

**THE DAILY COLLEGIAN**

"For A Better Penn State"

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Wednesday Morning, November 13, 1940

**Did The Last Election Defeat The American Press?**

How much force does the American press today exercise?

Is its defeat in the presidential election a sign of that editorial opinion, even the mightiest of it, is no longer potent?

The answer seems to be yes, but it is not a sure yes. In one way the defeat of the press in this election is a credit to the press.

It might be taken to show that, although the editorial opinion predominantly favored Wendell Willkie, the news columns of all papers presented both sides impartially. On the basis of this impartial presentation, it might be said, the American public made its decision.

There are, of course, other factors in last week's defeat of the press. President Roosevelt had behind him two groups editorial opinion was not likely to influence very strongly, the Solid South, and that great bloc of voters who have received very direct financial benefits from the seven years of Roosevelt rule.

Such a suggestion leads naturally to an assumption that the press may no longer represent a true cross-section of public opinion. This seems to be true. Perhaps it is because American society has realigned itself since the crash of 1929.

Since 1929 there has grown up a class distinction and even enmity between capital and labor that is sharper than any that existed before. This is partly due to the fact that labor has only recently come to appreciate its full potentialities as an organized bloc and partly due to the fact that since 1933 it has had its first real champion in the White House.

With this new division of society, cutting cross-wise instead of up and down, most newspaper editors and publishers find out that they have all been sliced into the same half, usually called the upper half. Thus they are all agreeing with each other and with the half they have been sliced into, but the half to which they don't belong and which they don't affect too greatly is apparently the dominant half.

Perhaps this is an explanation. If it is then it is also true that the loss of prestige by the press is confined only to certain issues, the issues which elicit our society cross-wise. When we find a problem which slices up and down we are likely to find the press divided and the proportion of its division is likely to reflect clearly the sentiment of the American public.

A probable result of this new cross-slicing is that the press will not continue to be left out in the cold. A certain bloc of it (more sizeable than now) may do the expedient and become champions and representatives of the "forgotten men" who since 1933 have become so important in our American way of life. That change will represent a new era in American life and will bespeak a sort of bloodless revolution.

**Syracuse And School Spirit**

The football tie with Syracuse will be more than worth the loss in national gridiron prestige if it helps boost school spirit.

Perhaps Penn State fans were getting too used to the monotony of victory. Since the great flare-up over beating Pitt last November for the first time in 20 years, victories over Bucknell, West Virginia, Lehigh, Temple, and South Carolina are dull by comparison. A Syracuse victory would have been just as dull. A tie was not dull at all.

Significantly, more than 300 fans waited well over an hour to receive the team when it came back on Sunday. Last Friday, only a handful turned out to see it off.

**A LEAN AND HUNGRY LOOK**

If no one objects, we are becoming increasingly irritated at those little items which from time to time appear in the Collegian's columns announcing the departure or return of little groups of high-minded persons bound on "Social Inquiry Trips." To observe conditions among the poor of the large cities. To see how the other half exists. How nice; how smug. Here is a poor man; let us observe this peculiar phenomenon carefully as a sociological specimen. But he is human? No matter about that, see how he moves from place to place. See how he eats and talks; observe his proletarian manner. Let us discuss him and write a thesis about him and deduce certain facts about him and reduce the facts to charts and statistics. How very modern and socially-conscious we shall be.

And how completely futile. The other day, moved to exploration, we toured the new library from end to end, horizontal and vertical. It was not such a good idea. The new library is externally not at all bad looking. We have, in time past, called it Centre County's Temple of Karnak for reasons that are a little vague now but which are nevertheless existent. Internally, however, Mr. Lewis' Lulu is not all that could be desired. The top two floors are functionally useless; can be reached only at the cost of much physical effort and mental strain. One asks wistfully why such things must be done with it. We suggest painting it pink and turning it into a pigeon loft. The only thing about it that one hesitates to decry is the pleasant view from the roof.

For the past several weeks we've been hearing loud cries of lamentation over the dreadful fact that no one has been showing up for the early morning Pep rallies. We wonder. It takes an iron will and a dumb adoration for a cause to get out of bed at six o'clock in the morning to cheer a departing football team. Not that we of Penn State are not iron willed, but there are times when it seems quite a great deal more important to sleep than to go to Pep rallies. Other schools meet this question by throwing their howl-fests in the evening, accompanied by bonfires. We might do well to follow that theory, instead of the one presently in favor.

At eleven o'clock on Monday morning, on the eleventh of November, we watched two middle aged men gently lower a flag to half-mast. A flag at half-staff is unspeakably melancholy. We were reminded a little bitterly of Mr. Lincoln's "that they shall not have died in vain." Yet when later we retired to the Corner to restore the tissues we learned that eleven o'clock had come and gone with business as usual. Somehow that was reassuring. It was not entirely in vain perhaps; a flag at half-mast is not too high a price to pay for the peculiar privilege of sitting quietly over a coke in the academic serenity of a Corner room booth at eleven o'clock on the eleventh of November.

**BOOK WEEK**

This week America is celebrating Book Week, which this year takes on more significance than a mere promotional scheme. America has the freest press in the world—has the least censorship (the not little enuf to suit Ezra Pound); its book press especially is of a quality unsurpassed anywhere. In a world filled with dictatorships and suppressions, American books are still free to include revolutionary ideas.

To the publishers of these books we express our gratitude and very sincere admiration. Will you join us by showing a material interest?

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