



THE CHARLOTTE NEWS

Brodie S. Griffith Editor and General Manager
Cecil Phipps Associate Editor
R. L. Young Jr. Managing Editor

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Editorial Book Review

Government By The Power Of The Pen

THE FOURTH BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. By Douglas Cater. Houghton Mifflin. Boston. 194 pp. \$2.50.

Three thousand miles across the Atlantic, 131 years ago, this new book starts. In England, 1828, Lord Macaulay had the first inkling of press power in democracy.

"The gallery in which the reporters sit," he observed, "has become a fourth estate of the realm."

In Washington, 1959, Mr. Cater tells us, the gallery in which the reporters sit holds sway as never before. Gentlemen of the press are more than a fourth estate, wrestling with common and lords spiritual and temporal. They form a "fourth branch of the government."

In this book, Mr. Cater, Washington editor of The Reporter magazine, examines the new branch and the sources and uses of its power.

The press' lordly perch has long been clear to America's own Macaulays. But probably jolts are in store for those whose eyes seldom wander from desks or bank balances to Washington and who are casual consumers of newspapers, radio and television. Jolts are also in store for any who thought they had American government neatly caged in a political science text — "government of laws, not of men" — checked and balanced — three branches, etc.

What a rude awakening. Books like Mr. Cater's testify that for better or worse government is of men and as laws. Even among the trustees of the people, there occasionally strays into the fold a not too vicious wolf named Jim Hagerty. Henry Luce, or Joseph Alsop. The wolves have proud blood. Before the Civil War, the young Henry Adams entered publishing as a reporter, conscious that he would not only pursue the will of the wisp "fact." He would also conjure it from the political swamp, his own pen the wand. "He was unbalanced," writes Mr. Cater, "at the idea of using his column as an instrument of influence and special pleading rather than as a vehicle for enlightening his readers."

But is this to say that reporters in Washington are all blackguards — or that they are using the public? Not at all. Mr. Cater would be horrified, for he has written here about a conspiracy of innocence. In the last resort, the press is innocent. The public servants they write about are innocent and the public is innocent. That is to say, the high-speed press, the telegraph wire, and the television set in every home have ripped down the old curtains of government. Democracy and public opinion have gone into pump tins, holding hands so hard that it is difficult indeed to tell one from the other. That is what Mr. Cater is saying. Also, that events of government have never taken place "out there" where, so they have an independent stance apart from what we say and think about them. This, in combination with the telegraph wire and the mass circulation "public media," has made government a large and noisy, alarming degree what the newspapers say it is.

But let's look at some of Mr. Cater's examples.

In 1937, Sir Winston Churchill had declared devastated Europe a "channel house" — a rubble heap. Secretary of State Marshall, President Truman and others knew that if Europe were to imitate Lazarus and rise from the dead it would need unprecedented American economic aid. As always, Midwestern isolationism offered a barrier. What if it protested? As it turned out, when the Marshall Plan was proposed it did take up isolationist sentiment. But here the press power entered — the voices of the hinterlands were not "news-worthy" as weighed against the spontaneous reaction from abroad. In the capitals of Europe, Britain's Devin and France's Bidault were hailing the plan — and getting the headlines. Before the opponents could capture the initiative, public sentiment was a vast phalanx behind Gen. Marshall. Here, most of us would say, the press was a force of "good." But of its power there could be no question.

What we read in the papers, in short, often reflects the judgment of those who insert the news. The editors, but reporters make "news" at the wellhead, as surely as the figures who play their roles as antagonist and protagonist in Mr. Cater's presidential press conferences. Where reporters may now dictate on what subjects the need of state's influential opinion is to be heard. They ask the questions, and like himself once complained: "They never give me a chance to talk about defense." Reporters have occasionally informed the President — who does not exactly devour their products — of what is going on. Rowland Evans of the New York Herald



A Fourth Branch?

Tribune did so inadvertently one day in 1937, when he asked him if he thought it wise to give the attorney general indictment power in integration cases. "Well, no..." the President stammered; his halting answer showed he was unfamiliar with the proposal. Often he has been heard to say, "Now you are telling me something about my work I haven't heard..." Sometimes it sparks action.

As for outright manipulation, among many examples the juiciest may be cited — that of James Hagerty, Mr. Eisenhower's press aide. An ex-journalist, Hagerty understands the needs of reporters. He has often played on them. When the President vacations, Mr. Hagerty takes along newsworthy papers and acts to be released under an Augusta or Gettysburg dateline, encourages stories about the communications network linking Ike to Washington, and does not deny that he sometimes invites Cabinet members to visit the vacation spot. ("Maybe I do.") When the President was recuperating from an illness, Hagerty had a ready-prepared statement to be read by a visiting Cabinet member on how well he looked. On a more tipsy scale, Mr. Cater relates it, Mr. Hagerty personally directed the creation (and subsequent deletion) of the "Geneva spirit" during the summit conference of 1955.

Of course the puissant gentlemen of the press would be impotent indeed without the helping hand of officialdom itself. But officials, noting the enticement of the press, have bowed obligingly. Congressmen seek the advice of reporters, sometimes, on crucial votes; other officials conduct "leak" sessions; all keep a close eye on the techniques of hush-hush when they are locked in tight maneuver.

Sometimes public officials tap the drum-head of public opinion by allowing reporters to quote them anonymously. But officials, who are "high government sources," ex-Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was an acknowledged virtuoso. During the Formosa crisis last fall, he played both ends against the middle as "a high government official" by threatening nuclear weapons in the straits, then denying any thought of them.

Yet, withal, it cannot be said that the antics of the press and its collaborators are diabolical. If a conspiracy has been Mr. Cater does not call it that; it is again a conspiracy of innocence in which most of the cohorts are simply men doing their job as they see it. Often the kingly journalists know more about government and its dilemmas than public servants themselves. It is inescapable that they should occupy "the fourth branch of government."

Conspiracy no, irony yes. The public and the journalists, save for a handful of pioneers like the New York Times or the Christian Science Monitor, still think government is a disembodied, "objective" machine running on "out there." If it were true, "news" would be like a photograph.

Yet Mr. Cater is not alone when he tells us that government is an artifice in which the observers are deeply involved. The historians and recorders, the journalists, are as much involved in what the public sees, reads, and hears as a sculptor is involved in the statue he makes from his clay. Let us recognize that, Mr. Cater pleads, and give reporters latitude to be better — and more truthful — artists. The illusion of "objectivity" was never more dangerous than when placed at the mercy of a Sen. McCarthy, who quickly discovered "the inherent vulnerabilities" — the frozen patterns of the press — and played upon them with unerring skill.

No one questions the press' value as a sentinel. But when it opens itself by stubbornly maintaining outmoded traditions to the use of demagogues, it is a menace.

From Svenska Dagbladet, Stockholm, Sweden

VERITAS?

Julius Caesar was not only a great general and politician; he was also one of the world's best traffic experts.

Traffic problems in Caesar's Rome

People's Platform

'Let's Have Those Voting Machines By 1960'

Editors, The News:

The Mecklenburg County Republican Women's Club endorses the request of the League of Women Voters that the question of having voting machines in Mecklenburg County be put to a vote of the people, in connection with the forthcoming school bond election.

Our present method of casting and counting ballots is outmoded and is inadequate for today's large and complicated elections. The extremely long hours invite inaccuracies, because even the most careful and conscientious precinct officials cannot help but become tired and inefficient after 12 to 20 hours of continuous duty. No business would expect good performance under such conditions. It is high tribute to our poll workers that they have been comparatively free from errors.

Cost is the objection most frequently raised against voting machines. By itself, this may seem great. Compared to present and future costs of our outmoded system it loses its validity. Our registrars, judges, clerks, and counters are paid on a scale based on the long hours required of them. This pay scale has practically doubled in the past decade and is going up at a rapidly accelerated rate. In the past year it has risen by 50 per cent — and it is still difficult to get enough competent workers for the jobs. A reduction in hours for daytime workers and the elimination of several hundred counties will save thousands of dollars a year — and we have an average of three elections a year. Furthermore, the machines can be bought on long-term payments or can be rented, with a generous portion of the rental applied on ultimate purchases.

There will be additional savings on the cost of ballots and the cost of recounts. One recount and the subsequent investigation in just one small precinct recently cost about \$1,000.

Other objections, such as storage, transportation and maintenance of the machines are not trivial but they are far from insurmountable. They have been solved by hundreds of other communities where machines are used and we are sure that the Election Board, if so instructed, will find out how these matters are handled elsewhere.

We urge that the County Board of Commissioners and the City Council look into this matter forthwith — not only in view of present conditions, but also in the light of possible developments during the next few decades.

Let us keep a close eye on the techniques of hush-hush when they are locked in tight maneuver. Sometimes public officials tap the drum-head of public opinion by allowing reporters to quote them anonymously. But officials, who are "high government sources," ex-Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was an acknowledged virtuoso. During the Formosa crisis last fall, he played both ends against the middle as "a high government official" by threatening nuclear weapons in the straits, then denying any thought of them.

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Queen City Has Other Publishers

Editor, The News:

In Julian Scherer's column of May 12 there was a short item about St. Helens of Charonne bringing the house down at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism with the utterance, "Since the Knights purchased The Charlotte News, there are now only two publishers in Charlotte — the Knights and Harry Golden." I would like to inform St. Harry that there are several publishers in the City of Charlotte.

St. Harry, the great "integrations" and creator of the "New York Times" five weekly newspaper published in Charlotte, The Charlotte Post is a Negro weekly published and edited by Dr. J. S. Nathaniel Tross. I doubt if Carl Sandburg or Adlai Stevenson

Drew Pearson's Merry-Go-Round

WASHINGTON

When French comedian Maurice Chevalier kissed the hand of Marie Eisenhower and murmured "merci beaucoup" the other day it was more than just a gallant gesture.

For Chevalier owes his life to Mrs. Eisenhower's husband. It's one of the little known stories of the war, but Chevalier almost faced a French firing squad 14 years ago in Paris.

Tried By The Maquis

When the American forces led by the French Second Armored Division under Gen. Le Clerc first entered Paris in 1944, the Free French went crazy with excitement. They pounced on various alleged Nazi collaborators, among them Maurice Chevalier.

son is a subscriber to the Post. But it is an outstanding paper just the same. I would like to inform St. Harry that one does not have to be "white" to be counted a publisher in Charlotte.

—BERTIE RITTER

P.S. Mr. Scherer, how in the world did "bulldozing" Harry Golden substitute for "bel-raining" Harry Tross? That is about like Bertie Ritter substituting for Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

'Nothing To Lose, Much To Gain ...'

Editors, The News:

After 40 years of false and vicious propaganda in the cold war perhaps one should not be surprised at letters like that of J. R. Cherry Jr., in The News, May 12 ("Soviet 'Culture' Should Be Kept Out"). Mr. Cherry obviously has little confidence in American nationality and even less in the principles of Christianity.

While stationed in Berlin, Germany, with U. S. Military Government, 1945-47, I had many opportunities to hear the Russian Army officers and I am sure even Mr. Cherry would have benefited, yes, even have approved of their performance. Music fortunately is neutral so far as the cold war propaganda is concerned, and the more the artists of the Soviet Union and the U. S. can exchange visits the better for understanding between the peoples of the two nations.

If democracy is as good as I think it is, there is nothing to lose and much to gain from these exchanges.

Even if "the rulers of Russia" were to impose rigid controls and cutbacks of the lowest kind, which they are not, it would still be in our interest to increase to the maximum these cultural exchanges. What does Mr. Cherry think has happened to the redemptive features of the Christian example and the pull of the free life? I should think he would be in there there, that opportunity to save lost souls.

—HUGH B. HESTER

Brig. Gen. U. S. Army (ret.)

Boy Scout Circus Was Big Success

Fluence, S.C.

Editors, The News:

The Boy Scout Circus which was held here on May 8 has been termed a tremendous success by those who saw it.

The participation of the boys in the circus, and certainly the excellent crowd, was due in a large part to the outstanding publicity received prior to the circus.

On behalf of the Pee Dee Area Council, and personally, may I express our appreciation to you and your paper for the vital part you played in making the circus successful.

It is our hope and prayer that this activity may prove to be another step toward instilling the desire in our boys to serve God, country and other people as they grow into participating citizens.

—W. E. STALLWORTH

Scout Executive

Pee Dee Area Council

Pity The People Who Don't Read

Editors, The News:

Robert A. Heinlein, one of the most popular novelists in the field of scientific romance, once wrote that "a good science fiction novel is a novel that can be read and written in nine-tenths free even in chains."

Whether one shares this view or not, there is little doubt that the ability to read and write are two of the most unique and important talents of the human race. It is generally agreed, I think, that the most efficient means of communication between intelligent beings, and also the only way that our generation becomes acquainted with the ideas and accomplishments of the preceding generation, is in this way that knowledge is passed on from age to age, each age adding its contribution, until finally the accumulated facts are correlated into a significant whole. Mathematics is one field in which accumulated knowledge has been used to great advantage, for without the records left by the early Greek thinkers and others, it

is unlikely that the human race would have progressed very far along this line. Indeed, without the aid of written records we could not have progressed very far in any field of human endeavor.

The point of this letter? Well, I've always been an omnivorous reader and consequently I'm rather amazed at the vast number of people who have a disdainful attitude toward the written word. To me a newspaper is irreplaceable, and a public library is a place of pure magic, where the greatest minds of all time wait to guide their thoughts to any person, of any age or social position, who cares to linger with them. Contained within the walls of libraries is the sum total of human knowledge, and it is as free — and as beneficial — as the very air we breathe. Yet a shockingly small number of people ever take advantage of it. Too many look on the written word as merely a dark mark on paper, without considering the direct reading and writing have had on the

history of the human race, or the effect they will have on generations yet to come.

I suppose a person who reads a lot could rightly be labeled a bookworm; certainly no stigma should be attached to the appellation. There is a real bit of philosophy, however, which applies quite well to those who look with scorn on the written word: Pity the man who cannot read, but pity more the man who can read but doesn't fully utilize his talent.

—CHARLES L. MORRIS

'I Don't Know How I Happened To Get Bottled Up In The First Place'



Trouble In The Alliance

Will Britain Go It Alone?

By JOSEPH ALSOP

GENEVA

In the American and French delegations here, there is increasing disquiet about the British attitude. The second installment is far more sensational though fortunately far more doubtful too. In brief, reports have reached Secretary of State Christian Herter and his French colleague, Maurice Couve de Murville, of Anglo-Soviet transactions that would set a wholly new pattern.

The reports, apparently coming from Turkish and German sources, actually suggest that an important Anglo-Soviet economic and political deal has been made in the very midst of the Berlin crisis. It is alleged that the British government has tentatively agreed to extend a massive purchasing credit to the Soviet government, in order to increase Soviet trade with Britain. It is further alleged that the Soviets have undertaken to order the Arab Communist parties not to disturb British oil interests in the Middle East, in return for a British undertaking to see problems outside the Middle East with an eye more sympathetic to the Soviets.

On their face these reports are incredible. They are not. In view of the timing and other circumstances, it is very hard to believe that the decision by Britain's and the U. S. industries Federation was not officially approved, or even actively encouraged. One of the issues in dispute here at Geneva is of course the Soviet demand for some sort of de facto recognition of the Communist regime in East Germany. The British think that de facto recognition ought to be accorded. And the industries Federation looks unhappily like a unilateral first step in the direction desired

By JOSEPH ALSOP

by the Foreign Office and opposed by Britain's allies. That is by no means all of the story either. The second installment is far more sensational though fortunately far more doubtful too. In brief, reports have reached Secretary of State Christian Herter and his French colleague, Maurice Couve de Murville, of Anglo-Soviet transactions that would set a wholly new pattern.

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Lloyd: Bizarre Deals

Ike Saved Maurice Chevalier's Life

The reason: He had entertained in Germany during the occupation. Chevalier was tried by the Maquis — French underground — and sentenced to be executed the other day.

Rose To The Rescue

Just then, David Rose of Paramount Pictures arrived in Europe on his plane. Learning of Chevalier's plight, Rose got hold of Col. Jack Lawrence, former public relations expert for Hollywood studios then serving on Eisenhower's staff. Lawrence started an investigation, found Chevalier had staged performances in Germany during the war, but he was speaking from the heart when he said, "Thank you very much."

Under The Dome

The governor of Alabama who banned the United Press from his office is

another two hours Chevalier would have been executed. Lawrence got the ear of Capt. Harry Butcher, close friend of Eisenhower, and he ordered a full-dress inquiry. He stipulated that Chevalier was to be kept alive until the inquiry was over.

Comedian Cleared

The inquiry proved Chevalier was right. So, when the famous French comedian kissed Mrs. Eisenhower's hand the other day, he was speaking from the heart when he said, "Thank you very much."

Meanwhile, time was running out. In

the same governor whose House of Representatives recently elected the privileges of its floor to the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, Robert Shelton, of Tuscaloosa, Ala. Gen. John Paterno was irked at the UPI for reporting that Charlie Merriweather, his finance director, was going to be ousted. Col. Robert L. Schulz, military aide to Ike, who is past 50, has just become a father, for the third time. The march of time ducks continues: The Senate has just confirmed two former members of Congress defeated in the political arena — Sen. Frank Barrett of Wyoming, Republican, and the general council for Ezra Taft Benson, who is a high-ranking congressman from Connecticut who's getting another term on the U.S. Tariff Commission though he's a high protectionist and has come out for reciprocal trade.