

FLAGELLATOR

Press Relations

By HARLEY W. LOND

C.T. Staff Writer

Last of 3 Parts

Newsweek magazine and the Los Angeles Times are two examples of what is termed the "new journalism." Both are becoming number one in their field by running objective news stories coupled with incisive interpretive reporting. Yet both publications, while claiming to be objective in their news pages, are in fact distorting the news in a subtle manner. Both are guilty of overlooking ideas and causes they consider unpopular. They tend to slant opinion away from certain topics even while claiming to present the news fairly. As such, they are representative of the print media in general.

One of the prime targets for distortion and misrepresentation by the print media are the Black Panthers. Whenever the Panthers are caught doing something "wrong," both publications ballyhoo arrests and police raids.

But, there is never any coverage of the community programs of the Black Panthers or their relation to the black community. Panthers are modern day bogeymen and as such make great front page news.

When Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed in Chicago in a police raid, the Times splashed the front page with the story of how police officers were forced into a shoot-out with the Panthers.

The story mainly covered the early-breaking police version of the incident, and it was top news. But when a federal grand jury, investigating the raid, reported that the performance of police agents "gives some reasonable basis for public doubt of their efficiency or even of their credi-

bility," the Times ran the story on the 11th page of their Sunday, May 17 edition.

Clearly, such a statement by a jury would tend to cast doubts on police handling of Black Panther affairs, but the Times is content to continue to present Black Panther news without doubting police reports and without their own investigation of the news.

When Newsweek ran a cover story on the Black Panthers, rather than go into a meaningful analysis of the Panthers, they only reinforced stereotypes of them as "the Bad Niggers of White America's nightmares come chillingly to life."

The New York Media Project, a group organized to combat the distortions and censorship of the press, carefully analysed the Newsweek story and pointed out its flaws (a copy of the analysis can be received by writing the New York Media Project, P.O. Box 266, Village Station, New York 10014).

A quote from Newsweek: If the Panthers survive as a party, they will be powerfully indebted to the police. The Panthers have fared best when they have had a martyr--a Newton bound for prison, a Cleaver in flight--and Fred Hampton dead in bed in Chicago gave them the best martyr they have ever had."

From the Media Project: "Read the preceding paragraph: If the Kennedys survive as a dynasty, they will be powerfully indebted to political assassins. The Kennedys have fared best when they have had a martyr--a Joe Kennedy Jr. killed in flight, a Joe Kennedy Sr. disabled by a stroke, a Jack Kennedy murdered in Dallas--and Bobby gave them the best martyr they have ever had... If you reacted to this as being in bad taste, and you didn't react to the parallel Panther paragraph, then you begin

to understand the depths of your white supremacy."

The radical left-wing continually produces material which the press uses to sell newspapers. Newsweek is again guilty of distortion and half-truths in an article entitled "Terrorism on the Left."

The story covers the rash of bomb scares in the East early this year and Newsweek shades the story to foster the impression of a left-wing conspiracy in the bombings. For example, part of the story attributes the death of a San Francisco policeman, in the bombing of a Haight-Ashbury District police station-house, to left-wing radicals. Yet, it has never been determined who set off the explosion.

In May of this year, a rock concert at the Olympic Auditorium was terminated when the stage collapsed under the feet of Little Richard and his musicians. The Times, in its Sunday edition, ran a story about the concert, mentioning the mishap and also stating that more than 80 people were arrested after the police closed down the show because of the emergency.

A quick check with the concert promoters would have shown the Times' reporter that the majority of arrests occurred before the stage collapsed, and that police officers constantly harassed the audience by moving into the crowd, nightsticks flailing, to make arrests.

The reporter was content to copy police reports which were totally out of step with reality. No mention of the unwarranted police brutality or of the efforts by police officials to close down dance concerts in Los Angeles.

It is clear then that the print media, as evidenced by Newsweek and the L.A. Times, is content to sell publications based on sensational stories, without any concern as to social responsibility.