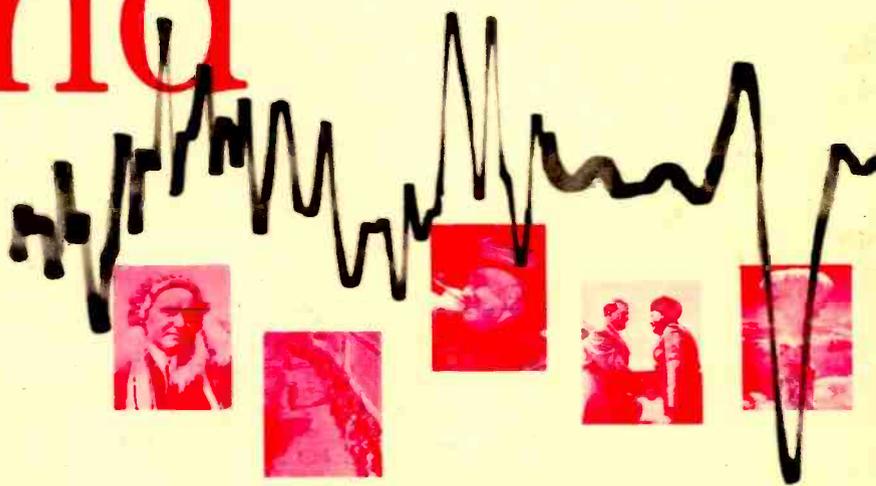


The  
sound  
of  
your  
life



The  
sound



of your  
life

*A record of  
Radio's first  
generation*



*Printed in U.S.A., 1950*

*Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.*

FOREWORD: *The only importance of anything is people. The only importance of a bath tub is a bather; of a book, a reader; of a car, a passenger.*

*The only importance of radio is a listener.*

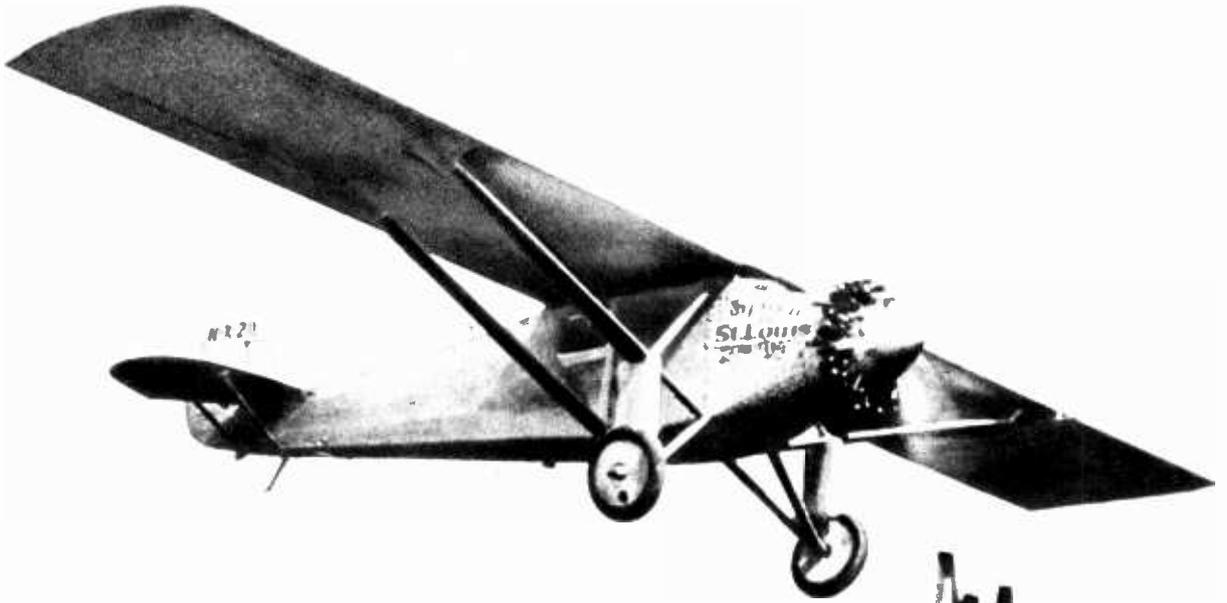
*What about the listener? He has been around for nearly a generation. How has radio affected him? Is he better for it or worse? Is he wiser, kinder, healthier, more capable? Has radio helped him understand more clearly the concentric worlds in which he lives, starting with himself at the center, and spreading through his family, his town, his country and his universe? Has radio helped him to function in each of them more effectively?*

*Has it given him a good time?*

*These are questions that call for conclusions. As radio broadcasters it is only proper for us to provide the material—namely the story of this generation—Radio's First Generation—as it came over the radio to the listener. From these facts you must draw your own conclusions.*

*To make the record typical and representative we have arbitrarily created an imaginary family of radio listeners. This means that today this family listens to the radio more than four hours a day, and that it is a composite of more than forty million other radio families in the United States—or about 95% of the population.*

*In order to give this family limited personality, we have given them a name (Smith) and a place to live (Indiana). The Smiths are now in their late forties and their son has a family of his own. But when our story begins in 1927 they are a "young couple," and their Joe, Jr. is still at the tadpole stage. Anything else you want to know about them you will have to fill in yourself. But that should not be hard. After all, you do it every day when you listen to a voice coming out of your radio.*

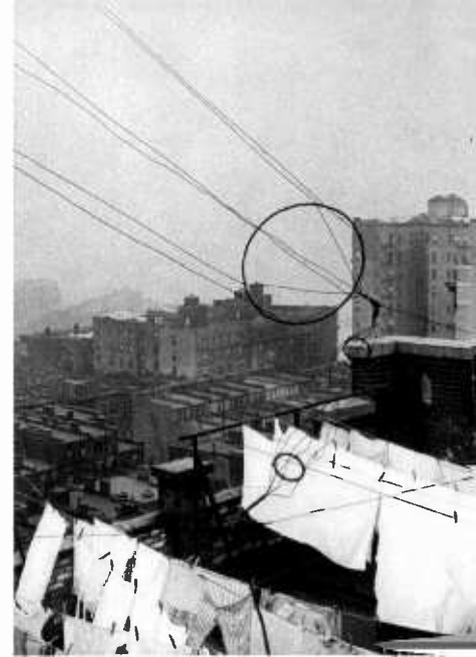
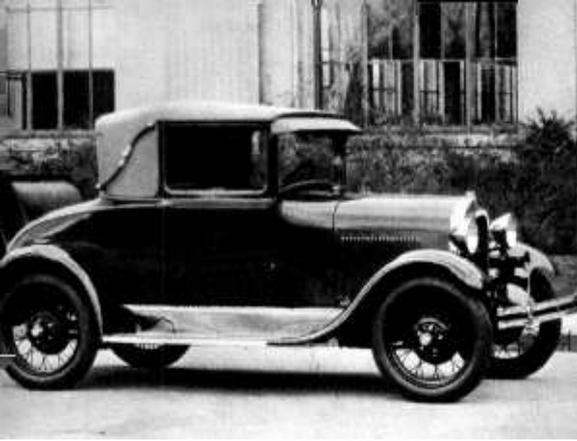




## 1. *A Multitude of Sound*

You may remember 1927 as quite a year. The Smiths do. They remember it chiefly as a year of hero-worship which started when a thin sandy-haired flier took off alone in a plane from a runway on Long Island and without stopping landed at an airfield outside Paris. The flight touched off a tidal wave which swept through every village, town and city of the nation. Americans talked of virtually nothing else throughout the summer and fall. New York to Paris: 33½ hours. The reality was hard to grasp, the reality of the birth of a new era—the Air Age.

Altogether it was a good year to be alive unless you were an art editor named Albert Snyder. In that case you were murdered by your wife and a corset salesman named Henry Judd Gray. Otherwise you sang and danced to *Ol' Man River* and *Chloe* and *A Russian Lullaby*. You saw Henry Ford take

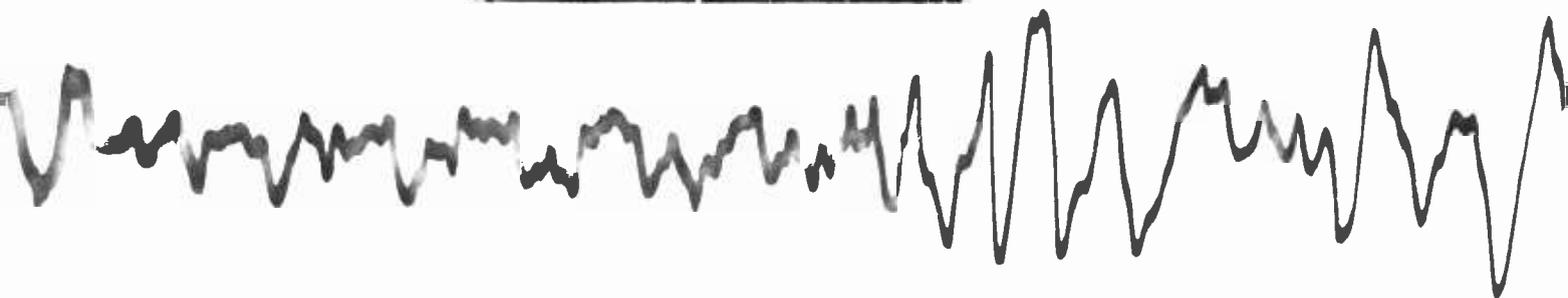


the wraps off his first Model A. You argued whether the Marines had any right to move into Nicaragua. You watched the market soar to new peaks with industrial stocks averaging \$214 a share.

The Smiths kept their radio in the living room. It was one of the new Fada Neutrodynes and cost about \$95. The loudspeaker was separate and cost extra. Mr. Smith had also rigged up an aerial on the roof. You had to in those days. Otherwise you couldn't hear very well.

The aerial had a lightning switch connected with it. If you were smart you turned it on during storms to keep from blowing up the family. If you were mechanically minded you built your own set, but most of the 7,000,000 radios then in use were sold over the counter.

Like the majority of radio owners, the Smiths listened mostly at night. You could hear better at night and you could get distance. That was the big thing. If you lived in Indiana you might even get Atlanta, Georgia—that is if you were



patient and stayed up late enough. And when you did get Atlanta, you talked about it for days. In 1927 it was hard to get people who had just bought radios to go to bed before 3 a.m.

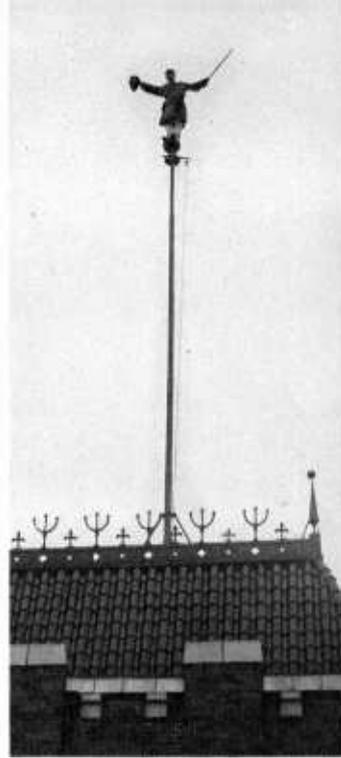
A Sunday night in September still stands out in the Smiths' memory. It was nearly 9 o'clock and Joe Smith was fiddling with the dial, trying for distance. He brought in the nearby station of WOWO at Fort Wayne and started to tune it out when some words caught his ear. A voice was saying something about the first broadcast of a new radio network called the Columbia Broadcasting System. Then came a list of the call-letters of sixteen stations and the names of the cities in which they were located. The voice was that of Major J. Andrew White, first president of CBS, and he went on to say the new network's first program would be the premiere of a new American opera called "The King's Henchman" by Deems Taylor and Edna St. Vincent Millay. For the next hour the Smiths and hundreds of thousands of other American families from Boston to St. Louis



listened to the first opera they had ever heard.

Radio was beginning to take on a larger dimension for the Smiths. It now meant more than getting distance at night. And this sudden impression was further strengthened by the one-hour broadcast of Floyd Bennett's funeral service in Arlington the following April and the sound of Herbert Hoover's voice from Palo Alto accepting the Republican nomination. Meanwhile Americans were repeating the airborne jokes of the "Two Black Crows," Moran and Mack, and were sitting in rapt attention before their loudspeakers listening to the Sunday afternoon broadcasts of the Columbia Symphony Orchestra.

The Smiths occasionally thought of writing a letter to Station WOWO expressing their interest in the programs. A letter like the one a Milwaukee listener wrote to CBS dated September 14, 1928: "*... I certainly appreciate your wonderful entertainment more all the time . . . As I have said before why don't we have to pay for all this? I can't believe that it is given to us—and why?*"



The writer must have been even more perplexed at the answer to her letter from Major White, president of the network, saying:

*“Radio entertainment has progressed very markedly, I feel, since Columbia entered the field eleven months ago. It has cost a little over a million dollars to give our programs free to the public this far. In the main I feel that everyone has been substantially benefited, even if it has been exceedingly expensive to us.”*

How expensive? Well, it had actually cost the network nearly twice that to operate the first year. Of this total, advertisers had purchased time worth over a million dollars. American industry even then was footing a substantial part of America’s radio bill—companies like Dodge Brothers and Lambert Pharmacal, William Wrigley and Studebaker, Emerson Drug and Cambridge Rubber. At the end of 1927 American industry had spent nearly \$4,000,000 worth of network radio time to advertise its products to America’s 8 million radio families.

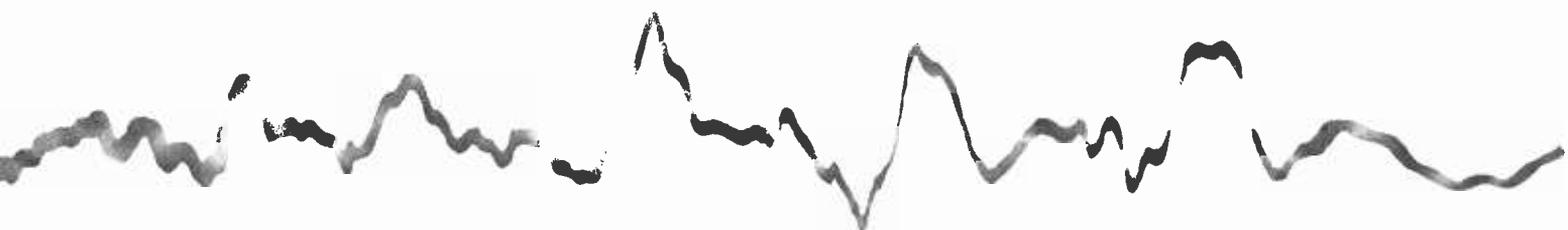
Listening became a steady habit with the Smiths rather than an occasional



experience. While daytime radio fare consisted mostly of music, Mrs. Smith found herself regularly tuning in the domestic programs of Ida Bailey Allen. The program was called *The National Radio Home-makers Club* and there wasn't a household occupation, from painting the kitchen to baking a cake, that Mrs. Allen did not offer sound advice about.

At the time the Smiths' favorite radio personality was an announcer named Ted Husing. His specialty was sports events but he doubled in anything that came along. It was *his* voice that came through the loudspeaker with the story of Floyd Bennett's burial, and it was he who broadcast the arrival of the Graf Zeppelin over New York on its first transatlantic flight. It was Husing, too, who figured prominently a few weeks later in the memorable broadcasts of the 1928 election returns. As he tells it:

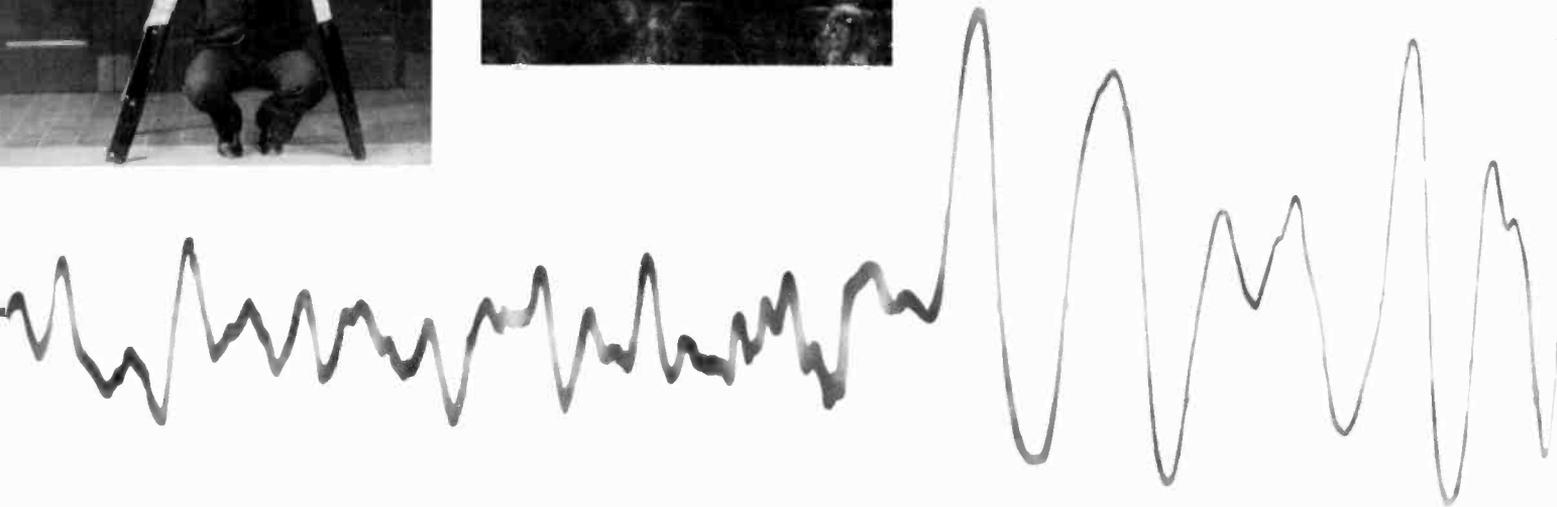
*"...The broadcasting feat of that year of which I'm still proudest was the CBS report of the election returns which I took care of single-handed, compilations*



*and all, working from 8 p.m. to 6 o'clock in the morning, much of the time at the mike. We sent out a combination of concert (music) and election returns that night, incidentally shooting it by shortwave to Australia...We went way ahead of anybody on that broadcast. CBS received 12,000 telegrams of congratulations from listeners that night, and afterwards came columns of editorials from all parts of the country."*

The Smiths stayed up most of that night to hear the returns. They heard Herbert Hoover in Palo Alto accept victory and Alfred E. Smith in New York concede defeat. And they laughed when Al spoke about his talks over the "raddio." But the "raddio" had brought them one of the most exciting evenings in their lives.

This excitement—the feeling that radio was able to bring the listener close to important things that happened—was not lost on America's advertisers. By the end of 1928, American business had nearly tripled its investment of the year before. Advertisers spent more than \$10,500,000 telling people of their goods and

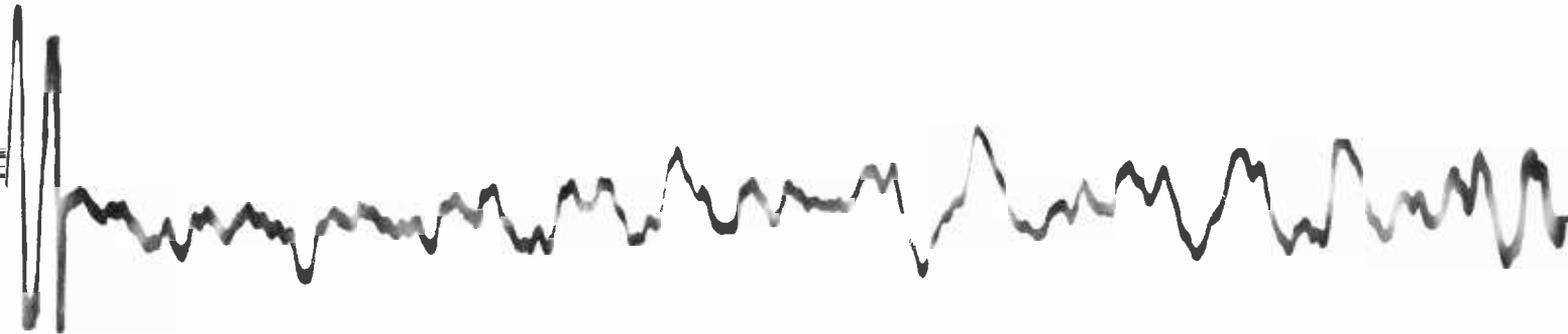


services over network radio. And by the end of 1929, the figure had soared to nearly \$19,000,000.

That was the year of Bing Crosby and blindfold tests and Paul Whiteman. The Smiths rarely missed the *La Palina Smoker* broadcasts, which brought into their living room the leading entertainers of the stage and screen. It was the year a CBS commentator named H. V. Kaltenborn took hold of the public mind with his report and analysis of major news events. It was the year radio reported the ratification of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the short-wave flash of Byrd's flight over the South Pole. It was the year that Columbia, under the guidance of William S. Paley as President, jumped from a chain of 16 stations to a network of 53. It was also the year the bottom fell out of the market.

It kept the Smiths close to their radio.

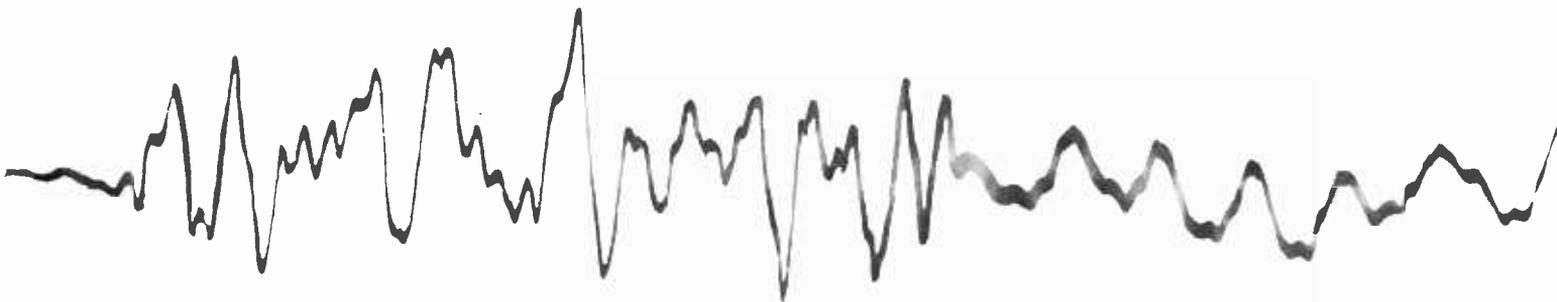
At 3:30 p.m. on the afternoon of January 21, 1930, while tidying up the living room, Mrs. Smith heard the radio say:



*“Two weeks from today, and each Tuesday and Thursday thereafter, we shall present a series of programs to be known as the American School of the Air... the first comprehensive series of programs for school children yet attempted on a nation-wide scale...”*

If on the afternoon of January 21, 1930, Mrs. Smith and several million other American mothers had been intrigued by the announcement of the *School of the Air*, they were no less captivated an hour later to hear the voice of George V coming through their loudspeakers from Buckingham Palace. The King’s voice formally opened the five-power Naval Disarmament Conference in London. During the next two months Columbia brought its listeners a total of 23 separate broadcasts reporting the proceedings of the conference and ending with the treaty’s final ratification by Congress on April 21.

Radio had quite a day on Monday, April 21. That was the day it broke one of the biggest news stories of the year—the Ohio State Penitentiary fire which killed

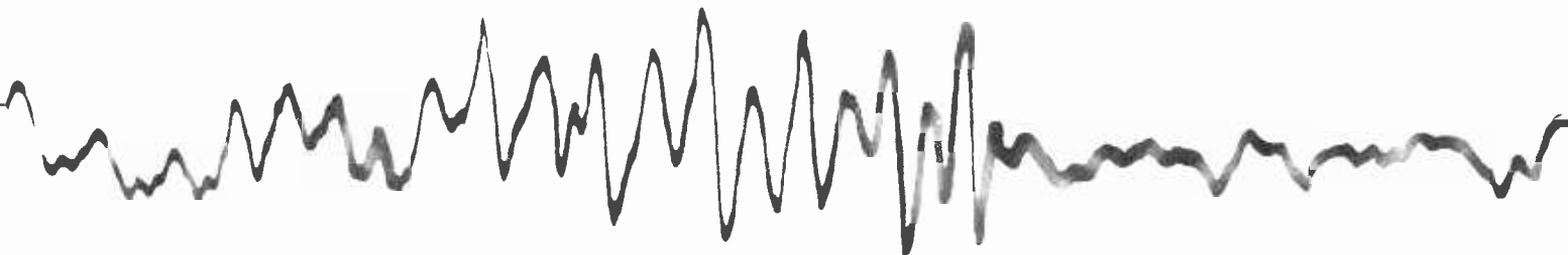


320 convicts. The news was on the air fully eight hours before it was on the street in print. The *New York Times*, giving radio full credit, published the story next morning: “An old Negro convict...gave a graphic account of the fire in the State Penitentiary from the prisoner’s viewpoint, over a nation-wide hookup of the Columbia Broadcasting System at 11:15 o’clock...”

Over the loudspeakers of the nation came the roar of crackling flames and firemen’s oaths. These were sounds the Smiths and millions of other radio listeners were not to forget. When the first report went out on the air that night, people who happened to be awake called their friends throughout the country to make sure that they, too, were awake and listening.

In New York that was the year listeners who tuned in the Monday night fifteen-minute program of the Saks-34th Street department store on WABC heard a new voice with the timbre of a tommygun:

*“Good evening, you great big gossip fiends! ...The raciest of the new shows is due*



*the first week in June...It is called 'Lysistrata' and you'll thank me later for telling you how to pronounce it..."*

The voice kept hammering for 12 minutes and 50 seconds:

*"And that is all there is—there isn't any more, as my dear friend Ethel Barrymore would say...Thanks for listening. I am yours respectfully, Mrs. Winchell's little boy, Walter."*

That was the year another voice which was to win a different kind of fame was beamed to the nation's 15,000,000 loudspeakers for the first time. It belonged to a man who was to become known as The Town Crier, and its first words were always *"This is Woolcott speaking..."*

Sunday, October 5, 1930, was generally fair and cool throughout the nation. A high pressure area over the Ohio Valley kept the temperature hovering around 70. The Smiths had their in-laws for dinner. It was a little after 3 o'clock before the last dish had been put away. Someone switched on the radio and the sound

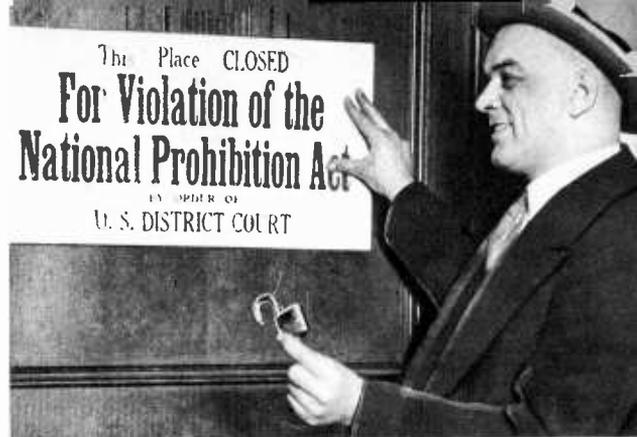


of von Weber's Overture from "Der Freischütz" burst from the loudspeaker.

The music came from an aggregation of 36 violins, 14 violas, 12 cellos, 10 bass fiddles, and an assorted group of wind, brass and percussion instruments for a grand total of 104 separate pieces. They composed the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society, oldest symphonic group in the western hemisphere, and third oldest in the world, of which James Huneker once said: "The history of the Philharmonic is the history of music in America."

The broadcast continued for two hours, through Mozart's Serenade No. 9, an intermission talk by Olin Downes, and Tschaikowsky's Fourth Symphony. Three microphones on the stage of Carnegie Hall picked up the music and sent it winging across America into several million homes, including the Smiths'.

At 4:59:35 p.m. a voice made the closing announcement. The first broadcast of a series of Sunday afternoon symphony concerts was over. It was to become the most popular and esteemed program of serious music in America, and to con-



tinue without interruption to the present day. Today, 10 million listeners hear the Philharmonic on a single Sunday afternoon. With this broadcast Columbia became the first radio network to present on a continuing basis the regular subscription season of a symphony orchestra.

The Smiths spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon.

During the year ending December 31, 1930, America's advertisers had spent over \$40,000,000 on all radio. Forty million for what? To talk to how many people? When? Where? How often? With what result? They knew radio *sold* their goods. But the question of *who* listened to *what* how frequently, was still open.

In 1930 the Association of National Advertisers took steps to find out by organizing the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting, familiarly known as the Crossley Report. By asking people on the phone what programs they had listened to, the Survey was the first report on program popularity. The standard greeting of the day among people in radio was "How's your Crossley?"

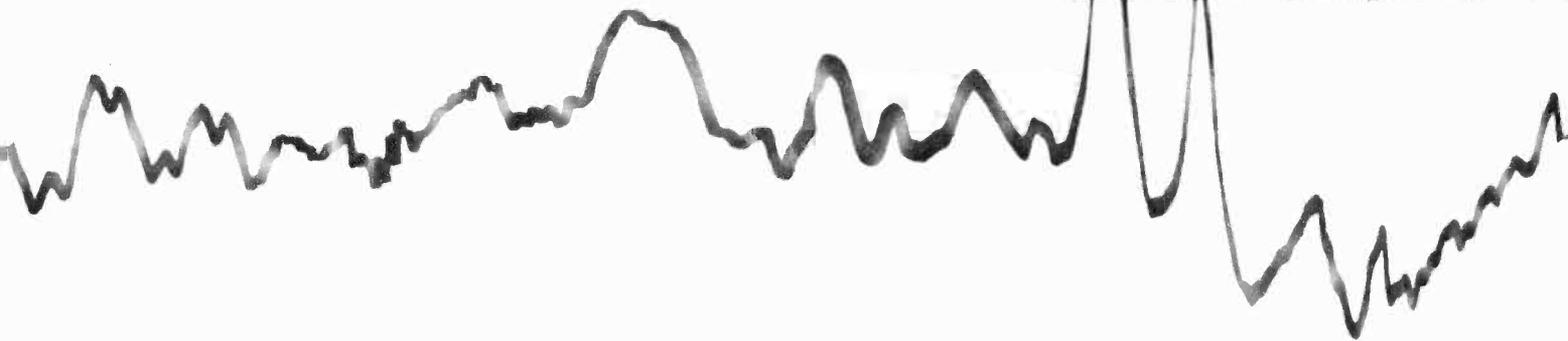


But Columbia was interested in finding out more than the popularity of a given program. It wanted to know the popularity of radio. It initiated the first “study of network popularity” by employing the accounting firm of Price, Waterhouse & Company to send out 200,000 questionnaires to radio owners in 67 cities asking the single question, “What radio station do you listen to most?” It discovered that more of Columbia’s stations were listened to more frequently than those affiliated with the other two networks. The survey demonstrated to advertisers Columbia’s penetration of America’s 15,000,000 radio homes.

Three seconds after 7 p.m. on New Year’s Eve, 1930, the first of twelve clanging strokes of a clock boomed from the loudspeaker in the Smiths’ living room. Forty-nine seconds later the twelfth stroke faded. It was the sound of London’s Big Ben across the sea, banging the old year out, the new year in.

For the Smiths there were still five hours of the old year left.

It was radio stealing a march on time.



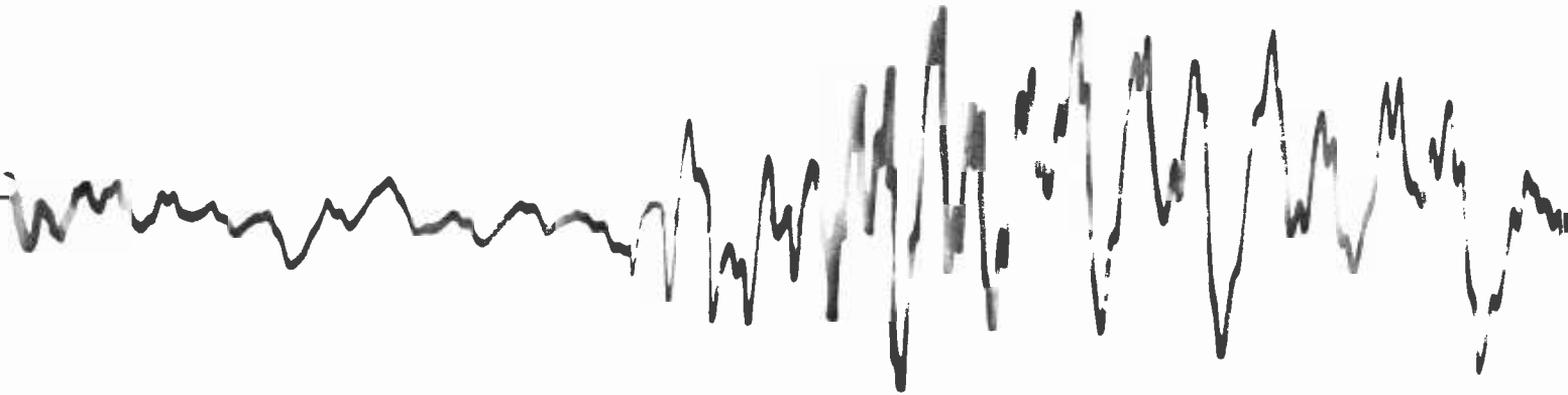
## 2. *The Power of a Voice*

New Year's Day in 1931 was a Thursday. The Smiths were sitting in the living room, wishing they had gone to bed earlier the night before. Mrs. Smith asked her husband to turn on the radio.

The first voice they heard puzzled them. It sounded something like Joe Costello, who ran the spaghetti restaurant downtown. It also sounded a good deal more authoritative. Mr. Smith reached for the day's radio schedule (which he had carefully torn out of the paper after breakfast) and reported that this was indeed not Mr. Costello. It was Mussolini.

They settled down to study Il Duce's brand of English and only after a while did they begin to take in what he was saying:

**BENITO MUSSOLINI**, January 1, 1931: *"I should like to contradict many rumors spread abroad on the attitude taken by Fascism and the danger it is sup-*

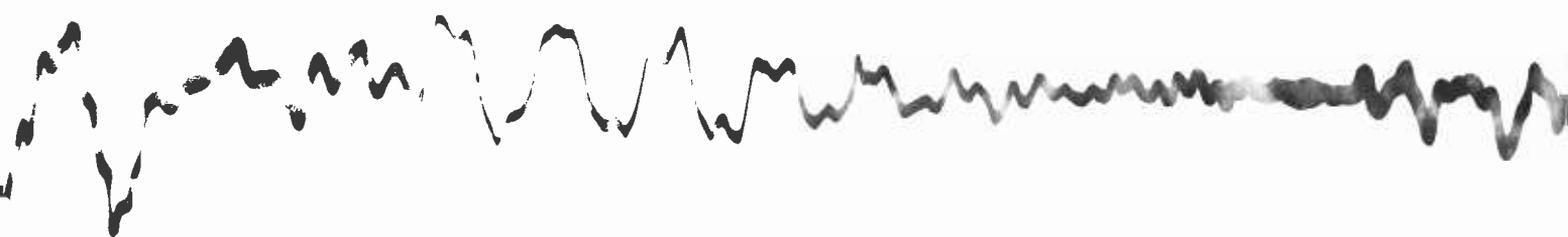


*posed to represent to the world. Such accusations are groundless. Neither I, nor my government, nor the Italian people, desire to bring about another war... A war nowadays inevitably would become a general war. Civilization itself would be endangered...*

*"Italy, let me repeat it, will never take the initiative in starting a war..."*

The word "war," repeated many times by so highly placed a figure as Mussolini, troubled Mrs. Smith.

Six weeks later it was Thursday again. This time another voice, speaking only 2 miles distant from Mussolini's Palazzo Venezia, somewhat lessened Mrs. Smith's anxiety. A CBS announcer said that he was taking her now to Rome, and the next man she heard was named Marconi. He had just built a radio station in the Vatican, Station HVJ. This was the opening broadcast. Then another announcer introduced the main speaker. It was Pope Pius XI. He spoke in Latin, but she soon heard an English translation, by Monsignor Francis J. Spellman.



**POPE PIUS XI, February 12, 1931:**

*“AD UNIVERSAM CREATURAM: . . . Qui prima in loco ipsa mira sane ope Marconiana uti frui possumus, ad omnia et omnes primo nos convertimus, atque, hic et infra, Sacro Textu juvante dicimus: Audite, caeli, quae loquor; audiat terra verba oris mei; audite haec, omnes gentes; auribus percipite, omnes qui habitatis orbem, simul in unum dives et pauper; audite, insulae, et attendite, populi, de longe . . .”*

**MONSIGNOR SPELLMAN:**

*“TO ALL CREATION: . . . Being the first Pope to make use of this truly wonderful Marconian invention, we, in the first place, turn to all things and all men and we say to them: Hear, O ye Heavens, the things I speak; let the nations give ear to the words of my mouth; hear these things all ye nations; give ear all ye inhabitants of the world, both rich and poor together; give ear ye islands, and harken ye people from afar . . .”*

For the first time a Pope had departed from the limited radius of encyclical letters to speak, directly and at once, to millions in the world's radio audience.



For the first time that year, too, American listeners could count on network religious programs of all faiths on a regular schedule—through the CBS *Church of the Air*...another program that would still be summoning its loyal weekly audience twenty years later.

Radio was really beginning to move around. Engineers began appearing with microphones and portable transmitters in dozens of places. The Smiths heard:

- (1) CBS newsman Frederick William Wile buttonholing legislators on the floor of the U.S. Senate with a handy, unobtrusive new lapel microphone;
- (2) A musical program called *Ever-Ready Gaieties*, from the dining-car of a speeding B.&O. train;
- (3) A nightingale singing in the Pangbourne Woods near London;
- (4) Gertrude Ederle's report on how it feels to speak from an aquaplane;
- (5) Auguste Piccard in Desenzano, Italy, telling how it feels to balloon 10 miles into the stratosphere; and



(6) William Beebe, off Nonsuch Island, reporting from a steel and glass bathysphere 2,200 feet below sea level:

*“It is absolutely black. Now there are fish two or three feet away...It is the most amazing thing now: the amount of light down here. It must be the normal luminescence of the creatures...Here comes loads of little—I don’t know what they are—I never saw anything like them.”* (Then, speaking to his tugboat half a mile above) *“Let’s go down some more.”*

In the final months of 1932 the Smiths became convinced that there were few spots on, above, or below the earth’s surface where radio could not take them.

But enough was going on right around your corner in those days to keep your mind off anything that might be going on across 3,000 miles of ocean. You had only to lean out of the window to see a breadline, or an apple vendor, or a foreclosed farmer. You had only to walk down to the bank to find you could not get in.

So when the radio on the night of January 30, 1933, brought you the report

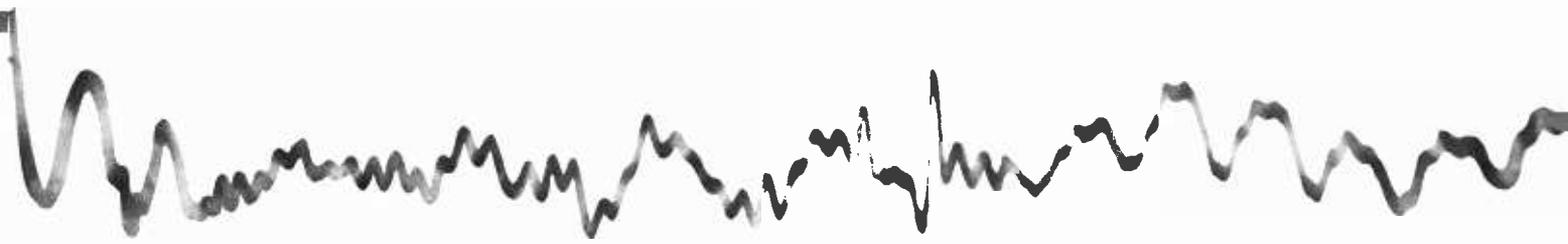


that a man named Adolf Hitler had become Chancellor of Germany, you could take it or leave it. You probably left it.

And if you had a fire in your town on February 27, you probably didn't pay much attention to the fact that Berlin's Reichstag Building also burned that day. And that Adolf Hitler's new Nazi tribunal quickly announced its opinion that this was the work of Communist enemies of the Reich and at once proceeded to drastic measures against any and all anti-Nazi factions.

But at 3:30 p.m. on March 2, the name of Adolf Hitler suddenly took on compelling reality. For now it was not only a name, but a voice, speaking in German and coming into your living room from an auditorium in Berlin massed with 20,000 National Socialists.

**ADOLF HITLER**, March 2, 1933 (from Berlin): *"The individual inventor or organizer of human achievement in all ages has been the leader of mankind. It was ever the man and not democracy that created values in centuries gone by*



*when democracy destroyed and annihilated the value of individual effort...It is sheer madness to assume that the majority can suddenly replace the achievements of the individual...*

*“If Germany was saved from going to pieces, it was because the defenders of democratic principles were so completely below average, so inferior and dwarflike as to make them unfit to be leaders of the masses...*

*“Our program is the direct contrary of their program of madness and insanity.”*

The next morning the *New York Times* reported: *“The voice of Chancellor Hitler was heard clearly over WABC and the Columbia Broadcasting System yesterday afternoon in a rebroadcast of his Berlin address. Stirred up to a high pitch of enthusiasm the crowd roared its approval time after time and its cheers were brought across the ocean without losing strength.”*

That was a Thursday. The following Saturday the Smiths heard another voice, manifestly different in content and inflection. The President of the United States



was making his inaugural address at the Capitol:

**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**, March 4, 1933: *“Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance...*

*“We do not distrust the future of essential democracy. The people of the United States have not failed. In their need they have registered a mandate that they want direct, vigorous action. They have asked for discipline and direction under leadership. They have made me the present instrument of their wishes. In the spirit of the gift I take it...”*

This was the very first time the Smiths had happened to hear the voice that was to become perhaps radio’s most historic. For Franklin D. Roosevelt was first among the world’s public figures to realize fully what an instrument the broadcast human voice could be in explaining and implementing policy. He took his case directly to the people by radio—not alone in public addresses, but in informal



“Fireside Chats,” and addressed his countrymen as no other head of office had, as “My Friends”—a salutation which was to induce affectionate smiles in many of his listeners, near-apoplexy in others.

But whatever faction they belonged to, it is certain that Franklin D. Roosevelt made very clear to his contemporaries the importance and effectiveness of radio as an instrument of policy. From that day forward, there was never to be a major public issue which was not thoroughly debated and discussed over radio. Leading figures in politics, business, labor, the sciences and professions quickly learned that by carrying their argument or proposal to the people by radio, they could find swifter reaction and response than by any other means. And a lot of public figures began taking voice lessons.

But back there in the chilly March of 1933, the Smiths merely noted there was something comforting about being urged by such a highly-placed person not to fear. And they were glad to be guided by this voice instead of the harsh and stri-



dent one they'd heard two days ago from Berlin.

By this time the Smiths had come to depend a lot on their opinion of various voices. Not just those of the world's statesmen, but the minstrels and clowns and entertainers who visited them every day. Singin' Sam, the Barbasol Man; Frank Crumit and Julia Sanderson; David Ross, who read them poems; the Easy Aces, who made them laugh; Edwin C. Hill, with the Human Side of the News. Mr. Smith loved Stoopnagle and Budd. Mrs. Smith confessed to going all shivery when she heard the Street Singer. Nights when friends dropped in, the Smiths rolled up the rugs and danced, with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians, Isham Jones, Paul Whiteman, or Ben Bernie and All the Lads to call the tune. Good tunes, too: *Carioca*, *Easter Parade*, *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf*, *The Isle of Capri*.

But the big voices—the ones that were making history—were never very far away. More and more frequently, the Smiths were hearing radio's "alert" cutting across their favorite music or comedy shows:



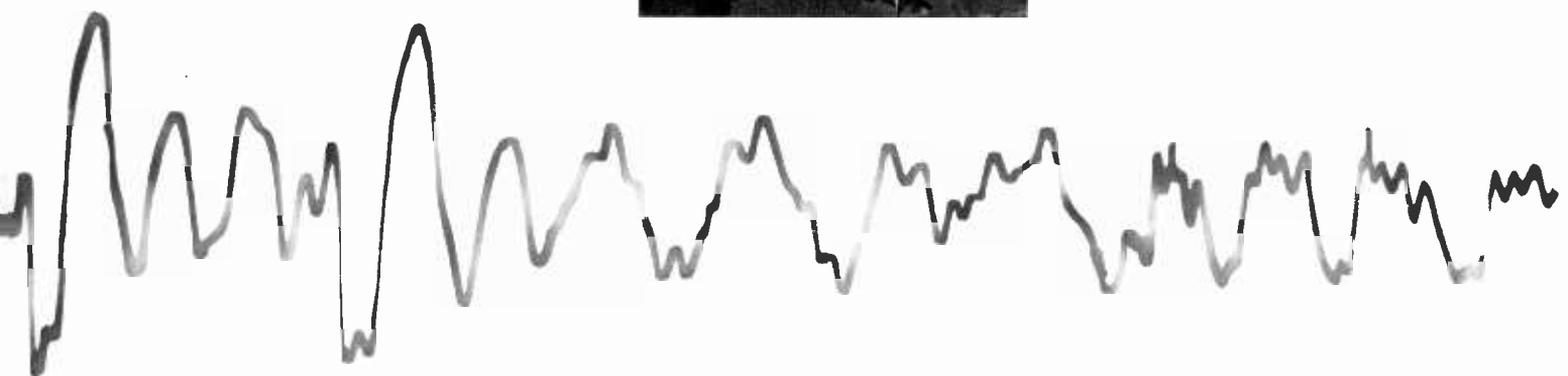
*“We interrupt this program to bring you a special bulletin...”*

One such flashed from Vienna on July 26, 1934.

**COL. WALTER ADAM**, July 26, 1934: *“As Chancellor Dollfuss was retiring to a side building, he had just reached the well-known Congress Hall when they burst in from a left door, direct from the corridor. Two shots were fired. The Chancellor was hit in the neck and below the shoulder. He turned to one side and fell on his back on the floor. He called softly, ‘Help! Help!’ and then became unconscious and his blood flowed out on the carpet...”*

*“The family of the Chancellor, his wife and two young children were in Italy, with the Chief of the Italian Government, Benito Mussolini. Mussolini himself informed Frau Dollfuss of the news. The children of the Chancellor remained in Italy under the personal care of Mussolini.”*

Thoughtful of Mussolini. So was the invasion a year later of Ethiopia by 50,000 Italian troops. They moved in on October 2, 1935. Next day from a balcony



Mussolini told the world his side of the story.

**BENITO MUSSOLINI**, October 3, 1935 (from Rome): *“Black Shirts of the Revolution! Men and women of all Italy! Italians all over the world—beyond the mountains—beyond the seas! Listen!...Instead of recognizing the rights of Italy, the League of Nations dares talk of sanctions...*

*“...Italy! Italy! Entirely and universally Fascist!...Rise to your feet, let the cry of your determination...reach our soldiers in East Africa...an encouragement to our friends...a warning to our enemies...It is the cry of Justice and Victory!”*

Nearly five years had passed since the last time the Smiths had heard Mussolini’s voice. But a few words echoed dimly: *“...Neither I, nor my government, nor the Italian people, desire to bring about another war...”* If the irony was apparent to an American family, it was bitter to the small, black-bearded equatorial king whose country was in peril. His voice leaped between two continents a month later, speaking in Amharic.



**HAILE SELASSIE, EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA**, November 6, 1935 (from Addis Ababa): *“This is the first opportunity I have had since war has been thrust on the Ethiopian people of addressing the people of our strong and well-loved friend, the United States of America. I thank the Columbia Broadcasting Network for extending its facilities...*

*“The League of Nations has solemnly pronounced the international form of punishment known as sanctions upon the Italian nation—the only weapon left to a peace-loving world...*

*“Now the time has come...for collective action against the criminal aggressor... I ask no one to take the sword against Italy. The method of the sword and of force are the methods of ancient ignorance...The time has come for those masses of Americans whom I know desire peace to help the League in its efforts for conciliation. Not because it is the League. Not because it is my nation that needs the strength of American sympathy. But because there is no controverting that our*



*cause is the cause of humanity, of justice, and of peace on earth..."*

If, like the Smiths, you responded to the impact of these voices, you came away from your radio with more than new sounds in your ears. You came away with new pictures in your mind. Radio had brought a chancellery in Vienna and a palace in East Africa as near as the store on the corner. Radio had brought into your living room with instantaneous speed over tremendous distances the size and color of a man's convictions. Words spoken into a microphone started armies in motion.

You came away with a new picture of the power of the voice.



### 3. *The Play's the Thing*

Some nineteen hundred years before Mussolini, another Roman named Juvenal observed that most people want bread *and* circuses. In that respect people had changed very little by 1935. They could take the nourishment of national and international debate in small doses. What really kept them close to their loudspeaker was the remarkable variety of entertainment that issued from it day and night.

It was about this time that the Smiths discovered some programs were habit-forming. Like *Lux Radio Theatre*, on Monday nights, with its Broadway and Hollywood stars in hour-long adaptations of famous plays and pictures. The first program (July 29, 1935) presented Helen Hayes in Graham Moffat's tender comedy "Bunty Pulls the Strings."

**BUNTY (MISS HAYES):** *"Are you not afraid that you'll be henpecked, Weelum? Maybe you had better no marry me; for I'm sure I can't help managing you."*



**WEELUM:** *“That’s just what I need. I don’t care if I’m the most henpecked man in all Scotland . . . I’ll just glory in my shame.”*

**BUNTY:** *“Oh, WEELUM!”*

If you liked your performances funny you continued to have plenty of choice. In 1936 you could sample the wares of Joe Penner, Burns and Allen, Eddie Cantor, Phil Baker, Jack Oakie, and Ed Wynn.

Wynn was romping through the role of Gulliver the Traveller, for Plymouth cars. Perhaps you remember a routine that invariably began, “I love the woods”: *“I love the woods . . . There’s a man in the woods who crossed a kangaroo with a raccoon . . . he’s trying to raise raccoon coats with pockets . . . I’m kind to animals . . . I always bring cookies to give to the little bears in the woods . . . I bring them cub cakes.”*

That year, as every year, Eddie Cantor was playing himself. On a night in January, for example, he was on the losing end of a debate with a character



of appalling denseness called Parkyakarkas.

**CANTOR:** *“Let’s say I had ten dollars and I lost two dollars...”*

**PARK:** *“A big boy like you should be more careful.”*

**CANTOR:** *“Forget you and me. Let’s take John D. Rockefeller. He had ten dollars and loses two dollars.”*

**PARK:** *“Well, what’s two dollars to a man like Rockefeller?”*

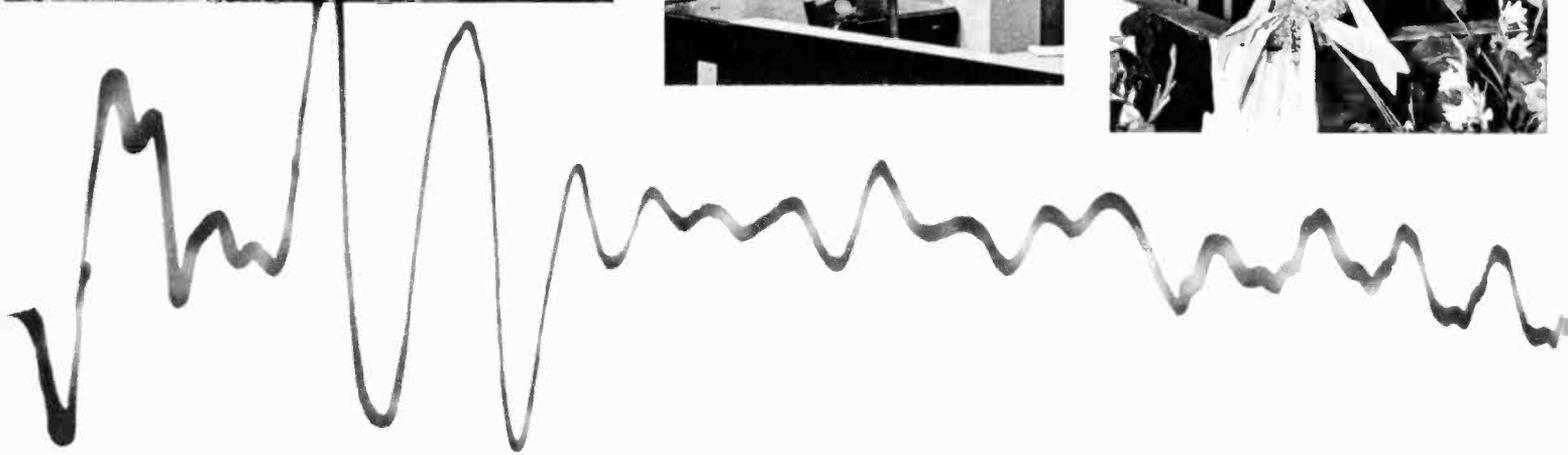
Burns and Allen did it a little differently:

**GRACIE:** *“Uncle Fred, the one who eats concrete, he said to my nephoo...”*

And Joe Penner added to the nation’s store of nonsense with his insistent question: *“Wanna buy a duck?”*

That year, too, the fever of guessing-games hit the nation. Blame it on radio. Columbia introduced to network listeners a new kind of program—the quiz show.

**PROF. QUIZ:** *“All right, let’s have the first contestant. Your name is?... Good, will you help yourself to a question?... All right. What is the difference between*



*a lama with one 'l' and a llama with two 'l's'?"*

Historically, that was the first quiz question, and historically, the contestant didn't know the answer.

About this time the more acute and venturesome folk in broadcasting began to find new possibilities in radio's unique qualities. For the musician, radio provided a far more intimate hearing than the concert hall; it permitted new orchestral effects; it offered no distractions for the eye; yet it challenged the composer to arrest the attention of multitudes who listened with only half an ear. For the dramatist, radio provided a stage within inches of its audience, heightening dramatic impact and allowing subtler shadings of speech and emotion; but it also put all the dramatists' action behind a curtain. Sound was everything.

So in 1936 CBS began in earnest to explore these two frontiers of the microphone. It first launched (on July 18) what was to become radio's foremost experimental theatre, the *Columbia Workshop*.



A week later the Smiths were astonished to hear in their living room a collection of sounds and voices such as they had never experienced anywhere, anytime before. It was the *Workshop's* interpretation of Broadway.

**NARRATOR:** *"The world beats to the pulse of Broadway, and its heart is the crowd..."*

**VOICES:** *"Joe's place...Amy said she'd wait for us inside...fat chance, they're sold out for seven weeks...best band in town...four bucks in the balcony even...Comedy Theatre...Forties somewhere...she's seen it twice...don't have to tip so you save...double feature...fellow that always plays the dumb guy...that's before six o'clock, eighty-five cents after six...can't act, just goodlooking..."*

Meanwhile, Columbia had commissioned six distinguished composers to write a series of new musical works specifically for radio. Deems Taylor (then CBS consultant on music) asked only that the compositions be within suitable time limits for broadcasting; the deadline, he added, would be June 1, 1937.

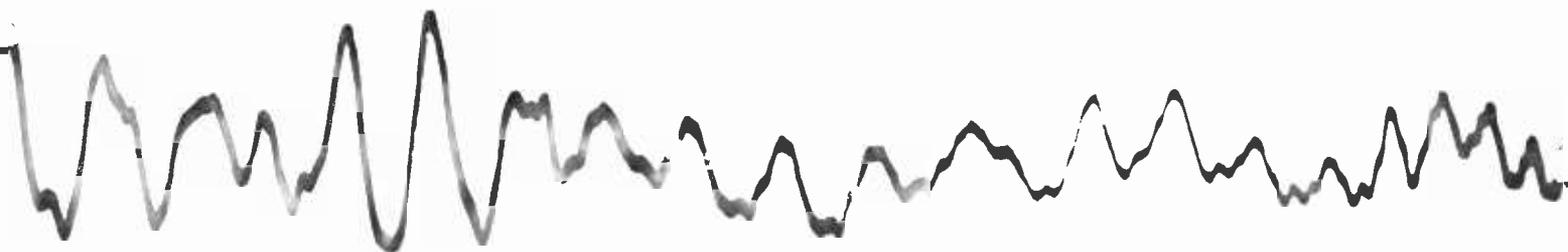


In the heads of America's leading composers the music went 'round and 'round, and came out, on schedule, in the summer of 1937. The Columbia Symphony Orchestra performed world premières of works by Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, William Grant Still, Howard Hanson, Louis Gruenberg, and Roy Harris.

On August 8, the Smiths heard Roy Harris' *Time Suite*, written in honor of "one of the most important musical instruments in radio—the stop-watch." The first movement, called "Broadway," took one minute; the second two minutes; the third three minutes; and so on.

In the words of the *Columbia Workshop*, it had sounded like this: "*The world beats to the pulse of Broadway...*" Now, in Columbia-commissioned music, here was Broadway speaking again:



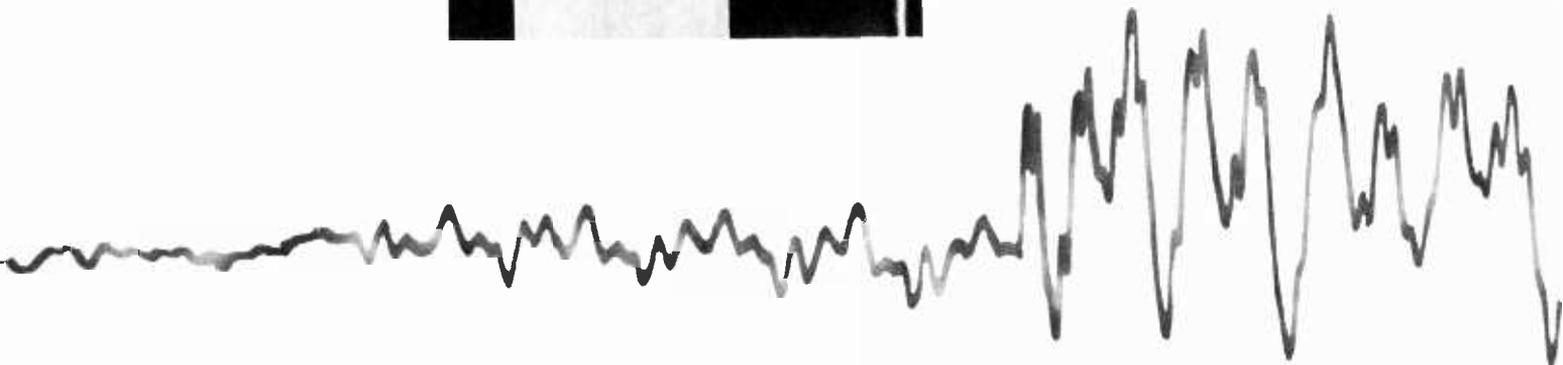


#### 4. *The Good Samaritan*

The Smiths kept listening. They heard what pundits were much later to tell them they should have recognized all the time as storm-warnings before a world exploded: a Spanish militarist coup in Morocco under a General Franco, which was to spread to the mainland and become a full-scale civil war; German troops marching into the Rhineland; a French Socialist government forming under Léon Blum; the creation of the Rome-Berlin Axis; the signing of the German-Japanese “Anti-Comintern” Pact.

To the Smiths, as to many of their countrymen, all this was vaguely disturbing, but mostly it was confusing and hard to understand. Anyway, it was all happening a long way from Indiana.

Much closer to Indiana, not geographically but emotionally, was a world-famous romance which kept the Smiths close to their radio all through the first



weeks of December, 1936. And on the 11th, streets all over America were deserted, office staffs dismissed early, so folks could rush home to their radios and hear:

**HIS FORMER MAJESTY KING EDWARD VIII:** *“At long last I am able to say a few words of my own...you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do, without the help and support of the woman I love...”*

That was the kind of story that made you thankful you had a radio.

Other things made you thankful, too.

Take a letter. *“Dear Dr. O’Brien: I am a little girl 7 years old. I had a sore throat. I looked. I had a skin rash. I told Ma. Ma told the doctor. He said it was scarlet fever. Yours truly. P.S. I notice you’re going to be talking about whooping cough next week.”*



This letter came from the pen of a radio listener. It was addressed to Dr. William A. O'Brien, who for sixteen years had been broadcasting a series of weekly health talks over WCCO, the CBS station in Minneapolis. He spoke plainly and casually of various ailments. He discussed the nature and appearance of symptoms (*"At the sign of a sore throat, look for a rash"*). Each morning his desk was piled high with letters requesting information or expressing gratitude for advice.

Today radio's response to human need is commonplace. Fifteen years ago it was only suspected. But on the night of January 22, 1937, this suspicion exploded into fact. The Ohio River broke loose and the worst flood in the nation's history roared through the Mississippi Valley.

The swirling, rain-swollen waters cost the lives of 900 people, drove a half million families from their homes, blacked out communities in four states and laid waste millions of dollars of property.



The threat of catastrophe brought radio to its feet. Almost in unison each of the nation's 591 radio stations devoted its station breaks at intervals of fifteen minutes to broadcast appeals for medical supplies, food and money. For more than two weeks thousands of engineers, technicians and announcers lived virtually without sleep, manning the control rooms, the microphones, the mobile units, and the transmitters whose antennas in many instances were sunk deep in 15 feet of water. During the first five days, as the flood moved toward its crest, the Columbia network carried broadcasts from 31 major points of disaster.

A listener sends a telegram to a radio station:

*"I am 65 years old and have been at my radio continuously for the past 36 hours, hoping WSM would broadcast the whereabouts of my son. I will stay here until you mention his name, because I know that radio will tell me he is safe."*

Multiply this telegram by ten thousand. Then double it for the number of phone calls which poured into stations throughout the Ohio-Mississippi Valley.



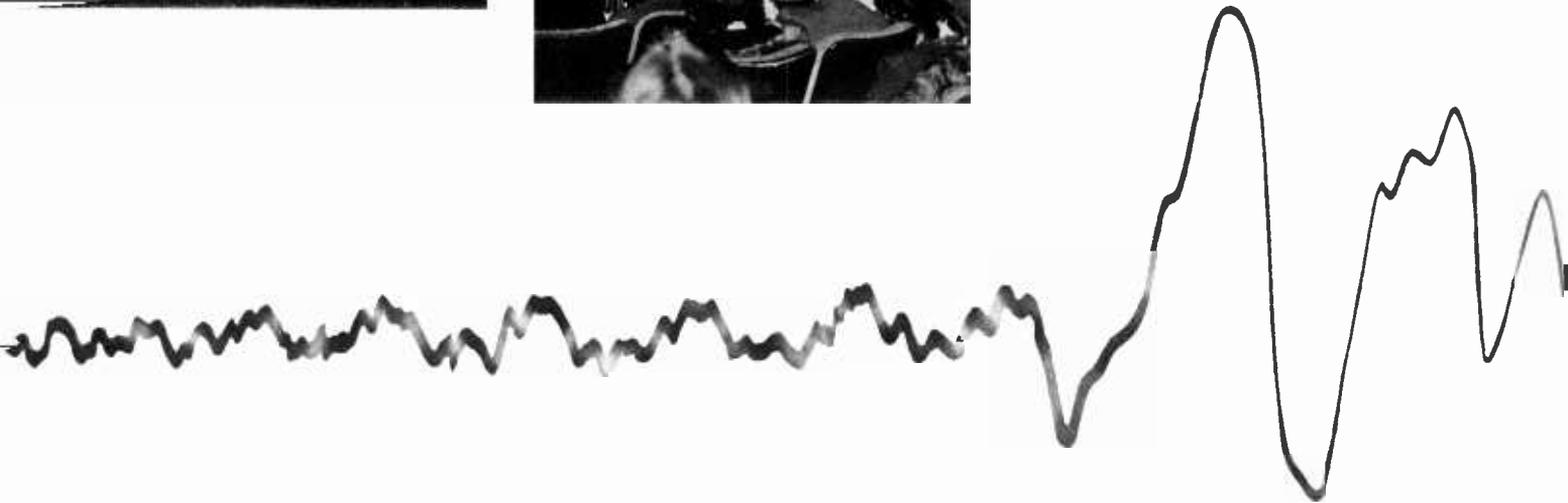
The sum total provides an approximate picture of the hope and dependence which the American people placed on radio in the year 1937.

Admiral Cary T. Grayson, chairman of the American Red Cross, put it this way:

*"...Frankly, we here at the Red Cross do not know what we would do without the radio. Without exception the radio stations of this whole country have thrown themselves into the emergency and have almost literally placed their entire facilities at the disposal of the American Red Cross... They have aided us in directing rescue work and in rushing emergency supplies..."*

In the presence of fire, flood and hurricane, radio leaps to dramatic action. But in the ordinary course of human events, the wholesome force which radio volunteers to its community spreads far, wide and handsome. Criss-cross the nation and you find such typical items as these:

San Antonio — Station KTSA broadcasts a message to locate an unknown



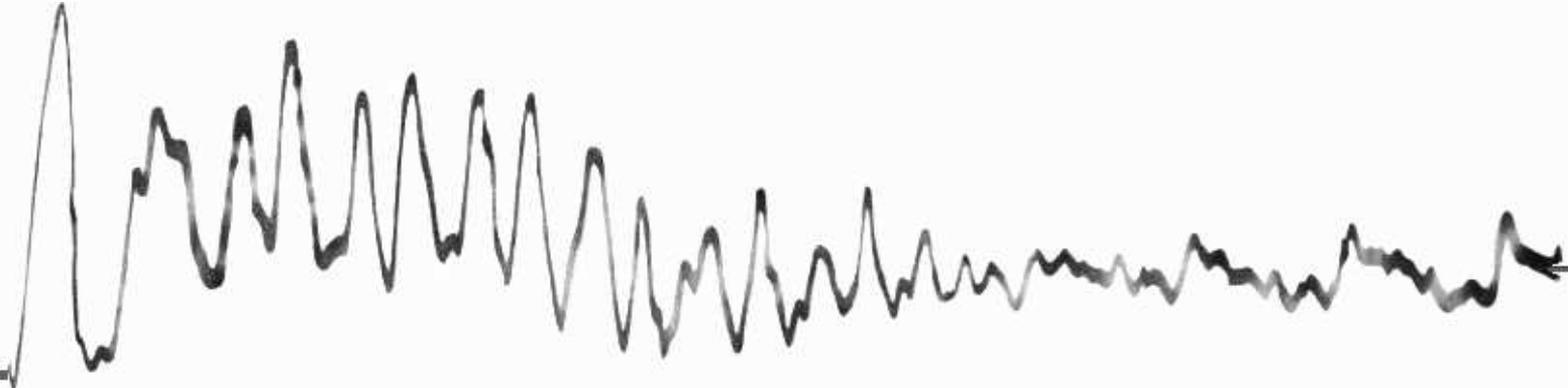
12-year-old boy known to have been bitten by a mad dog. Mother hears message; boy gets rabies serum in time.

St. Augustine — Station WFOY rouses 600 people to search for a 4-year-old boy lost in the swamplands. Posse finds boy in swamp no worse for wear.

Charlotte — Station WBT appeals for 35 harmonicas to exercise the throat muscles of children stricken with infantile paralysis at the local hospital. Twenty-four hours later 450 mouth organs pour into the studios.

Richmond—A hitchhiking sailor tells Station WRVA he left his belongings in a car which had picked him up. He thinks the driver lives in Richmond. WRVA makes three announcements. Sailor, driver, and dufflebag are reunited.

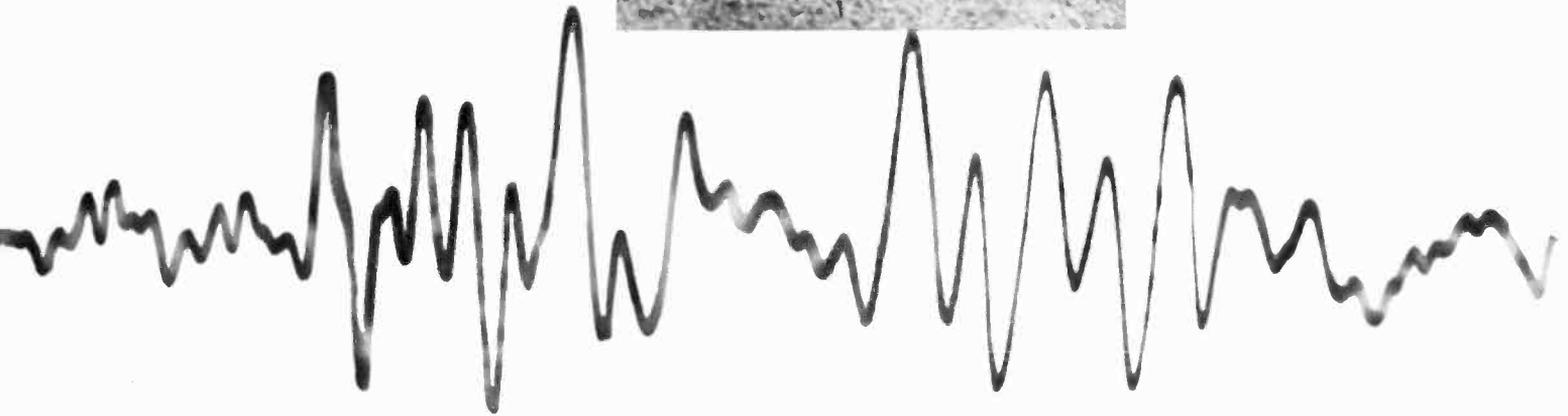
Quincy — Four thugs rob a bank in Girard, Ill., escape in a black sedan. Station WTAD broadcasts description. Car located passing through Carthage. WTAD notifies airport. Plane takes off, spots sedan, relays information to WTAD, which broadcasts exact location of robbers. Police stop sedan, catch



three robbers. Fourth escapes on saddle horse. Plane takes off again, spots horse and rider, again notifies WTAD. Fourth robber captured.

In Dayton, radio puts on a high school spelling-bee. In Tucson, it persuades 26,000 car owners to have their brakes checked. In Great Falls, it tells two thousand mothers that their children are safe in school during a blizzard. In Greensboro, during a single year 111 community enterprises get free time on the local station to promote civic cooperation.

The land had been dry where the Smiths lived, but the sound and fury of the worst flood in American history spilled through their radio into their living room day and night for two weeks as disaster mounted. When the waters finally receded, the Smiths knew that radio was on their side.



## 5. *Thunder on the Left*

It is Friday, March 11, 1938. A lot of maps have gone out of date since Haile Selassie's vain plea in the fall of 1935. Mussolini has conquered Ethiopia. Hitler has seized the Rhineland. Hirohito has pushed troops into China. Monday of this week a thousand citizens of Barcelona—men, women and children—died in an air raid conducted by Generalissimo Franco, with an able assist from Hitler, who uses Spain as a theatre for the full-dress rehearsal of bigger and bloodier things to come. And Germany is once again looking down the gun-barrel at Austria.

In shooting Dollfuss in 1934 the National Socialists had hoped to annex Austria overnight. It didn't work, but they kept right on trying. Now, once more, the time seems ripe. Hitler has forced a puppet Minister of the Interior on the Austrian Chancellor. Austrians will have to take him, or else.



It is 6:55 a.m. in Indiana, and Smith is putting on his pants. He's also listening to the morning news and wondering who is going to win today's fight—Max Baer or that Welshman, Tommy Farr.

At 6:56 a CBS announcer says:

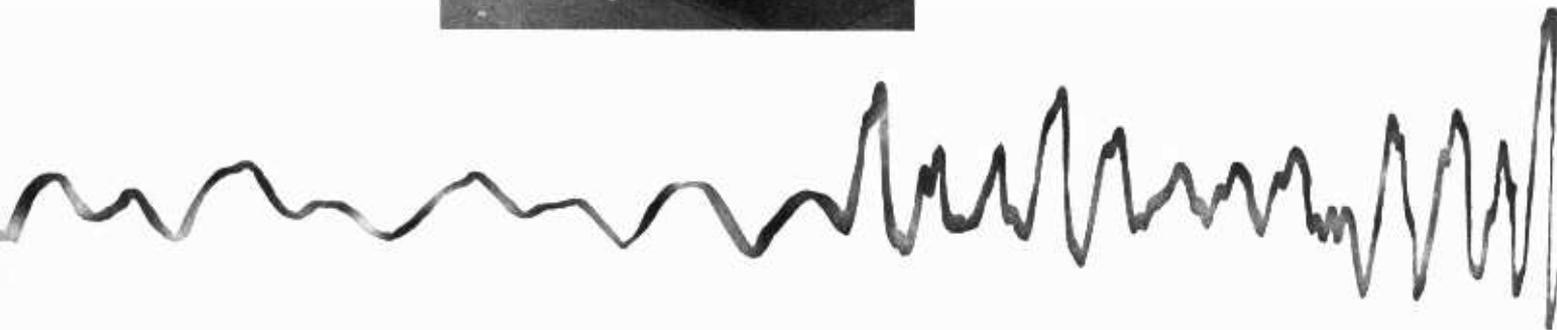
**AUSTRIA** —“*The Austrian teakettle is likely to boil over any minute...Chancellor Schuschnigg says that if necessary he will proclaim martial law...*”

Mr. Smith goes off to work, but for Mrs. Smith and all who can listen through the day, radio ticks off the final hours of another sovereign state:

**VIENNA** —11:29 a.m.—“*The general election has been postponed...The action was taken under the extreme pressure of Germany which is reported to have given Schuschnigg a virtual ultimatum...*”

1:45 p.m.—“*The Austrian government announces that German troops have crossed the border.*”

5:00 p.m.—“*Austria is in the hands of the Nazis and all Europe is in turmoil...*”



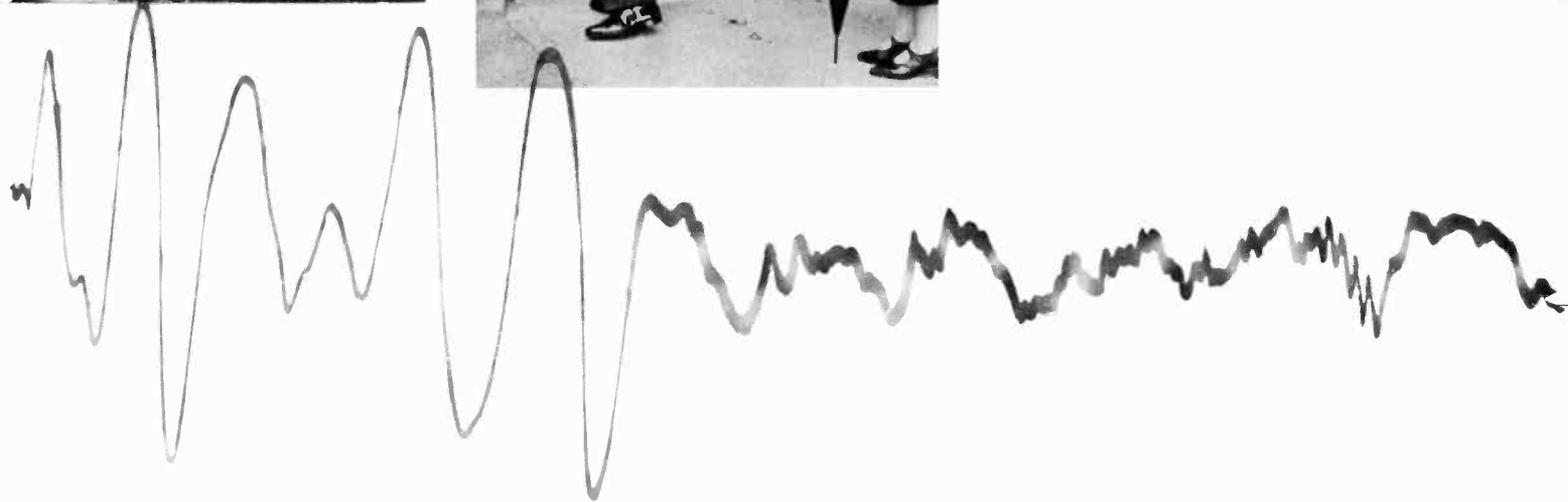
Two days later, the Smiths heard from all that turmoil, when CBS inaugurated its now familiar World News Roundup. In the space of minutes, the voices of Shirer in London, Mowrer in Paris, Huss in Berlin, Murrow in Vienna, plus Bob Trout and Senator Schwollenbach in Washington, sped straight from those capitals into the Smiths' living room. Another magical demonstration of radio's seven-league boots came four months later, in a less weighty discourse—this time, a direct two-way conversation between London and Chicago, and between Lum and Abner.

**LUM**, July 21, 1938 (in London): *“This ain’t no regular wave...it’s shortwave. Regular wave is longwave.”*

**ABNER** (in Chicago): *“You must have that mixed up, Lum. This must be the longwave we’re using. You couldn’t hear me clean over there in England.”*

**LUM**: *“No, I ain’t mixed up...the shortwave is longer than the longwave.”*

Summer vacations end. Labor Day passes. Suddenly the world erupts again.



**ADOLF HITLER**, September 12, 1938: . . .*“It is intolerable at this moment to think of a large part of our people exposed to the democratic hordes who threaten our people. I refer to Czechoslovakia! (Cheers) That country is a democracy... In that country, like in a true democracy, the majority of the population (are) oppressed and mistreated and deprived of their right to live . . . I, in no circumstances, intend to watch with endless patience the continued oppression of our German brothers in Czechoslovakia.”*

**GOEBBELS:** *“Adolf Hitler, our Fuehrer!”*

**CROWD:** *“Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!”*

Eighteen days later Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain comes back from Munich, where he has delivered into German and Hungarian hands two-thirds of the land and two-thirds of the people of Czechoslovakia. He folds his umbrella, moves to a window at No. 10 Downing Street, and says to an anxious crowd below: “I believe it is peace in our time.”



In those 18 days a lot of other people came out with a different answer. This was plainly a new kind of warfare—undeclared, localized, unceasing, and for most Americans radio was the instrument of revelation. Through radio they heard more and understood more of what was happening than any other people in the world. On CBS they heard 417 broadcasts from 18 world news centers by 57 principals. They heard London direct 36 times, Prague 22 times, Paris 15, Berlin 12. They heard events reported and weighed in the now familiar service of international news round-ups, and for the first time they gained a sense of active participation in history in the making.

The fact that Americans found themselves so thoroughly informed was no lucky accident, but the result of the most painstaking care in planning. Since before the Austrian Anschluss, CBS News Director Paul White had been quietly dispatching top news men to all the high-temperature areas of Europe. Elaborate telephone and cable facilities had been arranged for, so that what-



ever the emergency, CBS reporters would be there, and able to get the news out.

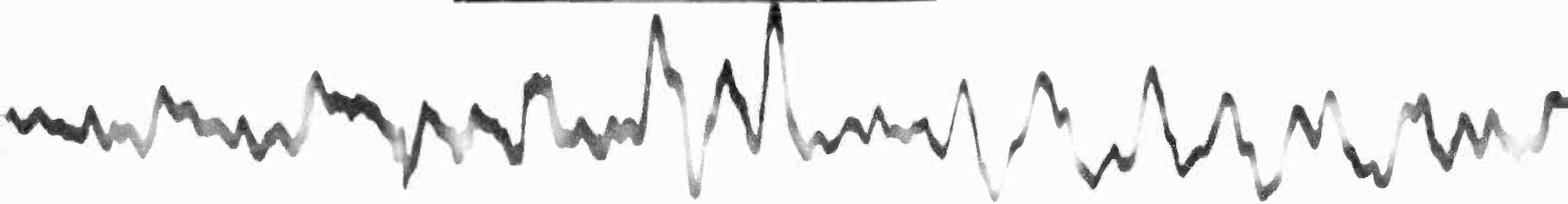
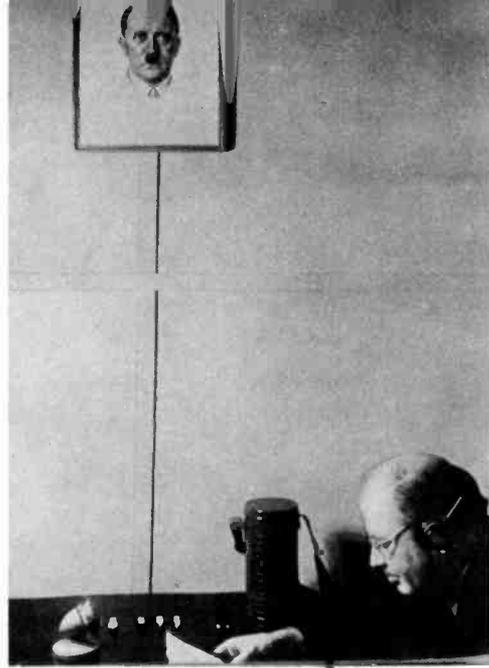
If you caught on to Hitler's pattern of aggression before Chamberlain did, it could well have been at one of these climactic moments:

**CBS ANNOUNCER**, September 14: *"Prime Minister Chamberlain will fly to Germany tomorrow to have a personal interview with Adolf Hitler, in a final effort to head off a European war..."*

**PHILIP JORDAN** (of the *London News Chronicle*) September 17: *"The government is waiting for the visit of French Prime Minister Daladier and Foreign Minister Bonnet...There is a fear that they are coming to discuss...a betrayal without parallel in history."*

**WILLIAM SHIRER**, September 29 (Prague): *"It took the Big Four just five hours and twenty-five minutes in Munich today to come to an agreement over the partition of Czechoslovakia..."*

Exactly one month later a precocious dramatist of 23 put on the air a



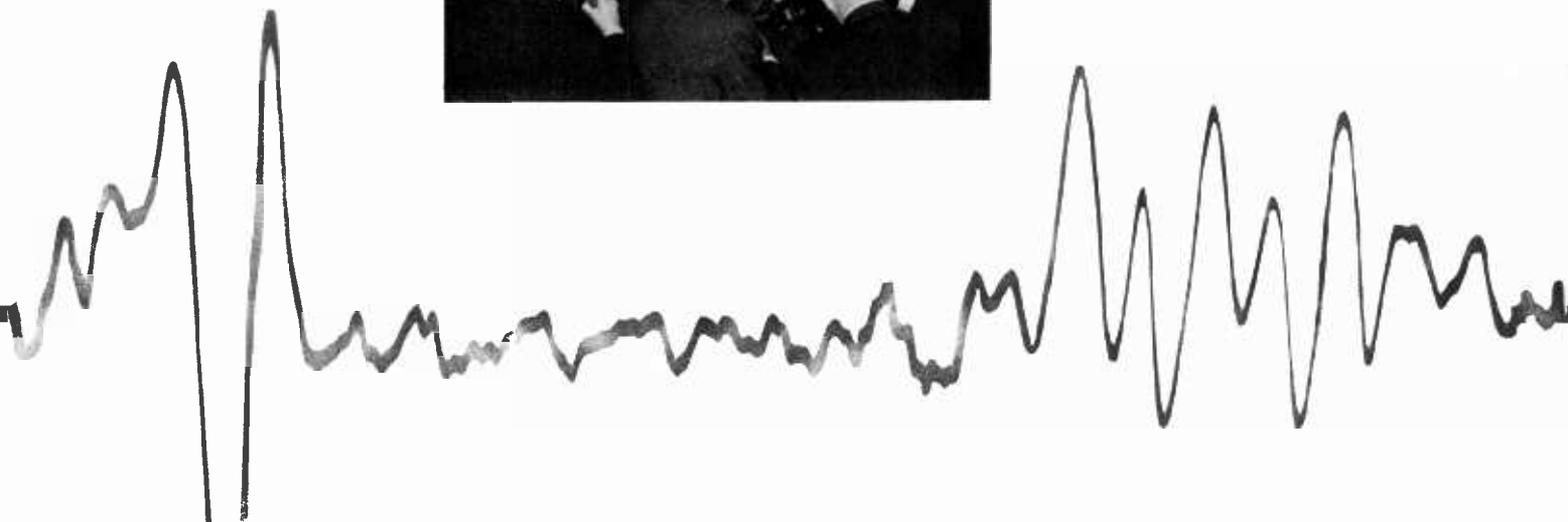
fantasy about an invasion from Mars—and several million Americans gave themselves up to cold terror.

The fantasy was H. G. Wells' famous novel "War of the Worlds," adapted to an American setting. The story was by then 40 years old. Four times during the program an announcer explained that it was a dramatization. All names were fictitious. The program was listed in all newspaper radio schedules.

Where the dramatist, Orson Welles, slipped up was in using the same news pattern that had so recently carried the story of Munich. He began with a routine weather report, followed by:

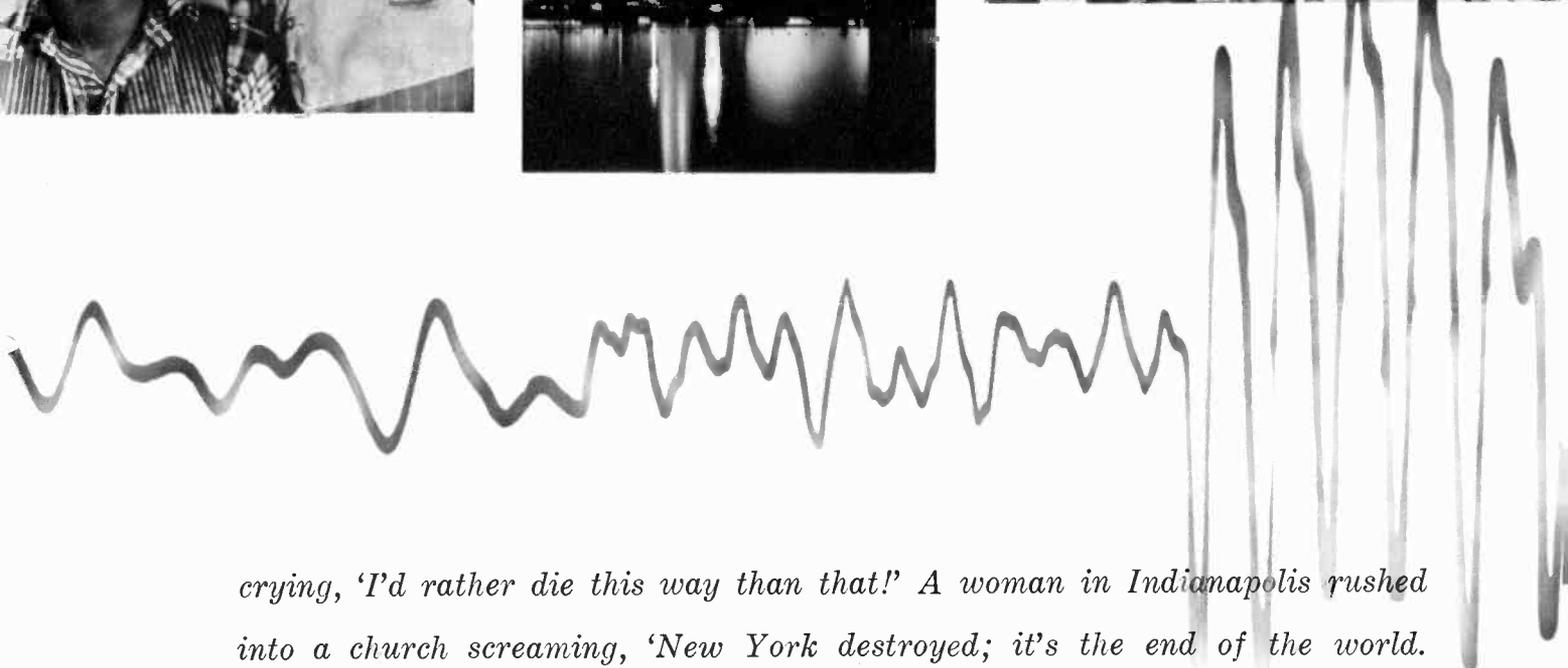
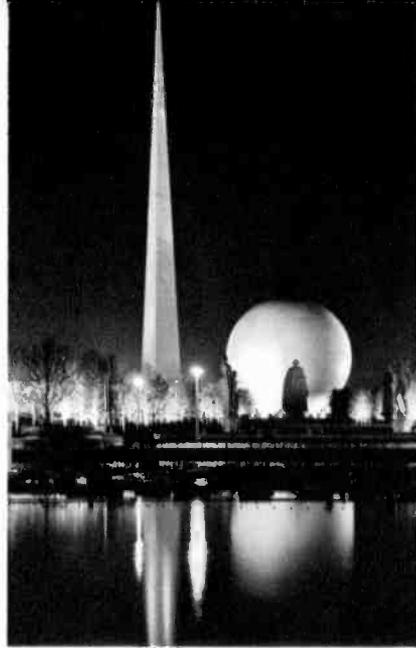
**ANNOUNCER 1:** *"From the Meridian Room in the Park Plaza in New York City, we bring you the music of Ramon Raquello and his orchestra. With a touch of the Spanish, Ramon leads off with 'La Cumparsita.'*" (Music starts).

**ANNOUNCER 2:** *"Ladies and gentlemen, we interrupt our program of dance music to bring you a special bulletin... At 20 minutes before eight, Central*



*Time*, Professor Farrell of the Mount Jennings Observatory, Chicago, reports observing several explosions of incandescent gas, occurring at regular intervals on the planet Mars.”

Then came more dance music, more information about disturbances on Mars, and a “bulletin” reporting the arrival of Martians in huge metal cylinders which landed in New Jersey. Finally the attack was reported as being general all over the United States—flame-throwers, heat-rays, weird exterminators of every sort. Let Frederick Lewis Allen’s “Only Yesterday” take it from there: “*Terror-stricken people rushed out of their houses and milled about in the streets, not quite sure whether they were being attacked by Martians or by Germans, but sure that destruction was on the way...In Newark, New Jersey, several families, convinced that a ‘gas-attack’ had begun, put wet cloths on their faces and tried to pack all their belongings in a car; the traffic was jammed for blocks around. A woman in Pittsburgh prepared to take poison,*



*crying, 'I'd rather die this way than that!' A woman in Indianapolis rushed into a church screaming, 'New York destroyed; it's the end of the world. You might as well go home to die. I just heard it on the radio,' and the church service came to a hurried end... So it went, with endless variations, all over the country... a remarkable case study in national hysteria."*

CBS, and all radio, learned a lesson. The listener's faith in news on the air obviously exceeded the most inflated broadcaster's estimate. Simulated radio news was dynamite.

Listeners would hear about the real thing soon enough.

Less than a year later, they would hear, for example, the first declaration of war ever made on the air.

**NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN**, September 3, 1939: *"This morning the British Ambassador in Berlin handed the German Government a final note, stating that unless we heard from them by eleven o'clock that they were prepared at once to*

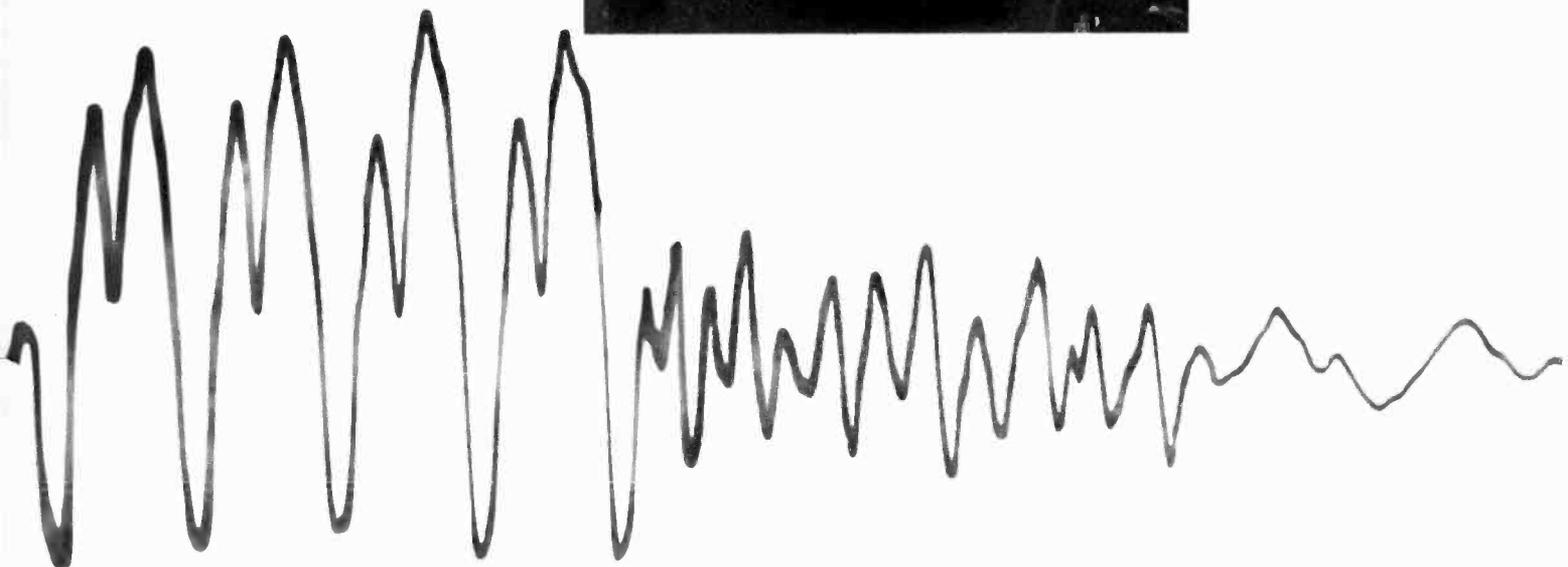


*withdraw their troops from Poland, a state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has been received and that consequently this country is at war with Germany...”*

For the next month, while Germany and Russia devour Poland, the Smiths are never far from a radio. Then through a long winter nothing much happened. People called it the “Phony War.” At Indiana parties some wag was always eager to repeat a parody of current overseas broadcasts: “We take you now to a British stronghold near the Maginot Line—Go ahead, France!...One club... pass...one heart...pass...four hearts...double!”

The “Phony War” evaporated. Denmark and Norway fell. Then, in May, within three nightmare weeks, Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, and a great part of France. The Smiths now learned the un-French-sounding name of Dunkirk.

They heard of British troops singing *Roll Out the Barrel* as they waded out into the Channel under Nazi fire to meet the tattered flotilla come to carry



them home to England, in history's greatest military evacuation.

Another three weeks, and they heard a tired and quiet voice from Paris:  
**WILLIAM L. SHIRER**, June 22, 1940: *"The armistice between France and Germany was signed at exactly six-fifty p.m., German summer time—that is, one hour and twenty-five minutes ago....It was signed here in the same old railroad coach in the middle of Compiègne Forest where the Armistice of November 11, 1918 was made....The French delegates returned to Compiègne Forest this morning. About ten-thirty a.m. we saw them filing into Marshal Foch's old Pullman coach. They remained for an hour and then General Keitel arrived. Through the windows we could see them talking and going over various papers. At one-thirty p.m. there was a recess so that the French could contact their government in Bordeaux for the last time.*

*"And then came the big moment. At six-fifty p.m. the gentlemen in the car started affixing their signatures to Germany's armistice conditions. General Keitel signed*



*for Germany; General Huntziger for France. It was all over in a few moments.”*

Shirer didn't know it at the time, but with this broadcast he had scooped the world. In a way, he had been doing it right along. Stationed in Berlin throughout the early days of the war, with censorship buttoned down tight, Shirer had managed, by careful wording and inflection, to convey to his American listeners a picture of Germany very different from the official communiqués.

And now the pre-invasion hammer-blows began to fall on Britain. The Smiths learned that “blitz” was the German word for lightning, and that lightning was striking closer to them every day. On October 15, 480 German aircraft dropped 386 tons of heavy explosives and 70,000 incendiaries on the city of London. And the day after that, Mr. Smith and his son, now 20, found themselves waiting in their first long line—to register for Selective Service. Eventually they got their draft numbers and went home to await the lottery.

On October 29, the Smiths gathered by their radio to hear President Roosevelt



draw the first draft number. At the President's elbow, Secretary of War Stimson stood blindfolded before an immense glass bowl. He fished out a blue capsule and passed it to the President. Mr. Roosevelt lifted out a slip of paper, read it, paused, and said into a battery of microphones: "*One...Five...Eight.*"

Not till next April will the Smiths' boy amble down Main Street to the depot with a straggling band of his neighbors bound for an army induction center. But the Smiths know now that the faraway foreign war is breathing hotly down their necks. They cling to their radios, hoping for something to hope for, rooting for the embattled Britons who are now taking the full impact of the Blitz in their streets and in their homes. They listen to an American voice coming from a bomb-shelter, starting each day's broadcast with the words "*This...is London...*" and coolly enumerating the day's events while often the trembling reverberation of a near hit can be heard behind his voice.

To the Smiths as to millions of their countrymen, the voice of Edward R. Mur-



row typifies wartime radio...on the job all the time, with quick, concise, accurate information about the things that matter most right now.

From London also comes another voice the Smiths are beginning to know. This is an English voice, with a slight lisp, and it speaks a language that reminds the Smiths of their King James Bible, and the Shakespeare they studied in school.

In February, this voice speaks to the Smiths and to the British Empire:

**WINSTON CHURCHILL**, February 9, 1941: *"The other day President Roosevelt ...wrote out a verse...which, he said, 'applies to you people as it does to us:*

*"...Sail on, O Ship of State! Sail on, O Union strong and great...'*

*"Here is the answer which I will give to President Roosevelt.*

*"Put your confidence in us. Give us your faith and your blessing and under Providence all will be well. We shall not fail or falter; we shall not weaken or tire. Neither the sudden shock of battle nor the long-drawn trials of vigilance and exertion will wear us down. Give us the tools and we will finish the job."*



The tools began to travel, and the Smiths' radio told them about that. And about the siege of Tobruk, the sinking of the *Bismarck*, the mad flight of Nazi Rudolph Hess into Scotland.

And then in the early morning hours of June 22, CBS picked up by shortwave the clacking accents of Herr Goebbels, reading Hitler's pronouncement of the day ...that a German invasion of Russia had begun. Before he had finished, the network was broadcasting to sleepy or sleeping American homes...and all through that night top newsmen—Edward R. Murrow, Elmer Davis, William L. Shirer, Albert Warner, Bill Henry, Major George Fielding Eliot—were on the air, reading bulletins, estimating, speculating. By the time the Smiths were wide awake on Sunday morning, the bare bones of the news had begun to be clothed by bulletins from all of Europe.

But it remained once again for Prime Minister Churchill, long an implacable and articulate foe of Communist Russia, to put the mighty change of attitude into



memorable words, as he did that summer Sunday afternoon :

*“At 4 o’clock this morning Hitler attacked and invaded Russia. All his usual formalities of perfidy were observed with scrupulous technique...*

*“So now this bloodthirsty guttersnipe must launch his mechanized armies upon new fields of slaughter, pillage and devastation...*

*“We have but one aim and one single irrevocable purpose. We are resolved to destroy Hitler and every vestige of the Nazi regime. From this nothing will ever turn us. Nothing. We will never parley; we will never negotiate with Hitler or any of his gang. We shall fight him by land; we shall fight him by sea; we shall fight him in the air, until, with God’s help, we have rid the earth of his shadow and liberated its people from his yoke.*

*“Any man or State who fights against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or State who marches with Hitler is our foe...It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever aid we can to the Russian people...”*



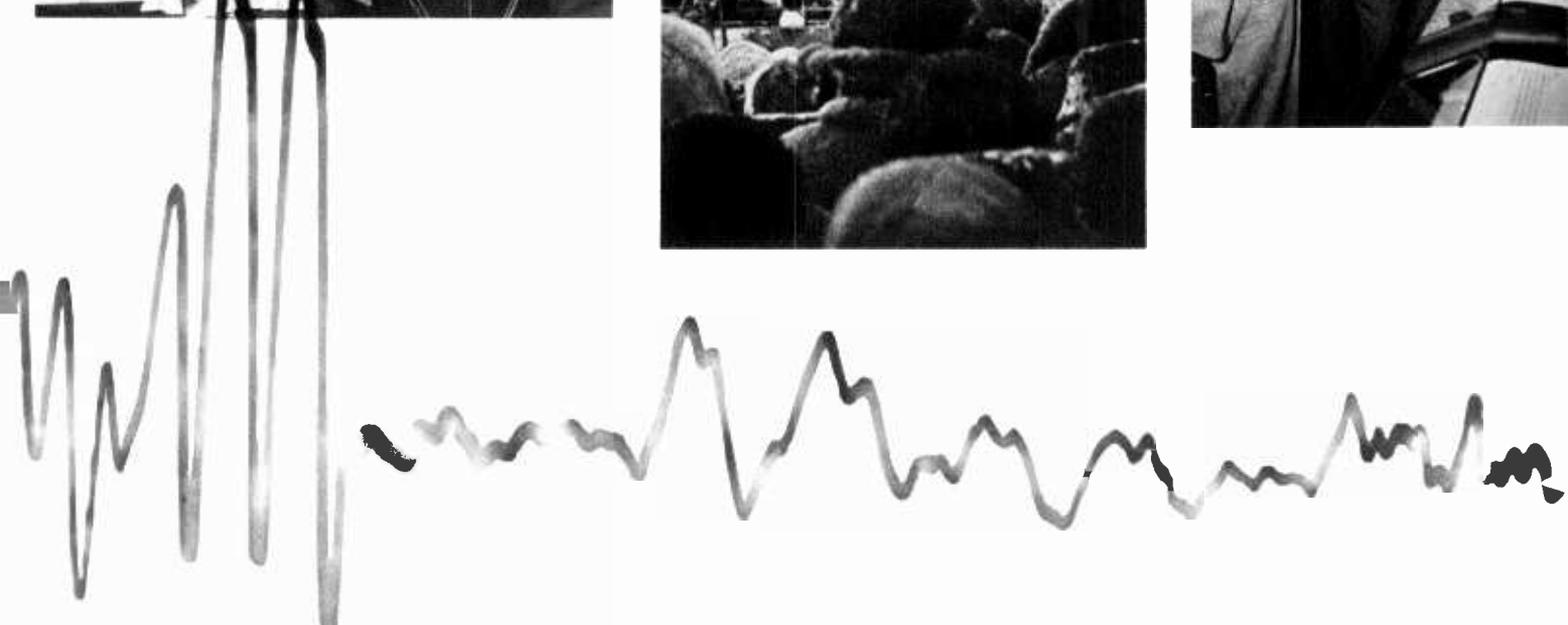
## 6. *Holocaust*

It came for most Americans in the middle of a chicken dinner. It was a December Sunday—2:30 in the East; 1:30 in the Middle West. The East eats later than the Middle West (sleeps later, too).

You may or may not prefer the radio with your Sunday dinner, but with 6 million families across the country (including the Smiths) it is standard operating procedure. Into these homes it came with the sharp, peremptory shock of a backfire. Uncushioned. It came from the CBS news room in New York where John Daly, clutching a piece of yellow newstape torn from a United Press ticker, broke into the network:

**DALY**, December 7, 1941: *“The Japanese have attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by air, President Roosevelt has just announced...”*

It is noon the next day before you know it...the Smiths are waiting to hear



what the President will say at the joint session of Congress.

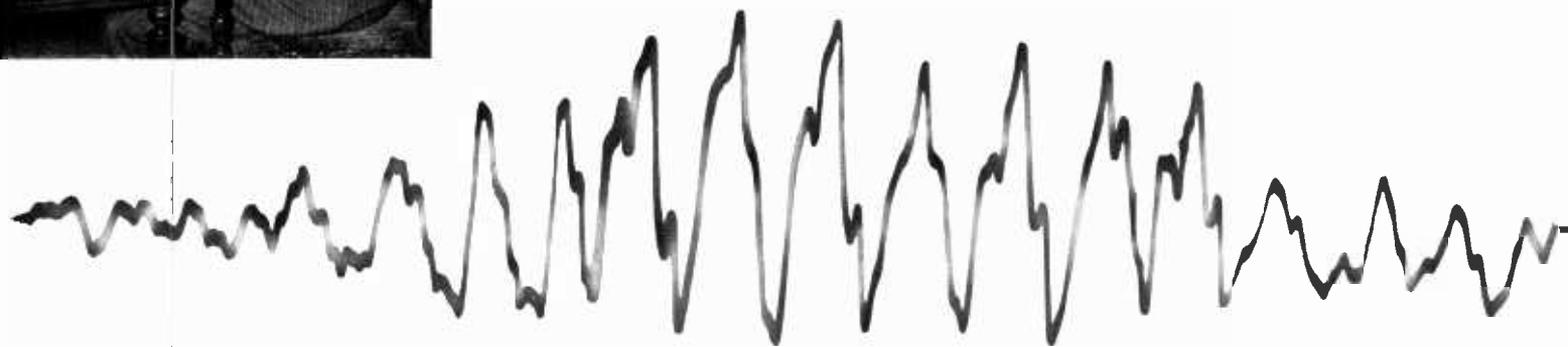
**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT**, December 8, 1941: *“Mr. Vice-President, Mr. Speaker, members of the Senate and the House of Representatives:*

*“Yesterday, December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan...*

*“I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, 1941, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire.”*

The Congress so declares, and four days later adds Germany and Italy to the roster of the Enemy.

It may be idle speculation to consider what the impact of the news of the past two days would have been on the American people had there been no radio. But one thing you can be sure of: had there been no radio when the President spoke



the next night 60,100,000 Americans would not have stayed at home, glued to their loudspeakers. For on that night C. E. Hooper's audience measurement bureau estimated that 79% of the nation's radios tuned in the President. It was the largest audience in radio's history. It still is.

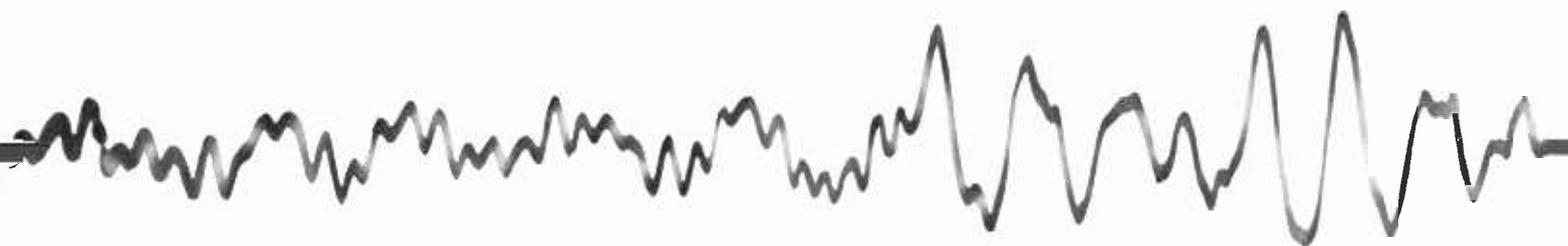
On December 11, a Tokyo broadcast boasted that the great British battleship *Prince of Wales* and the heavy cruiser *Repulse* had been sunk off Malaya. The CBS News Department knew that its Far Eastern correspondent, Cecil Brown, was aboard the *Repulse*. Twenty-four hours after the Tokyo broadcast, a cable came through from Brown. Read on the air at once, and many times thereafter, it was one of the notable news broadcasts of all time...maybe you remember some of it: *"I was aboard the Repulse and with hundreds of others escaped. Then, swimming in thick oil, I saw the Prince of Wales lay over on her side like a tired war horse and slide beneath the waters. I kept a diary from the time the first Japanese high-level bombing started at 11:15 until 12:31 when Captain William Tennant, skip-*



*per of the Repulse and Senior British Captain afloat, shouted through the ship's communications system, 'All hands on deck, prepare to abandon ship. May God be with you.'*”

*“I jumped twenty feet to the water from the up end of the side of the Repulse and smashed my stop-watch at thirty-five-and-a-half minutes after twelve...*

*“Two Jap aircraft are approaching us. I see more of them coming with the naked eye. I again count nine...Their daring is astonishing, coming so close you can make out the pilot's outline...At 12:15 the Wales seems to be stopped definitely...All around me men were stripping off their clothes and their shoes and tossing aside their steel helmets. Some are running alongside the three-quarters exposed hull of the ship to reach a spot where they can slide down the side without injuring themselves in the jagged hole in the ship's side. Others are running to reach a point where they have a shorter dive to the water. I am reluctant to leave my new portable typewriter down in my cabin and unwilling to discard my shoes*



*which I had made just a week before. As I go over the side the Prince of Wales half a mile away seems to be a fire but her guns are still firing the heaviest. It's most obvious she's stopped dead and out of control due to her previous damage."*

On December 15, a notable program was broadcast by CBS, NBC, the Blue, and MBS, from Hollywood. It had been commissioned some two months before by the U.S. Office of Facts and Figures, in order to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the American Bill of Rights. But it had extraordinary meaning now, just eight days after the United States had entered the war, and at a time most Americans realized their liberties were in such peril as never before.

This broadcast was written by Norman Corwin, who had established himself as radio's outstanding creative writer through the *Columbia Workshop* series. Its stars included Edward Arnold, Lionel Barrymore, Walter Brennan, Bob Burns, Walter Huston, James Stewart, Marjorie Main, Edward G. Robinson, Rudy Vallee, and Orson Welles.



Bernard Herrmann composed the dramatic score. Leopold Stokowski and the New York Philharmonic played the national anthem. President Roosevelt spoke the epilogue of the broadcast.

Perhaps this will refresh your memory :

**NARRATOR:** *“Do you think fifty-five representatives of the American people sat in a hall in New York City, in a drafty hall, and made up articles of freedom? Do you think the Congressmen from thirteen States made up those freedoms out of their own heads? Debated there, deliberated there, without assistance? Themselves? From their own experience?”*

*“Oh, no, they had much help...”*

*“The headsman, he was there...”*

*“Nero was there. Caligula, King Philip, Torquemada, Cotton Mather, all the tyrants and the martyrs who had gone before, sat quietly, unseen, among the representatives, read from their memoirs expert testimonies, found their way*



*into the record and between the lines.*

*“Out of the agonies, out of the crisscrossed scars of all the human race, they made a bill of rights for their own people—for a new, a willful and a hopeful nation—made a bill of rights to stand against the enemies within: connivers, fakers, those who lust for power, those who make of their authority an insolence...”*

**CITIZEN:** *“Is not our Bill of Rights more cherished now than ever? The blood more zealous to preserve it whole?”*

*“Americans shall answer. For they alone, they know the answer. The people of America: from east, from west, from north, from south.”*

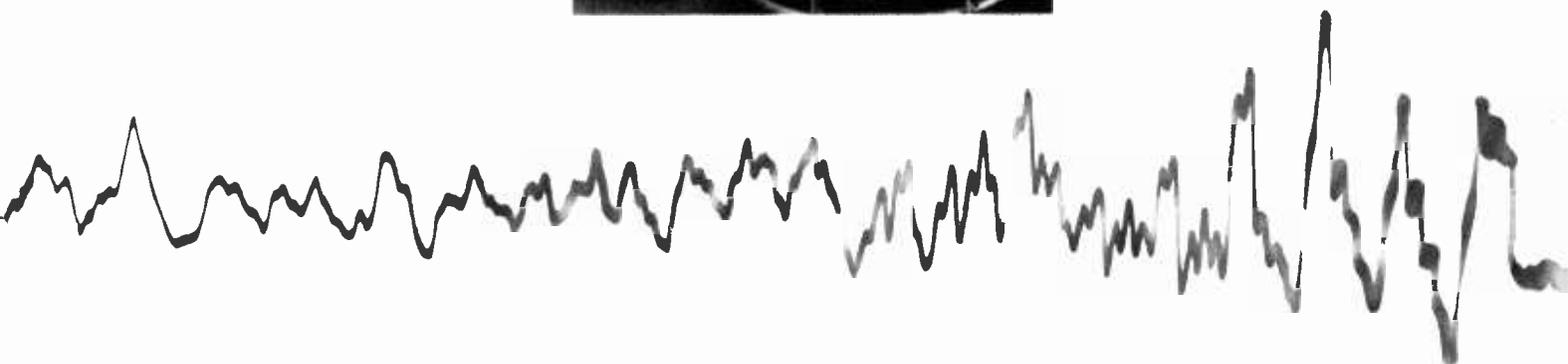
**PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT:** *“...We will not, under any threat, or in the face of any danger, surrender the guarantees of liberty our forefathers framed for us in our Bill of Rights...”*

*“We are solemnly determined that no power or combination of powers of this earth shall shake our hold upon them.”*



No other radio drama broadcast before or since reached so large an audience. The listener count was again close to sixty million. Radio again proved itself a formidable channel of strength and inspiration. It repeated this proof the day after Christmas when Winston Churchill addressed the Congress and the people. **CHURCHILL**, December 26, 1941: *“The wicked men...who have launched their peoples on the path of war and conquest, know that they will be called to terrible account if they cannot beat down by force of arms the people they have assailed...”* *“Here we are together, defending all that to free men is dear. Twice in a single generation the catastrophe of world war has fallen upon us. Twice in our life-time the long arm of fate has reached out across the oceans to bring the United States into the forefront of the battle...”* *“Do we not owe it to ourselves, to our children, to tormented mankind, to make sure that these catastrophes do not engulf us for the third time? ...”*

That winter the Smiths turned to radio as their chief source of news, but the



news brought small comfort. The Japanese offensive pushed forward relentlessly in the South Pacific. The first lift came in the spring, when a CBS short wave monitor in San Francisco picked up a flash from the Tokyo radio, and relayed it to the network.

**ANNOUNCER**, April 18, 1942: *“The Japanese radio says that three enemy planes have bombed the heart of Tokyo...”*

Weeks elapsed before the nation learned that it was the Doolittle raid, but the news acted like a shot of adrenalin. It was short-lived, for on May 6 the American garrison on Corregidor surrendered.

To Americans at home, the full impact of what those final 100 days of bombing meant to the men on the Rock came in the radio relay of a telegraph message which a Signal Corpsman had tapped out on his key from deep inside the fortress. **ANNOUNCER**, May 31, 1942 (reading): *“They are not near yet. We are waiting for God only knows what. How about a chocolate soda? ...*



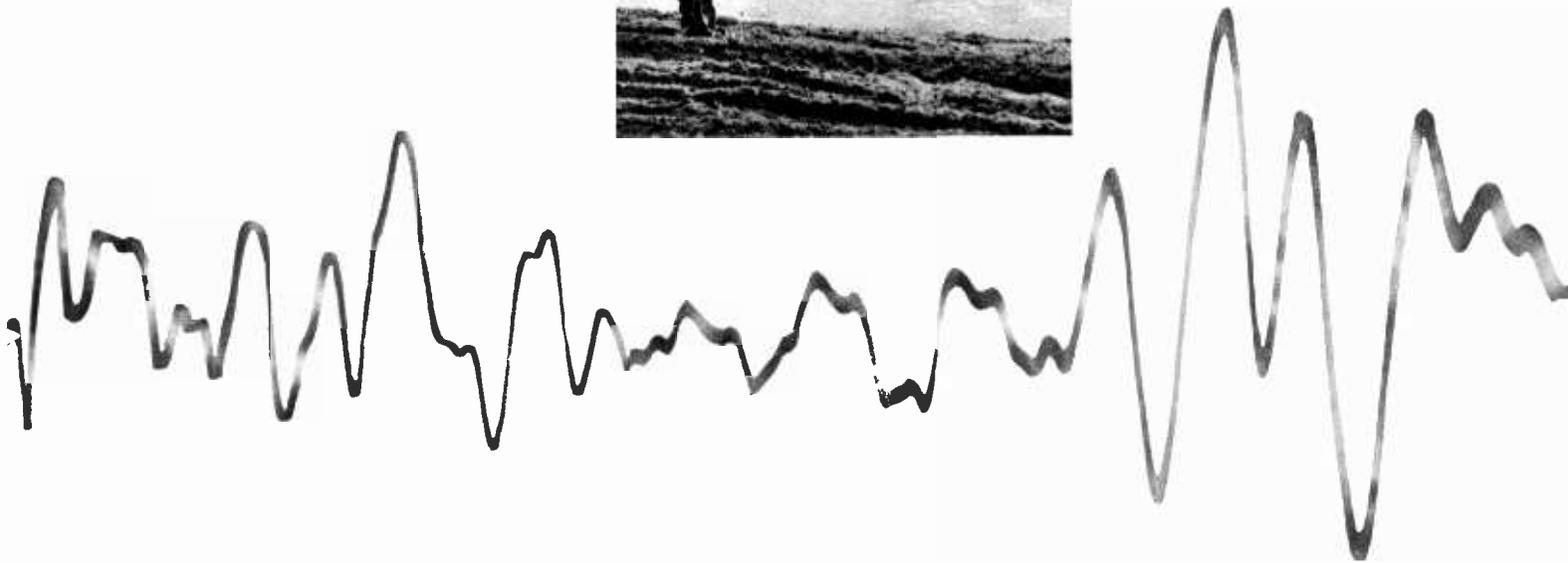
*“Not many. Not near yet. Lots of heavy fighting going on. We’ve only got about one hour twenty minutes before...”*

*“We may have to give up by noon. We don’t know yet. They are throwing men and shells at us and we may not be able to stand it.”*

*“We’ve got about 55 minutes and I feel sick at my stomach... They are around now smashing rifles. They bring in the wounded every minute. We will be waiting for you guys to help...”*

*“I know now how a mouse feels. Caught in a trap waiting for guys to come along and finish it up. Got a treat. Can pineapple...”*

*“My name Irving Strobings. Get this to my mother, Mrs. Minnie Strobings, 605 Barby Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. They are to get along O.K. Get in touch with them as soon as possible. Message: My love to Pa, Joe, Sue, Mac, Garry, Joy and Paul. Also to all family and friends. God bless ’em all. Hope they be there when I come home. Tell Joe wherever he is to go give ’em hell for us. My love to you all. God*



*bless and keep you. Love.*

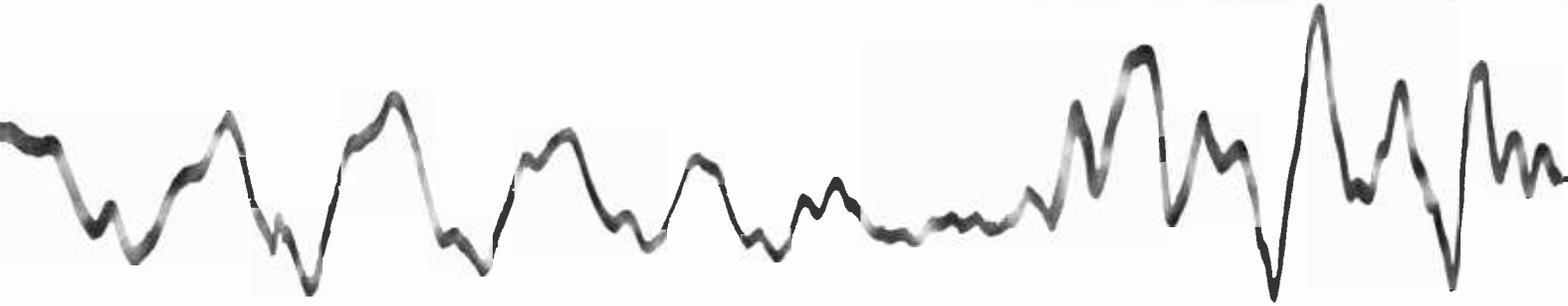
*“Sign my name and tell my mother how you heard from me.”*

The tide starts to turn on August 7 when the Marines land on Guadalcanal. It keeps turning with the autumn leaves. At 8:55 p.m. on a November Saturday night, on the network in Washington during a five-minute news period, Eric Sevareid electrifies the country with this sentence:

**SEVAREID**, November 7, 1942: *“...There is tremendous excitement in Axis and neutral capitals about a great Allied convoy, which these capitals say has moved out from Gibraltar into the Mediterranean.”*

This is all he knows. He turns to other theatres. At 9 his place is taken on the air by the *Hit Parade*. Mark Warnow and the orchestra swing into *Gobs of Love* and Joan Edwards takes the chorus. She’s cut off in the middle of a high note.

**ANNOUNCER**: *“The White House announced a few minutes ago that powerful American forces are landing on the Mediterranean and Atlantic coast of the*

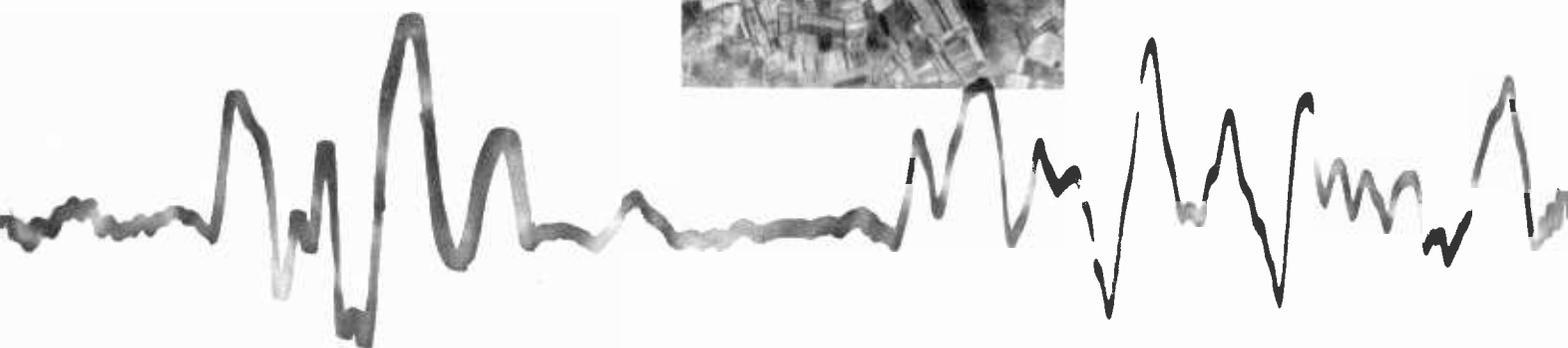


*French colonies in Africa. The White House said this is being done 'to forestall an invasion of Africa by Germany and Italy.' British navy and air forces are assisting our troops in the landing. Lieutenant-General Eisenhower is in command of our forces . . ."*

**EDWARD R. MURROW:** *"Tonight's news will lift British hearts, but there will be no final flourish of trumpets. This may be the turning point of the war..."*

Perhaps there were two turning points. In February the Smiths learn by radio of another Valley Forge—the relief of Stalingrad.

**NED CALMER, February 2, 1943:** *"In Russia, the Red Army has written the last chapter in this war's story of Verdun. The battle of Stalingrad has ended. That was disclosed by Moscow tonight in a special communiqué, and Joseph Stalin sent his congratulations to the victorious Soviet commanders. The great German siege army of three hundred and thirty thousand men, surrounded since last November twenty-third, has been liquidated. The city of the Volga stands uncon-*



*quered as the symbol of Russian resistance to that once unbeatable German army. In the last three weeks of the battle, ninety-one thousand German prisoners were taken, including twenty-four Generals who had been told by Adolf Hitler to fight to the death. And tonight Berlin is evidently getting ready to admit that it's all over. The German radio is reporting that the last pocket of trapped Nazis has not been heard from since this afternoon..."*

In November, 1943, Marine Sgt. Roy Maypole, a former CBS producer, stumbled ashore with the troops at a Pacific island called Bougainville, carrying a wire recorder. He described the landing, but it took his recording, a milestone in radio history, another 3 months to reach the network. Perhaps you remember: **SGT. MAYPOLE**, February 6, 1944: *"This is Sgt. Roy Maypole with the initial Marine landing party on the now Jap-held island of Bougainville. Dawn is about to break as we stand ready to attack. The Marines are ready to land... "As I'm standing at the rail, watching these boys, they go over the side into a*



*Higgins rig, down a rope ladder. Perhaps over my voice you can hear the landing barges as they take off from this ship.*

*“Possibly you can hear planes overhead. That’s our air umbrella...bless ’em! You may have stood at your airport and looked at a P-38 and thought it’s a beautiful thing...well, ladies and gentlemen, you have no idea how gorgeous a P-38 can look out here when they’re keeping those Zeros away from us.*

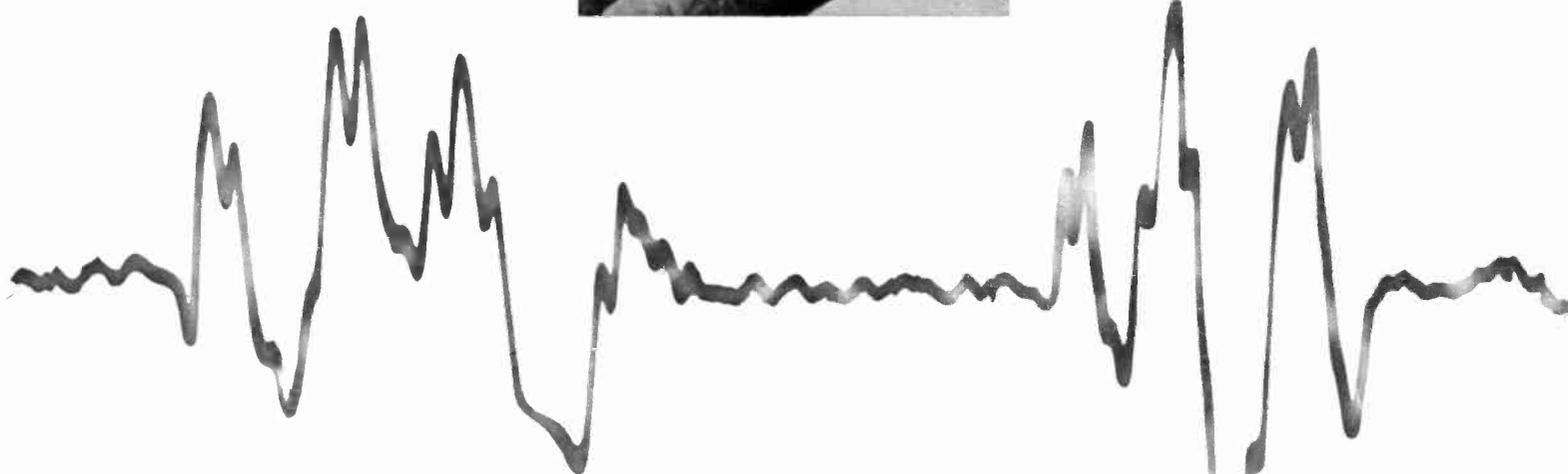
*“I’m about to introduce you to Gunnar Cannon, who is in charge of the Communications Personnel landing party and is going to take us ashore. Gunnar, how does it look like it’s going this far?”*

**CANNON:** *“In the groove.”*

**MAYPOLE:** (Noise) *“Do you anticipate...What was that in the background?”*

**CANNON:** *“That was a three-inch gun going...”* (Noise)

**MAYPOLE:** *“Ladies and gentlemen, you can feel the vibration of those guns as they go off. Can you hear them in the background? The dive bombers are*

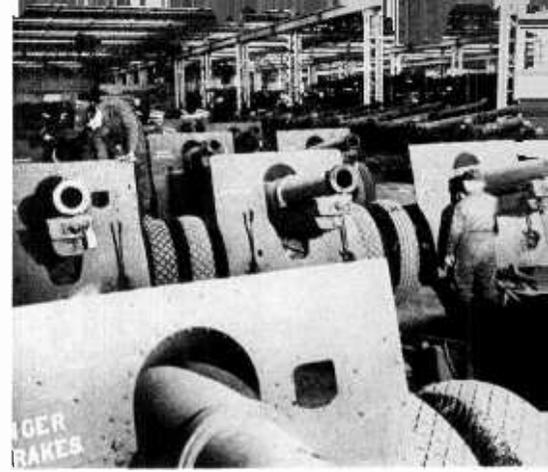
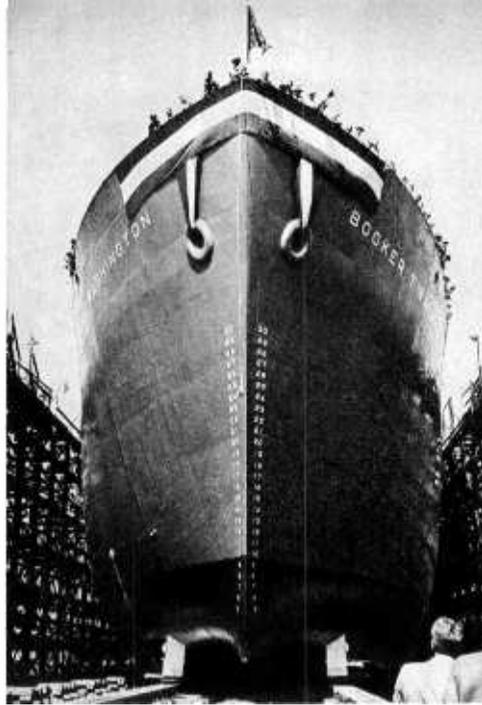


*coming in, ladies and gentlemen; you can see them swooping out of the sky and the... (drowned out)...are beginning to hit. The dive bombers are (drowned out)...you'll hear them in just a second...There goes a plane right out...there goes a bomb and a plane. I can see it...it's going down...it's down...it hits."*

The beachhead is established.

**MAYPOLE:** *"We have just come from digging our fox-holes and from burying our dead. We have landed on Bougainville...I don't know if you've ever stood out in a field with shells breaking all around you and burying good American Marines. It's something that reaches way down inside of you..."*

The Smiths agreed. It reaches way down inside of you. The guns going off, the sound of an American voice in the accent of Illinois, the heat and smell of cordite, all seemed to come out of the square of fabric covering the loud-speaker. Reading about it somehow was not the same.



## 7. *Home Front*

From Bougainville, Sergeant Roy Maypole brings back alive the sounds of an isolated landing operation. But between Algiers and Attu there aren't enough Sergeant Maypoles to go around. Nor enough wire recorders to fetch home to a fact-hungry audience the global drama of men at work at a thousand tasks, of men at war at a hundred points.

Yet an audience (an audience of 32,500,000 families) exists. It only wants to know, and feel, what's going on.

Before long it finds out. Through the acute perception of the radio dramatist —through programs like Columbia's notable series *The Man Behind The Gun*— a nation of Smiths soon knows how it feels to be cut off behind Jap lines in Burma, to thread your way through a thicket of land mines, to live on the bull's-eye of a Liberty ship, and to go down with an aircraft carrier once called



*Yorktown*, but now—for reasons of sentiment and security—*Aunt Aggie*.

The night the Smiths heard “*The Death of Aunt Aggie*” it relieved them to think that Joe Smith, Jr., was not in the Navy but in the Army. Not on water, but somewhere on the firm soil of Great Britain. For the Smiths, England was now beginning to take on the reality of familiar ground, say Ohio. It came to them, in bits and pieces, through Joe’s letters home, through shortwave news broadcasts, and now—every other Sunday—through a remarkable program titled *Transatlantic Call*.

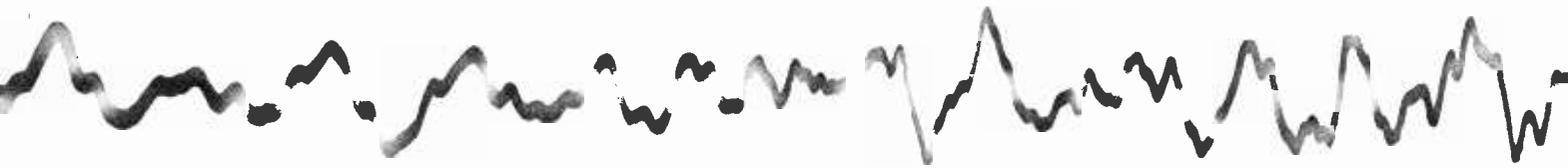
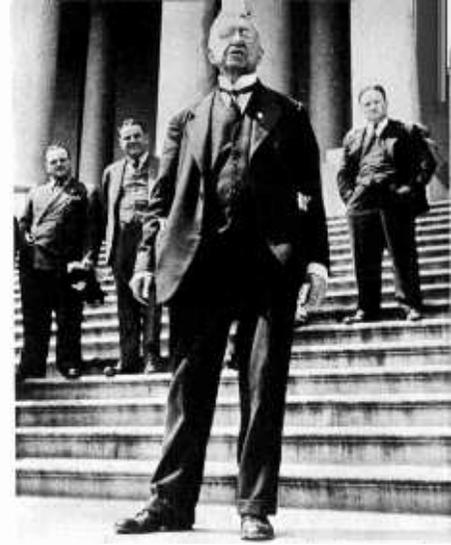
CBS and the British Broadcasting Corporation did the program together. One week, for example, an assortment of Tennessee farmers and engineers would explain through CBS to a puzzled but attentive British audience what the TVA was all about. The following week, the BBC would speak to America from a war plant at Dedham, where one matter-of-fact Briton declares “I work 64 hours a week and it begins to gripe sometimes”; where another says



his plant no longer shuts down during “minor” air raids—just keeps spotters outside to let them know “when it gets too hot.”

For the first time in history, war was what the pundits called “total.” For the first time a national instrument of communication—like radio in the United States—was at hand to translate total war first into total defense, then into total attack.

In describing, in dramatizing, in documenting the conflict, radio performed only half of its wartime job. It performed the other half by telling people at home how they could advance the common cause. From December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945, broadcasters and their advertisers carried on 175 major information campaigns. In this period, if you had kept tuned only to CBS, you would have heard 35,753 programs that tied in with the war effort. Put them all together, and you’d have heard nine solid months of CBS war-related programs.



Radio spoke. What happened? Fifty million Smiths planted victory gardens, 4 million city people went to work on farms, Women's Army Corps recruiting jumped 400 per cent in one year, uncounted millions turned part of themselves into blood plasma, housewives salvaged 538 million pounds of waste fats, 800 million pounds of tin cans and 23 million tons of paper. 30,000 glider pilots appeared out of thin air. And one thing more—

A U.S. Treasury Department official put it this way:

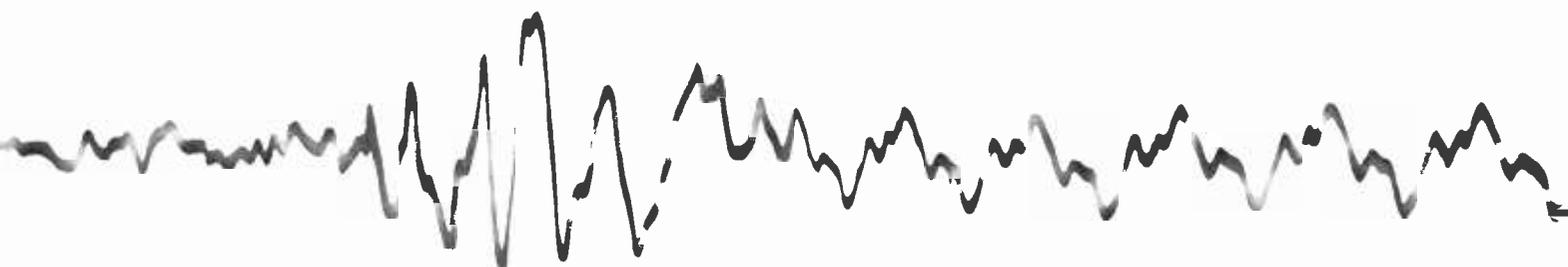
*"...I am familiar with your wartime service in many projects and the value of radio in each field. I think, however, that radio's proudest accomplishment has been its contribution to the war finance program...You have not only sold bonds—cold instruments of finance—but you have sold habits and ideas and hopes that are beyond price...It is a job of selling that will not be fully appreciated until viewed by historians of the future.*

*"It is a job of selling that without radio would not have been possible."*



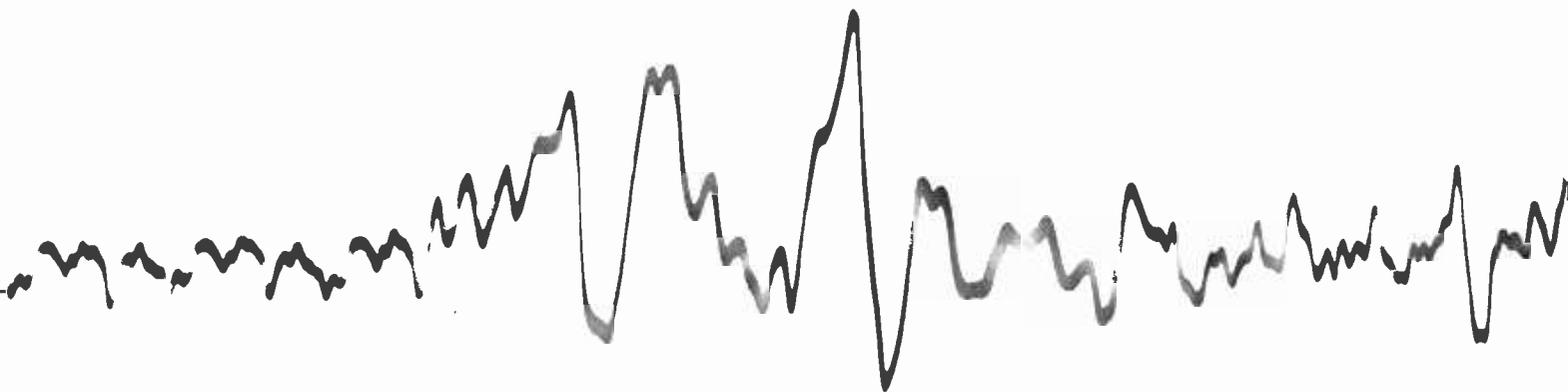
Eighty-five million people bought bonds, and a substantial number bought them for the first time because a familiar radio voice kept speaking urgent little speeches, ending on the question: "*Will you buy a bond?*" It was the soft Dixie voice of Kate Smith. They heard her on four different days, speaking every fifteen minutes or so from eight in the morning till long past midnight. Sixty times or more a day she would push aside her coffee cup, cut in on CBS programs with another reason why, and ask "*Will you buy a bond?*" They bought by the millions.

By the third Kate Smith Day sociologists concluded that this marathon appeal was unique in the history of mass persuasion. By 11 a.m. the fourth day, Mrs. Smith and her fellow citizens had bought two million dollars worth of bonds; by 6 p.m., 15 millions; by midnight, 40 millions. By the following dawn, switchboard operators at CBS stations added up a final figure. In one day, one voice on one network had sold bonds to the tune of \$108,000,000.



Radio's great stars, like Kate Smith, sold bonds, urged their audiences on to all possible aid to the war effort, tirelessly travelled the world to entertain troops at home and in all the fighting areas. And they did more. They provided what entertainment, what laughter there could be in a troubled time. People could relax with their radios as well as learn from them. A tender love-story played by gifted Hollywood stars on *Lux Radio Theatre*, or a spine-chiller on *Suspense*, could sometimes do a lot to ease the tension. Mr. Smith was often a rooster for unknown amateurs who performed on Major Bowes' program, hoping the all-powerful Major would not sound the fateful Gong for them. And Mrs. Smith found her Red Cross sewing went considerably faster whenever a boy named Sinatra snuggled up to the *Hit Parade* microphone and softly crooned straight at Mrs. Smith, "You'll never know...just how much I love you..."

So the fun and the music were a part of wartime radio, too, providing an



anodyne that taut nerves much needed.

In total war, even the by-products of an industry play a role. Radio's by-products were the skills of the technicians it released to the armed services. Before Tokyo Rose could say "Guadalcanal," a regiment of engineers, program directors, announcers, writers, and performers had launched a new American network — the Armed Forces Radio Service. From its 178 far-flung stations, G.I. programs and the best of America's regular network programs were soon vibrating in loudspeakers beside our troops everywhere in the world. With this difference: domestic programs that came at an inconvenient time — i.e., during operations — were recorded by AFRS stations and held for broadcast at a more opportune moment.

A second overseas network was devoted to audiences of another sort: —In the night a loudspeaker is planted in a hedge beside a German outpost. Wires lead back to the American lines. A voice says: "*Be smart. Quit now.*"





Criss-crossing Europe and the North Atlantic in a crazy pattern, the voices and codes of the U.S. Army snapped and crackled and sped from point to point. Contents were noted and troops moved. Behind this third communication system were the brains and experience of the head of another well-known American network—Brigadier General David Sarnoff, Special Consultant on Communications, SHAEF.

But to tens of thousands of American families, the Army network that meant the most was one that worked in reverse. Teams of G.I. engineers and interviewers, armed with portable recording apparatus, would prowl through hospitals, rest camps, and replacement centers, capturing soldiers' messages and thoughts of home.

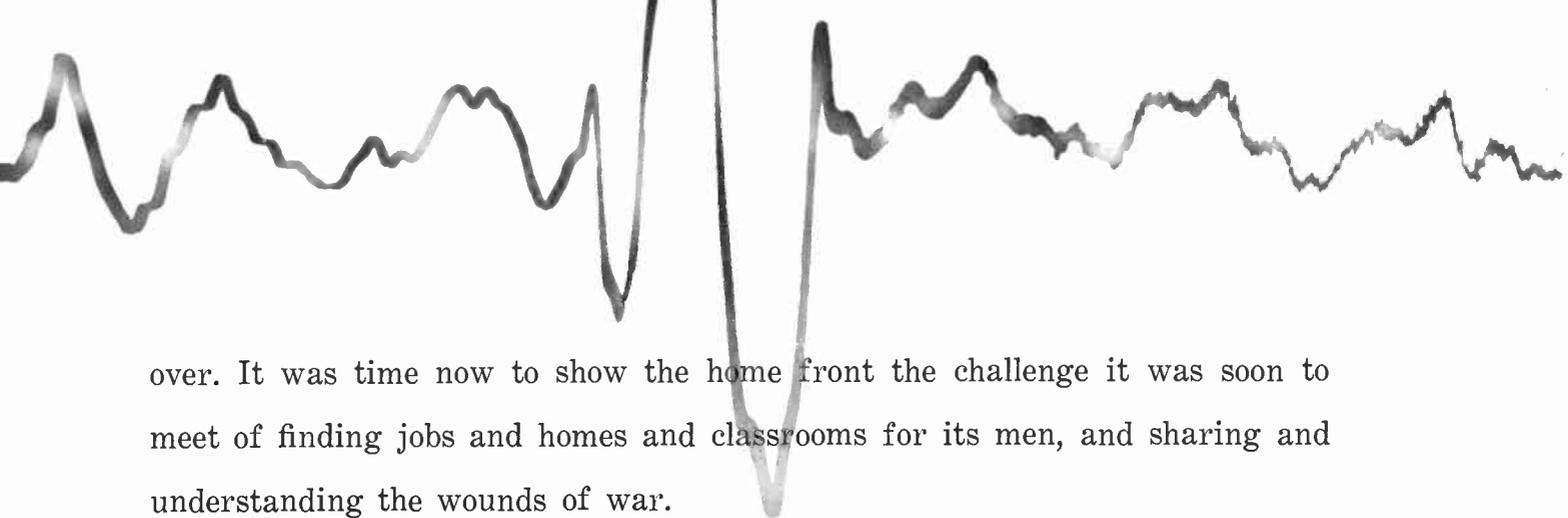
The team that caught up with Joe Smith, Jr., found him near Paris. Joe talked into the microphone for two-and-a-half minutes, then stalled. By the time he remembered all the things he might have said, the record was in



London. Five days later it had touched Newfoundland, New York, and Washington, and had come to rest on the desk of WFBM's program manager in Indianapolis. The program manager did what he was used to doing. He picked up the phone, told Mrs. Smith he had a record from her son, assured her he wasn't kidding, and asked her when she'd like to drive in and hear it. She said what he was used to hearing. She'd come right away.

An hour later Mrs. Smith, and Mr. Smith, were sitting alone in a studio at WFBM, listening to their son's voice. They heard the record three times. Mrs. Smith cried a little. She said it sounded just like Joe.

About the time Joe's unit got to the Saar, the Army called on radio in general, and CBS in particular, for one last big effort—to pave the way for the men who would soon come home. In a joint War Department-CBS series called *Assignment Home*, radio dealt thoughtfully and understandingly with the problems the fighting-men were soon to face, when the fighting would be



over. It was time now to show the home front the challenge it was soon to meet of finding jobs and homes and classrooms for its men, and sharing and understanding the wounds of war.

(A year from now, the Smiths' victory garden will have gone to seed; the gas-rationing "A" sticker will be shredded and forgotten on the windshield of their car; and the recording of Joe's voice will be packed away in the attic along with the German war-helmet he brought back. And a new covey of researchers will be settling on the front stoops of Indiana homes. They ask:

*"Taking everything into consideration, which one of these do you think did the best job of serving the public during the war—magazines, newspapers, moving pictures or radio broadcasting?"*

Sixty-seven per cent of the people in Indiana, and elsewhere, answer: "Radio.")

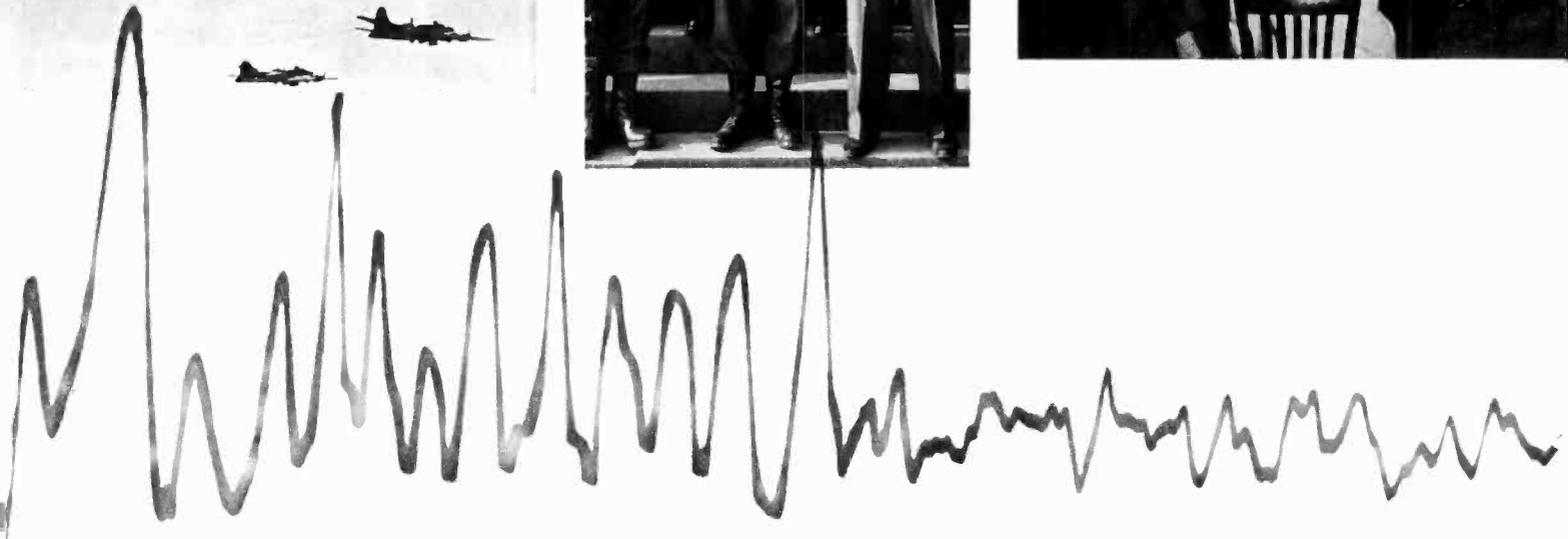


## 8. *Holocaust (continued)*

If, like the Smiths, you were living East of the Rocky Mountains on June 5, 1944, you probably got a better night's sleep than the folks who lived in the Far West. (For Westerners that was the night World War II began to be the War-of-the-Long-Waits.)

On the East Coast it was already 12:48 a.m., June 6. In Indiana it was 11:48 p.m., June 5, and the Smiths had gone to bed. But in the Rockies it was 10:48 p.m. and on the West Coast, a wide-awake 9:48. Over CBS Ned Calmer cuts in on a program of popular music to say:

*"A bulletin has just been received from the London office of the Associated Press which quotes the German Transocean News Agency as asserting that the invasion of Western Europe has begun. This report—and we stress it is of enemy origin with absolutely no confirmation from Allied sources—says*

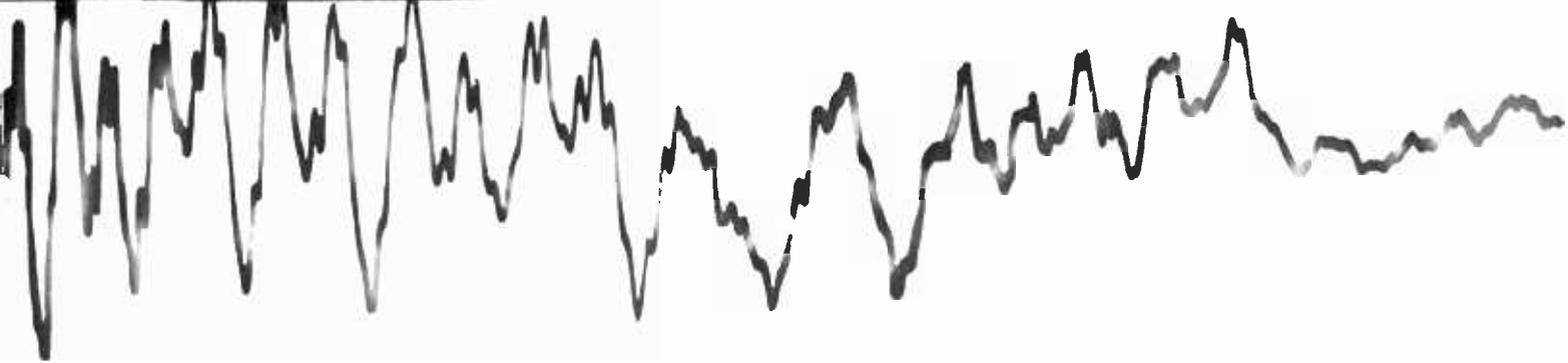


*that American landings were made this morning on the shores of Northwestern France...*

Instantly the nation (where it is awake) is electrified. And then the vigil begins. Nothing new is added for the next two hours and 44 minutes. Every little while another announcer takes the microphone, edges up to the report, points out its unofficial source, and backs away. Major George Fielding Eliot gnaws the bone a while; then even he gives up.

In the Mountains it is now 1:32 a.m., June 6. On the Coast, a yawning 12:32. Five seconds later the real news breaks. A voice from SHAEF in London: *“Under the command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France.”*

Now the news tumbles out: Murrow from London, Eisenhower, King Haakon of Norway, the Belgian Prime Minister, the Netherlands Prime Minister, and



eye-witnesses back from flights over the flashing Normandy Beach.

Even as they speak, the story of the invasion—as it looked to the invaders—is already frozen on a wire spool, waiting for a naval courier to take it back to London. You hear it that night:

**GEORGE HICKS** (a recording made in action): *“I am speaking now from a tower above the signal bridge of an American naval flagship, and we’re lying some few miles off the coast of France where the invasion of Europe has begun. It’s now 20 minutes to six and the landing craft have been disembarked from their mother ships and are moving in long irregular lines towards the horizon of France which is very plain to the naked eye...*

*“It’s now becoming quite near daylight as 6 a.m. approaches on June 6th, 1944 ...We can hear the thud of shells or bombs landing on the French coastline, perhaps eight or ten miles before us, and the steel bridge on which we stand vibrates from the concussion of the heavy guns that are firing on the American*



*and British battleships and heavy cruisers on the long line right behind us. I can count twenty-two of the squat, square-nosed landing craft, carrying vehicles...as they turn and bounce in the choppy sea awaiting the exact timing to form their lines and start in toward the beach...*

*“That baby was plenty low!*

*“I think I just made the statement that no German planes had been seen and I think there was the first one we’ve seen so far...just cleared our stack...let go a stream of tracers that did no harm... (Sounds of ship’s whistle)*

*“Our own ship has just given its warning whistle and now the flak is coming up in the sky...*

*“It’s planes you hear overhead now...they are the motors of Nazis coming and going...The reverberation of bombs... (Sound of crash)*

*“That was a bomb hit, another one...If you’ll excuse me, I’ll just take a deep breath for a moment and stop speaking...*



*“Here we go again! (Noise) Another plane has come over...right over our port side...tracers are making an arc right over the bow now...*

*“...Give it to her, boys!...Another one coming over...a cruiser on...pouring it out...something burning is falling down through the sky and hurtling down...it may be a hit plane. (Terrific noises in background)...Here he goes...they got one! (Voices cheering) They got one!” (Voice: “Did we?”) “Yeah...great splotches of fire came down and are smoldering now just off our port side in the sea...smoke and flame there. (Various sounds and voices in background)... The lights of that burning Nazi plane are just twinkling now in the sea...”*

The invasion, the breakthrough, the drive on Paris, a second landing on the Southern coast of France—all go according to plan. Back in the States the same sanguine souls who had looked for invasion in 1943 now say it will all be over by Christmas. Wait and see, they say.

For the Smiths, with a son in Europe, Christmas 1944 is not a merry one.



On December 16 the Germans counter-attack south of Aachen. Panzer divisions meet the First Army head on. Leapfrogging paratroopers harass its rear. Next morning Richard Hottel, at First Army Headquarters, warns it is serious: *"...There's no doubt about it that this is the major German effort. Some of the best units in the German Army are involved in this penetration..."*

*"...There's no hit-and-run character about this. After tanks and infantry made the initial breach the enemy moved his artillery in. He means to consolidate and hold everything he takes and to sustain the offensive..."*

Newspapers are now spelling "bulge" with a capital "B." Radio reporters are pronouncing it the same way. Three days before Christmas, in Bastogne, an American brigadier general made of cement and named McAuliffe says "Nuts!" Says it to the German demand for surrender. And means it. He hangs on for another six days and nights, until another American general, for whom "Nuts!" is a term of endearment, puts on one of his memorable



bursts of speed. On December 28, Patton relieves the Bastogne garrison. The character of the battle changes overnight. Von Rundstedt's attack is now contained. The Wehrmacht goes into reverse.

There will be many more tense moments for the Smiths, sitting by their radios...but there's beginning to be a feel of hope as well as spring in the air.

And then it's April 12, 1945, and a reporter asks a housewife on New York's East Side if she's heard the news that's on the radio. "For what do I need a radio," she asks, with her voice catching. "It is on everybody's face."

Just the same it was radio that put the story on the first faces. At 5:47 p.m., April 12, 1945, the International News Service sent into the CBS newsroom the shortest flash in the history of newsgathering. It said:

"WASHN—FDR DEAD."

At 5:49 John Daly puts it on the air.

Back in the newsroom the INS teletype machine hiccups along. A line—a

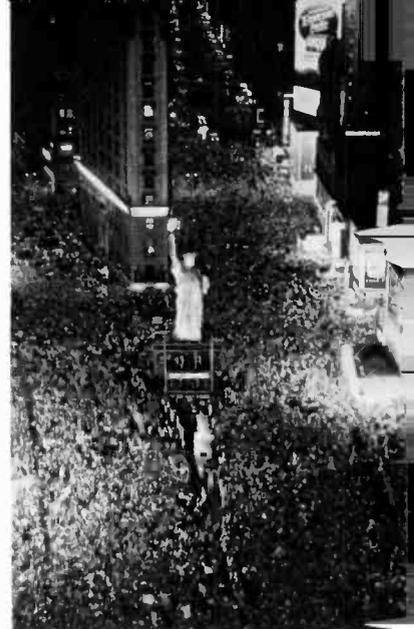


pause—a line—a pause, and not many lines. With no script, no notes—only news bulletins handed to him, Daly continues:

*“...died of a cerebral hemorrhage...all we know so far is that the President died at Warm Springs in Georgia...the announcement came from Stephen Early, the Presidential Secretary...less than five minutes ago...Mrs. Roosevelt called Vice-President Truman to the White House and informed him herself...”*

So Franklin D. Roosevelt did not face the San Francisco Conference that met on April 25 to draft a charter for his dream of a world family of nations. Nor did the newly-burdened Harry S. Truman. He was in the grip of another Long Wait—for V-E Day in Europe.

In the span of a single week the British capture Bremen, the Russians Potsdam, the Americans Munich. The Russians enter Berlin. We meet the Russians at the Elbe. Still no victory. Italian partisans slay Mussolini. The German radio reports that Hitler is dead too. Still no victory. On May 4, one



million Nazi troops surrender to Montgomery. Then victory comes—but when?

You may take your choice:

May 7, 8:22 a.m. EST: *“German Foreign Minister Ludwig Schwerin Von Krosigk announced to the German people over the wavelength of the Flensburg station today that “after almost six years of struggle we have succumbed.”*

May 7, 9:35:50 a.m.: *“The Associated Press has just sent a flash from Reims: THE ALLIES OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCE THAT GERMANY HAS SURRENDERED UNCONDITIONALLY...”*

**HARRY S. TRUMAN**, May 8, 9:00 a.m., from the White House: *“This is a solemn but glorious hour. I only wish that Franklin D. Roosevelt had lived to witness this day. General Eisenhower informs me that the forces of Germany have surrendered to the United Nations. The flags of freedom fly all over Europe...”*

Now the President can go to San Francisco, where on June 26 fifty nations



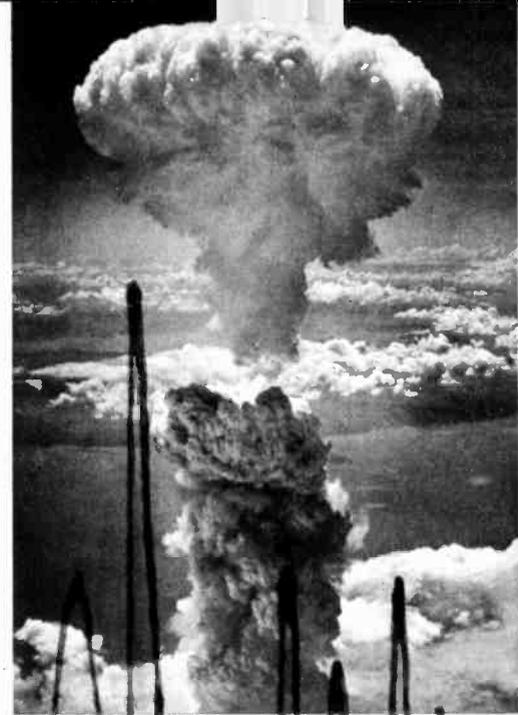
sign the new charter of the United Nations Organization. To the delegates, and to the Smiths, Mr. Truman says, in part:

*“Upon our decisive action rests the hope of those who have fallen, those now living, and those yet unborn—the hope for a world of free countries, with decent standards of living, which will work and cooperate in a friendly, civilized community of nations.*

*“This new structure of peace is rising on strong foundations.*

*“Let us not fail to grasp this supreme chance to re-establish a world-wide rule of reason—to create an enduring peace under the guidance of God.”*

On July 16 in New Mexico’s desert wasteland, one of civilization’s major news events occurs, but this is one the Smiths will not hear of on their radios for some time, for it is one of the country’s most closely guarded military secrets. A handful of scientists hoist a mysterious contraption to the top of a steel tower. Judiciously they back ten miles away, put on dark glasses, and



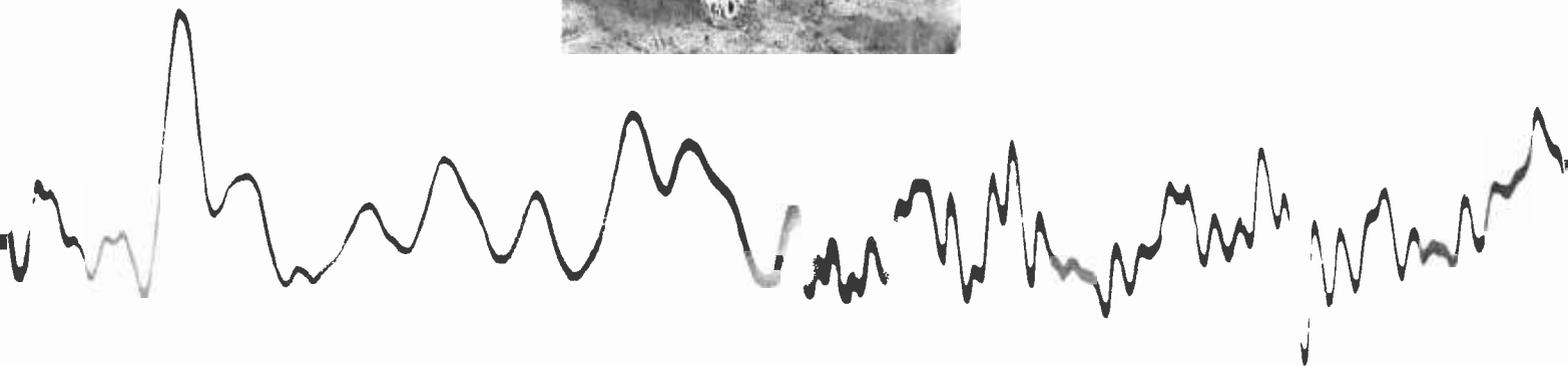
stick their fingers in their ears. A flash lights the sky. In Albuquerque, 120 miles away, a blind girl asks, "What was that?" (It was eight minutes later when she *heard* it.) "That" was the vaporizing of a steel tower, the digging of an excavation three-quarters of a mile wide, the unlocking of a force that binds the universe. That was the first atomic bomb.

On July 26, at Potsdam, Truman and Churchill issue an ultimatum. As the Smiths hear later in the day, it ends with these words:

*"We call upon the Government of Japan to proclaim...unconditional surrender ...The alternative for Japan is prompt and utter destruction."*

Japan chose the alternative.

On August 6, at 11:15:15 a.m. Harry Kramer interrupts a CBS program: *"...to report a bulletin just received from Washington. President Truman has just announced that an 'atomic bomb' has been used against Japan for the first time, with power equal to 20,000 tons of TNT."*



On August 9, at 12:31:15 p.m., Joe Weeks interrupts another CBS program: *“The Army has just announced the second use of the atomic bomb, and has announced that good results were obtained. There was no further information...”*

If you were anywhere near a radio in mid-August you know that the Allied nations launched enough V-J Days to end five wars. August 10 wasn't V-J Day though you could cite a picked-up Japanese broadcast to prove it. Nor was it August 11, though the rumors were hot and the owners of store windows anxious. It wasn't August 12, though another premature press association flash said it was. It wasn't the 13th. (A lot of diplomatic finagling was going on. Coded messages shuttled back and forth from Tokyo to Washington, through the neutral capital of Berne. Two sneezes by one Swiss decoding clerk could father half a dozen new rumors.)

At last on August 14, the news breaks at the White House at 7 p.m., on CBS at 7:00:11. By 7:03 Bill Henry is reading the President's statement. It begins:



*"I have this afternoon a message from the Japanese Government. I deem this to be a full acceptance of the Potsdam declaration. It specifies the unconditional surrender of Japan..."*

On September 1 in Indiana (September 2 in Tokyo Bay), V-J Day officially arrives. The Smiths hear General MacArthur from the U.S.S. *Missouri*:

*"We are gathered here, representative of the major warring powers, to conclude a solemn agreement whereby peace may be restored..."*

(Mr. and Mrs. Smith look at each other and nod. Joe Smith, Jr. will soon be coming home. Automatically, they turn back to the same radio they have turned to every day for 1,366 days.)

*"I now invite the representatives of the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Government and the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters to sign the instrument of surrender at the places indicated..."*

They sign.



## 9. *No More Parades*

For nearly four years radio had unceasingly poured the sounds of distant conflict into the homes of more than thirty million American families. The sounds of strange place-names: Bandoeng, Karkhov, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Dakar, Smolensk, Cassino, Avranches, Remagen. The sounds of a world at war.

Now radio turned once more to the sounds of familiar and pronounceable names: New York, Chicago and Washington, Little Rock, Waterbury, Savannah. Smith, Brown and Jones. The sounds of a nation no longer at war. The sounds of a nation picking up the pieces.

In their Indiana living room the Smiths waited anxiously for these sounds. They came first from the Chief Executive.

**PRESIDENT TRUMAN**, October 30, 1945: "*Fellow citizens: On August 18, 1945, four days after the surrender of Japan, I laid down the guiding policies of your*

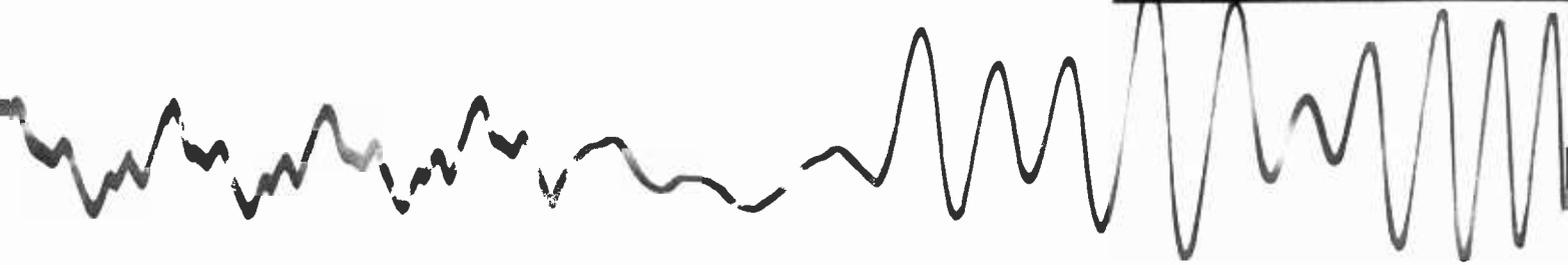


*Government during the transition from war to peace...*

*“One of the major factors determining whether or not we shall succeed in carrying out those policies is the question of wages and prices. If wages go down substantially, we face deflation. If prices go up substantially we face inflation...”*

The war was over, all right, and the Smiths were glad of that. But you had to admit there'd been something in the harsh simplicity of war and its issues that had brought people together. Nowadays everything seemed to be pulling them apart. Labor and management, landlord and tenant, buyer and seller, Democrat and Republican. Picking up the pieces wasn't going to be easy, thought the Smiths, as they sat by their radio and listened to endless debate and tried to decide who was right and who was wrong.

The national problem of reconversion deeply disturbed the Smiths and 140,000,000 of their fellow citizens. But overshadowing this concern was a planetary problem. Most people had pushed it into the back of their minds ever since it first



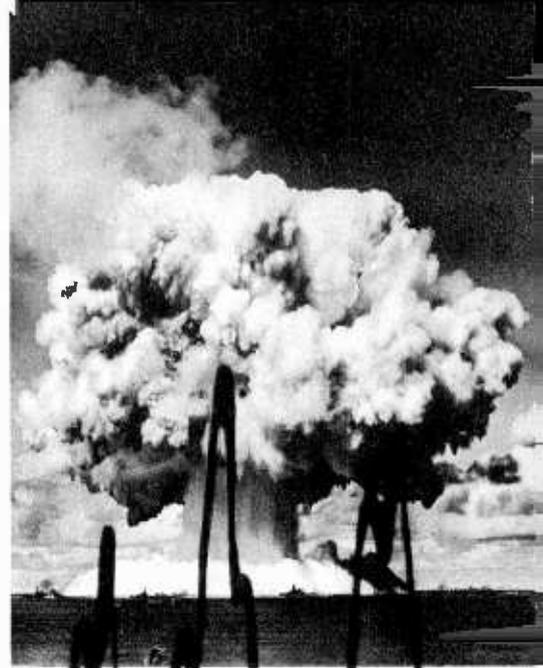
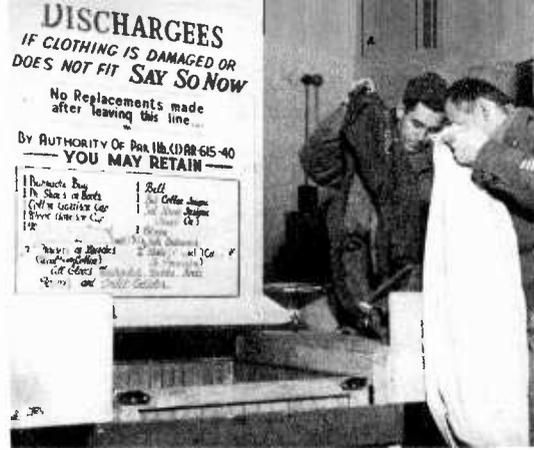
appeared as a cloud somewhat bigger than a man's hand over Hiroshima. The Smiths had spent considerable time talking about the atom bomb, but it was loose, uncertain talk. During the winter they had listened to others speak about it on the air with specific gravity—people like General Groves, Secretary of War Patterson, President Hutchins of the University of Chicago, Senator Brien McMahon.

And more recently a visiting Englishman in Fulton, Missouri.

**WINSTON CHURCHILL**, March 5, 1946: *"It would... be wrong and imprudent to entrust the secret knowledge or experience of the atomic bomb, which the United States, Great Britain and Canada now share, to the world organization, while it is still in its infancy..."*

*"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent..."*

*"...If the Western democracies stand together in strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter, their influence for furthering these principles will*



*be immense and no one is likely to molest them. If, however, they become divided or falter in their duty, and if these all-important years are allowed to slip away, then indeed catastrophe may overwhelm us all."*

The Smiths had followed Churchill's wartime speeches with absorbed interest and warm agreement. But now, was he saying there wasn't to be a peace? The familiar voice had once more sounded like a call to arms. Were the Russians who had been wartime allies now to become the enemy? It was deeply disturbing and confusing, this peace.

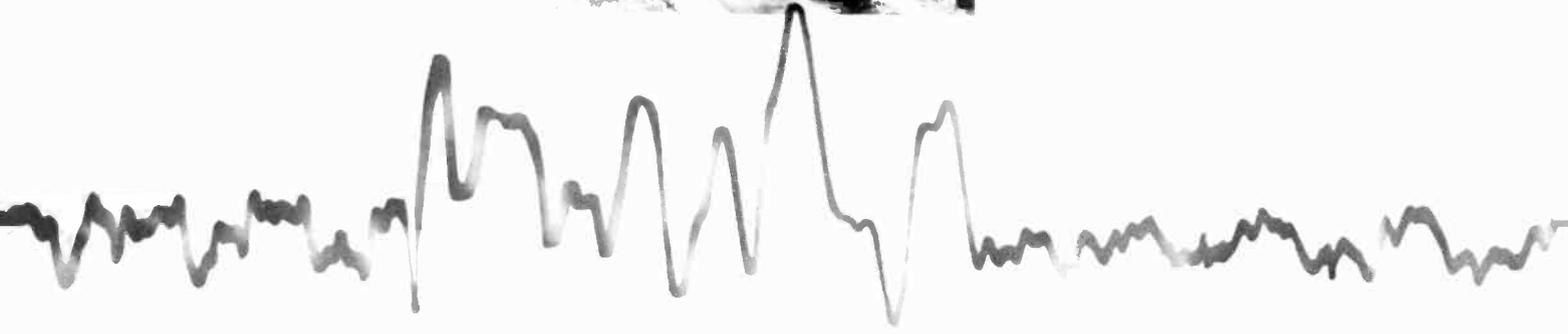
And other events of the spring and summer did little to dispel the sense of foreboding.

On a Tuesday night in May, radio drained the color from people's faces with a program called *Operation Crossroads*. For a full hour, the Smiths heard the story of the atom bomb in terms of life and death—their own life and death. The story took off from a cruiser steaming across the Pacific.



ADMIRAL BLANDY, May 28, 1946: *“Ladies and gentlemen, this is Vice Admiral W. H. P. Blandy, Commander of Joint Army-Navy Task Force 1. I am speaking to you from my flagship, the U.S.S. Mount McKinley, en route to the Marshall Islands in the mid-Pacific. There, about July 1st, the fourth man-made atomic explosion will take place. It will climax a long series of careful, scientific preparations for the experiment called ‘OPERATION CROSSROADS,’ an experiment intended to aid in keeping a peace-loving America strong in a troubled world... “As Task Force 1 proceeds to its rendezvous with atomic energy, another Operation Crossroads is about to be executed by the Columbia Broadcasting System in Washington, D. C. There, in the granite building of the Library of Congress, representative Americans from all over the nation have gathered to consider with you some other phases of the same great Crossroads to which the splitting of the atom has brought mankind—perhaps the Crossroads of human destiny.”*

From Washington the voices of representative Americans, voices with big and



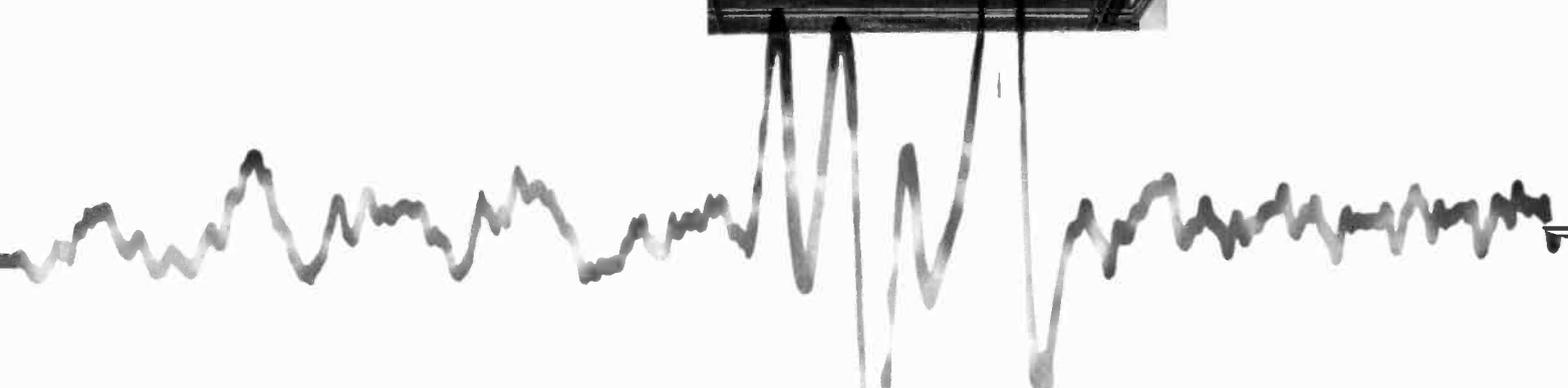
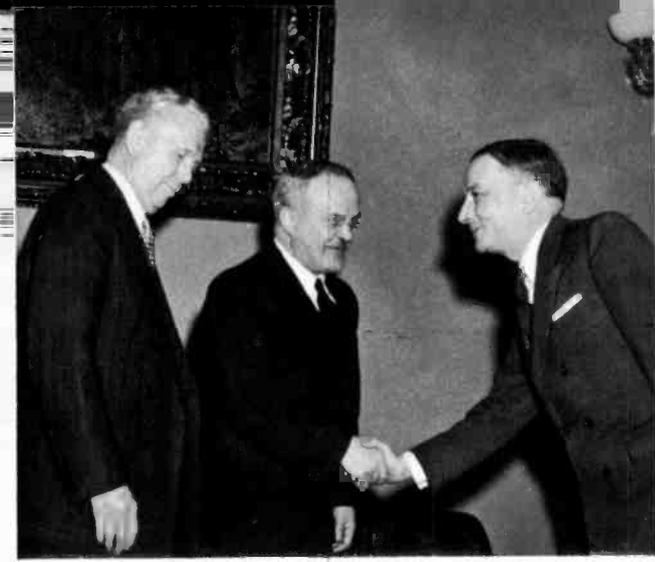
little names, filtered through the Smith radio.

**GEORGE C. KENNEY** (A four-star General) : *“We should understand clearly... There just isn’t any adequate defense against atomic attack.”*

**MRS. HOWARD J. HOLLISTER** (A Gold Star Mother) : *“If we can’t defend ourselves against atomic bombs why can’t we stop them from being used... by keeping the secret?”*

**HAROLD C. UREY** (An atomic scientist) : *“What secret?... There is no secret that we can keep for more than a few years.”*

**GEORGE CARON** (A B-29 photographer who flew over Hiroshima) : *“At the time that we dropped the bomb I didn’t actually pray that it would never happen to an American city, but ever since then I’ve been doing a lot of thinking. What I’ve been hoping is that no one ever sees one of those things go off again where there are people around anywhere in the world. I believe there is a way we can survive in this atomic age... Support the United Nations.”*



**HAROLD E. STASSEN** (A former Governor): *“Yes, but let’s be clear about this. This will mean an authority will be created to control atomic energy which will be, in one sense, higher than the Government of the United States or the Government of Russia or any other one nation. It will represent all the United Nations...We must delegate a portion of our national sovereignty to a United Nations authority.”*

**CARON**: *“What about this...sovereignty? What is it? How much of it do we have to give up?”*

**WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS** (An Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court): *“Sovereignty, Mr. Caron, is final authority...We do not give up sovereignty or surrender it; we exercise it...all we’re being asked to do is to exercise our sovereignty on a new level—the international one.”*

**ROBERT TROUT** (A CBS news correspondent): *“...While many people hope and pray that war can be averted, they’re pessimistic...They say it is just ‘human*



*nature'...no chance of changing in a million years..."*

**ALBERT EINSTEIN** (A scientist): *"I would say that it's precisely because we cannot change it in a million years, that we must do what we have to do now, very quickly, in order to prevent the terrible destruction of an atomic war...Just as we use our reason to build a dam, to hold the river in check, we must now build institutions to restrain the fears and suspicions and greeds which move people and their rulers. Such institutions...must have authority over atomic bombs and other weapons, and there must be the power to enforce this authority. We do not have to wait a million years to use our ability to reason...We can and must use it now, or human society will disappear in a new and terrible dark age of mankind—perhaps forever."*

One way to use man's power to restrain fear and greed was suggested by Secretary of State George Catlett Marshall, addressing a meeting of the Harvard Alumni Association as part of the June, 1947 Commencement ceremonies. What



General Marshall had to say ranged a considerable distance beyond Cambridge.

It was the first statement of what came to be known as the Marshall Plan—in outline, as bold and inspiring a project for healing a sick world as anyone had yet enunciated. But the Russians were at once suspicious. Three months before they had heard the U. S. President outline another plan, called the Truman Doctrine, which frankly stated that American foreign policy involved opposition to Communism and that American military and financial aid were available to any country where Communism threatened. The Russians chose to regard the Marshall Plan as a further extension of the “imperialist” American policy and quickly announced that neither they nor their satellite countries wanted any part of it. By October they had implemented their policy by the revival of the Communist International, now called the “Cominform,” and the Smiths of every country could indeed look upon a divided world.

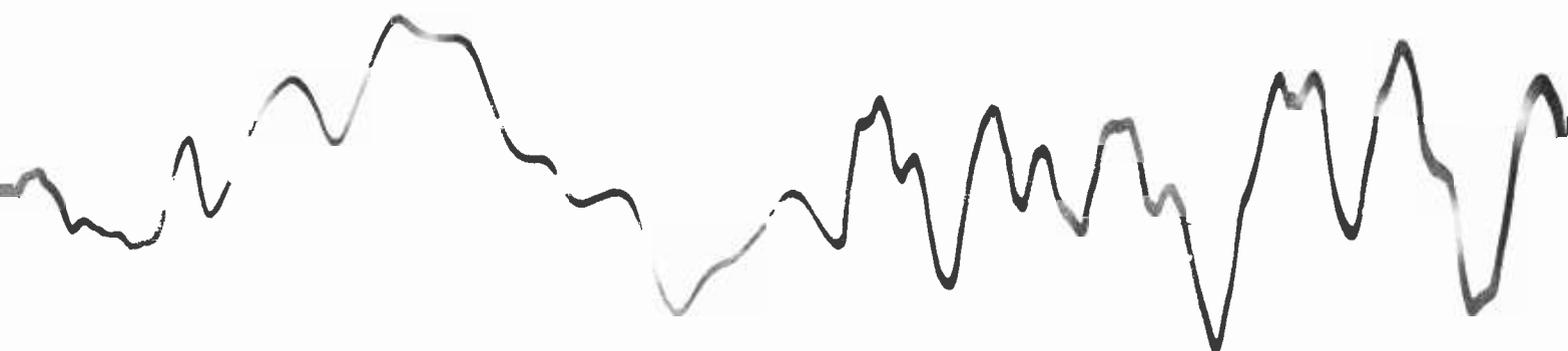


## 10. *How about a Couple of Straws?*

It was an uneasy time, this peace the Smiths had waited for so long. One after another, the accepted symbols of that peace seemed to be crumbling. The United Nations, charged with strengthening the bonds between nations, had been the scene of bitter and acrid exchange. U.S. Secretary of State Marshall had blamed the Russians for blocking peace efforts; USSR Deputy Foreign Minister Vishinsky had accused the U.S. of war-mongering.

The year 1948 was barely a month old when the early morning radio brought the announcement of a new act of violence, this time in India.

**ANNOUNCER**, January 30, 1948: *“Here’s a bulletin from New Delhi, India —just in. Mohandas K. Gandhi was shot three times today. Doctors were rushed to Birla House where he is staying. ‘All India Radio’ reports that Gandhi is dead.”*



In the evening Lowell Thomas, who had interviewed Gandhi in the Twenties, went on the air with a recollective picture of the Hindu leader.

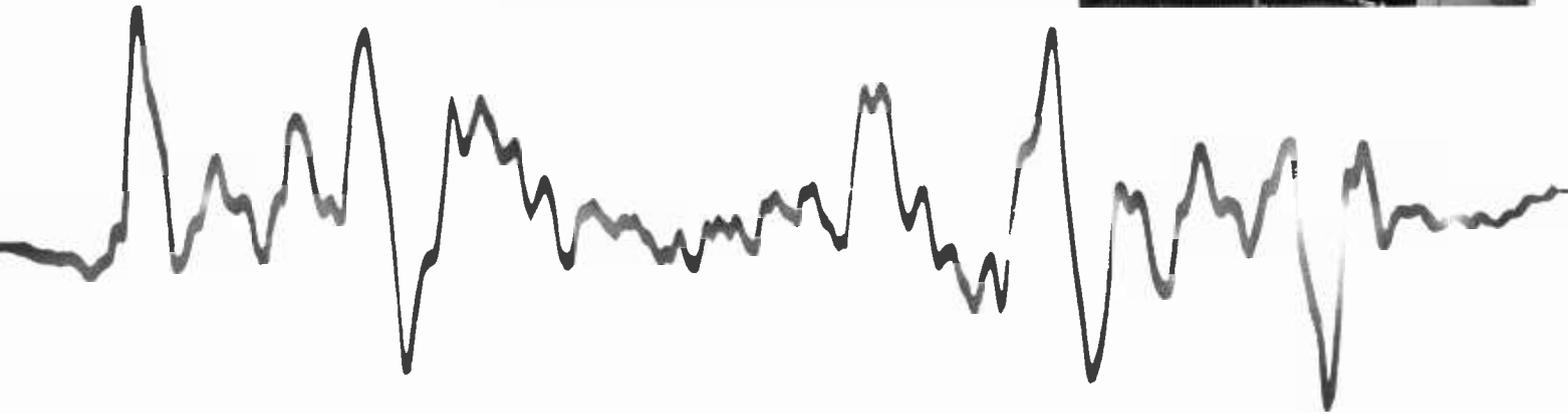
**LOWELL THOMAS:** “...*Gandhi reverted to his ancestral Hinduism, which with its mystical philosophy prevented him from becoming a warlike enemy...*

*“Of all the world-wide expressions, the sharpest comes from—well, from where you would expect—from George Bernard Shaw. Commenting on the assassination, Shaw today remarked, ‘It shows how dangerous it is to be too good.’ ”*

On March 10 Americans heard the news of a second crash—when Jan Masaryk, Czech Foreign Minister and son of the founder of the republic—jumped out of the third-story window of his office in Prague, a week after Czechoslovakia had bowed to the political domination of Russia.

The pressure mounted. A Russian blockade closed the Western Powers’ transportation lines in and out of occupied Berlin.

**LOWELL THOMAS,** April 1, 1948: *“The situation in Berlin between the western*



*Allies and Russia tonight has reached what news dispatches describe as a complete and potentially 'dangerous deadlock.' A climax was reached when the Red Army bluntly rejected a British protest against the blockade, delivered in person, by the British Deputy Commander.*

*"The U.S. Army has immediately inaugurated an emergency service by air, to run supplies into the U.S. Zone..."*

Throughout this period the Smiths, like most of their fellow citizens, searched the sounds coming through the sky for some area of agreement, for some appearance of unity, for some sign of an end to division and a beginning of security. It was a wish they did not—perhaps could not—articulate, but it was no less anxious for being unexpressed. Almost anything would do—any straw in the wind.

The first straw appeared in the middle of May. Israel was proclaimed a nation. On May 14 at 6 p.m., the 30-year British mandate over Palestine expired. The State of Israel became a fact. And a few minutes after 6, a bulletin from President

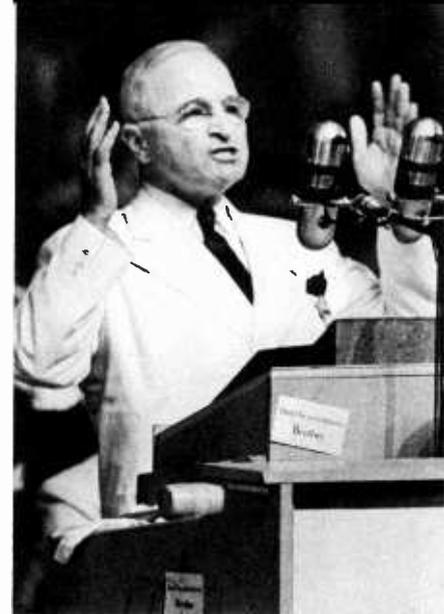


Truman announced that the United States had recognized the new-born nation.

This was an event of importance, but not nearly as important to the Smiths as the announcement that came three days later of recognition of Israel by the Soviet Union. Here, for the first time since the war, East and West appeared to be acting in concert rather than at loggerheads. For a brief while, it acquired even more substance, as the Moscow radio broadcast a statement by Stalin that he had accepted Henry A. Wallace's proposal to end the "cold war" between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Soon it was summer, and time for all good Americans to do what they always do every four years—drop everything and have a good slam-bang political campaign. The national conventions were as noisy as ever, and the candidates all promised everything.

Over the radio, the Smiths heard Governor Dewey accept the Republican nomination, and declare his intentions:



**THOMAS E. DEWEY**, June 24, 1948: *“Our people are turning away from the meaner things that divide us. They have a yearning to move to higher ground, to find a common purpose in the finer things that unite us. We, the Republican Party, must be the instrument of achieving that aspiration...”*

Three weeks later the Smiths tuned in to the acceptance speech of President Truman. The President used most of it to attack the “renegade 80th Congress.”

**PRESIDENT TRUMAN**, July 15, 1948: *“On the twenty-sixth day of July, which out in Missouri will be called Tulip Day, I’m going to call that Congress back and I’m going to ask them to pass laws halting rising prices and to meet the housing crisis, which they say they’re for in their platform. At the same time, I shall ask them to act upon other vitally needed measures such as aid to education, which they say they’re for, a national health program, civil rights legislation, which they say they’re for, and an increase in the minimum wage, which I doubt very much they’re for...”*



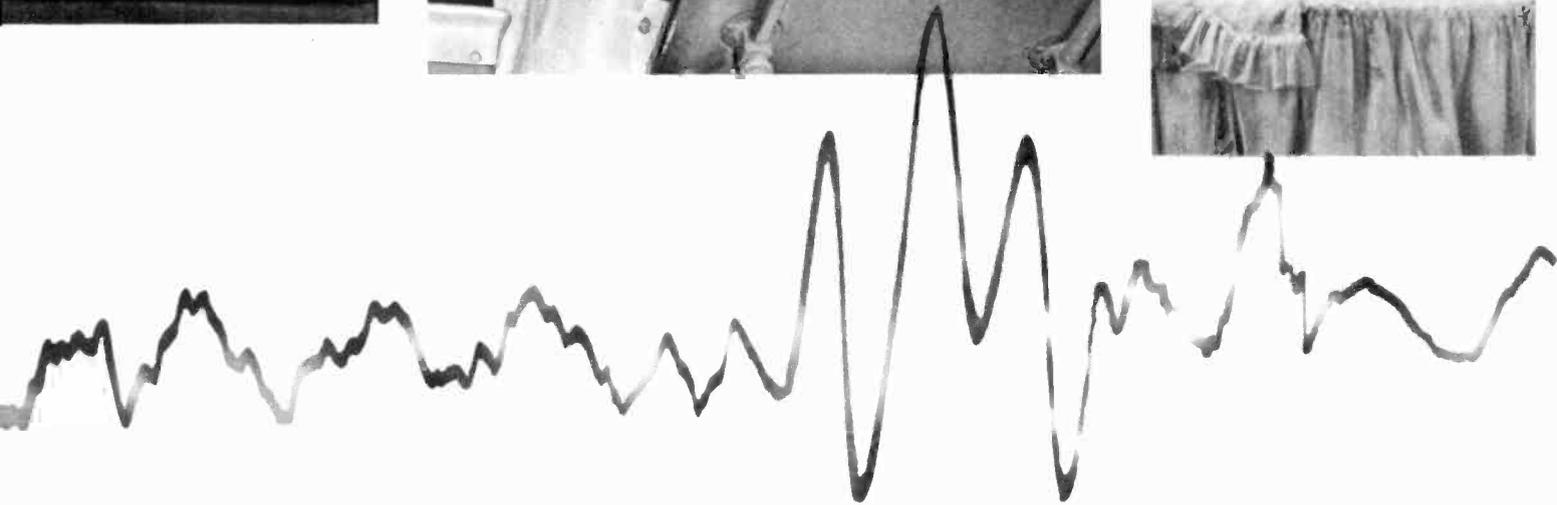
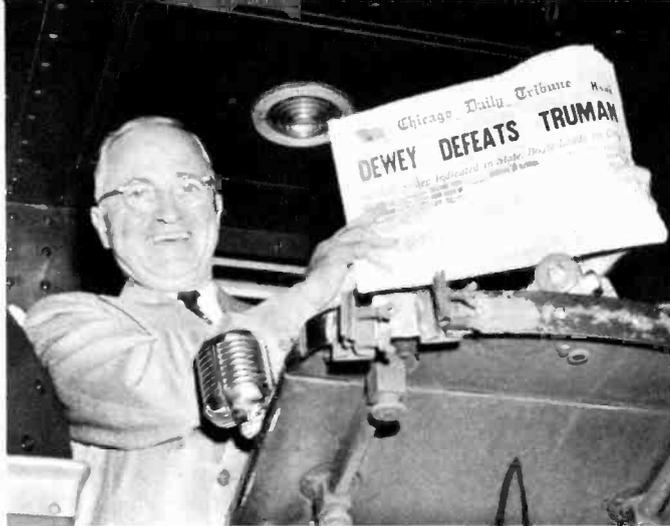
*“Now, my friends, with the help of God and the wholehearted push which you can put behind this campaign, we can save this country from a continuation of the 80th Congress. The country can’t afford another Republican Congress!”*

And this time there was a third contender and a third party, ill-pleased with the candidates and policies of the other two:

**HENRY A. WALLACE**, October 30, 1948: *“This campaign is but a single battle in a long war. Until the great issues facing us—peace instead of war, abundance instead of scarcity, health before wealth, men before profit—are solved in favor of the American people, the Progressive Party will remain the great triumphant fact of American life.”*

The 3 Smiths and 48,489,214 other voting Americans listened to everybody, and on November 2 went to the polls and surprised everybody.

**NED CALMER**, November 3, 1948: *“America ate supper last night convinced that Thomas E. Dewey was the next President of the United States and woke up this*



*morning to the strong possibility that it'll be Harry S. Truman. What happened in-between has become one of the great surprises of our history...the election news has just about flabbergasted the people—and there are millions of them, both Republicans and Democrats, who figured Dewey to be a sure thing, along with most of the newspapers in the country and most of the polls. Or as Ed Murrow remarked during the special CBS broadcasts of the returns, which stayed on the air until 5:30 a.m., Eastern Time, this morning: 'It was more than a victory of candidate over candidate; it was a victory of the people over the pollsters.'*”

It wasn't until 11:14 a.m. that Mr. Dewey conceded the election and wished Mr. Truman all the luck in the world. Nobody needed it more.

The Smiths wound up the year with a pleasant piece of family news on their radio, the kind of news that properly belongs to peacetime, and home and hope. ANNOUNCER, Sunday Night, November 14: *“Her Royal Highness, the Princess Elizabeth, was safely delivered of a Prince at 9:14 p.m. (London Time). Her Royal*



*Highness and her son are both doing well.”*

It was the best available atmosphere in which to start the Christmas season.

As the New Year opened CBS listeners began to hear new voices on the network—voices that sent waves of laughter echoing through millions of homes. On Sunday night, January 2, 1949, at 7 p.m. they heard announcer Don Wilson: **DON:** *“Ladies and gentlemen, today marks Jack Benny’s first program on the Columbia Broadcasting System...so let’s go back a couple of hours and pick up Jack and Mary on their way to the studio. Rochester is driving them.”*

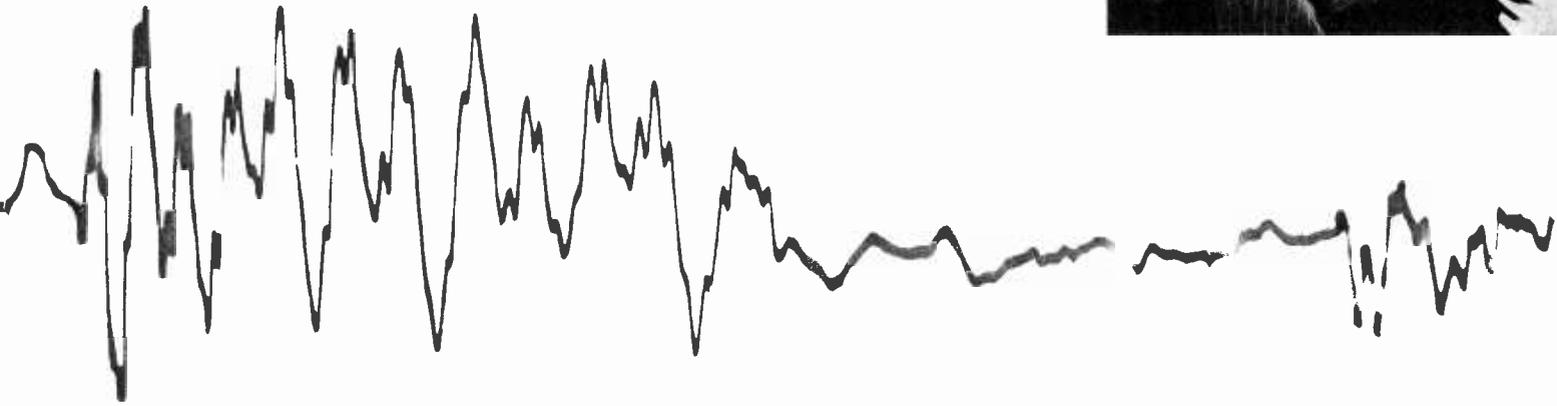
**JACK:** (Very nervous) *“Not so fast, Rochester...Don’t cross the double line... look out for that car...What’s the matter with you?”*

**ROCH:** *“I’m driving as carefully as I can, Boss.”*

**JACK:** *“Well, just watch it, that’s all.”*

**MARY:** *“For heavens’ sakes, Jack, calm down...don’t be so nervous.”*

**JACK:** *“I’M NOT NERVOUS.”*



**MARY:** *"Then stop pacing up and down on the running board."*

**JACK:** *"Okay, Mary...I'll admit it...I AM nervous, and you can't blame me ...today's my opening broadcast on CBS."*

**MARY:** *"All right, so you're opening on CBS."*

**JACK:** *"What do you mean all right?...Do you realize this is the first time my program will be heard in Alaska?"*

Jack Benny's appearance on CBS provided the symbol of a notable achievement in radio programming. Benny, perhaps more than anyone, typified radio entertainment to most people. Indeed, within a year after his appearance on CBS, the nation's radio editors were to acknowledge this by voting him the outstanding personality of radio's first quarter-century.

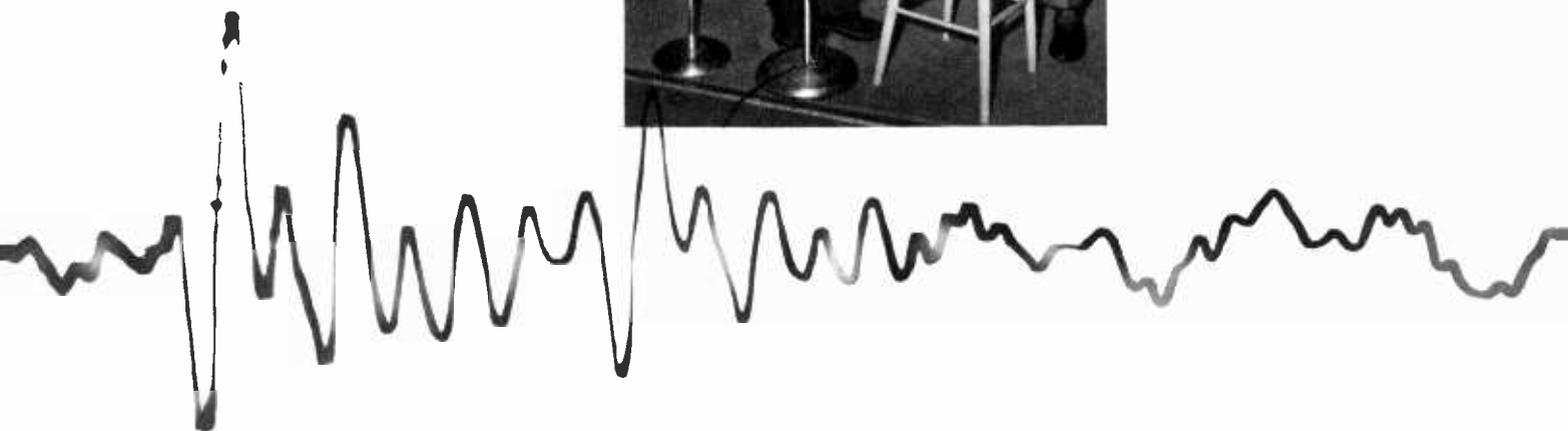
Actually, the parade of radio's top comedy stars to CBS had started some months before, with the return of the matchless Amos 'n' Andy to the network after an absence of nearly 6 years. And soon Edgar Bergen, Bing Crosby, Burns



and Allen, Red Skelton and others were to follow.

This impressive cavalcade climaxed a programming effort without parallel in broadcasting. CBS had built up a concept of effective programming over a period of years; had itself developed many of radio's greatest writers, performers and programs. Within the two years preceding the rush from other networks to CBS, Columbia had showcased Arthur Godfrey, one of the great personalities of all show business... plus such other successes as *My Friend Irma*, *Suspense*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *Crime Photographer*, *Studio One*, *Life with Luigi*. By diligent search for new talent and development of that talent on its own facilities, CBS had achieved a stature which provided the best possible permanent framework for the established successes which were soon to join the network.

So when on the night of January 2 the Smiths listened and laughed with Jack Benny, they were glad to hear he was being heard in Alaska, all right, but gladder still they could hear him on their own CBS station right in Indiana.



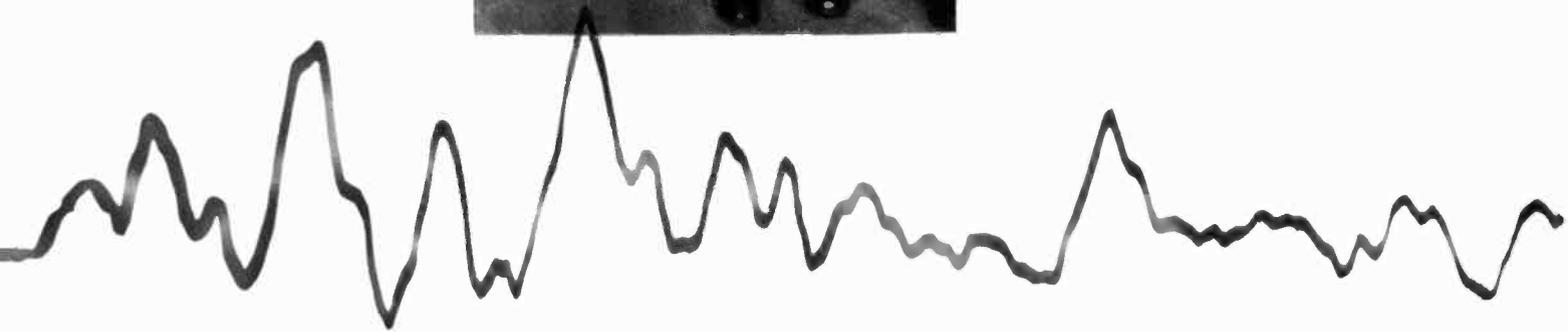
## 11. *Radio at Mid-Century*

These were, to be sure, not the only sounds which radio brought into the lives of the Smiths during twenty-three years. But they were some of the ones the Smiths remember best.

It would scarcely occur to the Smiths to wonder what their lives would have been like if they had not heard these sounds—that is, if there had been no radio. It would not occur to them because it would seem fantastic. For Americans today the notion of a world without radio is as hard to grasp as a world without running water, or automobiles, or electric light.

The Smiths no longer boast about owning a radio, as they did in 1927. How could they? They now belong to a population in which 95 out of every 100 families own a radio and one out of every three families owns at least two.

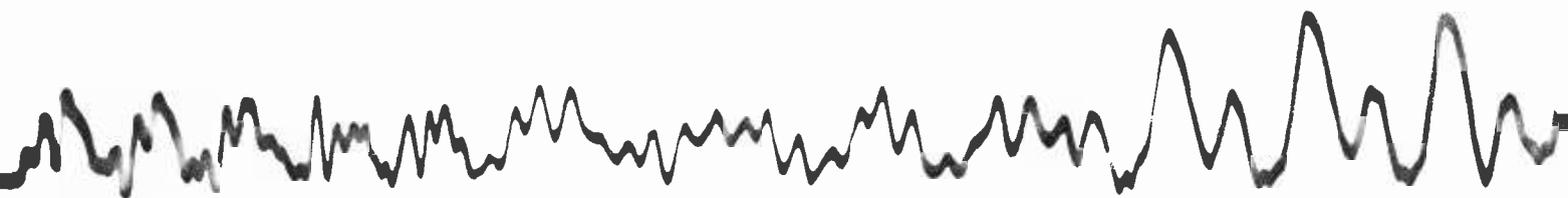
Smith would no more think of missing the morning weather forecast on his



radio than of missing his coffee. No more than millions of school children would think of missing the magical tales on *Let's Pretend*. No more than Mrs. Smith (together with 54% of her fellow countrywomen) would think of missing *Ma Perkins* or *Our Gal Sunday*, while tidying up the house.

It does violence to the mind to imagine a world without radio, when each time you step into a Statler hotel bedroom you find a radio at your service, and when every car moving off today's assembly lines is equipped with a dashboard that provides for a radio. Radio is standard equipment on long-distance trains. The portable is omnipresent: in the canoe beneath the moonlight, at the seashore picnic, wherever the people gather and for whatever purpose. "From the cradle to the grave, sound pursues us," says the Poet. Whether man be at rest or in motion, at work or at play, the sounds of radio are part of the orchestration of his life.

For this reason, if for no other, the Smiths find it hard to think of them-

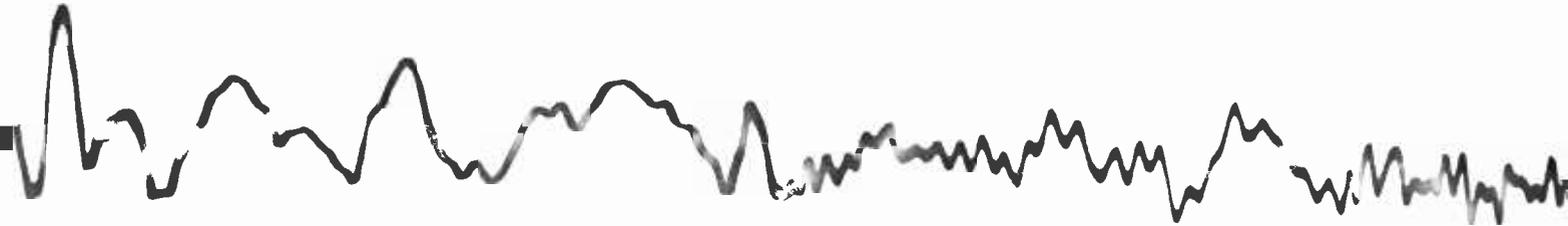
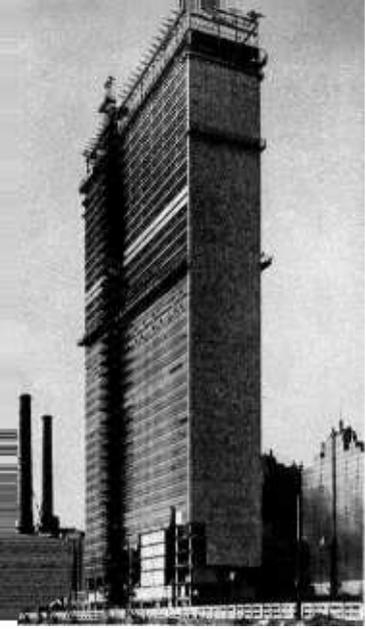


selves without radio, or to comprehend a world without it. The action of twisting the knob on the radio has become a conditioned reflex, as automatic and unconsidered as flicking the light switch on the wall or turning on the steam. Only the unusual circumstance occasionally compels them to change their focus—to think of radio in terms outside themselves.

Once a year, perhaps, their phone rings and a voice asks them if they're listening to the radio, and if so, what program they're listening to. Or the doorbell rings and the interviewer says:

*"In every community the schools, the newspapers, the local government each has a different job to do. Around here would you say the schools are doing an excellent, good, fair or poor job? How about the newspapers? The radio stations? The local government? The churches?"*

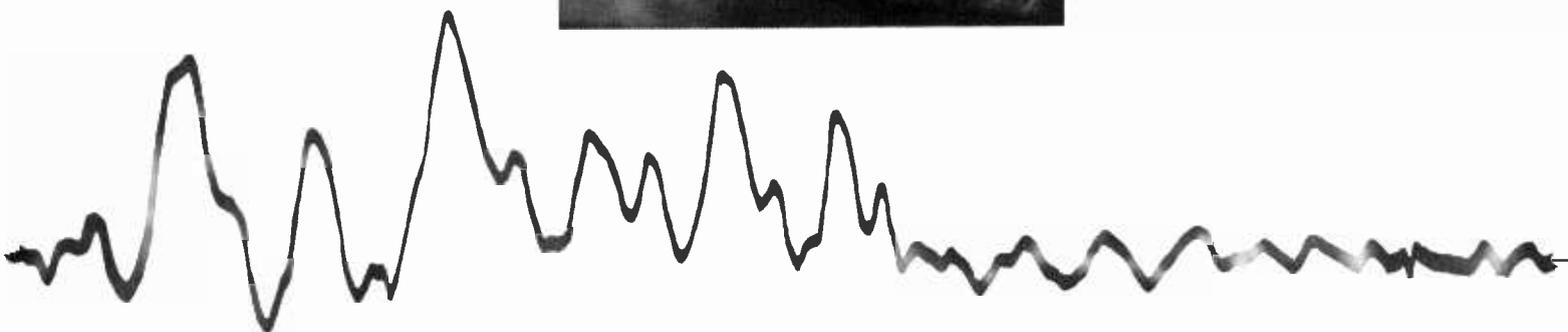
Radio wins the Smith vote. It wins the approval of more people than any of the other candidates. Faced with the hypothetical choice of having to give



up either going to the movies or listening to the radio, the Smiths vote overwhelmingly to give up the movies. Together with 61% of their fellow citizens they say they depend on radio rather than newspapers for most of their daily news. Of the total time they spend reading, going to the movies, and listening to the radio, nearly half is devoted to the radio. In fact they spend over 4 hours a day listening to the radio.

The doorbell rings again and the Smiths answer more questions. They say they prefer listening to the news to any other kind of program. They give their second choice to either comedy or drama. They recognize that radio in America is financed by advertising, and say they prefer to have their programs with advertising rather than without. In this respect they agree with the majority (62%) of their neighbors.

It gets down to the fact that the Smiths use and like radio, and would not be without it. Sometimes a commercial may sound silly; the voice of an



announcer unbearably unctuous; the adventures of a specific soap opera highly implausible. But so, sometimes, do ads they see in the papers and stories they read in the magazines.

The Smiths wish things weren't so, but they don't get into a sweat about it. Intuitively they accept it as a necessary condition of life—as the inescapable ratio of good and evil. As long as the good heavily outweighs the bad—and in radio they believe it does—why perspire?

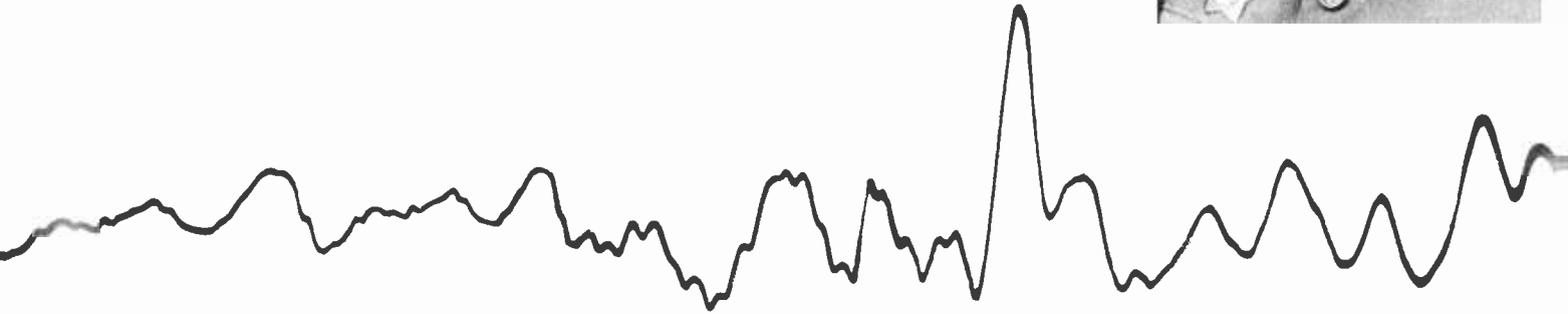
Furthermore, they are fully aware of their control over their instrument. At the first sound of a sour joke or a fatuous commercial or a dull speech, they know what to do. They tune out, or switch to another station. The process is educational. Gradually they learn what to expect of one network as against another, and inevitably they veer to the program, the station and the network which satisfies them. They form habits and patterns of listening that are both measurable and predictable. They attach and detach themselves to and from



personalities on the air—singers, comedians, orchestras, and news reporters—with alacrity and conviction. Their attachment is expressed by the vanloads of mail that arrive weekly at the radio station, addressed to their favorite performer; their detachment, by the sudden drop of the performer's Nielsen rating—sometimes so sharp you can hear it hit bottom.

Occasionally the Smiths run into someone who is deeply irritated by radio. He finds the comedy low-brow; the music trivial; the advertising deplorable; the serious programs inadequate both in number and time of broadcast. Virtually a blanket indictment.

The Smiths find it hard to square these views with their own or with those of most of their friends. They are vividly conscious of their own laughter at much of radio's comedy. They remember their utter absorption in radio's dramatizations of the great works of fiction; the excitement that comes with listening to a football game, or a prizefight. They recall the talks and discus-



sions by public figures on national and world affairs, which helped to crystallize their own ideas. And one thing they cannot possibly forget is how they listened to the war on their radio—for 1,366 days running.

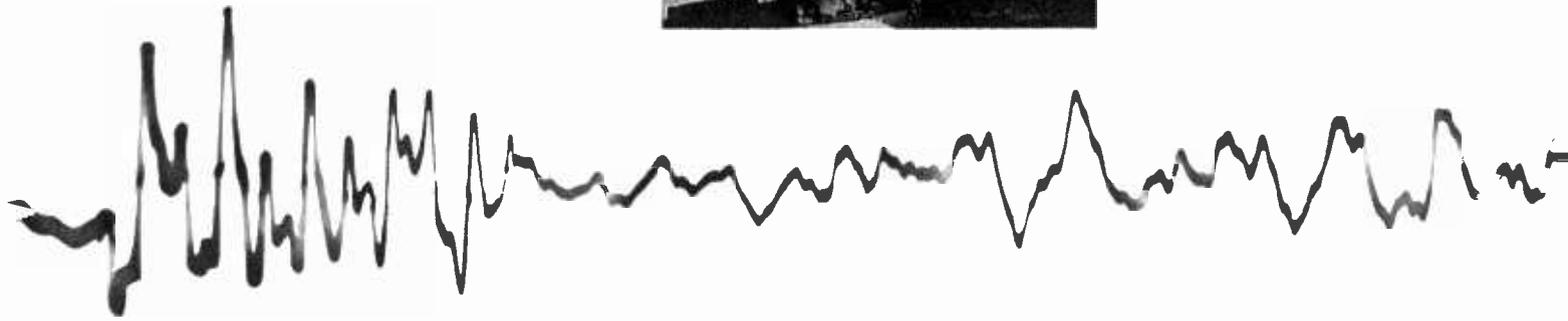
You allow for differences in standards, taste, and point of view. One man's program puts another man to sleep. But you wonder, too, how radio manages to keep going if *all* of it is as bad as the man says. You wonder why more people buy more radios each year and why in 1950 American families spent 49 million more hours each day listening to the radio than they did in 1944.

It suggests that for most people radio is doing all right. The fact that American business spent nearly \$5,000,000 in 1927 for its total radio time and something over \$637,000,000 in 1949 suggests it even more. It seems reasonable to conclude that American business would not multiply its investment 127 times in an industry which failed to give most of the people what they want most of the time.



The conflict between most of the people who get what they want from radio, and some of the people who don't, inescapably touches the political and economic roots of America. As a democratic institution operating under a government franchise, radio's primary purpose from the beginning was to become useful to the greatest number of people. To achieve this usefulness meant providing them with the kind of information and entertainment they required. As a private business enterprise, radio's second objective was to become self-supporting and profitable.

Actually both things happened at the same time. By continuing to provide its listeners with the kind of service they required, radio multiplied them into the largest audience in history. (Today 40,700,000 American families, having access to 85,200,000 radio sets, tune in nearly 3,000 radio stations.) And in creating this audience, radio became the most formidable tool of communication yet devised.



To communicate is to sell, to a greater or less degree. To communicate information, entertainment and inspiration is to stimulate a desire for them. Radio became at once a dynamic selling force not only for the values and aims of American life, but equally for the physical equipment of living—for food and cars and household goods. This is where the producers, distributors and advertisers of such goods came in—and where radio became at once a self-supporting and profitable operation.

The story of America is as much as anything else a story of production. But it has not been alone our ability to produce faster and better than anyone else that has made us the richest people in the world. Equally, it has been our ability to distribute the output of our production by discovering and using the most effective tools of distribution.

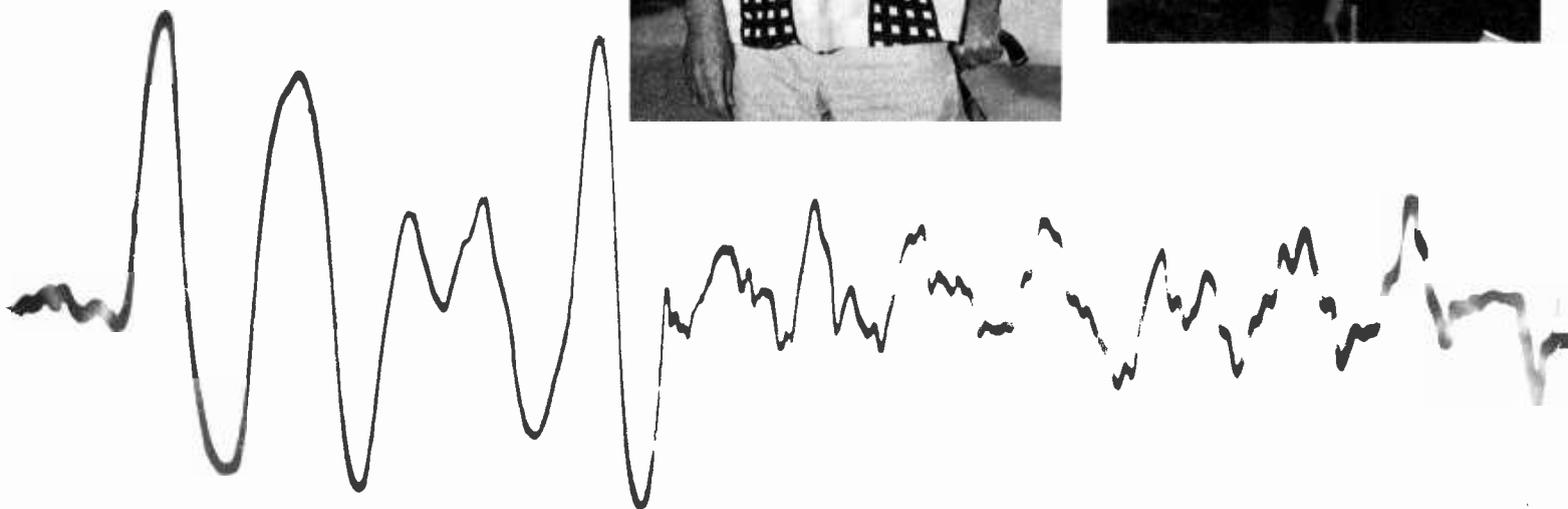
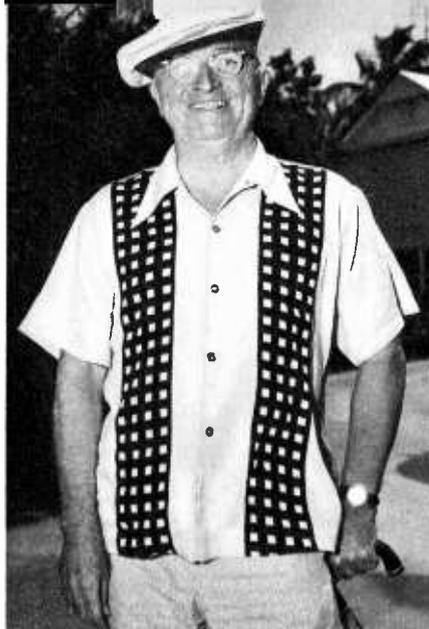
Of these tools, radio is the greatest. It has pushed America's market place into every nook and cranny of the nation. Wherever a radio set exists in work-



ing order, it has created a market place where people stand in front of a counter (i.e., a radio commercial) inspecting the things they may need or want to buy. Radio is the biggest simultaneous market place in the world—the only place where so many millions can focus on the same product at the same time. Without radio, the peaks of distribution achieved by many American industries could never have occurred.

If you leave economics out of the picture, the alternative seems obvious. It is government support and control. But that raises even more perplexing questions. Under such control would most of the people continue to get what they wanted from radio? Would, in fact, the minority groups get what they wanted? Or might most of the people get a lot of things they didn't want, indeed, things which might be a lot worse for them than the things they got from a privately-supported radio?

In the long run, the Smiths felt that it was better to leave the microphone in the hands of the people, just as it was better to leave the printing press in the



hands of the people. Then you could take it or leave it. And if enough of you didn't like what you were hearing, or wanted to hear something else—and shouted loud enough—you'd probably get what you wanted.

Twenty-three years is an important stretch of time. In this time radio has interlaced the country with broadcasting stations, reaching out to 3,072 counties. The sound pours out from their transmitters for as much as 23 hours each day, into the hills, the flatlands, the deltas, and the streets of a nation.

In this time nearly a thousand of these stations have grouped themselves into four major networks, each linked and held together by strands of telephone wire. Separately and together they are able to penetrate with their sound all but a fraction of the total square mileage of the 48 states.

In this time, one of these networks, the Columbia Broadcasting System, has reproduced itself nearly 12 times over, from a basic group of 16 stations to a chain of 190, with outposts in Alaska, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and the Philippines.



During a single year this network pours out more than 8,000 hours of sound in the form of 25,000 separate programs.

Actually, the picture of radio today turns out to be a picture of CBS. For on CBS today you find the greatest stars in radio providing, night and day, the best entertainment and information to be had anywhere in the world.

That it should be CBS is no accident. The stars, the entertainment, the information are all there because CBS spared neither effort nor ingenuity to put them there. They are there because they represent a first principle of the network: that effective programming comes before anything else in the interest, efforts and achievements of a broadcaster.

For a quarter of a century, the American people have lived with and among the sounds of radio. The question raised at the outset of this chronicle might properly be asked again. Are they the better for it? Would they have been better without it?

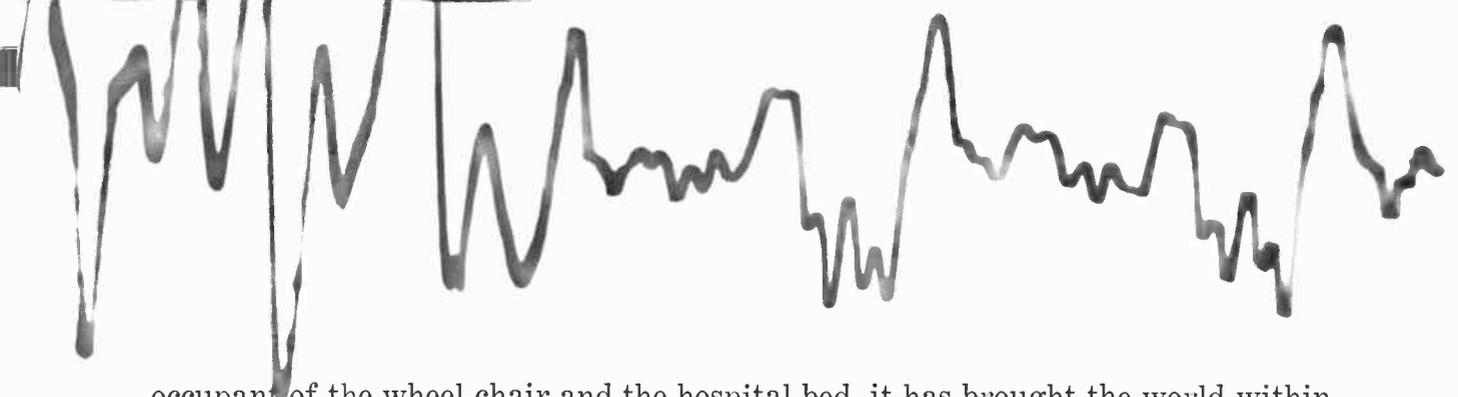


During this time, radio has grown from a picturesque invention into an essential mechanism of life. It has enabled people to hear things they never heard before, and, through hearing them, to acquire knowledge they never had before.

It has held in suspense the attention of a whole people listening at the same time to a single voice, and in so doing has bound them in a common mood of kinship—the Oregon logger and the Florida citrus-grower, the New York cab-driver and the Pecos cowboy.

Radio has put new sounds into people's ears and new words into their mouths. A congressman, a judge, a teacher, an errand-boy says "...The 64-dollar question is..."—and he speaks a phrase born of radio. He speaks it, too, when he says *soap opera, on the beam, disc jockey*.

For untold millions, indifferent or inaccessible to the bookshelf and concert hall, radio has unlocked the treasure-box of literature and music. Radio has brought courage to the oppressed, and consolation to the stricken. For the



occupant of the wheel-chair and the hospital bed, it has brought the world within four walls.

And the world it has brought is a smaller world, because of radio. In an instant radio has spanned the seas to bring the sounds of history, the clash of opinion, the peal of laughter, the report of triumph or disaster into the common, shared experience of all mankind.

If as a people we are more fully informed than ever before, if we have learned something of a fellow feeling for other people miles or nations or oceans away, then radio has been one of the principal agents for bringing this about.

In one generation, radio has proved itself an essential part of our lives—not alone as it entertains and informs, not alone as a force in our business economy—but also in rising brilliantly to emergency, and in time of crisis mobilizing its prodigious power to the service of the people.

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