

N. Y. News Offers to Print Ad

Attacking Its Policies on War

Two Other Papers Refuse to Accept

Copy From 'Friends of Democracy'

NEW YORK, May 3 (N. Y. News)—A full-page advertisement which the N. Y. News would be glad to print at its regular advertising rates has appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle after attempts to place it in two New York morning dailies failed.

Under the heading "And What Do You Call 'Aiding The Enemy', Gentlemen?" it reprints excerpts from editorials written by William Randolph Hearst, Robert R. McCormick and Joseph M. Patterson, and attacks them as "endless carping, spreading of unease and constant spittle of suspicion of our Government and Allies."

"Man in Street's" Language

The advertisement is signed by "Friends of Democracy, Inc.," with headquarters in the Fidelity Building, Kansas City, Mo.

A blurb in small type in one corner points out that "We do not use the phrase 'aiding the enemy' in its legalistic sense. We are not talking the language of lawyers, but of the man in the street."

From sources in which it has confidence, the News learned that Wendell Willkie was among a group of representative citizens who were asked to sign the advertisement when it was first drafted from information supplied, indirectly, by the Office of Facts and Figures in Washington.

Willkie, who has frequently expressed himself as being opposed to any attempt to suppress free speech no matter how much he found himself in disagreement with others, declined.

Backed Papers' View

Some time later, it was understood, after the ad had been submitted to the New York Times and the New York Herald-Tribune for publication, both papers at different times asked Willkie about his opinion of the ad. He was understood to have told each that his judgment was in accord with theirs, as he did not believe personal attacks, or suppression of expression as distinguished from consideration of issues, aided public discussion.

The Times sent the Friends of Democracy a brief note saying that the advertisement was "not acceptable." The Herald-Tribune informed the sponsors that it did not care to accept an ad dealing harshly in personalities.

The San Francisco Chronicle did not mention the matter in its editorial or news columns. The only other morning newspaper in San Francisco is a Hearst paper.

Organized by Birkhead

The Friends of Democracy, one of the earliest and most bellicose of the "democracy" groups, was organized in 1937 by Leon Milton Birkhead, who earned his living as a minister until he left a Kansas City pulpit in 1939 to become national director of his brain child.

He is 57 years old, a Republican and a native of Missouri. He worked for a year (1926-27) with Sinclair Lewis, his most intimate friend, on the writing of Elmer Gantry, a sensational novel dealing with the ministry, which drew down a national storm of criticism on the heads of the author and collaborator.

He was the author of several "Little Blue Books," among them: "Is Elmer Gantry True?" "Can Man Know God?" and "The Religion of the Free Man."

Birkhead said he was inspired to organize Friends of Democracy

by a three-month trip through England, France and Germany in 1935, during which he learned that European nations had many propaganda links in the United States. On his return he went on a lecture trip and discovered, he said, that many of those he contacted felt, as he did, that some means must be found to combat such propaganda.

He was aided in the actual organization of the Friends of Democracy by the Rev. Joseph C. Cleveland, another Kansas City pastor. By means of letters, he said, he built up a membership of 10,000, with offices in Kansas City and at 103 Park Avenue, Manhattan.

"There are no dues nor fees, but only voluntary contributions," Birkhead said. "We have no major financial backers. Contributions vary from \$1 to one of \$1,500 by Clarence H. Low, chairman of our finance committee. Last year our operating costs were \$53,000. While we do not receive many large sums of money, our national committee contains many able writers, and we receive copious contributions of talent."

Stout Helped Write Ad

Among the talent contributions is that of Rex Stout, author and member of the F. of D.'s national committee. Stout said that several people had begun six weeks ago to draft the anti-Hearst-McCormick-Patterson ad, and that it was completed two weeks later. He himself wrote the final draft, Stout said.

"We received no assistance from the Office of Facts and Figures," he said. "It is true I have several friends in the OFF, but I have turned down several offers of assistance from them, particularly in doing away with certain censorship problems I have encountered in radio broadcasts."

Archibald MacLeish, director of the Office of Facts and Figures, also denied tonight that his office had any connection either with the advertisement or its sponsors. He told a News reporter:

"I am not now and never have been a member of the Friends of Democracy. I never heard of the organization until I read this advertisement in the San Francisco Chronicle. Neither I nor the Office of Facts and Figures had anything to do with it. The Office of Facts and Figures is a Government agency."

In Washington it was reported that the final draft of the cleverly-worded advertisement was written by Laura Hobson, an experienced copy writer. There it was said that although those who drafted the ad may have received no official help from the OFF, they had many long conversations with employees of that bureau.

Birkhead also denied any OFF help and didn't seem to think too favorably of MacLeish.

"MacLeish is a poet and not militant enough," he said today.

Other Papers "Consider" Ad

"A number of papers have the ad under consideration," he went on. "I'm reluctant to tell you what they are because something might be done to influence any further consideration. Herbert Agar, editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, said he would not assume responsibility for its publication in that paper."

"Other papers have commented editorially on the ad and in some instances have used it intact in two-column form without the pictures of Hearst, McCormick and Patterson. The San Francisco Chronicle charged us approximately \$1,000 for the space.

"The offer of the Daily News to

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"The offer of the Daily News to reprint it as straight advertising will be discussed tomorrow with local committeemen."

Regarding last year's \$53,000 operating expenses, Birkhead said that about \$20,000 was spent for publication of pamphlets, the same for radio time, salaries, office expenses, etc., and the balance on "miscellaneous matters."

Louis Bromfield President

Louis Bromfield, author, is president of the F. of D. and Harold Payson, Washington economist, is treasurer. There are 37 members listed on the national committee.

Birkhead said that all contributions of the Friends of Democracy were deductible from income tax returns because it is an "educational organization."

In Washington, John P. Wenchell, assistant general counsel of the Treasury Department, said he could not recall having seen the Friends of Democracy on the list of tax-deductible organizations. He pointed out that to qualify, an organization must collect funds, "no substantial part of which is used in carrying on propaganda."

Among the pamphlets which the Friends of Democracy paid more than a third of its funds to print last year are one containing a bitter attack on Henry Ford and another entitled "Is Lindbergh a Nazi?"

They were offered for sale last week during a vocal attack on the News conducted at Vesey and Church Streets by representatives of the American Appeal Forum of America. The speaker, who identified himself as Alfred Morse, an official of the Appeal Forum, told about 75 listeners:

"If you can't afford both, then buy one about Henry Ford for 10 cents. You know it cost us 20 cents to print this about Ford."