

# 'On the Other Hand'

This Is Time When Freedom of Press  
Is Gravely Threatened by Dies' Attacks

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By Lowell Mellett.

If I were the American Society of Newspaper Editors, meeting in Washington this week, this is what I would do. I'd get me a fife and a drum and an American flag. I would wrap a bandage around Mark Sullivan's broad forehead and give him the fife; the drum I would give to Ernie Pyle. Anybody could carry the flag. And I would send that trio tooting and drumming down the length of Pennsylvania avenue to the Capitol. The Spirit of '76! At the same time I would put Roy Roberts, president of the society, aboard a good, stout, galloping horse and send him forth to shout the alarm through every American village and farm.



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For this is not only the anniversary week of Paul Revere's ride, but this is a moment when freedom of the press is actually in danger. The newspapers of the country, it seems to me, have been slow to recognize the danger, having in mind how sensitive they normally are on the subject. This can be accounted for only by the fact that the threat is all wrapped around a chap whom some of them do not like, one Walter Winchell.

## Hardly a Man Is Now Alive.

I've read somewhere that a lot of people didn't like Paul Revere either. I don't know about that, since after all it was the 18th of April in '75 and hardly a man is now alive who remembers that famous day and year. In any case, Paul Revere did a great job in his day, and Walter Winchell is doing a great job in his, for one of America's important freedoms.

I've never been one to worry much about the freedom of the press in this country, but if the ineffable Mr. Dies of Texas gets away with his present effort to throttle the Winchells of journalism — along with the advertisers who pay the freight—the day is not far away when the editors of the land really will have to equip themselves with fifes and drums if they want to be heard.

Make no mistake about it, Martin Dies and his methods have ceased to be funny. We know that in Washington. A complacent Congress is in

a fair way to let him set up his own government—government by nuisance. Through this complacency on the part of some and connivance on the part of others, he has come to have the power to coerce.

## Principles, Not Persons, Involved.

For every administrative official who will stand up and fight for the rights of the men and women on his payroll, there has seemed in the last year or two several more inclined to quietly eliminate the men or women Dies sets out to "get." It takes time to fight, time to make tedious investigations into the life histories of obscure employes; time to prepare for exhausting hearings; time that could be devoted to work that has to be done. So Dies has only to shout "Communism!" at some inoffensive little cuss on some embattled agency's payroll to throw that whole agency into a dither. He doesn't have to have any evidence.

That's what Dies has been doing in the field of government. Now he has turned his attention to the broad and inviting field of the press and radio.

Newspaper editors should realize what this means. Suppose we really had a dictator in the White House and really had a rubber-stamp Congress. Is the implication clear?

I think the editors have been given

a challenge they should accept. They shouldn't wait for the Dies tactics to be turned against some journalist who is universally popular—Sullivan, for instance, or Pyle. That would only confuse the issue, not clarify it. The fight concerns a principle and a process, not a person.