

New Republic's

Changes

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By Lawrence Feinberg

Gilbert A. Harrison, editor-in-chief of The New Republic since 1956, resigned yesterday after a simmering dispute with the magazine's owner, Martin Peretz, who purchased the liberal weekly from Harrison last March.

"I did it because my differences with the owner could not be reconciled," Harrison, 59, said in an interview, but he refused to comment further.

Peretz, 35, praised Harrison as "a very fine man," but added: "I just think our

styles are somewhat different."

There was "No particular philosophical or management issue" that divided the two men, Peretz said, "but with two people in (charge of) the magazine, that was the difference . . . I was going to begin to determine the future of the magazine, and he didn't want to stay."

A source familiar with the situation said there had been some disagreements over editorial policy, particularly toward the Middle East, where Peretz is fervently pro-Israel, but he said the

sharpest tensions involved personality.

The New Republic was founded by Willard and Dorothy Straight in 1914, and over the years has included among its writers Walter Lippmann, Herbert Croly and Edmund Wilson.

Its staples recently have been Richard Strout's pseudonymous "TRB" columns at the front of the magazine, John Osborne's "White House Watch" and Walter Pincus' political essays, including lengthy analyses of Watergate issues.

Peretz said Osborne will continue his White House column but will become senior editor of the magazine as well. Stanley Karnow, who has been an associate editor for a year, will become foreign editor, Peretz said, while David Sanford, the magazine's managing editor for the last four years, will remain in his post and Pincus will continue as executive editor.

Peretz said he will take over many of Harrison's functions but not the title editor-in-chief. He said there will be no substantial chang-

es in what The New Republic publishes.

"It will remain an open magazine in the liberal spirit," Peretz said. His own title, Peretz said, will remain chairman of the editorial board. He said he probably will reduce his teaching duties at Harvard, where he is a lecturer, and spend more time at the magazines' offices in Washington where he recently has put in about two or three days a week.

The New Republic has a
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Martin Peretz

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circulation of about 100,000. Sanford said that when Harrison sold the magazine to Peretz last March for \$380,000, the contract included a provision that Harrison would remain as editor-in-chief until 1977, with final control over hiring, firing and manuscripts.

"That's just not the way to run a magazine," Sanford said. "It's obvious that you can't have ownership residing in one person and control in another. It's a structurally unsound situation. Now the control of the magazine has reverted to the owner."

Both Peretz and Harrison signed legal papers yesterday terminating the agreement. Peretz declined to say whether the document included any severance pay for Harrison and Harrison could not be reached for comment on that point.

The negotiations over Harrison's departure "were done in a decorous manner over a number of weeks," Sanford said. Harrison's final day at the magazine will be Friday when he will complete work on next week's issue.

During Harrison's 19 years in charge of The New Republic, the magazine retained its reputation as liberal, intellectual and non-doctrinaire, but with its idealism tempered by a sense of political realism. The magazine reached a peak of influence during the Kennedy administration. It strongly supported President Johnson in his domestic programs but was an early and ardent opponent of the Vietnam war.

Harrison said he hasn't decided yet what he will do now.