

Paul Harvey, 'Voice of the Silent Majority,' Opposes

By **SETH S. KING**

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CHICAGO—The postman, as he usually does, rang for the third time today at Paul Harvey's trim, native-stone house in the exclusive Chicago suburb of River Forest. He was bringing the day's third large bag of mail—most of it letters from applauding listeners of the man who is called, and on occasion calls himself, the "voice of the silent majority."

Several weeks ago, Mr. Harvey, in one of his twice daily radio programs over the American Broadcasting Company's networks, had exclaimed: "Mr. President, I love you—but you are wrong!"

It was the day after Mr. Nixon announced he was sending American troops into Cambodia, and Mr. Harvey, as he usually does, was giving his undiluted opinion of the news.

"America's 6 per cent section of this planet's mothers cannot bear enough boy babies to police Asia — and our nation can't bleed to death trying," he declared.

Mail Response Favorable

In a sepulchral tone and with phrasing that was apocalyptic, Mr. Harvey went on: "And quite frankly, Mr. President, out here in the unterrified nine-tenths of this country that's still country, we don't think there's anything in Indochina worth that."

Since then Mr. Harvey's mail has been heavy, as it usually is, and while he once believed his following would be heaviest in what he calls the "politically fundamentalist" Midwest and South, today's letters range from Poughkeepsie, N. Y., through Savannah, Ga., to Chula Vista, Calif., and most of them are favorable.

Mr. Harvey had his radio network beginnings in Chicago



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Paul Harvey

25 years ago, broadcasting to a Midwestern audience. In the years since, he has expanded his exposure in rapidly multiplying leaps. Today A.B.C. lists him twice daily on 407 affiliate stations in 48 states (Hawaii and Alaska excepted).

Although his radio programs are not carried in New York City itself, Mr. Harvey does have outlets close to the city at Patchogue, L. I., Poughkeepsie, Stamford, Conn., and Atlantic City.

He began a twice-daily five-minute television program two years ago on his own. Today it is distributed by private syndicate to 126 stations. His thrice-weekly newspaper column is carried in 250 small papers throughout the country. And he averages three speeches a week (at fees up to \$5,000 each) in many parts of the United States.

The closest Mr. Harvey comes to New York City on television is from stations in Washington and Pittsburgh.

No Claim to Objectivity

At the breathless end of his TV programs a studio announcer usually concludes by saying that the opinions expressed by Paul Harvey are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the station. Mr. Harvey himself leaves no doubt about this.

"I've never been objective or pretended to be," he told a visitor recently. "I've always taken a stand. I let it all hang out."

Mr. Harvey comes on brisk and positive and confidential, very much like a friendly, well-read neighbor from next door who has an opinion he's going to share with you.

"I've tried to make the hard, cold, sometimes acrid news palatable and interesting," he said. "If I did otherwise, we'd abandon that vast, decent, middle-income, middle-I.Q. audience to the rabble-rousers—to the professional anti-Communists, the white klan, and the Black Panthers!"

Mr. Harvey is a tall, lean, 51-year-old man with a receding hairline and a schooled voice that shows no hint of its original Oklahoma accent. He says that neither his material nor his delivery is tailored to fit his audience.

"Danny Thomas once said to

me, 'You'd better be right, because you sound like God.' We were only arguing about golf, so I guess I sound that way all the time, one the air or off," Mr. Harvey exclaimed.

Suddenly With Fulbright

Mr. Harvey shies away from accepting any labels on his outlook, though he agrees that he stands unapologetically for flag, country and God.

"I guess I'm a political fundamentalist, though I'm not sure exactly what that means," he explained, "I thought of myself as a conservative, until I woke up one morning in 1966, came out against the war in Vietnam, and found myself in bed with Senator [J. W.] Fulbright [Arkansas Democrat and a leading war critic]. But then I couldn't be any more comfortable with a lot of people who call themselves good Republicans."

In his radio and television programs and in his columns Mr. Harvey most often comes down well to the right of center, although not always.

In a recent period he warned the President that those who supported his Indochina policies, including the Cambodia action, would desert him if he failed to prove in this year that disengagement was irreversible as Mr. Nixon contended it was.

On other occasions Mr. Harvey has proclaimed that those churches that were "diluting their dogma" to cater to more modern concepts were losing members instead of gaining them, has attacked Mayor Lindsay of New York as a limousine liberal trying to identify himself with the common man, and has warned that the New York based media, domi-

Nixon's Cambodia Move

nated by typical "Manhattan Islanders" would like to make over "our mainland" in their image and could not understand why "our silent majority, which has to listen to them," did not always obey them.

On his television show, which is taped all at once for the upcoming week, Mr. Harvey carefully varies the subject matter as well as conclusions. He may, as he did recently, range from a discussion of nudity ("Gypsy Rose Lee was right, she left something for the imagination!") to whether President Nixon is isolated from his people ("Experienced as he is in politics, he should never have been surprised by the home front response to the wider warfront in Cambodia!").

Likes to Be in Okmulgee

Mr. Harvey grew up in Tulsa, Okla., where he was a champion orator, and spent his earliest days in radio on KVOO while he attended the University of Tulsa.

Since then he has remained in the Southwest and Middle West, resisting all efforts by the network to move him to Washington or New York.

"If I spend too much time in Washington, I get too preoccupied with what's happening on either end of Pennsylvania Avenue," he said. "Why, I find myself thinking nothing really important can happen west of the Appalachians. You know, I've got to be in Waxahachie (Tex.) or Okmulgee (Okla.) every so often to feel I know what's happening in this country."

He agrees with Vice President Agnew's attack on the "eastern establishment" that he says controls the newcasts of the major networks.

"He said it 30 years too late," Mr. Harvey proclaimed. "We should shake up the centralism. But I don't know what to do about it. Certainly I don't want any more Federal snoopervision!"

Although he rather reluctantly mentions a number of old-style preachers among his forebears, Mr. Harvey frequently refers to his close association with the evangelist Billy Graham and his admiration for fundamentalist teachings.

Actually, it's his business manager and wife, Linda (the "Angel" he often refers to in his broadcasts), who reminds a guest that Mr. Harvey has cloth in his background—from ancestors who were clergymen.

While he stresses his admiration of the new spirit among the nation's youth, he has no patience for those who bewail a communications gap with them.

"There hasn't been enough of a gap," he exclaimed. "I tell my son Paul, who is 22, and well on his way to being a good concert pianist, that I don't intend to change to suit him. I'm going to believe in God, no matter whether his professors agree or not. And if I sometimes sound like a top sergeant, I can only say, we are supposed to judge others by their fruits."

Yes, Mr. Harvey says, there is a "silent majority."

"They're the great, solid majority that doesn't gang up and they don't burn things down," he declared. "But they're not conservative, either. Barry Goldwater found that out, you may be sure!"

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