Tricks of the Press


BY H. G. CREEL

Comrade Chairman, Comrades and Friends: Three or four times a year it falls to my lot to lay aside my newspaper work and take to the platform. On such occasions I am forcibly reminded of the experience of a little girl friend of mine. Jennie was an excellent speller. Her written examinations never failed to bring grades of 100. It was with her oral spelling that she had trouble. She persisted in pronouncing a letter twice when it succeeded itself in a word. For instance, she spelled “little” l-i-t-t-l-e and “apple” a-p-p-l-e. Her teacher said, “Jennie, you mustn’t do that. You must say l-i-double-t-l-e and a-double-p-l-e.” She impressed this so firmly on the little girl’s mind that later when arising to give a recitation beginning, “The sun is in the sky, Mary. Up! up!” Jennie arose and in all seriousness said, “The sun is in the sky, Mary. Double up!”

Jennie’s trouble was that she recited rather than wrote what she had to say. And that’s the difficulty with the average newspaper man. As I go along, I’ll be obliged to refer to notes to keep from “doubling up” on my words.

If, in your opinion, I make too frequent use of the personal pronoun “I,” it is not because I’m overly fond of talking about myself, but, as you’ll see as I progress, somebody must stand sponsor for what I have to say. And so I shall tell you of some of the things that I, personally, know about the newspaper business.

So far as possible I will refrain from the use of technical terms. There is one, though, that I’ll be obliged to use and let us get clear on that. That is the word “story.” In the newspaper world everything that is not an editorial or an advertisement is a “story.” If I were
to witness the accidental killing of a man on the street today and write it up for my paper, that would be a "story." A "story" is not necessarily a piece of fiction. I shall use the word in the newspaper sense, referring to actual happenings—not to fictitious ones.

In the same way, when I employ the word "newspaper," I shall have to mind the large newspapers, the news agencies and the press associations. For all matter not of local character, the small newspaper is dependent upon this source for its news. This applies in the same way that the small or local merchant is dependent upon the wholesale houses or factories for his supplies. Everything appearing in the columns of your local papers, that does not concern the immediate vicinity, comes from the news or press associations, by mail or telegraph, or is clipped from other papers. We shall consider the source of this news rather than its outlet.

Here's something that's true of all newspapers: When a cub starts to work—a cub is a young man or young woman just breaking into the business—he is taken before his managing editor and told this: "Your business here is to write the truth, the strict truth and all of it. If we catch you in ever so slight a deviation from the strict line of veracity, off comes your journalistic head." And they mean it. Practically every reporter starts to work with that admonition.

But now let's see: Few newspapers are owned by men or coteries of men who have not other business interests. I don't know about your local papers. You do. Run over them mentally and see if this applies. We'll assume that the publisher of a newspaper is interested in traction stock. And this cub, who has been hired to tell the truth, comes in with a story of over-crowding, or under heating, or lack of safety appliances on the street cars. Mind you, now, every thing a reporter writes is read three times before it goes into the paper. It is read first by a copy reader, next by a proof reader and again by the managing editor. If it passes these three people it goes into the paper.

This cub's story comes to the managing editor. He is in touch with the publisher. He knows the publisher does not wish such a story in the columns. So he promptly lays it aside. And at the close of that day's business he calls this young cub to his desk and tells him, as gently as possible, "In the future put the soft pedal on traction
stories. We can’t use ’em. The old man’s in it.’ That’s a frequent remark in a newspaper office, ‘‘The old man’s in this thing.’’ After a few experiences of this sort the cub begins to understand. And the ‘‘truth’’ to him comes to mean: ‘‘Those things which do not conflict with the business interests back of my newspaper.’’ He becomes a mental reflection of the economic interests with which his paper is identified. And yet he’s hired to tell the truth!

On the old ‘‘Chicago Chronicle,’’ every copy reader’s desk contained a list of twenty-two corporations regarding which nothing derogatory could appear in that paper. The publisher of the ‘‘Chronicle,’’ John R. Walsh, was sentenced to Leavenworth prison. He was interested in each of these corporations. Among them were three banks. He wrecked those banks. You remember that the crash swept away the savings of thousands of small depositors, though the clearing house association afterward made good the amount to all who were caught in the crash. The banks accepted money after those on the inside knew they were insolvent. But the ‘‘Chronicle’’ was silent. Yet you know that John R. Walsh, publisher, knew what John R. Walsh, banker, was doing. Practically every man on the Walsh paper knew that the crash was impending. But that was the ‘‘truth’’ to none of them. It was a business interest back of the paper. It applies to a greater or lesser degree on all newspapers. Remember this in the future. You’ll be better able to interpret the stories you read.

No cartoonist is allowed to draw a cartoon which will interfere with the business, or arouse the antagonism, of a large advertiser. In his chalk talks, John T. McCutcheon, cartoonist for the ‘‘Chicago Tribune,’’ frankly admits this fact.

You remember, in reading your history, of the great Moon Hoax of the ‘‘New York Sun.’’ I want to review that briefly so we can compare it with present-day newspaper methods. This, you remember, was during the period of 1835. It was known that Sir John Herschel had gone to the Cape of Good Hope for the purpose of erecting an observatory. The ‘‘Sun’’ appeared on the streets one day with what purported to be an extract from the Edinburg ‘‘Journal of Science.’’ This stated that by means of a powerful telescope Herschel had found the moon to be inhabited by human beings with wings. Great flocks
of them had been seen flying about. The telescope had also revealed a most intelligent race of beavers. Pictures of these and of moon scenery were published. The story ran through several issues. Thousands of extra papers were sold. As the stages drove into outlying towns they were surrounded by crowds of excited people who refused to disperse until each had paid for and secured copies of the fake edition. This was before the day of cables. The deception was not discovered until the arrival of authentic advices from Edinburg.

Of course, in our day and age, nothing of this sort could happen. The fast mail train, the telegraph and cable are protection against such gross news frauds. But this did happen during the period mentioned. Now compare it with a more recent trick of the press.

The "Chicago Tribune" occupies school land in the heart of Chicago. By means of an illegal lease, signed at midnight, the "Tribune" is robbing the school fund of about $48,000 a year. When Edward Dunne was mayor of Chicago he attempted to annul that lease. Of course the "Tribune" fought him. Among other things, Dunne said that the "Tribune" was not acting in the best interests of the city. To this the "Tribune" replied with a lengthy editorial in which it said:

When Mayor Dunne fills the school board with scare-brains, anarchists and fools, he is not acting in the best interests of the city. When he packs the police department with ex-convicts, crooks and gamblers, he is not acting in the best interests of the city.

Dunne had been a judge on the bench. He thought he knew law. To him this clearly spelled libel. And he actually started suit against the "Chicago Tribune" for $100,000. But before he'd gone very far some of his good newspaper friends took him to one side and said: "Edward, don't make a fool of yourself." And he asked why. Then they quickly pointed out to him that the offending editorial said: "WHEN Mayor Dunne fills the school board with scare-brains, anarchists, and fools; and WHEN he packs the police department with ex-convicts, crooks and gamblers." It didn't say he had done it at all. What it did say was that when he DID act in this way—should he ever be guilty of such conduct—he would not be acting in the city's best interests. And Dunne had to agree with the "Tribune." He dropped the case. The "Tribune" did not go into court. That was a modern trick of the press.
When reading your newspaper you sometimes come across headlines after this fashion:

STATE BANK CASHIER
ABSCONDS WITH FUNDS?

But few of you notice the interrogation point at the end of that sentence. That takes all the sting out of the libel—so far as the newspaper is concerned. In reality the paper states something; it can prove in court that it merely asked a question. Here are some samples:

I hold in my hand the "Kansas City Times" for Monday, July 25, 1910. On the first page are five declaratory headlines—each followed by an interrogation point. I'll read two of them:

HE WAS CRUEL TO CHICKENS?

The "Times" has accused an express wagon driver of cruelty to animals. But not having time or inclination to verify the story, the paper uses the handy little interrogation point. That releases it from all responsibility. Here's another:

THE INTERESTS BEHIND WILSON?

This is clearly a case of libel—if Wilson can prove that he is not backed or dominated by what we call "the interests"—the trusts. But the sentence is clear. There's no misunderstanding its meaning. It states, without a pause, "The Interests Behind Wilson." Again the interrogation point is brought into use and the gentle art of newspaper trickery goes merrily onward.

Here's another from the "Kansas City Star" for Sunday, July 31, 1910:

COAL CONFERENCE FAILS?

As a matter of fact the coal conference between the miners and the operators did not fail. You know positively that on the 31st day of last July negotiations were not even broken off. In the light of later events you know that there was no justification for that story when the "Star" went to press on July 31st. This was printed on the first page. It was sent out to dishearten the miners in the district. It is an old newspaper trick to break the ranks of a union on strike. But to clear itself, to prove in
court if necessary, that it intended no misinformation at all, the "Star" places an interrogation point after a declaratory sentence.

In newspaper stories you read you frequently come across the word "alleged," or the phrase "it is said," "it is believed," "it is reported," etc. I want to read you something else from this same "Kansas City Star," July 31, 1910. I want you to see that these things are not isolated cases, accidents or typographical errors. They are carefully thought out and published with intent to deceive. This is on the first page, sixth column:

**A STRIKE ARMY GATHERING.**

Pennsylvania Officers May Be Attacked by Four Thousand.

Greensburg, Pa., July 30.—Following defeat in an alleged plot to draw a score of officers into a death trap early today, it was reported that striking miners near Export were mobilizing an army of nearly four thousand to avenge the loss of one man and the injury of many more in a battle between the deputies and fifty strikers today.

While it was still dark this morning, a vacant building near the mines was burned, it is charged, to draw officers of the law to their death.

There's some more of the story that I won't take time to read. This much will do. Please notice that this is straight to the point. There are no interrogation points after any of these sentences. All are clear. Now let's see: In the sub-head-line, which gives the impression that a strike army of four thousand is gathering to attack Pennsylvania officers, occur the words "may be." In the first paragraph we find that this is an "alleged plot;" and further, "it is reported" that striking miners were mobilizing an army. In the next paragraph we learn that a building was burned—"it is charged"—to draw officers of the law to their death. In a headline and two paragraphs we find: "may be," "it was reported," "alleged," and "it is charged." This is the foundation of the story. It is built on these phrases. But I say to you that the reading public is not familiar with this phase of newspaper trickery. Therefore these stories are accepted at their face value. And their face value is false—counterfeit. The incident here related need not have happened—I doubt if it did happen. There's nothing in this story to prove or even intimate that it happened. It could have been made and probably was made out of whole cloth.
That, too, was sent out to discredit a strike situation—to "mold" public opinion.

Here's another: I have here the "Chicago Tribune" for Friday, July 8, 1910. On the first page, at the top of the column, under a heavy headline, is this:

PLANT WRECKED BY LABOR BOMB.

New Building of International Harvester Company Blown Up; Steel Windows Hurled 300 Feet In The Air.

ROW OF IRON WORKERS.


This story is nearly a column long. It clearly tells how union men are responsible for a dynamite outrage. Any man or organization of men which would resort to such measures ought to be placed where they'll no longer inflict themselves upon society. This must be true of the iron workers' union or the "Tribune" wouldn't say so. This is a big union. It has thousands of dollars in its treasury. It can hire the best lawyers in the land. They can go into court and make the newspaper prove its charges or pay over an immense sum for libel. Of course, the "Tribune" is sure of its facts. Let's read the opening sentence:

Sympathizers with union iron workers and sheet metal workers are believed by the police to be responsible and so on through nearly a column. Ah! you see! They "are believed by the police" to be responsible, accessories before and after the fact, guilty—anything you
please. That little journalistic trick, "believed by the police," blocks any successful attempt to make the "Tribune" prove its falsehood. The paper releases itself from all responsibility by putting its own words in the mouth of someone else.

Continuing, this same story says:

Business agents of the Sheet Metal Workers' union appeared at the job two days ago and are said to have threatened the non-union men from Philadelphia.

You'll notice that they "are 'said' to have threatened" nonunion men. Again:

"You fellows had better go back to Philadelphia," the business agents are reported to have said.

Please notice that this whole story is built on these tricky phrases, word deceptions, distortions of English.

Added to second edition and to succeeding ones:

This story, dated July 8, 1910, proved to be the opening gun in the newspaper end of the conspiracy against the Iron Workers' union. The McNamara brothers were arrested on April 21, 1911, nine months later. In the meantime the Capitalist press was cunningly at work "molding" public opinion with this and similar stories. For the reader's enlightenment we'll trace the Iron Workers' dynamite outrages through the newspapers.

The "Kansas City (Mo.) Star" for Sunday, April 23, 1911, made a first page, nine-deck headline story of the arrest of the McNamaras. The opening paragraph containing, "is a charge," was as follows:

Indianapolis, April 22.—That certain union men are in a nation-wide plot to destroy with dynamite big works done by non-union men is a charge made public today with the arrest of accused men here and in Chicago.

The story then continued through an entire column on the first page and was continued for a quarter of a column on page thirteen of the same issue.

About a month later, May 14th, 1911, to be exact, another story was sent the rounds of the Capitalist press. This interesting paragraph is taken from a front-page story in the "Kansas City (Mo.) Journal" of above date:

The prosecution considers that it made a great gain in part by substantiating the alleged confession of Ortie McManigal.

There are three separate journalistic dodges in the above eighteen words, an average of one for every half dozen words. I leave the reader to apply what he has learned thus far, pick them out and draw his own conclusions.
On a wager I will allow you to write about any given person the most libelous story you can conceive. Then we'll submit it to your attorney. We'll get his opinion that it is thoroughly and wholly libelous and will hold in any court. You may sign my name to it. Let me have it for five minutes. I'll agree to rewrite and change it so slightly that you'll not notice the difference—your attorney may, but you'll not. And I guarantee you couldn't get a five-cent piece from me in all the courts in the land.

But again I say—and I want to drive this home—that you are not acquainted with these delicate methods of twisting the English language; of saying one thing and being able to prove that you said another. You are not skilled in the trickery with which the newspaper man is familiar. You don't know how to detect the false from the true. You don't like for me to say that, but deep in your hearts you know it's so.

Here's something else: You remember the killing of Young Lazarus Averbuch in Chicago. He was murdered in the home of Chief of Police Shippy. You were told that Averbuch was an anarchist; that he went to Shippy's home armed with a knife and a gun; that after a desperate personal encounter Shippy succeeded in shooting the anarchist, but not until the Chief had been severely wounded with a knife.

I saw Averbuch as he lay on a slab in the Cook county morgue. He was a boy 20 years old. A consumptive. Emaciated. Shippy was a man six feet two inches in height, of splendid physique. He was an athlete, trained in the handling of men. The idea of that consumptive boy successfully attacking Shippy was screamingly ludicrous. But Shippy had killed his man. First he boasted there would be no investigation. Then it was learned that young Averbuch was a Jew. There are powerful Jewish societies in Chicago. They demanded an investigation. People began to ask questions. It became evident that there would have to be an inquest. Shippy didn't dare go before a coroner's jury with the facts as I have related them to you. His story of a sickly boy overpowering him in a rough and tumble fight wouldn't hold water. And he knew it. Everybody else in official Chicago knew it. Then the newspapers sprang to his assistance.

I have here a copy of the "Chicago American" for March 18, 1906. You'll notice a picture of "Averbuch the
This is a "doped" or retouched photo of the unfortunate Jewish boy killed by Chief of Police George M. Shippy of Chicago. This picture, notoriously faked, was used to mold public opinion. It cleared Shippy long enough for him to resign as chief of police and leave the country.
Athlete." This was published to be introduced at the inquest. It shows a man with tremendously muscular forearms. At the time this appeared in the Chicago papers Frank Gotch, wrestling champion of the world, was in the city. I compared these measurements with those of Gotch. He had no such muscular development as is here shown. To carry out the proportions, this boy’s hand would have to be the size of a ham. His arm is one-half the width of his body at the shoulders. In all the history of the world there never lived a man so wonderfully developed as this one.

The inquest was held. The "Jewish World" summed up the case when it said that only God and the Shippy family knew what happened in that house—and God wasn’t called to the inquest. But this photo had been circulated in the newspapers before the inquest. Public opinion had been "molded." Shippy was cleared.

I want you to look carefully at this photo. And remember, it’s a fake. I’ve drawn some lines here with a brush. (See page 11.) If you look closely you’ll see that the arms have been made larger than the photo showed them originally. This is done by "retouching." Fully a third has been added to this boy’s arms. All that you see below the lines I’ve drawn has been added. The picture is "doped." It is not truthful. That is the evidence which cleared Shippy. It enabled him to go free long enough to resign as chief of police, skip the country and stay away until it was safe to return. Men have been hung on similar "evidence." A good lawyer can hang you on such evidence. This is a photograph in a capitalist newspaper—the kind you read.

Say, a lot of you nodded your heads wisely when I said the newspapers of today couldn’t repeat the Moon Hoax of 1835. Look at that picture again and see if they can’t. They can. And they do. And you’re the people who furnish the funds by which they do it.

In the future don’t be too sure about the pictures,
the photographs, you see in the papers. Look for the motive behind them. You'll learn something.

Why, see here: You remember the shooting of Mayor Gaynor of New York City. You know he was shot in the back of the neck. You know nothing of the sort! Here's the Chicago "Tribune" for Wednesday, August 11, with a picture of the wounded mayor with blood streaming down his face. Then he must have been shot from in front and not from behind. The type stories tell you one thing and the pictures tell you another. Pass that paper around.

Another thing: You know that the assassin of the Mayor was an Irish-American named Gallagher. He was rather a portly individual. He could not be called a tall man. You know these things. You think you do! You've read them in the papers. Well, here's something the people of New York City read in the New York "Journal" on the day of the shooting:

The Mayor was sitting in his cabin at the time. A tall man, with a mustache and appearing to be about fifty-six years old, came along. He stopped and looked at the party as though he were gazing out of curiosity at the Mayor.

Then the man suddenly drew a revolver and fired. He was within two feet of Mr. Gaynor at the time. The bullet struck the Mayor in the temple and he toppled over into his wife's arms.

Why, you've been reading out here that the Mayor was on deck when he was shot; this says he was in his cabin! Your papers told you he was shot in the back of the neck; this says the bullet entered the temple! Your best information is that Mayor Gaynor's secretary caught him as he fell and that his wife had to be telephoned to rush to St. Mary's hospital to see him; this says he toppled over into his wife's arms.

Who's being flim-flammed? you or the New Yorkers? You don't know. Who got the truth about the shooting? you or the people of the East? You don't know. What accounts seem the most likely? You—don't—know. What capitalist newspaper can you believe? Where can you get the truth in a paper published for profit? You don't know.
And yet for years you've been reading some capitalist newspaper, swallowing everything it told you for gospel truth.

Several months ago I was in Washington, D. C. While there I called at the White House. President Taft received me in the Blue Room. He consented to pose with me for a picture, I offering him a copy of "Appeal to Reason" and he with his hand extended accepting the paper.

Now, every one of you know that's a blamed lie. And yet I ask you to see the evidence of the camera (page 15.) Just pass these pictures around, please. There's the scene exactly as I described it. Remember that the camera does not lie. It reproduces only what was directly in front of the lens at the moment the shutter was released. There's no mistaking the figures. The famous Taft smile is playing all over the features of the President. I look rather scared, but who wouldn't he under the circumstances? The picture is true to life. You workingmen who voted for Taft and have since been invited to visit him at the White House will recognize the Blue Room, too. You can't deny that photograph. You've got to believe it. And yet you know the scene did not occur. You positively know that Taft would not pose in the White House for a picture with a Socialist, extend his hand for a copy of the Little Old "Appeal"—and smile about it. But consider the facts. I was in Washington. I did go to the White House. I was seen to enter. I was in the building plenty long enough to have had this picture taken. Then when I tell you that something happened while I was in there, when I show you a photograph of it—what are you going to do?

This is another instance of tricky photography. This is a composite of two photos. It's crude. I intended that it should be crude. I want to prove to you that it's a fake. You'll notice first that the President's outline is dimmer than mine. As compared with mine, his linen is
The crude fake photograph showing Creel and President Taft posing for a picture in the Blue Room of the White House.
The same photograph further "doped." Compare the two pictures. Notice how naturally the President's right hand grasps the newspaper in this picture.
soiled. Now look for his outstretched hand. It’s hidden behind the paper. A skillful photo-retoucher, such as the one who worked on the Averbuch picture, could make the outlines of equal strength. He’d brighten up the President’s linen to look like mine. And in a way so natural you’d never know the difference he’d show the Taft fingers grasping the “Appeal.” He’d make this whole picture so life-like that you couldn’t detect the fake unless you were forewarned. Look at the picture again. You’ll see that Taft’s right arm falls unnaturally. This same photo artist could paint the right arm in a natural position. That, again, would tone up the picture. I tell you by the time a tricky newspaper finished with that photo you couldn’t tell it from genuine. (See page 16.)

During the strike of the meat wagon drivers in Chicago it came to my attention that eleven photos were made into one. This composite photo showed a caravan of meat wagons being driven through the streets of Chicago. It was guarded on both sides by police walking about six feet apart. They carried revolvers in their hands. Midway down this caravan a wagon was overturned and a dozen or more men, with union buttons prominently displayed, were jubilantly sticking knives into the heart of a scab. There was no more truth in that photo than in this one.

The Chicago newspapers didn’t dare to put that picture in the city editions. It was destined for the “bull-dogs.” Do you know what a “bull-dog” is? A “bull-dog” is a newspaper printed at 12 o’clock noon to-day and dated 6 o’clock to-morrow night. Every great newspaper publishes its “bull-dog” or out-of-town edition. That’s what you get here. Weekly newspapers or monthly periodicals do not claim to be up to date in news matters and frankly admit that their editions are printed in advance. But the dailies profess to give you the news of to-day—to-day. As a matter of fact, most of the papers for out-of-town readers are dated twenty-four
hours ahead. Into these "bull-dogs" go columns and whole pages of stories the papers wouldn’t dare put on the streets of the cities in which they are published.

The great papers and the press associations deliberately send out this sort of stuff. Your papers here print it with malice aforethought or in good faith, it makes no difference. They PRINT it. And bear in mind that the press is the great educator. It "molds" public opinion. That's your opinion. It's YOUR mind that the owners of the newspapers and the press associations are playing with.

If you want to make the average publisher get up on his hind feet and paw the air, just intimate that there's any connection between his business and editorial offices. With a spurt of indignation he'll prove you a fool a dozen times over. I want to give you a few instances.

You remember a few years ago when Corey, the steel magnate, was trying to divorce his wife and marry the actress, Mabelle Gilman. Surely! You all remember that. And you know how every paper in the country championed Corey's wife. You remember how they excoriated the man, denounced divorce and upheld the "sanctity of the home." Yes! Well, to those of us on the inside, to the initiated, it was significant that the Steel Trust, of which Corey was head, spends not one cent in advertising with the newspapers. They had nothing to lose by telling the truth about Corey and his marital escapades. And had there been anything to lose, the interests back of the newspapers would have forced them to remain silent upon the subject of Corey and his actress.

Now, some of you don't believe that. And I'm real pleased that you don't. That gives me a good chance to prove it to you.

Up in Battle Creek, Mich., lives C. W. Post, president of the Citizens' Industrial Association and of the Postum Cereal Food Company. At the very time Corey was TRYING to divorce his wife—at the identical moment
the newspapers were crying so loudly against his ATTEMPTED wrong to a faithful wife, Post DID divorce his wife and marry his stenographer. And you didn’t read a word about it in the newspapers! Of course, the labor and Socialist press carried the story, but bear in mind that I’m talking about big newspapers, the Capitalist press.

Now why do you suppose they were silent upon this matter? Because the Postum Cereal Food Company spends hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in advertising with the newspapers. And I say to you that because of this advertising the entire Capitalist press has muzzled itself upon a record as black as the middle pit of Hades.

I hold in my hand the Wichita (Kan.) “Eagle” for Tuesday, July 19. You’ll notice here on the back page an advertisement covering more than a quarter page. It’s entitled “Mob Coddling by Congressmen.” This is one of Mr. Post’s anti-labor union and anti-Socialist advertisements. This is hush-money paid to the newspapers! I don’t know if the Kansas City papers publish these Post advertisements or not, but—

(Voice from audience—“Yes, they do. The “Times” printed that.”)

All right, then. Now some of you write the publisher of the “Kansas City Times.” Ask him why he has never allowed his paper to tell the truth about Post. Ask him how much hush-money he’s getting. I suppose the columns are open to “communications to the editor.” Are they?

(Voice—“Yes.”)

Good. Then put it under that head. Send it in and watch them publish it. After you’ve waited several weeks and it doesn’t appear, call on the publisher in person.

But this, I say, is an example, a national one, of how the business office dictates what shall and what shall not go into the news columns.
And perhaps you think the editorial columns are sacred. Maybe you think they cannot be bought and sold just as the advertising and news columns, though at a higher price. Let's see. You remember the case of Christian Rudowitz, the Russian refugee, imprisoned at Chicago by order of the Czar. He was wanted for public execution in Russia. His fate was to be a warning to other Russian revolutionists. This man took part in the revolution in the land of the Czar. He was fighting for freedom for his people. The Cossacks put down the rebellion and Rudowitz escaped to this country. In these United States we boast that we have an asylum for political refugees; that a man or men who have fought against tyranny elsewhere may find a haven within our boundaries. But, like "freedom of press," this is a theory only. The Czar wanted this man. He was arrested and ordered returned to Russia.

A National Political Refugee Defense League was hastily formed. At its head were such people as Jane Addams of Hull House, Raymond Robbins and other men and women of national reputation. Notwithstanding this, the great "Chicago Tribune" fought that case from start to finish. It said that Rudowitz was a common criminal. That there was nothing of a political nature in what he had done. It ridiculed the men and women who were trying to save him; demanded that he be returned to Russia and publicly shot—and that at once.

And this was the reason. Follow this: The "Chicago Tribune" is owned by the McCormick family. The McCormick family owns the International Harvester Trust. Russia is the largest buyer of harvesting machines outside the United States. Why, so strong were the trade relations between the two countries, you remember, that a few years ago a member of the McCormick family was appointed ambassador to Russia. And so, in order that trade relations might not be disturbed, having in mind the sale of a few more machines, the great "Chicago
Tribune” exerted its powerful influence to have a Russian George Washington put to death by one of the bloodiest tyrants in history.

The only bright feature in the whole thing is that the “Tribune” failed. But the intent was the same. Here, then, was another instance of how the business interests dictate the editorial policy of newspapers. I could give you a thousand.

Most newspapers have financial editors. I want to show you how accurate is the newspaper’s financial news when it conflicts with the business interests or the advertisers back of the newspaper. I hold in my hand the “Chicago Tribune” for January 12, 1908. It carries, you’ll notice, a full-page advertisement elaborating upon the excellency and accuracy of its financial news columns. Bear that in mind while we go behind the scenes.

To begin with, I think it's fairly well established that we had a panic during 1907 and 1908. Most of you have a very vivid recollection of it. Yet if you’ll search the files of most of the big newspapers, the “Chicago Tribune” particularly, you’ll be amazed to find that the word “panic” was not mentioned all during that time. On the contrary, you’ll find long stories of “Sunshine” movements and the direct lie, day after day, that the financial and industrial situation “is improving.” It was worth a reporter’s job to write the word “panic” into his copy. When the papers wished to be particularly severe upon the system which fosters and creates panics they allowed the reporters to say “hard times,” but “panic”—never. This was a conspiracy to keep the knowledge of an actual panic confined to a few financiers and “captains of industry.” They knew the situation and profited by it, while many of you foolishly believed the papers you read, invested here, bought there, and when the banks closed down and issued scrip you were caught—and the other side sat back and laughed at the way their newspapers trapped you.
GUARD TAFT FROM SOCIALISTS

2 KILLED IN FIRE; LOSS $500,000

Other Men Are Reported Missing After Wabash Railroad Accident.

MRS. CHAPIN 'ONLY DRUDGE'

Wife Testifies Husband Complied Her to Work and Save Little Money for Household.

HOPKINS 55; PAIRS CUT THE VOTE

Only 156 Members Answer the Roll Call on the Thirty-Fourth Rule of the House.

FLAHERTY GOES TO MINORS

Formerly of the Pittsburgh and Boston National Lincoln Park, Flaherty Will Be President of the Federal Baseball Club.

CROWD CRYING FOR JOBS ATTEMPTS TO START DEMONSTRATION AND POLICE INTERFERE

Crowd Crying for Jobs Attempts to Start Demonstration and Police Interfere.
At any rate, when the panic came on the Chicago newspapers one day carried what purported to be an extract from that week’s report of the R. G. Dun Mercantile Agency. Regarding three industries it said that—

The furniture factories of Michigan were loaded with orders. The steel mills of Pennsylvania were running overtime. There was a call for more laborers on the docks at New Orleans.

Two days later I got the actual Dun report. Regarding these three items it said that—

There was a dearth of orders in the Michigan furniture factories. The steel mills of Pennsylvania were running short time. The New Orleans docks were crowded with idle men.

I was managing editor of a Chicago newspaper at the time. I sent two reporters to the office of the local manager of the R. G. Dun Mercantile Agency. They laid the two reports before him.

“Did you know this?” they asked.

“No,” he replied.

“Is the newspaper report true?”

“No. It’s a lie.”

“What do you intend doing about it?” they asked.

“Nothing,” answered the agency manager. “We don’t care how much the newspapers lie about us, so long as they all tell the same lie.”

And then he gave his reason. He said:

“See here, young men. Our service costs several hundred dollars a year. If the merchant could get an accurate commercial report from the columns of a two-cent newspaper, he wouldn’t pay our price for the service, would he?”

That was clear, and of course the reporters answered no.

“Well, then, that’s the reason,” said the manager. “The more frequently the public is misled through the financial columns of the newspapers the better we like it. But when they lie about us we do want them to all unite upon the same lie.”

Headline writing is an art in itself. On every newspaper are men whose duty it is to write the sentences which head every story. This is the largest type in the
paper, is the most important, and is supposed to give the gist of the story underneath. I've a gem here that I picked up in Chicago. This is the "Chicago Daily Journal" for February 11, 1909. This headline all of you can see. It won't be necessary to put on spectacles, either. It was written for a purpose—to be seen and read at a distance. Look at it. (See page 22.) It reads:

"GUARD TAFT FROM SOCIALISTS."

What do you think of it? Now, then, the beautiful part about this is that while the headline runs clear across six columns the actual story of "Guarding Taft from Socialists" occupies just sixteen lines, date line and all. You'll notice that I've drawn a line with pen and ink here, showing where the Socialist story leaves off and the paper launches into a description of "balmy spring weather." This is the typical newspaper, anti-Socialist story. It's six columns wide and an inch deep.

Such headlines are gotten out to be read from the news stands. They catch the eye. Even if you don't stop and buy a paper, the impression is made on your mind. You go on your way convinced that Socialists attempted to do the President bodily harm and were foiled in the attempt. As a matter of fact, this incident did not occur. I've corresponded with many people in New Orleans and none of them know anything about it. It's a fake pure and simple.

And now what redress do you suppose Socialists or anyone else have? We boys on the papers have a story which, to us, illustrates that point. It relates to one of you—the reading public—named John Brown. One day his name unfortunately crept into the obituary column. He was reported dead. And the next day an exceedingly angry John Brown presented himself to the managing editor of that paper. He held the previous day's issue in his hand. Shaking it under the nose of the editor, he said:
“See here! Yesterday you had me in the death column. I’m not dead. And it’s hurting my business. I want you to take it back.”

“Well,” said the editor, “I’m sorry about that. You see, we don’t correct mistakes on this paper. But I’ll fix it for you. If we had you in the death column yesterday I’ll put you in the birth column to-morrow. That’ll make it right.”

The newspapers figure that you—the reading public—have just that much chance of getting the truth or a retraction, if the paper wishes not to give it to you.

When a president of the United States, a senator or some other person of importance delivers a speech on a given night the newspapers print it entire the next morning. You’ve noticed that. Mr. Roosevelt is just now delivering speeches. Next week he speaks at Chicago, I believe. He’ll speak at 8 p.m. By 4 o’clock next morning your papers will be on the streets with his talk, word for word. You’ll see a line at the top of the first column, “By Telegraph.” Also you’re liable to find a short editorial elaborating upon the excellency of “our” news service. News-gathering facilities of to-day and twenty-five years ago will be compared. You’ll be told of the number of men who sat up all the night before—telegraphers, reporters, editors and others—how they worked all the night long to get this particular speech to you early in the morning. And you’ll not be allowed to forget the “enormous expense” incident to getting the telegraphic news on a modern daily. “Always read this paper. It spares neither pains nor expense. Its telegraphic service is unexcelled.”—Yes! Well, that speech is in every newspaper office in Kansas City—now. And it’s in type! It’s all ready to go into the columns at a moment’s notice.

This is done by what we call the “release” system. That is, these highly important people obligingly write up their speeches several weeks or months in advance.
They are then sent to the newspapers—by mail, not by telegraph—with the understanding that the papers will not publish them until a message is sent saying the speech has been delivered—until it has been "released." And that's the source of lots of your "telegraphic news."

That wouldn't be so bad if it applied to speeches only. But it's true of presidential messages as well. What a president says in a message to congress affects trade conditions to some extent. When it is known that the chief executive will send a message to the House on a given day, thousands of business men get up at 4 o'clock the following morning. They want the "news" in a hurry. They want to know if it's necessary for them to make a quick turn to keep even with the market.

Save your time! The newspaper publisher has had that message for days. If your local editor or his friends are playing the market they'll be on the right side forty-eight hours before you can possibly start. Sleep late that morning! Don't worry. You're in the hands of your friends, the interests which own and control the press which you support.

This release system works another way, too. Twenty-four hours after the San Francisco fire, the Chicago newspapers had stories in type telling how the unions were retarding the rebuilding of San Francisco. At that time the full extent of the damage was not known. It was supposed that rebuilding could be begun in a few days, or a week at latest. So this story was prepared, put in type and held ready to go into the papers at a moment's notice. Later events proved that while their homes were tumbling in upon them and their families, the newspapers were putting in type stories of how these same union men were rioting and killing other men who wanted to work. It was months before those stories were used. But they were used. You read them. You thought they came over the wires direct from the Pacific coast. They'd been laying in the newspaper offices for months, and were just as
true when you read them as they were when first written.

While we’re on the subject of telegraphic news, let’s go a step farther. Suppose you went to the telegraph office to-day and wished to send a ten-word message to San Francisco. What do you suppose it would cost you? You’d pay 75 cents. But suppose I wanted to send the same message to my newspaper in San Francisco for publication. If I walked into the same office, gave the same message to the same clerk and showed my reportorial star, how much do you suppose I’d have to pay? Twenty-five cents! I’d get a "press rate" and—

(Voice from the audience: "I paid a dollar for fourteen words three days ago.")

Oh, did you? Well, we’re getting real well acquainted, aren’t we?

But to continue: Let’s suppose that fourteen words wouldn’t be enough. Let’s say it would take a hundred. You’d have to pay seventy-five cents for the first ten words and five cents a word thereafter; four dollars and a half for ninety words and seventy-five cents for ten words, or a total of five dollars and a quarter for one hundred words. On this same distance the newspapers get a flat rate of two and a half cents a word. They pay $2.50 for identically the same service that costs you five dollars and twenty-five cents. Remember that I’m speaking of day messages in both cases.

Now, perhaps you’ll see why newspapers are not overly enthusiastic about government ownership of telegraph lines. They know that any concerted newspaper agitation along that line will result in the companies taking away their "press rates." Long ago the companies passed word to the papers that immediately they espoused government ownership of telegraph lines they, the newspapers, would pay the same tolls as the "dear people." So the papers obligingly remain silent, or, if forced to commit themselves, opine that government ownership of telegraph lines is not a desirable thing. Yet
the United States and Haiti are the only republics in the world which submit to private ownership of the means of telegraphic communication.

And perhaps you think that we newspaper boys—when working for the Capitalist press and writing this sort of stuff—maybe you think we believe it ourselves! Well, we don't.

You know that for $25 a week a reporter will go to work on a Republican paper; in that capacity he'll write with all the force at his command, declaring that everything politically righteous and holy is to be found within the Republican party—and nowhere else. And for a raise of $5 a week he'll walk right across the street and say the same thing about the Democrats. Then for $5 more he'll go to a third paper right around the corner and repeat the dose, this time about a so-called independent party or candidate. In the face of this, I solemnly declare to you that the newspaper man is honest. He's sincere. He has his work to do and he does it. Then why does he change his politics so readily? I'll tell you. We have learned that whether we work for a Republican paper, or a Democratic paper, or a so-called Independent paper, that we're working for the same gang. We're working for Capitalism. So the Capitalist newspaper man changes his politics as readily as you change your coat.

"Oh," you say, "that applies to the Socialist press too, Creel. You and other men on Socialist papers have changed your politics momentarily. You Socialists, too, are insincere."

There are a number of good reasons why this does not apply. I'll give you three.

In the first place, it would be utterly impossible for a man who has made no deep study of Socialism to write intelligently on the subject. You Socialists will appreciate that; the others may not. But to take a man fresh from the Capitalist press, put him on a Socialist paper and
tell him to explain the Socialist philosophy would be
equivalent to telling him to write an essay in Greek. He
couldn't do it. It's a simple thing to change from "Taft's
a good man. Vote for him," to "Bryan's a peerless man.
Vote for him." But to plunge a writer deep into "Eco-
nomic Determinism," "Materialistic Conception of His-
tory," "The Class Struggle," etc., is an altogether dif-
ferent matter.

Secondly, not more than three Socialist papers in the
United States can pay a man anything like what the
Capitalist press will pay him. So there is not the mone-
tary incentive for him to espouse Socialism.

Thirdly, immediately a man steps off the Capitalist
press and comes out strongly for Socialism, he's done for.
No capitalist paper will again employ him. He's black-
listed. You'd ought to know without me telling you that
no Republican or Democratic paper in the country would
pay me five cents a century—now. Yet they used to give
me good salaries. But I've violated the law of the edito-
rial sanctorium. I'm telling the tricks of the trade. I
couldn't go back if I wished to.

So I say it does not follow because a man jumps from
a Republican to a Democratic newspaper, then to an In-
dependent one; and loops the loop back and forth, that
he can do the same, or that the Capitalist press would
allow him to do the same, after he declares himself,
strongly, for Socialism and exposes the trickery of the
Capitalist press.

It frequently happens that a publisher or publishing
company will own and operate both a Republican and a
Democratic newspaper in the same city. This phase of
the newspaper game is illustrated in a little story of a
hare-lipped man who entered a barroom early one morn-
ing. He greeted the bartender, and then said:

"N'ay, old 'port, fix me up a little drink."

When the bartender set a cocktail before him the
Harelip said:
"Ave one yourself. Nake one on me."

"Well," said the other, "you're a pretty good fellow. I'll just take one on you."

When they finished, the Harelip said:

"Nust fill 'em up again, old 'port."

"What? Again!"

"Nure thing," said the patron. "It's on me. I'm buying."

So they had a second round. When the glasses were emptied this time the Harelip said:

"Now, nen, old 'port, I ju't tell you what I'll do. I'll vlip you to nee who pays for 'em."

"You'll flip me to see who pays for them?" yelled the bartender.

"Nure! Nure thing," replied the other. "Be a 'port."

"Well, you've got a nerve! However, I'll flip you."

Taking a coin from the till, the man behind the bar tossed it, caught it in his left palm and covered it with his right.

"Now, then, what do you take?" he asked.

"Wha-a-z."

"What is it?"

"Wha-a-z."

"I—I beg your pardon. I don't understand. Say it slowly. Do you take heads or tails?"

"Wh-a-z, wha-a-z. Gan't you un'er'tand English? I n'ay I take wha-az."

In desperation the saloon man uncovered the piece, pointed to the side uppermost, and said:

"Say, Bill, is dat what you mean?"

"N'at's it!" shouted the Harelip. "N'at's it!"

You see, he couldn't lose. It is so with you and the Capitalist newspapers, regardless of their politics. If the Republican candidate is voted into office the Morning Sun is jubilant over the confidence of the people in its man. If the Democratic nominee is successful the Even-
ing Star is elated because the voters have seen fit to place ITS man in office. And the banker, the department store owner and the street car magnate own both papers. They play both ends against the middle. And you're the middle.

The political coin tossed by the master class has a Republican head and a Democratic tail. Once in four years you are allowed to guess which side will be turned to view after the toss-up. The tricky language of the Capitalist newspaper is no more deceptive than that of the Harelip. Yet you allow yourselves to be gullled year after year by the same old subterfuges. On election night you go without sleep to buy an early morning extra and be greeted with a political——

"N'at's it. N'at's it!"

As opposed to this the Socialist Party and the Socialist press comes to you with the proposition of public ownership of the things publicly used and private ownership of the things privately used. In that program, and in that program alone, lies freedom from exploitation and from the acknowledged ills of our political, industrial and economic system. So long as the things publicly used can be made to turn a private profit, just so long will those of you who own no public utilities continue to pay the bills of those who do own them.

When you collectively own and control the press of the nation, when that press is operated solely for the dissemination of news of a public character; when the newspapers of the world are printed for the information and use of the many, instead of for the profit of the few, then, and then only, may you be off your guard against these and other tricks of the press.

I thank you.