

Newspaper industry

PROBLEMS OF A FREE PRESS  
Industrial Relations in the  
Newspaper Industry

by  
Donald J. Wood

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
Section I -- An Economic Dilemma	1
Section II -- Responsible Union Leadership	12
Section III -- Personnel Relations	20
Section IV -- Industrial Relations Program	32
Section V -- Publisher Cooperation	44
Appendices	54
Bibliography	62

**SECTION I**

**AN ECONOMIC DILEMMA**

Newspaper publishers, operating a quasi-public institution, not only have the moral and social responsibility of adequately informing the public, but as operators of an economic enterprise also have the obligation of seeing that newspapers have profit stability.

The last thirty years have witnessed technical improvisations and great advances in the field of communications. Radio, the national news magazine and television are fighting for the individual's time, and have a profound effect upon the operation of the nation's newspapers.

Since the advent of modern journalism and the passing of personal journalism, newspaper publishers have been forced to pay more attention to the economics of newspaper publishing. Particularly has this been true in the last ten years. These economic conditions have helped to create a monopolistic press in many metropolitan cities; more than 90% of the cities in the United States have only one newspaper.

Modern business problems in the publishing industry have created a group of publishers who, at times, have shown more interest in the financial statement, than in the dissemination of news. Many publishers have become more concerned with the business than the societal objectives of newspaper publishing. While it must be admitted that newspapers must of necessity be dollar conscious, at no

time can newspaper proprietors omit their responsibility that they owe to themselves and to their readers to print the news.

The newspaper strikes during the past five years in Pittsburgh, Rochester and New York City emphasize the role that modern newspapers play in the life of a community. These strikes, where large cities were without their daily newspapers, taught the news-starved readers that a newspaper was a throbbing, living part of their daily lives, and that radio and television will never and can never fill the vacuum created by the absence of the daily press.

There have been many periods of American history in which international and domestic tension demanded an informed and educated public; most newspapers throughout the history of America have tried to answer this need.

Newspaper publishers still have the responsibility of producing a free press and of distributing that product to a free people . . . to help them remain free.

As newspapers enter the last half of the twentieth century, they are faced with serious problems affecting their chances of survival. Besides fighting for the advertising dollar against the inroads of radio, television and other media, newspapers have been forced to demand management principles that have long been a part of other industries. Modern newspapers to continue to serve their community must adopt a realistic business and industrial

relations program.

These are critical times for the newspaper industry, characterized by increased costs and diminishing returns.<sup>1</sup> All of the creative ability of newspaper business executives is being used to insure each newspaper's survival. Recent years have brought larger circulations, increased advertising revenue, and high subscription and per copy rates for most newspapers, yet the margin of profit has continually decreased during the last ten years.

The eighth annual cost study by Robert U. Brown, president and editor of Editor & Publisher, illustrates the newspapers' battle with rising costs. Reporting for four circulation groups of a composite daily, the survey showed that the average for all papers showed a 1.61% increase in revenue with a 3.01 increase in expenses for 1954.<sup>2</sup>

There is no bright outlook for increased revenue. Raising advertising and circulation rates is not the answer, for high subscription rates mean fewer readers . . . and an eventual abandonment of the newspaper's role as a mass medium. Nor is increased advertising rates the solution, for increased rates mean less linage, less work for employees and less interest for the reader. The answer to this dilemma is better production methods and a better industrial relations program.

The newspaper industry, financially, is a very sick industry. It is paying more for its labor and lack of productivity than any other industry. On the average, its wages are highest; its man hours of work run

the highest, and its fringe benefits are among the best in industry.<sup>3</sup>

### Labor Costs

Newspaper wages during the last ten years have increased more than 100% and the cost of newsprint in the same period has risen more than 110%, far exceeding the increased costs of labor and material in any industry. Labor costs today account for a high percentage of a newspaper's total operating expense. The second annual cost study of a daily newspaper reported that payroll expenses constituted 53.2% of all expenses, 4.6% higher than the previous year.<sup>4</sup> Another illustration is that in 1935, the New York Times payroll amounted to \$7,500,000, and in 1954 it was \$27,000,000.

The late William Randolph Hearst once said that efficiency is the best economy. Newspaper publishers and business leaders realize that this great publisher's words are truer today than ever before, and consequently are attempting to develop a policy of efficiency. Today's newspaper executives recognize that operating expenses must be trimmed, net revenue must be increased, and labor efficiency must be encouraged and promoted.

There are new horizons for newspapermen . . . horizons that must be conquered if the newspapers of the country are to survive in these critical days of the free press.

Each year newspaper publishing becomes more acute . . . each year more newspapers are forced to cease publication or to merge with other newspapers. During the past ten years the high cost of newsprint, labor and operating expenses have taken its toll of the newspapers of our land.

Great newspapers in Los Angeles, Brooklyn, New York City, Camden, San Diego, Oakland, Chicago, Birmingham, Washington and St. Louis, to name a few, have been forced to cease publication, because of the financial dilemma of newspapers in this second half of the twentieth century.

The point is that economic pressures in the industry, largely resulting from labor demands, have established a monopoly trend. Every time that a newspaper suspends publication, one more voice is silenced and there is less freedom of the press.

This is the economic picture of newspapers today; consolidations, suspensions, fewer newspapers, higher prices, higher production and labor costs. All of these factors are inter-related, and they signify the strong drift to a monopolistic press.

George C. Biggers, president of Atlanta Newspapers, emphasized this problem when he said:

The days of Henry Watterson and Henry Grady and other great editors who commanded a great readership among their admirers are gone. There are still great editors and fine writers but there are fewer newspapers . . . fewer newspapers but larger circulations.

The same economic forces that have made for great papers and larger circulations, he continued, have also forced the merger and consolidations of others. He recalled that thirty-three newspapers were started in 1949, and if history repeats itself, only thirteen of them will be in business in 1969. There were 598 new dailies started since 1930, and 373 of them have since merged or suspended.<sup>5</sup> In the last twenty-five years, 840 dailies have suspended or merged.

#### The Solution

In order to solve this economic dilemma, newspapers and newspaper unions must adopt a realistic co-existence program. Included are:

1. Responsible Union Leadership. Many of the unions which represent newspaper workers have a narrow and distorted conception of their responsibilities to their union members and to the industry. There must be a cultivation of the "business unionism" philosophy among newspaper labor leaders, and the abolition of restrictive and unreasonable contract terms.

As John S. Knight, editor and publisher of the Knight Newspapers, said recently:

There is a great need for newspapers and craft unions to join forces in a program of education, leading to basic economies in the production end of the business.<sup>6</sup>

It is his conception that more understanding cooperation between management and unions could conceivably lead to even greater wages. He condemned the fact that newspapers are steadily losing needed profits, because of restrictive labor clauses and "make work" practices. He continued:

I regret to say that too many newspaper trade unions are pursuing what seems to me to be a completely outmoded outlook on newspaper economics. This country became a great industrial and productive nation largely because of technical developments. Too many union leaders take a shortsighted view in adhering to restrictive labor practices, such as artificial shortages of labor supply, clauses in labor contracts, which tend to retard productivity, and which offset the faster production made possible by modern presses and other printing equipment. <sup>6</sup>

Mr. Knight said that he was not attempting to blame unions solely for the present conditions existing in the newspaper industry today, but

. . . much of it has been brought about by the publishers' woeful lack of knowledge of their own newspaper plants. This neglect is the back breaker that is causing many newspapers to be dangling dangerously near the survival cliff. <sup>6</sup>

2. A Modern and Realistic Personnel Relations Program. As J. Cleve Rumble of the Louisville Courier Journal said:

Newspapers must overcome their "sacred cow" point of view that the high degree of unionization in the newspaper industry precludes the need for personnel management and prevents any effective administration of the personnel function.

The newspaper industry is not so different or so unique that it cannot learn from studying the experiences of other industries. <sup>7</sup>

He continued:

Somehow we must overcome the thought that the presence of unions prevents our doing anything about considering the individual. Somehow we must learn to tap the individual's willingness to work. Somehow we must learn how to create individual loyalty and trust and by that I do not mean to imply the weaning of the individual from the union. Somehow we must help the individual employee meet some of the major problems which interfere with his adaptation to modern industrial life . . . All of this must be done in a way that respects the personal dignity of the employee without a paternalistic spirit.

3. An Aggressive and Intelligent Industrial Relations Program. Labor relations have too long been an orphan among newspaper publishers . . . a necessary evil that does not command the same attention as other business problems.

Publishers, in most cases, have been unwilling to sit down with craft unions, and in most negotiations have entered conferences unprepared with facts to conduct intelligent negotiations.

An aggressive industrial relations program includes a genuine acceptance of unionism and collective bargaining, consultative management, a communications program and the avoidance of paternalism. Only by such a business philosophy can industrial strife in the newspaper industry be replaced by industrial peace.

4. Closer Publisher Cooperation. The newspaper industry has not generated publisher cooperation to solve the labor relations problems and to introduce technological

changes. Many of the restrictive practices and generous contract provisions have resulted because newspaper publishers have not created a united front.

In recent years state and city publishers' associations have attempted to solve this problem, but still have been whip-sawed into signing unreasonable contracts, and when one newspaper signs in a community, the others, because of competitive reasons, must also sign.

This dilemma has produced newspaper agreements unimaginable in other industries.

## References

1. See Appendix D.
2. Editor & Publisher, April 16, 1955, p. 7
3. Robert Bassett, former Hearst Labor Counsel, and now publisher of the Milwaukee Sentinel, at the Newspaper Personnel Relations Association Convention, as quoted in Editor & Publisher, May 14, 1949, pp.9-70.
4. Editor & Publisher, April 9, 1955, p. 14
5. Editor & Publisher, December 20, 1952, p. 9
6. Editor & Publisher, October 4, 1952, pp.7-58
7. The Monthly NewsLetter of the Newspaper Personnel Relations Association, April, 1953.

**SECTION II.**

**RESPONSIBLE UNION LEADERSHIP**

Throughout the history of collective bargaining union leaders have assumed many different roles in their association with management. They may think of their function as one of a protest organization, which is designed to fight the company and to contest all kinds of managerial authority and prerogative. At the other extreme, they may act in the role as a partner with management seeking to increase output and improve efficiency, realizing that they have a stake in the success of the company.

In most cases, union leaders consider their function as one of policing or regulating the company, protecting the interest of the workers they represent.

Past history indicates that in most cases newspaper union leaders have accepted the militant philosophy of unionism. They have not realized that they must be concerned with the economic welfare of the individual newspaper. The great number of mergers and consolidations, the rapid increase of wage rates in the newspaper industry seem to indicate that unions do not have a realistic conception that they, the union and the union members, are dependent upon the economic success of the company and the industry.

Whether this attitude is dictated by mismanagement in the newspaper industry, or because of lack of foresight by union leaders, or a combination of both, it does appear, however, that newspaper management and labor

unions can do many things to bring industrial peace to the newspaper industry. It is a truism, also, that labor leaders representing newspaper workers do not have a philosophy of labor relations that is conducive to the economic success of the modern newspaper.

Although the number of newspaper strikes<sup>1</sup> have been less than in other industries dominated by militant unionism, one cannot say that the collective bargaining relationship of newspaper and newspaper unions is one of industrial harmony.

For industrial peace to exist, union leaders and management must be willing to work actively together; they must make an attempt to increase the effectiveness of the organization and to increase the human development and satisfaction of each and every employee.

While industrial peace allows for industrial conflict dominated by democratic action, the philosophy of newspaper unions has developed a system of collective property rights in all jobs, which protects and improves its members' positions at the expense of the economics of modern newspaper publishing. Newspaper unions have achieved the complete unionization of their crafts with a virtual closed shop and union.

Although it is readily admitted that unions by their very nature are a protest and a pressure group, management and unions do have some common interests.

Union leaders have refused to accept the fact that they have a legal and a moral responsibility to preserve the organization and its jobs, as well as the preservation of a free society by democratic collective bargaining.

While it must be admitted that collective bargaining is a power conflict, and that both management's and union's strength rest on this power relationship, nevertheless management and unions must have confidence in the abilities and the intentions of the other if industrial harmony is to exist.

The criterion of industrial peace is the co-existence of industrial management and organized labor, with each retaining its institutional sovereignty.

#### Contract Terms

A study of union contracts in the newspaper industry illustrates that union leaders have not accepted this norm, but rather have adopted the philosophy of contesting newspaper management and refusing to accept managerial authority and prerogative. Such an attitude does not promote industrial peace.

In all crafts, even though the closed shop is outlawed by the Labor Management Relations Act, the unions' constitutions are so worded that only union members can be employed in the newspapers of the country that have labor agreements.

Similarly, the newspaper industry, like the building industry, is subjected to the most appalling and irresponsible feather-bedding practices. Because it has become big business, it is considered fair game by labor unions. A sample of this practice is a provision of the San Francisco Typographical Union with the publishers:

Matrices, plates, cuts or type of local advertisements or other local matter, furnished to newspapers may be used by such newspapers, provided such matter shall be reproduced as nearly as possible like the original which appeared in the newspaper (excepting such portions thereof as may be hand lettered or hand drawn) within 72 hours from the time of publication . . . It is understood that a local advertisement is: any advertisement originally set within the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Typographical Union No 21 . . .

Another practice that encourages waste is the manning provision of all labor contracts with the International Printing Pressmen's and Assistants Union of North America. These provisions establish the number of pressmen that must man the presses, and the number fluctuate with the number of pages in each day's paper.

Too, unions have purposely created a shortage of skilled, experienced men in most mechanical departments . . . by restrictive initiation fees and absolute refusal to take new men into the unions. This has been complicated by severe apprentice rules and regulations, which have forced newspaper publishers to have an overtime payroll far in excess of other industries.

In most labor contracts, union leaders have established provisions for the jurisdiction of all new

technological changes. While most business leaders cannot quarrel with this philosophy, the attempt by unions to hamper change and the apparent apathy of management have forced newspaper publishers to produce newspapers essentially as they were produced at the turn of the century. In no other industry has there been less technological change than in the newspaper industry.

Although the American Newspaper Guild does not hide a closed shop provision in their contracts, a person who is employed after forty-five days is considered competent, and

Discharges for reasons other than to reduce the force shall be subject to review and arbitration  
 . . .

This provision makes it almost impossible for management to fire employees for incompetency, and shackles newspapers with many inefficient workers.

There is and can be only one answer to this problem. Newspaper unions and ~~leaders~~ must adopt a policy of business unionism, dominated by the realization that collective agreements are a compromise between management and union . . . and that persuasion and trading, although typically accompanied by force, are essential today for the very survival of valuable newspaper properties and jobs.

While union leaders can remain adamant in their philosophy and demands and increase the wages of their members, they will eventually destroy the security of their

unions, and fail to maximize the economic welfare of each and everyone of their members.

## References

1. See Appendix F.

2. Section 35.

**SECTION III**

**PERSONNEL RELATIONS**

In a recent survey by the author, only 31.9% of the ninety-four newspapers which answered the survey had a personnel department . . . and this from a prejudiced and loaded sample. Most newspaper personnel programs are not scientifically developed, and much of the personnel operation is delegated to the various department heads.

While it is true that progress is being made by some of the leading newspapers in the country, most newspaper publishers have not adopted personnel programs that have been so successful in other industries.

The need for a well-organized personnel policy was cited in a talk by G. Gordon Strong, president of the Brush-Moore Newspapers, before the 1950 Ohio Circulation Managers Association convention. He said:

. . . Probably the most important problem facing industry in general and the newspaper business in particular is that of obtaining greater cooperation and effort from employees . . . We are therefore faced with the problem of getting maximum returns from those associated with us. This presents a human relations problem.

I feel that better personnel administration should be<sub>1</sub> the goal for which all of us should strive.

Even though the Newspaper Personnel Relations Association was formed in 1949, few publishers have developed a comprehensive personnel program.

#### Reasons For A Formal Personnel Program

What are the reasons for a personnel program?

What are the reasons for a company to offer company training, educational opportunities and welfare programs?

Why do outstanding companies select men and women carefully? Why do companies have supervisory training programs?

The obvious answers to these questions are:

1. To obtain a new employee who is emotionally, temperamentally, physically and vocationally fitted for the job,

2. To break in a new man,

3. To increase morale,

4. To produce a better product,

5. To increase advertising and circulation revenue,

6. To eliminate wasteful practices,

7. To train men for advancement,

8. To communicate company policy, rules and regulations,

9. To foster and encourage initiative, and

10. To create a loyal employee group.

An outstanding management leader recently cited the need for better selection, better utilization of human resources, and an over-all personnel program.

If management is to survive, he stated, they must carefully examine the human resources available and the use being made of their talents and abilities.

Management, he stressed, must develop the skill of its workers by a definite program to increase the efficiency of its workers by a definite program to increase the efficiency of operation. This program can only be effected by a program tuned to the needs and welfare of the employees and the company.

This is the personnel program that newspapers must cultivate for a better journalistic product -- more advertising and circulation -- better employee morale, and a greater efficiency operation at reduced costs. This is the program that must replace the fatalism that grips the modern publisher.

#### Current Newspaper Personnel Relations

A recent survey by the author proved that too few newspaper publishers are sensitive of their personnel and human relations program. On some of the larger dailies newspaper management has found that the establishment of a full-time or a part-time personnel director has paid large dividends. On a few small dailies this function is often delegated to an established department head, but on most dailies, large and small, there is no personnel manager or department.

From this survey it was seen that newspapers still have a long way to go in developing their personnel program. A scientific program includes selection, job introduction, job training, employee evaluation, job communication and security. While health and safety

programs, morale surveys, foreman training and employee service programs are an integral part of personnel relations, the aforementioned are basic to any program and will be discussed in this study.

An analysis of what newspapers are doing in these major personnel functions will illustrate the little progress that newspapers have made. It will be readily gleaned that most newspapers have not as yet adopted a formal program of personnel relations.

#### Selection

It was found that similar to most industries the personnel departments only screen the potential employees for the department heads. Only 1.1% of the newspapers surveyed encouraged their personnel departments to hire employees.

On those newspapers which do not have a personnel department the screening and hiring of potential employees are functions of the department heads. One large metropolitan newspaper replied:

We do not have a central personnel department. Each department head is responsible for hiring the key people in his division.

It can therefore be concluded that with or without a personnel department, the department heads are responsible for the hiring of new employees.

The use of scientific testing is not used to a great extent by newspapers. Probably the most progress

has been made in this field by Phillip J. Kruidenier, personnel director of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, who has developed interviewing and testing to a greater degree than any newspaper personnel executive.

### Job Introduction

The introduction of a new employee to his company and to his job remains the responsibility of the department heads, except in a few isolated cases. Dorothy Beers, personnel manager of the Washington Post, has developed a series of orientation classes for new employees. These meetings are held at weekly intervals and include sessions on the newspaper's history and an analysis of each department of the newspaper.

Many splendid booklets such as the New York Times' "this is your business", the New York Herald Tribune's "every morning", and the Milwaukee Journal's "Welcome to the Journal", and many more help the department heads to introduce the new worker to the newspaper business, to his company and to his job.

Newspaper managers, however, will confess that there are still new horizons to conquer in the job introduction field.

### Job Training

To the department heads, also, is delegated the responsibility to educate and train the new employees.

Most newspapers do not have any formal training program, as on-the-job training is the most popular method of training workers in the newspaper business.

There are a few newspapers who are encouraging their employees to avail themselves of the excellent training and educational facilities offered through distributive education; still others hold conferences, round-table discussions, and general training meetings, but it must be admitted that these newspapers are in the minority.

Phillip J. Kruidenier, personnel director of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune echoed the keynote of newspaper employee training when he said:

We believe that the training on the job is not a function of the Personnel Department, but rather the responsibility of the heads of the department. We do, however, have an "indoctrination program" which informs the new employee about the various general company policy and benefits.<sup>2</sup>

#### Employee Evaluation

Although some job descriptions, specifications, analyses and evaluations have been made of newspaper jobs, very little work has been attempted to develop some program of scientific employee evaluation.

Employees are still judged in an informal manner, and promotions are made after conferences of the unit supervisor and department head. The future awaits a

realistic newspaper employee evaluation program.

### Job Communication

Proper human relations is vital to the success of the newspaper, as it is to any industry. Supervisors are promoted because of their technical knowledge and their ability to work and lead workers; however, at this writing no newspaper has originated any supervisory training program.

The Oklahoma Publishing Company assists their executives in their job of communication by publishing "Cuff Stuff", a well-edited house organ. This not only contains stories about employees and their activities, but also communicates to the employee group any change in policy, the contemplated activities of the newspaper, as well as what the newspaper is doing today. However, most newspapers in the country today do not have a house organ.

There is much work to be done in the field of communication in the newspaper industry.

### Security

The average employee in America is becoming more conscious of security of pay, of immediate position, of rights of promotion, of protection in disability and illness and of care in old age. Industrial engineers who have made surveys of this subject have noted that many workers have sacrificed higher wages for security.

Newspapers have done a notable job in this respect, largely because of union pressure. The Milwaukee Journal, the Louisville Times and Courier-Journal, the Los Angeles Times and others offer their employees pension and welfare plans, hospital insurance, participation in credit unions, life insurance, etc.

### Summary

This is Newspaper Personnel Relations --- 1955.

From this analysis we can conclude:

1. Most newspaper publishers have not yet recognized the need for scientific selection and training, and they are not encouraging the development of a professional selection and training program.

2. On-the-job training is generally universal.

3. The department heads are in most cases responsible for the personnel functions in the newspapers of the country.

4. There is much work to be done in job introduction, employee evaluation and job communication.

5. The security programs of many newspapers are the finest in the country, principally due to labor negotiations.

A. J. De Andrade, vice president of the International Printing Pressmen's Union, summarized this problem when he said:

Newspaper publishers haven't worked at personnel administration long enough, and they haven't given it enough attention. 3

Newspaper publishers are discovering that high wages alone do not produce labor peace. Good employee relations set the climate for relations around the bargaining table, and management is the only one that can create a healthy attitude toward the company before negotiations begin through cultivating a personnel and industrial relations program that creates a climate of trust and loyalty.

Mechanical department employees in most papers throughout the country do not feel that they belong to any newspaper organization. They take more interest in union affairs, than those of management and the company . . . and this is a fact, because most newspaper publishers have shown so little interest in their workers.

As Richard Slocum of the Philadelphia Bulletin said:

The key to action is people. We can build better machines, develop better processes or what you will, but none of it will be successful without the cooperation of people. People are at the heart of everything.<sup>4</sup>

He then called for a personnel relations program to answer the financial dilemma of the twentieth century publisher.

There is no industry in the country that has fewer formal personnel programs to combat the precarious financial position of the newspaper business.

To solve their problems, publishers have to realize that the socio-esthetic results, such as security

benefits and peace of mind of the employee, are by-products of a sound personnel program, but the fundamental objective of a personnel relations program is to put profits in the till, and thus solve the economic problems of newspapers in the twentieth century.

References

1. Editor & Publisher, April 29, 1950, p. 90
2. Letter from Phillip J. Kruidenier, April 10, 1951
3. Editor & Publisher, March 21, 1953, pp. 9-74
4. Outline of a talk by Richard W. Slocum to the Newspaper Personnel Relations Association, March 25, 1954

**SECTION IV**

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS PROGRAM**

With the advent of collective bargaining agreements, management has discovered that it must cultivate a new philosophy of business management. Whereas, management decisions were at one time unilateral, the emergence of unions created the necessity for bilateral decisions.

Even though newspaper publishers were one of the first managerial class to sign labor contracts, it has been one of the last to develop a realistic and reasonable industrial relations program. While it must be admitted that there are many newspapers in the country which have recognized the need for the formation of an industrial and personnel relations program, in most instances newspaper publishers have failed to adapt themselves to the realities of labor-management relations.

Robert C. Bassett<sup>1</sup> has repeatedly urged newspapers to do something about employee relations in order to stimulate greater productivity.

He has warned that newspapers cannot expect to continue passing along higher operating costs to the consuming public. He said many newspapers believe that labor relations is a once-a-year contracting job, overlooking the fact that human and industrial relations is a 365-day program, if employee cooperation is to be obtained.

The Hearst executive warned, moreover, that employers cannot buy employee loyalty, but must have

the respect of their employees both at the bargaining table and in their day-to-day contacts.

### Acceptance of Unions

One of the cardinal principles of sound industrial relations is the positive acceptance of unions as partners in many managerial functions. Management, to insure industrial peace, must accept the doctrine that a strong, responsible and democratic union is an asset to its business. This assumes the realization by union leadership that it has a stake in the economic success of the business, and emphasizes the fact that what is good for the industry is also good for the union membership.

There can never be antagonism or reliance on legal technicalities in negotiations, but rather a complete denial of secrecy and a keen understanding of human behavior by leaders in both management and labor.

Where there is industrial peace, unions are therefore genuinely recognized as permanent economic and political organizations, and management has developed the credo that it is easier to get along with them than attempting to invent ways to outmaneuver them. This philosophy includes the active cooperation in building the strength, prestige and membership support of the union, as a means of increasing the union's responsibility. At the same time, a resourceful management stays completely out of the union's internal affairs, but it must be admitted that a formal union shop and a closed shop

are at times antagonistic to harmonious relations.

This acceptance of unions recognizes that they are not only a supplier of labor, but a political organization as well . . . with the union leaders in a position that they must satisfy the membership. Newspaper managers must recognize that being a political organization, one of the principle goals of unions is institutional survival and growth.

Such a managerial attitude cultivates the union as a partner to decisions on production methods, rate setting, wage stabilization, company expansion, discharges and other company problems. Many publishers consider such a business relationship as an invasion of their managerial rights and prerogatives, and because they have this conception of labor-management relationship it can be readily seen why there is industrial warfare rather than peace in the publishing industry. The development of union participation on problems of productive efficiency and cost reduction is probably the greatest challenge for attaining healthy and stable relationships. Such a cooperative attitude breeds mutual trust and confidence, and generally results in a climate of industrial harmony.

Management loses none of its prerogatives by such a program, for it can combine firmness with the ability to avoid being dogmatic . . . it can make a sustained effort to encourage a strong and responsible union . . .

and at the same time develop a dynamic, productive and steadily improving union-management relationship.

Union leaders, in most cases, accept this crying need for more understanding and cooperation between management and unions. Edward J. Volz, president of the International Photo-Engravers Unions of North America has said:

Cooperation between publisher and union, and likewise between management and workers, to bring about economy in production . . . is always in order, especially since the well-being of all dependent upon the industry is involved.

Harry Martin, former president of the American Newspaper Guild, once said:

. . . Management and the unions need to take "joint" action in seeking solutions for certain problems with which the industry is confronted . . . The guild is aware that it has a stake in the economic success of the newspaper business . . .

#### Communications Program

This genuine acceptance of unionism and collective bargaining presupposes that management follows a policy of information-sharing and advance consultation on most matters affecting the job interests of employees. Under this business philosophy, management follows the practice of consulting foremen and union leaders on most managerial problems, and of inviting and encouraging union participation on a consultative basis, particularly on matters not necessarily covered by the union agreement. This is

bilateral rather than unilateral management action.

A resourceful management, which is anxious to secure a favorable climate for industrial peace, recognizes that it can change some of the factors that result in industrial conflict, and one of the greatest means is information-sharing with employees, foremen and unions.

Twentieth century management is concerned with materials, machines and men, but the present period of industrial management emphasizes the human element in today's industry. Industrial leaders recognize the importance of human engineering, as well as industrial engineering.

In management's quest for increased productivity it is discovering that the greatest single motivating factor in industrial productivity is the attitude of the employee to his job . . . his supervisor . . . and his company. A worker's morale is influenced by what he knows and understands about his job, his foreman and his organization.

Management recognizes that the key to these wants is good communications. No human relations program can be successful without complete and honest information. Newspaper management has in the past been very reticent to discuss its economic conditions either with the employees or the union, and when they have it has often been in a piecemeal fashion.

While management has the right to management, may we say, even the moral obligation to protect the interests

of the corporate body, nevertheless, it also has the responsibility to discuss willingly proposed programs, changes and economic conditions with the union and its members.

This lack of communications . . . this refusal by management to practice this necessary function of alert and progressive industrial and personnel relations has created an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion among newspaper labor leaders and members.

Surveys have proven that employees are interested in their company . . . its practices, policies and programs. As workers become better educated, they demand more democracy in industry, and they are going to satisfy this demand whether that information comes from the foremen or the shop stewards. Without a communications program, allegiance and loyalty are given to the unions, rather than to the companies.

Newspaper employees can receive official information from newspaper management and statements of foremen or from union leaders and shop stewards. There is generally great competition between union and management for the role of communications, and this struggle results in conflict, employee discontent, general suspicion and strained relations.

As it exists now, most newspaper employees receive their information from the union. Management must avoid being arbitrary in action, and employ the regular use of

consultative management. It means a program of joint consultation on matters of mutual interest . . . it means a program that keeps the unions and employees informed about company policies and objectives . . . it means bilateral decision-making, rather than unilateral.

In most communications program, management has accepted the union as the main channel of communications. By such a program management thereby has achieved its goal, and at the same time increasing the union's formal and informal control over jobs.

In the development of any industrial or personnel relations program the active support and help of the unions are necessary. While it is true that newspaper management has accepted unions as an economic necessity, in most cases they have failed to engender an attitude of confidence in management. As a result unions and union leaders question any and every move by newspaper management. This attitude has been fostered by newspaper management refusing to fully accept unionism, consultative management and proper communications.

Such a climate is not conducive to harmonious labor relations. Industrial peace can only be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual respect and security, where good faith, sincerity, good will, mutual trust, confidence and fair play characterize the labor-management relationship.

Such a climate avoids paternalism, and of prejudiced rules and regulations in favor of a flexible and democratic

approach to industrial relations.

### Other Programs

Besides enlisting the union's assistance in solving production problems, rate setting, wage stabilization, discharges and other company problems, management can solicit help in the formation of a personnel and industrial relations program.

In addition, newspaper management must develop new methods of formulating and executing policies, which includes the placing of full responsibility for industrial relations on line management, with the personnel function becoming a staff function. Industrial history has recorded the necessity of delegating authority and disseminating management's policies and practices to the lower levels of management. Needless to say this program demands a high degree of cooperation between line and staff personnel.

Too long in the newspaper industry foremen has been selected because of their technical experience and knowledge, rather than their ability to like, know and understand people. In industrial management today human engineering is as important, if not more so, than industrial engineering. Even though formal personnel relations is a staff function, every member of management must be conscious of their personnel relations.

And finally, any industrial relations program demands a recognition of public opinion. Although "there

is no substitute for free and unfettered collective bargaining between free management and free labor sitting around the conference table, the public is the silent third party and the public interest is paramount over the special interests of management and labor." <sup>3</sup>

Industrial conflict, considered as a whole, increasingly finds expressions in the socio-political sphere, in elections, lobbying, public relations activities, and educational and propaganda drives to win approval and support from workers, leaders of community opinion, and the general public. . . <sup>3</sup>

It has become increasingly important for labor and management to develop a public relations program that informs the "silent third party" of the power relationship between labor and management.

In a country as opinion conscious as the United States, it is mandatory that newspapers formalize a public relations program, that is today so much an integral part of union management.

### Conclusion

So we can conclude that besides the need for responsible unionism in the newspaper industry . . . one that bases its demands on realistic data on the cost of living, profits of the industry, as well as other economic factors--- one that recognizes the role of management and appreciates its rights and prerogatives . . . management also must practice social

justice and formulate a policy which includes consultative management, effective communications, avoidance of paternalism, and a better industrial relations program.

A good industrial climate does not guarantee industrial peace, but there is no question that it sets the stage for industrial harmony. The mere absence of industrial warfare does not mean that industrial peace exists, and although there were but three major strikes in the newspaper industry during 1954, the power relationship of present-day newspaper labor-management relations are not conducive to industrial harmony.

The fact that neither unions nor management have been willing to make intelligent compromises have resulted in the economic picture of newspapers today. The fate of the free press of the United States rests with the decision of newspaper management and union leaders to make or not to <sup>make</sup> political and economic compromises . . . and thus save a free press for our country.

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1. Publisher of the Milwaukee Sentinel
2. Editor & Publisher, November 8, 1952, pp.9-72
3. Kornhauser, Arthur., Dubin, Robert., and Ross, Arthur M.  
"Industrial Conflict". New York: McGraw-Hill  
Book Company, Inc., 1954, p. 15

**SECTION V**

**PUBLISHER COOPERATION**

An illustration of the great power of newspaper unions is a consideration of the International Typographical Union's defiance of the Labor Management Relations Act when that statute became effective in 1947.<sup>1</sup> Their "no-contract" policy created a rash of strikes shortly after the enactment of this new labor law. The most noteworthy strike was that against the Chicago newspapers which continued for twenty months.

Finally, in October, 1947, the American Newspaper Publishers Association filed charges against the ITU. On May 6, 1953, the National Labor Relations Board complied with the mandate of the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit to compel the ITU to bargain.

The reasons for the A.N.P.A. charges were vividly answered by the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals in its December 27, 1951 decision:

Upon passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in June, 1947 . . . the ITU at once launched a campaign for the apparent purpose of expressing its disapproval and defiance of the Act, and for the further purpose of instructing its subordinate locals and members on methods of avoiding the impact of the various provisions of the Act on the traditional practices and policies of the ITU . . .<sup>1</sup>

Even before passage of the Act, said the Court, ITU leaders informed all concerned that the closed shop was traditional as "the accepted practice in the Printing Industry" and ITU "will continue to so operate in spite of misguided or prejudiced legislators, their influential

backers, or any unconstitutional laws enemies of labor may be able to put on the books." <sup>1</sup>

The court quoted the ITU president as saying in May, 1947:

At no time has the International Typographical Union or any local thereof operated on other than a closed shop basis and whether it can make contracts or not, <sup>1</sup> it will continue to function on that basis.

Three months later the ITU convention in Cleveland adopted its "no contract policy".

Finally, the Seventh Circuit Court ordered the ITU to "Cease and desist from refusing . . . to bargain collectively and in good faith with any employer in the newspaper industry . . ." <sup>1</sup>

It is not bargaining in good faith when an ITU local insists that a publisher must agree to ITU laws, or must have a union foreman, or must grant the full measure of jurisdiction it demands, including jurisdiction over new processes, or must agree to a specified joint committee scheme for the hiring of journeymen and apprentices, and the determination of competency of journeymen. <sup>1</sup>

Despite this ruling, publishers who wish to reject such demands face a strike and cumbersome action of the National Labor Relations Board. Even though newspapers could win the case and the union would be subject to extreme penalties, newspaper publishers could well lose their valuable newspaper properties by a prolonged strike. Consequently, today most newspaper contracts contain those very clauses declared illegal.

### Effect of Key Bargains

The history of industrial relations reveals the fact that a limited number of key bargains influence the entire wage structure of the American economy. The reason why the ITU has been able to affront the Labor Management Relations Act and the decision of the courts is that several newspaper publishers signed such provisions with the ITU, even during the strike in Chicago.

Although in other industries it is one of the cardinal sins of business to sign a contract that proves embarrassing to other employers, still it has been the accepted practice in newspaper publishing.

Comparisons are important to the publishers, as it is to any employer, and such key agreements give newspaper unions a weapon that defeats the newspaper publisher before he sits down at the conference table.

The outstanding consideration is that such clauses have been signed despite the warnings of George N. Dale of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Speaking of the ITU demands, he stated that although he could not dictate what publishers should do, nevertheless the dangers were inherent.

### A Real Danger

Perhaps this the reason by Robert U. Brown, president and editor of Editor & Publisher, called upon Congress to limit strikes against newspaper properties.

In recent years millions of people in several cities have been denied access to a free press by unions acting in concert to establish and respect picket lines. The picket line conspiracy recently caused the permanent suspension of the Brooklyn Eagle. It even coerced the municipal government in preventing it from taking possession of the building. <sup>2</sup>

To answer this problem he urged that Congress should take action, since the Attorney-General's Committee to study the anti-trust laws have by-passed this growing problem of organized labor's immunity. He claims that this union strike action has a direct bearing on the people's right to a free press.

There cannot be freedom of the press if there is no press --- if individuals under the protection of "labor's rights" can conspire to prevent the press from functioning.

. . . if congress does not provide the answers in clarification of the people's rights and responsibilities --- whether they be union members or not . . . we will continue to drift toward a time in the future when our press guarantee will be only a traditional one . . . Maybe we have already arrived there. <sup>2</sup>

### Consolidated Bargaining

There is no question that to answer the challenge of newspaper unionism and to "preserve a free press for a free people" newspaper publishers must unite and present a common front.

While it is admitted that union pressure has produced unrealistic and unreasonable newspaper contracts, it has often been the apathy and lack of an industrial relations philosophy that has caused the serious labor

problems that currently exist in the publishing industry today.

One of the causes of industrial unrest is horizontal negotiations, or newspaper management being forced to deal with so many unions. In San Francisco alone, newspaper publishers must negotiate and sign seventeen different labor agreements. A study of industrial peace has illustrated that labor peace is more easily attainable when negotiations are conducted with one union. <sup>3</sup>

Aggressive unions and ambitious leaders attempt to set the pattern for negotiated benefits, whether they be wages or other concessions. Union members have the philosophy that comparisons with other unions, particularly in the same industry, measure the effectiveness of each union and its leaders. Consequently, pressure is on the newspaper negotiator from all sides, and no newspaper union in recent years have signed contracts without practically identical provisions as negotiated by the most aggressive union. This has resulted in major concessions in all phases of negotiations.

While it can be admitted that newspapers have attempted to attain consolidated bargaining structures on the local level, it has been completely overlooked on a regional or a national basis. With almost fifteen hundred labor contracts signed throughout the country and with little or no cooperation by newspaper publishers, it can be readily seen why newspaper publishers have been whipsawed almost to economic death.

It must be admitted that there are many obstacles to multiple employer bargaining; the personal or business philosophy of the publishers being one, which is probably more prevalent among newspaper leaders than any other industry. Publishers carefully guard their convictions and their prejudices, and perhaps this is one reason why the American press is one of the greatest in the world . . . however, publishers fail to comprehend that while they may be protecting their personal creed, they are helping to destroy the free press, which they so cherish.

Another obstacle to multiple employer bargaining is geographical location. It should be remembered that consolidation of the bargaining structure does not assume that there will be uniformity of wage rates, but wage rates must be considered in the light of the community and local conditions. This could be accomplished by regional and stronger local consolidated bargaining structures.

A third conflict is the traditions and precedents of the individual newspaper publisher, and what is the value of tradition when valuable newspaper properties are destroyed.

Consolidated bargaining structures could well be accomplished under the leadership of the American Newspaper Publishers Association Special Standing Labor Relations Committee, the state publisher associations and regional groups with more affinity.

Perhaps this isn't the answer to the industrial plight of American newspaper publishing . . . perhaps there is a better solution . . . but newspaper industrial relations cries for united effort. Newspaper publishers must forget their petty traditions, their personal and business differences, and attempt to develop a realistic, reasonable and necessary industrial and personnel relations program . . . individually and collectively with the help of the American Newspaper Publishers Association. Newspaper unions, alone, cannot be held responsible for the economic plight of newspapers, but careful examination will prove that the false philosophy of industrial relations prevalent in newspaper management circles has contributed to industrial warfare and newspaper failures. It takes two to make a contract, and both parties are responsible for the terms of that contract.

#### Conclusion

These are the challenges that face newspaper publishers in the second half of the twentieth century . . . these are the programs, the cooperative attitude that must be generated . . . these are the format for industrial peace in the newspaper business.

Neither labor nor management can be held entirely responsible for the lack of labor-management cooperation . . . and neither labor nor management alone can improve the economic conditions of most papers in the country today.

The problem cries for an answer. It demands the development of a realistic union philosophy in collective bargaining, and the adopting of the credo of business unionism, that guarantees a strong, but reasonable union.

It demands a development of an industrial and personnel relations program by newspapers, which are characterized by sincerity and a realization of the value of the human being in modern industry.

It demands cooperation among all newspaper publishers in their efforts to sustain "a free press for a free people".

Without efforts by both management and labor to develop industrial peace, industrial conflict could destroy the free press that our country cherishes.

## References

1. Editor & Publisher, April 24, 1954, pp.139-140
2. Editor & Publisher, April 16, 1955, p. 68
3. National Planning Association, Fundamentals of Labor Peace, Washington, D.C. : National Planning Association, 1953.

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A

NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS IN  
THE UNITED STATES<sup>a</sup>

1710	1
1720	3
1730	7
1740	12
1750	14
1760	18
1770	30
1780	39
1790	92
1800	235
1810	371
1820	512

DAILY NEWSPAPERS<sup>b</sup>

1790	8
1800	24
1810	26
1820	42
1830	65
1840	138
1850	254
1860	387
1870	574
1880	971
1889	1,610
1899	2,226
1909	2,600
1919	2,441
1929	2,086
1940	2,260
1950	1,772
1952	1,786
1955	1,765

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<sup>a</sup> Alfred M. Lee, The Daily Newspaper in America  
(New York: The Macmillan Company, 1937), p. 711

<sup>b</sup> Ibid., p. 717

<sup>b</sup> Editor & Publisher, International Yearbook  
Number for 1953, p. 18 -- for 1955, p. 20

APPENDIX B  
DAILY CIRCULATION IN THE  
UNITED STATES <sup>a</sup>

1850	758,454
1860	1,478,435
1870	2,601,547
1880	3,566,395
1889	8,387,188
1899	15,102,156
1904	19,632,603
1909	24,211,977
1919	33,028,630
1929	42,947,824 <sup>b</sup>
1939	44,945,542 <sup>b</sup>
1950	53,829,072 <sup>c</sup>
1952	53,950,615 <sup>c</sup>
1955	55,072,480 <sup>d</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Lee, op. cit., pp.725-726

<sup>b</sup> John Scott Davenport, Newspaper Circulation -- Backbone of the Industry, Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1949, p. 15

<sup>c</sup> Editor & Publisher, International Yearbook Number for 1953, p. 18

<sup>d</sup> Editor & Publisher, International Yearbook Number for 1955, p. 20

APPENDIX C

POPULATION AND NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION <sup>a</sup>

1940 and 1950

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
Total Population	131,669,275	150,697,311	14.5
Adult Population (Person 21 or over)	83,996,629	96,918,000	15.4
Daily Newspaper Circulation	41,131,711	53,829,072	30.9
Sunday Newspaper Circulation	32,371,092	46,582,348	43.9
Daily Circulation per Adult	490,000	555,000	13.4
Sunday Circulation per Adult	385,000	481,000	24.7

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<sup>a</sup> From a study by Oliver R. Smith as reported  
in Editor & Publisher, August 11, 1951, p. 55

APPENDIX D

RECORD OF REVENUE  
AND COST RISES <sup>a</sup>

Composite Daily

	<u>Revenue</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
'47 over '46	24.12	28.09
'48 over '47	15.06	20.04
'49 over '48	7.87	9.34
'50 over '49	5.09	6.85
'51 over '50	8.82	9.34
'52 over '51	88.58	9.95
'53 over '52	8.40	8.95
'54 over '53	1.61	3.01

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<sup>a</sup> Editor & Publisher, April 16, 1955, p. 7

APPENDIX E

ANPA ARBITRATION AWARDS

1947-1954 <sup>a</sup>

1947	24
1948	24
1949	29
1950	34
1951	38
1952	35
1953	42
1954	66

EIGHT YEAR TOTAL

Typographical	45
Pressmen	64
Stereotypers	17
Photo-Engravers	6
ITU Mailers	8
IMU Mailers	12
Guild	104
Others	36
Total	292

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<sup>a</sup> Editor & Publisher, April 30, 1955, p. 23

## APPENDIX F

### NEWSPAPER STRIKES <sup>a</sup>

	<u>Total</u>	<u>ITU</u>	<u>Other Unions</u>
1943	18	13	5
1944	11	7	4
1945	40	29	11
1946	33	18	15
1947	40	31	9
1948	27	20	7
1949	31	14	17
1950	18	15	3
1951	3	1	2
1952	11	4	7
1953	13	4	9
1954	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>93</b>

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<sup>a</sup> Editor & Publisher, April 30, 1955, p. 23

APPENDIX G

UNION AGREEMENTS

January 1 --- Each Year

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
Typographical	<u>115</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>271</u>	<u>298</u>	<u>325</u>	<u>347</u>
Pressmen	256	260	269	278	286	299
Stereotyper	185	191	193	199	199	203
Photo-Engraver	74	77	79	81	78	79
Mailer	<u>78</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>106</u>	<u>125</u>	<u>118</u>	<u>116</u>
Mech. Union * TOTAL	708	838	918	975	1,002	1,038
Office Contracts	144	148	150	155	158	161
Misc. Contracts* (1)	<u>177</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>178</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>215</u>
Total *	1,029	1,164	1,246	1,310	1,366	1,414

\*Total of all agreements. A contract covering two trades is listed twice but counted once in the total.

(1) Includes building service, circulators, drivers, electrical workers, machinists, news vendors, operating engineers, and paper handlers.

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<sup>a</sup> Editor & Publisher, April 30, 1955, p. 94

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