
THE HIGHEST REALM

Great corps of foreign correspondents, like great newspapers, come and go. At the end of the twentieth century, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times* fielded the premier foreign services. In an article on foreign reporting written shortly before World War II, Carroll Binder, the *Chicago Daily News* foreign editor, had an almost entirely different four-newspaper A-list.

Only one paper on Binder's list, the *New York Times*, was on the modern one as well. Having gained a measure of financial security, the *Times* began to pay serious attention to foreign news around 1908. It added overseas staff and special sections during World War I. In a 1922 trip to Paris, publisher Adolph Ochs asked correspondent Edwin James what it would cost to expand the staff in Europe so the *Times* would have the most comprehensive coverage. James said five hundred thousand dollars. Ochs directed him to draw up a plan for how to spend it.

Another New York newspaper on Binder's list was the *New York Herald Tribune*. It fielded outstanding correspondents during the 1930s, into the war, and afterward—all the while suffering a gradual decline. In the 1930s cost cutting crimped the ability of correspondents to write at length. After World War II, the owners did not reinvest in news as the *Times* did, and their paper gave ground across the board to its competitor. When it closed in 1966, the *Herald Tribune* had only two foreign bureaus. The Moscow bureau sold its equipment and handed over its lease and three Russian staffers to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the third paper on Binder's list.

The *Monitor* had an unusual pedigree. A victim of sensational newspaper coverage, church founder Mary Baker Eddy applied her theology of clean living to "clean journalism" with the founding of the paper in 1908. With a new twist on missionary work, the *Monitor* gave its readers extensive news about the world. Christian Science distaste for medicine, tobacco, and spirits led to idiosyncratic editorial rules that barred references to wine in travel stories on France. Because of Christian Science's skittishness about discussing death, the paper listed the survivors, not the victims, when the *Titanic* sank. Still, the extraordinary amount of cable news from the *Monitor's* reporters, the perspective and balance of its cover-

age, and its willingness to look at the underreported developing world made the paper's foreign coverage superior until about 1990, when it lost momentum due to internal church wrangling about the newspaper's direction and identity.

The fourth paper Binder listed was his own and rightly so. The *Chicago Daily News*, under the guiding hand of its owner, Victor Lawson, virtually invented the ideal of a high-quality American newspaper foreign service. Lawson's predated the *Times*' and the *Monitor*'s. While the old *New York Herald* and the old *New York Tribune* separately ventured abroad earlier than the *Daily News*, their excellence was mostly episodic and rooted in individual accomplishments of men like George Smalley, who helped establish the bureau concept. By the time the *Herald* and the *Tribune* combined into a single paper in 1924, the *Daily News*'s foreign service had been consistently superb for years.

Lawson's foreign service was grounded in the idea that American correspondents should gather original news for American readers, which marked one kind of breakthrough. Another was its mission of supplementing the wires, which came to mean less emphasis on the routine and more on background and analysis. At the high point more than one hundred North American newspapers subscribed to the *Daily News* service in order to use its stories in their pages. Behind this success lay yet another factor that may be attributed to Lawson's vision, the expertise of its correspondents, who spent years abroad and came to view themselves on a par with ambassadors in their interpretive skills and power. "Our men," noted Edward Price Bell, Lawson's first important standard-bearer abroad, "are journalistic intellectuals, with definite personalities, with considerable personal reputations, and charged with duties in the highest realm of newspaper work."

The *Daily News* foreign service, now long gone and virtually forgotten, contained some of the most respected names in foreign reporting, none more so than Paul Scott Mowrer. Mowrer went to Paris in 1910, plucked from the ranks of local reporters. His maturation paralleled the maturation of the foreign service, whose statesman-like qualities he personified. He won the first Pulitzer Prize in the category of "correspondence" and became editor of the newspaper in the 1930s. At each step, including his last days at the paper, Mowrer was acutely aware of the fragility of the foreign reporting enterprise. Those last days came after World War II when he, along with Binder, abruptly resigned. As Mowrer saw it, the new owners, three times removed from Lawson's proprietorship, were putting "bobby sox on the Madonna."



Robert Casey, a pudgy leprechaun of a journalist, covered local politics, revolutions, and wars for the *Daily News* and on the side wrote more than thirty books. Two were newsroom memoirs. The *Daily News*, he said in one of them, was "probably the strangest newspaper in the world."

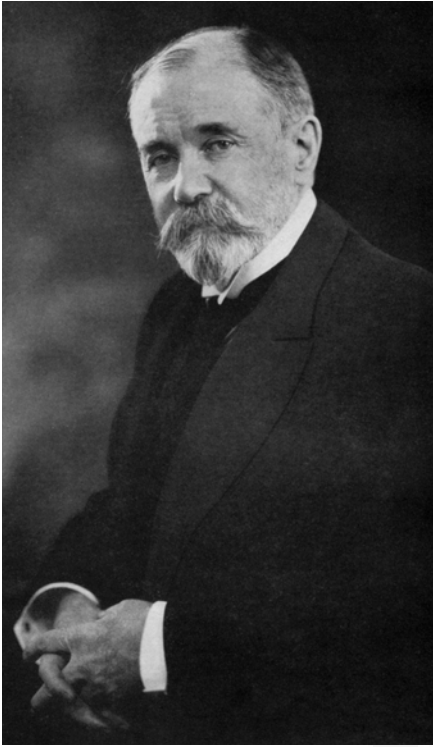
When Casey joined the staff in 1920, one's first sight upon entering the building on North Wells Street was graying women clerks who had begun working for the paper as girls. They worked under ancient gas fixtures wired for electric lights.

The building had expanded willy-nilly by breaking through firewalls into adjoining buildings, which were entered by stepping up or down to the varying floor levels. The reporters and the editors—some of the most brilliant in the profession—worked under similarly disconcerting circumstances. The paper trumpeted its successes with as much modesty as a carnival barker, all the while showing how profit and responsible reporting could be harmoniously married. The *Daily News*, Casey recalled, was “not only the only paper I had ever worked on but the only paper I had ever heard about that threw ads into the hellbox to make way for news.” Although the staff included eager tipplers, the paper took no liquor ads.

The *Daily News* was a writer’s paper. Eugene Field, who joined eight years after its founding in 1875, wrote the first popular American newspaper column chronicling the human condition with verse, humor, and other snippets of comment. The column’s name, *Sharps and Flats*, was borrowed from the title of a popular play written by Slason Thompson, also on the news staff. Later came columnists Finley Peter Dunne, creator of the homespun, nationally famous philosopher “Mr. Dooley,” and playwright George Ade.

Henry Justin Smith, a revered news executive at the *Daily News*, saw “the newspaper as a daily novel written by a score of Balzacs,” said Ben Hecht. Hecht’s local reporting experiences on the *Daily News* were grist for the coauthored comedic play and movie *The Front Page*. Smith himself wrote two novels about “a certain famous and fascinating newsroom.” At Hecht’s suggestion, Smith hired poet-historian Carl Sandburg, ostensibly as a labor reporter; Sandburg mostly worked on his own stuff while in the office. Others who toiled at one time or another on the long, sagging floor of what was called the “local room” included Ray Stannard Baker, later chief of President Woodrow Wilson’s Paris press office and his biographer; Robert Hardy Andrews, author of the Jack Armstrong radio serials; theater critic Lloyd Lewis, who doubled as a Civil War historian and coauthored a play with Sinclair Lewis; Brand Whitlock, who became a novelist, the mayor of Toledo, and an envoy to Belgium; and Edward P. Morgan, who served overseas with CBS radio during World War II. Henry Luce, who built the Time-Life media empire, was once a legman for Hecht.

The single most powerful force at the *Daily News* was “an invisible but omnipotent entity” adorned in a black frock coat, a top hat, and a Prince Albert beard. Victor Fremont Lawson was the son of a Norwegian-born immigrant who made a fortune in Chicago real estate and other investments. One of those holdings was a Norwegian-language daily called the *Skandinaven*, which was edited by young Lawson’s granduncle. Victor Lawson’s father suffered financially from the 1871 Chicago fire and died shortly afterward. Looking for ways to rebuild what was left to him, twenty-five-year-old Victor Lawson found an opportunity in his own newspaper building. Melville Stone, Lawson’s Chicago High School classmate, had rented railed-off space in one room to start an evening daily he called the *Daily News*. When Stone’s investors lost interest, he turned to Lawson for capital. In the deal they struck, Lawson acquired financial control and became business manager. Stone remained editor.



Victor Fremont Lawson, a picture of respectability. When he died, newspapers across the nation eulogized him and his “clean journalism.” Frontispiece photo in *World Chancelleries*, a collection of interviews conducted by Edward Price Bell and published by the Chicago Daily News to promote world peace.

The *Daily News* started out as a penny paper with a penny paper’s penchant for excitement. “All our fine theories would be of little avail,” Stone observed, “unless we could compel attention of the public.” Long before James Keeley perfected the catch-a-thief school of foreign reporting in Morocco, Stone personally tracked a local embezzler until he found him in Germany. The paper was a leader among Chicago papers in graphics, using red ink for “extras” with the latest sports scores, and it was quick to pick up on the potential for engaging photography.

Despite the *Daily News*’s enthusiasm for fires, earthquakes, murders, scandals, and other entertainment, Stone eschewed “the silly so-called ‘human-interest stories’ of cats born with two heads.” He aimed to supply reliable news on a range of serious subjects. So did Lawson, who became editor as well as publisher in 1888, when Stone sold his interest and went on to lead the Associated Press. “We do not want to fool our readers with sensational stories that have little or no foundation in fact,” admonished Lawson, in one of many instructions to his editors during the Spanish-American War. “In all editorial and news,” he said in another missive, “be enterprising but conservative in expression and tone.”

Few of the newsroom rank and file knew Lawson, except to see him on the elevator. None called him by the familiar “Fremont.” The turkeys the patrician owner dispensed at Thanksgiving did not offset complaints about the low wages he paid. But Lawson gave his reporters just what they wanted in the way of journalism. Unlike many flamboyant publishers of the era, Lawson remained in the shadows. He

never desired elected office. He expressed his views through the pages of his paper, which exposed corporate greed and official corruption, promoted good government associations such as Chicago's Municipal Voters' League, argued for the nation's first juvenile court and for regulations to improve health and reduce pollution, and championed the creation of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The *Daily News*, as one historian noted, was the first newspaper "to articulate a vision of public community."

Lawson was a tough businessman, sharp about collecting what was owed him, creative in gimmicks that promoted sales, and demanding of his lieutenants. "I note your miserable failure to keep the circulation of the *Daily News* at the 280,000 mark," he wrote ominously to managing editor Charles Faye from Europe, where he was traveling in 1898. "When I get back you will have to answer for this. Anybody can get out a paper that nobody will buy." But many of Lawson's best business practices lay in his high-mindedness. He charged one rate to all advertisers, rather than making side deals the way other publishers did. He rejected advertisements that promised more than they delivered. These policies enhanced the credibility of the newspaper to readers and made it more attractive to advertisers. In 1895 the evening *Daily News* circulation—then at 200,000—was more than twice as large as any other Chicago paper except for the morning *Record*, which Lawson also owned. During the early 1900s *Daily News* circulation reached 400,000, which was 100,000 more than any other American daily.

No publisher stood higher in making journalism a respectable business. When the impecunious Adolph Ochs wanted to establish his credentials in order to buy the faltering *New York Times* in 1896, one of the people to whom he turned for a recommendation was the admired Lawson.



Lawson showed an early, if episodic, interest in foreign news. In 1879 his readers had regular front-page foreign news roundups. A decade later, what foreign news existed in the paper was on the inside pages. Lawson sent reporters to the less-well-covered regions: Latin America, Australia and New Zealand, and Sweden. The work of Ross Raymond, an occasional correspondent in these early years, typified the *Daily News's* sketchy foreign reporting. In his wanderings from place to place, and from newspaper to newspaper, Raymond worked on the local staff of the *Daily News* and subsequently, out of the blue, cabled Stone from Cairo with a story about an important battle. It scooped the British newspapers.*

The Spanish-American War prompted Lawson to undertake a more concerted effort at foreign news-gathering. Amid early rumblings with Spain over Cuba, Lawson put reporters in Key West and Havana and with the insurgents. After the sink-

* Ross Raymond was a *nom de plume*, although it was closer to the mark to call it an alias. Besides passing himself off as a foreign correspondent, Raymond was variously a college professor, a clergyman, and a scientist. In one of his scams, he pulled off a jewelry heist in Paris by impersonating the representative of the Khedive of Egypt. Toward the end of his life he edited the *Star of Hope*, the Sing Sing prison newspaper.

ing of the *Maine*, he instructed his editors to “send all men possible to war reducing number later if advisable.” Lawson’s *Record* was his primary vehicle for foreign news. At one point during the war, foreign news consumed more than 40 percent of the *Record*’s news hole. The *Record*’s bureau in Key West received eyewitness dispatches carried from Cuba by the *Hercules*, a yacht Lawson hired. At the height of the conflict, Lawson had fourteen correspondents stretched from Cuba to the Philippines.

Before the war was over, Lawson announced he was starting a permanent foreign service. The United States had become a world power. It needed, Lawson thought, its own reporters abroad to represent American interests and points of view. “It is no longer desirable, or even safe,” he told one of his editors, “for public opinion in this country to rely, as it now does, almost exclusively on foreign agencies, most of them subsidized by foreign governments, for their news of foreign countries.”

Lawson considered his fledgling foreign service “largely an experiment.” Initially he did his experimenting in the morning *Record*. When he sold that paper in 1901, he kept the service for the *Daily News*. There it stayed when Lawson reacquired an interest in the then hyphenated *Herald-Record* for a time. Not certain how best to make foreign news a financial success, he briefly tried a syndicate partnership with Bennett’s *Herald* and equally briefly supplemented his supplementary service with one started by the *London Standard*. In 1902 Lawson and Ochs explored the possibility of running a foreign news service jointly. The discussions with the *Times* came to nothing, as Lawson was unwilling to cede adequate control to his New York junior partner. Lawson’s plan to sell a *Daily News*-owned service to other newspapers temporarily faltered when escalating prices for newsprint prompted his eight clients to cut costs and withdraw.

Lawson did not want his correspondents to rewrite stories from foreign newspapers, as was routinely done by the few correspondents stationed permanently abroad. Because most of this trolling for news was done from offices in London, the British angle predominated in American media. Lawson’s correspondents were to do original reporting. They also were enjoined not to duplicate the Associated Press, which Lawson helped reorganize and, under the leadership of his old partner Melville Stone, was keen to expand beyond its single permanent foreign bureau in London. This, nevertheless, left a broad open field in which to search for a journalistic mission.

A stream of decisive, ever-changing instructions issued from Lawson’s office in Chicago. His Paris correspondent, Theodore Stanton, started out in July 1898 with an admonition to create a “brief cable service covering important matters” that did not duplicate the AP; it was to contain “opinions statesmen American questions, foreign relations, continental happenings, not more than 300 words daily, much less ordinarily.” Six months later, Lawson redirected Stanton to mail “short, concisely written news notes on matters of recent occurrence and special interests”; “short stories on royalty”; “a terse and carefully written letter once a month, giving a general ‘bird’s-eye view’ of matters of most important general interest in the

country at date.” A year later, Lawson shifted gears again. “What I want to emphasize is to be particularly on the lookout for short, bright, novel, interesting bits of news and story-telling gossip of interest to Americans.”

Lawson also struggled with the question of who should do this reporting. At first, he relied heavily on foreigners—for instance, a German-American reporter in Berlin, “whom we especially engaged and trained here before sending him over,” and an Englishman stationed in Vienna, who spoke German and helped the *Daily News* cover the Spanish-American War. Many newspapers took this approach because foreigners had an intimate feel for local customs and politics, possessed local language ability, and were convenient to hire (and if things did not work out, easy to let go).^{*} Lawson continued to use foreigners, especially as stringers, of which he had scores. Gradually, though, he laid the foundation of his foreign service with full-time, homegrown talent such as Edward Price Bell, who in 1900 replaced a British journalist manning the London bureau and served as a chief of correspondents.

Raised on Raccoon Creek in Indiana, where he started his journalism career, Bell was one of the *Daily News*'s best reporters. His stories on local corruption would have won national awards if such honors had been given at the time, recalled Frederic William Wile, a younger Hoosier who was soon sent to assist Bell in London and who went on to have a long overseas career. Good local reporters like Bell and Wile, Lawson reasoned, could develop foreign expertise on the job and “judge news from the point of view of the average American newspaper reader.”



Chicago was simultaneously international and provincial.

With Germans, Irish, English, Poles, Scandinavians, and Bohemians pouring in, it was the second-most-populous city in the country. By 1890, when one thousand trains came or left the city daily, four out of five Chicagoans had been born abroad or had foreign-born parents. Ten years later, more than one in five Chicago

^{*} The *New York Times*, in contrast, was heavy with “foreign” foreign correspondents for years. At one point in the late 1920s, Wythe Williams was the only *Times* bureau chief in a Continental capital to carry a U.S. passport. Three of the first four *Times* reporters to win Pulitzer Prizes in the “correspondence” category for work abroad were two Englishmen, Walter Duranty (1932) and Frederick Birchall (1934), and German-born Otto Tolischus (1940). The fourth reporter, Anne O’Hare McCormick (1937), was born in England of American parents. In a “Report on London Office, February 1925,” Paris correspondent Edwin James told Adolph Ochs, “It is a conservative estimate that seventy-five per cent of all words cabled to the New York Times is taken directly from the London Times service at night. . . . Under existing conditions it seems that the most valuable addition which could now be made to the London staff would be a live reporter with a good knowledge of the United States, with rewrite ability, and with some knowledge of copy reading. He should above all be an American, for emphasis is to be placed on the fact that the three members of the London staff are all Englishmen.” As late as World War II, *Times* publisher Arthur Sulzberger was troubled that so many of his correspondents were British. He thought “an American paper should be served primarily by Americans.” The James report to Ochs is in the NYT Archives; for Sulzberger’s comment, see Tift and Jones, *The Trust*, 209.

journalists was foreign-born. Chicago coveted international recognition, earning the sobriquet “windy city” from New York editor Charles Dana for the aggressive boosterism that led Congress to select it to host the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. To find foreign exhibits for that extravaganza, the exposition executive committee sent an emissary to fetch a tribe of Pygmies that Henry Stanley had recently found in one of his explorations (the emissary died in Zanzibar).

At the same time, Chicago was still very much attuned to its agrarian roots and possessed a populist wariness of foreign influences. In 1927 Mayor Big Bill Thompson launched a crusade to purge the city’s libraries and schools of pro-British books.

The *Chicago Tribune*, a chief rival of the *Daily News*, was a microcosm of this schizophrenia. The *Tribune* created a permanent foreign service after World War I, headed up by swashbuckling Floyd Gibbons of SS *Laconia* fame. Some press watchers would have put the *Tribune*’s service on Binder’s list of the best, but one factor prevented unanimity, the *Tribune*’s quirky Col. Robert McCormick. McCormick had his suits made on Savile Row and yet was an avowed Anglophobe. His orders ranged from the spectacular (“FLY INDIA,” he cabled William Shirer, who was in Vienna) to the trivial (he ordered Shirer to find a pair of binoculars he had left in a French barn during the Great War, nine years before). Some of McCormick’s communications, said correspondent Edmund Taylor, “seemed to possess a kind of cosmic irrelevance that suggested the indecipherable cliff-writings of some vanished civilization.”

Although McCormick sustained a money-losing Paris edition of the newspaper for some time after World War I, his enthusiasm for foreign news was peculiar at best and often perverse. His outlook, readily apparent in the paper because of his micromanaging style, was reactionary and jingoistic. Gibbons advised a part-time China correspondent how to satisfy the home office: “You must always ‘write down’—don’t be ‘intellectual,’ the people who buy the *Tribune* in Chicago don’t understand or give a damn about Far Eastern politics—they want hot stories about battle and bandits.” Later, with Japanese aggression mounting in Asia, the meddling McCormick closed John B. Powell’s bureau. “The Colonel,” he was informed, “thinks China is no longer important as a source of news.” From 1937 to 1941, the *Tribune* had just one correspondent in Asia, a Japanese national based in Tokyo.

Parochialism was more pronounced at other Chicago newspapers. Before he worked for the *Daily News*, Ben Hecht worked at the old but not distinguished *Chicago Journal*. An editorial writer hired to comment on foreign affairs, Hecht thought, “was out of place on the newspaper. Who the hell wanted to read about Greeks, Bulgarians, Englishmen, and Russians, when they could read about Chicagoans!”

Lawson, a director of the World’s Columbian Exposition, hoped to appeal to and nurture Chicago’s more open-minded, international side. Because of his experience with the family’s Norwegian-language newspaper, the *Skandinaven*, he saw potential for readers in the foreign-born audience “who would be glad to get news from home directly instead of through foreign sources.” Another set of readers was

to be found among the prominent Chicagoans who traveled abroad for business and pleasure, as Lawson himself did. Some of these individuals were distinguished internationally. Chicago banker and businessman Charles Dawes, who served as vice president under Coolidge, became ambassador to London; plumbing manufacturing heir Charles Crane became ambassador to China. Crane, who considered Lawson "a most valued friend," financed Thomas Millard's Shanghai weekly and, with Walter Rogers, who had worked on the *Daily News*, established the Mutual News Service to bring articles by European correspondents to Americans and vice versa.

The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, one of America's first local foreign affairs organizations, was for many years a dividing point between the likes of McCormick and Lawson. The *Daily News* had strong ties to the council, whose founders stated in their first meeting, February 20, 1922, that "it was the duty of all intelligent" Americans to provide leadership in addressing the problems emerging out of World War I. Clifton Utley, appointed the council's executive director in 1931, worked for the *Daily News* and was a well-known commentator on WMAQ, a station that Lawson and a local department store started in 1922. In his broadcasts, Utley warned of the impending war and, after 1939, argued for supporting England. McCormick forbade the use of Utley's name in the *Tribune*, an edict not broken until the early 1950s when one of Utley's sons, who played local basketball, showed up in the *Tribune* sports pages.* When a new council president came aboard in 1974, he was told not to expect invitations to dinner parties that included Chicago *Tribune* people.

Chicago's internationalists and its immigrant population could not by themselves justify the creation of a foreign service. The public's interest in foreign news was neither so big nor so intense that it would raise circulation appreciably, especially considering that the *Daily News* was enormously successful without a foreign service. What counted most in Lawson's calculation in creating a foreign service was that it was a public service, a view that was held by the newspapers that followed him in this approach to news-gathering.

Lawson's courage was all the more remarkable because of the resistance he encountered from his own staff, who considered his interest in foreign news eccentric. Bell's assistant, Frederic William Wile, visited the home office in 1903 and reported back to Bell that managing editor Charles Faye considered the foreign service "a delusion and a snare." Were it not for orders from Lawson, Faye would "kill large slabs" of foreign news. In 1901, when Lawson sold the *Chicago Record*, his primary vehicle for foreign news, Bell and other correspondents waited for the service to be abandoned and to be called home to cover Chicago again.

The *Daily News*'s legendary editor Henry Justin Smith considered correspondents puffed up and useless. The foreign correspondent in one of his novels was John Goode, nicknamed Sinful and derisively described as "Young-Man-Going-Somewhere."

3. Another of Utley's sons, Garrick, became a well-known television correspondent abroad.

“Goode’s going to Mexico,” the Old Man told the city editor.

“Glad of it. Hope he croaks,” replied the [city editor], whose nerves had also been worn a bit thin by having Sinful Goode in barracks.

The rest of us were more benevolent. We gave Goode a farewell dinner, at which and to which our doggerel experts did great execution. Next day we inspected his new riding breeches, his camera, and horrendous revolver. And then we forgot him.

The kind of journalist Smith liked was young Paul Scott Mowrer, who was born in downstate Illinois and thrived in the local room. The cub reporter tracked down a local murderer whom neither the police nor reporters from other Chicago newspapers could find. He rewrote police stories into ballads. Long after his colleagues had cleared out at the end of the day, Mowrer stayed at his desk and filled up wastebaskets, “trying to perfect a style,” as he told Smith one evening.

Smith sourly greeted the news of the twenty-two-year-old’s overseas assignment in Paris in 1910. “A fellow goes to Europe to stay a few months and he stays for years,” he warned his protégé. “He may be a pretty fair newspaperman when he leaves. He comes back at last, wearing spats and carrying a cane, too good for reporting, no good as an executive, no place for him anywhere, his career wrecked.” Fellow reporters and editors signed a petition urging Lawson to keep Mowrer in Chicago, where he could do more good. Lawson ignored the advice.



Lawson, who never forgot that he ran a business as well as a public service, put a lot of money at risk with his foreign “experiment.” His expenses for the service at the end of 1899, its first full year of operation, were \$122,155.79, he precisely noted to potential newspaper customers for the service. With this and the tug of his staff’s ambivalence weighing heavily on his mind, he promoted tried-and-true approaches to coverage that appealed to a broad range of readers.

The quaint and the amusing—a theme in those early letters to his Paris correspondent—was one such approach. Before Bell was sent abroad, the paper ran a column from London, “Queer Sprigs of Gentility.” Lawson sent this as a promotional piece to prospective subscribers to his budding news service. Although the column was mercifully abandoned, the concern persisted that too many readers greeted stories on European politics “with a yawn or not at all.” In 1911 the home office asked for a weekly summary of the best jokes from the European press—a challenge for Mowrer since the funniest Parisian humor was too risqué for the Chicago reader.

Another approach was to cater to local interests. Editors pestered Bell for stories that awakened a “responsive thrill in the minds” of Chicago readers. “For circulation purposes,” he was reminded, “cables from Berlin, Vienna, Denmark, Sweden and Norway are distinctly of more value than from Paris and London, so far as The Daily News is concerned, owing to the very large foreign population in Chicago who are interested in the Teutonic and Scandinavian nations.” Localism also

showed up in the way Lawson made his foreign news bureaus hospitable to visitors. A reading table held the latest home papers. Visiting Chicagoans also were attracted to the offices because they could secure tourist information, collect their mail, and leave their names, which the *Daily News* dutifully printed on its front page.

In contrast to the *Daily News's* decrepit Chicago quarters, the London and Paris offices were fitted out like clubs, with potted palms, oriental rugs, and stuffed leather chairs. "Please remember," Lawson instructed Bell, "to spare no expense to have the decorating and the furnishing and big, outside, gold, wall-sign just as good as money can buy. In the matter of color for wall treatment avoid the dead white and use the white with a light cream tint or an 'old ivory' white, but the latter should not be too dark." When Bell was conspicuously planting the *Daily News* flag on Trafalgar Squarer, the *Chicago Tribune* was nowhere to be found in London, the *New York Sun* and the *Herald* occupied inauspicious, out-of-the-way offices, and a successor to the *New York Tribune's* George Smalley, whose office had catered to tourists, wrote at home or in the smoking-room of the National Club.

Bell understood the logic of Lawson's ostentatious bureaus. They augmented the prestige of the service and its attractiveness to newspapers who might subscribe, an important ingredient to making the service financially sustainable. Other correspondents, however, were inclined to think them a sign of Lawson's superficial in-



Paul Scott Mowrer described his Paris bureau: "My office was right across from the Café de la Paix, at the corner of the Place de l'Opéra, one floor up, with a private entrance on the Boulevard des Capucines. No tourist could come to Paris without seeing our big sign." Mowrer can be seen in the second-story window. Mowrer, *The House of Europe*, 135. Photo: Newberry Library.

terest in foreign news. In 1906 Frederic William Wile, by then the paper's Berlin correspondent, told Bell that he had "the firm impression" that Lawson's bureaus were "the reason, of all reasons, for his continuing to keep the service up. I have the feeling that news is only an incidental feature of the enterprise." A later Berlin bureau chief, Raymond Swing, thought Lawson "did not care a hoot about foreign news."

Such frustration was understandable, if ungenerous. True, Lawson favored news that he thought a broad segment of Chicago readers would appreciate, but it could not be said fairly that he did not care about serious news. Early on, under Bell, articles about the significance of upcoming French legislative sessions were mixed in with stories about Chicagoans in Norwegian boat crashes. Over time the service took on more gravity, as table 4 shows. In Bell's first year in London, 1901, more than 60 percent of the foreign news in the paper from all sources, including the Associated Press as well as the *Daily News* staff, was hard news rather than lighter fare such as human interest articles. The share of such news rose to 84 percent by 1921. Story length also increased through 1918, as did the proportion of stories that went beyond straight facts and provided background, analysis, and color—the category defined in the table as news analysis. Although the amount of this analysis dropped off overall in 1921, *Daily News* correspondents filed twice as much analysis after the war as in 1901. According to data not in the table, they accounted for more than 80 percent of all the foreign analysis in the paper. This was to be the forte of the *Daily News* correspondents.

TABLE 4. Development of foreign reporting at the *Daily News*

	1901	1913	1918	1921
No. of all foreign stories in <i>DN</i> *	98	169	329	184
Filed by <i>DN</i> correspondents	31	59	118	65
Percent of all foreign stories on pages 1 and 2*	62.2	75.7	70.1	70.9
Percent filed by <i>DN</i> correspondents	87.1	76.3	78.8	90.8
Percent of all foreign stories more than 6 paragraphs long*	12.5	19.8	26.7	23.1
Percent filed by <i>DN</i> correspondents	16.7	29.3	47.4	48.4
Percent hard news/percent soft news*	63.3/36.7	72.2/27.8	90.9/8.6	83.7/15.8
Percent filed by <i>DN</i> correspondents	64.5/35.5	55.9/44.1	90.6/9.4	83.1/16.9
Percent straight news/percent news analysis*	89.7/10.3	75.6/15.5	76.5/16.5	88/11.4
Percent filed by <i>DN</i> correspondents	90.0/10.0	47.5/27.1	60.7/37.6	76.9/21.5

Note: These findings are based on a sample of two randomly constructed weeks for each year tested. Because the *Daily News* did not publish on Sundays, these weeks had six days each.

*Figures includes reports from all sources, Associated Press and other services as well as *Chicago Daily News* correspondents.

World War I was a catalyst for this serious reporting. All the foreign expertise that Lawson had built up in that corps of talented reporters, all the experience his staff had developed in working with and supporting those reporters, was primed to swing into action. As *Chicago Tribune* editor-turned-war-propagandist James Keeley said in a London speech, Lawson's "harvest was at hand."

Recognizing his advantage, Lawson deposited gold coin in strategically located overseas banks. The funds were used by the thirty-odd correspondents he deployed "at the places of impact." Some were veterans—in addition to Bell and Mowrer, for instance, there was John Bass, who had covered the Boxer Rebellion in China for the *New York Journal* and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–5 for the *Daily News*, and Oswald F. Schuette, a Chicagoan on the staff who had reported from Germany for other newspapers just after the turn of the century. Some were foreign stringers who had regularly supplied copy to the *Daily News*, among them Constantine Stephanove, a University of Chicago-trained professor living in Sofia, and Elizabeth Christitch, a Serbian writer. Still others were raw recruits from Chicago with specialties: Chicago aeronautics writer Percy Noel; Anthony Czarnecki, "a leading spirit among the young citizens of Chicago of Polish descent and a newspaper writer of wide experience," who was to study conditions for Poles; and Eunice Tietjens. Tietjens, who had traveled widely and had been an editor of the internationally distinguished Chicago magazine *Poetry*, coaxed the editors into sending her to write "the woman's side of the war"; once in France, she shunned stories about socks knitted by Chicago women and wrote human interest features on American soldiers, refugees, and the French.

In Paris, Mowrer hired his younger brother, Edgar Ansel Mowrer, who had come to Europe to study; A. R. Decker, an American engineer whose work in France gave him rare access to frontline action; two French friends who scoured camps, hospitals, and towns for information; and an American who had been medically discharged from the French army. Although he got off to an ungainly start by beginning his first dispatch in Latin, Edgar Mowrer went on to cover the war in Italy; Decker became the Vienna correspondent after the armistice.

After the war, Ben Hecht took his writing flair to the Berlin bureau. ("GERMAN BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION TO DATE CONSISTS NINETY PERCENT RUMORS TEN PERCENT BAD SHOOTING," he wrote in a clipped cable.) Charles Dennis, who had risen from foreign editor to managing editor, helped Mowrer cover the Paris peace talks, where the *Daily News* placed seven accredited correspondents, three more than the *New York Times*.

In 1918 Lawson foresaw that the year's expenses would "considerably exceed \$200,000," a substantial sum at the time. This cost was only partially offset by the newspapers that bought his foreign service. Lawson reckoned the fifteen current subscribers would bring in between \$50,000 and \$60,000. The expense, however, did not diminish his enthusiasm. Accolades poured in. The *London Chronicle* called the *Daily News* "by far the best evening newspaper in the world." In a special article on Lawson's foreign service, the trade magazine *Editor and Publisher* said the *Daily News* scored "more beats on the war in its special foreign service than per-

haps any other paper in the world.” “The comment of other publishers is very common,” Lawson told Bell in 1918: The *Daily News* had “the best special service coming to America.” A sign of the service’s stature was that Bell was the acknowledged dean of foreign correspondents in London as well as dean of Lawson’s correspondents. Newspaperman Lord Northcliffe called him “the best American newspaperman London has ever had.” Wrote Lawson to Bell, “We were never more satisfied with the wisdom of maintaining a foreign service than now, and we shall continue to maintain one ‘forever.’”

The acknowledged excellence of the foreign service was something on which its correspondents could build. They had time to gather news and room to report it. The paper ran fifteen foreign stories a day in 1921, one-third of them by staff correspondents. Whatever was on the front page, day after day page 2 was devoted to these reports. Correspondents also had access to a larger audience than Chicago alone. In the four-year period ending in 1922, the number of newspapers subscribing to the *Daily News* foreign service more than doubled to thirty-one. And correspondents knew they were journalistic stars, none more so than Mowrer, who soon eclipsed Bell, his mentor.



Mowrer arrived in Paris in 1910 with a jejune bias against the social convention of evening dress and an awkward feeling of being “dumped into a great strange city whose language I speak none too fluently, whose methods are entirely different from those I have been accustomed to work in.” A little defensive over Bell’s familiarity with “the fascinating intricacies of international politics,” Mowrer told the elder correspondent such reporting was fine in London, but not in Paris. “My situation is different,” he wrote. “I was educated in features. My eye is trained to them. For a long time I wrote one a day for the front page of the paper in Chicago. Thus I feel I know something about what the *local* management wants in this respect. . . . I say we are both right. Let the dignified, enlightening, really-worth-while cables come from London, and let Paris effervesce the freakish, the far-fetched and the fantastic.”

This attitude did not last long. As much as Mowrer enjoyed covering Chicago, as sincerely as he assured Smith that he would stay only a year in Paris, he was too restless, too much the intellectual, to have been happy permanently in the *Daily News* local room. He had taken a break from the *Daily News* to attend the University of Michigan for two and one-half years as a “special student.” Special students forewent credits toward graduation in order to study what interested them. He used money from editing the student newspaper to travel to Europe one summer. Shortly after he returned, the prestigious literary magazine *Forum* published his first poem. He considered becoming a full-time poet or novelist, except he needed the steady income a newspaper job afforded.

“Although it made me feel inferior,” he said of his first visit to London, “I much admired Ed Bell’s incessant, often brilliant conversation. A man who can talk like that, I thought, will go far.” Mowrer acquired the veteran’s serious tastes in foreign

news as well as a dinner jacket and full dress, essential if he was to accept invitations to dine with people who could keep him informed. He also bought the cane and spats that Smith despised. During the early years of the war, he grew a Van-dyke beard to add further gravitas.

Mowrer's first major foray into serious reporting—as well as his first byline, something editors still awarded sparingly—began in late 1912. The Balkan states formed an alliance against Turkey. Mowrer urged that the *Daily News* not ignore the fighting as other papers were doing. Bell told Mowrer the task was his. With the help of Bulgarian stringer Constantine Stephanove, he braved the wintry mountains of Macedonia and Albania on horseback to reach the front.

World War I seasoned Mowrer more. He covered the fighting at the front. As his Paris bureau grew, he had his first experience managing often-unruly reporters. Although French authorities temporarily kept Mowrer off the front lines as punishment for writing unfavorable reports, he was later awarded the Legion of Honor. His first books appeared: *Hours of France*, which contained his poetry, and *Balkanized Europe*, the first analytic book by an American correspondent on postwar Europe. Convinced that the Paris treaty negotiations had not solved global problems, only put them off, Mowrer set out to visit the “small, weak, jealous, afraid, economically dependent” new countries oddly drawn by the victors. He took exception to the postwar analysis of British economist John Maynard Keynes. In his popular volume *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Keynes argued for canceling German reparations. Mowrer asserted that Europe's problems were chiefly political, not economic. If the dry volume enjoyed limited sales, *Balkanized Europe* confirmed him as an expert, although he was probably too ambitious in saying his title coined the term.

When Mowrer was on a home leave after the war, Lawson surprised him with a raise and a five-thousand-dollar bonus. In 1922 Bell gave up his London post and returned to Chicago, where he wrote about foreign affairs, and Lawson made Mowrer chief of the foreign service in Europe. Mowrer remained in Paris, which was in second place to London as a hub for foreign correspondence. He contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* and to the French political weekly *L'Europe Nouvelle*. He wrote another book of poetry. During an interlude in the mid-1920s, when he briefly stepped down as European chief to serve as a roving correspondent, he went to Morocco. Tribes in the northern Rif Mountains were revolting against the Spanish colonial authorities. With all the bravado of the most derring-do correspondents, he penetrated Spanish lines to reach the Riffian rebel leader Abd el-Krim and described his experience to Chicago readers.

I have visited the unknown Riff. During fifteen days dressed in flowing robes and turban, burned brown as an Arab by the noonday African sun, harried by the howling night winds of the wide bare places, sleeping on the ground in caves or under the tents of the Sons of Bou Yahi, among donkeys, goats, chickens, fierce wolfish dogs and men scarcely less wolfish, drinking muddy water and native tea, eating rancid oily messes with my fingers from a common wooden

bowl, conversing as best I could by signs and picked-up words of the strange Berber dialect, overcoming unaccustomed fatigues, having vermin, discomforts and Spanish airplane bombs, averting ill will with smiles, meeting suspicions with friendly confidence I have lived the life of a native North African.

Mowrer fit into the *Chicago Daily News* literary tradition without embracing the hard-drinking, prank-prone ethos described by Robert Casey. To the local room's irreverent delight, as Carl Sandburg noted, Mowrer's pallor, "dark zeal," and beard made him look like Christ. Ernest Hemingway, who had a special relationship with Mowrer, picked up on the religious theme; he considered Mowrer "a little too saintly for me." The special relationship sprang from the fact that Mowrer, whose first marriage had failed in the early 1930s, married Hemingway's first wife, Hadley, shortly after her divorce from the novelist. "There was something so tranquil, so solid, about Paul," Hadley said. If he were casting a movie, said a newspaper colleague, he would pick Mowrer to be a British diplomat, a Morgan partner, or "most likely a general."

Mowrer considered journalism "the newest of the great public professions." He was not impressed with the *Chicago Tribune's* enterprise in smuggling a complete copy of the Versailles Treaty out of Paris and presenting it to the U.S. Senate. He had acquired his own copy from a member of Wilson's staff and cabled the essential parts home. The *Tribune's* undignified grandstanding degraded "our profession—playing cheap politics, to no constructive purpose!" In building up the *Daily News* foreign service, Mowrer wanted more people like himself. Writing Bell with his impressions of Raymond Swing, who was being considered for a job before the war, Mowrer sounded as though he were vetting someone for the diplomatic corps: "He's rather serious minded—sociologist, student of politics, etc., etc. But the dangerous side of that will soon be knocked out of him. I'll bet his morals are O.K. and that he'll be faithful. . . . He's tried to write fiction and plays without success—naturally!—and has just finished a magazine article on industrial housing in Vienna."

Junius Wood fell into a distinctly different class. Robert Casey remembered him as "the greatest correspondent who ever lived" and "the sort of acid gent with whom no stuffed shirt could ever be friends." During the war the *Daily News* reporter raised the ire of officers handling press relations. A little uncertain of his own authority and a bit of a stuffed shirt himself, Mowrer took the side of the military. "He is socially unfit because of his loud, rough manner, his general uncouthness, his constant criticism and complaints, his lack of general culture, his inability to associate pleasantly with cultivated men," Mowrer wrote Charles Dennis. "He is morally unfit, because of his excessive drinking, and his public association with immoral women. . . . It hurts our standing, and our whole profession." Among Wood's sins were not letting censors read his outgoing mail and spending a wild night with some news pals. "The other evening, I am informed on reliable testimony, a number of them got drunk," Mowrer reported, "and going along the corridor of the hotel late one night, put the cards of various houses of prostitutes they

had visited into the shoes of supposedly respectable women, these shoes having been placed outside the door to be cleaned.”

Mowrer made no pretense that he was plebeian or that he wanted to write for plebeians. His ideal Chicago readers, he once suggested, were members of a local committee made up mostly of business executives who drafted a report on foreign policy for the Chicago Association of Commerce. “If public opinion is to conduct our foreign affairs wisely, it must be rightly informed, by expert observers,” he wrote in a 1920 internal memo. “It is better to give a first-class service to those who can appreciate it than to aim to please all, and succeed in pleasing none.”

In his diplomatic reporting, Mowrer worked hard to understand complex international political maneuverings. Lilian Mowrer, Edgar’s wife, described the scene when the two brothers covered an international conference together: “Edgar and Paul would sit together piecing out their story. Each had contacts with half a dozen delegates and observers, each worked with certain foreign correspondents; their ‘lines’ were always out.”

In the mid-1920s, Paul Mowrer persuaded the *Daily News* to let him write a weekly article that synthesized such broad issues as “The Reorganization of the British Empire” and “Real Uses of the American Diplomatic Service.” “I had to keep up on international politics everywhere, by constant reading of reports, by personal contacts and a system of files,” Mowrer said. “I got so I felt competent to write a speech for almost any foreign minister, expressing his country’s views.”



In 1929 the Pulitzer Prize board gave the first awards exclusively for “correspondence.” (Swope’s Pulitzer for coverage of Germany a decade earlier had been in the general category of “reporting.”)* The *Daily News* had two nominees, Mowrer in Europe, and Bell, who had accompanied President Hoover on his trip to South America. While covering the Young Commission on German reparations, Mowrer received word that he was the winner. His reports, the jurors said, “most closely approximate the ideals” expressed in the award criteria: “fair, judicious, well-balanced and well-informed interpretive writing, which shall make clear the significance of the subject covered in the correspondence or which shall promote international understanding and appreciation.”

The stories that won Mowrer’s Pulitzer Prize were written in the manner of an insider writing for insiders. The focus was on diplomatic maneuverings. Attribution was minimal. The dominant voice was Mowrer’s, which was knowledgeable, slightly pompous, and opinionated. On the surface was his belief that the United States needed to shed the isolationist tendencies that prompted it to refuse mem-

* The new category in which Mowrer won, “correspondence,” was not exclusively for foreign reporting either; it included “correspondence” from Washington, although foreign reporting dominated. In 1942 a prize for International Telegraphic Reporting was added. In 1947, jurors recommended the single international category that exists today. This, of course, does not preclude stories with overseas datelines winning in other categories, as Swope’s did.

bership in the League of Nations. The reports were well suited to the diplomatic pouch.

Ex cathedra analysis was common for Pulitzer Prize-winning “correspondence” during the early years of awards in this category, which were won successively by Leland Stowe of the *New York Herald Tribune* (and later the *Chicago Daily News*), H. R. Knickerbocker of the *New York Evening Post*, Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*, and Mowrer’s brother Edgar. Today such stories would not be considered seriously by Pulitzer jurors, let alone printed in daily newspapers. While interpretation continues to win Pulitzers, judges’ tastes now run toward livelier reporting intelligible to average readers.

Below is one of the articles by Mowrer that was considered by the Pulitzer Prize committee. It was published on March 17, 1928. Note the significant role he assigns to journalists in the third paragraph.

U. S. PROPOSAL TO BAN WAR IS GAINING GROUND ABROAD

Europe’s Acceptance of Multilateral Treaty Now Believed to
Be Only Question of Time; Influential Members
of League Favor It.

BY PAUL SCOTT MOWRER.

SPECIAL CABLE

To The Chicago Daily News Foreign Service,
Copyright, 1928, The Chicago Daily News, Inc.

Paris, France, March 17.—Careful inquiry among the chancellories of Europe leads to the belief that adoption, by virtually all the nations, of the United States’ proposal for a multilateral treaty outlawing war is now only a question of time. Europe’s first reaction to this proposal was unfavorable, but gradually the view is gaining ground that the present moment is perhaps decisive in the relations between the United States and Europe.

Rejection of our proposal would, in the words of one foreign diplomat, be nothing less than catastrophic, for it would tend to keep Europe and the United States apart and might perilously aggravate the incipient United States-British naval rivalry. Acceptance, on the other hand, probably would lead to close permanent co-operation between the United States and the league of nations, thus ending a decade of unfortunate misunderstandings between the two great branches of the white race peopling opposite shores of the Atlantic.

League Favors Acceptance.

All influential members of the league secretariat are in favor of such acceptance. So do Germany and Japan, and probably Great Britain and the Soviet Union favor it. Canada is using its good offices for acceptance by both Great Britain and France. Aristide Briand, French foreign minister, has been influenced in these circumstances in the course of the recent private conversations

at Geneva, and French opinion, which had been greatly confused during the negotiations, is slowly being somewhat enlightened by a few farseeing journalists and such American utterances as Secretary of State Kellogg's speech on Thursday and Senator William E. Borah's recent article. But even if France unexpectedly tries to let the proposal drop this will be impossible because the United States has already communicated the documents to Germany and Spain and will soon communicate the proposal to Great Britain also.

A vastly important situation underlies these negotiations. The United States after refusing to join the league plan for peace has gradually evolved a complete peace policy of its own. The time is therefore come to compare these two plans and see to what extent they are similar and can be reconciled and to what extent they fundamentally differ.

Plan Provides for Arbitration.

Both plans provide for the conciliation of all international disputes but by a special commission in one case and the league council in the other. Both favor arbitration of all justifiable disputes or reference to the international court. Both favor regional peace agreements, but in one case merely for common consultation in the event of danger, and in the other case for armed aid in the event aggression is committed. Both tend toward disarmament, but in one case regional without international supervision, and in the other case general and interrelated with international supervision.

None of these points offer insuperable obstacles to co-operation between the United States and the league. Real difficulty emerges from divergent methods of trying to end war. The league provides for common causes against an aggressor; the United States' multilateral declaration allows no resort to war and is without sanctions.

U. S. Opposes Sanctions.

The United States is strongly opposed to the idea of sanctions. Secretary Kellogg clearly implied in his speech Thursday that he considers treaties prearranging sanctions are military alliances, dangerous and ineffective for keeping peace. However, the United States is protected against aggression by two oceans. The continental European states, especially France and its allies, which have common frontiers with discontented neighbors, feel insecure without promises of mutual aid and they refuse to disarm except in proportion to such aid as is promised.

The divergence would be less serious were it not for the fact that the United States, as the world's strongest power, can, if it likes, render the league's plan of sanctions against a pact breaker ineffective simply by refusing to recognize the league blockade. The belief is widespread in Europe that the projected increase in our navy is due mainly to our desire to protect our commerce against interference from blockaders acting for the league.

Was this the condition of affairs which led M. Briand to make his original offer of a dual outlawry treaty with the United States?

French Suspicions Unjustified.

In the French mind a Franco-American treaty outlawing war could be followed by similar treaties between the United States and other powers, and the neutrality of the United States in case of league action against an aggressor would have been insured. The French were somewhat piqued when we rejected this offer and proposed instead a multilateral treaty. The French became suspicious immediately and scented a sort of plot against the league and also against France and its allies.

Now, however, thanks to Secretary Kellogg and Senator Borah, it is being made clear that these suspicions are unjustified. Since all nations may sign the treaty, Poland will be as much protected from Germany as will France, and, since breach of the treaty by one signatory restores freedom of action to all, the league covenant and regional treaties, like the Locarno pact, can immediately be enforced against the pact breaker.

Unfortunately Senator Borah's explanations on this last point remain unofficial. If and when they are confirmed by Secretary Kellogg, the chief cause of France's present hesitation doubtless will be removed.

Our proposal, says the British statesman, Gilbert Murray, "is an extension and not a contradiction of the league covenant."

Briand Still Doubtful.

With the French elections at hand and the domestic campaign in full swing, M. Briand is still meditating, but it is significant that on the left, Leon Blum, influential socialist leader, is outspoken for acceptance of the American proposal, while on the right the influential journalist, Jacques Bardoux, has begun in the newspaper *Le Temps* an even franker series of articles on the Franco-American relations.

"France's suspicions," says M. Bardoux, "betray its smallness of view. The preponderance of the United States since the world war changes the outlook of world politics, and it is to France's interest that the United States should be associated as closely as possible with European affairs. By the acceptance of Mr. Kellogg's proposal, the United States would be bound morally if not legally to act sympathetically toward any common action taken against a possible pact breaker. Great Britain would be reassured and the league covenant would at last become effective."

M. Bardoux's view seems to be gaining ground. The outlook for permanent political reconciliation of ourselves with Europe has never been brighter than it is now.



Simply by being a bridge between the people they cover and the people for whom they report, correspondents are envoys. But at times they go beyond reporting to become moving parts in the machinery of diplomacy. Brash yellow journalist James Creelman, apparently acting for Hearst, proposed that the president of Haiti

join his country to the United States. The more serious George Smalley worked behind the scenes to help defuse a dispute between the United States and Britain over Venezuela's border with British Guiana. During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, John Scali of ABC News carried messages between the Kennedy administration and the Soviet KGB station chief in Washington; the communication helped bring about a peaceful settlement. (Scali later became a real ambassador to the United Nations.) Closer to our own times, Ted Koppel's *Nightline* television program served as an "electronic negotiating table" by bringing together opposing sides in overseas hot spots to discuss their differences. In 2002 the *New York Times*' Thomas Friedman—strangely criticized by Koppel for "journalism-fueled diplomacy"—floated a Saudi proposal for Middle East peace, which he acquired in a dinner with Saudi crown prince Abdullah.

While by no means unique in the willingness of its correspondents to play envoy, the *Daily News* was exceptional in the extensiveness of its involvement and the seriousness of purpose with which it pursued those tasks. A glimmering of its interest in diplomacy was evident as early as the 1880s, when a *Daily News* correspondent helped establish the forerunner to the Organization of American States. By the 1920s, such journalistic statesmanship was a habit. "The right kind of foreign correspondent," said Charles Dennis, "is, in fact, an unofficial envoy who frequently performs services of value to the American people." During his three-plus years in Constantinople, Constantine Brown "helped the embassy again and again," he told Dennis in 1927. He passed information to American diplomats that he could not report without compromising his sources and, vice versa, served as a backdoor channel for unofficial overtures to foreign governments. "While the embassy could not officially be in touch with the Nationalist rebels, we—who were not official people—were in constant touch with them, and we were able to tell the state department all the moves of Kemal [Atatürk] and his confederates."

"More than any other writer of his time, Edward Price Bell was a newspaper reporter on the ambassadorial level," said the undiplomatic Junius Wood. With the bright conversation Mowrer admired, Bell cultivated the powerful. They, in turn, came to view him as an important interpreter both of Great Britain to America and of America to Great Britain. During early stages of World War I, he privately urged the British to undertake more aggressive war propaganda in the United States, which had yet to take sides militarily. In letters to the *Times* of London in 1917, Bell explained to impatient British subjects why Wilson had not entered but would. He considered his exclusive wartime interviews with British statesmen to have the status of official state papers.

Lawson worried that Bell's pro-British sentiment did not go down well with the largely stay-out-of-the-war Chicago audience. "If the reader thinks the correspondent is a partisan," he cautioned his correspondent, "the correspondent's influence is distinctly impaired, regardless of how faithful may be his presentation of the truth as he sees it." Bell, however, did not desist. And after the war, Lawson was all for his world tours to interview leaders for a frankly diplomatic purpose. Lawson and Bell were "afraid the consequences of the war are going to be worse than

the war itself.” They hoped Bell’s interviews would foster international understanding and “jar” the American public into appreciating its global responsibilities. Lawson called it “Our Great Adventure.” The *Daily News* published Bell’s reports in two books. A number of statesmen supported his nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Other *Daily News* reporters took on diplomatic roles. Col. Edward M. House in President Wilson’s kitchen cabinet enlisted Raymond Swing to quietly lobby left-of-center French politicians to embrace the president’s Fourteen Points. Paul Mowrer endorsed the mission. In the 1930s, after moving on to the *Philadelphia Public Ledger’s* foreign service, Swing found himself a serious candidate to be the U.S. ambassador to Ireland. Just before World War II, the *Daily News* assigned Paul Scott Mowrer’s brother Edgar to work with William Donovan, who was asked by President Roosevelt to design and run the wartime intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). They coauthored a series of articles on fifth columnists in Europe, which the *Daily News* offered free to any newspaper that wanted it. Edgar Mowrer subsequently made an undercover fact-finding trip to Asia for Donovan while maintaining his status as a correspondent, something that would be considered inappropriate today but was not at all unusual at the time.* He quit the *Daily News* during the war to work for the Office of War Information, resigning from that position after being denied a mission to North Africa because he was “too emotional” and out of step with Roosevelt’s pro-Vichy policy. After the war, Carroll Binder served on two UN commissions on press freedom. *Daily News* corre-

* An example of the change in attitude can be seen in journalistic involvement with the Central Intelligence Agency. Investigations in the 1970s revealed that the CIA had recruited correspondents to work as agents or to assist agents, or had used news media as cover for its agents. The foreign correspondent role was ideal for such purposes since persons in that profession are expected to travel widely, mix with officials of all kinds, and ask lots of questions. By one count, compiled by Carl Bernstein in *Rolling Stone* in 1977, some four hundred journalists had ties to the CIA during the previous quarter century. Many were with major news media like CBS and the *New York Times*.

Some of the help given by foreign correspondents came as patriotic favors, with no expectation of remuneration. Sometimes the correspondents were engaged in casual back-and-forth in which information useful to both the journalist and the American officials were exchanged. Sometimes the involvement was much deeper. At one point in the 1950s, the CIA had formal training programs to teach agents to be journalists.

The embarrassing revelations about this involvement were not the only reason journalists drew back from this work. Journalists came to see that they could not be independent of officialdom and part of it simultaneously, something that became less desirable as the cold war consensus disintegrated and evidence of government mendacity increased. Journalists also put themselves at serious physical risk abroad if they were perceived as arms of government, rather than as independent observers.

Legislation has since made it more difficult, but not impossible, for intelligence agencies to employ journalists representing U.S. news media organizations. The president or the director of the CIA can waive this rule in the event of “overriding national security interests of the United States.” House and Senate committees on intelligence must be notified of the waiver. The law also does not bar a correspondent from volunteering to cooperate. See Carl Bernstein, “The CIA and the Media,” *Rolling Stone*, October 20, 1977, 55–67.

spondent William Stoneman was for three years an adviser to the first UN secretary general, Trygve Lie.

One member of the staff, the charming, aristocratic Paul Ghali, joined the newspaper *after* diplomatic service. Ghali was unusually well connected to international politics. His family on his mother's side had come to Avignon with the popes in the thirteenth century; his father was an Egyptian judge at the International Court. After graduating from Oxford, the Paris School of Political Science, and the Sorbonne, he joined the Egyptian Diplomatic Service. In 1939 he became a *Daily News* correspondent. During the war, he helped Donovan's OSS acquire the diaries of Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister, whom Mussolini had executed for disloyalty. Portions of the diaries, embarrassing to Mussolini and the Germans, were published in the *Daily News*, which paid twenty-five thousand dollars for the rights. They were used later in the Nuremberg war crimes trials.

An American ambassador to France told Dennis that Paul Mowrer "never forgets his country and he is ever ready to help it in any way he can." Mowrer did not share Bell's enthusiasm for long verbatim interviews with leaders, which left misleading statements unchallenged. (The wisdom of Mowrer's criticism can be seen in Bell's flattering portraits of Hitler and Mussolini.) Mowrer's preferred method of diplomatic intervention was a small step beyond the approach in his Pulitzer Prize-winning articles. In the manner of many European journalists, who considered themselves intellectuals, and a few American journalistic public intellectuals, such as Walter Lippmann, Mowrer sought to provide expert advice in writing.

Our Foreign Affairs was his most important contribution. Although not written with the verve of Lippmann's book-length musings on foreign affairs, the 1924 volume deserves to be remembered for its forward-looking analysis. Mowrer foresaw the global depression, the increasing importance of arms-limitation agreements, the disruptiveness of rapid communications for diplomacy, the need for better White House foreign policy coordination among a wide array of government agencies, and Americans' growing dependence on foreign petroleum and other minerals. "Diplomatically, the principal trait of the new era is the henceforth unavoidable political, economic, and moral interdependence of the nations." Nearly thirty years later political scientist Hans Morgenthau told Mowrer he was still assigning the book to his students.

Daily News correspondents acquired expertise rivaling that of any diplomat. Their reports ranged widely, touching regions and issues most Americans otherwise did not think much about. *Daily News* series in 1928 and 1929 included Stoneman on Schleswig, Binder on the Calabria region of Italy, and John W. White on the reasons for South American ill will toward the United States. "See that glint!" exclaims a character in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1928 Professor Challenger short story, a tale of the mad British scientist's secret drilling in Sussex to reach the earth's life force. "That's the telescope of the Chicago *Daily News*." The foreign service, judged journalist and press critic Oswald Garrison Villard, was "as distinguished

a corps of correspondents as has ever been assembled by an American daily.” With scores of newspapers including the *Washington Star* subscribing, *Daily News* correspondents were read in the White House and across the nation.

On the strength of this, the mood in the local room at the *Daily News* changed from the days when Mowrer apologetically set out for Europe on his first assignment. Instead of ridiculing foreign news, ambitious reporters clamored for a chance to go abroad, too. Stoneman hadn’t waited to be asked. Learning of an opening in Sweden, he left Chicago for Stockholm and cabled home. Since he was already there, he said, he might as well have the job.

Mowrer stood at the top of this distinguished heap. In typical “Timestyle” pretentiousness, *Time* dubbed him “a journalist panjandrum.” When a League of Nations body assembled a report on the educational role of the press, it turned to him for one of the essays. Putting aside his concerns about the spats and cane, the discriminating Henry Justin Smith held him up as a model. Mowrer’s style, he told journalism students, “whether he employed it upon ‘human interest’ topics or upon analysis of diplomatic tangles, is among the most brilliant, well-poised and flexible media of expression wielded by a journalist.”



The *Daily News* was not about to forget the average reader, who might not care much about foreign affairs. Sports stories were a fixture on the front page, sometimes the banner story. Serialized fiction and Hollywood news entertained readers. “There are more romances told or suggested in a single issue of a metropolitan daily,” Lawson believed, “than you will find in a dozen novels.” Whatever he might say about the success of the experiment in foreign news-gathering, home considerations and foreign ones clashed. There were constant reminders that the foreign service, as brilliant as it had become, could not be taken for granted.

Foreign reporting was an expensive undertaking, and Lawson, parsimonious to start with, never let correspondents forget it. In the first days of the service, when it was housed in the *Record*, Lawson was painfully aware of the costs of cabling, which in the first year of operation, 1899, were more than double all of his correspondents’ salaries plus stories he paid for on an as-used basis. When a cable seemed trivial (and some indubitably were), he pasted it to a form letter that he sent to the correspondent. The letter ended with the words, “the attached cable should *not* have been sent. It is worth neither the cost of cabling nor the necessary space” in the paper.

Imperatives to keep costs down, correspondents complained, were self-defeating. Editors pressed for mailers but treated them with little respect, sometimes not running them at all or giving them second place to AP stories by wire. The discord reached an absurd level when cost-conscious Chicago editors barred correspondents from using the word *stop* in their cables. This command generated a years-long debate on the relative merits of the little word. Junius Wood complained in 1917 that excluding “stop” or “period” from cables led to “bad results in printed copy, sentences split, joined together wrongly, entire sense changed. . . . Even the

U.P. which gets a half page out of a 50 word cable, requires 'stop' in its cables." At one point Bell wrote a three-page defense of "stop." To make sure Dennis was getting the message, Bell raised the issue in a letter two months later: "Re the use of the word 'stop' in cables, I have just heard from [Percy] Noel. He says he has suffered 'shockingly' at times from the omission of this word. Indeed he goes so far as to state that in his opinion commas should be cabled."

Other expenses were scrutinized as well. Junius Wood, who was notorious for circumventing *Daily News* auditors, was reduced to writing a plaintive memo justifying his expenses during twenty-two months in Asia: "I had a single room without bath or running water, so dark that artificial light was needed in daytime, which was both workroom and living quarters."

The tension over money crackled with intensity when Hopewell Rogers in the business office got involved with expense accounts. Rogers was "Mr. Lawson's efficiency man in all departments of The Daily News. He has a genius for detail," Dennis informed Mowrer in 1924, explaining that foreign correspondence was the last branch of the paper's activity to be given to Rogers "for his expert consideration." Among Rogers's ideas for improvement was elimination of the category "incidental" from expense forms. Bell in Chicago advised Lawson that just the opposite was called for: "There should be no detailed scrutiny as to how our men spend their money." Paul Mowrer proposed taking over Rogers's accounting functions for the foreign service. Getting nowhere and finding Rogers's hectoring "humiliating and demoralizing," Mowrer resigned. Lawson placated Mowrer by disclaiming any knowledge of Rogers's enthusiastic cost cutting and promising it would not happen again.

Correspondents complained that Lawson's view of foreign news—and often the view of his managing editor, Dennis—was not always theirs. In 1920 Lawson still urged correspondents to look for human interest angles. "Mr. Lawson's last order is perfectly impossible, and is simply going to kill our foreign service," Paul Mowrer wrote. Chimed in his hyperbolic brother, "To write about silly visitors and businessmen, at a time when Europe is going to pieces, is sheer fiddling." In 1926 Dennis suggested to Mowrer that readers wanted fewer political stories and more stories like one from Rome about a bird that sang at night in the Coliseum. Likewise, Lawson turned aside suggestions to expand the service. "Our efforts to broaden the service," Dennis wrote to Mowrer in 1923 almost apologetically and somewhat cryptically, "do not meet with Mr. Lawson's approval, because he says truly that more correspondents make more cable dispatches and more cable dispatches are merely an embarrassment, as well as an added expense."

These frustrations notwithstanding, Lawson was not about to let Rogers drive off Mowrer, and he and his editors rarely second-guessed the substance of correspondents' stories. Lawson's editorial philosophy, expressed through men like Dennis and Smith, was "the man on the spot is always right." "No argument by cable," said Edgar Mowrer; "no tampering with his copy." The *Daily News* foreign service, they all understood, was secure as long as the gentlemanly owner in the frock coat was taking the elevator to the top floor of the *Daily News* rickety building. When

Lawson died in 1925 and uncertainty gripped the newspaper, Edward Price Bell put all the disagreements with the home office behind him. He thought Lawson's "journalistic genius was near to a perfect thing."

Lawson's death was a blow. He carried his business around in his head and, with the expensive enterprise of foreign news, in his heart. While he micromanaged the office furnishings for his foreign bureaus and meddled in other details, he made no provision at all in his will for the *Daily News*. The will simply lumped the newspaper with his other property. Because his wife predeceased him and he had no children, the proceeds went to charities and a few close associates. Mowrer feared that the newspaper could end up in the hands of a grocer, a banker, or a lawyer with no interest in its traditions. "My deep conviction," said Bell, in the anger stage of grief, "is that Mr. Lawson while meaning well, wronged me unpardonably, and wronged others much more than myself. He torpedoed the good ship on which we were sailing. It was our ship, in the sight of right, as much as it was his."

To everyone's relief, Walter Strong stepped in with a solution. A distant relative of Lawson's wife, he had worked on the business side of the *Daily News* for years and now organized a group to buy the newspaper, with himself owning a controlling interest and becoming publisher. Although his group did not submit the top bid, its \$13.5 million purchase price was the highest for an American newspaper up to that time. The trustees and beneficiaries of Lawson's estate accepted it in order to ensure that the newspaper continued along familiar lines.

This was no guarantee that nothing would change, for change was essential. Circulation had been flat for the past decade, "despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent on promotion," management consultants told Strong. The facilities needed modernizing. Victor Lawson's inefficient patrician management style was equally outmoded. "It is a marvel to all persons outside the News and many inside," the consultants also noted, "that the staff is able to produce a daily Newspaper of the size and quality of the *Daily News*." Strong tightened the budget, raised salaries, and ordered construction of a twenty-five-story art deco skyscraper at 400 Madison St., along the Chicago River. Radio station WMAQ broadcast from the top floor. For the first time in anyone's memory, the furniture matched.

The *Daily News* foreign service was secure—for the time being.



A second test of the Lawson tradition came in 1931 with Strong's untimely death. This time a will made provisions for the *Daily News*. It directed that the paper should be sold to someone who would preserve "The Chicago Daily News or its successor as a semi-public institution, with substantially the character it may have at my death." Strong provided a grace period to allow employees to arrange purchase of his controlling interest. But the staff could not marshal the resources, which may have been just as well. Strong had taken on heavy debt to acquire the newspaper and build its new quarters. An experienced financial manager was needed to satisfy creditors and cope with the Depression economy. The search for such a per-

son led to Col. Frank Knox, who purchased the paper with financial support from a New England newspaper supplier. Knox had long newspaper experience, most recently as general manager of Hearst's twenty-seven newspapers. Strong's family claimed that he was the man to carry on *Daily News* traditions. A *New York Times* editorial thought Knox "may be counted upon not to depart from the high standards set by his predecessors." In an editorial of its own, the *Daily News* promised to uphold "its priceless heritage."

The transition, nevertheless, was again jolting, this time more so than with Lawson's passing. The retiring Lawson had claimed he never voted in a primary. Knox, an extrovert, had charged up San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and had risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel in World War I. As publisher and owner of the *Manchester Union Leader*, he unsuccessfully campaigned for governor of New Hampshire. His political aspirations did not end with his purchase of the *Daily News*. In 1936 he ran for vice president on Alf Landon's ticket. Nor was Knox the kindly patrician Lawson and Strong had been. Upon becoming owner of the newspaper, he ordered a pay cut and sold its half interest in WMAQ. Strong had made a loan to help Mowrer prop up his investments during the stock market crash. Knox wrote to ask when he was going to pay it back and, in line with other cost-saving steps, slashed his pay by 15 percent. "I should like to have word from you as to what you think is going to happen to all of us," correspondent John Gunther wrote to Carroll Binder. "Being remote here, and off the main currents, we are a bit worried."

The future of the foreign service was probably as unclear to Knox himself. His knowledge of foreign affairs was limited to the battlefield. Critics said his geography was shaky. Correspondence with Bell suggests he did not know much about the history of the newspaper's foreign coverage or Bell's role. Although the *Daily News* already had released part-time correspondents in Oslo, Madrid, Ireland, Milan, and elsewhere to cope with the bad economy, rumors had it that Knox still considered the foreign service too expensive. He recalled Junius Wood from Moscow and closed the bureau. Constantine Brown, who had become the *Daily News's* diplomatic correspondent in Washington, got the ax. The reason, Brown thought, was that he did not check stories against the Hoover administration foreign policy line. In addition to forcing his resignation, Knox refused to honor a contract that, Brown said, entitled him to severance. Knox sent him downstairs to get "his week's pay" and dared him to sue. (Brown became foreign news editor and columnist at the *Washington Star*.)

Knox initially reassured Edward Price Bell. He said he supported the foreign service's interpretive tradition. Unlike McCormick, the new owner liked the British. (When Knox died, his widow endowed a Harvard educational exchange in his name between the United States and the British Commonwealth.) But the embryonic comity between Bell and Knox died in a matter of weeks. Knox's British sympathies notwithstanding, he was disenchanted with Bell's strong pro-British viewpoint as well as, possibly, his Olympian approach to news analysis. For his part, Bell disliked Knox's overt Republican sympathies and what he seems to have re-

garded as pressure “to deflect me from the line of conscience.” Bell wanted freedom and deference that Knox was unwilling to grant. Whether Bell was fired, as Mowrer believed, or resigned, as Bell’s papers suggest, he and the paper severed ties. In his twilight years Bell scrounged magazine assignments abroad, toiled over an autobiography he could not get published, and at the very end wrote a column for the *Saturday Spectator* in Terre Haute, Indiana.

“Bell’s attitude,” Knox told Dawes, “is only an exaggerated illustration of the difficulties I am encountering in handling the staff of the foreign news service.” In addition to “difficulties” in keeping costs down, Knox may have felt intimidated by the foreign correspondents, a feeling he was not used to. He certainly did not want to be pushed around by reporters who fancied themselves on a par with presidents and prime ministers and were likely to be out of touch with their readers.

Mowrer, second to none on the staff in his elitist views, had good reason to apprehend that Knox’s housecleaning could sweep him unceremoniously out the door. He knew Knox diagnosed in him a different strain of the Bell disease, Francophilia. Besides that, soon after Knox acquired the paper, a brief letter arrived to say that Mowrer was no longer head of European correspondents. Management of all foreign news was being brought back to Chicago. When Mowrer asked to come home to discuss this decision, the request was denied. Meanwhile, word reached him that Knox was keeping an eye on him for any reporting mistakes he might make. A worried Mowrer toyed with the idea of accepting a job as an adviser to the Chinese government.

Catching Mowrer in a mistake was not easy. Fellow correspondents considered him “an almost fanatical stickler for accuracy.” When Mowrer scooped an impending armament agreement with detailed—and correct—figures, Knox sent congratulations. The two men subsequently met in London and hit it off. Knox wanted to bring him home to oversee editorials and eventually replace Dennis as editor. On a trip to Berlin, Knox was similarly won over to Edgar Mowrer’s tough reporting on Hitler (although Knox briefly brought him back to Chicago to reacquaint him with his own country). “Colonel Knox arrived in Europe an isolationist (‘we must keep out of that dogfight’),” Edgar Mowrer said, “and returned to America a resolute antifascist.”

After almost a quarter of a century abroad, Paul Scott Mowrer returned to Chicago as associate editor. In 1935 he became editor. He was known to impose “his will around the office on foreign affairs,” although he was scarcely alone in his expertise in foreign affairs. The front office was full of such talent. Mowrer’s managing editor was a longtime foreign correspondent, Hal O’Flaherty. Carroll Binder, a reserved, thoughtful internationalist who came home to serve as Knox’s assistant, became foreign editor the year after Mowrer took the top job.

The staff had been rattled during the first years of the new regime. Good correspondents were lost. Knox’s commitment to the paper was in doubt not only in the minds of his reporters and editors, but in his own as well. He confided to his wife, shortly before acquiring the *Daily News*, “Just as soon as I know a deal [to buy the paper] can be consummated I will renew discussions with Roy Howard with a view

to eventually sale [sic] to them when they are ready to take on another big paper and this property has been made to earn what it should earn. That is where and how I can expect to make our fortune." But Knox did not say.

Knox understood the majesty of the *Daily News*, "easily among the first half-dozen papers in the country." When Prohibition was repealed in 1933, Knox held true to Lawson's teetotaling rule of not running liquor ads. Once the foreign service shake-up was over, the paper settled in for a new strong run in which it ended the less-than-grand tradition of publishing the names of Chicagoans who visited its overseas bureaus. Mowrer respected the new owner as a thoroughgoing newspaperman. On politics, they were in general sympathy. Knox ran as a Republican; Mowrer voted that way. Knox was "Critic Number One" of Roosevelt, when it came to the New Deal. When it came to international affairs, he endorsed FDR's assertive foreign policy. If Mowrer wished that greater sophistication about foreign affairs underpinned Knox's internationalism, he appreciated that his boss did not meddle, even when he ran for vice president or when Roosevelt reached across the aisle to appoint him secretary of the navy. Press critic Villard had roughly the same view: Knox did not measure up to Lawson and Strong; but he "was wise enough not to interfere with this [foreign] service or to change the fundamental character of the paper."

If anything, the *Daily News's* feud with the *Tribune* became more intense. Knox and McCormick belonged to the same political party, which might have made them allies, except that they both had an interest in being at the head of Illinois Republicans. On the journalistic front, Knox was critical of the practices of "our chief competitor." The *Tribune*, he told John Gunther, "doctors its news from abroad and from Washington to fit its editorial views. I do not regard that as honest newspaper work."* The *Daily News* crusaded against the *Tribune's* isolationist view of the world, often explicitly, as when cartoonist Cecil Jensen wickedly lampooned McCormick in a series of cartoons called "The Adventures of Col. McCosmic." In 1941 the *Daily News* ran a daily feature called "Famous Sayings of History," consisting exclusively of silly comments by McCormick. McCormick used his pages to repay the insults. "You will be interested to hear, by the way, that the *Tribune* has not attacked you personally for more than a week," Mowrer wrote to Knox in the spring of 1942, when the *Daily News* owner was in Washington serving as navy secretary. A new, serious controversy flared up a few weeks later when McCormick's paper recklessly published a story about a naval battle, revealing that the United States had broken the Japanese code. Knox wanted to prosecute, an idea that was ditched only when the navy realized this would draw Japanese attention to the story.

Knox attempted to manage the *Daily News* while serving in Washington, an arrangement that was not optimal from a business point of view. Circulation in 1943 was slightly below the mark of 1930. Nevertheless, the paper remained prestigious

* One occasion on which McCormick combined editorializing and reporting was his failed campaign to put Chicago on summer daylight time year round, which would have made it more difficult for the *Daily News* to run end-of-day stock market results.

and profitable, and from the point of view of the foreign service, strength built on strength during the 1930s. Not happy with the *Herald Tribune*, John Whitaker jumped to the *Daily News* overseas staff. He was joined later by his Pulitzer Prize-winning colleague Leland Stowe, to whom the *Herald Tribune* denied an overseas assignment at the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939. Stowe was “delighted to be a member of the recognized highest-quality foreign correspondent team of any U.S. news media.” George Weller, a future Pulitzer Prize winner who had worked at the *New York Times*, joined too. At the outset of the war, journalists praised the *Daily News* foreign service as “the crowning glory of the newspaper world.”

Knox sent a note to Binder with a one-thousand-dollar bonus at the end of 1943. “I want to congratulate you on the fine progress we have made during the year in the Foreign News Service,” Knox wrote. “It continues to be what I have always regarded it—the best foreign news service in the country—and that means in the world.”

Four months later Knox died.



A group of employees, including Paul Scott Mowrer, tried to buy the paper. Leading the effort was future presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, an international-minded local attorney who had worked with Knox at the Navy Department. The deal fell through when the overly cautious Stevenson wouldn’t take the bidding one notch higher. From among the many suitors who showed an interest in buying the paper, Knox’s heirs chose John Knight, whose budding newspaper chain included dailies in Miami, Detroit, and Akron.

The new owner offered the usual platitudes about maintaining the foreign service, which Binder telegraphed, in cablese, to the foreign service: “IN MY ANNOUNCEMENT OWNERSHIP PAYING SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO VICTOR LAWSONS VISION GENIUS BUILDING SERVICE WHICH IS PREEMINENT IN ITS FIELD STOP PLEASE BE ASSURED THERELL BE NO CURTAILMENT SERVICE IN ANY RESPECT.” Other signs were less promising. On his first day in the office, Knight declared an end to the war with McCormick’s *Tribune*. Cartoonist Cecil Jensen’s “Adventures of Col. McCosmic” never appeared again. On October 21, 1944, two days after Knight’s cabled message about a bright future, Binder sent a second cable announcing his resignation. Mowrer followed with his own, “for reasons of incompatibility.”

“It seemed to us as if the world were falling about our ears,” said Binder’s wife. The new editor, Basil “Stuffy” Walters, possessed enormous energy and a mandate to boost sagging circulation. Knight correctly considered Walters ahead of his time. Foreshadowing the relentless search for strategies and simple tricks to keep readers interested, Walters spun theories about RPU (reader pulling units) and emphasized bright layouts and story condensation, which made him unpopular with correspondents who were accustomed to being left alone—and with sophisticated Chicagoans, who enjoyed the newspaper as it was. “What can you expect us to do in education when the press is in the hands of men like Stuffy Walters?” University of Chicago president Robert M. Hutchins asked.



Colonel McCormick, the isolationist, and Colonel Knox, the internationalist, reflected Chicago's two attitudes toward the world. The "battle of the colonels" spilled over into *Daily News* cartoons with Cecil Jensen's portrayal of Colonel McCosmic, "the world's greatest military, economic and political expert." In one cartoon Jensen ridicules McCosmic's Anglophobia; in the other he depicts McCormick throwing darts at FDR; Henry Stimson, FDR's secretary of war; and Colonel Knox, who was navy secretary.

William Stoneman, a veteran of the foreign service, tried to educate Knight on the paper's great foreign reporting legacy with which he was entrusted. The *Daily News*, he emphasized, was the only one that had "fully and intelligently reported the situation which led up to the Second World War." That accomplishment, he added, meant more to reporters in the foreign service than huge salaries. Knight, who earned a reputation as a news-oriented owner, sought to reassure Stoneman even as he revealed his worries about the expense of upholding the Lawson tradition. "A quality newspaper is nice to have if you can afford it," Knight said; "frankly I am interested in popular journalism."

Bylines that seemed as much a part of the newspaper as the *Daily News* masthead disappeared. Robert Casey, whose writing had for many years graced the paper he loved, left as unceremoniously as Edward Price Bell had fifteen years before. "So, mighty Casey went under, before our startled eyes—fired, to tell the truth," said a colleague, "because he no longer could fit in, or wouldn't." Carroll Binder, courted by the *New York Times* editorial page, accepted an offer in his wife's home state, Minnesota. *Minneapolis Tribune* owner John Cowles, who distributed the *Daily News* foreign service material through his syndicate, was broadening his newspaper's perspective. Binder edited the editorial page and wrote a foreign affairs column. Arch Steele, a respected China Hand on the *Daily News* foreign staff, went to the *Herald Tribune*.

The *New York Post* was a singular beneficiary of this talent drain. In a media

buying spree, Dorothy Schiff, the *Post's* owner, and her new husband, journalist Ted Thackrey, had made a bid for the *Daily News*. When Knox's heirs opted to sell to the more Republican Knight, Schiff and Thackrey recruited Mowrer, whom they had come to know in the process and whose brother Edgar was now a syndicated columnist for them. Although Thackrey thought a man like Mowrer more suited to the *New York Times*, Mowrer was just the sort of person needed if the *Post* was to become a prestige newspaper. Mowrer was to report from Paris for the *Post* and its Brooklyn radio station, WLIB, as well as build a foreign service and start a Paris version of the paper, the *Paris Post*. This heady time at the *Post* was as brief as the Schiff-Thackrey marriage, and Mowrer soon retired altogether from journalism. While the *Post's* foreign interests still bloomed, however, Mowrer helped recruit his son, Richard Mowrer, as well as *Daily News* correspondent Helen Kirkpatrick. Kirkpatrick decided to quit the *Daily News* when Walters cabled instructions to concentrate on "the Chicago angle" in an important diplomatic meeting in Moscow.

Walters elevated circulation to an all-time high. His crusading local news won awards. And, as it turned out, the *Daily News* foreign service continued to shine. "Walters didn't waste any time," the dislodged Robert Casey observed, in a book about the good old days. "He booted out most of the foreign service before which the customers had stood in awe for so many years, and booted it back in again when the awe got overloud." George Weller, Paul Ghali, and William Stoneman stayed. Stoneman told Binder he could not afford to leave because of alimony and his investment in the *Daily News* retirement fund. Some new talent, such as Georgie Anne Geyer, joined. Keyes Beech and Fred Sparks shared the 1951 Pulitzer for coverage of the Korean War with correspondents from three other newspapers. The service still sought, as its Tokyo correspondent wrote in the mid-1950s, to do original reporting, not rewrite the wires, with an emphasis on interpretation of the "big developments of the day and elaborate the spot developments with material that the agencies do not include in their reports." The momentum of the past carried these correspondents forward. They had sources that went back for decades and used those contacts, Mowrer-fashion, to provide context. In 1952, 31 newspapers subscribed to the *New York Times* foreign news service, 45 to the *Daily News's*.

To the schooled eye, nevertheless, all was not well. Walters spoke of the virtues of quality over quantity, which sounded good enough, until one understood that he meant less room for foreign news, fewer correspondents, and more direction from the home office. In late 1952 and early 1953, a study showed, the *Daily News* carried about one-fifth of the foreign news found in the *New York Times*. At least half of the best stories, Walters boasted, came from the newsroom, offered up by "editors, copyreaders, editorial writers, reporters and even office boys." Although this may have been an overstatement, the exuberance in his comment was a long way from the time when Edward Price Bell confidently protested to Lawson about second-guessing in Chicago: "a man of my experience—I see no virtue in modesty that is dishonest—should [not] be turned over to some sub-editor." Walters could fuss all he wanted when the respected broadcaster Eric Sevareid lamented "the break-up of

ON RETIRING FROM ACTIVE NEWSPAPER WORK

The *Paris Post* launched on July 4, 1945, with Paul Scott Mowrer as editor and publisher. Like a Fourth of July rocket, it disappeared as abruptly as it started.

Due to shortages caused by the war, paper and ink were in short supply and expensive. American servicemen were leaving Europe and there was no corresponding influx of tourists. The old *Paris Herald Tribune*, which bounced back after being shut down during the war, put up a strong fight. Mowrer was willing to hang on, he told Ted Thackrey, the *New York Post* editor, but “it is a question of what you are willing to pay for the prestige, good will, good deeds.” On January 28, 1946, seven months after it started, the *Paris Post* suspended publication.

Still proud to have Mowrer on its staff, Thackrey retained him as associate editor and chief correspondent for European affairs, based in Paris. This, too, was short-lived. “Much as I regret to write it,” Thackrey informed Mowrer in early 1948, “I am not at all sure at this time whether we can continue the foreign service on its present basis.” Six weeks later he shut the London bureau. Mowrer was instructed to close the Paris office by the end of the year. A final contract kept Mowrer on the *Post* until the end of 1949. During this last stint in Paris, his byline occasionally appeared in the *Chicago Daily News*.

Mowrer and his wife retired to Chocorua, New Hampshire. There he indulged his passion for fishing and the outdoors, played chess by mail with his brother, and devoted himself to his early love, poetry. He defended traditional verse against the “modern” variety in the *Saturday Review of Literature* and produced so much of his own that he was named New Hampshire’s first poet laureate. For good measure he wrote a book of short plays. Below is one of his poems.

ON RETIRING FROM ACTIVE NEWSPAPER WORK

A hated tyrant falls; a fierce plot tears
The webs of power; war rumors cross the sea
A crisis—yet my fingers tap no key.
After a life well crammed with public cares,
How strange to stand apart from world affairs
And let, like other men, what is to be
Occur without one warning word from me!
No more to deal in daily threats and scares,
Cluck round events like anxious, brooding hen;
Dash comment out, explain, or analyse!
I sit and muse at last, like other men,
Read books, walk forth and watch the clouds take shape.
The great may do or die; I poetize.

once-great foreign staffs, as happened with the Chicago Daily News.” The service was losing steam at the same time that the newspaper generally faced an uphill financial struggle.



Social and economic forces worked against afternoon newspapers. In the *Daily News's* heyday, homebound commuters boarded a train or bus with the newspaper tucked under their arms. With the postwar rise of sprawling suburbs, more and more readers drove their cars to work. They listened to their radios on the road and to their televisions in their living rooms. Getting newspapers to inner-city projects was perilous; getting them to the suburbs on time was increasingly difficult because of the distances involved and the congested expressways. The morning papers, in contrast, were delivered when most motorists were in bed.

That was not all. Under Lawson, who strictly observed the Sabbath, the *Daily News* was a six-day-a-week paper, and it remained so. Without a Sunday edition, it missed out on lucrative weekend advertising; faithful readers who wanted a Sunday newspaper had to split their loyalties. This may have been less of a problem when Colonel McCormick imposed his peculiar views on the news from his office atop the *Chicago Tribune's* gothic tower. With his death in 1955, the *Tribune* improved. Offended by the *Daily News's* aggressive coverage of civil rights, its campaign to make birth control information available to Chicago families on welfare (which won a Pulitzer gold medal for public service), and other sensitive issues, middle-class readers had an alternative, and many of them took it. Advertisers, meanwhile, became highly selective. In city after city across the country, they gravitated toward the newspaper with the largest circulation, a process that made the financially strong papers stronger and the weak ones weaker.

Although these factors worked against the *Daily News*, its circulation remained healthy, reaching a high point of 614,000 in 1957. In an effort to protect the financial viability of the franchise, Knight in 1959 tried to buy the afternoon *Chicago American*, a Hearst paper. By merging it with the *Daily News*, he would have a Sunday paper. The *Tribune*, however, made a stronger bid, converting the *American* to a bright tabloid. Thwarted, Knight decided to sell the *Daily News*. Once more the sale price, \$24 million, was unprecedented. The purchaser this time was Marshall Field IV, a descendant of Chicago's department store magnate of the same name. Field owned the morning *Sun-Times* and wanted an evening paper to go with it. He moved the *Daily News* to North Wabash Avenue, where it was consolidated with its new sister paper.

Field named himself editor when Walters retired in 1961. Field's interest in the editorship was positive, in that it indicated his commitment to journalism, and negative, given his precarious mental health, which was characterized by wide mood swings. One day he could insist on putting someone in Moscow and the next day abruptly change his mind, remembered Milt Freudenheim, a correspondent and foreign editor with the *Daily News*. When Field died in 1965 at age forty-nine, the

next in line was his son. Marshall Field V turned twenty-seven that year, roughly the same age Victor Lawson had been when he took over his father's newspaper interests.

Management tried all manner of schemes. "It seemed like we had a new vice-president every day," said Georgie Anne Geyer. Nothing seemed to help. By 1971, when the Society of Professional Journalists named the *Daily News* a historic site because it had the oldest continuous foreign service, circulation dipped to 327,000, roughly half of what it had been in 1957. *Daily News* accountants wrote in red ink.

The foreign service faded like a newspaper left too long in the sun. George Weller, Paul Ghali, and William Stoneman retired. Geyer left the paper to write a column for the *Los Angeles Times Syndicate*. Correspondent Donald Shanor spoke with Marshall Field V on home leave. Field seemed excessively adamant about keeping the paper open; Shanor decided the opposite was the case and quit. There were still moments of pride, such as when Bob Tamarkin, a superb reporter, was one of the very last reporters to leave Vietnam at its fall in 1975. But the paper's Vietnam bureau—one of the first to be established in the country after the *New York Times'* bureau—had been downsized when the war was raging. Tamarkin's predecessor, Larry Green, sold the office car, gave his office and staff to a reporter with the *Los Angeles Times*, and worked out of a hotel room. Correspondents elsewhere were urged to do the same, more or less as Bell's competitors had been forced to do at the beginning of the century in London. Milt Freudenheim, in Mowrer's old post in Paris, had a grand office at 23 Rue de la Paix. He rented most of it to two Lebanese businessmen, making an office for himself in the kitchen.

As a last-ditch effort in 1977, Field put James Hoge, editor of the *Sun-Times*, in charge of both papers. Hoge accepted the assignment with the understanding that he had two years to bring the *Daily News* back to life. Hoge had an interest in foreign news—later in his career he became editor of *Foreign Affairs* magazine. Even so, he saw no way to maintain the *Daily News* foreign news tradition. He called the newspaper's four remaining correspondents home. The *Daily News* relied on the *Washington Post-Los Angeles Times* syndicate and a few stringers for nonspot foreign news. Only once did the last foreign editor, Joe Geshwiler, get permission from Hoge to send a stringer on an assignment.

With advice from consultants, an increasingly common sight in newsrooms, Hoge concentrated on local coverage, advice and how-to features, and finance. Circulation increased the first year; advertising lagged. The result was increased printing and delivery costs without offsetting gains in revenue. Hoge argued that the rising circulation and improved content built in year one gave the paper the ability to woo advertisers in year two. Field's business lieutenants lost faith in this strategy before it had played out. They argued that it was time to cut their losses and kill the *Daily News*. Some later blamed Field for renegeing on his two-year commitment for rejuvenating the *Daily News*; others thought he simply bowed to the inevitable.

In 1911 Will Irwin singled out the *Daily News* in a series of articles for *Collier's* on the state of journalism. "Even should it change hands, should a get-rich-quick policy destroy its character, the 'News' would go on paying for a generation by power

of its old honesty,” he wrote. The Lawson tradition carried the *Daily News* through more than one generation. But as perceptive as Irwin had been in one sense, he misjudged in another. “In the business of journalism,” he declared, “it seems that virtue does get its final material reward.”

On the same day in early 1978 that a *Daily News* reporter won the prestigious William Allen White Award for editorial writing, Field stood on a city room desk and announced the end of the paper. As the paper prepared to close, editors from around the country flew in to recruit the bereaved staff for their newspapers. In a final burst of self-promotion that would have gratified Lawson, the staff devoted most of the final edition on March 4 to recalling its accomplishments. “May the spirit of the writer’s newspaper survive,” wrote one staffer in his eulogy, “somewhere in newspaper heaven.”

