

# NEWSROOM DEMOCRACY AND MEDIA MONOPOLY: THE DILEMMAS OF WORKPLACE REFORM AMONG PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS\*

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## INTRODUCTION

During the late 1960's a wide variety of activities emerged to protest the organization and ideology of the professions. The protests took several forms: "caucuses" within professional associations; alternative institutions such as free schools, law collectives, health care clinics, and advocacy planning organizations; journals, newsletters, and magazines providing an "anti-establishment," critical viewpoint; and attempts to "demystify" expertise, provide more access to "clients," organize work more democratically, and recruit more representatives of minority groups into the professions.

These efforts were all part of a strategy (loosely co-ordinated at best) that was often called a "long march through the institutions" of society. The activities of what came to be known as the "radicals in the professions" movement were seen as the beginnings of that march. These efforts represented, they believed, an alliance between radical professionals (with particular knowledge and skills at their disposal) and the more powerless and silent sectors of American society. They challenged "professionalism" — the monopoly of skills by certified members — as an ideology used to mask privilege and self-interest. Yet the skills themselves — in health care, city planning, education, law, social work, and other institutions — were valued. They did not reject "expertise" per se; they challenged its mystification and misuse. And they protested the institutional arrangements of the professions and the "social control" functions they performed. They took seriously the professional norms that emphasized altruistic service, but saw the institutions themselves as obstacles to their fulfillment. By working within those institutions many came to feel that they were wasting their talents.

The "radicals in the professions" movement reached into almost every niche of society, but the particular form it took varied according to the organization and ideology of the profession under challenge. This paper deals with the expression of that movement within professional journalism. It will not focus on the efforts to create alternative institutions (the so-called "under-

ground press") but rather on the efforts of journalists within mass circulation daily newspapers to reform the content and structure of their own work organizations.

The paper will argue that while the "newsroom democracy" activities of the late 1960's and 1970's reflected the general concerns of the "radicals in the professions" movement, they were shaped by those aspects of journalism and the newspaper industry that differ from other professions. Thus the "newsroom democracy" revolt — expressed through journalism reviews, caucuses, and collective bargaining demands — should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon peculiar to journalism, but as part of a larger social movement. It ebbed and flowed — and eventually failed — within the larger protest movement of the period. At the same time, however, the trajectory of the journalists' revolt cannot be understood without particular reference to the unique and ambiguous role of the mass media in capitalist (and American) society.

## RADICALS IN THE PROFESSIONS

How do we explain the emergence of the "radicals in the professions" movement? In part, it emerged out of the general mood of protest during the 1960's. As Flacks has written: "In a sense, the spirit of the student movement and the campus revolt is being carried into the medical complex, the law office, the government bureau, the newspaper office, the research center, the professional convention, and the faculty meeting."<sup>1</sup> By bringing the civil rights, anti-war, and student movements into the workplace, the activists were seeking both to broaden the base of protest and to resolve the dilemma of being a radical but working "within the system." A "radicals in the professions" conference was organized in 1967, according to SDS founders Barbara and Al Haber, as a "response to an essentially personal crisis that is widespread among people in the movement; the crisis of remaining radical beyond the college or graduate student years..."<sup>2</sup>

Because this personal crisis was shared by a large cohort, we need to look at the sociological origins of the

dilemma facing these activists. The immediate roots of this movement can be found in the decade of protest over civil rights and Viet Nam, but as Perrucci argues, "it is likely that such organized discontent can be traced more accurately to the nature of work in advanced capitalist society."<sup>3</sup>

These social protest movements were organized primarily by relatively "privileged" sectors within capitalist countries, primarily students and young professionals. Attempts to explain this apparent irony first focused on the personality and socialization attributes of the young protestors. Depending on the observer's perspective, their revolt was viewed as either "pathological" or "liberated."<sup>4</sup> But the major efforts to explain this revolt soon focused on the changing class structure, the growth of "knowledge" and "human service" occupations, and the bureaucratization of these occupations. The expansion of these sectors is explained, according to Flacks, by

the need in advanced industrial society for people to do the work of planning, prediction, innovation and systematic training, and socialization that the system now requires for its survival and growth.<sup>5</sup>

As those tasks became subservient to the system's overall goals, as knowledge work became "proletarianized," the gap widened between the humanitarian ideals of the professions and the actual day-to-day organization of work. The student movement and the "radicals in the professions" movement were thus explained as a reflection of the transformation of these tasks and the expansion of what was variously called the "new working class," the "mass intelligentia," or the "professional-managerial class."<sup>6</sup> These "middle layers," according to Braverman, encompass a "broad range of types," graduations of "specialized knowledge and delegated authority without which the machinery of production, distribution, and administration would cease to operate." As a result, this group "takes its characteristics from both sides," but increasingly comes to resemble the industrial proletariat. Braverman suggests that

unlike that earlier middle-class mass, which has so largely evaporated, it corresponds increasingly to the formal definition of a working class. That is, like the working class it possesses no economic or occupational independence, is employed by capital and its offshoots, possesses no access to the labor process or the means of production outside that employment, and must renew its labors for capital incessantly in order to subsist. This portion of employment embraces the engineering, technical, and scientific cadre, the lower ranks of supervision and management, the considerable numbers of specialized and "professional" employees occupied in marketing, financial and organizational administration, and the like, as well as, outside of capitalist industry proper, in hospitals, schools, government administration, and so forth.<sup>7</sup>

One need not belabor these societal, institutional, and psychological changes. Suffice it to say that the "radicals in the professions" movement reflected a significant shift in the class structure of capitalism (and the organization of professional work within it), as well as the specific post-war demographic changes that produced a large age-cohort of college graduates in the late 1960's.

### THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA

Because power based on naked force is unstable, those in power seek to legitimate their rule — among themselves as well as among subordinate groups. According to Weber, "organized domination . . . requires that human conduct be conditioned to obedience toward those masters who claim to be the bearers of legitimate power."<sup>8</sup> The "divine right" of kings, the sanctity of the church, racial superiority, and tradition have served as justifications for various systems of domination. Control of the institutions of socialization and legitimation are thus crucial for those in power to justify their domination and remain in power.

In all complex societies, the mass media, along with the schools and the church, serve as instruments of legitimation. In a capitalist society, therefore, the mass media act as agencies of political socialization — or indoctrination — that promote acceptance of the capitalist system. This process of fostering the "ideological hegemony" of the owning class, as Gramsci called it, is much more subtle in capitalist democracies than is the process of indoctrination within more authoritarian or one-party regimes. It is this very subtlety which makes the analysis of the mass media so difficult, because it is not simply a straightforward "brainwashing" apparatus.

Although variations exist (particularly with regard to broadcast media), within most capitalist societies the mass media are privately owned and controlled. In the U.S., the major commercial TV and radio networks, the popular magazines, the record and film companies, and the mass circulation daily newspapers are profit-making corporations. While the broadcast media are "regulated" by government agencies (because the air waves are limited), they, like the print media, justify this private ownership arrangement on the grounds that they are "socially responsible" in serving the "public interest," particularly against the encroachments of state power. Indeed, in classic liberal doctrine, the state (rather than the owning class) is viewed as the primary source of oppression. This doctrine is embodied in the First Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees the "freedom of the press" against state intervention but makes no provision against abuses by a press linked to private economic interests.

Because the owners of the mass media are primarily involved in profit-seeking, the logic of the marketplace operates. They seek to protect and expand their investments. As a result the mass media, like other industries, has undergone a process of consolidation

and concentration of ownership. The 50 largest newspaper chains have more than two-thirds of all daily newspaper sales; the top 12 have more than one-third. Many of these newspaper chains, in turn, own broadcast (radio and TV) outlets, often in the same cities in which they control the daily newspaper. There are more than 1,500 cities with daily newspapers, but only 40 with competing newspaper managements; newspaper monopolies exist in 97.5 percent of all cities with newspapers. Many of the companies that own newspapers, magazines, and broadcast facilities have been bought out, particularly in recent years, by conglomerates for whom the mass media are but one product among many.<sup>8</sup> As part of this process of concentration and consolidation of ownership, the mass media are increasingly integrated with other industries through interlocking directorships and through involvement in elite social and policy-making organizations at both local and national levels.<sup>10</sup>

The mass media are owned by the capitalist class. But, like that class, the news media are hardly monolithic, and reflect divisions within the dominant class: liberal and conservative, Republican and Democrat, Sunbelt and Snowbelt, competitive and monopolistic, and so on. In addition, "controversial" and "dissident" views find their way into the daily press, popular magazines, films, TV, and radio. Business groups and government officials both often accuse the mass media of being too critical and "irresponsible." For example, there have been obvious tensions between the liberal press (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*) and recent Republican Administrations over the Watergate scandal, CIA activities, and the Pentagon Papers.

But it is also clear that there are limits to the mass media's willingness to venture outside the acceptable boundaries of the dominant political consensus. Among the press, there are still newspapers that wander off onto the edges, particularly on the right (such as William Loeb's Manchester, N.H., *Union-Leader*), but for the most part the major mass media represent a narrow range on the ideological spectrum. While "dissident" views outside these accepted boundaries are heard, they are not given equal weight. "Freedom of the press" exists in the sense that no central and external authority dictates what shall be published, but as Miliband has pointed out:

that freedom has to be set in the real economic and political context of these societies; and in that context the free expression of ideas and opinions mainly means the free expression of ideas and opinions which are helpful to the prevailing system of power and privilege.<sup>11</sup>

The complete absence of any dissident views would help undermine the notions of free and open expression (the marketplace of ideas) that promote the legitimation of the existing order as democratic and pluralistic. To foster the legitimacy of the status quo, Miliband writes, "it is only necessary that ideological competition should be so unequal as to give a crushing

advantage to one side against the other."<sup>12</sup> The media need not defend or foster complete acceptance of every aspect of the system. It need only discredit alternative ideologies and arrangements as even worse evils (or as utopian).<sup>13</sup>

The narrow range of acceptable content is particularly striking in the U.S. when compared with other Western capitalist democracies. Prior to the Civil War, when they were sponsored by political parties, newspapers reflected explicit class, regional, and ideological differences. As the press became commercialized, sponsored by advertisers, and as it sought to appeal to a wider (and more literate) mass readership, newspapers no longer tailored their content to a particular segment of the population. During the age of "personal journalism," publishers such as Hearst and Pulitzer used their newspapers as vehicles for their own viewpoints and personal power, but even though these papers were often sensational and crusading, they did not reflect a very wide spectrum of political ideologies. The introduction of the wire services, which provide most newspapers (and, today, TV and radio) with national and international news, created another pressure toward standardization and middle-of-the-road journalism. During the second half of the 20th century, as family and local ownership gave way to corporate and national ownership, many of the variations due to personal idiosyncracies and regional differences have disappeared.

But the overriding explanation for the narrow spectrum of the American mass media has to do with the general political climate. The absence of self-conscious ideological politics, and the weakness of political parties and trade unions as agencies of political mobilization and education, have fostered a dominant consensus. In multi-party political systems, as in Western Europe, especially those based on stronger class and ideological differences, the mass media exhibit a greater degree of variation, although this point should not be exaggerated.<sup>14</sup>

The news media "set the agenda" of public discussion: which issues get raised and how they are framed.<sup>15</sup> The boundaries, though narrow (as we have suggested), are not fixed or impermeable; they expand and contract. There are periods when new issues and perspectives gain access on the public agenda and broaden the range of political discussion. There are cracks in the consensus.

It is thus of some interest to consider the conditions under which the limits of political debate are pushed outwards from the dominant center. The media are not mechanical transmission belts for the capitalist class's ideology.<sup>16</sup> Just how far can these boundaries be stretched, before the owners and controllers of the mass media pull in the reins? Put more broadly, how autonomous is the mass media in a bourgeois democracy? While it is important to acknowledge the class character of the mass media in our society, it is equally important to view the mass media as institutions lodged within a society fraught with conflicts, including conflicts *within* the mass media organizations themselves.

Consider the newspaper. At one time it was possible for one person to be owner, editor, reporter, advertising manager, printer, and distributor. Today, the newspaper is a large, complex institution. With some exceptions, those who own, and thus ultimately control, the newspapers are not directly involved with the day-to-day activities of running the paper. Even in the most visible (and ideological) area of the paper — the newsroom — there is very little direct contact between owners and the working journalists. Such "interference" is a violation of professional norms, even though it is perfectly legal. Heavy-handed publishers still exist — especially on smaller newspapers — but they are, for the most part, part of a bygone era of personal journalism. Owners delegate authority to publishers, editors, and managing editors. They, in turn, grant a considerable degree of independence to the news staff. Few journalists consider themselves "hired hands" of the capitalist class and would be angered to be seen as transmission belts for capitalist class ideology. As a whole, journalists are more liberal than the general public.<sup>16a</sup> Most journalists (especially those on large urban papers) see themselves as reformers. They are generally hostile to business, cynical about the intentions of politicians, and sympathetic to progressive causes.

Yet study after study confirms the finding that the press reflect the authority and values of the business class — not in an overtly polemical and ideological way, but in a subtle, episodic, and cumulative manner. For the most part, the press (as well as popular magazines and TV) reflect the official version of reality of those in power. The analysis of Lazarsfeld and Merton, written 30 years ago, is equally true today.

Increasingly, the chief power groups, among which organized business occupies the most spectacular place, have come to adopt techniques for manipulating mass publics through propaganda in place of more direct means of control. . . . Economic power seems to have reduced direct exploitation and turned to a subtler type of psychological exploitation, achieved largely by disseminating propaganda through the mass media of communications. . . . The media have taken on the job of rendering mass publics conformative to the social and economic status quo.<sup>17</sup>

To promote the values of the capitalist class, the owners of daily newspapers do not have to issue direct orders to newsroom staff. The process is far more subtle. Organizational and professional factors are more important.

First, as members of American society, most journalists take for granted its institutional arrangements and values. Their political sympathies, though generally liberal, are usually vague and blurred. American journalism (unlike its European counterpart) does not seem to attract many ideologues with strong political commitments. Self-selection plays its part as well; few journalists bother to take a job on a paper with which they

strongly disagree.<sup>18</sup> For persons with strongly dissident views, that rules out most daily newspapers.

Once on the job, journalists are subject to a subtle process of socialization whereby they learn, more often by "osmosis" than by explicit guidelines, the established routines, sacred cows, and routes for advancement.<sup>19</sup> As Miliband has written:

These "cultural workmen" are unlikely to be greatly troubled by the limitations and constrictions imposed upon the mass media by the prevailing economic and political system, because their ideological and political make-up does not normally bring them up against these limitations. The leash they wear is sufficiently long to allow them as much freedom of movement as they themselves wish to have; and they therefore do not feel the strain; or not so as to make life impossible.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, the work setting for the journalist on a daily newspaper is hardly authoritarian or oppressive. The newsroom is in fact, a rather informal, first-name workplace where relations of authority are muted. Tasks are interdependent, and interaction frequent but casual. Many journalists believe that the quick decisions necessitated by deadline daily journalism require some focal point of authority — usually a city editor or managing editor — but this authority is rarely exercised in a heavy-handed manner.

Rather, the structure and ideology of newswork itself results in a steady stream of "news" that reflects the hierarchy of power and authority in the larger society. News is primarily the coverage of "events." Because of limited staff size and daily deadlines, journalists cannot comprehensively cover the wide range of activities that are potentially newsworthy. Both private and public groups in power have the resources to stage events, to hire public relations staffs, to publish reports and studies by "experts." Hearings, press releases, press conferences, background briefings, leaks, reports, and other activities become the source of most news. Such activities are usually self-serving. In contrast, the poor, the powerless, the unorganized lack the resources to command such routine access to reporters and the media. To make the news, they must disrupt "business as usual."

Newspapers also station reporters at "beats" — city hall, the courts, the White House, the State Department, the regulatory agencies, the school board — where they expect "news" to happen. This, of course, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, and reporters under time and competitive pressures file stories from these beats rather than venture off the beaten track. In addition, as a result of these day-to-day routines, reporters develop ongoing relationships with regular news sources. They often develop forms of co-operation that are mutually beneficial; the reporter wants a story and the source wants his version of reality reported. Reporters also recognize that many news sources, particularly politicians and government officials, can provide career opportunities. Gans has observed that "events that

strain the system of mutual obligations are rare."<sup>21</sup> As a result of these procedures, news represents an "official" version of reality rather than a cross-section of activities. Sigal's systematic analysis of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, for example, reveals how the channels and sources of newsgathering create a strong bias in the direction of those with power.<sup>22</sup>

Much of the "investigative" journalism of the past decade can be seen as a result of the expansion of the state and the conflict between different sectors of the state apparatus. Middle level officials often "leak" information contrary to the interest of high level officials. Or officials in one branch of the state (e.g., a Senate committee, a regulatory agency) provide the press with data (e.g., suppressed reports) that can embarrass another branch. The exposes of Watergate, CIA activities, Pentagon Papers, the Soviet wheat deal, and many others can be seen in this light. This interpretation does not clash with the finding of an "official" bias, but shows conflicts among officials.

Still, journalists claim to be "objective." Given the specific meaning of "objectivity" within daily journalism, they are not being cynical. Reporters are not expected to be experts on the topics they cover. But they are expected to attribute all information to "responsible" and "reliable" sources. If there is a controversy, then they should achieve a "balance" among competing sources. "Objectivity" is thus a set of procedures to achieve this "balance."

On a day-to-day basis, this means that reporters seek out Republicans to rebut Democrats, labor union officials to rebut management spokespersons, one academic "expert" to rebut another academic "expert," and so on. The journalist does not seek out the truth, but strives to balance competing "truth claims."<sup>23</sup> Often, however, this is impossible. The primary obstacle is that those in power usually initiate events and thus have an advantage. Under deadline pressure, or limits of space, reporters may not be able to find another source to provide "balance." Another problem is to determine whom to contact. In many cases such "controversies" are well-orchestrated, when both sides have routine access to reporters. But in many other situations there is no obvious counterpart, or at least not one within the reporter's line of vision. News sources must be "responsible," represent an organized constituency, talk the language of "news." To make such controversies more predictable, the news media often appoint an individual or an organization to represent the "other side": "responsible critic," "maverick politician" "consumer advocate," and so on; reporters in Chicago who wanted the "black" position on something would call Rev. Jesse Jackson, just as the news media appointed Abbie Hoffman a "leader" of the New Left.

Not all "truth claims," of course, are given equal opportunity. Journalists have their own "hierarchy of credibility" that shapes the content of news.<sup>24</sup> Journalists do not think of this as bias or one-sided reporting. They report events that come into their field of vision. Under severe limits of time and space, they must often choose among competing "truth claims." Their routine

newsgathering activities seem neutral enough, even if the final product displays a decided bias in favor of "official" news.

Journalists tend to take these organizational constraints for granted. They do not see them as the result of economic decisions made outside the newsroom. (The size of the "news hole," for example, is determined by the amount of advertising in that day's paper rather than the potentially newsworthy activities.) On a daily basis, in fact, it is these very constraints — limits of time (deadlines), space (front page competition), and news sources (scoops, leaks) — that make journalism exciting and attractive. Much of the romance of newspapering, portrayed in such films as "The Front Page," comes from overcoming the challenges and obstacles that these constraints erect.

The process by which "news" is identified, gathered, written, and edited produces a particular version of reality that, overall, supports the existing social order. This does not mean that all journalists are entirely satisfied with the finished product. But over time, most learn to accommodate themselves to the daily routines, for lack of a better alternative or lack of power to reorganize newswork according to different priorities.

The role of the journalist, like those of others within the "mass intelligentsia," is thus ambiguous. Our society places a high value on "freedom of the press" and intellectual craftsmanship. But while the press, as an institution, is legally free from external interference, the journalist's own freedom is quite circumscribed.

### AMERICAN JOURNALISM

From the beginning of American history, attacking the press has been a favorite pastime of many segments of the population — politicians, business, the church, parents groups, intellectuals and other defenders of high culture, and a wide variety of social reform movements. All have their axes to grind — from critics of yellow journalism during the Spanish-American War, to Vice President Agnew's attacks on the liberal Eastern establishment press.<sup>25</sup>

Journalists too have shared in the criticism of the way the news is gathered, written, and edited. But for the most part, and until very recently, journalists have tended to restrict their criticism to newsroom and bar-room sniping. While many independent journalists — Upton Sinclair, H.L. Mencken, I.F. Stone, A.J. Liebling, George Seldes, and others — have challenged the structure and content of the daily newspaper in books and magazine articles, few working reporters have gone beyond day-to-day complaints about stories that got spiked or rewritten by unfriendly editors or self-protecting publishers. Until recently, newspeople who didn't like the way newspapers operated took other forms of expressing their discontent — high rates of alcoholism, a great deal of movement between newspapers, and a significant degree of exit into related fields such as public relations, advertising, and freelancing. Our image of the cynical, hard-drinking, and peripatetic reporter may be exaggerated by the movies and popular novels, but there is some grain of truth to it.

Even when journalists began to organize collectively through the American Newspaper Guild (now The Newspaper Guild) in the 1930's, the primary emphasis was on providing more job security, better wages, and better working conditions for the working reporter and editor. It is no accident that newspeople were among the first white-collar workers to unionize in vast numbers. Journalists tended to be reform-minded in the first place; and during the Depression newspapers were folding right and left, staffs were laid off at a publisher's whim, and reporters worked 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. Since the highly-skilled production workers were organized through the International Typographical Union (ITU), and since the publishers faced fixed costs in the price of newsprint and other investments, they cut the most vulnerable and replaceable workers — the journalists.<sup>26</sup>

It is understandable, therefore, that in fighting for job security and better immediate pay and conditions, the journalists in the early days of the Guild gave little attention to organizing around the structure of control and the content of "news" within the newspapers they worked for. The Guild was aggressive in championing various social causes of the period. But my own research into the early organizing of the Guild in Chicago reveals that even though the early leadership were members of or close to the Communist Party, they subordinated any challenge to the political power of the press to the immediate task of building a union.<sup>27</sup> A Communist Party member who was one of the few Guild members at the *Chicago Tribune* in the mid-1930's told the National Labor Relations Board about how the *Tribune* management tried to "make my working conditions so disagreeable that I would quit my position . . . to discredit me with my fellow employees . . . to frighten me sufficiently to force me to resign from the Newspaper Guild . . . to make an example of me before other *Tribune* employees who might otherwise have been disposed to join the Guild." His testimony before the NLRB in 1937 illustrates, however, how journalists were unable or unwilling to challenge the management's right to determine the definition of "news." A copy editor, he told the NLRB:

I earn \$60 a week and I do not feel that I owe the *Tribune* anything for that sum beyond a determined effort to be efficient. Nobody said lousier things about Roosevelt than I did in certain headlines. If the *Tribune* had ordered me to say Roosevelt was illegitimate, I would have done so. To refuse would have been impossible. To hold a job I had to obey my boss's wishes.<sup>28</sup>

In the 1940's and 1950's the Guild lost much of its progressive thrust. During those years, the Guild purged its radical leadership in bitter battles. In fact, the Guild was the first CIO union to throw out its Communist Party national officers. Once a militant and progressive union seeking to organize all white-collar employees in the news industry, the Guild became a cautious, though still liberal, union, more interested in preserving the gains of

the past than in making bold initiatives. During the post-war period the Guild put its energies into consolidating its gains among journalists, improving wages, working conditions, and fringe benefits. It was less concerned with mobilizing support for social causes, promoting higher standards of journalism, organizing the non-unionized newspaper employees outside the newsroom, or forging alliances with other newspaper unions. In the early 1960's the Guild's progressive image was severely tarnished when it was discovered that it had co-operated with the red-baiting of the McCarthy period and had joined forces with the CIA in promoting an anti-communist "free press" around the world.<sup>29</sup>

Meanwhile, the number of large metropolitan newspapers, in which the Guild's membership was concentrated, continued to shrink due to the accelerated number of mergers and closures, while industry profits increased. Smaller suburban papers emerged in place of the large urban dailies. The Guild's efforts to organize these papers were half-hearted at best, in part because most of them had too few newsroom employees. The Guild fell behind in organizing newspeople and did little to stem the tide of increasing concentration of newspaper and broadcast ownership by fewer media conglomerates. Gains in membership were offset by losses due to mergers and deaths. About 5,000 Guild jobs were lost in the 1960's alone. By the late 1960's the Guild had 222 contracts (135 with newspapers among the nation's 1,748 daily papers) and about 32,000 members on newspapers, wire services, and magazines. For beginning reporters, weekly wages doubled between 1950 and 1970. On the largest papers, \$250/week was not unusual, but outside the big cities this figure was often halved.<sup>30</sup> As a result of the Guild's influence, wages and benefits on the *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Globe*, and other non-union newsrooms were usually on a par with their unionized competitors in the same city. But issues of control over the work process and the content of news remained the topic of after-hours bar talk rather than of organized efforts by working journalists.

#### ORIGINS OF THE PROTEST

Beginning in the late 1960's, however, journalists around the nation began to talk about "newsroom democracy." Having covered the various protest movements of the decade — in which consumers, ghetto blacks, students, blue-collar workers, and others demanded a voice in decision-making within the institutions that affected them — journalists, too, realized that their own powerlessness on the job created obstacles to aggressive and responsible journalism. The norms and procedures of daily journalism rendered the journalist little more than what one reporter labeled a "glorified tape recorder," with little ability to use his/her own expertise in deciding what was and wasn't news.

Several sociological forces converged to create a haphazard movement among a small but vocal group of

newspeople. First, TV had encroached on the daily newspapers' territory to cover dramatic and instant events of the day. By the 1960's, newspaper editors and journalism professors had reluctantly accepted the idea of "interpretive" journalism — going beyond "just the facts" to put events in context.<sup>31</sup> Without rejecting "objectivity" (impartiality of reporting, presenting all sides), "interpretive" journalism opened the door for journalists to look for causes, institutional as well as personal, for poverty, racial discrimination, poor health care, and other social problems, rather than simply to respond to the press releases, press conferences and official proceedings that provide the powerful with routine access to the press.

Second, the conflicts of the 1960's forced the daily press to explain why ghettos were burning, students were sitting-in, prices were rising while product quality was deteriorating, and the Viet Nam war was escalating with little sign of victory or purpose. Most of the press looked skeptically, if not hostilely, at these forces of dissent. "Official" interpretations of events — by police, mayors, and blue-ribbon commissions — prevailed in the press. More often than not, the forms of protest, rather than the content of the issues and the underlying causes, became the "news." A demonstration was not deemed "newsworthy" unless violence, confrontation, or some other dramatic feature made it a "spectacle." Psychological interpretations of protesters' motives, or the probability of outside agitators' making trouble, became newsworthy themes. To make the news, powerless groups had to disrupt "business as usual."<sup>32</sup> But these groups did make headlines, placing new issues on the political agenda and causing more thoughtful journalists to seek out the structural causes of discontent as well as to consider why the news media, through the norms and routines of objective journalism, rarely went after the important questions or beyond surface factuality.

Finally, it is necessary to look at the journalists themselves. By the mid-1960's, journalists on big city newspapers had achieved a modest standard of working conditions, pay, and benefits, thanks primarily to the Newspaper Guild. Journalism had always attracted its share of reform-minded types, but there were just as likely to be frustrated writers, alcoholics, or sycophants who entered journalism for a variety of reasons. After World War II, however, journalism sought to "professionalize." Larger, more prestigious papers began to require college degrees, including the increasingly acceptable journalism school credentials. Journalists in the 1950's and 1960's were more likely to be college-educated, with at least a smattering of social science instead of an emphasis on English or philosophy; more and more came to journalism from law school or from a variety of social science graduate programs.<sup>33</sup> This tempered some of the parochialism and anti-intellectualism within journalism. Their view of the world was shaped by formal study as well as by the city editor's outlook. Also, because "crime news" was no longer the big front-page story that it had been in earlier

decades, young journalists were no longer trained first-and-foremost as police reporters, learning journalism from precinct stations and learning that news meant "quote the cops."

Journalism remained a field for "generalists," whose style and technique were rewarded over their substance and knowledge; but by the mid-1960's a new breed of young journalists — raised like their peers during a period of generational conflict and of political stirrings out of apathy — began to question many of the taken-for-granted assumptions about news. Some (certainly not most) chose journalism over law, teaching, or government because it combined what they thought to be social commitment with daily excitement. But, like other college-educated professionals of the period, they often found that the reality was something less than the ideal. As with others in education, law, medicines, social service, and elsewhere, their frustration led to a variety of protest forms.

Journalists, however, lacked several of the attributes of the more established professions. There were no universally-recognized standards for journalism training and no means of certification. No professional association oversaw standards of entry. Newspapers could hire anyone they pleased. Journalism also lacked a body of knowledge it could call its own, but drew instead on a wide variety of disciplines, skills, and "savvy."

This had several, perhaps unwitting, consequences. First, reporters were used interchangeably. An editor could assign one reporter to cover many different topics. This is a very "efficient" use of personnel but perhaps not the best journalism. Lacking expertise, the reporter was even more dependent on the source's version of reality. It also meant that, lacking specific standards, newspaper management often judged (and promoted) journalists by external criteria such as the awards they won. (Most journalism awards, however, are given by organizations with vested interests: the ABA for best legal reporting, the AMA for best medical reporting, and so on.) Unlike the more established professions, in other words, journalists could not artificially restrict entry into the occupation. This put journalists in a relatively weak bargaining position vis-a-vis management. And, in addition to the other competitive pressures on a daily paper, the lack of agreed-upon standards of performance made journalists even more competitive, since it was difficult to judge success by internal criteria. A beat (say, city hall) reporter is always looking over his/her shoulder; if the counterpart from the competing paper gets a story he/she missed, the editor will notice. This naturally tends to encourage "herd" or "pack" journalism.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, the growing size and complexity of the daily newspaper tended to bureaucratize newswork. Johnstone notes that journalists in larger news organizations experience more constraints on their professional autonomy. At each stage of the process — identifying newsworthy events, gathering and reporting the news, and editing the copy — these journalists have

less control over their immediate tasks. Journalists on large newspapers are less satisfied with their jobs than those on smaller papers, even though the scope of news in big cities is broader.<sup>35</sup> Part of the reason may lie in the fact, as we shall discuss, that the larger, more prominent papers attract "the best and the brightest" among journalists, whose expectations are higher.

"Newsroom democracy" was, at first, as much a mood as a co-ordinated movement. Surveys found that younger journalists, those on larger city newspapers, and those with college degrees were more likely to identify with a cluster of values that Johnstone labels "participatory" journalism. On October 15, 1969, for example, staffers at *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and other New York City-based publications sought permission to wear peace symbols, attend anti-war rallies, circulate petitions, and discuss the war in company auditoriums as part of the anti-war activities taking place around the country. This was a clear violation of the dominant norms of journalistic impartiality.

The values of "participatory" journalism emphasize the role of the journalist in shaping and even creating news, the importance of providing background, context, and interpretation of news, and the newspaper's function as a molder of opinion. "Neutral" journalism, on the other hand, emphasizes the journalist's technical prowess (rather than his familiarity with substance, and verifiable information), the importance of getting information to the public as quickly as possible without providing much background or context, and the entertainment function of the newspaper. "Participant" news values were positively correlated with having attended college (particularly "quality" colleges), youth, a non-managerial position in the news hierarchy, employment on large and prestigious news organizations and in larger cities, and integration into informal networks of fellow journalists rather than into a wider network of voluntary organizations in the community at large.<sup>36</sup>

Out of these trends and sentiments a number of activities emerged to challenge the prevailing norms, routines, and organization of the daily press. In seeking a greater "voice" for the isolated and powerless groups in society, journalists began to realize their own powerlessness on the job. Thus journalists' dissent focused on two themes. They sought, first, more access for the perspectives of the powerless, less emphasis on "official" news, and more aggressive journalism into structural causes of social injustice, political corruption, and economic inequality; in other words, they sought changes in the *content* of "news" itself. Second, they sought changes in the routines of daily journalism — allowing more time for "investigative" reporting and devoting less attention and staff time to the "civic house-keeping" functions of covering trivial, superficial, and official events — and a greater voice in running the newspaper, in deciding what is "news," on the part of those who gather, write, and edit the paper's content; in other words, they sought changes in the *structure* of control within the newsroom itself.

Journalists devised two strategies to develop these concerns. One was the publication of "journalism reviews" written by local newspeople about their own employing institutions. Journalism reviews represented a collective effort to criticize the press, not by embittered ex-journalists, but by working newspeople themselves. (Most existing journalism publications — such as Sigma Delta Chi's *Quill* and the American Society of Newspaper Editors' *Bulletin* — were sponsored by various professional societies that were oriented toward management or just generally less critical. The *Columbia Journalism Review*, a national and usually critical quarterly started in 1962, is subsidized by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.) Starting with the *Chicago Journalism Review* in 1968, critical publications were established in most major cities within the next five years, differing in financial sponsorship, regularity, emphasis, and internal organization, but all representing a parallel set of concerns. Conferences often brought these journalists together to discuss common problems, but for the most part these reviews focused on local issues and local media.

Another strategy was the assertion of "newsroom democracy" through newsroom caucuses and through collective bargaining, usually via the Newspaper Guild. Having reached a certain threshold of wages and hours, young journalists tended to take for granted what their elders had fought for, often violently, through the CIO-affiliated Newspaper Guild, beginning in 1933. Through the mid-1960's, the Guild was viewed by most younger journalists as simply another professional society that sponsored annual award dinners. The exposure of the Guild's CIA connections didn't help its image. During the late 1960's, the Guild renewed some of its concern for improving journalism standards by sponsoring local "press councils" and encouraging the spread of local journalism reviews. As the Guild began to open up different ideas, some young journalists in the 1960's and 1970's began to see the union as a mechanism for institutionalizing more "reporter power" in the daily running of their employing newspapers. These demands met with stiff resistance, not only from newspaper managements but also from many, perhaps most, other journalists, particularly those older journalists who did not share the "participatory" values of the younger cohort.

The rest of this paper will concern itself with two things. First, it will trace the history of "newsroom democracy" activities through a case study of Chicago journalism (where the movement began in 1968) and explore its decline by the mid-1970's. Second, it will examine more generally some of the structural conditions and trends of the newspaper industry that have inhibited the democratization of journalism and that raise important questions about control over the "means of information" in this country.

#### CHICAGO: 1968

In the late 1960's Chicago was the only city in the



nation that still had four daily newspapers. The Tribune Company owned the morning *Tribune* and the afternoon *American*, and as well as a local TV and radio station. Field Enterprises owned the morning *Sun-Times* and the afternoon *Daily News*, as well as a TV station. The two companies controlled more than 70% of local ad revenues.<sup>37</sup> The two Field papers were unionized by the Chicago Newspaper Guild, were consistently more liberal editorially than the Tribune papers, and had hired a staff of journalists who were more liberal, cosmopolitan, and socially conscious. During the decade of the 1960's, the two Field papers were consistently more sympathetic to the civil rights, school integration, student, and anti-war movements in Chicago. Their editors encouraged a degree of investigative or at least analytic reporting. Although not to be overemphasized, this created an atmosphere at the *Sun-Times* and *Daily News* of higher expectations, more autonomy and responsibility, and more momentum among the news staffs than existed at the *Tribune* or the *American*.

Through the twists of fate and Democratic Party politics, the Democrats' August 1968 convention was scheduled for Chicago. As a prelude to the August convention, anti-war groups made plans for demonstrations, while the Chicago establishment and police claimed that the protest groups were violent and anti-American. All four Chicago papers called for stronger police protection. In April 1968, riots broke out on Chicago's West Side ghetto following the assassination of Martin Luther King in Memphis. A few weeks later a major anti-war march took place in Chicago, resulting in confrontation. Convention week itself (August 24-30, 1968) included major violent confrontations between the Chicago Police Department and a variety of protesters, during which newspaper reporters themselves were victims of police attacks. Finally, in the aftermath of the convention came attempts from various quarters — Mayor Daley, the Chicago Police Department, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Kerner Commission on violence, and the press itself — to explain what had occurred and why.

In each case, Chicago's four papers played an active role in covering and interpreting the conflicts. An analysis of the news coverage during these months, particularly of the convention violence on Chicago's streets, reveals that Chicagoans reading their four newspapers got a different view of the events than did those in the rest of the nation reading wire service reports, watching the national TV news, and reading the weekly newsmagazines. All four Chicago dailies consistently emphasized the demonstrators' violence but de-emphasized violence by police. Where the press did observe police violence it was interpreted as "normal and necessary." Rewritemen and editors rejected reporters' first-hand accounts as unnewsworthy, undocumented, or "hysterical." The social, political, and economic grievances of the protesters were all but ignored. The press accepted the official interpretation of the events and disorders — that "conspirators," "terrorists," and television had been responsible. The pap-

ers were critical of reports that emphasized official misconduct, and they unquestioningly accepted Mayor Daley's word about these events.<sup>38</sup> The national spotlight was on Chicago in the nation's media. For most Chicago journalists, "it was the biggest news story ever," as a reporter said, "and the papers blew it."

No one was surprised by such coverage by the two Tribune Company papers. But the journalists at the two Field Enterprises papers were angered by the way their copy was handled, by the unwillingness of their editors to trust their news judgments and first-hand accounts, and by the knee-jerk reflex of the papers' higher-ups to defend the City of Chicago and Richard Daley against critical coverage by outside news media. This shared experience served to solidify and crystallize many of the gripes and complaints of the journalists. They began to talk among themselves about the connections between Chicago's press and the city's political and business elites, about the systematic biases of their employing papers, and about the constraints placed on them on a day-to-day basis.

#### THE CHICAGO JOURNALISM REVIEW

Immediately after the convention, a small group of reporters and other journalists called a meeting to discuss ways to respond to these injustices. Attempts to organize an ongoing organization, an alternative to the Guild, Sigma Delta Chi, the Chicago Headline Club, and other associations, failed. But out of these meetings came plans for the *Chicago Journalism Review*, to be written by working journalists, which would hold their own papers up to professional standards of journalism. The first issue was published in October 1968 and the *Review* lasted until September 1975. Its circulation reached a peak of 9,000 — about 2,000 outside the Chicago area.

The *Review* served as a forum for journalists (including those in broadcasting, the wire services, and national and local magazines) to raise issues about their own profession and employers. It created an atmosphere which would later, in 1971, lead to more direct challenges to the structure of control. The issues reflected the concerns of a small but active group of Chicago journalists. The *Review* included articles on the pro-police and pro-business bias of news reporting; on the personal and institutional links between publishers and editors and the city's business and political leaders; on the lack of in-depth reporting of Chicago's black community; and on biases in reporting about civil rights and the Vietnam war. It published stories that Chicago papers' editors had "spiked." In its biggest expose, the *Review* was responsible for exposing how the Chicago press had accepted the "official" police version of the murder of Black Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark in 1969. Later the daily papers admitted that the police version was indeed wrong. Contributors also expressed the alienation of newswork by poking fun at the "formula writing" required by most newspapers.

One reporter was fired and several quit in anger,

after the *Review* published exposes written for downtown papers that the papers had refused to publish. Because they were protected by the Newspaper Guild, reporters for the two Field papers did the bulk of the articles for the *Chicago Journalism Review*. Non-unionized *Tribune* staffers provided anonymous tips or wrote stories without bylines. Perhaps 300 journalists contributed articles, tips, or art work to the *Review* during its seven years. Most worked in Chicago, on local media or in bureaus of national media organizations, but as the *Review's* reputation expanded it received articles from journalists, academics, students, and others from around the country.

During those years, the *Review* inspired similar efforts by journalists in more than twenty other cities. The *Review's* editors became aware of similar injustices among journalists elsewhere. Making these connections, they saw that their problems were not unique to Chicago. In particular, the *Review* became a forum for issues of newsroom democracy. It published stories about "caucuses" and insurgencies elsewhere. It discussed the prestigious "worker-controlled" daily, *Le Monde*, in Paris. It began to question the editorial and business prerogatives of management. It sponsored conferences of journalists from around the country who shared similar perspectives for a more "advocacy" and "activist" journalism.

Even among its small nucleus of editors and contributors, there was hardly unanimity on issues of professional and political change. Ron Dorfman, a *Review* founder and long-time editor, and a catalyst for developing a network of like-minded journalists around the country, was an outspoken radical not only on newsroom issues but on larger political and economic concerns. He was a strong advocate of worker self-management in the newspaper industry and his influence was reflected in the *Review* content. Dorfman was more radical than most of his *Review* colleagues. Don Rottenberg, another editor, was a moderating influence on the *Review's* content but his tenure there was shorter.

After a few years the *Review* lost much of its early radical thrust. One reason was turnover — a number of the journalists who helped start the *Review* and worked for downtown papers soon got frustrated and quit or were fired. Some simply left Chicago; others left journalism altogether. Also, much of the anger over the 1968 events subsided by the mid-1970's. The Chicago dailies did open up somewhat to more aggressive reporting. More stories were done at the suggestion of reporters, who were increasingly encouraged to take initiatives. Editorial writers more often sought out the opinions of reporters about whose stories or specializations they were editorializing. Editors were more willing to listen to reporters' arguments. The changes were not dramatic. They were due more to the fact that old, hard-bitten editors retired or were replaced with younger, more open-minded editors: for example, the *Tribune*, which had a tradition of promoting copy editors rather than reporters into editors' slots, changed this policy to

encourage more understanding of reporters' perspectives. Management at both papers took some of the anger out of the journalists without making any basic structural concessions. Finally, and most importantly, the social movement context which gave impetus, social support, and ideological justification to these activities had dissipated. The protest movements that had "radicalized" journalists no longer existed. It was difficult to sustain a sense of momentum in isolation.

#### JOURNALISTS CONFRONT MANAGEMENT

By creating this atmosphere, this questioning of management's prerogatives, and by revealing that alternatives existed, the *Chicago Journalism Review* provided the stimulus for organized efforts to achieve more direct control over the day-to-day decision-making in the newsrooms of the two Field newspapers, the *Sun-Times* and *Daily News*.

Particularly at these two papers, an informal peer group culture had developed among young reporters. Much like the "resistance on the shop floor" in factories,<sup>39</sup> these reporters lobbied for each others' investigative stories, supported each others' initiatives, and were social friends outside the newsroom. Some, but few, were involved directly in political activities at the time — putting out a newsletter for the Medical Committee for Human Rights, organizing tenant unions, working with Operation PUSH (a black protest group), helping movement groups learn to use the press, feeding tips to the underground papers. But they had to do so covertly or with hesitancy, since direct involvement in these activities was a violation of the canons of "objective," "impartial" journalism which govern newspaper reporting. Many of the younger reporters, however, sympathized with the concerns of these social movements even if they were not directly involved, and disagreed with the professional socialization within journalism schools that emphasized the neutral, "on the sidelines" stance of the journalist.<sup>40</sup>

A number of journalists, in fact, traced the changes in their own political and professional outlook back to their experiences in covering the social protests of the period, in getting to know the civil rights, student, and anti-war movement leaders first-hand, as well as in being exposed to Chicago's ghetto conditions for the first time. They had, in other words, assimilated the point-of-view of their news sources. This is not unusual, as many studies of reporters have found, except that here the sources were not the powerful, institutional, and "official" elites that routinely get access to the media.

Two incidents in the 1970-71 period — two years after the 1968 convention violence — transformed this informal peer group culture into an attempt to institutionalize "newsroom democracy" at the bargaining table.

In July, 1970, morale was low in the *Sun-Times* newsroom. A truck strike had reduced ad revenues, the economy was in a downturn, overtime was almost cut

off, and rumors were circulating of big budget cuts. On July 6 the city editor told two reporters that they were being laid off, explaining that money was short. Word soon spread in the *Sun-Times* newsroom and immediately after deadline the staff walked off the newsroom into a large meeting room adjacent to the newsroom. The Guild leaders demanded meetings with the editor and the publisher to protest the firings, to discuss the paper's financial future, and to develop on-going channels of communication between the staff and management, rather than the typical brief individual face-to-face meetings between one reporter and one editor, usually over a developing story. Following an August 19 meeting with a Guild delegation, the editor (the publisher had refused to meet with them) agreed to set up periodic meetings with a Guild committee about news policy and the paper's economic condition, but reserved the right to make final decisions. The Guild unit chairperson said the meetings were intended to "give the Guild voice some authority in making of management decisions."

The *Chicago Journalism Review*, in covering this incident, fanned the flames by quoting publisher Marshall Field as saying, "As long as there's single ownership here, I'm running this paper." The article emphasized the need for journalists to have more day-to-day say in the operation of the paper. The same issue of the *Chicago Journalism Review* reported on the demands of news staffers at the *Minneapolis Tribune*, who had achieved "one minor victory — an advisory role for the staff in the appointment of assistant city editors . . . ." This was the first time that Chicago journalists had raised the issue of having a voice in the running of the paper — and now they realized they were not alone. It quoted a Minneapolis reporter as saying, "We're professionals, not clerks. Why shouldn't we be able to help run the paper?" An article on the journalist-controlled *Le Monde* was published soon after, entitled, "Toward a Non-Capitalist Journalism."<sup>41</sup> One of the newsroom activists later recalled that this incident brought about a "change in expectations" among both *Sun-Times* and *Daily News* staffers. The editor's image as a young progressive was tarnished. And it was clear that the expanding job market of the 1960's was over.

The next incident between the Field papers' news staffs and the management took place after both papers endorsed Mayor Richard Daley for re-election in mid-March of 1971. This endorsement triggered another round of activity in opposition to Field's policy. The staff was refused free space on the editorial page or an extended letter to the editor to rebut the papers' endorsement. The news staff then collected money (\$1,981) to place a full-page ad in both Field papers denouncing the endorsement of Daley as contrary to the interests of Chicago's citizens — and "inconsistent" with their own day-to-day observations as journalists of Chicago's streets and the papers' own editorial positions. They did this at some risk, since the editors threatened that any reporter with his or her name on the advertisement (and they insisted that all names must be

on the ad) could not cover politics in Chicago because he or she would have abandoned any impartiality and credibility.

Fortunately for the participants, most of the two papers' top, prize-winning reporters, including syndicated *Daily News* columnist Mike Royko, were in the leadership of this activity and signed the ad. So the editors' threat turned out to be empty. The staff thus learned something about solidarity. In the ad, they called themselves "Concerned Newsmen and Women." Approximately 85 percent of the editorial staffs of the two papers signed the ad, from copyboy to assistant managing editor. (Both the *Tribune* and *Chicago Today* — the former *American* — also endorsed Mayor Daley. No similar protest emerged on the *Tribune* for two reasons: the staff was more cautious and conservative in the first place, and it also lacked any organized union to protect them. *Today* gave its staff space on the editorial page for a counter-endorsement of Daley's opponent.)<sup>42</sup>

In interpreting this incident, the *Chicago Journalism Review* wrote the following:

None of this is especially revolutionary, except in the sense that more such acts are bound to follow (e.g., when Marshall Field decides next year to endorse Spiro Agnew's boss for re-election), and each makes it more difficult for the profession to perpetuate the non-sensical notion that a reporter is a non-human creature who understands everything and believes nothing.

The story went on:

In fact, the news media have been deeply committed, almost always on the side of the powers that be. Our "objective" reporting is like the "objective" scholarship of social scientists who study the powerless on behalf of the powerful . . . . If the public had not been bamboozled in the first place by our own propaganda, there would be no problem and no need for a solution.<sup>43</sup>

Another story in that issue suggested that reporters be consulted when editorials were written, and reviewed several misguided editorials as evidence.<sup>44</sup>

The incident over the Daley endorsement boosted morale in the newsrooms and no doubt accelerated and crystallized anti-management sentiment. The incident also received nationwide publicity in major newspapers and journalism periodicals.

These two incidents — confronting management on the firing of two reporters (management agreed not to fire them) and confronting management on its endorsement of Daley — set the stage for the "newsroom democracy" efforts.

During the previous two years, several of the activists had been elected officers of the local Guild unit. Guild contract negotiations were about to begin in January 1972 and so a Guild meeting was scheduled for November 18, 1971, to discuss contract proposals. Three days earlier eleven young staffers — ten reporters and one copy clerk — held an informal meeting at a

local bar to discuss what they called "voice in product" proposals which they would raise at the Guild meeting. Their initial proposals included the following:

1. Any reporter criticized or faulted in letters to the editor has the right to respond to the letter, in print, on the editorial page.
2. The Guild shall have one-third voting membership on the papers' editorial board and editorial conferences (at which editorial policies are made).
3. A Guild committee shall meet weekly with editors to discuss news policy and special assignments.
4. Editorial and news staff are exempt from doing promotion articles, such as the gift guide, the auto guide, and advertisements.
5. If either paper is to be sold the Guild and/or employees shall have the first option to buy it.
6. If either paper is to be sold, editorial staffs must approve by 51 percent any proposed sale and purchaser.
7. The news staff shall have veto power over the appointment of department heads.
8. Interpretative reporting by beat reporters is to be encouraged.
9. Guild members shall be on a committee to appraise the percentage of the paper used for news vs. ads to find ways to expand the space allotted to news.

The activists mobilized support and got these proposals approved by the larger Chicago Guild meeting three days later and hammered them out more systematically. But they met one roadblock.<sup>45</sup>

Any new proposals had to be approved by the International Executive Board of the Newspaper Guild. The staff raised money to send members to an International Executive Board meeting in Washington, D.C., to lobby for their "voice in product" proposals — a radical departure in Guild negotiations. In making their case, they said:

These proposals would allow a newspaper's staff to influence major decisions that affect the paper or the staff instead of leaving these important issues solely in the hands of a single person who often is a businessman lacking both journalistic experience and journalistic goals . . . . We believe that the day has long gone when the journalist's interest in a newspaper is limited to a weekly paycheck. A journalist now is interested in the paper's editorial page positions, its news

policies, its hiring policies and its integrity and fairness. In short, journalists are interested in how a newspaper measures up to its public responsibilities.<sup>46</sup>

They met a mixed reception from the International Executive Board. It rejected the proposals that gave journalists the right to veto the sale of the paper to a third party or to give the Guild members an option to buy the paper. This upset the traditional labor-management set-up with which most International Executive Board members were comfortable. They did approve, however, the other proposals which gave employees a voice in day-to-day news policy decision-making. Journalists around the nation were looking at Chicago as a testing ground for democratizing the newsroom.

Back in Chicago, they faced the obstacle of the Field management, which was adept at the bargaining table. Field's new vice-president for labor relations prolonged negotiations for more than a year. The first blush of enthusiasm for the "voice" demands began to weaken. The anti-"voice" (predominantly older) staffers split from the pro-"voice" ones, feeling that "newsroom democracy" proposals were getting in the way of improving fringe benefits and retirement packages. The management used this wedge to its own advantage. Midway in the negotiations, the *Sun-Times* and *Daily News* units of the Guild held elections. All the advocates of "newsroom democracy" were defeated. The new officers cut back the membership of the negotiating committee, dropping the pro-"newsroom democracy" activists. The contract then went into arbitration. There, nothing came of any of the proposals. Field made one minor concession, giving a reporter the right to withhold his/her byline from a story if the article is changed by an editor in a the reporter disapproves. The contract was signed in November 1972 — one year after the initial meeting — with little evidence of the efforts to achieve more direct participation by journalists in newsroom decisions.

### THREE REASONS FOR FAILURE

The "newsroom democracy" movement was short-lived. The following year, and thereafter, none of the proposals reappeared. A few years later, in September 1975, the *Chicago Journalism Review* folded.

Why did the movement fail? While some part of the failure can be attributed to peculiarities of the Chicago situation, the more plausible explanations focus on a different level, since other journalists experienced similar lack of success. I shall explore three related reasons.

1. Whereas in the 1930's the Guild sought with some success to organize other non-unionized newspaper workers, the "newsroom democracy" activists made no effort to enlist the support of other newspaper employees. The newsroom staff had been increasingly isolated from other departments in the newspaper. As on most papers, they are on different floors in the newspaper building. Increased size and specialization of tasks has further removed the journalist from any ongoing familiarity with persons in these other departments. Even more important, the different divisions of the newspaper are represented by different unions. At the

1975 *Sun-Times/Daily News*, for example, different unions represented the auto mechanics, the mailers, the paper handlers, the stereotypers, the printers, the pressmen, the drivers, the machinists, the photoengravers, and the journalists. Over the years, these unions have not been particularly supportive of each other during contract negotiations and strikes. ITU printers as well as non-unionized journalists crossed pressmen's picket lines in a 1912 strike in Chicago.<sup>47</sup> A violent two-year strike against the two Hearst papers in 1938-40 failed, in part, because the Guild had no support from the printers' union and the paper kept publishing with strikebreakers.<sup>48</sup> An ITU strike in 1947 did not stop the presses; the papers used other means to publish and newsroom employees continued to work. Many Chicago newspeople — journalists and printers — recalled these events and continued to harbor grievances against their fellow employees in different departments. Part of the legacy of hostility stems from the fact that the ITU was an AFL union and bitterly opposed the CIO-affiliated Guild. During the 1930's, when newspaper management was trying to bust the Guild, the AFL sought to impose its own editorial-workers "company" union.

Another reason for the hostility is that the different departments faced different rates of technological change. Production workers had been facing, and resisting, automation since the 1950's. Newspaper management blamed the printers' union for high production costs and for the death of many urban newspapers, most visibly in New York City during the 1960's. Journalists, who were not to face a computerized newsroom until the 1970's, scapegoated the ITU for the loss of jobs. In addition, the tempo of newswork is quite different from that of other departments in the newspaper. Production workers, mailers, advertising and circulation workers, and others operate on a routine schedule, but the newsroom's pace is dictated by the flow of events, which cannot be so routinely predicted and scheduled.<sup>49</sup> The newsroom's need to accommodate to the production department's routine tempo creates conflicts of its own on a day-to-day basis.

Even if the journalists had been willing to strike over the "voice" proposals (which is unlikely), they would not have had the support of other workers on the paper. The journalists viewed themselves as "professionals," whose education and expertise gave them a right to control their work process; but they had little interest in extending and sharing the decision-making, or in seeking support from other employees — the unionized production workers, mailers, and drivers, or non-unionized office workers in the advertising and circulation departments.

This lack of concern has considerable drawbacks. Newspaper managements are developing ways to circumvent work stoppages by employees in most departments. For example, they have established a center in Oklahoma (the Southern Production Program, Inc.) to train non-union personnel in pressroom operations. This was used during a violent strike of pressmen, photoengravers, and mailers at the *Washington Post* in 1975. Most newsroom employees defied the local Guild and crossed the picket line. A year earlier, the Guild had gone on strike but had permitted the other unions to work. The union had expected that the *Post*, without its highly-acclaimed journalistic talent and its advertising

staff, would soon cave in. But by using management personnel (and some strikebreakers) in place of Guild members, the *Post* had continued to publish without losing much circulation.<sup>50</sup>

Management has been able, in other words, to circumvent unionized employees and to divide the numerous unions within the newspaper industry. The Guild, as *Business Week* pointed out, is in an increasingly weak bargaining position. This was evident during a Guild strike at the *New York Daily News* in May 1978:

Because automatic equipment and computers have replaced newspaper craftsmen and weakened their unions, the muscle of the Guild now depends on the unpredictable allegiance of the driver-distributors of the papers. Only when deliverers joined the recent *Daily News* strike — after two days of continuing to drive — did the paper cease publishing.<sup>51</sup>

The elitism of many journalists, especially those in the big cities, serves to isolate them further from the craft unions and other employees. To make matters worse, a "glut" of journalism school graduates during the early 1970's further weakens the bargaining position of journalists.

The "voice" advocates in Chicago had lukewarm support within their own newsrooms. There was also no attempt to develop alliances with other newspaper unions and employees. Structural and historical conditions had isolated journalists (and the Guild) from the other employees. Management understood the "voice" advocates' isolation better than they did themselves.

The Guild's weakness would later be even more obvious. In 1974, the Tribune Company folded the afternoon paper, *Chicago Today*. In 1978, Field Enterprises folded its afternoon daily, the *Chicago Daily News*. Ironically, if the International Guild had approved the Chicago Guild's request to bargain for the right to buy the paper (and if the Guild had won that far-reaching demand — which probably would have necessitated a strike), many jobs would have been saved. As it happened, the Guild was helpless to stop Field management from laying off *Sun-Times* workers and replacing them with employees from the *Daily News* after the latter had folded.

2. In addition, the Guild activists made no attempt to bring their case to the "consumers" of news — the readers.

During the 1938-40 strike in Chicago, the Guild — aided by other CIO unions — organized a consumer boycott of the papers' advertisers. Eventually this forced one of the two Hearst papers to fold because of declining advertising revenues. This was a mixed blessing, but by actively enlisting the support of readers and other unionists, the Guild had strengthened its own bargaining position.

The "newsroom democracy" activists of the recent past made no such efforts to try to link their desire for more control over newsroom decisions with readers' concerns over news policy or with the lack of access to the news media of powerless groups in Chicago. The dailies, of course, did not report the continual negotiations or try to explain the "voice" demands to their readers. The *Chicago Journalism Review* was read

primarily by journalists, intellectuals, and politicians. This was a source of considerable frustration among the more radical *Review* activists. (Several of them began a monthly magazine, the *Chicago Free Press*, to reach working-class readers, but it folded in less than a year.)

For the most part, the activist journalists thought of themselves as "advocates" for the powerless — but they had no notion of making structural changes in the way in which powerless groups are denied routine access to the press, and no notion of making the press accountable to its readers.

Journalists have even less direct contact with their "clients" (the readers) than do most professionals. Radical social workers and welfare recipients, radical lawyers and their clients, radical doctors and patients, radical planners and community groups, and so on, all have at least the potential for a professional-client alliance, a basic tenet of the "radicals in the professions" movement. But journalists have no mechanism for back or accountability from the mass readership about their performance. In fact, according to one journalism text, "on the whole it is remarkable how little journalists think about their audiences and how little they know about the people who will read or see their work."<sup>52</sup> Their readers are diffuse and constantly shifting. This lack of contact with and knowledge about their readership often leads journalists to identify more closely with their news sources with whom they have ongoing contact and feedback.<sup>53</sup> In addition, journalists might be called on the carpet by management if they engage in community activities that would, in management's eyes, create the appearance of abandoning their "impartiality" and "objectivity." This further insulates them from the mass audience. (This is not such a problem, of course, for journalists on "underground," "movement," or other publications directed at an audience of like-minded partisans.)

Thus, in both a structural and ideological way, journalists on daily papers are isolated from readers. This is a dilemma for journalists which is not easily overcome, even by those who see themselves as "advocates" for a segment of the population.

3. The "newsroom democracy" advocates lacked any sense of long-range strategy. They mobilized a small group of fellow journalists, but they lacked patience and gave up after a short period when their demands for a "voice" were not met. This was partly a result of their political inexperience. Unlike other segments of the "radicals in the professions" movement, few of the activist journalists had been radicals prior to either the 1968 convention riots, their employment on a daily paper, or their contact as journalists with leaders of the protest movements they covered. This suggests another distinction between journalism and other professions. Journalism, as we noted earlier, did not attract many activists or persons who, according to studies, are predisposed to become activists. The journalism schools of the 1950's and 1960's, from which most young journalists were recruited, were not centers of protest activity during the 1960's. Indeed, it is suggestive to note that most of the activists on the *Chicago Journalism Review* and among the "voice" proponents had not majored in journalism in college. Most studied other subjects (although many worked on their college papers) and decided to enter journalism after gradua-

tion, while doing another kind of work or while in graduate school. In this way, at least, they were not typical of their journalist cohort. The activist journalists were latecomers to "the movement." Indeed, one of them even suggested, somewhat harshly, that "few of these reporters were real movement people. They were not really radicals, but people attracted by the trendiness of the movement."

For whatever reasons, few of the activist journalists stayed for the "long march" through journalism's institutions. One, as we noted, was fired when he published a story in the *Review* that was originally written for the *Sun-Times*. A few others quit in frustration when stories they wrote for their papers were "spiked" or severely edited for obviously "political" reasons. Some of these found jobs in journalism, but others left the profession altogether or tried to make it as freelance writers. Other *Review* and "voice" advocates simply went on to other journalistic career opportunities.

Part of the strategic failure can be attributed to the kind of people who were attracted to the movement. But one must also point out that while their "revolt" was perhaps more ephemeral than those in other professions, the other segments of the "radicals in the professions" movement did not fare much better. The journalists' failure must be seen primarily as part of the decline of the larger political movement outside the newspaper industry. By 1972 the anti-war and black movements, the demands for "participatory democracy" on campuses and "community control" in the ghettos, and thus the impetus for the journalists' challenge to management's authority, had withered.

Ross has shown (with reference to advocate planners) that the connection with a larger social movement is crucial for sustaining the idealism which gives the movement its radical thrust.<sup>54</sup> Without it, such activities turn into narrow "professionalism" — more control for its own sake. Leaders are more easily discouraged, outside resources (such as the foundation grants that underwrote the *Review*) are more difficult to obtain, and members get less social support for their activities. The people who started the *Review* and those that formed the leadership nucleus of the "voice" activities devoted a great deal of time, outside their working hours, to these activities. As people quit their jobs, were fired, or simply "burned out," it became more difficult for those who remained to sustain the momentum and their commitment to radical change within the profession. The activists were not only colleagues on the job, but friends outside of work. When this began to crumble, the networks of social support that all social movements need to survive broke down as well.

## CONCLUSION

The failure of the journalists' worker-control efforts in Chicago was mirrored in other cities as well. "Causes" and "cabals" demanding more voice in newsroom decisions, which had emerged in most major cities, soon disappeared; none of them went as far as the Chicago activists in seeking to institutionalize these demands through collective bargaining. Most of the local journalism reviews faded as well. Those that continue to publish have, for the most part, turned into slick magazines and/or gossip sheets for the news community, rather than tools for raising issues of control, media

access, racism and sexism, hiring practices, the media's business ties, and so on. The only review that continues the *Review's* early thrust, *More*, did so by expanding into a national publication instead of remaining a New York-oriented review; in mid-1978, however, it was unclear whether *More* would stay alive.

The Newspaper Guild has continued to fall behind in organizing journalists on the burgeoning suburban papers, has done little to halt the decline of newspapers in big cities, and has made no subsequent efforts to push for a "voice" in industry decision-making. Almost out of desperation, it has begun merger talks with several craft unions in the newspaper industry which, like the newsroom workers, face lay-offs due to technological innovations. Whether such mergers will strengthen the Guild, particularly after several years of bargaining weakness, is unclear.<sup>55</sup> The Guild faced a political crisis in 1972 when its International Executive Board voted to endorse George McGovern for President. This illustrates the generally liberal sympathies of the Guild, since that election year many unions remained neutral or backed Nixon. But even though the vast majority of members were no doubt McGovern supporters, many of them felt that the endorsement jeopardized their "neutrality" as journalists. This points out the very ambivalent role of the Guild as both a part of the labor movement and as an organization of professional journalists, a dilemma that the Guild has faced since its founding.<sup>56</sup> The Guild did not endorse a candidate in 1976.

Although the journalists' movement failed to institutionalize democratic control structures, there is no doubt that some of the more aggressive investigative reporting of the 1970's can be attributed both to the shifting norms among American journalists and to the activities of the various reform movements (consumer, environmental, community organizing) and insurgencies (military, feminist, labor) that have emerged. At the national level, exposés about the energy crisis, CIA involvement in foreign countries, conflict of interest between government officeholders and corporate business, and the Watergate scandal received widespread attention, spearheaded by the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. In Chicago, the *Sun-Times* and the increasingly aggressive *Tribune* undertook investigations of police brutality, corruption among politicians close to Mayor Daley, and other scandals, although they continued to avoid emphasis on corporate abuses.

The growing popularity of investigative and muckraking journalism (the "Woodstein" effect) should not be overestimated, however. These efforts, while leading to considerable publicity and numerous awards to the reporters and newspapers involved, are few and far between. Moreover, they rarely attempt to examine the underlying institutional linkages among corporate expansion, the role of the state in fostering capital accumulation and economic concentration, and the resulting problems of underemployment, inflation, unsafe workplaces, poverty, racism, and sexism. More often, news-feature stories, and columnists such as Jimmy Breslin and Mike Royko, will focus on the "human" side of

institutional problems (e.g., an unemployed ghetto youth, a middle class family burdened by inflation, a woman afraid to walk the streets at night, a senior citizen unable to pay utility bills in winter). By focusing on the "little guy," the victims of political and economic decisions, they allow readers to identify, but fail to search for social causes or solutions other than to "throw the rascals out." The investigative reporting mostly focuses on personal corruptions (e.g., Bert Lance) or bureaucratic "abuses" (e.g., some of OSHA's petty regulations).

On a day-to-day basis, newspapers continue to operate primarily to deliver audiences to advertisers rather than to deliver news to readers. Newspapers have gotten "fatter," but almost all the increase is due to larger advertising budgets. Papers still devote only about one-quarter of their total space to non-advertising matter and much of that consists of comics, "people" sections, advice and entertainment columns, and what Bagdikian described as "special sections" that are mostly appalling fluff-puffery accompanying food, real estate, or clothing ads — providing the subscriber with uncritical promotional information.<sup>57</sup> Newspapers' "objectivity" still emphasizes the trivial and surface facts. Despite the growing interest in investigative journalism, most daily journalism still involves "civic housekeeping" and "official" news coverage.

Thus the "newsroom democracy" movement had a noticeable, if limited, impact. It helped to open up a period of critical self-assessment within the profession of journalism. It gave credibility to an alternative set of professional norms ("advocacy" or "participatory" journalism) that is reflected in both the daily and the alternative press. It also provided a context in which various "whistle-blowers" in public, semi-public, and private institutions could provide "leaks" to sympathetic journalists about various violations of the public interest. In many cases, these anonymous informants were other "radicals in the professions" who found that they could not achieve the humanitarian goals of their profession while working within those institutions.

In its impact, the "newsroom democracy" movement paralleled similar efforts among other segments of the "radicals in the professions" movement. All of them found that they were frustrated in achieving structural reforms. Part of the reason can be in the fact that they occupied an ambiguous role in the class structure: what the Ehrenreichs have called the "professional managerial class" and what Wright has called a "contradictory class location."<sup>58</sup> Despite somewhat different emphases, both concepts suggest that this sector occupies a position antagonistic to both the capitalist class and to the working class. This ambiguous social role works itself out in different ways according to the profession and institution involved. But in all cases, the "radicals in the professions" found that in addition to their conflicts with the owning and controlling class they faced considerable dilemmas in forging ongoing alliances with "clients." This was the case with advocate planners and community groups,<sup>59</sup> radical health professionals and patients,<sup>60</sup> law collectives and poor clients,<sup>61</sup> social workers and welfare recipients,<sup>62</sup> and radical teachers

and students and community residents.

Journalists faced this dilemma in perhaps a more complex way than other members of the mass intelligentsia. They occupy somewhat privileged positions within institutions whose major functions are to make a profit and to promote capitalist ideology. More than other major institutions, the news media rank very low in public trust and esteem and have been losing ground since the 1960's, according to public opinion polls. To the working class in general, and to participants in protest movements in particular, journalists are viewed as representatives of these institutions. (This was an ongoing and excruciating dilemma for radical journalists who were sympathetic to the 1960's protest movements but could only provide minimal access for their perspective.) More than most other professionals, journalists have no ongoing contact with their "clients." Other workers on the newspaper itself view journalists as closer to management in pay, prestige, and autonomy. Compared with pressmen, clericals, drivers, and printers, journalists clearly have more direct involvement with the creation of the most visible product of the newspaper, the "news" itself.

Yet journalists do not themselves control the apparatus of ideological production. Nor do they have any direct authority over other workers. On a day-to-day level, journalists do not experience very much direct interference, as we have seen. Their situation is analogous to others in the professional-managerial class (for example, schoolteachers). Their control over immediate tasks is hardly the same as real autonomy; the larger institution imposes routines that are beyond their immediate control.

The dilemmas faced by the "newsroom democracy" movement should be seen in this theoretical context. As both disseminators of capitalist ideology and workers within the newspaper's overall production process, journalists occupy a social position antagonistic to both the capitalist class (newspaper owners) and to the working class (readers, other newspaper workers). These boundaries are not easily crossed, especially when the journalists themselves are divided over their class and professional loyalties. The movement was unable to resolve these dilemmas, to form the necessary alliances that would guarantee their own success as well as benefit readers and/or other newspaper employees.

One of the lessons of the activist journalist movement is that journalism reflects the struggles and structure of power in the society at large. The "muckracking" journalism period of Lincoln Steffens, Ida Tarbel, Upton Sinclair, and others accompanied the Progressive Era reform movements. The initiatives of the Newspaper Guild took place in the context of the industrial union movement in the Depression. The "newsroom democracy" movement corresponded with the New Left and the "radicals in the professions" protests. Periods of critical journalism and journalistic activism correspond to social conflicts and movements of which journalists feel a part and to which the news media must respond to maintain their legitimacy. "News," in other words, reflects the relations of power within and outside the newsroom.

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## FOOTNOTES

1. Richard Flacks, *Youth And Social Change* (Chicago: Markham, 1971), p. 118.
2. Barbara and Al Haber, "Getting By With a Little Help From Our Friends," in J. David Colfax and Jack L. Roach, eds., *Radical Sociology* (New York: Basic Books, 1971), p. 388.
3. Robert Perrucci, "In the Service of Man: Radical Movements in the Professions," in Joel Gerstl and Glenn Jacobs, eds., *Professions for the People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1978), p. 215.
4. The debate over the psychological origins of student protest resulted in a wide-ranging literature. For contrasting views see Lewis A. Feuer, *Conflict of Generations* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), and Richard Flacks, "The Liberated Generation: An Exploration of the Roots of Student Protest," *Journal of Social Issues* 23 (July 1967).
5. Richard Flacks, "Young Intelligentsia in Revolt," in Dennis Wrong and Harry L. Gracey, eds., *Readings in Introductory Sociology* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 478.
6. For an outline of the "new working class" perspective see Bogdan Deritch, "The New Left and the New Working Class," in Colfax and Roach, op. cit. The "mass intelligentsia" view, very similar to the "new working class" perspective, is found in Flacks, "Young Intelligentsia in Revolt." The "professional-managerial class" view is of more recent vintage. While sympathetic to the New Left's outlook and activities, it is critical of the "new working class" perspective as well as of the more orthodox Marxist approach which views the New Left as a "petty bourgeois" movement. See Barbara and John Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," *Radical America* 11 (March-April 1977), and "The New Left and the Professional-Managerial Class," *Radical America* 11 (May-June 1977).
7. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), pp. 403-404.
8. Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 78.
9. Ben Bagdikian, "Newspaper Mergers — The Final Phase," *Columbia Journalism Review*, March/April 1977; "The Media Monopolies," *The Progressive*, June 1978; Bruce Owen, *Economics and Freedom of Expression* (Cambridge, Mass: Ballinger, 1975); Martin Slieden, *Who Controls the Mass Media?* (New York: Basic Books, 1974) and "After A Rush to Take-Over, New Worries About 'Press Lords,'" *U.S. News & World Report*, January 24, 1977.
10. Glenn K. Hirsch, "Only You Can Prevent Ideological Hegemony: The Advertising Council and Its Place in the American Power Structure," *Insurgent Sociologist* 5 (Spring 1975); Howard J. Ehrlich, "The Politics of News Media Control," in Alan Weiss, ed., *Mass Media and Society* (Palo Alto, Calif.: Mayfield, 1975); and Peter Dreier, "The Newspaper Industry and the Corporate Economy" (forthcoming, 1979).
11. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 220.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
13. Alan Wolfe, *The Seamy Side of Democracy* (New York: David McKay, 1973).
14. Stuart Hood, *The Mass Media* (London: Macmillan, 1972); and Svennik Hoyer, Stig Hadenius, and Lennart Weibull, *The Politics and Economics of the Press: A Developmental Perspective* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Professional Papers in Contemporary Political Sociology, 1975).
15. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35 (Winter 1972).
16. For a debate on this issue between Nicos Poulantzas and Ralph Miliband, see "The Problem of the Capitalist State," in Robin Blackburn, ed., *Ideology in Social Science* (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp. 238-262.
17. John Johnstone, Edward Slawski, and William Bowman, *The Newspeople* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), and Edward Epstein, *News from Nowhere* (New York: Random House, 1973).
18. Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organized Social Action," in Wilbur Schram, ed., *Mass Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960).
19. Sigelman shows how two newspapers in the same city that consistently slanted the news in different directions attracted and hired staffers that agreed with the particular paper's bias. Lee Sigelman, "Reporting the News: An Organizational Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (July 1973), pp. 132-151. The same pattern was certainly true of Chicago's papers during the 1960's.
20. The subtle process of newsroom socialization was first described in the now-classic article by Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom," *Social Forces* 33 (May 1955), pp. 328-35.
21. Miliband, op. cit., pp. 238.
22. Herbert Gans, "The Famine in Mass Communications Research," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (January, 1972). See also Jeremy Tunstall, *Journalists at Work* (London: Constable, 1971).



22. A well-documented study of the "official" bias of news reporting is found in Leon Sigal, *Reporters and Officials* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1973). Also see David Palentz, Peggy Reichart, and Barbara McIntyre, "How the Media Support Local Government Authority," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 35 (Spring 1971), pp. 80-92.
23. The ways in which "objective" journalism leads to "strategic rituals" of newsgathering can be found in Bernard Roshko, *Newsmaking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); and Gaye Tuchman, "Objectivity as Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity," *American Journal of Sociology* 77 (January 1972), pp. 680-79, and "Making News by Doing Work," *American Journal of Sociology* 79 (July 1973), pp. 110-31. The evolution of the journalistic norm of objectivity can be found in Michael Schudson, "The Origins of Objectivity as an Ideology in Journalism" (unpublished paper, December 1975); Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press, 1922); and Roshko, *op. cit.*
24. Howard Becker introduced the notion of a "hierarchy of credibility" in "Whose Side Are We On?" *Social Problems* 14 (Winter 1967).
25. For a history of American journalism, as well as a discussion of its critics, see: Edwin Emery, *The Press and America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Lee Brown, *The Reluctant Reformation* (New York: David McKay, 1974); Alfred McC. Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1937); and James Aronson, *Deadline for the Media* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972).
26. On the origins and history of the American Newspaper Guild, see Daniel J. Leab, *A Union of Individuals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); and San Kuczian, "History of the American Newspaper Guild" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1972).
27. From interviews with former Chicago journalists, archival materials, and participant observation at Chicago's two morning newspapers for the author's Ph.D. dissertation, "The Urban Press in Transition: The Political Economy of Newswork" (University of Chicago, 1976). Also see the two studies in footnote 26, and Barry Kritzberg, "An Unfinished Chapter in White-Collar Unionism: The Formative Stages of the Chicago Newspaper Guild," *Labor History* 14 (Summer 1973).
28. From the Chicago Newspaper Guild archives and the Ben Meyers papers at the Chicago Historical Society (Meyers was the Chicago Newspaper Guild's lawyer).
29. Kuczian, *op. cit.*, and James Aronson, *The Press and The Cold War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).
30. Kuczian, *op. cit.*
31. Much has been written about this trend, but see the books by Emery and Roshko.
32. Harvey Molotch and Marilyn Lester, "News as Purposive Behavior: On the Strategic Use of Routine Events, Accidents and Scandals," *American Sociological Review* 39 (February 1974), pp. 101-12.
33. Empirical evidence on the shifting social and educational backgrounds of the journalism workforce is found in Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, *op. cit.* The debate over the need for and substance of professional journalism education can be found in the proceedings of a conference sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association, *Education for Newspaper Journalists in the Seventies and Beyond* (Reston, Virginia: ANPA 1973); and in Ben H. Bagdikian, "Woodstein U.," *The Atlantic*, March 1977. Journalism magazines paid a great deal of attention to the emergence of the "new" journalism, "advocacy" journalism, and other critiques of objective norms. For example Norman Chermis, "How to Handle the New Breed of Activist Reporters," *Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, May 1970, and Jerry Ackerman, "Editors Weight Two Sides of Militancy in Newsroom," *Editor and Publisher*, November 14, 1970.
34. Tunstall, *op. cit.*, and Timothy Crouse, *The Boys on the Bus* (New York: Ballantine, 1973).
35. John Johnstone discusses the trend toward larger, more bureaucratic newspapers in "Organizational Constraints on Newswork" (unpublished paper, January 1975).
36. Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-32.
37. Robert W. Bennett, "Media Concentration and the FCC: Focusing with a Section Seven Lens," *Northwestern University Law Review* 66 (May/June 1971), pp. 159-98, discusses the concentration of advertising revenues within Chicago-area news media.
38. A great deal has been written about the Chicago convention violence and its news media coverage. A well-documented two-volume study is James A. Flannery, "Chicago Newspapers' Coverage of the City's Major Civil Disorders of 1968" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1971).
39. Much of traditional industrial sociology was concerned with the development of informal work norms and peer pressures within workplaces as barriers to efficiency and productivity. More recent work in this area has viewed these activities as forms of "resistance" to arbitrary authority, and as precursors of more disciplined and organized labor protest. See Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973); Jeremy Brecher, *Strike* (San Francisco: Straight Arrow Press, 1972); and Bill Watson, "Counter-Planning on the Shop Floor," *Radical America* (May/June 1971). In the case under discussion it is clear that the informal peer group culture among "participant" journalists in Chicago, and the two incidents of confrontation to be discussed next, set the stage for more organized efforts to gain newsroom democracy.
40. Haskell Wexler's film about the Chicago convention riots, "Medium Cool," gave credence to this activist/participant role of the journalist. The film was quite popular, and controversial, within Chicago journalism circles.
41. This incident is described in John Unstead, "Sun-Times Gets Kick in the Brass," *Chicago Journalism Review*, August 1970, and in "Unfl, Editor to Discuss Policy, Pads," *Guild Reporter*, September 11, 1970. The *Guild Reporter* is the union's biweekly newspaper. The incidents at the Minneapolis paper were described in Joel Havemann, "Mpls... Staff Wins, Loses; Mary Leave," *Chicago Journalism Review*, August 1970. That these articles were adjacent in the *Review* could not be lost on many readers. The article on *Le Monde* and an interview with Jean Schowebel, the leader of the worker-control movement in the French press, is
42. A union did exist at the *American* (in 1969 renamed *Chicago Today*), but the union, Chicago Editorial Associates, was widely recognized as a passive company union. It had been organized by the AFL during the 1938-40 CIO-Guild strike against the two Hearst papers in Chicago and remained after the paper was sold to the Tribune Company in 1956. The Tribune itself had successfully resisted all Guild efforts to organize the staff at that paper by a combination of careful hiring practices, self-selection to the conservative paper, and very paternalistic labor relations begun under publisher Col. Robert McCormick (who died in 1955) and continued by his successors.
43. Ron Dorfman, "The Great Endorsement Flap," *Chicago Journalism Review*, May 1971.
44. Dan Rottenberg, "Who is Best Qualified to Write Editorials?" *Chicago Journalism Review*, May 1971.
45. My account of these "voice" activities is taken from interviews with participants on all sides, issues of the *Chicago Journalism Review*, documents supplied by participants and by Justin McCarthy (executive director of the Chicago Newspaper Guild), and "Chicago's 'Voice' Demands OK'd," *Guild Reporter*, February 11, 1972.
46. From a letter to the Guild's International Executive Board by journalists Charles Lewis and Larry Finley, written on behalf of the Chicago Newspaper Guild, January 24, 1972.
47. Philip Tait, "The Limits of Labor Unity: The Chicago Newspaper Strike of 1912," *Labor History* 19 (Winter 1978), pp. 100-129.
48. See Kritzberg, *op. cit.*, and Barbara Newell, *Chicago and the Labor Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961).
49. Jeremy Tunstall, *op. cit.*, discusses how the "non-routine" schedule of the news-gathering process is rendered subordinate to the "routine" organizational needs of the advertising, production, and distribution departments.
50. Shirley Elder, "Journalists vs. The Unions at The Washington Post," *Columbia Journalism Review*, May/June 1976; and John Hanrahan and Chip Berist, "Washington Post: The Unions Are Running Scared," *MORE*, December 1977. It should be noted that conflict between the newsroom and production workers also exists at *Le Monde*. See Kerry Gruson, "Controlling the Press: The French Experience," *Working Papers*, Spring 1974. French law includes a "conscience clause" which allows journalists to resist writing stories that violate their political principles and to collect compensation if they leave a newspaper over such differences. In Italy, production workers have struck or slowed-down work at papers that print stories against the political stance of the printers' union.
51. "Unionized Papers Strike Back," *Business Week*, July 3, 1978. Also see Jon G. Udell, *The Economics of the American Newspaper* (New York: Hastings House, 1978), for a management-oriented analysis of newspaper labor relations.
52. W. Phillips Davison, James Boyton, and Frederick Yu, *Mass Media* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 92.
53. See Sigal, *op. cit.*, and Bernard Cohen, *The Press and Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). One attempt to deal with the question of press accountability is the idea of a press council, consisting of representatives of the press and of readers. Britain has had a national press council for many years. The Hutchins Report, *A Free and Responsible Press*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1947), recommended that a national press council be established, but the idea was not seriously considered until the spate of press criticism during the 1960's. At that time, professional journalism organizations and journalism schools, as well as the Newspaper Guild, helped set up community-based press councils in several small and medium-size cities. The problem with these councils is that the representatives of the press tend to be executives rather than working journalists; the representatives of the public tend to be local elites who may not be representative of the wider community; and the press' cooperation is purely voluntary. Also, complaints to the local councils tend to come from already organized and powerful interest groups. A National News Council was set up in 1973 but has faced very similar problems; indeed, a majority of the leading newspapers, including the *New York Times*, have refused to cooperate with it.
54. Robert Ross, "The Impact of Social Movements On a Profession in Process," *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 3 (November 1976); see also John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization* (Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press, 1973).
55. The assessment of changes in the journalism reviews is based on my own impressionistic overview of these publications. The failure of "reporter power," "advocacy journalism," or "newsroom democracy" efforts and the weakness of the Newspaper Guild come from the *Guild Reporter* and *Editor and Publisher* (the industry's weekly trade magazine) over the past ten years.
56. The Guild's "identity crisis" as a result of being both a labor union as well as an association of "neutral" journalists is discussed in Haynes Johnson, "The Newspaper Guild's Identity Crisis," *Columbia Journalism Review*, November/December 1972, and in Martin Arnold, "Reporting, Politics: Difficult Mixture," *New York Times*, August 31, 1975.
57. Ben Bagdikian, "Fat Newspapers and Thin Coverage," *Columbia Journalism Review*, September/October 1973.
58. Barbara and John Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*; Erik Wright, "Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies," *New Left Review*, No. 98, 1976.
59. Robert Goodman, *After the Planners* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971); Gordon Fellman and Barbara Brandt, *The Deceived Majority* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1973).
60. Rosemary Taylor, "Free Medicine," *Working Papers*, Fall 1976.
61. Robert L. Kidder, "Lawyers for the People," in Gerstl and Jacobs, *op. cit.*
62. Larry Hirschhorn, "The Political Meaning of Social Work," *Working Papers*, March/April 1978.