WHO, WHAT, WHY IS RADIO?

RADIO HOUSE SERIES

1. *Who, What, Why is Radio?* by Robert J. Landry
2. *All Children Listen* by Dorothy Gordon
3. *The Radio Station: Its Management, Its Functions, Its Future* by Jerome Sill (in preparation)

WHO, WHAT, WHY IS RADIO?

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A RADIO HOUSE BOOK

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FOREWORD TO REVISED EDITION

RADIO HAS JUST experienced its first war. It emerges now into a troubled world. The people of all nations wonder, fairly, if there is inherent within the human race enough intelligence to protect itself in the end from the consequences of its own talents in one phase of development—the scientific laboratory phase. Do we possess the sheer brain capacity to devise ethics to match the destructive forces which have just been so eloquently dramatized in the buzz-bomb and the atom bomb? Bring these two inventions together, the radio-controlled flying torpedo and the deadly chemical formula which releases atomic energy—and the means exist for the suicide of the human race.

All this adds up to saying that the conscience of the world needs to be kept on permanent alert. Only education and an enlightened public opinion can hope to keep the world peaceful. The moral is obvious: one of the great media of communication (i.e. education) is radio-broadcasting. What, then, is American radio like? Mr. Landry's provocative survey of the who-what-why has been widely read and quoted since its first appearance and now, the text partly revised to bring it up to date, it is re-issued because of the persistent demand for the work. It is not a lengthy volume. This "Radio House"

series is planned to provide readers with concise, fact-packed, perspective-providing statements on various aspects of a complex modern phenomenon. *Who, What, Why is Radio?* as the lead-off book in the series has suggested the tone and indicated the design of the whole.

At the time of its first publication Mr. Landry's book was warmly received by the press. *Time* called the volume "benignant but free from bunk" and added that "as an introduction to broadcasting and as a try at a sound point of view on the subject it has few predecessors and no up-to-date rivals." *Advertising & Selling Magazine* esteemed *Who, What, Why is Radio?* in these words: "the most cogent description yet written of the growth and development of radio."

To the extent that any volume dealing with an expanding and constantly changing art can be a standard text, we believe that it is apt to so represent Mr. Landry's work. We proudly offer this revised edition.

The Publishers.

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[I] WHO

1. THE REGULATORS

THE VASTNESS of American radio needs to be emphasized. There are 915 radio stations, four coast-to-coast networks, 25 regional networks. Stations operate 17 and 18 hours a day. Programs parade past four and five abreast from before daylight to after midnight. In New York City alone there are 20 stations. There are 16 in Chicago, 12 in Los Angeles, eight in Boston.

Over two-thirds of the stations are affiliated with national or regional networks. During the day the stations intermittently join or leave these chains, losing or gaining in the process a national, a regional or a local complexion. Thus is provided to the American public a many-sided, many-sized, diverse, diffuse, far-flung, non-stop broadcasting service. Sometimes it is demagogic, sometimes bucolic, on occasion mildly pedagogic. In its finer moments it is dynamic. It represents perhaps a sort of democratic splendor, a trifle clouded.

Big and devious and various, it is not easy to gain a full perspective on American radio. Nor is it surprising to learn that the preoccupied radio specialist often sees only his own small niche. The engineer is concerned only with his inputs and outputs, his dials, cables, antennae and gadgets. To him these things constitute radio. The salesman seldom meditates beyond frequency dis-

counts. For him the signed contract is the whole beauty and fulfillment of radio. And the over-enthusiastic announcer whose voice rents for $750 a week is interested only in his precious throat. He bothers very little about the social implications of the medium.

Almost any attempt to fill in the infinite detail of a mural depicting the full sweep and scope of American radio will crowd too many nearly-forgotten elements in too reduced scale around the edges. It is probably an easier feat of imaginative summation to conceive of radio as a mirror as big as America itself and held, slightly tilted, so that in the fullness of the passing days every shading of American life will be reflected.

American radio begins early in the morning as an alarm clock to awaken the masses. It is the latter day town crier. It counts ten to music for the middle-aged to touch the floor breathing deeply. It gives the weather forecast, the state of the roads, the news of the world. Interspersed is optimism, chin-up poetry, jokes at breakfast. Finally the breadwinner is got off to work, the children off to school. Then, their joint matinal responsibilities discharged, radio and the housewife get together for some story-telling. Starting early in the morning and continuing through the afternoon with little more than an occasional intermission for, say, the Farm and Home Hour there is broadcast a continuous stream of serials, outpourings of fiction which are known in the radio trade as "soap operas," a flip reference to a principal type of advertiser. These continue until the children return from school. Late in the after-

noon the kiddies have their own hour or two of continued stories of a wild kind of make-believe in which boy detectives do rather better than the FBI in tracking down criminals. In the evening, when the menfolk are about, radio turns adult and there begins a parade of more or less sophisticated comedy and music and drama. Then, too, come the debates, the speeches, the spelling bees, the interviews, the news commentators. Finally come the late dance orchestras, and so to bed.

In short, American radio mirrors America as British radio mirrors Britain and Mexican radio mirrors Mexico.

We know after two decades of observation that a radio system is a fair measure of the country or colony it serves. It is obviously the fruit of its ideology and economy. A country has the kind of radio its culture, prosperity and nerves will sanction.

Certainly to understand the whole of American radio we must evaluate many factors in American life. Perhaps the most appropriate question to ask first is this: we are a democracy; is our radio system democratic in organization and in effect? To answer this question we must go exploring, we must draw up an inventory of the practices and realities that, taken together, constitute the everyday stock-in-trade of American radio. A logical place to begin such an inventory is with the seven men, the Federal Communications Commission, who make the rules and license the stations and police the air.

The incumbent chairman (Democrat) is Paul A. Porter, former newspaperman and lawyer, holder of various Government posts. Porter was born in 1904

and is from Kentucky.

Charles R. Denny, Jr., formerly with Department of Justice, whilom general counsel of FCC. Aged 35. Democrat.

Clifford J. Durr, Alabaman; Rhodes Scholar, Oxford, 1922; counsel to various government agencies, 1933-1941. Born 1899. Democrat.

Ewell K. Jett, Marylander; retired U. S. Navy, 1929, assistant chief engineer, later chief engineer, FCC, 1929-1943; U. S. representative to Mexico City, Bucharest, Havana, Cairo, Santiago de Chile conferences. Born 1893. Politically independent.

Ray C. Wakefield, Californian; lawyer; California Railroad Commission, 1937-40. Born 1895. Republican.

Paul A. Walker, Oklahoman; lawyer, educator, 15 years on Oklahoma Corporation Commission. Born 1881. Democrat.

William H. Wills, former lieutenant-governor and governor of Vermont. Insurance, real estate business background. Born 1882. Republican.

The members of the FCC are appointed by the President of the United States, and confirmed by the Senate to serve a term of seven years at a salary of $10,000 per year. In practical effect they define, interpret, alter, revise, investigate, grant, revoke, approve, disapprove.

They are a quasi-judicial, quasi-independent body. They quarrel with the broadcasters, with the radio lawyers, with Congress and with themselves. They have frequently been challenged both on what they have done and on their right under law to do it. They have been branded tyrannical, capricious, contradictory and "cussed," and have been in turn, courted, flattered, cajoled, bullied, pressured, appealed to and appealed from. To them falls the infinitely difficult and delicate assignment of being umpire-in-chief to all American communications, including besides radio the telephone, cable and telegraph combines, police, aviation, maritime and international shortwave operations and, finally, some 55,000 amateurs who keep calling to each other all through the night and the middle frequencies.

These seven men have within their gift subject to no down payment, royalty, air rent or franchise tax the granting of licenses to operate broadcasting stations with the privilege of selling broadcast time to advertisers. But in return for the profits that may accrue to him and the prestige conferred upon him the broadcaster accepts one inclusive responsibility as a limiting factor upon his policies. He agrees to operate his station not for his own or his customers' maximum exploitation of the air but for the public's interest, convenience and necessity. This is the Hippocratic oath of his new profession and the democratic test of his fitness to be relicensed with every succeeding year. The broadcaster who faithfully approximates public interest creates a moral claim upon a renewal of franchise but he never can enjoy a vested (i.e. guaranteed or permanent) in-

terest in either the license itself or the precise wattage, wavelength or other physical conditions defined in the license.

As the concept of "public interest" has expanded, the FCC has grown progressively severe in its judgments of those already licensed and in its demands upon those who seek to qualify for new licenses. Radio licenses were dispensed in the early twenties as land in the far west in pioneer days was dispensed, generously and uncritically on a first-come-first-served basis. Americans were reacting at this period from too much government as then symbolized by the George Creel morale commission and the seizure of the railroads. In an atmosphere of joyous liberation from censorship and of happy return to private ownership the radio industry was born.

The value of a radio license has on occasion tempted would-be broadcasters and their attorneys to commit unethical acts. For example, two lawyers were disbarred for tampering with FCC documents with the connivance of a girl file clerk. Another lawyer helped fake financial assets for a Maryland nobody in whose name a prosperous citizen was seeking a license. A clergyman in a western state was revealed to have misrepresented the ownership and juggled the records of half a dozen small town stations.

The growth of a veritable Washington profession of how-to-get-a-license strategists is part—and not a nice part—of the history of American broadcasting. Too much of the Washington opus has been orchestrated with a contrapuntal theme of petty conniving, backstairs politics, private memoranda not incorporated in

the official record. And yet despite the lawyers and the lobbyists and the bankrolls made of stage money, despite the questionable good nature of some former members of the Commission, despite the official inconsistency of lofty precepts followed by suspicious exceptions, despite the Washington tendency to run around with expediency while married to principle, the obbligato of democratic conscience has somehow sounded through the din.

Congress itself has a record of not admiring its own radio statutes or trusting its own radio confirmations. Often rude and seldom on time, Congress at least has been interested in keeping the FCC and radio democratic. Its sometimes annoying habits of leaving things dangling is perhaps typical both of American legislatures and American democracy. One Congressional committee third-degreed Chairman Frank McNinch in 1938 and left him dangling without appropriations for the next fiscal year. Another committee grilled Commissioner Thad Brown in 1940 and left him dangling without confirmation of his re-appointment. There have been congressional investigations of radio, or agitations, in 1928, 1929, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941.

The first Radio Act in 1912 was enacted in Congress well before it was urgently needed and the second Radio Act in 1927 was enacted well after it was urgently needed. Congress originally designated the Secretary of Commerce to administer radio and then didn't trust him. It established the Federal Radio Commission and didn't trust it. In 1934 when there was an obvious need to bring radio legislation up to date Congress lazily re-enacted most of the 1927 act with the differ-

ence that a new and larger Federal Communications Commission was authorized. In no time at all Congress more or less suspected this commission, too.

In this 1934 "reform" Congress perpetrated a legal incongruity in putting telephone and telegraph, which are common carriers, under the same umbrella with radio which is a non-carrier. Of this strange grouping William S. Paley of the Columbia Broadcasting System has said . . . "a single group of men is now trying every day to think one minute in terms of that kind of common carrier regulation, and in the next minute to think about the mere licensing regulation of a non-carrier which is in part a business and in part an art and which deals so incessantly with public affairs."

Present day regulatory severity was dramatically emphasized in April, 1940 when the FCC introduced a new 42-page questionnaire for would-be broadcasters to fill in. *Variety* at the time observed, "Like a doctor's X-ray the FCC questionnaire reveals all, including gold teeth, incisions and pants buttons." Washington radio lawyers promptly estimated that a prospective licensee would have to invest $1,000 to $2,500 to comply with the questionnaire requirements alone. This questionnaire was in keeping with a constantly enlarging number of documents and reports required of licensees on all sorts of subjects. Many broadcasters call most of these questionnaires a case of nonsense and bureaucracy running mad. There has also intensified among licensees a resentment of the many costly journeys to Washington which began to be a necessity of business survival in broadcasting.

In 1939 Elliott Roosevelt, the broadcaster-son of the President, appeared to testify at FCC hearings in Washington and bluntly termed the Communications Act of 1934 antiquated, puzzling and unsatisfactory and the basis of excessive government meddling in the radio business. He urged a more streamlined concept of broadcasting's obligations, functions and privileges. Young Roosevelt told the FCC "the radio business is probably the only business of its kind in the United States which is not able to obtain financing from banks." This condition was, he argued, a result of banker fears of sudden and capricious regulatory changes.

Meantime, whether valued as a bank risk or not, the broadcasting industry as a whole was doing very well financially. It had legitimate complaints against bureaucratic confusion and red tape but not about business. The oldest webs could make these contrasts to illustrate their expanding dollar volume:

NBC	
First full year (1927)	$ 3,760,000
Tenth full year (1936)	34,523,950
CBS	
First full year (1928)	$ 1,647,364
Tenth full year (1937)	28,722,118
MUTUAL	
First full year (1935)	$1,293,103
Tenth full year (1945)	24,000,000

Because broadcasting was capable of producing impressive profits local stations acquired a sale value greatly in excess of mere technical equipment installation or replacement value. This write-up for good will, going-concern value, existing contracts and management cleverness collided headlong with the austere notion of certain commissioners and their advisors that a station should be sold by one operator to another operator only at a "bare bones" evaluation. In this connection the much debated sale of KNX, Los Angeles, to the Columbia Network for $1,250,000 touched off a sputter of fireworks. There was then and since a good deal of talk about, and frowning upon, so-called "trafficking in wavelengths." The points of view of men conditioned by public utilities regulation experience seemed strange and bizarre to the points of view of men conditioned by orthodox business experience. Business men could not comprehend either the democratic need or the practical justice of penalties on success.

In recent years particularly, an articulate group within the New Deal administration has underlined the figures on capital investment in broadcast plants and equipment in order to draw invidious comparisons with the profits. The auditors for business have replied that this was an unfair approach, that the profits of broadcasting would be analysed by persons of good will toward radio in terms of what percentage the profits represented to gross income. By such reckoning it was stated the profits of radio were nominal.

By 1938 the various political, legal, engineering and financial steps necessary for the establishment of a

radio station were sufficiently standardized to make it possible to estimate the probable outlay in capital investment according to authorized power. Estimates of average costs were as follows:

SIZE OF STATION	TOTAL STARTING EXPENSE	TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT INSTALLED
50,000 watts	$445,127	$247,482
10,000-25,000 watts	260,468	214,036
2,500 watts	85,510	58,385
1,000 watts	65,636	42,486
500 watts	42,996	30,668
100 watts	19,629	14,061

In the same year a payroll census for the whole broadcasting industry revealed that 6,925 program employees were paid $305,627 weekly, that 3,193 technicians got $126,414 in salaries, that 3,030 general and administrative employees drew an aggregate of $85,856 weekly. In all, the broadcasting industry had a personnel of some 20,000 and a weekly payroll of $700,000.

By this time broadcast management looked back upon its record of less than 20 years and was astounded and rather gratified. Radio management developed quite easily the point of view that here was a considerable industry that had been swiftly and soundly built with no major scandal, that had pleased the public and created an unassailable story of social and advertising effectiveness.

Broadcasters felt they could congratulate themselves

and enjoy with an unspecked conscience the ripening fruit of their husbandry. But it was not so simple. Prosperity begets envy and there were many rivals who pictured in their wishful thinking this new high-flying business brought back to humbler levels. There lingered, too, some who admired the British kind of radio and others who hated all advertising and radio advertising not least.

During the Terrible Thirties which began with breadlines and ended with front lines it was the happy fortune of radio to suffer only one setback, and that only fleetingly in 1934. The rest of the time the way was clear and the going fast. Along the way radio passed the prostrate forms of a dying vaudeville, a temporarily knocked out phonograph industry, a sheet music business seized with anemia. These industries rose up figuratively on one elbow to point at radio and whisper "but for that monster, we would be standing upon our feet."

One radio-hating songwriter plunged into technocracy and emerged with the theory that the depression was practically caused by radio. Listening was keeping people at home too much. Clothes weren't wearing out as fast as before. Shoe leather depreciation was slowed, fewer theater tickets were sold, fewer waiters got fewer tips from fewer diners-out.

More threatening were the anti-radio thrusts of various labor, religious and consumer groups. Especially telling was the propaganda of the Allied Printing Trades Council which helped implant in many influential minds the notion that radio was a Midas industry created not by effort and brains and striving but by the mere

scratch of an official pen. How effective this printing-trades campaign had been became evident in the summer of 1941 when a tax-desperate House of Representatives proved willing to impose special taxes on radio and not upon other advertising media.

During the Thirties there had been scattered incidents which while petty and unimportant in the main did not always seem so as screamed in newspaper headlines. The Orson Welles panic was widely publicized. Mae West's and Don Ameche's leering version of Adam and Eve drew ecclesiastical denunciation. There was much ado in the press about a radio version of Eugene O'Neill's "Beyond the Horizon" because a man in Minneapolis, never identified, and his wife wrote a letter to the FCC complaining that this classic of the Twentieth Century took the name of the Lord in vain. Anti-Mexican elements cried "obscene" and pointed to the lyrics of an ancient song. The song was in archaic eleventh-century Spanish on a program sponsored by the Mexican travel bureau over NBC. It was hard to see how it could corrupt anybody and moreover there were two diametrically opposite translations by experts. But the story got much publicity. So, too, did the synthetic "we're not listening" clubs of Westchester County which fired some anonymous shells at the daytime serials. The probation officer of a midwestern city made widely-publicized charges that a certain gangster program had caused much juvenile delinquency. Psychologists answered that backward children seeking any excuse in a predicament would, of course, gladly seize, and were probably offered, the chance to blame their

mischief on radio as if to lessen their own guilt. Every now and again the newspapers flamed with a fantastic headline "Boy Shoots Chum, Got Idea Listening to Radio." Never any follow-ups, no corroborations. Just the first story, the first smear of radio.

All this was, and is, the background of regulation.

By 1938 reflective minds of the industry felt that the industry had been lax in defending itself against unwarranted meddling. It saw the FCC as so many tentacles always moving out for a tighter grasp. There was widespread grumbling about bureaucracy-created insecurity and instability and about the mounting overhead necessary to comply with regulations and orders of doubtful legal validity. "Usurpation" by the FCC was the constant cry. Broadcasters foresaw themselves retreating crabwise into a corner where one day they would be, like the railroads, unable to make a move on their own without Government permission. "Public interest" was becoming a universal umbrella to cover everything or anything bureaucrats favored. Broadcasters recalled that the former Chairman, Harold A. LaFount, back in 1933 had ordered them to "co-operate with the NRA." They recalled the veiled ultimatum of Chairman McNinch, a Dry, that no alcoholic beverage advertising be carried. There had been some disquieting evidence, too, that the FCC was tending to enforce upon broadcasters the orders of other Government bureaus, notably the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration.

In the five-year period from 1936 to 1941 there were numerous appeals from FCC decisions. Many of

them were based on the charge that the FCC had exceeded its authority as defined by Congress. In a number of decisions the Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia rebuked the Commission for its autocratic policies; but after the smoke of litigation had cleared away, clearer decisions left the FCC stronger than before. In general the industry derived no real satisfaction for past grievances and no promise of more predictable treatment in the future. Indeed the very possibility of further judicial reviews of FCC acts seemed clouded.

The nub of this question of court appeal is that the FCC, or a majority of its members, may in its discretion adopt any rules and may change these rules with dizzying rapidity, yet stations may not allege damages or plead violation of due process of law. The law is the collective conscience of the FCC majority.

Bad blood and barbed briefs filed in recent years by lawyers for stations and networks have confused the issues. The FCC has felt that the broadcasters were forgetting the fundamentals: that a license is a privilege, not a right; that the regulatory power, not the regulated parties, will and must determine the nature of regulation; that guarantees of public interest transcend in importance guarantees of private contract commitments as a ground lease overrides rental contracts; that private entrepreneurs may be the builders but they are not the architects of the system.

The whole who, what, why of radio regulation came to a sharp focus on May 2, 1941 when Chairman James L. Fly moved to place in force as of August 2, 1941

certain "anti-monopoly" rules which were the final results of prolonged hearings begun three years before.

The radio industry and its champions in the Senate challenged the orders and obtained a postponement of their effective date. Meantime Senator Burton Wheeler recommended that both sides get together and improvise a compromise that would meet FCC ideas without being so obnoxious to the industry. Even while this get-together was in progres a separate FCC hearing was convened to investigate the social fitness of newspaper publishers to operate stations. Here, again, the authority of the FCC to demand data and conduct such probes was challenged.

The more important issue of the anti-monopoly orders had sharply divided the FCC majority and the broadcasting industry. The two viewpoints were poles apart. NBC and CBS bluntly denounced Chairman Fly's motives, reasoning and fairness. Mutual, contrariwise, praised the Commission. Some of the contradictions made startling contrasts. Chairman Fly declared "This is not a wrecking operation; this is a minor operation upon some clauses in these contracts . . ." but his dissenting colleague, T. A. M. Craven, spoke of "revolutionary change"; while William S. Paley of CBS foresaw "regulation by raised eyebrows, in which a nod will put one program on the air and a frown will keep another off."

The clash of the FCC and the networks continued throughout 1941, so much so that on the last day of the year an action was filed in Chicago by the Department of Justice to force acceptance of the FCC's orders even

while the networks' legal challenge of the FCC's authority was docketed in a New York City Federal Court. The industry was meantime newly introduced to another, new, war-created authority, the Defense Communications Board. On the west coast, too, the Japanese ushered the army interceptor command into the lives of broadcasters.

While all this confusion prevailed, NBC was beginning the divorcement into separately officered and administered entities of its twins, the Red and Blue networks. Even in fighting the FCC, radio executives put into effect most of the demands and met most of the criticisms.

Meanwhile the radio broadcasting industry has seen the dramatis personae of regulation change many times. Commissioners come and go each for a time affecting the equation, each having his own pet theories and slants. Some have been broad-visioned and understanding. Some have been eminently correct and some have been careless of their dignity and too obliging for their own, or the industry's, good. Some of them are forgotten, some dead, some few are now radio business men themselves.

The chairman naturally sets the "tone" of any particular commission and ordinarily is its spokesman. At various times, however, minority members have publicly taken issue with the Chairman. T. A. M. Craven, a former member, and James L. Fly, a former chairman, were often far apart in public statements. Certainly the task of heading so complex and controversial a body is exhausting. This goes back to the point made earlier

about seven men having to be "experts" in not one but a dozen kinds of media. The extended discussions on television and frequency modulation in recent months exemplify the sheer abstractions constantly before the FCC.

There has never been a woman member of the Federal Radio or Federal Communications Commissions. Friends of various imposing ladies have thought the idea very jolly but no clique has ever been able to marshal the necessary strength at the White House to put their heroine across. Appointments to the FCC are considered choice plums and they do not shake off the tree into just anybody's basket. But Madame Commissioner may come yet.

2. THE BROADCASTERS

"THE IDEA OF RADIO as a mass entertainment backed by millions of dollars in capital was far beyond me."

This is the candid confession of John T. Schilling, general manager of WHB, Kansas City, who as a high school student experimented with a "rock-crusher" transmitter and later worked in Dr. Lee De Forest's New York laboratories side by side with I. R. Lounsberry, now general manager of WGR, Buffalo. Schilling's point is that he thought of radio merely as electrical experimentation. Many another founding father has said the same thing. They did not possess any data or information on which to conjure up the future social and cultural importance of broadcasting. It was not possible for them to guess that after 1927 advertisers would in 13 years pour over $500,000,000 into broadcasting, providing the practical means for the best and most diversified programs in all the world.

But there was at least one Jules Verne imagination in the field of the radio telephone. In 1916 David Sarnoff, then 25 years of age, wrote a letter to his superior at the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company in New York making this remarkable prophecy:

"I have in mind a plan of development which would

make radio a 'household utility' in the same sense as the piano or phonograph. The idea is to bring music into the home by wireless. . . . The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple 'Radio music box' and arranged for several different wavelengths which should be changeable with the throwing of a single switch . . . the same principle can be extended to receiving lectures at home; also events of national importance. Baseball scores can be transmitted by air. . . ."

Once the industry was launched pioneer broadcasters found themselves charting a difficult course by dead reckoning. Harrison Holliway, late general manager of KFI-KEGA, Los Angeles, was running KFRC in San Francisco in 1925. When he introduced "direct advertising" to finance his operations he heard his policy damned as spelling the doom of broadcasting.

A businessman named Powel Crosley, Jr., stepped into a Cincinnati store in 1921 to buy his young son "one of the new toys." The cheapest radiophone, as they were then called, was $130. This was pretty expensive for a boy's toy so Crosley bought the parts and built his son a set at home for $35. That fired his imagination. He began manufacturing the Harko, a set which sold for $20 and which started a trade revolution. In a year Crosley was making 500 of them every day. Meantime getting deeper into radio he began broadcasting from his home. Over and over he played a phonograph record, "Song of India," and asked all who heard it to telephone him. Six years later he had brought this home radio station, WLW, along the path, step by step, to 50,000 watts.

Loosely sketched, these were the historic cycles of radio's growth:

1. Radio as a Novelty (1919-1922). An epidemic of puttering and tinkering, of home-built sets, of "hams" exchanging messages into the wee hours, of "Yes, We Have No Bananas" heard far-off in Schenectady, of war-incubated and newspaper-nursed curiosity about wireless. (Wireless departments were circulation and advertising features of the same newspapers that came to hate radio some years later.)

2. Radio as a Profit Rainbow (1922-1926). Once the preliminaries of cross-licensing (of patents) were worked out the market boomed, radio shares skyrocketed, sets were sold by the millions. A new wonder produced new trademarks and new fortunes in America. To protect the sale of more millions of sets, tubes, parts, and storage batteries, organized program service was subsidized. Manufacturers, distributors, music and department stores, merchants, electrical schools established broadcasting stations. In 1926 the National Broadcasting Company was organized. Its first president, M. H. Aylesworth, frankly stated that NBC was a sales promotion adjunct to the Radio Corporation of America. RCA was, of course, both a manufacturer and a licensor of other manufacturers.

3. Radio as an Adolescent (1926-1936). Once radio ceased to be a child prodigy it entered the painful period of puberty. As an advertising medium it found itself in competition with the poised, experienced salesmen of magazines and newspapers. Radio spent ten years making surveys, writing brochures, trying to an-

swer the doubters. Radio felt, in these days, a sense of inferiority which it struggled to overcome. The embarrassment lingered as long as the dubious pioneer sponsors.

4. Radio as a Success (1936- ——). The success was already well established substantially before this date. Radio had stopped apologizing. It was solidly established. Newspapers and magazines left off jeering to begin fearing the newcomer. Radio's success files were by now laden with fairy tales, duly notarized.

Along the upward climb radio inevitably lost many a starter who couldn't go the distance. This shaking-out was a healthy part of the maturing process of the medium. It simply wouldn't do for some few of the more picturesque early squatters to continue to be greeted as comrades. John R. Brinkley and Norman Baker were soon sent packing off to the Mexican border to make a nuisance of themselves for another ten years. It is hardly a secret that there were early advertisers who were not properly housebroken and early station men who thought "public service" was about as important as a framed motto in a saloon.

After 1927 radio broadcasting gradually became an art. Before that it was one half miracle and one half nuisance, more noisy than entertaining, more fad of the moment than airwave of the future. Broadcasters were busier surviving than thinking. Many stations were on the barter system, literally trading time for canned goods and, in turn, paying off their hillbilly talent in succotash. There was not universal agreement that radio was either habit-forming or here to stay.

NBC gave a new prestige and corporate dignity to radio when it was formed in 1926 for NBC began life as big business. CBS, which was established a year later, was to undergo many vicissitudes. It was an upstart founded by promoters who promptly went broke. There was bumpy going ahead even for a long time after William S. Paley of the Philadelphia tobacco family took over the web.

Broadcast management naturally differs as between a network operating many kinds of services on a nationwide basis and a single station whose problems are essentially local. It is the networks that contact business, government, social organizations and social responsibility in the most immediately vital ways.

Nevertheless broadcast management in the case of local stations also has national problems. These include affiliation with a network, station efforts to attract national spot advertisers, and the station's relationship to those various Government departments and bureaus in Washington which, with varying degrees of plausibility, feel it essential to democracy that news of their special activities be regularly broadcast.

The FCC licenses local stations. It does not license networks although this has been urged by the networks. Of the four coast-to-coast networks, the Red and Blue of NBC, and CBS, are centralized service organizations in whose policies the affiliated stations have no direct vote. Member stations influence major decisions and policies of these networks only as public opinion influences, say, the major decisions of Congress. Mutual, as its name suggests, has a semi-co-operative organiza-

tion. It has a central group of stockholder-stations (WOR, New York, WGN, Chicago, the Don Lee group, etc.) which calculates and provides an operating budget each year. Mutual management by itself does not, under this method, show a profit. Nor does it have the control over its affiliates' time that has been a prime specification of NBC and CBS planning.

NBC and CBS are the chief channels through which the famous radio entertainments identified with Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Eddie Cantor, Kate Smith, Bing Crosby, Amos 'n' Andy, Phil Spitalny, Ben Bernie, Major Bowes, etc., are received by the public. Mutual, for a variety of reasons, has only an occasional entertainment of similar eminence. NBC and CBS have also been big enough to arrange and handle such cultural programs as the NBC Symphony with Arturo Toscanini, the New York Philharmonic, the Columbia School of the Air, America's Town Meeting of the Air, etc.

The effect of network enterprise, brains, bigness and resources upon local station management is one of the moot questions of American radio. It bears upon the question: is our radio system democratic in organization and in effect?

The networks, not the local stations, have made American broadcasting the leader in program standards for the whole world. We have more of everything and the most of the best. But even in this very virtue some social critics have seen inimical tendencies. Too many programs originate in New York, Hollywood, and Chicago. A scattering of points of origin would be more democratic, these social critics assert. Theoretically this

may be a valid point except that smaller cities cannot, or at least usually do not, create programs of a quality comparable with the standards of New York, Chicago, and Hollywood.

Among the 915 stations of the country, network key stations excepted, only a handful of local stations are fully organized and accustomed to produce first rate radio shows. The first and best of these surely is WLW, Cincinnati. WXYZ, Detroit, owned by the theater magnates, King and Trendle, has developed a highly successful program-building adjunct. KMBC in Kansas City, WLS and WGN in Chicago; WOR, New York; WSM, Nashville; WHO, Des Moines; WTIC, Hartford, have commendable records as creative radio showmen. Add to this list an occasional, isolated program of some distinction from stations in Seattle, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Denver, Omaha, St. Louis, Dallas, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, Rochester, Schenectady, Louisville, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore. These are not many among 900 stations.

Make out of it what you will in terms of democracy, the networks have supplied the driving force and the creative talent. They more than anybody else built American radio, they built in the virtues that are now there and then ripped out the worst original faults of the catch-as-catch-can era.

Naturally all of the numerous threads that go to make up a big network must be brought together into a harmonious design. Above the men and women of the operating sections with their astonishing special skills,

their incredibly diverse contacts, and their uniqueness are the men who must stand aside and see everything in perspective.

In the fullness of time network operations have been stabilized and something akin to standard practice worked out. Necessarily this varies from chain to chain. Each takes its personality from certain dominant executives. Plainly CBS reflects William S. Paley, Paul Kesten, Frank Stanton, Joseph Ream, Frank White, Larry Lowman, Douglas Coulter, Paul Hollister. They are the pacesetters. So, too, at NBC the organization is in some measure the mirror of certain men, notably David Sarnoff, he of the long experience, Niles Trammell, Frank Mullen, Roy Witmer, John Royal, James Rowland Angell, one-time president of Yale University. The Blue network that was and which now calls itself the American Broadcasting System is less clearly personality-branded due to numerous and frequent changes of executives. ABC came under the control of Edward Noble, the candy manufacturer. Its president is the former NBC treasurer, Mark Woods. The Mutual network, which tends increasingly to resemble the more "orthodox" networks in terms of organizational set-up, does still reflect out-of-New York influences. The student of Mutual affairs is conscious of the force of Col. Robert McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune*, of Lewis Allen Weiss of the Don Lee group of stations in California and other local broadcasters. Since 1944 Mutual has been captained by the shrewd, tradepaper-trained, NBC-graduated, contract-getting Edgar Kobak. He has brought into the Mutual business family such alumni

of NBC or ABC as Robert Swezey, E. P. H. James, Phillips Carlin.

No one can say how much influence on broadcasters is exercised, for example, by a little known group of station sales representatives (time brokers) who headquarter in New York and Chicago, men like Edward Petry, Joseph Weed, John Blair, Eugene Katz, Loren Watson, J. H. McGillvra, Paul Raymer, Fred Brokaw, George Hollingbery, the firm of Free & Peters.

The same might well be said for many of the Washington radio lawyers, men like Clarence Dill, Eliot Lovett, Phillip Loucks, Thomas P. Littlepage, Duke Patrick, Paul D. P. Spearman, Paul M. Segal.

Broadcasters have organized various protective associations apart from the industry's main trade body, the National Association of Broadcasters. In and out of the NAB there has, from 1922 onward, been intra-industry conflict between, say, affiliates and networks, clear channels and regional channels, big fellows and little fellows, major markets and rural hundred-watters. The industry has needed to adopt an industry attitude toward competitive advertising media, toward music performing rights societies, toward show business and particularly Hollywood film studios, toward the National Association of Manufacturers, toward labor unions, pressure groups, evangelists, discounts for cash and Father Coughlin.

The NAB elected honorary presidents from among its membership until 1938 when the practice of having a paid professional president was initiated with the selection of Nevel Miller, then famous as the broadcasting

mayor of flood-bound Louisville. Miller and James L. Fly, chairman of the FCC, conducted a classic quarrel before the eyes of delegates to the St. Louis convention of 1941. The current NAB president is Justin Miller (no relation) who was recruited from the Federal judiciary. His NAB salary is $50,000 a year.

The issues before successive NAB conventions have varied, the leading personalities have changed. Yesterday's firebrand is sometimes today's silent delegate. Prosperity has sweetened some of the malcontents. The war boom in advertising particularly had a mollifying effect. Yet there has persisted and no doubt will hereafter persist a continuing tension between "bigness" and "littleness" within the industry. The traditional enemy of the broadcasters, ASCAP, has been exorcised, at least for the immediately foreseeable future and there is a general expectancy that future NAB problems will be borne of new times and new threats. Mr. Petrillo and the Musicians Union are always present in the restless dreams of the radio men.

In respect to its own policies every network and every local station is pretty much a free agent yet all tend to recognize that in the public's mind radio is apt to be judged whole. Acts or policies that draw adverse comment draw it not upon the specific culprit but, too often, upon all broadcasters. This fact induces the careful element to prod the careless brethren to watch their step.

A fairly high order of everyday common sense and social conscience is required of radio men. The profession has needed and attracted some very bright minds. This

applies equally of course to the feminine contingent. Margaret Cuthbert, Judith Waller, Bertha Brainerd occupy posts of importance at NBC. Helen Siousset is Director of Talks, Marjorie Morrow is casting director, Lucille Singleton is Audition Supervisor, Elinor Inman is Director of Religious Broadcasts and Nila Mack a staff producer at CBS. Carol Irwin and Grace Johnson at ABC, Elsie Dick at Mutual, Bernice Judis, the manager of Station WNEW, New York City, are other prominent she-broadcasters. Advertising agencies employ many career women as directors, writers, time buyers and so on.

3. THE ADVERTISERS

LOOKING BACK at that melancholy year of depression, 1932, we recall the heavy mists of despondency, the opaque visibility overhanging the national track. We are astonished to note, in retrospect, that at least one horse was running at a steady gallop in that wet and heavy path. It was the great "mudder" among American industries, radio broadcasting. Let it rain, let it pour, bad times were good times for radio. Through the binoculars of incredulous observers the jockey was recognized as that flash from the newer Wall Street stables, packaged goods. Far behind in the slough down with a broken back was that older Wall Street favorite, capital goods. This mount with the colors of toothpaste, coffee, laxatives, quick gelatin, cigarettes, wonder-suds and patented hair-goo was a streak of promise in a lethargic field. In the grandstands the publishers of newspapers and magazines felt ill. But businessmen watched radio coming through with curious interest.

Tell us, they said later, more about this radio.

It is typical, is it not, of private enterprise under a liberal economy to turn from discredited methods and dried-up markets to try new methods and to seek new markets? The businessmen listened entranced to the saga of Amos 'n' Andy. They heard with amazement

how from affection and loyalty to this blackface pair hundreds of thousands of healthy, unspotted American throats were being drenched nightly in Pepsodent antiseptic. They heard that millions considered radio entertainment a great boon in their otherwise drab lives, that they showered gratitude upon make-believe characters and suffered in real suspense until tomorrow explained some make-believe predicament.

How long, oh how long, said quite conservative businessmen, has this been going on?

One national advertiser, spending millions of dollars annually in newspapers, magazines and billboards, went on the air finally but insisted that the singers on its radio program should not pass from lyrics into recitative. Spoken lines were dialogue, ruled the sponsor, adding that dialogue was show business and the company was not in show business. It was presenting a concert.

It is, of course, a first truth of broadcasting under advertising sponsorship that the sponsor is using showmanship without being a showman and is not, save as an inescapable incident, in the entertainment business. Indeed the businessman, and especially his banker, has such a highly conditioned aversion to intangibles that the emotional appeal upon which radio rests is not attractive. Conservative businessmen frown upon their colleagues who occasionally back Broadway shows. Such men are often considered profligates and often are. A hundred prejudices and doubts were implicit in the business community when radio salesmen first began to make the rounds.

Radio needed to represent an overwhelming tempta-

tion to the self-interest of advertisers in order to outweigh the pronounced reluctance of cautious management to embark upon ventures involving actresses and comics.

Through the years there has been heard a certain amount of rather vague criticism of the fact that radio sponsor's motives were not philantrophic. Perhaps because there was so much original emphasis upon the "radio music box," because the term "concert" was so freely employed to describe radio programs, and because some few early entertainment features were cooperatively supported by voluntary contributions, the idea took root that radio programs should be financed somewhat like symphony orchestras whose annual deficits are absorbed by subscribers. In the very early Twenties the discussions concerning program underwriting were pretty confusing. Most of the proposals at that period lacked the virtue of general application and the vitality of self-interest.

Granted that the United States has, and wishes to retain, an economy based on private enterprise with grudging surrender of a few of its functions to the Government as dire necessity may occasionally require, it does seem perfectly logical, and definitely American, to expect social benefits (i.e. a superior program service) to result from the more or less free interplay of buyer and seller and broker. To the charge that progressive and provocative items can have little place in the schedules of a radio system bound to the service of and inevitably influenced by the philosophy of business the answer is (1) that it hasn't worked out that way,

and (2) that the art of democracy itself is to balance and offset this kind of danger which arises everywhere, not alone in radio.

It was not mere conservatism in taste nor resistance to innovation that dictated that Great Britain's radio system should be financed by taxes on receiving sets. Great Britain's choice of method and control were fundamental to reasons of state. On our side these demanding reasons of state largely did not exist in the early Twenties.

Britain in the early Twenties, as perhaps always, was highly sophisticated and perceptive of propaganda possibilities. Painfully elaborate but not entirely reassuring steps to create a new balance of power in Europe would necessarily color the thinking of the Cabinet and of Parliament toward radio. What would or might the trouble-making continental nations do with radio? What about radio and the problems of domestic politics at home? Did the Government owe an obligation to the radio point of view of the press Lords? Finally, but most of all, what means this new thing to the Empire?

But as for the often-heard assertion that Englishmen out of sheer Englishness would never, never, never tolerate advertising in their castles and flats it should be remarked that the press Lords did not allow the truth of this theory to be tested. It should be recalled that many prominent men in the United States, including Herbert Hoover, vehemently asserted that Americans out of sheer Americanness never, never, never would tolerate salesmanship in the parlor. Englishmen are at least as toughen-up-able as Yankees, so they, too, might

have gradually come to love the entertainments and not to mind the commercials overmuch. We do know that from 1935 to 1939 there were English language advertising programs on Radio Luxembourg and Radio Normandie. In those easterly and southerly counties of England which were within the adequate signal areas of these continental stations Englishmen revealed a normal willingness to listen to commercial programs and a normal tendency to purchase the goods thus called to their attention.

The outbreak of war snuffed out Luxembourg and Normandie and thereby ended the paradox of a $3,000,000-a-year commercial broadcasting industry operating out of London (by transcriptions) and supported by British business houses.

The trouble with the American radio sponsor has not been his motives—more trade being a social good—but his narrow understanding of why radio is a great medium. The broadcasters, and notably the networks, were obliged patiently to educate advertisers not to abuse the privilege of addressing the masses in their parlors. Some crude merchandisers behaved, or wanted to behave, like stooges in a Joe Cook musical, swinging from the chandeliers and poking holes in the upholstery. It took a lot of tact and a lot of eloquence to make the aggressive businessman not only overcome his inherent dislike of entertainment by itself but to hold back and not open the throttle wide once he decided to take a chance.

However it must be acknowledged that many corporations were exceedingly polite in their radio manners

and held their programs to a quality level from the beginning. Indeed some of the more genteel business establishments were almost too refined and their radio presentations may have overshot public taste.

The networks quite early in their histories developed rules for acceptable copy. Every year or two these "codes" were revised. More and more practices were outlawed. It was the networks' motto and the networks' job to sell their clients the idea that good broadcasting was good business and bad broadcasting (i.e. broadcasting not in the public interest) was not good business for the advertiser.

The high pressure merchandisers were often devoted to the added touch, the extra paragraph. They wanted to be sure that radio advertising was clear, loud, repetitious. They pounded, they shouted, they said it again. And they wanted mail. "Send in a boxtop," said the announcer. It was a method of demonstrating what the trade calls "proof of sale."

But even when willing to acknowledge the merchandising potency of radio many businessmen still were loathe to make the plunge. Neither they nor their advertising counsel felt any confidence in their judgment about entertainment appeal. The networks did not have an imposing record in the matter of selecting or producing popular radio shows for sponsors. Program producing responsibility increasingly fell upon the buyer of time. To his qualms about the medium itself was added the greater dilemma of showmanship. As early as 1929 one third of all the sponsored programs were being prepared by advertising agencies. Five years later

approximately 80% of all production of advertising shows on the networks was in the hands of the agencies.

It was not surprising that many advertisers sought safe middle ground between their appreciation of radio as a sales aid and their acute reluctance to gamble with unpredictable entertainment formulae. It was a flight from showmanship that turned them to sponsoring time signals, chain-break announcements, baseball or football play-by-play, news flashes and similar radio services entailing few production responsibilities.

Early radio programs doted upon "clubs" among their listeners. Advertisers issued cards, scrolls, diplomas, buttons, badges, hats, holsters, magic rings and whatnot. Children, of course, were especially fond of the mystic abracadabra of lodges and secret societies of which the Foodtown Pops Pirate Club, the Iodent Big Brothers, the Kremel Dessert Gang, the Lone Wolf Tribe and Scoop Ward Press clubs were representative.

During the Twenties it was fairly common for a radio advertiser to go before the microphone and broadcast his message personally as a fire sale merchant publishes a picture of himself in his full-page advertisement. Needless to say broadcasters were confronted with every shade of business ego and business ethics and had to devise restraints to keep the medium in the public interest. It was the profound conviction of many an early customer of radio that no hired announcer could possibly put the soul-feeling into the description of the goods that the boss could do. Thus early commercials were often rendered with every ounce of feeling the sponsor

could summon. The message was right from the horse's mouth.

It was in Baltimore (and it deserves to be preserved as a revealing incident) that a self-broadcasting sponsor paused in his soliloquy one evening a decade ago to rebuke the first three rows of the invited audience for squirming in their seats. Whereupon the whole impatient studio audience answered the windy gentleman with a spontaneous throaty Baltimore oriole.

A Detroit automobile manufacturer was not content with three shouted descriptions of the many charms and virtues of the Whoozis car by the regular announcer. In addition the whole plot took place in a Whoozis sales room. The hero was a Whoozis salesman and all the complications involved closing contracts for Whoozis cars. If he made his quota it was understood that the slap-happy salesman-hero would win the hand of the boss's daughter and raise a lot of little Whoozises.

To evoke public gratitude demands an expert. And the history of radio during the Thirties was liberally dotted with professionals uniquely and splendidly endowed by nature with the qualities of voice and manner and personality that are the organ-stops of super-salesmanship. One of these, perhaps more remarkable than typical, was jovial, roly-poly, deep-voiced Smilin' Ed McConnell, a big fellow in size, and pictured to the radio audience as having a heart as large as a watermelon. Smilin' Ed (he drops all g's) is a singer of hymns and chin-up songs and a teller of simple everyday stories of brave people and good. Above all he speaks in the idiom of the unpretentious people who are the

backbone of the country. For "you" Smilin' Ed says "ya" and for "your" he pronounces "yer." He sees to it that nobody could mistake him for other than a plain, simple man. There is a snowstorm of orders practically guaranteed to any businessman who sponsors Smilin' Ed.

The businessman, remember, has been worried for every costly minute ticked off on the studio clock. He has been thinking of what all this folderol of music, ingenues, orchestras, arrangers and comedians was costing his company. He was over-emphatic that the advertising —his only excuse for shooting the bankroll this way— should be loud and long. In addition to his own qualms the sponsor has always been exposed to unnerving taunts like the famous sneer of a magazine publisher: "Men who back shows are called angels . . . it isn't a business, just a gamble . . . talent is limited and high-priced . . . angels, you will remember, are pure spirits quite uninterested in material rewards."

It took courage and vision on the part of the networks to insist that such jittery gentry as sponsors should not assuage their own private doubts by compensating excesses on the air. It sometimes meant turning down business. Network management broke the heart of its own salesmen on many an occasion. Don't ask a salesman to take a long view. He's got a contract in his pocket that cries for signature.

It was a nervous cigarette company president who barred the song, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" with the comment "there is nothing unpleasant about this brand." A ginger ale company struck out "Shine, Little Glow Worm" because some official thought "it might

lead listeners to suspect our ginger ale has worms." The milk executive who deleted "The Old Oaken Bucket" from the repertory, gave the explanation: "My milk is not watered." A coal dealer similarly had an author eliminate a scene of boys throwing rocks. It offended him because "his coal was pure; no rocks in it." A script reference to scarlet fever was bluepenciled by the manufacturer of a well known brand of baked beans with this marginal annotation: "might create bad taste in mouth that otherwise might be watering for beans."

A radio time salesman doesn't believe in ghosts but he is apt to believe that sponsors are a special kind of creature, their blood being royal, thin and easily chilled. It is the salesman who created the lush setting in modern radio studios that provides sponsors with special deference, hip-deep divans, express elevators, velvet ropes, instant recognition by all uniformed menials. NBC, for one, has ruled that the official temperature in the client's glass-enclosed mezzanine shall be 72 degrees.

Today the best brains, or at least the best rewards, of broadcasting are devoted to advertising: getting it, keeping it, servicing it, measuring it, glorifying it. Sponsored radio programs do not all have the same objectives but the total purposes of radio salesmanship may be summed up as:

To sell goods, services, trademarks, quality, integrity, price and/or the social usefulness, standards, past record, or niceness of an industry, a corporation, a controlling group or family; and/or to impress jobbers and dealers, offset competitors already using radio, inspire

field staffs and ease the way and enhance the prestige of representatives and product alike.

The Jack Benny program sells Jello, Kate Smith sells Grapenuts, Easy Aces sell Anacin. Here is a clear-cut, simple, readily understood setup whereby packaged goods manufacturers utilize radio entertainment to attract large audiences in order to imprint trade names and impulses to buy upon the public's collective consciousness. The competitive spur is sharp and pressing in the fields of prepared desserts, breakfast foods, remedies, soaps, cigarettes, gasolines, etc.

To illustrate other types of radio sponsorship: the Ontario Travel Bureau, Thomas Cook & Sons, the Mexican Government, the Illinois Central Railroad have used American radio to attract tourists. In other words to influence vacation decisions. Wheeling Steel has found radio helpful in creating cordial employee relations while also spreading the trademark of the company. The United States of Brazil sponsored Drew Pearson and Robert Allen to sell not a brand of coffee but the Brazilian crop. The Florida Citrus Commission and the Sunkist co-operative of California have radio-ballyhooed seasonal growths. In many communities the local banks have sought good will and better understanding by sponsoring programs. So, too, with electric light and gas companies. In Buffalo the bar association sponsored a program to present lawyers in a more favorable light than the gangster mouthpieces had provided. Atlantic Refining went into broadcasting originally for the frankly stated reason that radio identification was a necessity of its prestige in the oil distribution field.

WOR, New York once had an unusual customer, the Isola Lithograph Company, which sold nothing to the public directly but used radio to attract printing orders from Catholic sources. A Pennsylvania corset company sponsored East and Dumke primarily to create good will for its saleswomen who operated on a house-to-house call basis. Radio's job was to assure the saleswomen a welcome, to build confidence in quality and integrity in the prospective purchaser.

Few sponsors, as such, are known to the general public. George Washington Hill of the American Tobacco Company is one. His imperious will extends into the realm of radio where he knows what he wants sometimes down to the last cymbal crash by the orchestra. He has often tested the tempo of the music by dancing in the control room. There is not much doubt that all of the several radio broadcast series sponsored by Henry and Edsel Ford were a reflection of their personal tastes. The veteran "Voice of Firestone" program was definitely in the quiet, dreamy musical idiom favored by Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Firestone, Sr., and no subordinate was ever allowed to put an impious hand upon the program.

For ten years the Carborundum Company of Niagara Falls broadcast a series on CBS each winter in which one element of the program, a talk on the Indian lore of upstate New York, was the personal hobby of the advertising manager, Francis Bowman, who personally delivered the talks. When the Pepperell Company of Atlanta went on some 35 NBC stations the sponsor offered, against the advice of its advertising counsel, the sermons of a Georgia clergyman, Dr. Karl Rieland.

Although sponsor anecdotes are fairly abundant in the broadcasting trade it would be exuberant to suggest that personal eccentricity or preference is more than occasionally a dominant factor of influence. The typical sponsor is not a person but a board of directors. Company attitude toward radio as toward all problems of business strategy is impersonal in the extreme.

The most publicized case of supposed imposition by an industrialist of his personal economic philosophy through the medium of his own radio program is, of course, the practice of Henry Ford of incorporating a talk by his spokesman, William J. Cameron, on his Sunday night concerts. Labor unions particularly have protested that this was an undemocratic practice.

It is charged from time to time that sponsored news analysts are biased on certain issues. The western isolationists constantly raised the cry that radio commentators were personally pro-British in the war. Which was undoubtedly true. But that the commentators and their sponsors planned and plotted to lead America into war on the side of Britain is an exaggeration and an absurdity that only a fanatic could swallow. The fact that research groups all the way from social science and public affairs schools to Communist muckrakers are constantly checking the scripts of commentators is by itself a good guarantee that no full-scale plot to poison the wells of information could long succeed. The news commentator speaks his piece under the cold glare of hostility and woe to him if he attempts offside practices.

This is not to say that authentic cases of leaning one way or another to please a sponsor have not occurred.

One newscaster quoted frequently during the 1940 campaign from the political editorials of a rural publication without revealing to his radio audience, as good democracy and good ethics seemed to demand, that the owner of the farmer's voice was his sponsor, who was no farmer but a principal backer of one of the major political parties.

However, in general advertisers are neither so naïve nor clumsy as to attempt to deliberately color the day's news when every vigilante of the Administration, of network management, of political opposition and of business competition would pounce upon them and flay them in public. Advertisers have primarily sponsored news commentators because, and only because of, Adolf Hitler and all he and his world revolution connotate in eager and universal American interest in news.

Not to "influence" the news but to "exploit" general public interest in the news, fees from $500 to $3,000 have been paid by sponsors to such authorities as Raymond Gram Swing, Dorothy Thompson, Elmer Davis, Gabriel Heatter, Edwin C. Hill, Hans Von Kaltenborn, Johannes Steel, John Gunther, Hendrik Van Loon, and others.

[II] WHAT

4. FOLKWAYS

WHAT IS BROADCAST bears a natural relationship to who broadcasts. All sorts of restrictions and censorships everywhere curtail the privilege of public statement. Networks and stations insist upon advance scrutiny of speeches to protect themselves from unwittingly becoming co-defendants in actions for slander. Politicians and propagandists, especially in elections or during great, bitterly fought national debates as on the Lend-Lease policy, must be kept under sharp scrutiny by the broadcasters since they, the broadcasters, are responsible under law as the on-the-spot representatives of democracy. Intemperate, unconscionable partisans will depart from their prepared text on occasion and at such moments the broadcaster must decide, and decide instantly, whether to cut the offender off the air and run the risks of the hullabaloo of "persecution" that will surely follow or to wink at the breach and suffer the alternative consequences.

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

The sharecrop evil must be treated with an almost ludicrous diplomacy in the South while lynching and jimcrowism probably cannot be seriously debated on the average Dixie outlet at this time although a few surprisingly frank network discussions have been disseminated in the South recently.

All of us have overheard the right of free speech being abridged in a dozen ways:

In the home . . . "Oh, shut up" . . .
In the office . . . "Hire a hall" . . .
On the soapbox . . . "I'll punch you in the nose" . . .
In the auditorium . . . "Boo. . . ." . . .

The man who stutters suffers a definite loss of free speech throughout life. The man who fumbles for words does, too. The man who is vulgar or lewd is shushed in public. The bore loses his audience. The fanatic is frequently deprived not only of his free speech but of his freedom as well. Tolerance varies in degree with the section, the season, the mood. It runs thin when strikes and lockouts overcloud a community. Do not look for an abstract ideal like free speech when bayonets and tinhats are around. Tempers and passion, cruelty and profit make a medley of madness in which the voice of sweet reason is not heard.

Free speech is a valid ideal. It is justly celebrated. It should be taken seriously and intelligent safeguards should be devised. But free speech is also something that has to be lived with in radio as elsewhere.

The Federal Trade Commision cracks down fairly frequently on advertisers whose claims cannot bear the

inspection of scientific tests, and the punitive powers of the Federal Communications Commission are invoked once in a while against some notorious provincial who is dull of comprehension where public interest is involved. Slowly and laboriously the machinery of democratic disapproval and ejection catches up with the dim-wit who can't take a hint but will take a chance. A death sentence is imposed upon his station which thereafter is heard no more.

It was an earlier FCC chairman, the late Anning S. Prall, who once told a convention of broadcasters that the FCC would not provide a detailed blueprint of operating principles to guide radio stations. Any broadcaster who lacked the inherent wit and imagination to judge, and judge correctly, what was or was not in the public interest did not possess as a gift from God and his parents the intellectual competence to enjoy the privilege of a radio license. And the privilege would be taken from him.

Some FCC commissioners and radio lawyers deplore the fact that the FCC does not apparently have more discretionary powers under law to punish stations short of the severity of complete revocation. There is a natural reluctance to destroy a man's business altogether and on occasion a three-day suspension of the station, or some similar punishment, would perhaps serve democracy just as well while tempering justice with charity.

During the first 20 years of its existence radio did gradually acquire a trade lore of cautions and *verbotens*. Some of these were presently in writing. Despite Prall's declaration and the FCC's traditional aversion to being

specific, the FCC did at long last formalize in words certain minimums of public interest.

It decreed that having sold or given time to one political party or one representative group of citizens for the discussion of campaign or special controversial matters there was an obligation under public interest for a station to make available equal opportunities to other parties and other representative groups. On another occasion in a report detailing the most common types of complaints it receives from the public, the FCC suggested rather than ruled the following as "not in the public interest":

1. Fortune telling,
2. Astrology,
3. Solicitation of funds,
4. False, fraudulent and misleading advertisements,
5. Defamatory statements,
6. Refusal to give equal opportunity for discussion of controversial subjects,
7. Programs bordering on obscenity or indecency,
8. Programs offending religious sensibilities,
9. Programs in which the station takes sides on political, religious or racial questions,
10. Liquor advertising,
11. Children's programs of "cliffhanger" type,
12. Programs in which a concert is interrupted for advertising announcements,
13. Programs containing too much advertising,
14. Too many recorded programs.

Following a suggestion made the year before by David Sarnoff, president of the Radio Corporation of Amer-

ica, the seventeenth annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters on July 11, 1939, adopted a code for the whole industry and also set up a standing committee to facilitate industry-wide compliance. The NAB code included percentage scales to limit total advertising minutes in respect to total program minutes. It added hand-writing analysis, schools offering questionable promises of employment, matrimonial agencies, racetrack tipster publications, inducements to financial speculation, and offers of "home-work" to the list of undesirable radio material.

While the industry has not followed and does not now follow uniform practice, and while some stations and some sections are more lax or more liberal depending on the point of view, there is fairly widespread recognition that it is not in the public interest to accept advertising of painless dentists, mysterious herbs, pills purporting to cure stomach ulcers, anything offered as effective in serious ailments, depilatories, face rejuvenators, obesity treatments. There is also general agreement that the broadcaster is responsible for advertising copy of any sizz-phiz, aspirin by-product, cathartic, etc. so that exaggerated or obnoxious phrasing shall not be broadcast.

There are certain obvious must-nots of broadcasting dictated by taste. American radio does not discuss birth control, miscarriage, or rape. Those Victorian hush-words, syphilis and gonnorhea, have been cautiously pronounced over the air from time to time since the precedent was finally established in 1936. Responsible broadcasters will not permit over-graphic advertising

phrases. In the early days of radio copy-writing people with colds frankly "hawked up mucus" and people who wished to be socially popular were informed they "should guard against rancid body sweat."

Radio may not use "hell" or "damn" as expletives nor speak of "wops," "dagos," "coons," "chinks," etc. In gangster stories radio may not describe methods of cracking safes, using burglar tools or otherwise give free lessons in the craftsmanship of crime.

In narrative, parental authority may not be attacked or mocked. Religious views or racial traits may not be alluded to. Recklessness is not supposed to be passed off as adventure. References to cocaine, "hop," "reefers," "muggles" and so on are banned completely.

At Broadcasting House in London production personnel concerned with entertainment also have a quick-glance list. Since the BBC is non-advertising in policy some of its prohibitions do not exist in the U. S. A. The British must-nots include mentions of:

Proprietary articles and business names,
Religion (including spiritualism),
Scriptural quotations,
Public personalities,
Marital infidelity,
Effeminacy in men,
Immorality of any kind,
Physical infirmities or deformities, including blindness, deafness, stammering, cross-eyes,
Painful or fatal diseases,
Unnecessary emphasis upon drunkenness,
"Niggers" for negroes or "chinks" for Chinese.

All American network and many local program directors and announcers are equipped with a handbook to refresh their memories and guide their decisions.

The networks strictly edit the titles and lyrics of popular songs. The Columbia Broadcasting System, for example, has banned

"When You Were A Smile on your Mother's Lips"
"Horsie, Keep your Tail Up"
"Religion Ain't Nothin' to Play With"
"She Lived Next Door to the Firehouse"
"Don't Never Do That, You Nasty Man"
"Fooling With Another Woman's Man"

In the Cole Porter song the line "I get a kick out of cocaine" was radio-purified to read "some like perfume from Spain."

The late Thirties were marked by abnormal, neurotic group sensitivities. In a harmless radio skit a nurse called her patient "Toots" whereupon, highly indignant, a professional association of nurses solemnly passed a resolution asserting that nurses never address their patients as "Toots."

There is seldom any argument about the extreme cases. Most people will instantly recognize an infraction of obvious taste or decency or democratic good will toward all men. Indeed a line, a passage, a program, an attitude that is conspicuously off-key will shock the ear, jar the innate sense of propriety of the people. They will know, and all who are in attunement with the people will generally know, that a *faux pas* has been committed.

But we must understand that there is a wide zone

between the universally condemned behavior of vulgar, vicious, nasty or blindly acquisitive mentalities and the opposite extreme of perhaps over-demanding daintiness and refinement. Our radio system is probably healthy because on the whole it reflects neither extreme.

A close study of radio programs will turn up strange items. Critical judgment may often stumble because there is no way to predict all the maverick strains in an audience of 75,000,000 or more listeners. Quite silly entertainments lacking in merit and any plausible expectation of providing general pleasure will on occasion pick out of the vast radio audience a bloc of pleased listeners sufficiently large to make the program a commercial success. In such confusing circumstances it would be a cocksure person indeed who would draw too rabid conclusions. Nevertheless it may remain a fact, fully valid by normal standards of judgment, that the program was thoroughly and incontestably of a shallow and insipid silliness, a mediocrity of the deepest dye.

Consider the apparently confusing unpredictability of Biblical references over the air. A negro comic, Eddie Green, whose comedy has no sex implications, lampooned Adam and Eve without evoking any reaction whatever. It was considered innocuous. Only a few weeks later Mae West handled the identical subject and the hue and cry went up charging her, Standard Brands and NBC with blasphemy. Impersonating a jilted woman pathetically awaiting a telephone call that did not come, Miriam Hopkins in a radio monologue by Dorothy Parker sobbingly addressed a plea to God to send back her man.

Apparently because it concerned sex this piece was widely criticized by church people as sacrilegious. Arch Oboler's radio playlet "The Signal" was six times revised by broadcasters and finally never was presented because it was written as a dialogue between Christ and Mussolini, most of Christ's lines being taken from scripture.

Men of the theater supposed that they knew from their own experience and scattered incidents in radio itself that Biblical incidents and characters were invariably hazardous to handle in dramatic form. There were so many unforseeable opportunities of innocently giving offense. There were scholarly anachronisms and sectarian dogma to fear as a pilot fears hidden rocks in a river channel. The stage and the screen and radio seemed agreed that scripture was always fictionized at grave danger of being either (a) a financial failure in which nobody is interested or (b) a source of friction, protest and boycott. Yet with all this backlog of experience to suggest otherwise, one daytime radio serial, "Light of the World," has broadcast with definite popularity a series that has taken astounding literary liberties with scriptural incidents and has, moreover, told the story of the Old Testament in the modern, slangy American English of the soap operas. "Don't tell me again what the serpent said," shouted Adam at the dinner table, "I'm tired of hearing about him." And at the end of the installment the announcer aroused the listeners to contemplate this immemorial problem: "Did Eve do wrong? Was she too much the mother in seeking to protect her child? Tune in tomorrow for the next chapter

of 'Light of the World' brought to you every day Monday through Friday by the makers of Softasilk Flour."

In the beginning, according to Genesis, there was nothing. But in the beginning, according to the radio version, there was a two minute commercial for General Mills. But is anybody offended? Is there any protest, any threat of boycott? To the contrary. Only a handful of aesthetes are shocked by the use of sacred text to sell a commercial product. The advertising line "our flour is made by the same careful methods of the millers in the times of the saints" does not apparently seem incongruous to either clergy or laity.

Crusading of the underworld exposé type has been attempted by a number of radio stations. During the Prohibition era one radio announcer in Detroit was murdered. In Cleveland some years later a mystery voice began broadcasting names and addresses of gambling dens, brothels, and other illicit establishments. The broadcasts were a tremendous local sensation but presently one night a bomb ripped away the front porch from the home of the station owner. The crusade stopped pronto. In Pittsburgh, on another occasion a radio commentator rocked the boat a bit with vice disclosures that were detailed and embarrassing.

Among broadcasters there will be found individuals who have a well-developed sense of a mission in life to encourage the virtuous and oppose the sinful. It runs contrary to their natures to refrain from using their own radio stations to speak out. They are non-partisan under compulsion of their fellow-broadcasters and they hate it. Mencken has written that "every third American de-

votes himself to improving and lifting up his fellow-citizens."

For nine years Station WQAM in Miami, Florida, broadcast "to interest listeners in giving more thought to subjects which closely concern their welfare and the welfare of the community and state." The station's president, Fred Borton, wrote or edited most of the material and Phil Kelleher read it over the air as "The WQAM News Commentator."

The program urged curtailment of gambling and spoke against laxity in police enforcement. It remonstrated continuously against drunken driving and recklessness. It campaigned for a wild life sanctuary in South Florida. It took a position against price fixing in milk and dry cleaning. It harped on uneven distribution of state taxes. It endorsed removal of downtown railroad tracks and slum clearance for whites and negroes. It stressed meetings and movements for greater tolerance. It fought and got action against obscene magazines on newsstands.

Remember, this was leadership by the station, the exercise of editorial comment by the licensee himself. This station was "for" and it was against specific practices in the community. For nine years it gave articulation to the personal views of Fred Borton.

In June, 1939, the program was discontinued so that WQAM could conform to the new code of the National Association of Broadcasters which denies to a broadcaster the right to use his station as a medium for editorializing.

The industry as a whole has felt that a radio station

ought to be a platform for others, never for itself. While stations frequently take the initiative in non-partisan community activities, i.e. charitable drives or emergencies, in general they sidestep anything that could be represented as advocacy of one side of a controversy.

5. TECHNIQUES

NOT SNIFFS AND SNAILS and puppy dog tails but

WORDS
MUSIC
SOUND EFFECTS
SILENCE

are what radio programs are made of, listing the ingredients in the order of their importance. Only silence perhaps requires any explanation here. Silence, or the pregnant pause, is a legitimate device for conveying emotional effects and accents and while not much used it should be included among the components of a broadcast program.

The whimsical Eric Barnouw has calculated that there are some 17,000 radio programs broadcast every day in the United States and he has broken them down into 20,000,000 words, or more radio words every day than all the words in all the plays produced on Broadway in ten years.

The sheer mechanics of cataloging jokes for radio was vividly illustrated by the late David Freedman's incredible file of 300,000 cross-indexed gags, of which he rated 60,000 Grade A humor.

Network data show that comedy programs are only 2.8% of all the programs, not surprising considering the

scarcity and cost of comedians and comedy material. There is 58% music in radio programs, this estimate including casual as well as preponderant usage. Drama represents about 18% of the broadcast schedule of the "webs," the daylight hours being fairly solid with serials. "Talks," 9.7%, constitute one chief network contribution to public interest.

In general, radio programs, national and local alike, fall into six broad categories:

1. Advertising programs,
2. Would-be advertising programs,
3. Organizational collaborations,
4. Government programs,
5. Special events programs,
6. Fillers.

The advertising programs are, we know, the life-blood of networks and local stations alike. Advertising maintains the velocity of privately operated broadcasting. Because it is to the self-interest of advertisers to have fine shows, radio builds up big audiences; because the broadcaster's own self-interest in big audiences is engaged he has a double reason for guarding the quality of programs. Q.E.D. good programs attract big audiences and big audiences attract good programs, and together these two realities provide a method to meet Government standards but stay free of Government control. Networks derive enough from the sale of their time to pay dividends to their stockholders on the one hand and plow back large sums into sustaining programs, engineering experimentation, etc., on the other.

Would-be advertising programs are those programs

which are being groomed for sponsorship but which often fail of that ardently desired fate due to (1) an excess of wishful thinking and (2) false markmanship in aiming at particular persons (advertisers) instead of at people (customers).

Organizational collaborations embody the most significant and intelligent expansions of the concept of public interest by broadcast management in recent years and we shall say much more about them in a moment.

Government programs, which partially overlap with organizational collaborations may be summarized as one by-product of everything that has happened in the U. S. A. since the débâcle of 1932.

The sixth program category, filler, as its name suggests, includes the nondescript items: stand-by tenors, pianists, organists, tired interviews, who-cares banquets and whatnot.

It is hardly a secret that broadcasters have not been altogether happy about the considerable multiplication in recent years of radio programs produced by Government departments, bureaus, authorities, administrations, committees, commissions and offices. Broadcasters fear that one-sided, pro-administration propaganda creeps into such programs like a camel into an Arab's tent, a little at first but all the way in the end. However, a few of the Government programs have been first rate in quality and Government programs seem, if not too numerous and if not abused, a democratic way in which certain kinds of information can be effectively communicated to the public.

Early in 1940 the petroleum industry's Washington

lookouts created some embarrassment by finger-pointing at the Department of the Interior and charging that unfair radio dramatizations had grossly stacked the cards in favor of the Department and against the oil business. A Congressional committee, that did nothing about it, was told that the Department of Interior radio script had used melodrama unethically. Wags promptly nicknamed the Secretary Orson Ickes.

The networks in national terms and the individual stations in local terms have gradually perfected the rudiments of a technique for making their public interest demonstrable to the FCC under the rules of evidence. NBC, for example, has established in recent years regular working relationships with at least one hundred civic, artistic, pedagogic and other organizations. Occasional or regular series of broadcasts are presented under co-sponsorship. The National Council of Women organized a "Quilting Bee" with actress Peggy Wood as mistress. The Twentieth Century Fund dramatized economics in "The Next Step Forward." Cesar Saerchinger spoke on "The News Behind the Headlines" under the credentials of the American Historical Association. Another non-profit organization, the American Law Institute, treated the crime problem in "Youth in the Toils."

Other co-sponsorships have existed with the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the Federal Council of Churches, The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Vocational Guidance Association, Phi Beta Kappa, the Smithsonian Institution, et al.

Statistics-minded Protestants have reported that during the history of network broadcasting free radio facilities have been granted to 1,143 different clergymen. The Catholics in turn state that 85 individual station hours are devoted to live network programs every week and that stations augment this by 52 local Catholic quarter hours, 60 half hours, 12 full hours, and 28 local Catholic broadcasts of miscellaneous character.

The Catholics under unified episcopacy have perhaps better been able to plan intelligently and utilize their radio opportunities than the divided and disputatious Protestants. The Catholic Hour on NBC has been heard every Sunday for 12 years, lately on 101 stations. The Catholics average two programs a month on Columbia's Church of the Air program and have a four-months' series annually on the NBC Blue entitled "Call to Youth." Some 17 stations between Massachusetts and Illinois carry a Polish language "Rosary Hour" and the Yankee network in New England has a "Catholic Question Box."

The Missouri Synod of the Lutherans has made vigorous utilization on a paid time basis of the Mutual network. Jehovah's Witnesses, the Brooklyn sect founded by Pastor Russell and guided in recent years by Judge Rutherford, had over 300 stations on its radio transcription list some years ago. But this group's aggressive proselytizing evoked resentments and incidents around the country and many broadcasters have long since refused to accept the cult's contracts or cash. A station in Seattle some years ago published a newspaper apology and disclaimer for one zealously sectarian broad-

cast by the Witnesses. An organization calling itself Psychiana, with headquarters in Moscow, Idaho, was familiar to stations during the Thirties.

The churchman is, by his very interest in souls and converts, alert to showmanship, or the art of attracting an audience. We know that the professional theater itself is an outgrowth of the clergymen of antiquity who followed the habit of dramatizing temple dogma with the aid of sacred impersonations by priests and priestesses. Nothing is more plausible than a modern clergyman's appreciation of radio as a means of reaching people. The men of God would, without fearing any challenge, assume their right to consider religion definitely within the protection and the benefits inherent in the Government's demand that stations serve the public interest. Churchmen contend that if religious groups are willing to shoulder the expense of production involved in certain types of religious programs then they, the churchmen, are rendering a favor to the broadcaster in helping him perform his public service duty.

Edward J. Heffron, executive secretary of the National Council of Catholic Men, has stated the free time thesis in these words: "It is my sincere opinion that the general good would be served if all religious radio programs were presented on free time . . . it would provide the best protection against those people who want to buy time on the air with the sole purpose of raising money." On the Protestant side Frank Goodman, radio expert of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, testifies that in his 18 years of experience with

radio problems "the most serious problem always was the conflicting ideas of how religion should be presented over the air."

NBC has one policy: it assigns stated periods to Catholics, Protestants and Jews and, subject to a few fundamental limitations upon sectarian bias, allows each group to devise its own preferred type of broadcast. CBS has another policy: it alternates the opportunity to broadcast over its network between the various churches on a basis of their numerical size in the country as a whole. The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago which operates WMBI there has emphasized through Harold L. Lundquist the absolute necessity of sects to maintain "proper consideration and kindliness to those of other faiths."

Many clergymen have felt that the church of origin should be publicized on any religious broadcast. In other words they have wanted denominational emphasis. However, the general policy of broadcasters and most churchmen is in the direction of non-sectarianism. It has been realized that thousands of casual listeners will stay tuned in to a clergyman of another faith only so long as sectarian advantage or sectarian bias does not mar the tone of spirituality.

Typically American perhaps, and certainly a sample of democracy in a delicate field, are the inter-faith broadcasts of the kind the National Conference of Christians and Jews encourages. James H. Scull, the radio officer of this group, states "primarily these programs are of two types. First, a team of three speakers, Protestant, Catholic and Jew. Second, the inter-faith

religious news broadcast in which important news or trends in all churches are reported impartially as Dr. Walker Van Kirk has done on NBC."

The networks have probably enjoyed their greatest acclaim as cultural benefactors of the nation through their support of symphony orchestras and grand opera. NBC's spectacular prolonged contract with Arturo Toscanini, the world's greatest conductor, was much more than a radio exclusive; it was a nation-wide Saturday night fiesta. Indeed radio's most clear-cut contribution to the elevation of taste is in musical matters. There is general agreement that the concert world and the opera owe their present prosperity to the tonic effect of broadcasting.

The networks are not, however, always showered with plaudits when they spend their money lavishly on cultural offerings. Perhaps their unhappiest experience occurred during the summer months of 1937 when both NBC and CBS undertook to translate Shakespeare into radio. The Bard, it seemed, could not be successfully radioized even with all-star casts.

NBC used John Barrymore who used Elaine Barrie (hers was the most original Lady Macbeth of the century). Columbia used Leslie Howard, Grace George, William A. Brady, Reginald Denny, Ben Webster, John Wray, Frieda Inescourt, Montagu Love, Walter Huston, Elissa Landi, Frank Morgan, Brian Ahearne, Tallulah Bankhead, Claude Rains, Edward G. Robinson, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Burgess Meredith.

It was probably good for NBC and CBS to get Shakespeare out of their systems. The experience taught them

that the classics in their native format constitute no boulevard to culture on the air.

What local radio stations do in terms of local programs and what manner of operating philosophies they follow has been investigated annually since early 1934 by the radio trade publication *Variety*. Through these annual surveys of the principal American cities and towns where two or more stations operate in competition it has been possible to discern the emerging outlines of a local equivalent to the organizational collaboration of the networks.

The local broadcaster strives to identify his station with community activities. In only a few of these, however, can the station itself take the initiative. In universally approved kindnesses such as providing shoes, candy, and toys for poor children at Christmas time the broadcaster may in his own name or the name of his station carry the torch. Ordinarily, however, the broadcaster must serve the public interest without partisanship. What the station usually seeks is to win good will for itself by helping the Community Chest, the Rotary Club, the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts, the Y.M.C.A., the American Legion Post and so on. A reciprocity of publicity is established whereby in return for the station's public interest gestures these influential civic organizations will defend the station if, say, it should be attacked in Washington.

Almost any local station can spin heart-tug tales of human interest. Hurry-up appeals for blood donors, searches for missing persons successfully conducted over the air, radio heroics in flood and hurricane and disasters

of all kinds: these are the run-of-mill of local public service.

Fairly typical of the better local managements was a report for April, 1936, which the staff of WGAR, Cleveland, prepared for general manager John Patt. Public interest features for the month included these:

"Cultural Institute of the Air,"
"Room Over the Gate" (promotion Cleveland Church Federation),
"WGAR Health Reporter" (promotion Academy of Medicine),
"League of Women Voters" (promotion County League of Women Voters),
Rabbi Brickner,
Rudolph Ringwell (promotion Cleveland orchestra),
Western Reserve Historical Society,
American Family Robinson (promotion National Association of Manufacturers),
Colonial Days (promotion D.A.R. and Museum of Art),
Ohio Bell Telephone Chorus,
"Your Council" (weekly report on City Council Meeting),
Juvenile Minstrels,
Guide to Happiness (advice),
Amateur Basketball Program (Scores),
Lenten Services (Old Stone Church),
A broadcast from the Boy Scout exposition held in Public Auditorium under the auspices of the Rotary Club,
A broadcast of the second WGAR Annual Declamation Contest finals,
Three-hour Good Friday Service broadcast direct from the Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament,
A broadcast from the Variety Club Banquet,
A talk by Senator James Metzenbaum for the Phyllis Wheatley Homes,

Concert by the Fairport Harbor High School Choir,
"Feeding" of the Czecho-Slovakian Choir of 3,000 voices to the NBC Blue network.

When Harry Wilder of WSYR, Syracuse, acquired WBNX in an 8,000 population town (Springfield, Vermont), he commissioned the advertising agency, Leighton & Nelson, to survey the station, its audience, its problems. From this survey came a 300-page report covering recommendations to put the station in harmony with advanced station management practice. The report called for general physical overhauling of the plant and enlargement of staff, the reduction of phonograph records to a minimum, a policy of broadcasting no program not previously heard in audition or rehearsal by the station manager, payment for all live talent, identification of stations with civic activities and a special telephone circuit from the station to Dartmouth College.

All American stations liberally donate announcements (i.e. attention-callers) to civic bodies. KFPY, Spokane, classified its public service announcements for a ten-month period and found the following totals:

Recruiting Service	10
President's Birthday Ball	5
U. S. Navy	23
U. S. Army	59
U. S. Marines	21
Boy Scouts	1
Income Tax	18
Chamber of Commerce	1
Red Cross	2
Civilian Mobilization	3

Flag Week	4
Defense of America Committee	6
Register to Vote	27
Voting	14
Church Service	22
Drive Carefully	69
Surplus Foods	20
Fourth of July	1
Fire Prevention	54
Treasury Department	3
National Guard	5
Spokane Parks	2
Safety	3
Forest Service	10
National Defense	38
Alien Registration	5
Forget-me-not-Day	1
Selective Service	27
Community Chest	35
State Patrol	4

Nearly 250 radio stations were analysed one year by the *Variety* Showmanship Survey which has been previously mentioned. It was found that 65% of the stations carried broadcasts which puffed community pride, saluted nearby towns, and introduced and praised civic leaders (some of whom, be it noted, were also present or prospective radio advertisers).

Some 58% of the stations had newspaper tie-ins. That is, they were either owned by newspapers or had a space-for-time publicity swapping arrangement. Church programs were noted in 48% of the schedules and 31% of the stations had participated in local charity drives.

Schools and colleges were one source of programs for 30% of the stations, debating teams being conspicuous. Programs relating to safety (police, fire, speeding, etc.) were scheduled by 28% of the reporting stations. War veteran activities were common (27%) as were parent-teachers' and women's club contacts. There were crime-does-not-pay broadcasts, many of them in dramatic script form, on 17% of the stations. There were unemployment bulletins on 10% of the stations but strike news was featured on only 3%.

Fortune magazine has pictured a typical broadcaster's relationship to his environment in this paragraph: "At half-past ten the radio in Mr. Williams's office is turned on and he listens grimly to a tirade against indecent motion pictures by a hoarse-voiced representative of the Smith City Religious Council. One of the hardest parts of Mr. Williams's job is coping with the multitude of organized minorities that regard a radio station as their own property. Any day he may expect demands for time from the American Legion post, which wants to expose the activities of Communists in the Smith City College student body; from the Young Communists League which wants to draw attention to the fascist tendencies of the college branch of the R.O.T.C.; from the Central Labor Council and the Manufacturers Association; from the West End Garden Club and the Colored People's Betterment Association; from every church, every school, every industry, every union, every political party and especially every women's club."

In any locality the non-profit organization that wishes to further its purposes by the intelligent use of

radio broadcasting is definitely handicapped by a lack of trained personnel capable of producing a broadcast of professional quality. Very often the local radio station is willing to donate time but is not able to supply production aids other than a stand-by announcer. Civic groups have already learned that a poorly produced broadcast is a squandered opportunity. In short, nobody will listen; no tangible benefits will be derived. To correct this situation in some regions various service groups like the Y.M.C.A. and the Boy Scouts may pool with Community Chests and other bodies to share the expense and the services of one qualified radio director among them.

Denver is the headquarters of an extremely provocative recent development, the so-called Rocky Mountain Radio Council, an experimental non-profit program-building organization which has been financed by small cash grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Payne Fund of New York and the Boettcher Foundation of Colorado. This experiment stems from the basic assumption that the modern college and university must be more than a mere seat of resident instruction. It must serve the whole population of its area.

Of this comparatively recent development in Colorado, Robert Hudson, the director, has written: "Both commercial broadcasters and educational interests have developed certain unchallenged skills which lift education on the air to a higher level of effectiveness, and commercial broadcasting to a higher level of public interest and service. For either to ignore the other is to pave the way for legislative paternalism. Both want to

maintain the free principles of the American system of radio, which has achieved a position of interest and popularity above any other in the world."

Some nine stations in the region of the Rocky Mountain Radio Council have no network affiliation and none of the stations in the area has a staff of sufficient size to spare manpower to co-operate with non-commercial organizations, including colleges, to create broadcasts in the public interest. It is into this void that the Radio Council with a small staff of trained directors and writers steps.

The rediscovery of radio going on at present among the schools and colleges represents a strange paradox. The colleges, notably the engineering schools, enthusiastically abetted the laboratory work in the early days of radio. Many schools took out licenses and for a time operated stations. But once the novelty wore off the learned world lost interest. Educational stations in the United States lapsed from a total of 125 to a scant 28. There was neither the funds nor the zeal to get funds to carry them through. Many of the college stations were sold to commercial interests. Others were simply abandoned. One licensed station in a municipal school system in upper New York State stayed on the air only because high school boys were interested enough to staff it voluntarily. The superintendent of schools was completely indifferent.

Of those educational stations that have continued through the years several have adhered to broad and varied schedules. WHA of the University of Wisconsin in Madison is a highly significant example. WOI of

Iowa State, WRUF of the University of Florida, WILL of the University of Illinois, WOSU of Ohio State and WBOE owned and operated by the Cleveland Board of Education have persevered and piled up a vast store of practical experience.

The educational stations often specialize in information for scientific farming, and dairying. They deal in weather forecasts, crop data, interviews with county agents, campus entertainers. Some have full, detailed curricula co-ordinated with the educational policies of the state.

Several municipalities have acquired radio stations. WRR in Dallas is one. WPG, Atlantic City, is another. WNYC in New York is still another. The latter has had a spotty career. It was badly neglected by the politicians prior to Mayor LaGuardia's administration. A pre-LaGuardia surrender of its night-time hours of operation in favor of a commercial station now shuts the station off the air at sunset in Minneapolis. Civil service requirements hamper WNYC in selecting personnel, many experienced people flatly declining to submit to civil service examinations which they consider silly as a test of showmanship talents. Nor can the salaries paid compete with the commercial scale of remuneration.

WNYC has specialized on consumer information for housewives. It also actively co-operates with various municipal departments and was the official instructional agency for the hundreds of Selective Service Boards in greater New York when the military draft was set up. Each night neighborhood chairmen got their orders by radio. WPA orchestras and dramatic societies from the

schools have been utilized. The station under the management of Morris Novik and the program directorship of Morris Seigel has managed to integrate itself with the metropolis despite small budget, inadequate studio and transmitter equipment, civil service redtape, political persecution and the devastating competition of the big commercial stations.

6. ATTITUDES

AMONG OTHER THINGS radio is an extrovert medium. It is seldom subtle. Law and custom do not sanction anonymous sponsorship. What the corporation does, and why it does it, are freely commented upon. If conservative banks and utilities and bar associations take to an extrovert medium like radio it is because they feel under social attack and wish to win friends and influence them, this faculty being the undoubted genius of radio.

Radio is a medium for direct statement, simple, crisp sentences. Neither politician nor advertiser nor educator can indulge in under-statement in the literary sense. Nor can they presume a high starting line in their listeners. Organizations and propagandists long ago discovered that the precious radio opportunity can be wasted by an ill-prepared script, a hesitant, corrugated voice, unfortunate microphone idiosyncrasies.

In still another direction the very extrovert character of the medium produces colorations of attitude. For example there are extensive hours morning and afternoon five days a week devoted to quarter-hour serials. Superficially these often seem to deal with human miseries. Indeed on occasion there seems to be a veritable piling up of agony. But this is not the noble tragedy of greatness, the catharsis of the spirit, a cleansing ritual.

Expect nothing like that. It is an absurdity in terms. Radio flees from the stark. Instead it has a good cry by the stop-watch, a good extrovert job of weeping to signal from the control room. Intermingled with these intangibles of attitude is a fear of the medium, a fear of its sheer ability to shatter the slender reeds of people whose lives are a living tragedy perhaps. A fear, too, of offending prejudices. Radio is, I think, almost unconsciously restrained by dread of unpredictable consequences. It shudders once in a while when it hears that some sick soul or child-like mind has followed a course of action ostensibly, or at least possibly, suggested to it over the air. Youngsters have been reported poised on a roof to take off into space as the gravity-defying hero of a radio serial has done.

Actors and writers and directors present a curiously uniform pattern of reaction to radio. Some who have prospered beyond their dreams have a purely personal possessiveness. Radio to them is perfect. It can do no wrong. To suggest flaws is to bring down a stream of vituperation on the critic. Less zealous contemporaries in the professional ranks sometimes seem almost deliberately determined not to take radio seriously. It is not, they keep telling themselves over and over, an art. It cannot be an art because it is a business. These professionals have a clear wish not to be, and not to seem, like some of the self-consciously "arty" program people.

Another influence upon attitude is the fact that a radio broadcast usually dies with the breath and electrical energy that momentarily gave it life. A great performance seldom is repeated and has therefore none

of the accumulated word-of-mouth praise of a stage play or a film or any work of "art" which exists in an organized form permitting easy repetition. Even when a droll piece of whimsy like Norman Corwin's "My Client Curly" was repeated ("by popular demand") the director and principal actor were changed, the music was changed, the script was cut, the whole tempo and spirit were altered.

In recent years there has developed in a small way a market for recordings of fine programs, and radio scripts have been published in book form. Arch Oboler has brought out several editions of his radio works. Archibald MacLeish, Irving Reis, Vic Knight, Stephen Vincent Benét, Milton Geiger, True Boardman are among the writers for radio whose broadcast scripts have been put between boards. All this perhaps enhances the dignity of the medium.

Salesmanager attitude toward radio differs according to purely commercial calculation. One soap manufacturer favors costly night-time shows with big expensive stars; its rival adheres to starless, low-cost daytime fiction. Each begins with a full appreciation of radio. Each builds its total sales strategy partly, perhaps predominantly, around broadcast advertising, yet in attitude toward programming they are miles apart.

Note has been taken by many shrewd observers that it is the unscrupulous high-pressure, small membership organizations that are likely to make the greatest use of, and the most numerous demands upon, radio stations and networks. They, too, are extroverts, characteristically eager and direct and practical. Their attitude

toward the medium is a compound of all those strains of character, personality and ingenuity which permit them to live by their wits. Contrariwise there are great masses of semi-organized, relatively inert bodies which do not have a clear attitude.

Two radio stations in the farm country had a bitter feud because one purchased broadcast rights to a corn-husking contest and posted No Trespassing signs on the field of battle, shutting out the other station and its portable equipment. Here is the extrovert attitude of the broadcasters themselves stated in gladiatorial terms. Promoters of athletic events, arrangers of banquets, presentation ceremonies, street parades and similar events have not hesitated to completely alter their plans to conform to radio convenience, and radio has not hesitated to suggest that civic events be moved ahead or moved back to coincide with open periods. One special-events executive once cabled the Queen of the Netherlands who was about to baptize a new naval vessel that if she would move the hour he, the American broadcaster, could arrange to carry the ceremony. Royalty did not deign to reply.

Apropos of attitude an interesting conversation is reported, circa 1937, between Sir John Reith, head of the British Broadcasting Corporation and Edward Murrow who had just arrived in England as the new overseas representative of the Columbia Broadcasting System. Murrow arrived with a reputation as a highbrow, a man from the salons where political science is small talk. Reith was disposed to greet him with the faint unbending due another high-minded chap.

"Well," Reith began, "in view of your record I daresay your company's programs in the future will be a little more intellectual?"

"On the contrary," Murrow demurred, "I want our programs from England to be anything but intellectual. I want them to be down to earth, in the vernacular of the man in the street."

"Humph," snorted Reith, "then you will drag radio down to the level of Hyde Park Corner."

"Exactly," said Murrow, "and I also plan to arrange programs from English pubs and from Brighton on bank holidays."

As this was typically Yankee and therefore incomprehensible, Reith forebore argument but remarked that in Britain the Britons heard what he thought they should hear.

"Mr. Paley and Mr. Klauber are not so daring," observed Murrow, "Columbia gives the public what they like, as far as we understand what they like."

Reith made no effort to stop Murrow from degrading America any further. Nor was Fred Bate of National Broadcasting Company or John Steele of Mutual ever discouraged from arranging typically Yankee programs in England. These programs, after all, went out of, not to, the United Kingdom.

Earlier in the history of broadcasting there was a willingness in the United States itself to exalt the British, and to deplore the American, radio system. Indeed the respective systems were given as the debate subject to high school teams in the United States one year. Much emphasis was laid upon the bad taste of radio advertising

and it was widely assumed, quite erroneously, that the British banned air advertising because they were so well bred, whereas the better reason was that the press lords were so well organized.

It was during the Thirties that the impact of radio upon our modern world became apparent in many strange scenes. Bedouins in the desert were pictured around a radio receiver outside their sheik's tent. Seated legs drawn up under them they listened to Arabic readings from the Koran broadcast from Cairo or Jerusalem. The isolated rancher in the Bush Country of Australia indulged his passion for betting on the horse races with the aid of the daily descriptions from Sydney. In Saskatchewan the Royal Mounted Police purchased radio time and advertised for information concerning wanted persons.

During these fear-haunted days the broadcasts of the various Powers were like pulse readings of their internal disquiet. Germany meantime employed its radio transmitters as a multi-console organ on which Dr. Goebbels varied the chords to run from gentle innocence to rushing fury as it suited the purposes of the Wilhelmstrasse's diplomatic campaigns. There were brave, futile, answering words from the radio towers of Warsaw and Prague.

Closer at hand in the western hemisphere Cuban revolutionaries had given us the spectacle of armed seizure of radio stations.

Every European antenna was guarded by soldiers and there was already the tradition of assassination at the microphone. We were given a vivid mental picture of bloodstains on the studio carpet and beside them, quite

dead, the former announcer of the former regime. We could almost imagine the glassy-eyed young man with the smoking revolver announcing . . . "ladies and gentlemen, the program originally scheduled for this period will not be heard . . . this is a stick-up . . . I mean, democracy is rotten. Long live tyranny!"

We learned during the Thirties that the failure of the Spanish defenders of the Alcazar to hear over the radio that reinforcements were coming up was worth a battle. And it was a battle against panic that radio won that hushed evening early in 1933 when Franklin D. Roosevelt told America it had nothing to fear but fear.

Immediately the Nazis marched into Poland the British radio system went "underground." It was broken up into scattered units. First of all there was a scheme of frequent alternation between various transmitters so that the radio beams could not be used by German bombers to calculate their position. The whole strategy was to keep radio in constant operation despite any possible holocaust. British announcers and entertainers and engineers were sworn in for the duration of the war (Theoretically temperament in an actor became treason!) Small companies of radio personnel took refuge in supposedly secret parts of the United Kingdom. Musicians were billeted in remote English and Scottish villages. With characteristic British humor the war programs presently were announced as coming from Hogs Norton, in reference to the imaginary Hunt of that name. Almost everybody understood Hogs Norton was a *nom de guerre* for Bristol.

This writer was in England at the outbreak of the

war. The first fortnight after the declaration revealed some virtues and flaws of democratic radio in a crisis. First of all there were the endless bulletins, the reiterated instructions, the warnings to be calm, the exhaustively detailed explanations about the evacuation of children, the dawn of rationing, the rules governing exchange, mail and aliens in the war. The King spoke, the Prime Minister spoke, the Home Secretary spoke, the Minister of Health spoke.

The first flash on the sinking of the *Athenia* was a bolt out of the deep quietly delivered over the wireless by the impassive well-bred English announcer.

In the haste of carrying through war orders the BBC became essentially a newscasting system. News on the radio and in the press was word for word identical. Between the radio intervals phonograph records were used to fill in. Unhappily the doleful disks reserved for Sunday, always a sad day on the BBC, were about as dismal a collection of sombre stuff as anyone would listen to for want of better activity. Oddly enough a large percentage of the musical selections were German, notably Wagnerian.

It didn't take long for a peculiar neurosis to develop around the habit, already some weeks old, of hanging breathlessly upon the radio communiqués. Britons were for the moment being spoon-fed on a diet of anxiety served on the half-hour. Letters to the *Times* promptly began protesting that the BBC was going to disorganize morale with too many bulletins and too little news in them. Between bulletins it was already the Bore war.

In time many changes were sanctioned in British radio

because the troops were better able to make their will felt at Broadcasting House than had been the general public in the earlier Reith days. (Sir John had meantime gone on to higher responsibilities.)

Seeing, as they did, that the Government called the tune for European broadcasters some Washington bureaucrats presently began to insinuate more clearly than ever before, that the Government should be more than an indulgent policeman and engineer-in-chief to our radio system. It obviously annoyed one Washington clique that private broadcasters held the right to grant or deny air time to the spokesman of a Government agency.

Actually responsible spokesmen of the Government, or any of its branches, have practically never been denied access to the air. They have, it is true, objected on occasion to the time assigned them or the number of stations in the hookup. But figures kept by the networks do not suggest any lack of opportunity to be heard, regardless of the reluctance of commercial radio to yield the best commercial time to anybody but the President himself or to events of extraordinary rather than routine character. Of 4,120 talks made over the NBC Red and the NBC Blue networks in 1938 a tabulation showed that President Roosevelt spoke 33 times, Henry Wallace 19 times, James Farley 18 times, Cordell Hull 14 times and so on. There were 105 speeches by Senators, 120 by Representatives. Not counting participation in a number of fixed series, the Department of Agriculture's various subdivisions had 110 radio periods during the year.

But it still annoys some Washington bureaucrats that

they must "ask" for time. It also annoys Congressmen that although the networks send out their speeches local stations outside the actual constituency have a habit of disconnecting the circuit and substituting a local program. Station managers wish to increase, not decrease, the number of their listeners and run-of-the-mill politicians are considered on a par with luminal in inducing slumber.

Congressmen, it appears, have no rendezvous with destiny outside their own district.

The attitude of the radio listener has been rather exhaustively looked into by research men over a period of 15 years. One of the earliest disputes between radio and newsprint as rivals for the advertiser's dollar was whether the eye or the ear registered and retained impressions better. Radio has stressed its cheap rates per thousand families, the pleasurable associations, the feeling of gratitude. The importance of radio in leisure was proven in late years by a *Fortune* magazine survey which listed radio first, movies second, magazines and books third, sports fourth, hunting and fishing fifth among the leisure activities of the American people. Certainly it is true that people often listen to radio with half an ear while continuing to play bridge or other games. Careless listening is often evidenced in protests, as in the Orson Welles Martian case, to a program that has not been heard whole but only in part.

Before the war various democracies on the European continent made efforts to organize listening groups. That is to say citizens got together at a home, a club, or semi-public place for the express purpose of hearing certain

specific broadcasts and then commenting among themselves on what they had heard. This was a very minor development more challenging for the future than impressive in its present story. Perhaps the most apparent listener circle reaction in the United States has been evoked by America's Town Meeting of the Air which has made an organized effort to encourage local groups (Y.M.C.A. and church groups, political units, already existing literary associations, et al.) to hear the radio forums in a body. The Town Meeting has provided printed background material to guide the leaders of such circles which usually remain in session after the broadcast to comment upon it. The difficulty with this method is that the group tends to dwindle. The task of keeping enthusiasm and interest up is more than many leaders can cope with. In the early summer of 1941 Town Hall experimentally launched in New York City a course for discussion leadership.

A few words may be apropos concerning the attitude of Frenchmen toward radio. Unlike its erstwhile ally across the channel, France did little to use radio to bring the Government and the people into closer mutual confidence. Only very belatedly as the gray shadows across the Rhine grew larger and larger did some French statesmen attempt to emulate American and British political leadership by using the microphone to fortify the popular will and mind. American radio men as late as 1938 were taking note of how little place broadcasting had in everyday French life. Two or three aggressive commercial stations did exist such as *Radio Cité* of Paris but in the main the French lagged in appreciation or use

of them. A common explanation, and perhaps a reliable one, is that the highly civilized and rather sardonic French mind could not persuade itself to take this strange new toy seriously as a social force.

Yet, ironically, it was the French who thought of nominating a patron saint for radio. In Paris during 1936 at the *Notre Dame de Bonne Nouvelle* (Our Lady of Good News) a special mass was celebrated in honor of broadcasting.

[III] WHY

7. PROBLEMS

AMERICAN RADIO has lately passed through Alice-in-Wonderland experiences. Men and women have screamed on free time from coast to coast that they were being denied their constitutional rights of free speech. Quite obscure citizens have threatened, figuratively, to punch the President in the nose on the grounds that he's a dictator.

Dozens of radio stations in this democratic land have broadcast news every hour on the hour. On days or occasions when the democracies did not or could not provide enough news the lack was filled in from German and Italian sources, thus, in a sense, making the avowed enemies of our ways of life a free gift of our propaganda channels.

When the Don Lee network on the Pacific coast decided that never again would it carry the voice of Adolf Hitler certain persons actually criticized the network on the fantastic grounds that to deny free speech to *Der Fuehrer* was undemocratic.

Meanwhile broadcasters who were not sufficiently obliging in dispensing free time to pressure groups, propagandists and Congressmen were being threatened with a witch-hunt "after the war."

Our minds and our moral natures reeled under the

bombardment of contradiction and confusion. Do this—don't do this—fight—don't fight—convoy—don't convoy—seize the Atlantic islands—don't seize them—listen to Wheeler—listen to Lindbergh—listen to Knox—listen to Ickes.

Even so, the democratic virtues of broadcasting took hold of the imaginations of many fine people and induced in them a cheerful disposition to see radio as an outer American defense line able to absorb concussions from cataclysms far off and thus guard our evolutionary ideal of orderly development. This is true of American radio only in a carefully qualified sense. We must not minimize the possible debilitating influence of constant emergency endlessly prolonged with accretions of confusion setting up a constipation of democracy. After a long period of near-anarchy in a world sick with anxieties it is wholly conceivable that a given set of circumstances might provide a moment favorable to an American Putsch by democracy-hating elements. Then would come the danger of our radio defenses being flanked as the Germans flanked the Maginot line. In democracy as in military tactics fixed systems of defense must be supported by effective mobile striking power.

Surely we have in many sections of America the social swamps in which to breed parochial Hitlers. And the American demagogue has from the beginning exhibited a lecherous interest in radio.

There was considerable, and justified, alarm in 1934 at the implications of the Upton Sinclair campaign for the Governorship of California. That spectacular skyrocket in the post-Hoover skies was snuffed out politi-

cally with the aid of some extremely barefisted radio tactics. America saw the grim glint of California vigilante morality brought up to date under the skillful direction of professional advertising counsel. Shrewd minds evolved a "fear campaign" and made it work with radio. Conventional political mudslinging acquired strange and disquieting new values because of radio. The voters heard over the air what purported to be interviews with real hoboes who were pictured as flocking to California to live in bountiful ease at the taxpayers' expense thanks to Sinclair's crackpotism. Professional actors impersonated the hoboes and the remarks they uttered were put in their mouths by fiction writers. It was enough to frighten the rest of the country, and it did. It was the first and last example of such a wholesale campaign of smear by radio in terms of lies, inventions and faked interviews. But it has not been forgotten.

If twentieth-century history teaches us anything it is that economic pressure, raising the body-heat of fascism, quickly develops a kind of muscular will for success and disdain for failure in politicians and in many men of insistent ambition and glandular pugnacity of spirit. Such men who respect only action and worship only results will use any and all weapons at hand. The trick is for democracy to keep radio out of their reach. A very great American politician was asked not long ago what he thought of the various radio forums and he replied with charming simplicity, "I don't like 'em. Why help your opponent get his points across?"

If today it is a precept of political broadcasting that the speaker must be clearly identified and that he must

take full personal responsibility for his statements we must remember that this is only a precept and only as good as its observance. The clever enemies of democracy are always resourceful in circumventing inconvenient rules.

Radio has no inherent social virtue beyond the physical capacity to make itself heard by the masses. From the standpoint of engineering the radio systems of the dictatorships are probably as good as, and often better than, the radio systems of the democracies.

Socially a radio system is (a) who broadcasts, (b) what is broadcast, and (c) why it is broadcast; (a) plus (b) plus (c) represent all the social values of radio and all are decided by (1) the regime in a dictatorship, and (2) by the total interplay of all potent and articulate groups in a commonwealth.

Radio when put to democratic uses and when consecrated to democratic ideals is undoubtedly a great humanitarian instrument, perhaps the greatest. But it must be clearly understood that radio by itself does not solve but rather multiplies the problems of democracy.

Radio has no power of itself to protect democracy. Instead democracy must protect radio. This means formulating elaborate etiquettes of controversy and accommodation of antagonistic groups and interests. It means keeping real the privilege of discussion without allowing mischief makers to borrow sacred shields of democracy to fight the treacherous fight of fanatical race or class revolution and gore-thirsty anarchy.

Is it not a challenge to democratic leadership in the United States——————

That a great medium like radio is often put to incredibly petty uses?

That a method to foster reason and good will sometimes spreads intolerance and malice?

That a miracle of science can transform a local bounder into a nationally famous cad?

That instead of unity and confidence and an inward sense of national strength, free speech on the radio may help incubate a vicious paralysis of belief in all things and all leadership?

That radio debate shows a capacity to make all debate an empty, futile, non-stop, repetitious, inconclusive marathon of words?

That the man who used to hire a hall now addresses the whole nation but delivers the same old political twaddle?

That broadcasters can on occasion be forced to choose between, say, two high minded savants "willing" to discuss an issue and two low-minded demagogues who "demand" to discuss it?

It seems an absurdly exaggerated conception of free speech which allows provincial propagandists obscure and unknown in January to have a national radio audience in February. It seems unwise that uncertain, frightened, prejudiced individuals should be permitted to spread their personal fears, their ignorance, their bigotry, over the entire country.

New controls and limitations upon pressure groups are being and must be put through. Take just the single matter of war relief societies. There were over 475 registered societies of this kind. Many of those concerned

with Chinese relief have already been merged. Most of them concerned with British relief have also been merged, although there are hold-outs among organizations jealous of their separate identities. Related groups of all kinds must inevitably combine. The sheer lack of radio time forces this upon them. From the democratic point of view such combinations probably neutralize poison and offset unscrupulous individuals. They make the one-man or the one-woman pressure group impossible.

On the whole broadcasters have a clear-cut business motive for being fair, and for this reason, plus their practical experience, any new controls would probably be better enforced in the public interest by broadcasters than by either bureaucrats or interested groups of citizens.

Among the things that would seem to be good democratic influences in the interest of temperate and balanced discussion are these:

1. Pick-ups from mass meetings and rallies should not be made. This would keep staged demonstrations, mob hysteria, name-calling by hecklers and all such manifestations off the air;

2. All radio talks on controversial issues should be delivered only in radio studios without audiences or by means of recordings;

3. Announcement should be made before and after any controversial talk that an answer to it will be given at a later date. If possible the day and hour of the answer should be given;

4. Forums should be encouraged but not to run wild.

A forum under a weak or uncertain moderator can easily abuse the right of free speech.

Our problem is to preserve the realities of free speech and democracy without letting these symbols be employed by deceitful persons for their own purposes. A polite but judicious neglect of microscopic minorities and conversation-loving cranks is forced upon all practical men, broadcasters among them, by the sheer necessities of common sense. Every self-elected pressure group headed by a him or a her with the gift of gab cannot possibly have a radio hearing.

America's Town Meeting of the Air, The People's Platform, Parker Wheatley's Reviewing Stand, The Granik Forum in Washington and other programs of similar type, exemplify in their experiences much that is stimulating, and much that is depressing, in democratic radio. The Town Hall Thursday night forums, in particular, attempt to provide a sounding board for the conflicting views of representative spokesmen on issues of the day. Outwardly this is a splendid realization of practical democracy. But there is one major flaw in the Town Hall idea itself when applied to radio, namely, the true town hall meeting of New England memory was not a weekly but an annual debate and it was not national but local in character and, most important of all, after talking itself out the meeting took a vote and decided upon township policies for the next year. Then the citizens dispersed with the minority accepting the decision of the majority.

The chief characteristic of American debate in and out of Congress up to Sunday afternoon, December 7,

1941, has been a refusal to abide by supposed decisions. Radio forum programs have not escaped this quality of writing postscripts to postscripts.

Students of the art of discussion have been keenly aware of the irony that radio programs may, in the very act of seeking to glorify democracy, magnify democracy-weakening confusion. The obligation of balancing the sides, of turning from first one to the other viewpoint frequently puts a low-grade competitive aspect upon radio discussion. Speakers on radio forums too often have gone all-out to score spectacular verbal touchdowns against their opponents. A sincere regard for truth was not in them. What the nation got was vituperation, stump speeches, debaters' tricks, slick evasions of the issues, snide misrepresentation.

In order to be timely, in order to open its platform to the most currently publicized spokesmen of the rival camps any radio forum invites speakers on a basis of their showmanship plausibility. True authorities and savants thus on occasion run second best to men and women concerned more with personal vainglory than with the intellectual level of the discussion. In consequence nationally broadcast radio forums have been close to disgraceful on a number of occasions.

George V. Denny, Jr., as moderator of Town Hall has had the daring to experiment with various discussion devices. Notably he used a "clarifier" on several programs. The clarifier was a summarizer for the public. He digested what he conceived to be the pith of each speaker's remarks and he commented upon them from his own knowledge and attitude. H. V. Kaltenborn and

Stanley High proved especially nimble at this extremely difficult assignment. The clarifier must be a scholar of tremendous range of erudition. He must have sharp, incisive powers of expression, to be able to extract the core. He must be a personage in his own right yet not intrusively egotistical. Tact and self-effacement must go hand in hand with authoritativeness.

Denny's search for better discussion techniques stems from a realization that democracy must try to avoid giving millions of listeners the feeling that sound policy cannot be determined since the experts all disagree. The radio moderator must be scrupulously impartial but the clarifier, in contrast, must only be fair; he need not be afraid to enunciate opinion. Indeed he is a digester of opinion. Thus with a strong moderator to control the meeting and preserve the atmosphere of free speech without its abuse, and a qualified clarifier to close the meeting so that the audience takes away an intellectual package rather than blurred impressions, the formula for radio forums under modern conditions may more nearly approximate the ideal.

Harold Lasswell, the social scientist, is a great believer in and advocate of the doctrine that under modern menaces democracy must provide "instant reply" to antidemocratic propaganda. To accomplish this, of course, qualified spokesmen should almost literally be standing by for an immediate rebuttal. Although the word "instant" needs defining and Lasswell's theory must be translated into practical operating mechanics, his concept is highly realistic and provocative. Radio history has a scattered number of examples of the "instant reply"

technique applied very literally. When the Governor of Georgia appeared one night at WSB, Atlanta, to attack the station in a speech the contemporary manager of the station, Lambdin Kay, listened in an adjoining studio and when the Governor had finished Kay immediately went on the air to give WSB's comment and explanation.

This seems a first necessity: the educator who wishes to utilize radio must throw away the professorial shorthand by which he regularly communicates his thought-patterns to his fellow intellectuals. He must go back to simplicities of speech, an extremely difficult task for many pedagogues. In one of his experiments with public-opinion technology Lasswell collaborated with a practical radio script writer, Albert N. Williams of NBC, to conduct a series of radio lectures on psychiatric phenomena. Ordinarily such talks by such a scholar would have been unintelligible to radio listeners. The technique developed by Lasswell and Williams together produced a running lecture in which interpolated dramatic monologue and dialogue by trained actors illustrated the social scientist's thesis as he went along. This series under the title "Human Nature in Action" attracted much attention and considerable praise as bold trail-blazing in a difficult zone.

8. NEIGHBORS

YANKEES HAVE LATELY rediscovered Latin America 450 years after Columbus. They made out South America by the light of advance flares dropped from Nazi plans. It surprised the Yanks to realize what a considerable stretch of terra firma and what a large body of the species *homo sapiens* they had been overlooking. This has produced a somewhat boyish and distinctly tardy excitement on the part of some Yankees and, in turn, evoked a certain amount of pique from the cultured and culture-conscious pro-European classes of the Latin lands who did not and do not appreciate this abrupt recognition of their existence. While the Latins are always courteous in greeting strangers and in entertaining good will missions they still have allowed the Yanks to understand that there were discords in hemispheric close harmony.

Perhaps it is always a bit incredible to the mind of a Yankee that all the world does not necessarily share his conviction that the United States is the finest nation and civilization in the world. And the Yank has been a bit condescending. If he thought of the South Americans at all, the average Yankee probably thought of them as tango-dancing cowboys from the pampas or llama-shepherding hillbillies from the Andes mountains. To discover that the South Americans, far from having an

appropriate sense of their own backwardness, actually regarded the Mr. Big Stuff Yankee as an untutored yokel, has been a chastening experience for some of the boys from God's front yard.

But once convinced that something ought to be done about something, the Yankee is the man to act. Just now we have under way in the United States and in Latin America innumerable good will activities, many of them still pretty vague, but all designed to charm the South Americans and check the Germans. We are exchanging students and tenors, army officers and broadcasters. At least two U.S.A. magazines are issuing Spanish language editions. Articles and photographs and social notes from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Peru have begun to appear in our publications. Most significant—and astonishing—of all is that Yankee business men in the U.S.A. are studying to speak Spanish. They speak it atrociously but it's still Spanish.

One of the most spectacular Yankee undertakings of recent years has been, of course, the trip to South America of a party from the Columbia Broadcasting System headed by its president, William S. Paley. Visiting every country in South America (while another Columbia executive visited Mexico and Central America), the Paley party signed up 64 radio stations to form a network throughout the 20 Latin Republics.

Actually the National Broadcasting Company, and particularly John Royal, have been operating out of South America intermittently for 10 years.

It would be brash in anything as many-sided and controversial as Pan-Americanism to indulge in snap

judgments. Nevertheless there is support for the view that the United States must win the Latin youngsters and to a certain extent, resign itself to the arched eyebrows and skeptical smiles of the older generation who may perhaps be softened toward the Yanks but not wholly convinced. It is not for today but the generation of tomorrow that new and better impressions of the *Yanqui* need to be substituted for the old *peso*-squeezing, marine-landing, bigstick-waving caricature.

"Good will," apparently, is a peculiarly subtle thing not conveniently packaged for radio export. All the elaborate technique of "contact" in a year's time may fail to offset a single drunken sailor's fantastic behavior during one purple-hazed hour ashore. The brawling in Mexico City of a famous film actor from Hollywood was an international incident some years ago, involving as it did not only disturbance of the peace in the first degree, but an insult to the armed forces of the country.

Meantime, it is generally agreed that a too precipitate "romancing" of our hemispheric co-tenants is not desirable. This is particularly dangerous if there is not wider Yankee appreciation of the elements of the problem and if anachronisms continue to flourish in Yankee thinking. The emphasis upon "culture" without defining it, the thoughtless bunching of Peruvians and Mexicans, Bolivians and Costa Ricans as if there were no distinctions or differences between the countries of South America, as between the countries of Europe, may all lead us into errors of judgment. We will only be shadow-boxing with the problem of Pan-American relations if these differ-

ences, including language, are not correctly understood to start with and a *simpatico* is not introduced.

On the whole it is perhaps more important, negatively, to refrain from ill-considered stunts than, positively, to hope to "make a hit." Even so routine a matter as the wrong kind of Spanish dialect on shortwave programs has been resented. (We must apparently go farther afield than Cuba for our experts on speech and manners.)

There is also the question of the jarring "intrusion" of the Anglo-Saxon viewpoint on international affairs. While our news bulletins are generally respected in South America for their impartiality and completeness and freedom from doctrine, and this Administration is well-regarded, the fact remains that Latin leadership often chafes at the "assumptions" in our comment upon the war and upon political ideologies. Recently a large oil company has been sponsoring over the NBC shortwave from New York Spanish and Portuguese translations of the scripts used the day previously in the United States by Raymond Gram Swing. This immediately stirred questions of policy. On the one hand Americans and Britons resident in the Latin republics even sent cables to express their delight to have their point of view so eloquently and clearly articulated. Against this reaction was the comment of some South Americans that "we do not need to be told what to think."

Shortwave radio's role in modern propaganda is very considerable, but sometimes for reasons and in ways not always fully understood. Shortwave is also very limited. Surveys show that our U. S. shortwave radio listening is only about 3% of the total listening. This seems odd

when related to the fact that shortwave reception capabilities of sets have been a "selling point" of radio merchants for years. We simply do not listen to shortwave very much. The British (including BBC's New York agent, Lindsay Wellington) know this and have employed all possible publicity in the United States to draw attention to their nightly "Britain Speaks" (8:30 P.M. NYT) program from London. The Germans resorted to the stunt of offering to pay the cable charges for questions from Americans to be answered on the Nazi shortwave program. They did so not to get cables but to get listeners.

Dictatorships use shortwave a little to propagandize directly the masses in other lands, but perhaps chiefly to instruct agents, nations or partisans in the kind of argument or propaganda to be used.

The best thought in the United States is that we must have a long view with regard to "good will" exporting. Expediency must not tempt us from complete veracity in factual reporting and from discretion in comment upon Latin, and perhaps even European affairs. Most of all, and this may be particularly true of the history-remembering Mexicans and of the unpredictable beef-selling Argentines, we must exercise infinite patience and forbearance. We must not be led to hasty actions on radio or elsewhere that smack of Yankee high pressure.

9. CRITICS

It is, I believe, regrettable that there is so little published radio criticism in the United States. This scarcity exists at a time in the cultural development of America when publications of all kinds deem it appropriate to probe for form and technique and significance in such esoteric arts as the ballet, the cantata, drypoint etching, wood-carving and the "gutbucket jive" of frenzied negro trumpeters in obscure dives. Criticism is rampant in the presence of unabashed "stage turkeys" and even the B (for Bad) movie is given serious, straight-faced criticism. As for books which come off the literary belt-line like V-8's in Dearborn, the critics stand in queues to receive their assignments and give their solemn pronouncements even though it is an open secret that the typical offspring of press and bindery sells about 423 copies. Meantime, the only art medium with a universal audience, the one conduit for ideas that must be kept unclogged if democracy is to survive is practically without any organized, extensive, general criticism. What little published radio comment there is is apt to be offhand, careless and feeble.

Note, please, that I say *published* criticism by which I mean to underscore the fact that it is printer's ink, a by-line, the stamp of responsibility, that gives the critic not only his official standing and dignity but his

very existence. The act of publication not only creates the profession but engages the critic's pride in what he says and how he says it, which is the chief difference between professionalism and casual opinions given in idle conversation, or the vague faultfindings of, let us say, luncheon orators of both sexes.

The critique is printed, specific, circulated and must stand the test of disagreement and rebuttal. The published critic is himself criticized. The prestige of both the individual and his journal are involved, a *modus operandi* that favors standards of integrity, since in the rough-and-tumble of everyday experience nothing is so quickly called by its true name, and so thoroughly scorned, as corrupt criticism. (Stupid criticism is something else.)

Happily our American radio system is quite cleverly balanced to throw off inimical tendencies. If it continues to work as well in the future as it has in the past, we may congratulate ourselves. On the other hand, nothing in recent experience overseas encourages complacency. Radio criticism, in my theory, would merely add one further guarantee that the American air channels remain fluid and unpoisoned. That further guarantee might conceivably grow to be very important. The world gets more, not less, complicated and needs more, not fewer, fire patrols. The uncomfortable possibilities of the future need not here be labored. So long as the antagonisms remain in a state of reasonable check-and-double-check, we may perhaps safely assume that pressure groups are mutually antiseptic. We cannot, however, ignore the threats of collaborations which would not be in the

general interest, which would force issues faster than we are geared to meet them. Such possibilities do not impose upon us an obligation to look for the bogey-man in every new development, nor would radio critics have to be so many Horatios at the bridge. Nevertheless I urge the point that the radio channels are so important to democracy that as a nation we would be much better off to have, rather than not to have, a widespread corps of professional radio watchmen.

The radio industry is of course sensitive—sometimes too sensitive—to protests conveyed by telephone and mail. Indeed a single postcard has on occasion exercised ridiculous influence over broadcasters and advertisers alike. Comedians' jokes are blue-penciled rigorously. The country is dotted with groups quick to pass resolutions. Even since Pearl Harbor newscasters and commentators speaking against the Axis receive abusive mail emblazoned with swastikas and marginal expletives about "soiled Semites." Most of this byplay is kept within the trade. Conceding that a judicious neglect of lunatics may be wise, it still may well be that an independent body of trained observers would partly relieve the industry itself of odious decisions. Radio critics could, with far better grace than networks or stations, pour that shame upon bigotry which is democracy's only effective antidote to it.

It is pertinent to recall that a skillful radio propagandist like Father Coughlin, was able in his heyday to organize mass picketing against radio stations in Philadelphia, New York, or Chicago at will and to inundate Congressmen with protest mail.

The radio industry at the present time is not apt to regret the general absence of professional critics, having, as they feel, their hands already full with amateur ones. Here the industry tends to confuse complaints with criticism. Many of the interests and persons who badger the networks and stations are vociferously critical, yet upon investigation their sincerity is sometimes open to question as they seem willing to settle for fifteen minutes on a coast-to-coast hookup. Much sparring with this kind of "criticism" and with this type of "critic" creates among the broadcasters a calloused attitude. They fail to distinguish between critics and cranks, promoters, time-chiselers, and paid secretaries.

Industry spokesmen are prone to speak grandiosely of "the one true, the one best, the one really important radio critic"—by which they mean public opinion. Yet the broadcasters themselves are invariably suspicious and in any given "outbreak of public opinion" they will invariably look sharply behind the signals and symbols of clamor to see, if possible, who is pulling the strings.

Operating within the broad outlines of professionalism the radio critic would use criticism as a medium, not as an axe. Here we may properly note a modern phenomenon. A pressure group complains, with some plausibility, that a certain radio program situation is unbalanced and the division of air opportunities is uneven. In this complaint the pressure group and the professional critic may seem in complete agreement. The flaw from the point of view of public interest might very well consist in this danger: the pressure group is not likely to refuse a convenient opportunity to further

the very ends for which it exists and, given its own selfish advantage, it may easily withdraw its criticism and cease firing although the basic conditions of which it complained would remain unaffected. I suggest that the professional critic would be more worthy of public confidence. (This is on the assumption that radio criticism is to be a career in itself, not a stepping-stone to one.)

We might also ponder the thought that democracy is not necessarily furthered if the radio authority and the radio industry react to each other as independent entities rather than as extensions of the public will. Some shrewd kibitzing at the government-industry poker game might be one incidental virtue of radio criticism. It is worth remembering that when regulatory scandals have threatened in Washington the fact of complicity, rather than unilateral guilt, has had to be considered.

Direct comment upon matters of government or industry policy would be privileged to the critic only when translated into actual broadcasts. But it is likely, to cite a hypothetical case, that the granting of a station license to dubiously qualified interests on a plea of devotion to public interest might thereafter be an appropriate occasion for close crutiny of how well, or to what extent, the glib promises were carried out by the new broadcaster. Certainly the critic would, throughout the radio structure, have frequent occasion to note the contrast of lip service versus actual performance. This might not be popular with the interests involved but, contrarily, it might be in the public interest.

I repeat that, on the whole, we have put together and

operated an enormously complex and flexible radio system with a minimum of faults, but we cannot overlook the basic characteristics of merchandising on the one hand and bureaucracy on the other. Sales management must be controlled and politicians are frequently willing, if they are able, to manipulate in the direction of tyranny. The professional critic would be, in his time, a master debunker of proposals that you may be sure would be given innocent labels. Also accurate appraisals of spectacular clamor as in the Orson Welles, Mae West, and the Mexican "obscene song" cases are now extremely difficult. The chorus of expert opinion that critics would constitute would be valuable in such classic instances as an offset to those who, for selfish reasons, seek to distort and magnify the facts.

Within the American broadcasting industry three trade papers, *Variety, Billboard,* and *Radio Daily* publish program comment. Five other trade papers, *Broadcasting, Tide, Advertising and Selling, Printer's Ink,* and *Advertising Age,* do not. Something less than 300 important dailies have radio columnists, not to be called critics as very few of these are concerned beyond the inclusion of personality trivia about Kate Smith, Bing Crosby, and Jack Benny.

There were, of course, two conspicuous deterrents to radio criticism in America during the industry's first twenty years. First, the publishers of newspapers saw no sufficient reason of self-interest for publishing reviews which, if favorable, would render comfort to a competitive advertising medium and, if unfavorable, might embroil the publication with an advertising account, officials

of which would be quick to suspect spite. The second and almost equally strong deterrent was the general lack of respect for radio as an art, an attitude inevitably conditioned by the early purge-urging advertising excesses of cheap-tinsel-and-loud-music, red-flannel and hillbilly stuff. Newspaper publishers just would not, quite honestly, regard such radio programs as appropriate subjects for serious critiques.

Criticism, of course, is not mere fault-finding, or puffing, but intelligent examination of the whole gamut of problems of how effects can be obtained and ideas projected. It is a continuing study of finesse and technique and connotation.

There is a further contribution to radio's welfare that, I think, professional critics might make. Their existence and the force of their opinion might lessen the stranglehold of popularity surveys. Today the popularity survey is practically a substitute for judgment. If the research percentages are high, any kind of a program, no matter how socially questionable, is deemed confirmed in righteousness. If the percentages seem low there is, contrarily, impatience and a quick willingness to throw out the program no matter how promising. The industry is prone to call this whole situation "response to the known will of the public." Since the surveys are not infallible and competitive, carry-over and other factors are not explained, the substitution of statistical apparatus for competent judgment often seems a humiliating abdication of responsibility.

Of the American trade publications, *Variety* has devoted the greatest amount of space to reviewing and on

the whole has been the most sharply critical, and in consequence of this fact reviews by such experienced critics as Sid Silverman, Abel Green, Ben Bodec, Hobe Morrison, George Rosen, Arthur Ungar, Jack Hellman, and J. L. Connors have been the most feared, respected and quoted. *Variety* reviewers have often gone beyond the narrow trade concept of criticism's function which usually sums up in the question: "will it help sell soap?" *Variety* has suggested on occasion that selling a lot of soap is not a sufficient excuse for the deliberate choosing of shoddy entertainment and lottery-like come-ons.

But a trade paper, even *Variety*, has its natural limitations, not the least of which is that the general public is not directly reached. Undoubtedly *Variety's* influence is great by virtue of its being nearly alone in forthright expression of opinion (the simple act of candor is so rare in the world!) But some issues that arise are so transcendentally important to democracy itself that other voices, many voices, are needed.

The social (not cocktail) side of American radio is largely a thing of the future although clews to its probable form and nature are already available. Radio in the United States has been, under advertising sponsorship, a spectacular success, but it has not necessarily learned the ultimate verdict of history. If salesmanship breaks down or must be fundamentally modified, its handmaiden, advertising, will be affected. For example: Some reaction may yet be felt by radio to the persistent habit of asking the purchase of goods not on a strict basis of the quality of the goods, or even the consumer's need for them, but solely as an act of appreciation, a disguised

admission charge, for the show. We are perhaps too close to this new phenomenon to assay its implications adequately.

There is a second method of selling goods by radio which does not solicit gratitude, per se, for the enjoyment of entertainment but invites the public to participate in a game, a gamble, a spin of the wheel of fortune. A soap company gives away six $25 diamond rings every week, in the mechanics of which operation a staff in Chicago goes through 60,000 pieces of mail each week to sift the 200 best letters and refer them to the advertising agency. The manufacturer of a stomach tablet promises to pay, without further ado, $1,000 to any citizen chosen at random from a telephone directory and limited only by the consideration that he answer his own phone when the long-distance operator rings.

The history of American radio in its first two decades has been studied with show-your-appreciation appeals to consumer-listeners and, as a companion piece, the you-too-have-a-chance-to-win stunt. The critic might plausibly suggest that such artificial inducements to expenditure, if unrelated to need, are wasteful and undesirable. It might also be urged that the cash come-on, the free automobile, the grand tour to Bermuda, the gift out of the blue are subtle genuflections to Luck, the lazy man's idolatrous religion, and in the aggregate may widely inculcate dubious social attitudes.

Already the earlier antagonism of broadcasters and educators has been partly reconciled in favor of a practical kind of collaboration. This collaboration is important. We have a business civilization. With all its

possible flaws, it is our way of life, our going concern. Because we are temperamentally receptive to private enterprise we sanctioned a system of advertising sponsorship. But some of the men who were uniquely qualified to make the radio business hum were in some respects, by their very mentality and work-habits, not qualified to understand the broader humanitarian implications of the medium.

Given a radio system based on advertising sponsorship, my postulate is this: that such a radio structure can best remain responsive to democratic processes and responsibilities through the regular, integrated, operation of three principal correctives to a rampant commercialism which, if unchecked, might lead to monopoly of the medium by the most unprincipled, hardest-hitting, best-financed merchandisers. This would be a further step in the tyranny of the few over the many. The three democratizing factors based on a foundation of competitive private enterprise are, in my theory, as follows:

1. Control, or regulation, not to be identified with censorship. This control factor is exercised in the United States, and with the usual average of bureaucratic inconsistency, by the Federal Communications Commission with an occasional obbligato from the Federal Trade Commission.

2. Restraint, or enlightened selfishness, not to be confused with butter melting in the mouth. This restraint factor is derived from the radio industry's sense of responsibility and its accumulated lore of practical experience plus public opinion.

3. Published criticism, or responsible, professional analytic comment.

We have seen already that radio criticism is essentially a blank page yet to be written upon. What, we may well ask, should be the qualifications for radio critics? The answer to that is probably: the ability to say why things are good (why they are bad is easier) and familiarity with the nation, the world, the American people and the radio industry. I personally minimize a too intimate acquaintance with specific dramaturgic devices. A man who is over-conscious of, say, filter-mikes or board-fades, or echo-chambers might be inclined to see the trees and miss the forest. It would be better to know less of petty details and more of grand sweeps.

It should be obvious that nobody can effectively approach radio criticism from a lofty highbrow perch of contempt or in sole regard to symphonic music. To do so would be equivalent to missing the whole point, failing to see radio in its relationship to humanity. Nor will an impatient, lazy refusal to spend hours at the loudspeaker conduce to the background of familiarity indispensable to the writing of radio criticism. It is usually said that intimate knowledge of the medium is the second requisite of any criticism. The first qualification palpably is possession of a critical mind.

By criticism is meant an essentially urbane approach to programs from any one of several points of view, as, for example, the sheer theatrical finesse, the educational connotation, or the propagandistic character of the social impact of programs.

At this present stage in radio broadcasting the critic

would necessarily be dealing in the main with kindergarten considerations of ordinary showmanship, things that would be fairly clear to any qualified observer. In the wider applications of criticism, however, attention would no doubt focus almost immediately on the tendencies of some radio programs to spoon-feed the nation on intellectual mush almost entirely deficient in every vitamin necessary to a healthy populace capable of sustaining democracy under an increasing need for clear thinking. A people enslaved by the drug of romantic escape, made easy through the magical contrivance in everybody's parlor, may well pose some questions a little more vital than whether the actress playing Brenda Whatzis on the Peanut Scrunchies show has a good tremolo in her mid-afternoon love affair over the kilocycles.

The radio critic, if and when the breed develops, would need fairly exceptional gifts of perspective. Being neither too serious, the glaring fault of pedagogues, nor too flippant, perhaps a tendency of journalists, the critic would have to have a sense of relationship and proportion developed far beyond that of the early radio editors, who were often former radio technicians and hence could hardly hear the programs because of sheer fascination with the mechanics of transmission. Above all, the radio critic would face an obvious but important fact—it is easy to dissect the mediocre, difficult to capture the essence of merit.

A qualified corps of radio critics would certainly enhance the dignity of radio programs and help elevate standards by spot-lighting the shoddy, the careless,

the incompetent, and praising the opposites. Public praise is the greatest known stimulant to professional pride among all who deal in creative or semi-creative enterprises. Individual radio critics, publicly labeled as such, and themselves subject to the responsibility and integrity of their task, would have a clarifying influence unlike that of the present pressure-group, axe-grinding criticism which promotes confusion and is by its very motivation incapable of inspiring anything more than resentful defensive measures from the entrepreneurs.

Perhaps some day we may see under classified ads something to this effect:

> RADIO CRITIC WANTED—Must be gentle, understanding, fond of children's programs, devoted to the finer things yet capable of listening to claptrap sympathetically. Should be socially conscious but no business-hater, should have working familiarity with the classics, the lower middle class, the consumer movement and the Crossley Report. He must be high-minded, yet possessed of humor; he must modify his boldness with discretion; he must know acting, directing, advertising, merchandising and orchestrating and should know about public interest, convenience and necessity. Finally he should be free of bias, a master literary stylist and willing to work for small wages. Also willing to arrange free talent for the publisher's pet charity and relieve switchboard operator at lunch hour.

10. PROPHETS

Does radio render aid and comfort to the enemies of democracy by yielding to them, upon demand, equal opportunities to be heard? Perhaps a little. But fortunately radio standards are high. It is not, under present supervision, an ideal channel for the discharge of poison. The anti-democrat may not use over the air his foul vocabulary of abuse. He may not let his psychopathic blood-lusts run riot. The smutty leaflet, the blatant subsidized journal, the meeting behind locked doors—these are the propaganda devices that the bigot cherishes. In the hall the brethren may wallow in hatred safe from challenge and contempt.

The dirty whisper has to wear a false note of innocence for the American radio. As when some small-watters around New York City carried announcements inviting listeners to attend mass meetings without mentioning that Hitler's Jew-hatred was the subject. Or when in deepest Kansas radio announcements called attention to an ecclesiastical mongrel of the back country who preached venom against the Pope in a big tent in a cornfield.

On the whole, radio sterilizes itself against contact with the lepers of intolerance. And they turn from radio with some frustration, murmuring, as usual, that the

international Jewish bankers have again wickedly pretended to be virtuous.

Is there anything implicit in advertising sponsorship which prevents American radio from being a better system? About one-third of the programs are commercial and this one-third provides the money that carries the entire burden of full-scale operation. Out of their income from the sale of time the networks lay out such estimated items in a single year as these:

NBC	Symphony Orchestra	$250,000
CBS	School of the Air	150,000
ABC	Town Meeting	50,000
NBC	Television	700,000
CBS	Television	200,000
Shortwave—All webs		500,000

The plowing back of revenue into programs and services and experiments by the networks will presumably stand inspection by either the standard of public interest or the standard of common business practice. But essentially the advertising question is answered—or not answered—by the supreme fact that it is the *modus operandi* that keeps broadcasting a private enterprise.

Is there too much broadcasting in the United States? Some people think there is, and that there are too many stations, too many programs, too bewildering an array of choice, too many speakers, too many opinions. Yet this glacier of movement leaves a mountain of experience behind. And as a people we tend to approve diversity of ownership and control, of choice and opportunity.

Is radio management helpless against demagogues? By no means. Even if it may tremble a little at the voice of certain hard-hitting senators and not quite dare apply certain rules too literally when they hamper the great figures in a great controversy. The ingrates who complain that the gifts of free time bestowed upon them are not sufficient force broadcasters to audit their time distribution carefully. And that ought to be done anyhow. It is reassuring to know that in the Lend-Lease debate, for example, one network carried

For:	26 programs—	9 hours,	28 minutes
Against:	27 programs—	8 hours,	33 minutes
Debates:	8 programs—	2 hours,	35 minutes

Perhaps it is useful to underscore the fact that radio is only one of the voices and one of the implements of democracy but because it is singularly potent it should be prominent in the over-all defense of democracy. This defense, to over-simplify purposely, must presumably include two sides:

The positive—To speak boldly and movingly; to present democracy in the ruddy complexion of vigor; to instill confidence in the timid; to restate the tenets and proclaim the benefits of democracy in fresh, vital idiom with enthusiasm and music in it.

The negative—To fight anti-democrats; to call a spade a spade; to discredit bigotry and show its deliberate relationship to power politics; to blow down specious arguments and spurious Olympians, to scoff at

their blurred solutions, their phony science; to give them the cold water of instant rebuttal and the rich melodious note of the nose-bladder.

This much is clear: Radio broadcasting is now universally recognized as a superbly sharp and versatile tool in the kit of modern propaganda. Radio serves the diplomat, the politician, the advertiser. Less well known is its usefulness to culture and education, religion and charity. But on the whole there is no doubt that radio is thoroughly appreciated by all those who wish to address the multitude. If one desires to charm a constituency, to undermine an enemy nation's morale, or to launch a new toothpaste on the market, or to arrange a *coup d'état,* one must employ the radio.

Dictatorships use radio to keep the people misinformed, intimidated and deceived.

Democracies use radio to inform, instruct, warn and prevent the deception of the people.

The dictatorship formula is simple and brutal, backed up by absolute control and enforced by dire penalties. Accordingly it is a formula that is consistent in character.

The democratic formula is liberal and difficult, a patch-work of improvised and revised rules and compromises. It is more or less easy-going, frequently intelligent, usually fair, often splendid and seldom consistent.

It is indicative of democracy in the United States:

That the people freely damn or praise radio programs, writing millions of letters and postcards to advertisers, stations, stars, networks, announcers, members of Con-

gress and the President and that this mail is taken seriously.

That the President, as President, may speak as often as he wishes, and free, but when he is running for reelection he is a political candidate and must pay for his time like all other candidates.

That when the President does speak the White House Secretariat punctiliously observes democratic amenities by requesting time of the private broadcasters, not ordering it through the FCC, the Government agency having jurisdiction.

That although nobody worries very much about the also-ran parties that get their election returns by mail yet, in the democratic tradition, American radio provides national publicity advantages, disproportionate to their numbers, for Communists, Socialists, Coughlinites, Prohibitionists, etc. We not only allow, but wish minorities and dissenters to be heard.

If it was necessary in the election of 1936 for the FCC to flex its muscles to compel radio stations controlled by certain Tories to give the air to the leftists, the important fact was not the reluctance of the Tory gentlemen (which could be anticipated) but the firm insistence upon democratic practice by the public authority and public opinion.

Of course politics is only one segment of the radio problem as campaigns every four years are but the more vehement and picturesque expressions of the snarling dogs of modern life. Radio faces a far greater issue: its intimate role in the mid-twentieth-century muddle and struggle over the nice questions of who gets what

and for how long. Out of this expanding responsibility will almost certainly develop a demand that radio play a more conscious, purposeful, blueprinted part in the job of cooling down the hotheads, waking up the complacent and keeping the country sane and alert.

Radio cannot rest on its accomplishments. Its concepts must expand. Many broadcasters entered radio under the incomplete impression that broadcasting was primarily a business and that they were primarily business men, an idea that must be corrected since they are first and foremost custodians of the public's domain and they operate as a privilege, not a right. They are only incidentally business men. That is why what networks and stations contribute to the public service is so vital a consideration in the whole continuing success of the industry.

Unless Government and Business should one day merge and become coextensive (which wouldn't be democracy), radio will be expected to justify itself by complex criteria.

On the whole Americans seem disposed to appreciate diversity of viewpoints and spokesmen. They presumably sense safety in alternatives. It will take, and it should take, a great deal of evidence to persuade them lightly or thoughtlessly to surrender the known, present, demonstrable good of radio as it is for any unknown, theoretical future good that might follow a radical change of basic policy.

What, then, might logically be the long-pull purpose and fundamental dedication of American radio? To what constructive, thoughtful planned objective might it

direct its public service activities? Might it not be good democracy for management to recognize and the FCC to agree that the preservation and protection—and increase of membership from below—of the middle class is an absolute, basic necessity for the continuance of American democracy?

POSTLUDE

IT WAS THALES OF MILETUS who noted, in B.C. 640, that amber acquired the property, when rubbed, of attracting straws. Other Greeks and other scientists down through the next thousands of years similarly remarked other characteristics of static electricity until, in A.D. 1733, Du Fay stumbled upon the negative and positive qualities of electricity. He stroked with cat's fur a piece of sealing wax and evoked a different kind of response than he got from similarly stroking a glass rod.

With only this brief awareness of the past we still have the materials for a provocative view of civilization moving obliquely down the centuries in terms of electrical progress with radioelectronics as the grand climax in this manner:

Amber
Straw
Cat's Fur
Sealing wax
Glass rod
Morse Code
Lord Haw Haw