

3 March 1951

THE BRITISH PRESS

PART II

2. News Agencies

There are five news agencies serving the Press. They are:

Reuters: This world-wide and world-famous agency has since 1941 been owned and operated by the British Press under a trust agreement to guarantee the independence and integrity of the news service. Membership was extended in 1947 to the Australian Associated Press and the New Zealand Press Association, and in 1949 to the Press Trust of India.

Press Association: Owned by the provincial Press, and itself part owner with the Newspaper Proprietors' Association (i.e., the London Press) of Reuters.

Exchange Telegraph: Closely linked with the Press Association, many services being "joint"; has sole Stock Exchange rights.

The Associated Press and the British United Press: These are extensions of the two principal American news agencies.

3. Royal Commission on the Press

In 1947 a Royal Commission on the Press was appointed to inquire into the finance, control, management and ownership of the Press. Its terms of reference were: "with the object of furthering the free expression of opinion through the Press and the greatest practicable accuracy in the presentation of news; to inquire into the control, management and ownership of the newspaper and periodical Press and the news agencies, including the financial structure and the monopolistic tendencies to control, and to make recommendations thereon".

The Royal Commission held its first meeting on 30th April 1947, and issued its report on 29th June 1949.

Its recommendations in full were as follows:

1. That the Press should establish a General Council of the Press consisting of at least 25 members representing proprietors, editors, and other journalists, and having lay members amounting to about 20 per cent of the total, including the chairman. The lay members should be nominated jointly by the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord President of the Court of Session, who in choosing the other lay members should consult the chairman. The chairman, on whom a heavy burden of work will fall, should be paid.

The objects of the General Council should be to safeguard the freedom of the Press; to encourage the growth of the sense of public responsibility and public service among all engaged in the profession of journalism - that is, in the editorial production of newspapers - whether as directors, editors, or other journalists; and to further the efficiency of the profession and the well-being of those who practise it.

In furtherance of its objects the General Council should take such action as it thinks fit:

- (1) to keep under review any developments likely to restrict the supply of information of public interest and importance;
- (2) to improve the methods of recruitment, education, and training for the profession;
- (3) to promote a proper functional relation among all sections of the profession;
- (4) by censuring undesirable types of journalistic conduct, and by all other possible means, to build up a code in accordance with the highest professional standards. In this connection it should have the right to consider any complaints which it may receive about the conduct of the Press or of any persons towards the Press, to deal with these complaints in whatever manner may seem to it practicable and appropriate, and to include in its annual report any action under this heading;
- (5) to examine the practicability of a comprehensive pension scheme;
- (6) to promote the establishment of such common services as may from time to time appear desirable;
- (7) to promote technical and other research;
- (8) to study developments in the Press which may tend towards greater concentration or monopoly;
- (9) to represent the Press on appropriate occasions in its relations with the Government, with the organs of the United Nations, and with similar Press organizations abroad;
- (10) to publish periodical reports recording its own work and reviewing from time to time the various developments in the Press and the factors affecting them.

2. That powers of inquiry (into membership and control) similar to those of the Board of Trade under sections 172 and 173 of the Companies Act, 1947, should be conferred on the Register of Friendly Societies in respect of any societies registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts which publish newspapers or periodicals or engage in the business of a news agency.*

3. That chain newspapers should be required by law to carry on the front page a formula clearly indicating their common ownership.

4. That if local monopolies in a considerable area whether rural or urban should be found not to be within the purview of the Monopolies Commission, the Monopolies and Restrictive Practices (Inquiry and Control) Act, 1948, should be amended to bring newspaper monopolies in areas of this size within its scope.

5. That the present agreement in the industry to refrain from non-journalistic forms of competition should be prolonged indefinitely.

4. Journalism as a Profession

There is in Britain no uniform method of entry into journalism, nor are there any courses nor examinations recognized as providing qualifications for advancement in the profession. The general practice is for the aspirant to begin as a junior on the staff of a provincial weekly newspaper. Training consists in the day-to-day work of such an office. After this experience, giving opportunities both for reporting and for technical knowledge, a move is usually made to a London or provincial daily paper.

* Two newspapers would be affected by this recommendation, the Daily Worker and Reynolds News.

† This is already done by Kearsley Newspapers.

Later may come specialization, such as is afforded by politics, sport, crime etc. The method is empiric, it might be said rough-and-ready, but it has its advantages as well as its obvious disadvantages. Such a Journalist will have gained in alacrity, initiative, originality and resource, but probably at the expense of some cultural background. The recruitment, education and training of Journalists were the subject of one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Press (see above).

There are two professional organizations concerned with the maintenance of professional standards and the economic interests of Journalists. They are the Institute of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists. Attempts have been made over a number of years to merge these two organizations, so far without success.



19 February 1951

TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS
OF SOME OF THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

The following list may be of use in identifying some of the more important International Organizations which are commonly referred to by the initial letters of their title.

AEC	..	..	UN Atomic Energy Commission
BIS	..	..	Bank for International Settlements
CCG (BE)	..	..	Control Commission for Germany (British Element)
CFM	..	..	Council of Foreign Ministers
EOA	..	..	UN Economic Co-operation Administration
EEAFAE	..	..	UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
ECE	..	..	UN Economic Commission for Europe
ECLA	..	..	UN Economic Commission for Latin America
ECOSOC	..	..	UN Economic and Social Council
EFU	..	..	European Payments Union
ERP	..	..	European Recovery Programme
FAO	..	..	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FECC	..	..	Far Eastern Commission
GATT	..	..	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
IARA	..	..	Inter-Allied Reparations Agency
IATA	..	..	International Air Transport Association
IBRD	..	..	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICA	..	..	International Co-operative Alliance
ICAO	..	..	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICFTU	..	..	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICITO	..	..	Interim Committee of the International Trade Organization
ICJ	..	..	International Court of Justice
ILO	..	..	International Labour Organization
IMCO	..	..	International Maritime Consultative Organization
IMF	..	..	International Monetary Fund
IFU	..	..	Inter-Parliamentary Union
INC	..	..	International Refugee Organization
ITO	..	..	International Trade Organization (proposed)
ITU	..	..	International Telecommunications Union
NATO	..	..	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAS	..	..	Organization of American States
OECE	..	..	Organization for European Economic Co-operation
SCAP	..	..	Supreme Commander Allied Powers (occupying Japan)
SHAPE	..	..	Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe (of NATO)
TAA	..	..	Technical Assistance Administration
TAB	..	..	Technical Assistance Board
TAC	..	..	Technical Assistance Committee
UN	..	..	United Nations
UNIA	..	..	United Nations Association
UNICEF	..	..	UN Appeal for Children
UNOCP	..	..	UN Conciliation Commission for Palestine
UNOCI	..	..	UN Commission for Indonesia

UNCIP	.. ..	UN Commission for India and Pakistan
UNWCK	.. ..	UN Commission on Korea
UNWURK	.. ..	UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea
UNESCO	.. ..	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNKRA	.. ..	UN Korean Reconstruction Agency
UNICEF	.. ..	UN International Children's Emergency Fund
UNRWA	.. ..	UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
UNRPF	.. ..	UN Relief for Palestine Refugees Organization
UNRWA	.. ..	UN Relief and Works Agency (for Palestine Refugees)
UNSCOUR	.. ..	UN Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources
UNSCOB	.. ..	UN Special Committee on the Balkans
UPU	.. ..	Universal Postal Union
WAY	.. ..	World Assembly of Youth
WHO	.. ..	UN World Health Organization
WMO	.. ..	UN World Meteorological Organization

Details of most of these Organizations are given in a booklet "Guide to International Agencies" which may be consulted in the Information Department library, 3rd Floor, Room 103, Metochikon-Tamson Building, entrance Whizelou Street.

