von den Vertraegen festgelegt ist. . . . Das deutsche Volk denkt gar nicht daran, irgend ein Land zu ueberfallen.*

NARRATOR: Translation?

INTERPRETER: “We will tread no other path but that laid down by the treaties. . . . The German people have no thought of invading any country.”

NARRATOR: Said by the Fuehrer in May, 1933.

JAPANESE: *Nihon-wa Shina-ni oite nanra-no tochi shinryaku no ishi nashi.*

INTERPRETER: “Japan has no territorial designs in China.”

NARRATOR: Said by Foreign Minister Yoshizawa, December, 1931.

ITALIAN: *L'Italia non prenderà mai l'iniziativa di precipitare la guerra.*

INTERPRETER: "Italy will never take the initiative of starting a war."

NARRATOR: Said by the Duce on Christmas Day, 1931.

A second principle: write and produce the program in the simplest and most forthright way possible. A war broadcast has two primary aims: to inspire further those listeners already predisposed to action and to win over those who are hesitant, dubious or critical. To accomplish these aims the effective broadcast will be informative and sincere. Whenever possible, it will be rich in material "from the record" and will manifest integrity by its restraint and simplicity of presentation. Of course, all good writing, whether for radio, the stage or publication, is economical and direct. But radio writing cannot be divorced from radio production. Writing and production are two essential parts of the whole which emanates from the loudspeaker. And the fact is that radio too frequently prefers to play with its toys—with special music, excessive use of sound effects, etc.—rather than play with ideas. Even good writing may prove ineffective if garnished with too much production. In a war broadcast, the ideas and facts must justify the program. People are urged to listen, not simply for the pleasure of listening, or for entertainment alone, or so that the writer or producer can flex his literary muscles, but so that they will be inspired to *do* something.

However, it does not follow that the techniques and skills of production ought be eliminated altogether in the interests of simplicity and directness. Talk may be and frequently is a poor substitute for effective dramatization, but

skill and judgment must be exercised if the listener is not to lose interest in the message because he is delighted with the production. But there is a stronger argument of particular relevance to war dramatization. Excessive production invites the suspicion that the program is one of pressure salesmanship; it is exhortation with dramatic ribbons. At this point the program violates our first principle, for it suggests propaganda, and the listener may generally be counted upon to react against that. "While *This Is War!* was justly criticized in its early stages, it wound up by proving quite conclusively that a propaganda program is effective in proportion to the directness and simplicity of its design; that ten words, carefully written and powerfully spoken, are worth a hundred sound effects."<sup>10</sup>

A third principle requires that the program (a) express old ideas, facts, or sentiments in a new or challenging way, or (b) introduce new and fresh information. The latter requisite is to be preferred, but the fact that sources of information relating to the war are under strict censorship is a severe handicap for the producer. Further, because most radio programs are one-time productions, and thousands of programs must be aired daily, the opportunities for programming information far exceed the items of information which can be made available under the most favorable circumstances. Under these circumstances, program technicians must often exercise their skills in expressing old materials in new and ingenious ways.

The temptation to which most technicians succumb,

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<sup>10</sup> John K. Hutchens, "Fighting Shows," the *New York Times*, June 14, 1942.

is to expend their ingenuity on writing style and tricks of production. As a result, the area most ripe for exploitation is usually neglected—namely, the area of interpretation and clarification of information and issues. In this field the technician is seldom competent by himself. He knows *how* to state a fact, but not *what* facts or ideas to state. For example, a skilled technician, instructed in May, 1942, to write and produce a thirty-minute script on *Our Russian Allies*, has a wealth of material at his disposal for dramatic elements and opportunities. The chances are that the *information* he puts over will be minimal. If we may presume to write for him, his script may begin—

MUSIC: *Up and full and under*

NARRATOR: A salute—to “Our Russian Allies!”

MUSIC: *Up to smash tag*

NARRATOR: One-sixth of the world’s surface belongs to a stubborn and fighting peoples who fear neither death—nor Adolf Hitler. . . .

SNEAK: *Marching feet, rolling equipment, etc., softly in background*

VOICE: The peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—190 million allies for the United Nations—190 million allies for *Uncle Sam*!

SOUND: *Cue 5 up full for ten seconds. Wipe out with ominous music to background*

NARRATOR: No man knows better than does Adolf Hitler that the hammer and sickle are potent weapons against Stuka divebombers, against Nazi machine guns, against the tidal wave of men and gadgets called blitzkrieg. For in fourteen months the peoples of Soviet Russia have decimated crack

legions of the Nazi army, forced its blitzkrieg into reverse, bent its cocky morale into a cocked hat, and shattered forever the myth that nothing could stand up against the New Order on the March!

MUSIC: *Up momentarily and out*

RUSSIAN (*slight accent only; virile voice*): I will tell you how we did it. I, Feodore Karlenovitch, am a farmer. I will tell you how we did it—my comrades and I. We did it with fire—

SOUND: *Fire crackling—*

RUSSIAN (*cont.*):—with fire in our hearts, burning deep down against these—these monsters who hunger for our country. And we did it with fire that we held on sticks as we darted out of the snows and from behind trees and ignited their wagons and ammunition trucks. . . .

SOUND: *Fade fire quickly (Pause)*

RUSSIAN: And we did it with rifles, with bullets we hoarded as if they were pearls. One rifle—unseen—

SOUND: *Ping! of bullet ricochetting*

RUSSIAN (*cont.*): One shot from nowhere—

SOUND: *Rifle shot. Body falling.*

RUSSIAN (*cont.*):—and one less enemy to fight; one less precious minute for them to use; one *more* reason for the enemy to be afraid of the unseen gun that spits death from the night. . . .

Or his script may be written in his manner—

MUSIC: *Balalaika, softly; voices softly singing or humming a peasant tune. In background*

NARRATOR: The peasants and farmers,  
steel workers, mechanics, intellectuals,  
the great grab-bag of humanity  
that is Russia



lives close to the earth,  
close to mother earth,  
and sings the songs and lives the songs  
of an old, old people  
who have youth in their hearts.

**MUSIC:** *Balalaikas and voices up: Song. One minute finale by orchestra, to tag. And immediately establish background*

**NARRATOR:** These are the people  
who picked up sticks and stones,  
who beat ploughhares into swords,  
who oiled rusty rifles  
and went out to meet the enemy  
with murder in their hands  
and courage in their souls.  
These are the little people,  
the anonymous people,  
the peasants and farmers,  
steel workers, mechanics, intellectuals,  
the great grab-bag of humanity  
which introduced the armies of Adolf Hitler  
to the Communism—  
of death . . .

Or his script may read—

**BILL:** Well, Fred, I see by the papers the Nazis are rushin'.

**FRED:** You see by the papers the Nazis are Russian? Why, you're crazy. The Russians are Russian.

**BILL:** The Nazis are rushin'—they're rushin' home!

**CUE:** (*Five seconds for studio applause.*)

Any of these introductions might have been written by a technician who is facile with words and emotional devices, and could be produced as interesting radio theatre

from the most elementary kind of facts. These treatments, and the several variations to which they lend themselves, are concerned less with what is said than that it should be dramatically or entertainingly packaged. These programs, if written and produced by someone with the talent of a Corwin, would have a quality not only capable of holding the attention of listeners, but might inspire many of them to an emotional appreciation of America's debt to the defenders of Russia. But an emotional appreciation is no substitute for a real understanding. And the fact cannot be overlooked that only a select few of radio's technicians are men of superlative skill. As a result, the majority of specific programs about *Our Russian Allies* which millions of listeners would hear would probably be mediocre and virtually all of them would represent skill in the handling of exhortation. Only a very few would inform or clarify fundamental issues. And yet clarification and information would graduate these programs from the (a) to (b) category of our third principle.

What issues are fundamental? Why are they out of the province of most technicians? Let us continue the example of *Our Russian Allies*.

Listeners may be expected to know that the Russians are doing heroic work, that they have repulsed the enemy on several fronts, that they have driven them back on many others. Listeners may be expected to know that guerrilla tactics have been widely used; that the scorched earth is one of Russia's chief defense weapons. All of this material is dramatic and lends itself to heroic treatment, but after a while even the most avid radio listener will be bored by material with which he is already familiar. The

most effective wartime dramatic programs, on the other hand, are those which tell him things he does not already know, or which clarify his questions and doubts. Retaining the example of *Our Russian Allies*, a few of many such fundamental issues and matters after six months of war, were these:

How does a communistic nation fit into an alliance of United Nations who say they're fighting for democracy?

If Hitler loses, bad as he is, won't the "Reds" take over Europe?

Aren't the Russians totalitarian? And if they are, isn't it a choice of six of one and half a dozen of the other between them and Hitler's Germany?

Russia has one-sixth of the world's surface under her flag. But she's fighting a Germany and lesser nations who say they want "living space." Mightn't the war have been averted, or mightn't peace be possible now, if Russia would give up some of her enormous territory?

These are divisive questions and issues which our enemies are sowing among us. They may fall upon fertile soil. The war has made patriots of us all—but in a democracy a man can be a doubting Thomas and a patriot at one and the same time. While grateful for Soviet Russia's war against the Nazis, some Americans are fearful of a communistic Europe. While pleased by Russian victories, some may be apprehensive about Russian success. An effective radio program on *Our Russian Allies* cannot be regarded as truly successful if it concentrates itself on firing enthusiasms without clarifying doubts.

There are answers, and valid answers, to the questions not only about *Our Russian Allies* but about virtually

all matters relating to the war. Our enemies scratch these questions, and exploit ignorance and intolerance. There are times in all information and propaganda policy when strong medicine is the best cure. A strong medicine in radio war propaganda would be effective interpretation and clarification of information and issues, as a substitute for the mere exercise of skills and talents on saying old and obvious things in a challenging way.

To interpret and clarify requires wider knowledge and experience than most radio technicians possess. Technicians are not hired for their knowledge of foreign affairs, or of the economic requisites of a durable peace. The technician cannot be expected to write and produce programs which will clarify and interpret issues and problems of the war unless the blueprint is drawn up for him by an expert qualified to determine what fundamental ideas and issues deserve what expert treatment.

Radio's effort to be topical is one of the major reasons why technicians determine the content and emphasis of so many programs. In his report on *This Is War!* McClinton lists as the first lesson: "Wartime radio, if it is to be a useful weapon in the dissemination of information and the shaping of public opinion and morale, must be prepared to work under extraordinary pressure. Long-range planning of an extensive series of war programs is impossible. The issues and conflicts of war shift from week to week and even from day to day, and it is never safe to prepare a broadcast more than a week in advance even if its subject matter is to be dramatic and not entirely documentary. *This Is War!* was particularly fortunate in having the active partnership of the Office of Facts and

Figures, which keeps its fingers at the national pulse and was able, therefore, to correlate the broadcasts of *This Is War!* with the particular public opinion needs of the country, as they changed from week to week."

With this point of view one may differ sharply. If the series is to be "dramatic and not entirely documentary," then its subject matter, of course, will tend to be topical rather than fundamental. On this basis, the technicians want timely dramatic materials so that the excitements of the listener will be to current events. But excitements for what purpose? For what end? To inform listeners that the enemy is cruel? The listener knows that. To inform the listener that American factories are busy? The listener knows that. To report that the Russians are successfully fighting the Germans? The listener knows that. *This Is War!* told its stories eloquently, dramatically, *excitingly*. But a story told is not a story interpreted. A story told is not a story whose basic issues and problems are clarified. "Long-range planning" is not only possible, it is imperative, if by that expression one means the selection of topics—*The Enemy*, *America At War*, *Production*, etc.—which will be of interest and importance as long as the war lasts, and the spotlighting within each topic of the fundamental issues and problems on which public information and clarification is needed. For these issues and problems are in fact more topical than tomorrow's headlines; they are the trees to which transient events and incidents hang for a short while and then drop away like autumn leaves, later to be replaced by new buds.

For example, a problem which is, and will be, for years



to come, both timely and important is that of the peace to be written when the war ends. Peace aims can be effective war weapons; hence, peace is never too premature an issue for radio's consideration. The fact that radio functions not only as a medium of communication between government and the people, but conversely as a medium between the people and government has been discussed in Chapter 2. If radio properly exploits this two-way communication in regard to the problems of peace, it will contribute not only to the war effort but to the making of a new era in world relations. Any treatments of peace, however, must be on the level of fundamental issues and ideas, and not on the level of exhortations and dramatic pep talks about vague concepts of justice and democracy. The peace of the world is too important to be packaged and sold like soap. It is too important to be described by clichés, even if the clichés are backed by orchestras and sound effects. The peace cannot be touched except on the level of ideas, and radio's number one challenge in the realm of information and clarification is to give voice to the momentous issues involved. Of course, the government holds the key to a quick and effective basis for discussion of the peace. In the last war, when President Wilson's Fourteen Points were announced, they became the most effective "propaganda" of the Allied cause. So in this war a clear enunciation of peace aims will be potent "propaganda," and will establish a proper basis for radio's task of providing information and clarification. But the absence of a government declaration does not excuse radio from exercising

its responsibility nor its opportunity to treat peace problems.

A fourth principle: the listener must be given directives and suggestions for action, so that his emotional and intellectual responses to the stimuli of the program will not climax in frustration.

It will be best, first, to cite examples of what *not* to do. *America At War* provides handy reference material.

NARRATOR: [This war] won't be won by thoughtful editorials or by a voice like this or words like these. It won't be won by sitting home and letting others do the work. It won't be won by figuring that we can never lose because we've never lost. It may be that America has never lost a war; but neither, for *that* matter, has *Japan*. This is war and war is sweat and grime and mud and overtime and never-mind-the-profits. This is war and has to do with blood and bone and anger, and a big job done by many. *This is war!*

MUSIC: *A surge*

SOUND: *Water lapping for a long moment*

SAILOR (*weakly*): Hey.

2ND SAILOR (*after some time*): What?

SAILOR: Larry's gone.

2ND SAILOR: Well.

SAILOR: Lift him over.

2ND SAILOR: Ain't got the strength.

SAILOR: Lift him. Give me a hand.

BIZ: *Sound of straining. A splash*

NARRATOR: Six survivors. Thirty-four are missing. It appears on page eighteen, fifth column over. This is war.

After a few similar scenes, the narrator addressed himself to the listener—

How are you fighting it? Or are you?

What are you doing with your share of the Republic's time? Are you too good? Too proud? Too special? Are your hands too soft? Are you bored? Indifferent? Is humanity beneath you? Are you satisfied to give the brush-off to the greatest struggle of all time?

The narrator is now exhorting the listener to *do* something. His eloquence is the eloquence of the harangue. His purpose in so speaking is to arouse the listener to action; to inspire action by the innuendo that if you're not doing something for the war effort you're failing your duty as a citizen. For the sake of argument let us grant that precisely this response is forthcoming from the listener, who is now emotionally ripe for directives addressed to him; did not the narrator speak directly to him but a moment ago? But what happens? Does the narrator advance any "orders of the day"?

NARRATOR: The fight is on, and you are in it, whether you handle a bayonet or a monkeywrench. Both are good weapons. The sword is mighty and the pen is mighty, and the rubber tire also; the bombardier is mighty and the carpenter, the nurse, the teacher, air raid warden, paper-saver, rumor-killer. All of you are entered in the lists. All of you are making noises to be heard. You want to hear the sounds of battle? Listen:

BIZ: *Metal grinding on a lathe*

NARRATOR: Grinding job for a valve on one of the new tank motors.

BIZ: *Cross to typing*

NARRATOR: Getting out a report for a production conference.

BIZ: *Cross to assembly line noises*

NARRATOR: Know those 125,000 planes we're making? There go parts for two of them on the assembly line.

BIZ: *Cross to piano music*

NARRATOR: Practicing for a benefit performance. China relief.

A concert pianist! How many listeners are concert pianists? A factory worker turning out munitions. How many listeners are in jobs so obviously associated with the war? The point is that the program failed to direct the inspired listener to possible channels of action. Of course, no program can issue a personal directive for each listener; but the lathe operator, the war-job stenographer, and the China relief pianist, each has a job and is doing it. What about you and me and a lot of other people who were looking, groping, for something constructive to do? Four minutes—a long time on the air—might well have been taken for general examples of things *ordinary* listeners might do. The determination of these “do’s” can be made only by qualified experts, but the experts are available and can be tapped. The job thereafter is to blue-pencil the script sufficiently to incorporate the directives into the program. The first requirement is that sufficient time be provided so that the directives can be fully and carefully stated. The technician, if his interest is in drama rather than effectiveness, may protest that the dramatic continuity or impact of the program will suffer. This argument is based upon the erroneous premise that the purpose of the program is dramatic interest, perhaps entertainment; whereas the drama of the program should be regarded simply as a means to the

end of putting over the directives. Further, this argument presumes a fact which is at best dubious—that the statement of directives is neither dramatic nor interesting. The record seems fairly clear that people are anxious to do things. When war came, Washington was deluged with letters, telegrams, phone calls, and callers who begged to be told what to do. With few exceptions, the volunteer participation organizations of the country have more people than they know what to do with. The public is not only interested in receiving directives, but has a passionate desire to execute them.

There are positive and negative aspects to the use of direct-statement directives on dramatic programs. Briefly, those who favor this technique contend that forthright expository suggestions are effective because their very simplicity contrasts in a dramatic way with the lush production techniques of other sections of the program. This approach implies that "what we're now saying is serious business, and needs no emotional hypodermics." Some studies purport to show that background music, a dramatic plot-situation and many voices competing for the microphone distract the listener from the content of the message. A directive is an appeal to reason while production devices attempt to influence reason through the emotions, usually to the disadvantage of content.

The "con" argument declares that spot-announcements aren't effective, and that the simple expository directive is nothing more nor less than a spot announcement or series of spot announcements, a device labeled ineffective because it has been overdone. During the first six months of the war, and continuing today, spot announce-



ments are peppered at the public during virtually every station break, and many programs donate a minute or two of their time at some point to the reading of them. In fact, it is pointed out, the situation has become so bad that the Office of War Information now schedules announcements by means of a "Radio Allocation Plan."<sup>11</sup> The American listener, further, is conditioned to closing his ears during most announcements, and his maximum attention must be held by them. Hence, it is recommended that the directives be incorporated into the body of the script, and made an integral part of the dramatization. By this device, the argument runs, the listener will simultaneously enjoy an uninterrupted program and receive his directives. In addition, this pattern permits the listener to associate himself with the characters of the drama, and to participate vicariously in their activities. As a result, his predisposition to action will be sharpened. Finally, the emotional impact of dramatization clothes "the doers" in heroic colors, and emphasizes thereby the patriotic value of the action.

Neither of the foregoing methods for airing directives can be recommended for all types of programs. But certain general observations may be advanced. Not all dramatic programs lend themselves easily to directives. But official or semi-official series, like *This Is War!* and non-official programs of war-effort classification have an obligation to use them. War-effort broadcasts are justified largely to the extent to which they succeed in stimulating concerted action by listeners. They are entitled to time on the air, not, as is Jack Benny, to provide enter-

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 1.

tainment, escape and relaxation, but to provide inspiration or clarification or information *and* directives whereby audience interest can be channeled into productive activities. The technician writing and producing war-effort programs must determine whether dramatized or expository directives will be most effective. Inspirational programs specialize in emotional jags; they suffer by being brought down to earth. Dramatized directives in such programs seem artificial and labored. As a general rule the expository device will be more effective and should be aired at or near the conclusion of the broadcast. This involves the risk of being tuned out by ad-sick listeners, but war-effort programs run less of a risk in this regard than do other programs, because the public wants to know *what* to do. On the other hand, programs which are documentary or reportorial are better adapted to the use of dramatized directives. Since they deal with events and people, and are stories of action, directives can be incorporated into the body of the program without appearing labored or artificial.

In either case, however, the listener must be made to understand that what he is now hearing *is* a directive. Identification of the directive should be made explicitly. Not only will this assure the attention of the greatest number of listeners but it will have the dramatic effect of underlining the serious purpose of the broadcast.

The four principles outlined above were not consistently applied in the production of *This Is War!* The last half of the series manifested a better understanding of their validity than did the first. Throughout the series there was an excess of "What are *you* doing?" exhorta-

tions, and an insufficiency of specific directives. Allusions to the enemy were generally derogatory, on the naïve level of name-calling. Facts about the enemy were seldom permitted to speak for themselves. *The Enemy* reflected the faults of the series' general treatment. The Fascists are "the blackshirt gang" and Mussolini is "a jackal in a cage." The three leaders of the Axis are "the lowest scum of 5,000 years of what we charitably call civilization—they, and their circle of cutthroats. . . ." But *The Enemy* represented an improvement over the programs which preceded it—in so far as it was concerned less with name-calling and the dramatization of isolated episodes of atrocities than with demonstrating "a pattern, a master plan"—the strategy of terror. The attempt to provide information and clarification was, on the whole, successful. Only one other program attempted to clarify an important idea. In the program titled *Propaganda*, the ways our enemies attack our minds and morale were treated with skill and intelligence.<sup>12</sup>

*This Is War!* gave listeners little new information, with the exception of the three programs on the military services—*Your Navy*, *Your Army*, and *Your Air Forces*. These programs were effective if for no other reason than that after several months of war the American people still knew little about their military forces and were hungry for information. *The Army Hour* continues to render this service.

*This Is War!* demonstrated that radio can render an effective service by giving the public elementary facts

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<sup>12</sup> The scripts of *The Enemy* and *Propaganda* are published in *This Is War!* Dodd, Mead and Company, 1942.

about the military forces, and by maintaining the relationship between the home front and the battle front. On the whole, the series did not treat the fundamental ideas and issues attached to each topic, or even present fresh or important information.

The final programs were written and produced in a more simple and forthright manner than those which preceded them. For example, *America At War*, the first program, asked—"Shall a picture tell you how the marrow of the bone decays? Can a poem in a magazine express the green scum gathered on the soul? Will a broadcast on the radio impersonate the gnaw of hunger in the bowel?"

By the ninth program, the series had learned to speak the language of the people. For example, in the original script of *The Enemy*, one of the characters said—"Can you figure out that decree? That's how to prepare a race for serfdom. Keep them poor, get them drunk, fill them full of cheap music and lewd and corrupt entertainment. . . ."

In production, Corwin changed "serfdom" to "slavery" and "lewd" to "dirty." But such changes to the vernacular, while commendable, came too late. Even if they had come earlier, such changes would not have made *This Is War!* effective. According to an official analysis of *This Is War's* audience, more than 90 per cent of its listeners were well-educated people with high incomes. Less than 10 per cent were Americans of average means and schooling. Consequently, the potential effectiveness of the series was not realized. The majority of listeners were people who already knew a good deal about the war.

Their interest in the series was essentially aesthetic—they welcomed an adult-appeal program well written and skillfully produced. The majority of potential listeners in the lower economic and educational strata apparently found little interest in so literary and sophisticated a program. In other words, those who might have benefited from the elementary information and attempts at clarification in the series were not disposed to listen, and those who did listen were already familiar with the materials presented and for obvious reasons.

The audience of *This Is War!* was overwhelmingly urban. No references were made to agriculture in any of the programs. The “highbrow” appeal of the series was above the economic and educational level of rural listeners. With telling candor McClinton says in his report that “the producers of *This Is War!* never attempted to appeal to the agricultural section of the American people, nor to discuss its problems. It is quite conceivable that the relatively small number of farmers who listened . . . felt at times that they were eavesdropping on a world that failed to recognize their importance in the war effort.” One may well wonder at such neglect when it is remembered that during the months *This Is War!* was on the air, the “Food for Victory” campaign was at its height and the farm labor situation was becoming increasingly critical. Six months after war, two key groups of the national effort had been slighted by radio—the farmers and the men of the merchant marine. The role of the farmer in any national emergency is of such obvious importance that one searches for a logical reason why it should have been ignored in America’s first “offi-



cial" wartime radio series. The responsibility must rest upon the government and upon the O. F. F. as the "policy" agency behind the series.

Yet *This Is War!* was a profitable experiment because it taught radio some important lessons. The trend of subsequent programs has been toward direct and frank statement of content. The language is becoming simple and forthright. When Wyllis Cooper was assigned to write *The Army Hour*, he announced that "there'll be no poetry in what we have to say." An increasing number of programs attempt to explain why the government has adopted certain war measures. The necessity of supplying information and clarification is beginning to be recognized. One of the best programs in this category was the series *Three Thirds of the Nation*, which was announced as "a program about *doing without*," and which explained the need for rationing and why shortages exist.<sup>13</sup> Specific directives are finding their way into scripts. The technicians are beginning to recognize that it is not enough to exploit a desire toward action—the action must be outlined in detail.

*This Is War!* made a further contribution in its courageous efforts to treat the enemy and Fascism with vigor and bluntness. McClinton says that "our attacks upon the enemy and upon the system of Fascism were more vitriolic and more competently documented than on any previous American programs." The wisdom of "vitriolic attacks" is open to question, but there can be little doubt that, properly tempered, as a result of experience and a growing recognition that the most effective treatment of

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 9.

the enemy lies in reporting his acts and clarifying his strategy through understatement, candor is necessary in describing the enemy. Prior to *This Is War!* American radio insisted upon treating the enemy and treating Fascism with kid gloves. The carry-over from the pre-war conservatism and neutrality of the industry was still strong. Radio was accustomed to being "impartial." No single program for which the industry was exclusively responsible had the courage or wisdom to take off the kid gloves and get tough. The fact that *This Is War!* bore the "official" label and dared to smash the enemy with strong language broke the restraints. Already other programs, taking their cue from *This Is War!* are learning how to use radio as a war weapon.

As "one of the best" scripts to include in this volume, Corwin submitted *To The Young*, which was broadcast as the twelfth program in the series. It is more restrained in its references to the enemy than were other scripts in the series; and, although it sacrifices natural dialogue in a few places for the sake of speeches to the listener, the speeches are rooted in facts and are rather successful efforts at clarification, especially in the treatment of doubts about Russia. Moreover, the speeches are not exhortative, as were those of the narrator in *The Enemy* and *America at War*. The mood of the script is one of warmth, sympathy and fraternity. Probably the most mature and certainly the most restrained of the thirteen programs, *To The Young* deserves careful study as the best example of radio's first "propaganda" series after Pearl Harbor. The complete script follows:

## TO THE YOUNG

MUSIC: *Morning music. It fades under*

SOUND: *Milk cart in. It stops. Footsteps as Milkman walks across sidewalk and up steps; we hear the rattle of his bottles in metal container . . . footsteps up stairs. Suddenly he almost trips on the stairs*

MILKMAN: Oooops . . . sorry. Didn't see ya.

BOY (*sleepily*): Thass all right.

[*Milkman crosses porch, puts down bottle, picks up two, and recrosses porch. While he is doing this:*]

BOY: Gosh, I musta drowssed off.

GIRL: Me too. Ooh . . . look. Getting light.

MILKMAN (*about to descend steps*): Good morning.

BOY & GIRL: Good morning. (*Steps*)

BOY (*as milk cart pulls away in B G—yawning*): My back aches.

GIRL: Your uniform's all wrinkled.

[*There are birds stirring now*]

BOY: After all, I suppose these steps weren't made to sleep on.

GIRL: Tired?

BOY: It's nice with you in my arms. Wish it could always be like this.

GIRL: It will be.

BOY: You think so, darling? . . . Think I'll be back? Got a big mess to clean up before we get back. We're not sailin' for a Boy Scout convention, you know.

GIRL: Yes . . . I know. . . . Are you afraid, Tom?

BOY: I was at first.

GIRL: Afraid?

BOY: Afraid they wouldn't take me. (*Chuckles*)

GIRL (*after a long pause*): I love you, Tom.

BOY: I love you, Betty. (*Pause*) I guess that's one of the things this war's about.

GIRL: About us?

BOY: About *all* young people like us. About love, and gettin' hitched, and havin' a house and some kids, an' breathin' fresh air out in the suburbs like this, an'—well, about livin' an' workin' *decent*, like free people. . . .

GIRL: Tom. . . .

BOY: What?

GIRL: I'm gonna *miss* you—but. . . .

BOY: But what?

GIRL: But I'm gonna be *proud* while I'm missin' ya. . . .

MUSIC: *Surge, and behind*

ANNOUNCER: This is War! The four major networks again join to present the twelfth in their series of broadcasts for wartime America—*To the Young* by Norman Corwin.

MUSIC: *Dips down and fades under*

BILL: We go off to the war, guys like Tom and me. You come home to pack a few things, and you kid around as though it were nothing at all. Make it seem as though you were going on a two-weeks' vacation at Pine Point. You get out the old letters from your girl and read them, and then take another look at the newspaper clips about how you won the hurdles in the track meet with Sacred Heart, and scored a touch-down against James Madison . . . and you unstring your guitar, and put your tennis racket away in a frame, and then (*Stairs*) you come downstairs, and Mom and Pop are standing there, and you hug Mom and give Pop a friendly poke in the ribs because you don't know what else to do . . . and then you pick up your duffle bag. . . .

MUSIC: *In and behind*

BILL: So long, Mom . . . I'll write ya (*Pause*) . . . Aren't ya gonna say anything, Mom?

MOM: (*An almost inaudible sniffle*)

BILL: So long, Dad. Take it easy.

DAD: Goodbye, Bill. Good luck, boy.

[*Steps . . . the door*]

MUSIC: *Up and out behind*

BILL: . . . And you go off to the war . . . and there's the sadness that always hits you when you say goodbye to those you love, no matter what kind of a voyage you're going on; and for a while you sit in the train watching the country roll by, and you feel lonely (*Train sounds in*), and you think about the folks, and your girl, Alice, and your dog, Nick, and the Joyland Dance Palace down at Silver Lake, now the nights are getting warm—and after a spell of that, your eye happens to catch a couple of billboards and you read them, in the few seconds it takes for the train to move past. . . .

HOTEL SIGN (*echo*): Forty Miles to the Jefferson Hotel—Centrally Located—Baths with Each Room.

BILL: And you wonder how many miles to where you're going, and how centrally it's located, and whether there's hot-and-cold-running water in the pillboxes . . . and there's another sign. . . .

NEW ENGLAND (*echo*): Visit New England This Summer—The Playground of the East.

BILL: And you wonder whether you'll visit *Old* England this summer, or maybe New Caledonia or New Guinea or New Zealand. And it comes to you with a jolt that the thing you're on your way to fight is called "The *New* Order"—(*A bitter chuckle*)—actually, the oldest racket in the world—as old as Pharaoh and the first slave. . . . And there's another billboard . . .

PEARL HARBOR (*echo*): Remember Pearl Harbor.

BILL: Huh. As though anybody could *forget*! As though any American worth the price of the morning paper of December 8th, could ever forget. And yet you *wonder* about that



sign: whether it's a good idea to keep remembering the shame and treachery of that day—you wonder whether you've been training for a year to avenge some massacres in Warsaw, or Rotterdam, or whether you've been getting ready to do something bigger than revenge—something greater—maybe the biggest thing that ever happened in the history of civ—

OLD MAN: Excuse me, son, have you got a match on you?

BILL: Yeah. There y'are. Keep 'em. I got some more.

OLD MAN: Thanks very much.

BILL: And you sink back in your chair and close your eyes and muse about what kind of world it's going to be when you're as old as the man across the aisle who just asked for a light. And there's a little surge in your blood when you realize that it's young men like yourself all over the earth who are going to answer that question . . . those who've lived the least, will make the most of their lives. And then a half-dreamy thought comes to you out of the clicking wheels: This very night, this very hour, millions of young fellers like yourself, are out working on the same job as you . . . each one of them with folks at home and a girl named Alice and a dog named Nick. And you *wonder*: Does a guy your age in England feel the way you do?—does a Russian fighter have your kind of thoughts?—does a Chinese private dream of what's to come? And it warms your heart to think of your comrades—all the young folks in the fight. You wonder how it would be to drop in on them here and there among the nations you've united with; to ask them questions; help them lift a bomb into the rack, drink a beer with them, talk shoptalk about the job you're on—about the world that's in the works. You wonder how a *Tommy* feels . . . how you'd get along with a Red soldier—wonder what's cooking around the China way . . . won-

der so *hard* that in a minute off you go around the world to find out for yourself.

MUSIC: *Transition: space music: "Britannia" comes in quietly and unobtrusively: "We're in England now that April's there"*

FRED (*British*): She's the prettiest number *I've* ever taken out.

BILL: I can see why you're nuts about her.

FRED: Long and slim—that's the way I like them. And she travels in fast company.

BILL: Did she behave all right Wednesday night?

FRED: Gave me everything I asked. Even with all that ack-ack fire around us over Rostock, she handled beautifully. Headwind slowed her down on the return, but she still was fast enough to get away from those Heinkels.

BILL: You ought to see our PB 39's.

FRED: I can hardly wait to fly one. (*Up, to waitress*) I say, Edna, will you bring some more tea, please?

EDNA: Righto!

BILL: Will you have time?

FRED: Sure: Tell me, Bill—how are they taking the war back in the States?

BILL: By and large, fine. Everybody's pitching in. There are still some crabbers, of course.

FRED: Young people?

BILL: No. Old *experts*, mostly. Kicking about this and that—telling the Army and Navy how to run the war.

FRED: We had the same thing here for a while. Funny, isn't it—the blokes who do all the squawking and yammering are never the ones who do any of the fighting.

BILL: Some people give their lives, other people give their opinions.

FRED: Yes, quite. Tell me: is there any anti-British sentiment?

BILL: Well, the fifth and sixth columns are doing their best to plant it and nurse it along. (*Ad lib sounds of tea being served*) There's always a crackpot market for anything anti-sensible and anti-decent.

FRED: Mmm. The Axis errand boys. You know, Bill, it's getting pretty late for that kind of stuff. When a maniac's loose in the house is no time to argue about who left the door open. Good Lord, man, you and I'd get absolutely nowhere if we spent all our time blaming the old fools who made the big mistakes five and ten and twenty years ago. The idea is to go out and give the Axis hell and win the war, and do it soon.

BILL: And when it's won, to see that it *stays* won—

FRED: Exactly. To have *our* say in the kind of world we're pulling out of the fire. There's no reason why—

[*Door slightly off . . . opens suddenly and with it, hurriedly*]

PILOT (*off; slightly projecting*): Taking off in two minutes. Ready, Hollister?

FRED: Right with you.

PILOT: Righto.

[*Door closes*]

FRED: Bill—I've got to run now.

BILL: It's been swell to sit and talk with you.

FRED: One thing I wish you'd carry away with you, old man.

. . . (*Motors start warming up in middle distance*) . . .

Seems to me the world's shrunk a lot since we were kids—its's overnight from New York to London, if you fly a ship as good as my Jenny. We're not far apart any more. Not in miles or anything else. We're fighting the same scrap. There are no longer a dozen big powers in the world, there are only two: *good* and *evil*—and whatever a man's *accent* may be, whether it's Cockney or Yorkshire or Brooklyn or

Midwest or Russian or Chinese—he's fighting on *one* side, and that's *our* side, and—well, that man's a *brother* of mine and he can wear my shirt and borrow my gun! Bill, give it to 'em. See you in Berlin.

BILL: So long, Fred.

BIZ: *The door opens—motor sounds up briefly and down with the closing of the door*

BILL (*Musing—slowly to himself*): "Whether it's Cockney or Brooklyn or Midwest or Russian" . . . it's a small world, all right . . . and the accent doesn't matter any more . . . the accent's on Youth . . . the accent's on Victory. . . .

BIZ: *The motors—still in off perspective—turn up, and the bomber takes off*

BILL: Give it to 'em, Fred. Carry it home. They don't like war in their own backyard. They prefer to fight in somebody else's. It's an old German custom. Fly fast, kid, fly straight. . . . But at *that*, I'll be over Germany *before* you! (*Tagging the scene*) I'm on my way to *Russia*, Fred, to see a fightin' man named *Peter*!

MUSIC: *Transition sweeps up out of bomber noise—after a few measures of the space motif, the "Internationale" comes in symbolically; for a moment it is struggle music, then it quiets down to set the mood for:*

PETER (*Russian—speaking quietly*): Are you all right, Bill?

BILL: Yuh. But won't they spot us in this tree?

PETER: Not if you don't move. Don't talk loud, either. They're on the lookout for guerillas.

BILL: What do you make in the telescope?

PETER: Take a look. Nazi field headquarters. They think they're well hidden, so deep inside their own lines. (*Chuckles*) But I know the country a little better than they.

BILL: What's that car there?

PETER: Staff car. When they come out and climb into the car, that's when I go to work. Me and Katarina.

BILL: Katarina? (*Plane in*)

PETER: My sweet machine gun here. My little Katarina. My best girl.

BILL: Hey, what's that plane, Pete?

PETER: Nazi scout plane looking for guerillas. You haven't seen any guerillas in these woods, have you, Bill?

BILL: Not me.

PETER: Better keep your head low.

BILL: You been guerilla-fighting long?

PETER: Two months. Fought with the Army of the Southern front when we stopped the Nazis at Rostov. Then, when we began to drive them back, I was sent to train guerillas in the occupied areas. (*Plane out*)

BILL: Know something, Pete?

PETER: What?

BILL: We Americans certainly had a screwy idea about you Reds.

PETER (*not getting it*): Screwy? What means screwy?

BILL: I mean twisted—queer. Somebody *lied* to us, Pete, and they must have done a *lot* of lying over a long period of time.

PETER: So?

BILL: They told us you had a badly trained army; that you had no planes; that all your good generals had been killed off; that you were all starving to death; told us you had no constitution—no faith.

PETER (*laughs softly*): Does America understand us any better now?

BILL: Yes; but there are still some people who call you a menace. They say *we'll* have to fight *you* when *we've both* licked the Axis.



PETER: This is screwy. Who says that? Young people? Your soldiers and sailors?

BILL: No. A few cranks and some editors. (*Plane in*) And the Axis radio. But the vast majority of Americans think you're doing a great job, and they're behind you solidly. We're not taken in by any new variations on the old lies.

PETER: You know what Lozovsky said about the losses we have inflicted on the Nazis?

BILL: No; what'd he say?

PETER: He said we have destroyed a *generation* of Germans.

BILL (*thinking that over*): You have, at that.

PETER: That means, Bill, we have helped to make free in the world that you and I will grow old in, all the generations after us. This is a solemn thing to think about . . . terrible and yet sacred. (*Plane out*)

BILL: Yuh. . . .

PETER: Now America is fighting with us. That is good. We Russians can beat Hitler *here* this year—if we get some help.

BILL: Pete—do you think our countries will be good friends in the days to come?

PETER: Why not? Both of us have the same kind of aim—to help the common people live a better life.

BILL: Do you think that when—

PETER: Shhhh! (*Pause*) Don't make a sound. (*Pause*) They are coming out.

BILL (*whispering*): Many of them?

PETER: Six. A major general among them. (*Pause*) Here—hold the cartridge belt, Tovarich. (*Pause*) Steady now! (*Pause*)

BIZ: *Machine gun fire*

MUSIC: *Transition sweeps up out of the cold. It goes into a tragic variation on the "Lorelei" and is taken up, at the*

*end, by an accordion playing the "Lorelei" straight. A young man's voice hums it; at the end of a chorus:*

HANS (*sadly*): That was the Germany I grew up in. (*Sighs*)

Ah well—let's get back to these dishes.

BIZ: *Ad lib sound of washing dishes, which continues throughout*

BILL: Don't they sing that any more, Hans?

HANS: No. They sing about the super-race which will conquer the world. They sing about the decay of democracy, and how they'll whip America.

BILL: Do you remember any of the Songs?

HANS: Do you know the tune "O Tannenbaum?" (*Hums it*)

BILL (*identifying it*): "Maryland, my Maryland."

HANS: Yes, same tune. Old German folk song. Well, the Nazis have new words for it:

"America, America,  
Oh, filthy land, America  
Democracy is a disease,  
We'll whip you till you're on your knees,  
America, America,  
O filthy land, America."

BILL: Hmmmm. (*Pause, then change of subject*) Hans, was it hard to make up your mind to desert to the Russian lines?

HANS: A man is a traitor only when he betrays his country. I have not betrayed Germany by deserting Hitler. To the contrary, now I can hope to join those who are *really* fighting for my country—even if it's only kitchen police.

BILL: That's a good way to put it.

HANS: That's the way I've been putting it for five years. Since 1937 I was in the underground movement.

BILL: All that time?

HANS: I am a Catholic. You remember when the Nazis killed our priests and jailed Cardinal Faulhaber and tore down

the crucifixes in our schools to put up pictures of Hitler? Well, right at that time I *began* the desertion which finished when I crept over the lines the other day. As far back as that I saw that the Nazis were destroying not only Catholic youth, but *all* youth. Youth in Germany has one function: fuel for the war machine. Bill, I tell you, Hitler burns up youth the way a motor burns up gas. This thing of "building up" boys to be soldiers is merely a kind of *refining process* . . . the way you refine oil.

BILL (*reflectively*): There have been barbarians *before*—*natural* barbarians—but this is the first time human beings have been *trained* to be barbarians.

HANS: *Trained?* You should see those poor kids in school, getting the daily injection of poison. (*Fading together with sound*) Why, there isn't a single subject which has not been perverted. Take a class in nature study, for example—

TEACHER: *Heil Hitler!*

CLASS: *Heil Hitler!*

TEACHER: Now this morning we are going to draw conclusions from our trip in the field yesterday. Albert, tell me, what did you see?

ALBERT (*aged 10*): We saw an anthill.

TEACHER: Ernest?

ERNEST: And beetles and a beehive, and birds.

TEACHER: Yes; and everywhere you looked, you saw how nature uses the *Fuehrer* principle—the principle of leadership. One thing you did *not* see, and that is the principle of democracy.

CLASS: (*Laughs*)

TEACHER: Now everywhere in nature, the leader has to be obeyed; the *strong* rules over the *weak*. You noticed how the ants did what was assigned to them without questioning.

Now, class, *which* ants saw to it that the commands of the *Fuehrer ant* were carried out?

CLASS: The soldier ants.

TEACHER: Correct. You see Nature is very wise about all things, and nature intended soldiers to be the most important of all living creatures. When you grow up, you will be soldiers for Adolf Hitler. That is the highest glory (*Fading*) in the world—to die for our *Fuehrer*.

BIZ: *Dishes back in*

HANS: Or take a class in arithmetic . . . you might think, Bill, that stuff like “two-times-two” could not be distorted . . . but to the Nazis every problem is a chance to drive another nail into a kid’s head. . . .

*Dishes out*

MATH TEACHER: Here is your homework problem for tonight: . . . In the year 1933, there were 66,060,000 inhabitants in the German Reich, of whom 499,682 were despicable Jews. What was the percentage of Jews then? Also, find out the number of inhabitants in the Reich *today*, and the corresponding number and percentage of Jews.

BIZ: *Dishes in*

HANS: They stop at no absurdity, of course. No lie is too ridiculous. But what else can children do but believe? You believed *your* teachers, didn’t you? The kids in the drawing class draw *soldiers* and *tanks* and *planes*. The kids in chemistry class learn about poison gas and fire bombs. . . . They grow up believing war is the *only goal* in life—that dying for Hitler is the supreme achievement, that bearing babies for the New Order is the highest duty of womankind.

BILL (*very tentatively*): Have—er—have you got a *girl* back home in Germany?

HANS: Yes. Anna. She is in the underground too. I hope to Heaven she’s safe, and that she’ll *be* there when it’s ended.

I hope there'll be a few young men like you and me *left* in Germany to undo all the twisted wreckage, to bring the light back to the people. It has been so long. So very long. (*Suddenly intense and building in passion*) We must win, Bill! This *can't* go on in Germany forever! It must be destroyed before all our young are broken and bled white! *Ach*, the unspeakable *shame* for the once proud name of German! The same before all man and all history, from now until the end of time! The *shame* that our great Fatherland knows not its own sons!!

BIZ: *A dish drops and breaks*

HANS: I'm sorry. I—I lost myself.

BILL: No, Hans. You found yourself. You found yourself, five years ago, when most of the boys your age gave in to Adolf and his gangster bums. And don't worry—we'll do what you're asking. We've got some great guys and gals fighting on our side . . . guys named Fred and Peter and gals named Jenny and Katarina . . . and over in China, where they've been standing with their backs to the wall since long before any of the rest of us knew what it was about—they're *still* in there fighting. Yes, sir, that's where I'm going next. And when we win, kid, you'll get back to Anna and I'll get back to Alice, and the world'll get back to decency. You can bank on that.

MUSIC: *Transition: Space theme: It goes into a suggestion—but not too obvious a one—of Chinese music. It comes down under. . . .*

BIZ: *Lapping of water, as in the propulsion of a junk by long oars; this continues under:*

CHEN (*a Chinese girl*): Yes, we have come a long way, Mr. Bill. We were a passive people, and a very old people in our hearts and in our minds.

BILL: I know, Miss Chen. (*Chuckles*) I'm afraid a lot of



Americans had the idea China was made up mostly of laundrymen and Confucius. When the Japs first took you on, we thought you'd be knocked out in a couple of weeks.

CHEN: You can't defeat a fighting *people*, if they want to fight. We are young now, as America is young. We are united now, after all those years of revolution. We have given much to the world in the past and we give much now; and in the time to come we shall give more; we shall know each other better.

BILL: I hope so, Miss Chen. And I believe so. I've been talking to other young folks, young fighting people, and they feel just about the same way. No more splendid isolation, when this one's over. Freedom in China is freedom in Texas and Maine and Iowa and California. If we haven't learned that by now, we'll never learn it.

CHEN: Will you take the tiller for a while? I'll go below and cook something for all of us.

BILL: Sure (*Pause*) Say, this is some river. Wide as our Mississippi. (*Pause*) Tell me, how many of these junks have you moved upstream since the Japs bombed you out?

CHEN: About twenty. But we haven't far to go now. We'll set up the university again as soon as we reach Chungking.

BILL: Gosh—who'd think of moving a college two thousand miles, carrying the whole works on donkeys and in junks?

CHEN (*chuckling*): The Chinese would think of it. Mr. Bill, we have moved more than one hundred of our universities this way. In China, education does not continue in *spite* of war—but *because* of war. We want Young China to be ready after the victory, ready with the knowledge that will be needed to make the good life in a good world.

BILL: You know, Miss Chen—

BIZ: *In the middle distance, a toot from a small river craft*

BILL: What's that?

CHEN: Young Chinese soldiers on their way to the Burma front. They are saluting you. Wave to them.

BILL (*shouting*): Hi! Hi there! Hi, fellers! How's it going?

BIZ: *A few more toots*

BILL: The same to you! Give 'em hell when you get there! Good luck, fellers!

BIZ: *Two more toots, going immediately into:*

MUSIC: *Transition back to train, using suggestions of previous thematic devices; it fades under*

BIZ: *Clicking rails: interior coach:*

BILL (*Resuming the manner of the opening train sequence*):

And you look out of the window, and you see your country rolling by, and night is falling and lights are coming on in the farmhouses . . . and somehow you're not sad any more . . . the lonely thoughts are no longer with you; somehow you're not alone now, and you feel you'll never be alone again . . . because riding with you in the coach is Fred of the R. A. F.; and Peter, the guerilla, polishing his gun; and Hans and Anna of the underground; and young Miss Chen of China. And you know that everywhere tonight the young are fighting and the young are dying—fighting for themselves and all the future young. The yet unborn who'll read about it calmly; talk about it, think about it in a world made wholesome by the fire and the blood.

BIZ: *Toots*

BILL: And the train goes whistling through the night, through the same night that blacks out London and spreads eastward over France and Belgium, Norway, Denmark, Greece—the night which never will give way to day in any country anywhere if Fascism should win the fight.

And you know that it is all or nothing; youth and freedom or the living death . . . but you feel in your bones that it will be all right; that it will be a long one and a tough one, but it will be all right because of guys like Fred and Hans and Peter and Miss Chen, and guys like you.

MUSIC: *Conclusion*

## COMMENTARY

*By Norman Corwin*

CBS Writer-Producer, Director of *This Is War!*

The duty and responsibility of American radio is to explain to the people the nature of Fascism and why we are fighting it; to explain what we stand to lose by defeat and gain by victory; to face squarely the issues of this war instead of ducking them; to hammer away at, to reiterate, to follow through with the truth; to inform the people instead of selling, coaxing, scaring, upbraiding, or exhorting them. This is Sherman Dryer's thesis and I agree with it.

I believe that if people are brought to understand the origins of Fascism, its accomplishments and goals, they will be activated by something more affirmative than hate: by a rational as well as emotional abhorrence of Fascism, together with the conviction that they are fighting for a just cause and for a future of limitless good possibilities.

Dryer describes many of the components of morale, but does not offer a definition. Let me presume to offer one: morale is conviction. The shortest road to the conviction of a people at war is their belief in the right of the fight. We have seen, both in our strongest enemy and our strongest ally, the effect upon fighting morale of such political home-

work. The German people and the Nazi army were well indoctrinated—too well. The Russian army has long had political commissars in its ranks. Our own army came only recently to accept the principle of teaching soldiers *why* they are fighting as well as how to fight, that they might fight better. It seems to me that radio should at least accept the same principle of morale as our army.

It is surprising to me that there are still those who think morale is a mysterious and complex matter. At this late stage in the proceedings, with more than six million already dead in battle, there is still some question about the function of radio as propaganda, and considerable concern about what should be told the people.

The tragedy of the situation can be measured only against the contrasting clarity of the enemy on all these points. Nobody knows better than they, alas, how vast is the power of radio—a power far exceeding that of the press. The painful truth is that neither our government nor the radio industry seems fully awake to radio's potentialities. Radio, whose single greatest commodity is time, can least afford to waste any. Nor can any agency of the government afford to waste any. Nor can any agency of the government afford to be slow or haphazard in its liaison with radio. As Dryer has pointed out, there is an urgent need to crystallize a strategy of propaganda, and to furnish information, suggestions and directives to an industry which, for the most part, is convinced of the profound importance of bringing the truth to the people.

It is debatable whether programs devoted to the exploits of fighters, the immortality of heroic dead, or the documentation in dramatic form of resources, can greatly advance morale. Stirring exploits are all too familiar—they have been on the screen and in comic strips and in mass fiction in

times of peace as well as war, and in quantity. Accounts of death must be careful not to arouse fear and apprehension in anxious relatives of fighting men. Documentation is for those who have the patience and the wit to listen to a feature article about economy.

These are some of the considerations which disturb the men of radio. They ask themselves whether the Variety Show can help much; whether the spot announcement to "Remember Pearl Harbor" and "Buy A War Bond" is worth the breath it takes; whether the introduction of drafted lovers and war talk into soap operas is going to deepen anybody's conviction that this is a serious and urgent and desperate war, fought as none before, and for stakes affecting every last listener.

There are no easy answers to these questions. They can be determined only after a great deal of thought by men whose sense of public responsibility, knowledge of the facts and sense of hunch are good. There are such men in radio and there are such men in government; let us hope they are hard at work on these very problems. Let us hope they all soon come to agree that any speech, program, or public expression which proposes to take up the war and does not in some way clarify, construct, or advance the fight against Fascism is a waste of time at a period in our lives when any waste is criminal.

So much, then, for my opinions about the general issues with which this book is concerned. I do not agree with all of Dryer's ideas and recommendations about radio in wartime; but they are ideas and recommendations which represent some tough thinking about serious matters and therefore deserve respectful attention.

Now let me tell you something of the history of *This Is War!* A large operation of four networks, there was less



opportunity for the exercise of any individual's whim than there might otherwise be. At the inception of the series, certain stipulations were made which I felt must be made before such an ambitious venture could get underway.

One was that those responsible for the show be answerable to themselves, but operating *in cooperation* with the Office of Facts and Figures. *This Is War!* was "official" in quotes only. The O. F. F. did not initiate subjects. Everything was initiated by the staff, who were drawn from the radio industry. We drew up a prospectus, at the outset, of what we thought should be covered by the series. It was frankly understood at the outset that of the thirteen subjects in the prospectus it would be unlikely that more than eight or nine would get through because of the developments in the war and the special urgency of certain problems at certain times.

Moreover, we stipulated that there be no aesthetic judgments passed upon any of the productions or scripts by the O. F. F. Their only exercise of judgment would be on the advisability of certain ideas and information in relation to whether that information was of aid or comfort to the enemy.

The "we," the staff of *This Is War!*, was composed of a research staff of two people, very expert, very hard-working, who, given an assignment, would completely surround the subject and bring in everything they had or could lay their hands on; H. L. McClinton, of N. W. Ayer and Sons, who was the series' producer; and myself as director and part-time writer.

The series, whether it succeeded or failed (Dryer and I may have some differences of opinion!), cannot, certainly, be looked upon as a model for operation, since it was aired two months sooner than I would have wished and sooner than I urged the networks to put it on. In short, I felt *This Is*

*War!* was such a large undertaking that it would have been better to have studied the subjects much more thoroughly before starting the series.

There were breakdowns; there were many serious difficulties. But they are post-mortem details and do not hold vital lessons. Largely, however, it was the initiative of the writers which accounted for the suggestion of line taken, of subjects to be selected, of the way they were to be treated.

For example, let me give you the general details of the program on *Production*. In considering the best date for that program, we acted upon the counsel and advice of the O. F. F., for they were set up in such a way as to know best what was developing in every governmental agency. The WPB was represented on the O. F. F. and I, who wrote the script, interviewed Robert Nathan, the WPB's chief brain-truster. I began to query him from this springboard: What needs to be said? What do you fellows have that's urgent? What can be done constructively? From the more than ample answers which Mr. Nathan gave, I tried to make a breakdown into possible dramatic structure, choosing as best I could those techniques and those devices likely to make the program graphic, stimulating and perhaps informative and clarifying.

This book has raised some interesting questions about policy-makers and about technicians. I cannot speak for other than myself and the *This Is War!* technicians, but it was not our habit to question officials like Mr. Nathan about whether he really knew what should be said on production. We concerned ourselves, within the limit of our abilities, only to carrying out the *how* of saying the *what* the policy-makers determined. We could not presume to know more about military strategy than General Marshall. We initiated only *suggestions* for problems to be attacked.

Thus, we got no specific directive to attack the enemy within. That problem had been crying for attention for many years before the war. We felt, however, that the government had now manifested its readiness to attack, and we attacked with them. Certainly there was nothing in *This Is War!* which ever was contradictory to the interests of the government or the O. F. F.

Dryer refers to the fact that the Crossley of *This Is War!* was around 20, and he expresses some concern because its twenty million listeners appear not to have been the lowest intellectual and economic groups of the population—not the C D but the A B groups. Would Dryer have had us lower the base of our program so that the twenty millions were C D instead of A B? How would this have made things better, or the program more effective?

But let me take up certain of Dryer's other points. Probably I, too, would have to write a book to comment on them fully; but on the gamble that capsule commentaries have at least the value of getting people to think about their basic ideas and values, I shall state mine briefly.

*The Enemy.* Of course, as civilized and sophisticated human beings, we are probably not very receptive to name-calling about the enemy. In the task of public clarification (in which I believe earnestly) it is the organization and grand-plan menace of Fascism that deserves our most energetic attention. But in the process we cannot be too squeamish about our references to the enemy. The technician faces a difficult task in translating hatred of Naziism without mentioning Nazis; and in the process it is inevitable that some violence may be done to the Fascists as well as to Fascism.

I have learned something of what this war is. I have not been, as Cecil Brown has been, on a sinking ship, with men drowning in flaming oil. But I have talked to men in the

maritime service who have seen their comrades die under conditions that would be too horrible for me to tell you. I am in London at this writing, broadcasting from a bomb-proof B. B. C. studio to the people of America. I have seen the streets of London and what the *Luftwaffe* has done and I have talked with the men who have met the enemy. I have seen with my eyes and heard with my ears the evidence that has come out of the conquered countries and that has come out of Germany and Japan. There are things that have happened in this war, atrocities, if you will, which are so terrible that the public hasn't been told about them, and probably will not be told about them until the end of the war. I have seen pictures of torture, rape, beheading, burning, bayoneting, all of the grisly, nasty stuff that is going on. And I am in no mood for dalliance, and I haven't been. So if the tone of *This Is War!* was annoyingly realistic, that is the reason, partly.

*The Peace.* I agree with Dryer that the peace and the problems of the post-war world should concern radio now. Our first job, of course, is to win the war; but it does not follow that the job to follow should not meanwhile be thought about or planned for. The people want to know what kind of world there will be at the end of this war. I say that the peace will take care of itself, if the American people are informed about what happened in the last peace and why it happened, if the American people are told the nature of the democracy they live in, the nature of the Fascism that they are in mortal combat against.

A peace comes out of a people, or should come out of a people, if one is living in a people's government and people's country. It doesn't come out of a treaty table. We can see by looking only as far back as Versailles whether peace



comes out of diplomats who have no relationship to the mandates of their people.

*Our Allies.* Some plain speaking is in order here. There is no doubt that anti-Russian and anti-British undercurrents are making it hard for us to get ahead as well as we should. These undercurrents were eddying long before the war; the war has made them more dangerous. To understand how best to counter-attack, we must look back a bit. We have been lied to. I think we should inquire who is responsible, what the techniques of lying were, and how to insure against the continuation of such. We have had lies about our security. There have been lies about the security of our potential allies in Europe. There have been lies about the impregnability, the invulnerability of the Maginot line, lies about the weakness of our enemies, lies about Germany (they didn't have enough money to run a war for six months) no understanding of the economic issues, no understanding, no comprehension of the Axis philosophy, which is that you don't need the old economic rules to conquer, that you don't need gold if you can conquer the gold of other countries.

Lies about Russia. What about those? They had no army. It was ill-trained. They had no generals. They were all killed off. No spirit. Germans would be in Moscow in three weeks. What goes? Who is to blame for that? Who is to blame for telling us, before Poland, that the Russians had no airplanes, that the Germans couldn't possibly be stopped? Who is to blame for the lies about Hitler's being a guy to do business with, for the immoral and shameful lies about appeasement? There is lying going on now, and I think we have got to educate the people that there is lying going on. The lies that are being fomented against England, the lies against the United Nations, the lies against our own government. I think it is a pretty serious thing, and I think that



when we are considering what to do with war propaganda we might well give it a place.

In *To The Young* I tried to expose some of these lies. I think lies can't live for long in a glaring exposure. The first step toward the necessary clarification to which Dryer refers is public recognition that the old line was a wrong one, and that some new and honest information is at hand.

*Clarification.* Of course the fact that a man is a skilled radio technician does not *ipso facto* qualify him to attempt clarification of the problem and issues of the war. But I submit that there are many available sources from which the sincere and intelligent technician can draw clarifying materials with which to educate himself and his listeners.

How should one undertake to write a wartime program? First, he must decide what particular phase of the subject he wants to cover. War is a pretty broad field. And my answer to that is related to the answer I give anyone who comes to me and says, "Corwin, I would like to get into radio."

"Well, doing what?"

You have got to survey the subject, survey your own capacities and your own information. If you aren't able to do these things, then you should not presume to write as a clarifier. Determine, for example, whether you are going to write for women or for men. In relation to your audience, determine who are the people to whom your program is addressed: are they agricultural or industrial workers (or both)? What type of program will be likely to interest *them*?

Then you will find available to you trunks and libraries full of information which the government is anxious to get to you. And you will find all kinds of interlocking agencies which are kept informed of the progress of the war, in every

country, week by week—such as the Allied Information Service in New York City, or the British Information Service. And there are directives available to you, if only you will trouble to write the proper governmental authorities.

However, you must not adopt the attitude that merely because you are willing and eager to do a radio program, that geni will appear in your office Monday morning with a blueprint. After all, the technician must be *creative*. That is the function and responsibility of all who are working with radio in wartime.

*On Tooting Our Own Horn.* Dryer calls this "egocentric allusions to the American people and their war effort." He somewhat deplores this tendency in radio programs. I do not doubt that it has been overdone. But there is another side to this matter we should not overlook. America is getting things done. The people are making increasingly greater sacrifices and efforts to get things done. Recognition has its place; so has proper public enthusiasm and a sense of accomplishment. Radio should pay proper recognition, but avoid unfounded ballyhoo. Four destroyers went down the ways a couple of days ago. They weren't built by radio commentators. Those big assembly plants for tanks out in Detroit, the three-a-day shipbuilding program, those aren't built by the Seven Dwarfs, by pixies. Conversion hasn't been a miracle from heaven. It has been industrial planning. Why keep quiet about it?

*The Challenge to Radio—and Its Critics.* We are at war, not in a period of minor dislocation of radio. It is a very nasty, brutal, hard war, and if I have carried away with me from my contact with sources of information and with those agencies of official government operation in Washington one impression, it is that it is a tough war, which we may well lose if we don't really get right on the ball. I don't think we

have much time to waste with quibbling about what is proper technique, about whether there is this or that amount of imagination expended in the production of programs, about whether 210 or 550 radio stations are carrying chain break announcements about "Buy Defense Bonds," and I don't think there is much point to fencing and shadow-boxing about the approach to the American listener. There isn't any "typical" American listener.

Radio is beginning to treat the war courageously. I did a series for the Columbia Workshop last year. Late in the series I put on a program in which I attempted to demonstrate the parallel between the fall of Greece and the fall of democracy in Europe. For the most effective and devastating element in this program, I merely quoted verbatim from the *Olynthiacs* of Demosthenes. There was great horror in certain quarters that this program was done. Mind you, I did not once mention the Axis, mention Germany, Italy, Japan. I merely recounted the fall of Greece. But to read Demosthenes, just to quote Demosthenes, is to indulge in polemics apparently, because there was fear that we had committed an act of controversy by going on the air with a dramatized program not completely neutral. That kind of attitude doesn't exist any more. Radio has got over some of its editorial conservatism. Its next step is to recognize the necessity to explain this war to the people. They are confused. The people are earnest. The people want to fight. The people want to be sure what they are fighting *for* and what they are fighting *against*. There is a need to answer the hunger of the people for information, for an understanding of the issues. If the American people were able to see in some form or other just one hundredth of the material that one looks at in the course of preparing programs such

as *This Is War!* they would 'have to be restrained from mayhem.

There is a job to do. Mistakes will be made, of course; but the job cannot be stopped until perfect blueprints are drawn up. Intelligent and constructive criticism is needed and, I am sure, will be welcomed. This book is a step in the right direction. But the kind of criticism that is neither intelligent nor constructive is the sort that doesn't realize that we are at war—the sort that treats Elmer Davis and Archibald MacLeish and the Office of War Information and the Office of Facts and Figures as the enemy. The enemy, dear reader, is the Axis and the Fascists at home. . . .

## *Government Programs*

When radio shouldered arms it also shouldered the responsibilities of broadcasting for Uncle Sam. Prior to December 7, the government rated only limited privileges on the air. The President could broadcast whenever he wished, but other officials got time on the air only at the convenience of stations and networks. Government agencies were seldom permitted to write or produce programs. If their ideas and data seemed promising, radio not infrequently wrote and produced series on a sustaining basis for them. Radio was disposed to cooperate "within reason" with the government, but it was by no means subservient.

Today Uncle Sam has fewer privileges and more rights. In a period of emergency the licensing authority of the government is less a stick than a club. The government need no longer beg for time; it can demand it. Section 606 (C), Title VI of the Communications Act of 1934 reads: "Upon proclamation by the President that there



exists war or a threat of war or a state of public peril or disaster or other national emergency, or in order to preserve the neutrality of the United States, the President may suspend or amend, for such time as he may see fit, the rules and regulations applicable to any or all stations within the jurisdiction of the United States as prescribed by the Commission, and may cause the closing of any station for radio communication and the removal therefrom of its apparatus and equipment, or he may authorize the use or control of any such station and/or its apparatus and equipment by any department of the government under such regulations as he may prescribe, upon just compensation to the owners."

The President cannot act without regard to the political consequences or the effect of such action on public opinion, but his authority to do so nevertheless does exist. If that were not enough, the "Public convenience, interest and necessity" clause is sufficiently ambiguous to permit the government to do through the back door what it might be reluctant to do through the front door.

At any rate, the fact of war has a sobering effect on the owners and managers of radio. As patriots, they sincerely want to employ their facilities and talents for the greatest public good; as entrepreneurs, they do not want needlessly to jeopardize their investments. Their responsibilities to government and to stockholders are made greater by war.

Government officials and agencies were quick to perceive this change in radio's attitude and bargaining position. They immediately increased their claims upon radio. Government announcements began to clutter the air; a

crop of "officially sponsored" programs sprouted; officials leapt through the microphone into the nation's ear. Obviously, some traffic control plan was needed. The industry had neither the courage nor the imagination to set one up. So Uncle Sam stepped in. The Office of Facts and Figures was established, and one of its first acts was to establish a priority and allotment system for government messages and programs to eliminate duplication of agency materials. The plan was established "in cooperation with the broadcasting and advertising industries."

While the O. F. F.'s procedures brought order, they also created a new problem—some government agencies began to feel that they should write their own programs and, in other instances, produce them, too. The mechanical but not the creative services of radio were to be used. Commercial programs, as we said earlier, are written and produced by sponsors' advertising agencies; but for sustaining programs the industry itself had always assumed production direction and responsibility. The government's new attitude, consequently, was received with some trepidation by the radio industry, but two factors tended to make it acceptable. In the first place, the multiplicity of government programs might have placed a burden on the industry's technicians; and second, government radio personnel had with few exceptions been taken from radio's ranks. Most of them were writers and producers who had worked for networks and agencies. They felt they had the necessary skill and experience. As one of them said, "We are on loan from the industry, we're their boys, and they have little to fear from us."

But there are questions of public policy involved in this situation. Since the men who hold key positions in the government's wartime radio set-up are predominantly drawn from the industry, the first question is whether they are dedicated to the public service or are concerned about their post-war careers? To raise this question is not to impugn either the patriotism or the sincerity of any individual. The question embraces fundamental public policy. In war, a democracy draws upon great numbers of private citizens for government service. They are appointed, usually, to agencies that have jurisdiction over the private enterprises from which they were drawn. The assumption is that, as experts in those enterprises, they are the most competent personnel the government can get. But in modern business the experts seldom have much to do with the origination of policy; they are paid to carry out management effectively. In government, however, the experts often find themselves functioning as policy-makers *and* as technicians.

This general principle has a sharp validity when applied to radio, because the expert, the technician, as we have discussed elsewhere, is of key importance. To radio, wartime Washington is a Mecca—the city and the symbol of the truth faith. Not thrice, but a score of times daily, broadcasters make obeisance in its direction and implore guidance from its prophets. The technicians respond with facts, figures, hints and directives.

Harold Laski once said that experts should be on tap but not on top. Yet the experts are on top in the central government agencies which have to do with wartime radio. Walter Lippmann, in commenting on the appointment of

Elmer Davis and the organization of the Office of War Information, observed that the government "has placed at their head technicians and experts rather than public men, statesmen and politicians. Indispensable as are technicians and experts, they cannot successfully conduct government. The technicians and the experts need to be led and they need to be protected by public men."

When the war ends, where will the experts and the technicians go? Some of them will stay on, for the government will continue to use radio extensively. But most of them will continue their private careers in radio. This may have a subtle influence on the present—can one serve the public interest if he is sensitive to personal prospects? In daily routine this may not be really important; but when crucial decisions must be made—decisions which, if socially determined, might affect the industry adversely—it becomes very important. This is the crux of the "on tap but not on top" argument.

There are men who will not hesitate to make a decision on its social merits, but such integrity cannot be universal. Assume that a given decision really *ought* to be made in favor of the industry. The reasons may not be readily apparent to outsiders. A just decision may thus inspire charges that the public interest is being sacrificed for private advantage. Can we count always upon the courage of the individual? What are the chances of his leaning over backwards to resolve decisions against the industry because he fears his integrity will otherwise be assailed?

Washington seems to rely altogether too much upon the expert in the handling of its radio departments. Walter



Lippmann's plea for public men in the information services appears valid. There can probably be no effective use of radio as a weapon until a clear policy in this regard has been established.

Those who argue in favor of the expert contend that the planning, writing and producing of broadcasts requires specialist talent, and that the government must have specialists if it is to utilize radio. This is only half true, since the complaint is not that experts are used but that they too often determine the policies, the strategy of what their departments shall say over the radio, not only how it shall be said. The experts are not confined to the role of consultants or simply creative technicians. The chief of the radio department of a major government agency has written privately to the author that "I have been completely my own policy-maker, planner and strategist over any and all shows [this agency] wishes to have broadcast."

Now no one denies that the strategist must rely upon and solicit the judgments of the experts. But this is not to say that the expert's judgments should be final. A few good reasons for not relying on experts to administer and determine the government's radio policies are these:

1. The expert generally suffers from the myopia of specialization.
2. The expert usually lacks humility. He is certain of his facts, judgments and intuitions and becomes arrogant about their validity.
3. The expert generally respects the opinions or talents only of others in his specialized field.
4. The expert is generally not concerned with fitting



his "expertness" into a frame of values, for he concentrates only on the relation of his skills to the end of making his propaganda effective.

The foregoing generalizations are particularly relevant to problems of public policy relating to the use of radio. A medium by which the government can reach millions simultaneously must be employed with great wisdom and a high sense of responsibility. When the responsibilities of a technician and a strategist are vested in one individual, the means are apt to be confused with the ends. Meanwhile, millions of people are listening to the government's programs on the radio, and the confusion is either transmitted to them as dicta or influences them and their actions emotionally. This can be labeled only as irresponsibility in the handling of the public mind and conscience.

The experts do not seem properly qualified to determine how the six themes of the O. W. I. shall be treated; yet they do determine how. They do not seem properly qualified to clarify the fundamental issues and problems of the war; yet they do attempt that clarification. They do not seem properly qualified to pass on whether themes of hatred shall be fed the public, nor how the enemy shall be treated; yet they do. The experts, of course, are not to be blamed for carrying the ball tossed to them. It can be said that the experts are doing a reasonably good job under the circumstances; but it is the circumstances, and not the experts, which must be changed. One constructive step would be, as Chapter 2 advocates, the voluntary establishment by the radio industry of a board of strategy. Another would be for the government to re-

vamp its own radio activities to make the experts function only as experts and technicians, and leave matters of policy, strategy and the determination of values to others. Further, the government (no less than the industry) needs to establish an educational service to inform and instruct the technicians on the intrinsic values and basic needs of clarification as well as the facts and figures to be broadcast.

In the matter of writing and producing their own programs, government agencies have argued that only by such a procedure could they exercise maximum control over policy, content and presentation. "One factor cannot be divorced from the others," they said. Further, "only the government can speak for the government. If a network or station airs a program, even if its data and emphasis have come from official sources, the program at best is only semi-official." What is needed, they insisted, are official programs, backed by the prestige and authority of Uncle Sam. In war, the government has an obligation to communicate directly to the people.

The arguments sound convincing. Radio would not be a loser—it would be serving the public interest in a highly publicizable way; it would be able to present big-name stars who were eager to donate their services and talents to the government, but who usually demanded high fees from the industry.

But the fundamental question is evaded. Is it really the business of a democratic government to dress up its facts, figures and policy in the garb of entertainment and parade it coast-to-coast? Or is that the business only of private agencies? Should the government come out so

boldly with propaganda, frankly employing the manipulations and emotional stimuli of dramatic radio not merely to inform and clarify—but to inspire, excite, and arouse listeners?

The official utilization by government of the rich power and potential of radio drama as a means of getting its messages across to the nation does raise delicate questions. So long as propaganda was used on the paper and ink level of World War I, such questions did not arise. For the propaganda was not obvious. It was packaged as news—simply told, seemingly authenticated. The nearest radio equivalent of the “neutral propaganda” of World War I is an announcer’s or commentator’s voice reading a government statement or communiqué. But to contend that a World War II government should not employ radio drama is to confuse techniques with purpose.

In the first war the government had no choice but to use the technique of the news release to present its information and its propaganda. The purpose behind releases of whatever sort was to influence public thought and action. The most effective way to accomplish this purpose, considering the limitations of the medium, was to issue materials as straight news statements and, by hints or instructions to final editors, get it “played up.” Today, however, there are other media—the movies and radio—which are not circumscribed by format or tradition as is the press. The way to use them most effectively is by the utilization of emotional appeals and devices.

There are defensible arguments on the other side. Admitting that to use radio most effectively one cannot be limited to the mere reading of statements or the airing

of officials' speeches, is it the proper function of a democratic government to be so concerned with the techniques of persuasion? The Nazis, it is argued, are specialists in the trappings, the paraphernalia, the techniques of emotional incitement. They know the power of the symbol and the potency of manipulative procedures. A government which begins to lean upon techniques of persuasion may feel less and less the need for facts, figures and simple clarification. In short, the official use of radio dramatization by government, some fear, may set a precedent which may end in the formation of a "propaganda ministry."

This argument seems predicated upon two assumptions: (1) experts and technicians, who hold the key propaganda positions, are disposed to rely primarily on techniques to elicit concerted action. (2) the Strategy of Truth will therefore be compromised in the effort to attain maximum effectiveness. In themselves, both of these points are valid. But they do not tell the whole story. The true picture can be seen only by admitting other facts to evidence. In the first place, the Strategy of Truth need not be emasculated. As we discussed in Chapter 3, the tendency may be to interpret it less literally as the pressures of war become stronger; but it will never be, nor should it be, entirely abandoned. The question is, how much resiliency shall be permitted in its application? Some one person or group will have to decide; but each decision in favor of less literal interpretation will probably permit only minimum liberality at any one time. The Strategy of Truth will yield, but it is likely to yield only inch by inch. Further, although experts and technicians do hold the key government radio positions, and

although they are generally disposed to rely heavily upon techniques, it does not necessarily follow that content will be arbitrarily sacrificed, and that the government's dramatic programs will become mere sound and fury, and signify nothing. Effective dramatization requires that manipulative devices be nailed together by content, by ideas or evidence—in short, no government story can be effectively told if it lacks substance. It is now the policy of the government to use facts and figures from authenticated sources as much as possible. As time goes on, the tussle between expediency for the sake of effectiveness, and integrity for its sake alone, will become more vigorous; but the saving factor in a democracy's propaganda policy is that integrity *is* respected, and compromise is usually made only because of extraordinary exigency.

The checks and balances on any possible tendencies to overdo techniques and compromise integrity spring from the people and "their watchdog spokesmen"—journalists, commentators, public men and selected representatives. A vigorous but responsible policy of public criticism on propaganda and information agencies is of great value, but to be responsible rather than just vigorous requires a capacity to evaluate and comprehend the aims and accomplishments of any propaganda no less than to understand techniques. The criteria of the defunct Institute of Propaganda Analysis should not be used. For they assume any articulate argument to be propaganda and ignore the factors of crucial concealment and relevant duplicity; they assume that generalities, name-calling, transfer devices, etc., are *ipso facto* proof of propaganda, whereas they are merely techniques used by everyone to strengthen argu-



ments. What is needed, rather, is an acute sense of discrimination and judgment capable of evaluation and perspective. A course of training and education for propaganda and information critics seems in order.

Exclusive of clerical help, office personnel and radio field men, approximately seventy people have been employed in all government radio departments in Washington—script writers, producers, administrators, research assistants. There is no specific figure publicly available on the annual lump sum appropriation for all departments, but it certainly is in excess of one million dollars.

Of all the government agencies using radio, the one which has broadcast more dramatic programs than any other is the Office for Emergency Management. Under the direction of Bernard C. Schoenfeld, the radio schedules of the Office of Price Administration, the War Production Board, the Manpower Commission and the O. E. M. itself were determined and coordinated. The department had twenty-five expert employees and a yearly appropriation of three hundred thousand dollars.<sup>1</sup>

Schoenfeld is a firm believer in the right and the responsibility of the government to use radio dramatically. He contends that dramatic techniques help to clarify issues and problems, and to place facts and figures in proper perspective. His commentary on this chapter amplifies his position on this point. The first six months

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<sup>1</sup> With the establishment of the O. W. I., the radio departments of various government agencies clear through the O. W. I. radio bureau. Mr. Schoenfeld, on September 29, 1942, became a special writer with the Office of Price Administration.

after Pearl Harbor, his department had conceived, written and produced 275 special programs, dramatic or documentary in technique, and ranging in broadcast time from five minutes to half an hour. During that period, the department also wrote fifty non-dramatic programs such as Questions and Answers, skeleton scripts, etc. The O. E. M. has set five objectives for its programs. (1) What your government is doing to win this war. (2) What sacrifices *you* can make to win this war. (3) The documented truth about the nature of our enemy. (4) How *you* can get more planes, tanks and guns to the battle front. (5) The relations between this country and the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> The first three of these objectives have received the greatest amount of O. E. M. attention. *Keep 'Em Rolling*, which was broadcast over the Mutual Network, reported on production progress and explained the importance of the man behind the man behind the gun. It sought to establish the interdependence of the factory front and the battle front, and paid tribute to the citizens and workers of the nation. It flanked its microphones with stars, workers and government officials, and made liberal use of music, sound and drama. The dramatic skits were inspirational in theme, whereas the other sections of the programs were a documentary presentation of facts, figures and reporting. This technique was rather effective because it relieved the program proper of the responsibility simultaneously to inform, clarify and inspire. It did its job in blocs of appeals, and in a way represented several types of programs in one. One of the

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<sup>2</sup> Bernard C. Schoenfeld, "Battle of the Ether Waves," *Radio Daily*, June 26, 1942.

most effective of the plays was *In This Strange Land*. Elizabeth Bergner starred. It was a simple story designed to dramatize what ordinary freedom means. It approached this idea through the eyes of a German girl in New York who believed that in America the Gestapo was everywhere.

BUTCHER (*middle class, kindly, no accent*): Somehow or other I keep on thinking about that girl I met last week. It was a hot day and my feet were killing me. So I put my slippers in a paper bag and walked down Riverside Drive. You know how it is when you get to be sixty; you ain't young any more; you like to sit on a bench and look at the Hudson and the people walking by. Maybe you meet somebody your own age and you talk and find he plays a good game of pinochle. When I got down to 85th Street and the drive, it was crowded. Then I saw there was room on a bench next to a young girl. She was skinny and awfully pale. She was reading a book. . . .

MUSIC: *Out*

SOUND: *Feeling of a park . . . children playing . . . traffic from drive, etc. . . .*

BUTCHER: Mind if I sit down here?

ANNA: No—it's all right.

BUTCHER: Thank you. Phew, sure hot today. (*Pause*) When you're young you got good feet. I got the worst feet in New York. Stand on 'em from nine in the morning till seven at night. Mind if I put my slippers on?

ANNA (*friendly for the first time*): Of course not.

SOUND: *Rustle of paper bag*

BUTCHER (*slipping off his shoes*): Been . . . waiting . . . to . . . do . . . this . . . all day. . . . (*Sigh of relief*) Ah . . . wouldn't sell these slippers for a million. I feel cooler already (*Pause*) Mind if I talk? Or do you want to read?

ANNA (*a note of fear in her voice again*): It's so hot to talk.

BUTCHER (*chuckling*): I can see you're not a New Yorker.

Everybody in New York likes to talk.

BOY (*calling . . . off*): Ice cream . . . getcha ice cream. . . .

BUTCHER: Yeah. Ice cream would be cool. Have some?

ANNA (*uncertain*): No . . . no, thank you.

BUTCHER: Sure you will. (*Calling*) Sonny!

BOY: What'll it be? Vanilla, chocolate, strawberry?

BUTCHER: What'll you have?

ANNA (*tensely*): I won't have any, thank you.

BUTCHER: Sure you will. It's cooling. Give us two chocolate.

BOY: Two chocolate coming up.

BUTCHER: There you are, sonny.

BOY: Thanks.

SOUND: *Boy's footsteps fade*

BUTCHER: Here, miss.

ANNA (*low and fearfully*): Why do you insist I talk to you?

Why do you insist I have ice cream with you? Why do you insist on playing a game with me? Do I look like a fool to you? I know what you want.

BUTCHER (*embarrassed*): Oh, no . . . I didn't mean anything like that. (*Laugh*) Why, I got a daughter your age . . . I thought ice cream would be cool and. . . .

ANNA (*with a warm flood of apology*): I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I—It's just that. . . .

BUTCHER: Sure, it's hot. Lived in New York forty-five years and every summer is terrible. My wife and daughter are down at the seashore . . . Asbury. Lucky dogs . . . swimming right now. Ever been to Asbury?

ANNA: No . . . I've only . . . (*Hesitantly*) I've only been in this country two weeks.

BUTCHER: You talk English pretty good.

ANNA: I learned in school over there.

BUTCHER: I sent my wife and daughter to Europe three years ago . . . but now . . . of course . . . who goes to Europe? (Pause) You got relatives over there?

ANNA (*panic returning*): Why do you want to know?

BUTCHER: Oh, I didn't mean to be nosey. Just talking. I like to sit on a beach like this and talk. So I just asked if you have relatives over there.

ANNA (*with quiet hysteria*): I have no one in Germany! No one at all! I'm all alone . . . do you understand? There's no one left but me. You don't get any addresses from me. No! You're wasting your time.

BUTCHER (*bewildered*): For Pete's sake, young lady, what are you talking about? I don't understand you. Maybe you'd rather I left. Maybe you want to sit here by yourself and read?

ANNA (*low, despairingly*): It doesn't matter. Another of your kind will come . . . for your kind are everywhere. All right. Go back and tell them. Yes, I'm reading. Tell them I'm reading this. Look at it. See what it is? Tell them I'm reading this.

BUTCHER (*confused, embarrassed*): But I can't read that. It ain't English.

ANNA (*under her breath*): Liar . . . liar . . . liar. . . .

BUTCHER: See here, you're sick. The heat's got you. You ought to . . . (*Breaking off—calling anxiously*) Hey! Come back here. Listen, miss, you left your book!

MUSIC: *Up and out*

There were other similar scenes; and the play was climaxed in a simple colloquy between Anna and the doctor in the hospital where she was taken after an attempted suicide. . . .



ANNA: Yes, I believe *you* . . . but these others . . . who spied on me. . . .

DOCTOR: What others? Surely you don't mean Mac, the watchman? He saved your life.

ANNA: He . . . saved my life? Did he?

DOCTOR: Yes. Don't you remember? He jumped in the water after you. It was a wonderful thing to do, Anna.

ANNA: Why did he do it? Where is he? I want to thank him. . . .

DOCTOR: He just wanted to help you. All of us do, Anna. That's the way we are here.

ANNA: But those others . . . a girl in the store . . . in the museum . . . a man in the park . . . asking me questions. . . .

DOCTOR: Just being friendly . . . believe me.

ANNA: But they wanted to know about my relatives . . . in Germany.

DOCTOR: Of course. People here have a way of asking questions of each other, we're curious about our neighbors. . . .

ANNA: You mean . . . all these people . . . they . . . they. . . .

DOCTOR: Yes.

ANNA: How can I believe that?

DOCTOR: You must believe it, Anna. We're like that here. We like to sit on park benches and we like to talk. We like to watch children sailing boats on a pond. We like to talk with strangers about baseball scores and recipes for cooking. Believe me, Anna.

ANNA: What kind of a strange land is this?

DOCTOR: You must believe that, Anna.

ANNA: I—I want to.

DOCTOR: Good.

ANNA: Oh, Doctor . . . help me to forget the past. Help me to become one of you.

DOCTOR: You must help yourself.

ANNA: How can I?

DOCTOR: Work with us . . . live with us . . . fight with us.

ANNA: Oh, please, let me help. What can I do? Something . . . anything. . . .

DOCTOR: Tomorrow you can begin to help. Now you must sleep. Will you try to sleep, Anna?

ANNA: Yes . . . Yes. . . . But tomorrow . . . tomorrow. . . .

MUSIC: *Up and out*

This is effective and moving drama, but who is speaking to the American people here—the government or a playwright? The scene provides neither facts nor figures; it is an imaginative, not a true, story; it clarifies no specific problems or issues. There is a need for moving and significant drama on the air, of course, and as radio builds its literature it must more and more open its microphones to artists who have something to say and who say it well. But is the government the proper sponsor? In the field of arts perhaps the answer is yes. Uncle Sam sponsored a Federal Theatre, why not a Federal *Radio* Theatre? The question is irrelevant here—for *Keep 'Em Rolling* is a wartime broadcast; its purpose is propagandistic even if its content is not. True, the American people take their basic liberties for granted, as we have discussed elsewhere, and anything which shocks or arouses them to a recognition that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance is all to the good. But there are ways to handle this theme—one is imaginative; the other is the way of example, history, facts and figures. Which is the more proper for the government to sponsor?

The interesting thing about *In This Strange Land* was

not that it was a good piece of craftsmanship, nor that it was dramatic radio theatre. It was interesting because it represented one of the very few official exercises of a propaganda *for* the truth rather than a *Strategy of the Truth*. The government, in its broadcast, made an editorial point, and an important one; it did not use the devices of news or facts or figures. In the process, it furnished the ideal of liberty and freedom, although Mr. MacLeish insists that the furbishing of ideals is not the government's job.

Schoenfeld wrote *In This Strange Land*. The government broadcast it for him and announced his authorship. Thus the government is his patron. This is a high privilege for Uncle Sam to grant individuals. It is, however, a practice that generally has been observed by government radio agencies since 1936. Most government writers are credited at the end of the program.

The government explains this practice by pointing out that salaries of their script writers are small in comparison to what the script writers would be getting either in commercial radio or in Hollywood, and that it is small recompense to allow their names at the end of their scripts.

The argument seems to have a limited validity. It assumes that all of the government's writers possess the calibre of skill and artistry which Hollywood or commercial radio is eager to employ. This may be true in some cases. But there are scores of government writers; it is unlikely they are all worth a great deal more than what Uncle Sam pays them. This, however, is beside the fundamental question. Radio careers are built by publicity and success on the air. To what extent should

government radio technicians be granted the opportunity to capitalize on their contributions?

No categorical answer can be given. But the very raising of the question suggests possible standards which might well be established both to protect the integrity of departments and the reputations of individuals. First, the creative contributions of all government radio personnel should be anonymous. They are public servants, employed and paid by the people, and individual kudos is no more proper for them than for the thousands of other public servants who must maintain a position of anonymity. This will permit the personnel to contribute to the programs, and will partly close the door to temptations to capitalize personally. Second, every effort should be made to have the chiefs of departments work on policy and editorial supervision rather than as contributing technicians. The assumption here is that they will then have a better perspective on issues, principles and procedures. They will, in short, specialize as strategists, a function sorely needed in radio at this time. The assumption will probably be valid to the degree special-talent experts are not appointed to policy positions.

The O. E. M. programs which dealt with the second point—sacrifice—are worth study because they set the standard for the more effective radio treatments specializing in clarification and information. Entitled *Three Thirds of the Nation*, they were broadcast over the Blue Network. The scripts were written by Dorothea J. Lewis.

The first episode was the least effective of all, but it is worth some attention because it illustrates the kind of miscalculations which are yet prevalent in most wartime

dramas. Its subject was *Sugar*, and it was broadcast on April 22, 1942—twelve days before nation-wide sugar rationing was to go into effect.

MUSIC: *In on "Sugar"*

SINGER (*fading up rapidly*): Sugar, I call my baby sugar,

There's nothing so sweet as my sugar,

Sugar baby of mine,

Mm—m—m. . . .

I get my candy from sugar,

So why should I cheat on my sugar,

Sugar baby of mine. . . . (*Fading to B. G.*)

LITTLE BOY (*coaxing*): Give me a penny for

a lollipop, Pop. Aw, please . . .

. . . penny for a lollipop! . . .

(*Fading*) a jawbreaker! . . .

please . . . Pop . . .

SODA JERKER (*calling out*): Double-bannannana

split—three scoopsa cream—

chawclate syrup, maple syrup,

whipped cream, powdered sugar

atop!

HISTORIAN: America has an awful yen for sweets. . . . They're mixed up in our language and our slang.

HE (*off mike*): Hi, Sugar!

SHE (*off mike*): How are you, Honeysweet?

HE: Hello! Tootsie!

SHE: Honeychile!

[*Rapidly off mike.*]

HE: Sweetie pie!

SHE: Cookie!

HISTORIAN: Our literature. . . .



VOICE (*off mike*): The gingerbread man, the chocolate soldier,  
(*fading*) the peppermint pup. . . .

HISTORIAN (*going right on*): Our courting habits. . . .

VOICE (*off mike*): The Valentine box, the soda at the corner  
drugstore.

HISTORIAN: Our soft drinks and our *hard* drinks! But this is:—

SPOKESMAN: A story of sacrifice—*of doing without!*

MUSIC: *Banjo up and out sharp*

This is a brief, entertaining opening to hold listener interest. It says, in effect, "We're not going to be technical, dull or stuffy. Listen and you'll have fun and probably learn something. This affects you—it has a serious purpose—it's a story of sacrifice." But note, now, what happens. Remember, this is only twelve days before rationing goes into effect, the last of several weeks in which the newspapers and radio had done a great deal of explaining why rationing was necessary, weeks in which the American people had signified their willingness to accept rationing.

SOUND: *Coughing and shuffling of feet beginning as in a restless audience*

PROFESSOR (*pedantically*): We are assembled here tonight in this fine hall to discuss that familiar sweet, white carbohydrate—sugar—chemically a disaccharide formed by the union of one molecule of dextrose with one of levulose.

VOICE (*close to mike—just a whisper*): Stuffy in here, isn't it?

PROFESSOR (*going right on*): Its fine monoclinic crystals melt at 186 degrees Fahrenheit.

2ND VOICE (*calling out*): Get to it, Professor!

VOICES (*Chuckling to themselves*): That's telling him . . .  
Windbag. . . .

PROFESSOR (*going right on*): Our immediate concern with sugar is the present scarcity, involving questions of the inter-relation of things.

ALICE (*almost in a whisper*): What *is* the inter-relation of things, and what has war to do with strawberry tarts?

MAN (*very colloquially and easy*): You are very dumb, Alice. Don't you hear the Professor?

ALICE (*emphatically*): Indeed I do!

MAN: Don't you read the papers?

ALICE: I read all the papers, every day. I find that is just about as good as going through the looking glass or standing upside down in a corner on my head.

MAN: In other words, you mean you are confused, Alice.

ALICE: In any words, I am confused!

PROFESSOR: The questions of supply and demand, commerce and transportation. . . .

ALICE: My head is beginning to ache. (*Put out*) And such a simple little thing like sugar. . . .

The scene continues for a few more minutes. The program has been on the air for almost five minutes. We have heard no facts, there's been no clarification. But there has been a great amount of production—music, sound, actors. Finally, Alice and the Man speak up to the Professor and insist upon simple explanations. Here's what they get:

MUSIC: *Thin strain—faraway note—in and out*

VOICE: Hawaii!

2ND VOICE: In 1938—'39—'40 . . . what Hawaii meant to most of us was. . . .

SINGER: (*Singing "Sweet Leilani"—Half a chorus on full and fade under*)

WOMEN (*after music fades and over music B. G.*): The most marvelous bathing . . . that Waikiki Beach . . . those surf boards . . . palm trees and sky . . . my dear, there's no place like it!

MUSIC: *Out*

VOICE: The Philippines! (*Drops his voice*) In 1938-'39-'40. . . .

2ND VOICE (*lyrically*): Islands in the Pacific . . . (*Very innocently*) 2,010 miles from Japan, the Flowery Kingdom!

VOICE: Cuba!-'38, '39, '40. . . .

MUSIC: *Rhumba music segueing into conga*

VOICES (*counting the conga*): 1, 2, 3, 4,—1, 2, 3, 4,—1, 2, 3, 4!

2ND VOICE: But today! . . .

SOUND: "*Sweet Leilani*" in—up slightly, then fades into the whine of a bomb and crash

VOICE (*a reprise*): Islands in the Pacific—(*Now with deadly significance*) Manila only 1863 miles air line from Tokio, capital of a land of treachery!

SOUND: *The conga count fades into soldiers counting off 1, 2, 3, 4 and the B. G. of marching feet—marching up strong—*

CAPTAIN: Company—halt!

PROFESSOR: Times change and time changes change places, alter distances.

ALICE (*just a whisper*): I always loved "*Sweet Leilani*!"

It is now seven minutes since the program began—25 per cent of the half-hour's time gone. By listening carefully and culling for ourselves the few facts from the production business, we have learned: (1) Americans like sweets; (2) sugar is scarce; (3) we get most of our sugar from the Pacific Islands and Cuba; (4) a hint that Japan has something sinister to do with the Pacific Islands' sources. This can hardly be regarded as new or revealing

information. And so the program continued—scene after scene overwritten and overproduced, talking down to the listener, violating every relevant principle of effective war-time dramatics. Until, about two-thirds of the half-hour later —

ALICE: The war machine eats sugar?

SOUND: *Crash of a big gun*

EXPERT: That was a sixteen-inch gun. It used up a fifth of an acre of that beautiful yellow-green-purple sugar cane, just going off that once.

ALICE: How?

EXPERT: Sugar cane makes sugar molasses . . . sugar molasses makes ethyl alcohol . . . ethyl alcohol fires big guns. . . .

VOICE (*suddenly off mike*): 'Ware torpedo!

MUSIC: *Whooooosh for torpedo sound*

EXPERT: Ethyl alcohol furnishes the motive power for torpedoes.

SOUND: *Burst of gun fire—rattle of machine gun*

EXPERT: Ethyl alcohol is used in smokeless powder—essential for shells and bullets!

SOUND: *Plane—way off mike*

EXPERT: Ethyl alcohol goes into airplane dope.

ALICE: Airplane dope?

SOUND: *Plane gradually swelling*

EXPERT: The substance with which fabric parts of planes—wings, tail pieces—are coated to tighten them properly, to shape them and make them hold against weather and strain.

SOUND: *Plane up and out*

ALICE (*absolutely amazed*): Sugar . . . I never!

MUSIC: *Up and out*

This was fresh and interesting information to many listeners, who up to this point thought sugar demands

were purely biological. And then the program went on—Americans like sweets, sweets put on weight, a soldier who kills a “Jap” sniper—“Say, Bill! We got that Jap with a chocolate cake!”

The mistakes of this first program were quickly rectified. One of the refreshing things about the O. E. M. radio department was its quick intelligence to correct inferior techniques. For example, the third episode of *Three Thirds of the Nation* was on *Steel*.

VOICE (*quietly*): Steel is Victory!

SPOKESMAN (*quietly and simply*): The War Production Board of your Government presents the third of a series on sacrifice. . . .

VOICE: Three Thirds of the Nation!

MUSIC: *Up and out*

SOUND: *Murmurings—noise as though audience*

STEELMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, our subject tonight is the steel shortage. . . .

SOUND: *Honk-honk—(very polite honks)*

AUTO (*fading on on sonavox*): Excuse me, but may I come in. . . .

SOUND: *Murmurs of slight surprise*

STEELMAN: Come in . . . Auto.

AUTO: I had better introduce myself—I am the last of my race—the last Auto to be made in America for the duration of the war—a grey sedan with black-out trim. I am the youngest Auto in America, the newest, the shiniest—the most famous, I suppose, since the first Auto—but (*Wistfully*) I’m a little lonely!

*A clever use of fantasy. Subsequent programs in the series employed this device with effectiveness. Not only is it entertaining, but it permits information to be aired economically. Further, it exploits the sense of humor of the listener—doesn’t make rationing and “sacrifice” seem black and dreadful. Note how brief this introduction is, compared to the first program’s, and how much*



VOICES (*murmurs*): Poor Auto, etc. (*Ad lib*) *more quickly specific information is given.*

STEELMAN: Quite understandable, Auto—your loneliness—but what can I do to help?

AUTO: I should like to listen to your talk. Steel is very important to me. . . . It affects my family directly.

STEELMAN: Listen by all means, Auto.

VOICES (*sympathetically*): Yes, listen, Auto, etc.

AUTO: Thank you so much. You see, I don't understand about this shortage or why no more of me will be made. . . . There seems to be steel all over the place. I have seen the furnaces of Pittsburgh and Johnstown and Gary and Toledo and Lorain bright in the sky. There must be a lot of steel.

STEELMAN: There is, Auto, an awful lot. Statistics, please!

STATISTICS (*very brisk*): The United States has 45 per cent of the world's steel-making capacity. It can produce about twice as much steel as the whole German-controlled European continent.

*Here a straw man—"America has much steel"—is being set up. First, the picture of roaring steel plants—the newspapers and news reels had been publicizing them and creating some confusion about why a steel shortage. The script goes right with this attitude.*

*The character "Statistics" is introduced for the first time in the series. He reappears frequently in most subsequent programs. This device permits straight facts and figures to be given briefly and dramatically—they stand out by this device, which one might call verbal italics.*

STEELMAN: Forty-five per cent of the world's steel-making capacity and yet we have serious steel problems in the United States today.

AUTO (*puzzled*): A shortage of steel when we have so much?

SINGER: A paradox, a paradox, a most ingenious paradox. . . . (*Fades out—from Gilbert and Sullivan's "Pirates of Penzance"*)

STEELMAN: The explanation of the paradox is simple: There are steels *and* steels. It doesn't do any good just to have a lot of steel if it's not the right kind or in the right shape. You can't win a war with steel used for consumer goods! (*Fading*) It's like this:

*This "teaser" poses the question in everyone's mind. The device of repeating the statistics of U. S. steel capacity makes doubly sure they will be impressed on the listener.*

*Now the straw man is being knocked down—and by the introduction of a provocative idea; namely, "There are steels and steels." In fifteen lines the program has: (1) posed a question; (2) twice given facts of U. S. steel capacity; (3) stated the paradox; (4) began an explanation. Almost every word has augmented the program's information and clarification.*

SOUND: *Buzzing of a fly fading on*

MAN B: That sound is the buzz of a fly coming our way. (*Quite happy*) We make fine fly swatters in America!

MAN A (*non-committal*): Yes—

SOUND: *Buzz up strong*

MAN B: Let's get that fly!

SOUND: *Swat of the swatter—fly buzz out on little dying cough*

MAN B: Got him! One less fly!

SOUND: *Now a machine gun starts spitting bullets off, coming nearer and nearer*

MAN A: *That* sound is an enemy machine gun! Coming nearer and nearer! (*Casually*) Shall we try the fly swatter against it?

MAN B (*doubtfully*): Wellll. . . .

MAN A (*coaxingly*): Let's. . . .

MAN B (*still doubtful*): All right. . . .

SOUND: *Swat*

MAN B: There!

MACHINE: (*angrily sputtering on Sonavox like Donald Duck in a fury*) Swatter, huh!

MAN B (*frightened*): Swatter didn't stop it!

MAN A (*over it—with a shrug*) Tch . . . tch. . . . No, the swatter just made that mean gun mad!

SOUND: *Gun up and fade*

STEELMAN (*in silence after fade*): You can't win a war with consumer goods!

MAN B (*as before*): We have wonderful skyscrapers . . . lots of steel in them. Just look at that beautiful steel skyscraper standing there so tall . . . reaching 'way up into the sky!

MAN A (*agreeing briefly*)—*no real enthusiasm*): Pretty!

SOUND: *Plane fading on rapidly*

MAN A: There's an enemy bomber up there!

MAN B: What!

*An effective use of fantasy and irony play through the remainder of this scene. The listener knows, when it is finished, that what will count for victory will be the steel we produce, not the steel we have in buildings and bridges.*

*Perhaps the scene is a bit too long, but it is fast-moving and doesn't take up as much time as the number of words might suggest.*

MAN A: Going right for your skyscraper! No pursuit ships to head it off! . . . no ground guns to get it! Will your skyscraper fight back? It's leaning a little . . . swaying toward the plane!

MAN B (*distressed*): That's just the wind up there!

MAN A: Let's sic the building on the big old bully bomber!

MAN B (*hesitating*): Wellll. . . .

MAN A: Come on, let's . . . (*Now with irony calling*) Sic 'im, scraper! . . . Lean your penthouse over and smack 'im! . . . Pound him with your top 30 stories. . . .

SOUND: *Bomb explosion . . . crash and crumbling of stones and building*

MAN B: Ohhhhhh . . . my great skyscraper! Bombed to bits!

MAN A: Tch . . . tch . . . tch . . . no fight in it! Didn't lift a hand!

SOUND: *Crumbling of debris fades*

STEELMAN (*as before in silence*): You can't win a war with consumer goods!

MAN B (*happily*): We've built beautiful steel bridges in this country . . . Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, Brooklyn Bridge, George Washington Bridge, Royal Gorge . . . beautiful bridges of steel. . . .

*The Steelman's one line strikes home here. The action continues without interruption, but the unexpectedness of a serious remark has a sobering effect.*

MAN A (*apparently impressed*): Yes . . .  
 (*Ironically*) Let's stretch one of them  
 to Europe to carry our supplies and  
 men back and forth!

MAN B (*reluctant*): Welllll. . . . All the  
 way? To Europe?

MAN: Yes . . . or to Australia! Let's!  
 (*An order*) Stretch bridge!

BRIDGE: Yes, boss!

MUSIC: *Stretching further and further*  
*. . . getting thinner and thinner . . .*  
*suddenly:*

SOUND: *Kerplunk and big splash—glub*  
*. . . blub*

MAN A (*fake surprise*): Didn't make it  
 —tch, tch . . . tch . . . poor bridge  
 . . . couldn't swim a stroke!

MUSIC: *Up strong and out sharp*

AUTO (*very much amused*): Ha . . . Ha  
 . . . that was funny about the sissy  
 skyscraper . . . (*Quoting*) "didn't lift  
 a hand!" And the poor bridge that  
 drowned!

SOUND: *Crowd laughter*

STEELMAN (*now sharply*): Yes, Auto,  
 sure! . . . But it's not so funny in  
 reality . . . not when the sitting bird  
 that can't fight back is a human being  
 . . . not when the drowned are men!

SOUND: *Crowd laughter out sharply*

STEELMAN (*going right on*): Men of your

*The climax is serious  
 and down-to-business.  
 In contrast to the pre-  
 ceding business, its so-  
 briety is underlined.  
 The scene gets tough  
 abruptly, unlike Sugar,  
 which seemed afraid to  
 get tough at any time.*



cause . . . men of your country . . .  
men of your family.

AUTO: No . . . no, of course not!

STEELMAN: The wrong kind of steel is  
no laughing matter!

The program went on to discuss the problems of conversion, scrap and alloys. It gave facts, figures and conclusions. It was candid, and made no attempt to boast about American production or to imply we had the problems licked, hands down.

WORKER: Yes, we sent our scrap away over the ocean, or rather, we sold it for profit over the sea. Back me up, Statistics!

STATISTICS: In six years, from 1934, we sent more than twenty million tons of steel scrap abroad. Some went to Italy—and a lot to Japan.

SINGER: *Out*

AUTO (*whistles in amazement*): To—Japan?

STATISTICS: Yes. So *much* scrap went to Japan, that—

MUSIC: *Sneak under*

DOCTOR (*fading on as though reading, bitterly*): It seems incredible for an Army doctor like myself to be writing such a report here in the malaria jungle and battleground, but caring for the wounded on the Bataan front has not been exactly routine in any department. It gives me a strange sense of unreality, seeing wounded Americans without access to our highly developed X-ray machines, serums and vaccines. Today, operating in our tent hospital—I removed some surprising Japanese shrapnel from the flesh of American boys—victrola needles embedded like cactus thorns, parts of Fords, nuts and bolts, and to top it all—a Singer Sewing

Machine screw driver . . . neatly labeled "Made in U. S. A."

VOICE: April 20, 1942—the War Production Board today filed bills of complaint with the Justice Department, charging—

2ND VOICE (*angrily*): Repeated, deliberate violations of priority regulations in iron and steel . . . diversion of these vital materials, including critically scarce steel plate, to private consumers at the expense of the armed forces!

VOICE (*hit it hard*): Even today . . . more than four months after Pearl Harbor—

2ND VOICE (*very deliberately, very clear*): The complaint is made against the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company!

STATISTICS (*briskly*): The fourth largest steel company in this country!

VOICES (*including Auto—shocked*): Oh . . . oh, my . . . Did you ever. . . .

2ND VOICE (*going on implacably like a steam roller of contempt*): And against Carnegie-Illinois Steel . . . the *biggest* steel producer in the United States!

VOICES: Ohhhhhh!

MUSIC: *Up harshly and out*

When the series got under way, there were few punches pulled, and the meaning and necessity of sacrifice took on a fresh and dramatic clarity. *Three Thirds of the Nation* set a new pace for informative drama.

Although *This Is War!* treated of the enemy, it was the O. E. M. series *You Can't Do Business with Hitler*, based on Douglas Miller's book of the same title, which first broadcast about the enemy. The series was produced on electrical transcriptions, and was aired by more than six hundred stations. All costs—recordings, actors, music, sound effects—were paid by the government.

VOICE (on filter . . . vehement . . . hysterical): *Meine deutschen Volksgenossen, Maenner and Frauen. In dieser Schicksalsstunde sind wir von unbeugsamen Siegeswillen erfuehlt. Der Reichsadler fliegt vom Nordkap (Fade) bis Griechenland und unsere siegreichen Truppen verfolgen. . . .*

MILLER (low emphatic): *You Can't Do Business with Hitler!*

MUSIC: *Build to abrupt peak and cut sharp*

1ST ANNOUNCER: We are now at war. There are but two alternatives: Total victory or total defeat. There can be no such thing as a military stalemate that would result in the survival of Hitlerism. That is the opinion of a man who knows—Douglas Miller, for fifteen years commercial attaché to the American Embassy in Berlin.

2ND ANNOUNCER: Presenting a radio series entitled *You Can't Do Business with Hitler!*

Thus, with slight variations, began each episode. Mr. Miller spoke on most of them, and added his prestige and authority. The programs were hard-hitting attacks against the Nazis. They were so hard-hitting and so loaded against the Nazis that much of their potential effectiveness was probably lost. There was no dramatic leavening. The series smacked of propaganda, despite the authorities it quoted, despite Mr. Miller's participation. The enemy was wholly black, wholly evil. As we remarked about *This Is War!*, this technique seldom pays rich dividends. Even the titles of the episodes were loaded—*The Living Dead*, *The Thousand-Year Reich*, *The Anti-Christ*.

Yet the series did not make the mistake of calling the enemy names. There was an absence of smear-words. The record was quoted extensively. In this respect, the series

showed a better understanding of how to treat the enemy than did *This Is War!*

*The Anti-Christ*, as an example, opened with a scene of the arrest of a Catholic priest. . . .

HANS: Wait! You can't take him! What crime has he committed?

PRIEST: Patience, Hans. This is surely some error that shall be rectified. I shall go with them.

HANS: But why should you? What is the charge?

TROOPER II: The charge? . . . Criminal immorality.

MUSIC: *Crash bridge . . . to peak . . . flutter under*

MILLER: More than sixteen thousand members of various Catholic Religious Orders were dragged into court on these trumped-up charges. Proof? Read the *Lucerne Vaterland* for December 14, 1937. At the same time, the Nazi-controlled German press opened up a terrific mud-slinging barrage of abuse and vilification. Listen to Paul Goebbels, German Minister of Propaganda. . . .

GOEBBELS (*filter*): "A vast number of Catholic clerics have been tried for various crimes. It is not a matter of regrettable individual lapses, but of a general corruption of morals such as the history of civilization has scarcely ever known. No other class of society has contrived to indulge in filth on a scale resembling that achieved by the Catholic clergy in all its ranks."

MILLER: This from Paul Goebbels, official spokesman of Adolf Hitler. Unbelievable? You Catholics want proof? See a book entitled *Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich*, written by a German Catholic and translated from the German. I'll repeat that—*Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich*. . . . Turn to page 305 . . . page 305. The fact that every single Catholic

*called into court was innocent* made absolutely no difference to the Nazis. The immorality trials were merely a smear campaign.

The documentations, however, were caviar to the general plots. Most of the episodes contained a fictionalized interpretation of some Nazi policy or law. They were labeled as "typical" events. Thus, in *The Thousand-Year Reich*, a *Gauleiter* visits a Belgian school class. He becomes incensed at the teaching of the history class. . . .

GRUALT (*the Gauleiter*): I myself will teach the history learned here! The true story of the First World War! Not the lying, democratic, Jewish interpretation of world events.  
Jerome—

JEROME: Yes, sir.

GRUALT: How old are you?

JEROME: Thirteen, sir.

GRUALT: I see you are badly instructed. Don't you know that two times in twenty-five years Germany has had to save Belgium from the French?

JEROME: I have been taught differently.

GRUALT: Each time the French have made a bloody battlefield of Belgian soil.

JEROME: Yet my book said—

GRUALT: Your book was full of lies! Soon you will have a new book—a book full of truth!

JEROME: But my teacher, Herr Notebart, has said—

GRUALT: Herr Notebart is a *Dummkopf* . . . a stupid jackal who knows nothing about history. Is it not so, Herr Notebart?

NOTEBART: I do not think there is anything to be gained by personal—



GRUALT: Is it not so, Herr Notebart!

NOTEBART: Yes.

GRUALT: You see, Jerome. Herr Notebart has been lying to you. Why have you been lying to your students, Herr Notebart? Tell them.

NOTEBART: I—I—

GRUALT: The truth. . . . It was because you were in the pay of the French and the English and the Americans . . . Yes?

(Pause) You like your position, Herr Notebart?

(Pause) Surely you have heard of the Gestapo—

(Pause) You were in their pay—

NOTEBART: Yes, I was in their pay.

GRUALT: You told their lies—

NOTEBART: I told their lies.

GRUALT: Germany is the protector of Belgium.

NOTEBART: Germany is the protector of Belgium.

GRUALT: You, see, Jerome—

JEROME: Is it true, Herr Notebart?

NOTEBART: It . . . it must be, Jerome.

JEROME (*stammers*): Yes . . . it . . . it must be. We must have a new book.

GRUALT: Good. Now you will proceed with the instruction.

The Reich has been forced to save Belgium from the French how many times in the past twenty-five years?

JEROME (*breaking into tears*): Germany has been forced to save Belgium from the French two times in the past twenty-five years. History proves it. . . .

The documentation for these "typical" scenes was drawn from several sources other than official government ones. Rauschning's *Voice of Destruction* is quoted; so is Reveille's *Spoil of Europe* and similar books. The authority of these works was vouchsafed by Mr. Miller's

presence plus the fact that the government sponsored the series. This raises a nice question about the Strategy of Truth. What is the source of truth? The government apparently leans heavily on best-sellers. *Divide and Conquer*, the O. F. F. pamphlet, quotes Taylor's *The Strategy of Terror* frequently. Virtually all of the authors drawn upon for authority are established and reputable journalists, and all are anti-Nazi. Are their materials selected because they are reputable journalists—or because they have written anti-Nazi books? What criteria does the government set up to establish the validity of their writings? If it establishes none, what happens to the Strategy of Truth? If it has standards for veracity, then they must be rooted on official government records and reports, perhaps those of Army Intelligence. This would impress listeners more than quoting books, and therefore would seem to be more effective. The whole question of the authority of documented broadcasts is involved here. A Strategy of Truth can be based only on sources of the utmost integrity. A propaganda for the truth must have the same wells to draw from. Otherwise, the doorway is open to irresponsibility on the part of the technicians who write and produce America's radio programs. They may tend to set as proper source material any ostensibly anti-Fascist books. This can result in a scrambled-egg kind of strategy for radio, which, in terms of the problems for a radio strategy discussed earlier, ends up by being neither effective nor helpful to the industry.

*You Can't Do Business with Hitler* was the precursor of a later series, *This Is Our Enemy*, which the O. E. M. introduced over the Mutual Network in the summer of

'42. Schoenfeld justified it in these words: "A few weeks ago the War Production Board inaugurated a new radio series called *This Is Our Enemy*. The purpose of the series is implicit in the title: to inform the audience of the truth about the enemy. Critics and listeners responded to the series enthusiastically. . . . There were, however, several listeners who wrote me and asked: 'What business does the War Production Board have producing a series of this kind? Why should the War Production Board produce a series exposing the cruelties and perverted theories of the Nazi government? After all, isn't it the job of the War Production Board to see to it that the greatest quantity of tanks, planes, guns and ships are produced? What does such a series have to do with production?' To such criticisms, I answer: Unless the people of this country realize exactly *whom* they are fighting, and know the systems, aims and methods of the enemy—all of the planes, guns and tanks will be of little avail. . . . A worker in a factory will work longer hours and put more energy into his war work—if he understands the unbelievable shrewdness and cunning of the enemy and the plans the enemy has to destroy all of the things he holds dear. . . . The housewife will be more willing to make sacrifices if she has a clear understanding of how her plans for her child to live in a decent world are hated and mocked by the enemy. The motorist will more readily accept gas rationing and the conservation of rubber if he is shown that the way of life of the enemy is a way of life based on the suppression of all freedom, even to the annihilation of the Church itself. No, the War Production Board, it seems to me, is helping to get out more

tanks, planes and guns by putting on such a program. It is not enough for a nation to be told that it is fighting a war and must win that war. It must be told the aims of the enemy and the nature of the enemy and what kind of a world will exist should that enemy win. Such information is not propaganda; such information, based on authentic sources, becomes as necessary and realistic as statistics on our shipping lists.”<sup>3</sup>

VOICE: *This is your enemy!*

MUSIC: *Up and under*

NARRATOR: You, the people, have asked your government to give you the truth always. You have told us you can take it. Well, then, here is a program of cold, hard truth. It is not for the squeamish nor for the timid. This truth is ugly and at times horrible. It is the truth about the nature of your enemy.

MUSIC: *Up and under*

NARRATOR: Tonight we tell you facts about the kind of world the enemy has made for the women of his own country and is making for the women of countries he has conquered. When this program is finished ask yourself—“Which kind of a world do I prefer—*his* or *ours*?” There can be no half-way answer. On your decision rests the extent of your determination to defeat him.

MUSIC: *Up and out*

So began the first program. If *You Can't Do Business with Hitler* may be termed a radio pamphlet, *This Is Our Enemy* was a deluxe leather-bound volume. It had more character parts, more music, more sound; it was presented

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<sup>3</sup> Bernard C. Schoenfeld, *op. cit.*

in thirty—instead of fifteen—minute chapters. It, too, quoted Rauschning and other books as sources; it, too, dramatized “typical” scenes. Technically, it was better in every way. Mr. Miller did not participate, but other eminent personalities did.

NARRATOR: Dr. Baldwin Schwarz, well-known German professor of Catholic Philosophy, is here as eye-witness to the real stories which we have dramatized for you. This is a program of cruel hard truth. Not for the squeamish, or the timid. This truth is ugly and at times horrible. This is the truth about our enemy. . . .

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NARRATOR: Dr. Leo Stein, well-known German author of the best seller *I Was in Hell with Niemoeller*, is here as eye-witness to the real stories which we have dramatized for you. This is a program of cruel hard truth. Not for the squeamish, or the timid. This truth is ugly and at times horrible. This is the truth about our enemy. . . .

And at the end of the programs, on which they gave brief speeches, the guest authorities said “So help me, that is the world of our enemy, for I have seen it.”

The chief contributions to the radio literature of the enemy which Schoenfeld made in this series, were two: (1) He demonstrated in his early episodes the effectiveness of simplicity and understatement; (2) he avoided exhortation of the listener. Unlike the CBS series *The Nature of the Enemy*, he never lectured listeners on the need to hate, he didn’t cry out, “What are you doing to stop this kind of thing?” he refrained from labeling the enemy in indelicate and uncomplimentary terms. The first two



*This Is Our Enemy* broadcasts went about their business "with a factual and authoritative air, building to a climax which finds any reasonably intelligent, sensitive listener creating his own emotion. Its premise is that you must know your enemy if you are to defeat him. So you hear, in his own quoted words, Dr. Goebbels's theory of the status of women in the New Order; the degradation that follows would be all that a civilized person would need to know about the Master Race. This fearful truth about the enemy was as simply—and therefore compellingly—stated as that. You were meant to feel a cold revulsion, and inevitably you did, and you must have experienced it again if you heard the second program, which told of the corruption of German family life in terms of the brutalizing regimentation of children in whom the blood lust is implanted. There it is, such a script seems to say about all this, 'It is up to you to do something about it, if the stain is not to spread across the world.'"<sup>4</sup>

For example, the first episode had, as an early scene—

GOEBBELS: The Nazi movement is a masculine movement. When we eliminate women from public life, it is not because we want to dispense with them, but rather because we want to give them back their *essential function*.

NARRATOR: That was Dr. Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, speaking on February 11, 1934. And in 1936, in a new edition of *Mein Kampf*, Hitler stated:

HITLER: The German girl belongs to the State. We will lay stress above all on physical education, rather than on the spiritual or the intellectual.

NARRATOR: In schools, in the press, on the radio, in lecture

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<sup>4</sup> John K. Hutchens, radio editor, *New York Times*, June 14, 1942.

halls, this Nazi doctrine for women was proclaimed. It took time to get results. German women—like all women everywhere—considered themselves more than mere breeders. Many women rebelled—the women who were leaders in the old Germany—the teachers, doctors, lawyers. But the New Order rolled on:

VOICE: 1934. 11,500 women high-school teachers.

2ND VOICE: 1935. 3,000 women high-school teachers dismissed.

3RD VOICE: 1936. Out of 6,000 college teachers, only 46 are women.

1ST VOICE: 1932. There are 38 women members of the German parliament.

2ND VOICE: 1933. The Nazi regime is in power. Now there is not a single woman member.

3RD VOICE: 1934. Dr. Gerhart Wagner, Nazi head of the German Medical Association, shouts to the leading doctors of the country:

WAGNER: We will strangle higher education for women!

SOUND: *Cheers*

NARRATOR: Yes, the Nazis cheered. Women are to be broodmares. And yet, reducing women to this state still did not bring to Hitler enough children for his master race. So the Nazis studied the problem of unmarried women. Why should they not have children too? And so the Nazi party went to work to propagandize a new doctrine—the encouragement of illegitimacy. Again lecturers were sent out, there were radio speeches. And young girls read in the *Arbeitsfront* journal such editorials as this by Alfred Rosenberg:

ROSENBERG: The German Reich of the future will regard the woman without children—*whether she is married or not*—as being an inferior member of the community.

NARRATOR: Since the war, the highest official encouragement has been given to illegitimacy. In Nazi Germany, there are

more than sixty nursing homes belonging to the State, and the most splendid of them all is the nursing home at Bad Freienwalde, thirty-five miles from Berlin. It is a magnificent cream-colored stone palace with terraced green lawns bright with flowers, and red and black swastikas fluttering from a dozen flag-poles. Every month, a new batch of young women arrive. In the registration room, the director, thin and middle-aged, sits at her desk smiling at a young woman:

MATRON: Glad to have you back with us again, Anna.

ANNA (*a zealot—the essence of the new young Nazi woman*):

I'm proud to be back.

MATRON: When were you here last?

ANNA: A year ago.

MATRON: So soon? That was your first?

ANNA: Yes.

MATRON: Now I remember—a girl, wasn't it?

ANNA: Yes. But this time it will be a boy. It must be!

MATRON: I wish all women had your spirit, Anna . . . here is your registration card from last year. . . . Name—Anna Gettler—ah, I knew your family—fine Nazis—aristocrats—your husband is a major?

ANNA (*coldly*): He's dead. Killed in Russia a month after the girl was born.

MATRON: Oh? . . . Then this child. . . . (*Pause*) Yes, of course. . . . A few more details. The father of this child is pure Aryan? You needn't answer. I know he would be. He is in good health?

ANNA: He seemed to be—when I saw him last. Somebody told me he was in Libya.

MATRON: That's all, Anna. Make yourself at home. Eat well and rest. Heil Hitler.

ANNA: Heil Hitler.

But the later scripts began to get away from this factual and documentary pattern. Principal characters more and more became mouthpieces for excited perorations. Thus, the programs became exhortative in a reverse-twist sort of way. The listeners were not shouted at, but the characters sometimes shouted at each other. And the not-too-subtle implication was, "This is an example of a Nazi. They're excited—are you?"

MUELLER: For weeks I've been using my influence as Bishop of Prussia—speaking to every Protestant minister who'd listen to me—I've spoken of our wish to keep Church and State apart—of Hitler's promise not to interfere with Church funds or ceremonies or preaching—all has been going well—*(So furious he can hardly contain himself)* then, like a spoiled child in a jampot, you covered the entire affair with your sticky pagan fingers!

V. S.: What do you mean?

MUELLER: Good Friday.

V. S. *(understanding)*: Oh. . . .

MUELLER: Yes—oh. *(Disgustedly)* And what do you do on Good Friday? You make a speech—I can just hear you—standing on the hilltop, speaking to your Hitler Youth—Christ was a weakling—the Christian traditions are dead. Is that a cross?—take it down and put up a swastika. Oh, heard all about it—every child came back and poured it out to his parents and the parents spoke to their ministers and the ministers say to me, "Bishop Mueller, if Adolph Hitler has made you Bishop of Prussia and you ask us to become firm followers of National Socialism, why does a favorite to the Fuehrer, this Baldur von Schirach—speak on Good Friday advocating a new religion that runs counter to all teachings of Jesus Christ? *(He pauses; then, almost pleading)* And



what could I say to them, Baldur? Is that the way to get votes? And what do you say to me? (*He waits. No answer. Then.*) Well, you speak such poetry in public—perhaps you can compose a poem in explanation of your childish behavior!

V. S. (*calmly*): I owe you no explanation. I am responsible only to the Fuehrer. But if you want to know—

MUELLER: I do—

V. S.: Bishop Mueller, my work is simple: every child between five and sixteen must be given over body and soul to the Party and Adolph Hitler. (*His voice rises from now on: Passionate, devout, sincere*) We thrive on the knowledge that Adolph Hitler is divinely sent! Are your children to be stolen from by the blackrobed clergy who feed them a Sermon on the Mount? Brotherhood of man! No! Only Germans can be brothers! Germans of the same heritage, the same history, the same blood, the same race! What can a Lutheran or Catholic or Protestant in Belgium have in common with us? Nothing. What have we to do with a cross that is revered by inferior races like the Poles? Nothing. What have we to do with a bleeding figure of a man to whom even the savages of Africa kneel? Nothing! I am not a Lutheran, nor a Protestant, nor a Catholic—I am a German! We will have a real religion, Mueller—based on one soil, one blood, one race—not the soil of Jerusalem or Rome—but the soil of Germany—not the blood of Christ but the blood of all Germans spilled for the power and glory of the Reich! That will be our religion! I will teach every child that National Socialism is his religion and that Hitler was divinely sent! Perhaps you do lip-service to the Fuehrer. I do not. (*Quietly*) I would die for him and I tell you he is our God!

MUELLER (*pause*): What do I say to ministers when they speak



out against that kind of talk? It hurts everything I am trying to do!

V. S.: Who cares? It is the truth of National Socialism! It is the gospel of our Party! (*Factually*) Look—Hitler put you where you are—made you Bishop of Prussia—why? To keep the old ones—the Cross-lovers—cajoled—well-battered with assurances—but believe me, when you have done your job and the churches are on our side—then we can afford to destroy the churches, one by one! (*Once more the zealot*) And you will take off that black cassock and become a soldier again—not a soldier of Christ behind a pulpit—but a soldier of Hitler on the battlefield—(*With youthful sincerity*) And then I will admire and respect you as a young man can admire and respect a wise elder. . . .

MUELLER (*with quiet revulsion*): You—are—unbelievable. . . .

V. S.: The Fuehrer admires my qualities.

MUELLER: He would not have wished you to say in public what you have been saying to us.

V. S. (*smugly*): No? Here—this is my speech I make on the wireless tomorrow—go on, look at it. Who has written “well done” on the margin? Go on, look. Do you recognize the signature?

MUELLER (*with a deep sigh*): Yes. . . .

V. S. (*victoriously*): Good day, Bishop Mueller. . . . Heil Hitler!

Now it is irrelevant to analysis whether the “typical” scenes or their bases are true. The propagandist has to be effective; and he must endeavor to elicit action from his listeners. Undoubtedly the O. E. M. received many letters applauding *This Is Our Enemy*. But mail response and Crossleys do not necessarily prove a program’s effectiveness. They prove merely that some people

listened and a part of them liked or disliked the program enough to write about it. The letter-writer represents a kind of action; it may be assumed that if one writes a letter, the program made an impression of some kind. The real test, however, lies in what else one does as a result of the program.

What can such broadcasts about the enemy hope to accomplish? Schoenfeld, in his statement justifying the series, says they help make the people of the country realize whom they are fighting, and that the realization inspires them to harder work and greater sacrifice. This is a bland assumption. For it is predicated on the idea that seven months after Pearl Harbor and nine years after Hitler came to power in Germany, the American people were generally ignorant of the nature of their enemy; that they probably did not know he is anti-Church and anti-religion; that they probably did not know he persecutes minorities; that they probably did not realize he is a ruthless conqueror; that they probably did not know he believes in a race of the élite.

The strategic error of the latter episodes of *This Is Our Enemy* and the frequent error of *You Can't Do Business with Hitler* lay in their generally concentrating on specific misdeeds or the unhappy penalties which befell innocent people; in short, they were sophisticated atrocity stories, and specialized in human interest themes. The need they failed sufficiently to serve was that of clarification and education concerning the grand plan, philosophy and detailed organization of the enemy. It is ideas, not words, that hold the key to effective propaganda. The technician is a specialist in words. Without ideas his words

miss the mark. Of course, the strategist, who specializes in ideas, leans heavily upon the technician, without whom his ideas are ineffectively communicated. Radio has a wealth of technicians at its disposal; it has a dearth of strategists.

The techniques of *Three Thirds of the Nation* hold some answer to the techniques which might well be applied to treatments of the enemy. (1) Specific facts are presented briefly and in verbal italics; (2) humor, irony, fantasy are judiciously employed; (3) the interrelation of things and events is shown and clarified; (4) the documentary approach is made to the exclusion of human-interest dramas. Having decided to employ these devices, the technician faces the enormous task of digesting adequate materials and sources. For these devices cannot be employed save in so far as they embrace ideas. *Three Thirds of the Nation* succeeded on the whole because the technicians had at their disposal not only all the facts about the production problem, but they could contact the policy-makers who originated and carried through all phases of the production problem. What is needed are similar sources and contacts for the technicians who treat of the enemy as well as of all other phases of the six-point front on which radio must wage war.

## COMMENTARY

*By Bernard C. Schoenfeld*

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Mr. Dryer has asked me to discuss four questions:

1. Whether dramatic techniques help to clarify issues and problems and to place facts and figures in proper perspective.
2. Whether the technique expert should determine policy.
3. Whether the source material being used for dramatic anti-Nazi programs is valid material.
4. Whether the government should write and produce its own dramatic programs.

I shall discuss each question in sequence.

I firmly believe that the dramatic or story-telling technique is the finest form in radio, a technique by which a listener links his hopes, dreams, pocketbook, food, marriage and job to the tremendous issues involved in this war. Facts and statistics must be given to the listener, but they will never cause a man unselfishly to devote every minute of his working hours to the winning of the war. Only when he not only understands intellectually but feels how *he* can affect the progress of the war, can he become a total fighter in a total war.

This visceral understanding can be brought to him best, it seems to me, by dramatizing the issues in which he has, and must have, a personal part.

There is nothing new in this—the Greeks sang tales of individual sacrifice and bravery during their wars in order to stimulate the civilians to determination. Molière used the dramatic form to awaken the citizens of France to an awareness of social ills. Voltaire did it in *Candide*. Mrs. Stowe did much to set off the spark which began the Civil War by emo-

tionalizing the basic issue of freedom and slavery. The slam of the door in the last act of *Doll's House* did much to awaken people to the issue of woman's emancipation. Sholochov's *And Gently Flows the Don* did much to bring the Russian people to hatred of the Fascist enemy, exactly as Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* did much to numb America's sense of militarism. Sherwood's *There Shall Be No Night*, MacLeish's radio play *Fall of the City*, Corwin's radio play *They Fly Through the Air*, clarified the issue of Fascism. The list is long.

Since Homer spoke of brave deeds, drama, whether in play, novel, motion picture or radio, has personalized and individualized ideas, illuminated them, made the listener or reader say, "Yes, now I understand. That man was just like Mr. So-and-So and that kid was like my brother. Yes, now I see and I *know what to do about it!*" That story has made me see what I shall do about it!"

One of the jobs of a government radio man in this war is to stimulate the people to an awareness of a problem, clarify it for them, suggest what they can do about it. For these purposes, I consider the dramatic form a superlative one.

In the early days of the O. E. M. Radio Section, a radio chief, if he were worthy of his salt, had to determine his own policy on many given issues. The reason for this was simple. There was no one source of information and no single policy head. One agency contradicted another as to facts. Conferences went on for days while the people waited for the truth. Consequently, if anything was to be said, a media expert had to take the bull by the horns and determine *what* was to be said as well as *how* to say it.

Let us take an example. During the summer of 1940, we in Washington knew that business as usual was impeding production; that isolationism was dangerous, and that compla-



cency was rampant. The situation looked pretty grim. Commercial radio was not saying this on the air. As a matter of fact, it was saying the opposite or refusing to bring up the dangers on the ground that the problem was controversial. Nor for that matter had any government radio program pictured the grimness of the situation—because there was no single source which could give the go-ahead signal on telling the people where they stood.

But having coldly looked at the facts, as I heard them in press conferences, or as I spoke with this official and that, I naturally saw the need for a program to awaken the people into a realization of the urgency of the moment. A member of my staff wrote a program, *America, the Party's Over* and the Treasury Hour broadcast it. The program was grim. The program told the people what we all knew in Washington. The people responded to the program, writing to us asking why more programs were not done.

Mr. Dryer would say that I determined my own policy in this situation. I admit it. I think it was a good idea. Our job was to tell the people the truth of the situation. I did not arrive at that truth through guess-work but through first-hand information. I've always considered my job that of impartial reporter as well as technical expert.

Now that the Office of War Information has a Policy-Making Board, we need not worry about such matters. Naturally, it is better that this Board tell media heads the policy on any given subject than to have us determine it ourselves.

This is still not enough, however. It *would* be a good idea for those who have not spent years in government, and who have only recently come to Washington from outside jobs, to add to their technical experience a deeper responsibility to the people rather than to their agency, and develop a perception of fundamental issues as they arise from day to day. War can-

not be sold like soap, and the technical expert must know many things besides his technique before he can do the whole job of informing the people of the truth.

Mr. Dryer questions some of the sources upon which such series as *You Can't Do Business with Hitler* and *This Is Our Enemy* are based. He is disturbed that the government uses as source materials to show the nature of the enemy, such "best sellers" as Edmund Taylor's *The Strategy of Terror* and Reveille's *Spoil of Europe*. I should like to point out that both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Reveille were actual eye-witnesses to Nazi terrorism and strategy; that they are reporters with reputations for impartiality and accuracy. Mr. Taylor, as a matter of fact, has been employed by the Office of Co-ordinator of Information, a government agency, because of the validity of his writings. Must these writers wear an Army uniform as members of Army Intelligence to be accepted as sources from which to gather facts about Nazi Germany? Mr. Dryer suggests that the only sources to be leaned on by writers in government be records and reports of Army Intelligence because "this would impress listeners more than quoting books and, therefore, would seem to be more effective." Why? Does the average radio listener know the difference between government records and Mr. Wallace Deuel? Are there greater sources on the nature of the enemy than Mr. Deuel or Douglas Miller? Does Mr. Dryer imply that it is possible to exaggerate the evil of the Nazi plan for conquest? Every reporter returning from Europe has constantly stated that, if anything, we are minimizing the evil of the Nazis and that we cannot possibly exaggerate that evil.

Mr. Dryer further questions the validity of some of the dramatizations in such a series as *You Can't Do Business with Hitler*. This again is indicative of a tendency to believe that the evils of Naziism can be exaggerated. As a matter of fact,

time and again the dramatizations, checked by authorities as actual happenings, had to be softened before the radio censors would accept them. There are enough actual sources, authenticated by eye-witnesses, for us to use without having to "fictionalize" or invent new ones. I might remind critics that part of Hitler's success lay in the fact that no one believed that he would do what he said he would do.

Of course, I think the government should write and produce its own dramatic programs. I believe it for two reasons:

1. Today, there exists in Washington as fine a group of radio writers and producers as there exists anywhere in the country; men who were paid high salaries by the networks because the networks respected and made use of their talents. Does the transference of a radio writer or producer from Madison Avenue to Washington suddenly destroy his ability and make his talents questionable to Mr. Dryer or the networks?

A famous radio producer worked on my staff for a while. While thus engaged, he was forbidden to produce a government program by the network which had employed him for many years. Had he suddenly become an amateur because he was working for his government? Or did the network indulge in the fantastic fear that by allowing him to produce a program, it was further indication that the government was "taking over"?

2. It is impossible for anyone outside the government to give to the people the facts as the government wishes the people to have those facts. Imagine the subjects of price control, inflation, military strategy, labor piracy, and lack of basic materials being written or produced by anyone who has not sat, day after day, hour after hour, with authorities in all fields. The emphasis in many government shows has been changed because of the injudicious cutting in a control

room by a network producer who, though a technical expert, had absolutely no understanding of the policy involved or what the government wanted the people to know. Consequently, he cut "dull" lines which the people wanted to know or entire paragraphs which meant little to him save that the program was three minutes too long!

So much for my answers to Mr. Dryer's questions. For the most part, I agree with the suggestions and criticisms made in his chapter. I have learned a great deal from this chapter and so has my staff.

*The chapters in Part Two and the commentaries which follow them represent substantial agreement on these points—(1) the dramatic program represents radio's most effective format to inform, clarify and inspire; (2) the radio industry has so far been reluctant to employ its vast potentials fully on the psychological front; (3) the government is the proper agency to determine general areas of propaganda policy.*

*Mr. Schoenfeld and Mr. Corwin agree that there are adequate source materials from which to draw data for information and clarification. The problem, however, is how to make them easily available to technicians everywhere—and how to determine a standard of adequacy. Mr. Schoenfeld rises to the "defense" of certain best-selling authors; but the criticism is not against specific authors, but against the general proposition that any anti-Nazi book is ipso facto an authoritative source.*

*There is a difference of emphasis rather than opinion on the matter of hatred. Mr. Oboler seems to support the thesis that we must come to hate the wickedness of our enemies; Mr. Corwin concurs, and is not too squeamish whether, as a result of such emphasis, we come to hate our enemies as people; Mr. Schoenfeld carries this one step further and deplores any tendency "to believe that the evils of Nazism can be exaggerated." Yet both Mr. Corwin and Mr. Schoenfeld admit that many reports of Nazi brutality have not been, and will not be, broadcast—simply because sophisticated listeners would not respond effectively*



to them. Thus, the problem of hate and its "exaggeration" is related less to truth than to one's dramatic judgment—which is precisely the conclusion of the author.

Mr. Oboler and Mr. Schoenfeld are concerned about the welfare of the skilled dramatist in wartime. Mr. Oboler contends that "the conscientious dramatist . . . deserves the complete support of all government agencies," and Mr. Schoenfeld assails the "fantastic fear" of networks who may refuse their writers permission to produce government programs lest Uncle Sam take over radio. Their concern underlines the need for a sharp definition of the responsibilities of the dramatic artist and of the responsibilities of the dramatic pleader.

There is full agreement that pre-war radio failed in its duty to inform the public on the dynamic forces at work against us. Mr. Oboler says, "The devil in Hell alone knows what measure of responsibility is theirs"; Mr. Corwin bluntly declares that "we were lied to"; and Mr. Schoenfeld maintains that "commercial radio was refusing to bring up the dangers on the ground that the problem was controversial." It may be argued that that is water over the dam and, hence, no constructive purpose is to be served by reflecting on radio's negligence before Pearl Harbor. This, of course, is a traditional defense—and it can best be met by a traditional answer; namely, that one's present competency is best judged, in the absence of new evidence, by his past conduct. The crucial question, therefore, is whether any new evidence of radio's responsibility has been forthcoming to justify even the most friendly critic in refraining from a look backward.

There can be no doubt that radio, since the declaration

of war, has manifested a new willingness to shoulder its full burden of responsibility. But in this regard radio is like many individuals—eager to serve, to do its duty; but, as Chapter 3 emphasized, confused, uncertain, largely ignorant of where to turn or what precisely to do—in short, ready, willing and able if only Uncle Sam or someone will provide leadership and enunciate directives.

Radio, today, is not being fully or effectively employed as a weapon on the psychological front. True, as Mr. Landry points out, "quantitatively, the sheer number of war programs is surely impressive." Radio quotes statistics quickly and eagerly to demonstrate that it is performing its wartime role. But if there is any one point which above all we have sought to make, it is this: that the quantity of programs aired is of less importance than their quality, and that radio's effectiveness must be judged as a whole, not by its individual and isolated efforts.

Within this definition, one is probably justified in thinking back to radio's pre-war failures. Why is it that, a year after the outbreak of war, radio is not fully effective on the home front? Is it not that the dictum of broadcasting what interests the public is yet held paramount to broadcasting in the public interest? Is it not that skill in showmanship is even yet too much regarded as an adequate substitute for skill in planning, for tough thinking?

It would be a mistake for anyone to damn radio completely. It would be a mistake for two reasons—(1) the industry, always quick to defend itself, should not be given the opportunity to focus its rebuttal on critical generalizations and, consequently, on peripheral matters, rather than meeting specific points on their merits; (2) to damn radio

*completely would be unfair and unjustified. The record simply does not permit a blanket indictment. There are some programs and there are some efforts which deserve the support and approval of the public and of radio's critics. That these programs and these efforts have not been any except passing objects of attention in these pages is the result of deliberate editorial emphasis. For some, good does not excuse a great deal that is not good. The failures of radio at present outweigh the successes of radio. This book has been written not because it presumes to have all the answers or even to pose all the problems; but because a need exists for a tentative approach to a critical evaluation of radio's new role. Radio can afford to be criticized because it can no longer afford not to be.*



# APPENDIX

## OFFICE OF CENSORSHIP

Washington

### CODE OF WARTIME PRACTICES FOR AMERICAN BROADCASTERS

Five months have passed since the Office of Censorship issued the Code of Wartime Practices for American Broadcasters. This is a revision of that Code, combining original provisions with supplemental suggestions and interpretations which have developed out of our experience in working with the broadcasting industry.

The broad approach to the problem of voluntary censorship remains unchanged. In sum, this approach is that it is the responsibility of every American to help prevent the dissemination of information which will be of value to the enemy and inimical to the war effort. It is true now, as it was five months ago, that the broadcasting industry must be awake to the dangers inherent in (1) news broadcasts and (2) routine programming.

To combat these dangers effectively, broadcast management must be in complete control of all programming every minute of every day of operation. That accomplished—the broadcasting industry will have fulfilled an important wartime obligation.

Radio station managements will continue to function as their own censors. The facilities of the Office of Censorship are at their disposal 24 hours a day to assist them with con-



sultation and advice when any doubt arises as to the application of this Code. The following are the principal advisory guideposts which are intended to aid them in discharging their censorship responsibilities.

### I. NEWS BROADCASTS

Radio, because of the international character of its transmissions, should edit all news broadcasts in the light of this Code's suggestions, and of its own specialized knowledge, regardless of the medium or means through which such news is obtained.

It is requested that news in any of the following classifications be kept off the air, *unless released or authorized for release by appropriate authority.*

#### (a) WEATHER

*ALL* weather data, either forecasts, summaries, recapitulations, or any details of weather conditions. Stations should refrain from broadcasting any news relating to the results of weather phenomena such as tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, etc., unless it is specifically authorized for broadcast by the Office of Censorship. Occasionally, it is possible to clear such news, but for security reasons this office cannot authorize blanket clearance in advance. Each case must be considered individually in the light of the extent to which the enemy will be benefited if such information is broadcast. Confusion and inequalities of competition can be avoided if stations will consult the Office of Censorship promptly in all such cases, either directly or through their news service.

*Exceptions:* Emergency warnings when specifically released for broadcast by Weather Bureau authorities. Announcements regarding flood conditions may be

broadcast provided they contain no reference to weather conditions.

Information concerning hazardous road conditions may be broadcast when requested by a Federal, State or Municipal source, if it avoids reference to weather.

(Note: Special events reporters covering sports events are cautioned especially against the mention of weather conditions in describing contests, announcing their schedules, suspensions, or cancellations.)

#### (b) TROOPS

Type and movements of United States Army, Navy and Marine Corps Units, within or without continental United States, including information concerning

Location	Routes
Identity	Schedules
Composition	Assembly for Embarkation
Equipment	Prospective Embarkation
Strength	Actual Embarkation
Destination	

Such information regarding troops of friendly nations on American soil.

Revelation of possible future military operations by identifying an individual known for a specialized activity.

*Exceptions:* Troops in training camps in United States and units assigned to domestic police duty, as regards location and general character. Names, addresses of troops in domestic camps (if they do not give location of units disposed for tactical purposes or predict troop movements or embarkations). Names of individuals stationed in combat areas outside the United States (after presence of American troops in area has been announced and if their military units are not identi-

fied). Names of Naval personnel should not be linked with their ships or bases.

(c) SHIPS (Convoys, etc.)

Type and movements of United States Navy, or merchant vessels, or transports, of convoys, of neutral vessels, of vessels of nations opposing the Axis powers in any waters, including information concerning

Identity	Port of Departure
Location	Ports of Call
Port of Arrival	Nature of Cargoes
Time of Arrival	Assembly
Prospect of Arrival	Personnel

Enemy naval or merchant vessels in any waters, their

Type	Location
Identity	Movements

Secret information or instructions about sea defenses, such as

Buoys, lights and other guides to navigators  
Mine fields and other harbor defenses

Ship Construction

Type  
Number  
Size

Advance information on dates of launchings, commissionings

Physical description, technical details of shipyards

*Exceptions:* Information made public outside United States and origin stated. Movements of merchant vessels on Great Lakes or other sheltered inland waterways unless specific instances require special ruling.

**(d) DAMAGE BY ENEMY LAND OR SEA ATTACKS**

Information on damage to military objectives in continental United States or possessions, including

Docks	Public utilities
Railroads	Industrial plants engaged in
Airfields	war work

Counter-measures or plans of defense.

**(e) ACTION AT SEA**

Information about the sinking or damaging of Navy or merchant vessels or transports in any waters.

*Exceptions:* Information made public outside United States and origin stated.

*Appropriate authority:* For news about Naval action AGAINST United States vessels in or near American waters: Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington. For news about action BY United States vessels or aircraft against the enemy in or near American waters: Naval commander in district where action occurs or Naval Office of Public Relations, Washington.

**(f) ENEMY AIR ATTACKS**

Estimates of number of planes involved; number of bombs dropped; damage to

Fortifications	Public utilities
Docks	Industrial plants engaged in
Railroads	war work
Ships	All other military objectives
Airfields	

Warnings or reports of impending air raids; remote ad lib broadcasts dealing with raids, during or after action.

Mention of raid in the continental United States during its course by stations OUTSIDE the zone of action, unless expressly announced for broadcast by the War Department in Washington.

News which plays up horror or sensationalism; deals with or refers to unconfirmed reports or versions; refers to exact routes taken by enemy planes, or describes counter-measures of defense, such as troop mobilization or movements, or the number and location of anti-aircraft guns or searchlights in action.

*Exceptions:* After an air raid, general descriptions of action after all-clear has been given. Nothing in this request is intended to prevent or curtail constructive reporting or programming of such matters as feats of heroism, incidents of personal courage, or response to duty by the military or by civilian defense workers.

#### (g) PLANES

*Air Units*—Military air units of the United States and the United Nations as to

Disposition	New characteristics
Missions	Strength
Movements	

*Aircraft*—New or current military aircraft or information concerning their

Armament	Equipment
Construction	Cargo
Performance	

*Civil Air Patrol*—Nature and extent of military activities and missions.

*Miscellaneous*—Movements of personnel or material or other activities by commercial airlines for military purposes, including changes of schedules occasioned thereby.



Activities, operations and installations of United States and United Nations Air Forces Ferrying Commands, or commercial companies operating services for, or in cooperation with, such Ferrying Commands.

Commercial airline planes in international traffic.

*Exceptions:* When made public outside continental United States and origin stated.

#### (h) FORTIFICATIONS AND BASES

The location of forts, other fortifications, their nature and number, including

Anti-aircraft guns

Barrage balloons and all other air defense installations

Bomb shelters

Camouflaged objects

Coast-defense emplacements

Information concerning installations by American Military units outside the continental United States.

*Exceptions:* None

#### (i) PRODUCTION

*Plants*—Specifications which saboteurs could use to gain access to or damage war production plants.

*Exact estimates* of the amount, schedules, or delivery date of future production or exact reports of current production.

*Contracts*—Exact amounts involved in new contracts for war production and the specific nature or the specifications of such production.

*Statistics*—Any statistical information which would disclose the amounts of strategic or critical materials produced, imported or in reserve, such as tin, rubber, alu-

minum, uranium, zinc, chromium, manganese, tungsten, silk, platinum, cork, quinine, copper, optical glasses, mercury, high octane gasoline. Disclosure of movements of such materials and of munitions.

*Sabotage*—Information indicating sabotage in reporting industrial accidents.

*Secret Designs*—Any information about new or secret military designs, formulas or experiments, secret manufacturing processes or secret factory designs, either for war production, or capable of adaptation for war production.

*Roundups*—Nation-wide or regional roundups of current war production or war contract procurement data; local roundups disclosing total number of war production plants and the nature of their production.

*Type of production*—Nature of production should be generalized as follows: tanks, planes, parts, motorized vehicles, uniform equipment, ordnance, munitions, vessels.

*Exceptions:* Information about the award of contracts when officially announced by the War Production Board, the government agency executing the contract, a member of Congress, or when disclosed in public records.

#### (j) UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, RUMORS

The spread of rumors in such way that they will be accepted as facts will render aid and comfort to the enemy. The same is true of enemy propaganda or material calculated by the enemy to bring about division among the United Nations. Enemy claims of ship sinkings, or of other damage to our forces should be weighed carefully and the sources clearly identified, if broadcast. Equal caution should be used in handling so-called "atrocities" stories. Interviews with Service men or civilians from combat zones should be submitted for authority either to the

Office of Censorship or to the appropriate Army or Navy public relations officer.

(k) COMMUNICATIONS

Information concerning the establishment of new international points of communication.

(1) GENERAL

*Aliens*—Names of persons arrested, questioned or interned as enemy aliens; names of persons moved to resettlement centers; location and description of internment camps; location and description of resettlement centers.

*Art Objects, Historical Data*—Information disclosing the new location of national archives, or of public or private art treasures.

*Casualties*—Mention of specific military units and exact locations in broadcasting information about casualties from a station's primary area, as obtained from nearest of kin. Identification of naval casualties with their ships, unless such ships have been officially reported damaged or lost.

*Diplomatic Information*—Information about the movements of the President of the United States or of official, military or diplomatic missions or agents of the United States or of any other nation opposing the Axis powers—routes, schedules, destinations within or without continental United States. Premature disclosure of diplomatic negotiations or conversations.

*Lend-Lease War Material*—Information about production, amounts, dates and method of delivery, destination or routes, of Lend-Lease war material.

*Exceptions:* None.

## II. PROGRAMS

The following suggestions are made in order that broadcasters will have a pattern to follow in accomplishing the most important censorship function of program operation: keeping the microphone under the complete control of the station management, or its authorized representatives.

## (a) REQUEST PROGRAMS

*Music*—No telephoned or telegraphed requests for musical selections should be accepted.

No requests for musical selections made by word-of-mouth at the origin of broadcast, whether studio or remote, should be honored.

*Talk*—No telephoned or telegraphed requests for service announcements should be honored, except as hereinafter qualified. Such service announcements would include information relating to

Lost pets

Club meetings

"Swap" ads

Club programs, etc.

Mass meetings

No telephoned, telegraphed or word-of-mouth dedications of program features or segments thereof should be broadcast.

*Exceptions:* Emergency announcements (such as those seeking blood donors, doctors, lost persons, lost property, etc.) may be handled in conventional manner if the broadcaster confirms their origin. They should emanate from the police, the Red Cross, or similar recognized governmental or civilian agency.

Service announcements may be honored when source is checked and material is submitted in writing, subject to rewriting by station continuity staff. Requests

for the broadcast of greetings or other programs to commemorate personal anniversaries may be honored if the actual broadcast is not made on the anniversary date or at the time or on the date designated in the request.

These and ALL requests may be honored when submitted via mail, or otherwise in writing if they are held for an unspecified length of time and if the broadcaster staggers the order in which such requests are honored, rewriting any text which may be broadcast.

#### (b) QUIZ PROGRAMS

It is requested that all audience-participation type quiz programs originating from remote points, either by wire, transcription or short wave, be discontinued, except as qualified hereinafter. Any program which permits the public accessibility to an open microphone is dangerous and should be carefully supervised. Because of the nature of quiz programs, in which the public is not only permitted access to the microphone but encouraged to speak into it, the danger of usurpation by the enemy is enhanced. The greatest danger here lies in the informal interview conducted in a small group—10 to 25 people. In larger groups, where participants are selected from a theater audience, for example, the danger is not so great.

Generally speaking, any quiz program originating remotely, wherein the group is small, wherein no arrangement exists for investigating the background of participants, and wherein extraneous background noises cannot be eliminated at the discretion of the broadcaster, should be discontinued. Included in this classification are all such productions as man-in-the-street interviews, airport interviews, train terminal interviews, and so forth.



In all studio-audience type quiz shows, where the audience from which interviewees are to be selected numbers less than 50 people, program conductors are asked to exercise special care. They should devise a method whereby no individual seeking participation can be GUARANTEED PARTICIPATION.

(c) FORUMS AND INTERVIEWS

During forums in which the general public is permitted extemporaneous comment, panel discussions in which more than two persons participate, and interviews conducted by authorized employees of the broadcasting company, broadcasters should devise methods guaranteeing against the release of any information which might aid the enemy as described in Section I of the Code. If there is doubt concerning the acceptability of material to be used in interviews, complete scripts should be submitted to the Office of Censorship for review.

(d) COMMENTARIES AND DESCRIPTIONS (ad lib)

Special events reporters should study carefully the restrictions suggested in Section I of the Code, especially those referring to interviews and descriptions following enemy offensive action. Reporters and commentators should guard against use of descriptive material which might be employed by the enemy in plotting an area for attack.

If special programs which might be considered doubtful enterprises in view of our effort to keep information of value from the enemy are planned, outlines should be submitted to the Office of Censorship for review.

Caution is advised against reporting, under the guise of opinion, speculation or prediction, any fact which has not been released by an appropriate authority.

(e) DRAMATIC PROGRAMS

Radio is requested to avoid dramatic programs which attempt to portray the horrors of war, and sound effects which might be mistaken for aid raid alarms, or for any other defense alarms.

(f) COMMERCIAL CONTINUITY

Broadcasters should be alert to prevent the transmission of subversive information through the use of commercial continuity in program or announcement broadcasts.

In this connection, the continuity editor should regard his responsibility as equal to that of the news editor.

(g) FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Broadcasters have recognized that the loyalty of their personnel is of supreme importance in voluntary censorship; they recognize the dangers inherent in those foreign language broadcasts which are not under the control at all times of responsible station executives. Station managements, therefore, are requested to require all persons who broadcast in a foreign language to submit to the management in advance of broadcast complete scripts or transcriptions of such material, with an English translation. It is further requested that such material be checked "on the air" against the approved script, and that no deviations therefrom be permitted. These scripts or transcriptions with their translations should be kept on file at the station.

Broadcasters should ask themselves, "Is this information of value to the enemy?" If the answer is "yes," they should not use it. If doubtful, they should measure the material against the Code.

If information concerning any phase of the war effort

should be made available anywhere, which seems to come from doubtful authority, or to be in conflict with the general aims of these requests; or if special restrictions requested locally or otherwise by various authorities seem unreasonable or out of harmony with this summary, it is recommended that the question be submitted at once to the Office of Censorship.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Norman Corwin—"To The Young" and excerpts from *This Is War!* scripts.

H. L. McClinton—"A Summary Report" on *This Is War!*

Arch Oboler—"Ghost Story," from *Plays for Americans*.

Bernard Schoenfeld—"In This Strange Land"; "Sugar" and "Steel," both from *Three Thirds of the Nation; You Can't Do Business with Hitler*.

Robert J. Landry—*Who, What, Why Is Radio; Variety*.

John K. Hutchens—*The New York Times*.

Charles Seipmann—"Radio and Education," from *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*.

Chi Omega—Harold D. Lasswell's *Democracy Through Public Opinion*.

W. J. Jordan—*The American Journal of Sociology*.

Max Lerner—"Propaganda in Our Time," from *The New Republic*.

Bernard B. Smith—"What's Wrong with the Broadcasters?" from *Harper's*.

Bernard DeVoto—"Give It to Us Straight!" from *Harper's*.

Sol Taishoff—*Broadcasting Magazine*.

Ben Hibbs—*The Saturday Evening Post*.

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- The Yale University Press—*War Propaganda in the United States*.
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- Bruce Bliven—*The New Republic*.
- Douglas Waples—*Print, Radio and Film in a Democracy*.
- Carl J. Friedrich—*Controlling Broadcasting in Wartime*.
- Major Harold Kent, War Department—A. L. Chapman's *Advice to News Listeners*.
- Duell, Sloan and Pearce—Paul Lazarsfeld's *Radio and the Printed Page*.
- Gilbert Seldes—*Proclaim Liberty!*
- Common Sense—Ernest Shenkin's *Why Our Propaganda Creaks*.
- William E. Webb—pictographs of the National Broadcasting Company.
- Harper and Brothers—Cantril's and Allport's *The Psychology of Radio*.
- Charles Clayton Morrison—*The Christian Century*.
- Thorsten Sellen—*The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.
- Byron Price—*The U. S. Censorship Code (Radio)*.
- I. Keith Tyler—*Institutes for Education by Radio (Proceedings)*.

















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