

to the reporter's questions but hands him a typewritten statement, every term of which is weighed and whose purpose is to mislead or even to deceive. Many journalists deplore these new methods as the development of tendentious information.

We are convinced that the American press, jealous of its reputation and proud of its traditions, will know how to de-

fend itself, but we believe also that it will be impossible for it to suppress 'publicity.' All the more it will be able to restrain and regulate it. Since publicity exists, it is legitimate to make use of it. The German propaganda does not disdain it and it would be refreshing to think that there also existed a 'publicity director' at the Quai d'Orsay.

## BRITISH NEWSPAPERS AND FOREIGN PROPAGANDA

BY HERBERT BAILEY

From *The Westminster Gazette*, September 27  
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THE silent warfare between newspapers anxious to provide their readers with an excellent service of news, and government apologists striving to exploit a fertile field for their propaganda, continues with undiminished skill and intensity. The vigilance of editors clashes in muffled combat with the insidious onslaughts of a smiling enemy. Sometimes vigilance triumphs, and drives, with laughing scorn, the audacious attempts of the enemy into the waste-paper basket. Sometimes an apparently innocent paragraph appears in the most independent and least susceptible, of newspapers, to proclaim a propagandist victory.

These are the visible signs of many skirmishes. But all the elaborate precautions and devices, the ambushes and camouflage, the treasons and espionage of modern war are to be found in the conflict between conscientious editors and conscienceless propagandists. The editor warns his assistants to be circumspect in accepting any news

from a tainted source; the propagandist, suave and often shyly communicative, dangles items of news, and the prospect of earning the intimate confidence of the Government, before the eyes of the ardent and inexperienced searcher for news. Deception flourishes. The shrewd correspondent listens attentively, and apparently very sympathetically, to the tale of the propagandist, and, using so much of the propaganda as he needs, writes a daring attack on the Government for the following morning's issue. The wise and experienced propagandist welds news with views and apologies, until the one is hardly, if at all, distinguishable from the other, and affects to be an enlightened patron of industrious newspapermen. The promise of honors, invitations to dine, an occasional cigar, the letter of introduction to the eminent statesman that earns an important interview, and special telegraphic or telephonic facilities, all stand among the clumsy, but often effective, weapons of

the information secretaries of modern governments.

There have been, of course, unscrupulous but clever newspapermen, who accepted the honors with appropriate humility, dined well, smoked choice cigars, wrote exclusive interviews, and used all the facilities of communication offered by the Government, without losing their belief in the printed word, and defying, at convenient moments, the Government who patronized them. They have often discovered that it is only by questioning the wisdom of governments that any exclusive news is obtained about the progress of national affairs. Apologists need no conversion by propagandists. It is the journalist who doubts, whom it is necessary to convince. Sometimes there have been simple traitors, who passed from journalism to propaganda with the impulse of the soldier surrendering to the enemy. But more interesting are those who, while receiving the rewards of propaganda, still maintain a precarious foothold in the world of newspapers. Since no distinct uniform is worn by the combatants, it is often difficult to distinguish the enemies. Thus it is possible to survive in both camps.

The war extends, like modern warfare, far behind the front lines. The defection of a general in command of an excellent body of troops is much more important than the surrender of an occasional soldier. Thus, we sometimes find a newspaper changing proprietors or changing its policy with as much mystery as is veiled around modern war. Even neighboring newspapers are, for a long time, unaware of the defection, and the general retains his command while serving the enemy. In Paris to-day the readers of a violently anti-British newspaper do not know that a wealthy American oil company has a controlling interest in their paper

and that the pro-American and anti-British outpourings of that journal are dictated by the consideration of fighting the British plans for obtaining oil-supplies throughout the world.

Another Paris paper, with almost as enormous a circulation, was recently bought by a French minister, who is also an ambitious capitalist, without the public knowing anything at all of the transaction, and we have seen in London and the provinces the same mysterious process for influencing public opinion. But the assaults of other propagandists of modern governments is even carried into other fields. A Norwegian newspaper recently revealed to an astonished world how the Foreign Office was sending out its propaganda in the guise of independent news; but the Foreign Office, extensive though its propaganda activities are to-day, has not developed the arts and craft of propaganda to the point it has attained in European capitals and Moscow.

During the Kapp rising in Berlin, American correspondents, anxious to discover some semblance of the truth, found it necessary to visit the propaganda bureaus of every political party in Germany, each of which told a story that bore little resemblance to that obtained from the other. But propaganda had reached such a stage of confusion, that the news from the Wilhelmstrasse was denied by the Chancellor, and the news from the Chancellor denied by the President. Never indeed was truth so securely buried beneath propaganda, and never before was the acumen of correspondents in such demand. Happily the experience taught independent correspondents to distrust all information offered officially since that time. The wireless propaganda, the restrictions on visitors, the millions of leaflets, the army of orators, and the propaganda trains of the Soviet Government are now well known. Such propaganda is

mainly primitive and ill devised. The opponents of Bolshevism have been far more successful and sagacious in their employment of propaganda.

The increasing interest in foreign affairs which the United States and the British Empire have inherited from the war is, however, exploited by the propagandists of foreign governments in a way which few of the editors of the papers of these countries realize. Dependent as the majority of these newspapers are upon agencies for foreign news, they fail to inquire too closely into whether these agencies are free from the propaganda of foreign Governments. It is not known that all the news-agencies of the world, with a few unimportant exceptions, have working arrangements with agencies in the capitals whence news is sent. They buy the news-service of the foreign agency and supply news in return. The office of the foreign news-agency is their office, and although a competent correspondent is in charge of the office, his assistants, particularly during the night, are nationals of the country of origin. Now these foreign news-agencies, if they are not actually subsidized by the governments of their country, are so indebted to them for special facilities, or are so compliant, that they have become nothing but elaborate propaganda bureaux. On any question of international importance, such as the Silesian question, they obtain official views and send them out to the public as independent views. Official communiqués are telegraphed all over the world, in the cloak of news independently obtained and independently offered. The desire of the Government as to the handling of a particular issue is obeyed with remarkable faithfulness; and when the Government wishes some news suppressed for its own benefit, suppression, without a murmur of protest, takes place.

My own experience and the experiences of other journalists show how the agencies that supply the United States and the British Empire with news are susceptible to the propaganda of foreign governments, which they solemnly buy from foreign news-agencies. The deliberate misrepresentations as to the French policy on the Rhine and the fate of the 'republic' of Dr. Dorten had encircled the world before an independent statement of the facts, which time proved to be correct, could appear in London or New York. Again, I happened to discover that Krupp's was still making guns, a discovery that was admitted, but explained, by the brother of Prince von Bülow, who is the chief director of that concern. The German Government issued an angry denial of my story by wireless, and privately offered to correspondents in Berlin the explanation of von Bülow, which had not satisfied the British officers who were in charge of the disarmament of Essen. The denial was sent to London and New York in the same words as those used by the German Government, and repeated at convenient intervals afterward. Most of the English provincial newspapers, some of the London journals, and hundreds of American, Canadian, Australian, and South African newspapers printed the denial as if it was the independent investigation of a Berlin correspondent. German propaganda scored an easy victory.

The Chinese delegates to the Peace Conference could, if they chose, tell some instructive stories of how Japanese propaganda on the Shantung question was sent out to London and provincial newspapers as if it were pure news, and how the Chinese version was suppressed on the instructions of the Japanese. The intricate arrangements between the news-agencies of the world have become so interlaced, that no man

reading a simple item of news to-day can tell its origin or its purpose. The Silesian problem provided the latest lesson in how newspapers are exploited by propagandists. Anyone who troubles to read through the files of the British and American journals which did not have their own correspondents in Paris will find their foreign pages filled with propaganda that owed its inspiration to the Quai d'Orsay.

The danger to British interests of the country being flooded with foreign propaganda at the moment when an important international question is being settled by the Government is very apparent. Unfortunately, few newspapers in Britain, and still fewer in the Dominions, have any idea how tainted is much of the news which they print

as independent items. Their eagerness to obtain news makes them the easier to victimize, and leaves them a prey for the intrigues of the propagandist. The time has come when the newspapers of the British Empire, particularly those of provincial Britain and the Dominions, should demand that foreign news must be free from the insidious propaganda of foreign governments.

The Washington Conference will provide another illustration of the present danger. Governments have learned nothing from the war but the value of propaganda as an arm of diplomacy. Independent newspapers should have noted, too, that, although public interest in foreign affairs, in spite of surface appearances, has increased, their readers want news, not propaganda.

## POOLED POETRY

BY MAURICE HEWLETT

From *The Manchester Guardian*, October 14  
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You do not necessarily climb to discover a poet at his mystery. It is not always a matter of hitching to a star. With all proper respect for the name and virtues of Macaulay, streams do very often meander level with their founts. If the water-shed is broad, the stream will make a puddle of itself before it finds the slope.

So it has often been with poesy; so it is, plainly, just now, in England. Most of the young poets are meandering; and what will happen when they go over the edge, there is no man that knoweth. The thing has happened be-

fore, twice at least; and each time in an hour of exhaustion, or perhaps of approaching exhaustion. It happened within the first fifty years of the seventeenth century, when all young men, from Campion to Davenant, fluted in the same gay falsetto. Again it happened between the accession of Queen Anne and the death of Gray. In both those ages there was much meandering; there was each time a family likeness, a family cock of the eye. Poets not only saw the same things, but saw them from the same nursery window.

Our last great blare of poetry, that