

FLAGELLATOR

# Press Relations

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## Part I

With all the talk about news media bias against the present administration, a recent advertisement in the New York Times shows whose side the newspapers are on. "The following editorial employees of the New York Daily News condemn our government's actions in Indochina as abhorrent, as a source of daily atrocities, and in contradiction to the historical principles of this nation." It was signed by more than 70 employees of the Daily News. Yet the management of the Daily News refused to run the ad, paid for by the editorial writers.

It is apparent from this and other episodes in which news media management have not allowed their employees to speak out, that the business of news is more responsive to the administration than they let on. Newsweek magazine, for example, has been very hesitant in allowing their employees to organize themselves against the war in Indochina.

In recent incidents of government suppression of the media, the liberal news management has not supported its staffs.

The Justice Department, late last year, started to subpoena reporter's notebooks to be used in cases involving Black Panthers and college students. These notebooks have always been considered confidential. With this privilege, reporters have been able to get "off the record" information from politicians, police officials, and political activists.

If these people know that everything they say will fall into the hands of a zealous government

prosecutor, the job of gathering news will be hampered.

The government, it seems, is trying to stymie coverage of anti-administration news. If reporters give up their confidential notebooks, people who fear government repression will refuse to talk to them. And if reporters refuse to give up their notes, they will have to go to court.

This is too costly and time consuming, unless management backs up its staff. This does not seem to be the case. Both Newsweek and Time showed diffidence in backing their employees when the Justice Department demanded notebooks on campus dissidents.

The New York Times has dropped support of Earl Caldwell, a San Francisco reporter who is appealing a court ruling requiring him to give up information in matters of "national interest."

Caldwell fears that this ruling can be interpreted too loosely by the Justice Department, which may then force him to give up all his information and thus cause him to lose his credibility as a reporter.

To make matters worse, the Justice Department served a subpoena on a CBS news crew in Chicago. They demanded all the unprocessed film still in the cameras.

Thus, without support from their management and without credibility among those they deal with, reporters will not be able to cover anti-establishment news.

Nat Hentoff, writing in the Village Voice, states: "More and more members of groups under seige by the government will simply not talk to the press. And that, it seems to me, is one of (Attorney General) Mitchell's goals. It is in Mitchell's interest, for instance, to reduce the Panther's visibility as they are being picked off. And after the panthers?"