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THE WARTIME RADIO NEWS COMMENTARIES

OF RAYMOND SWING, 1939-1945

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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*****

The Ohio State University
1963

Approved by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 1957 Quincy Howe said that, although "less than twenty years have passed since the conjunction of the radio industry and the Second World War brought the news analyst, or commentator, into sudden being ... the conjunction of television, peace, and prosperity threatens him with gradual extinction."\(^1\) Although, six years later, the news commentator is not yet extinct, relatively few of the men who emerged as commentators before World War II are still appearing on national radio or television networks. This seems a good time to record and evaluate the importance of wartime radio network news commentators while the men and records of their careers are still available. This is a study of the wartime commentaries of Raymond Swing. This first chapter is a brief historical survey of the development of radio network news commentary.

The Importance of Radio Network News Commentary

In considering the importance of radio in changing the lives and attitudes of Americans, Lloyd Morris has written:

By the middle of the century, the evaluation of news had become one of the most important services undertaken by radio ... . It was also, by its nature, one of the most delicate and difficult. For the meaning of the news is

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necessarily a matter of opinion. Specialists and experts, like all human beings, are subject to prejudice. And in certain fields—such as foreign policy, industrial relations, social legislation—the real implications of news may be a matter of controversy. On the whole, the evaluation of news furnished by the four national networks was singularly free from bias, partisanship and distortion. A number of radio's news analysts were outstanding for their achievement in informing and educating public opinion rather than seeking to influence it.2

The radio news commentator was an unusual kind of radio performer in the 1930's. He was, in journalistic terms, as much a feature writer as a reporter, because he frequently explained the importance of the news he reported; he was related to the editorial writers of newspapers and magazines, because he frequently offered his own opinions; and commentators sometimes had much in common with the gossip columnists who appeared in the 1920's to report on the private lives of stage and screen celebrities. The commentator was a product of the depression, the New Deal, which created great interest in activities in Washington, and, as Quincy Howe suggested, the Second World War.

Early Personalities

Most news broadcasts on the networks during the period between 1927 and 1932 were identified by the name of the man reading the news. David Lawrence, Frederick William Wile and H. V. Lloyd Morris, Not So Long Ago (New York: Random House, 1949), p. 485.
Kaltenborn may be found in the New York Times listings as early as 1927. At NBC the identification of news programs by the name of the newscaster was based on the assumption that the listener thought of the program primarily in terms of the news reader. The use of the name also made news gathering somewhat easier.

"The name Lowell Thomas was sufficient to win access to many official circles where the regular press was not welcome."  

Many network newscasts presented a particular aspect of the news, suggesting that the person reading the news was expert on certain matters. During the 1933-34 season George R. Holmes, chief of the International News Service Washington Bureau, was identified with the "Washington News." Frederick William Wile's newscast was titled "The Political Situation," and Edwin C. Hill was identified with the newscast "The Human Side of the News." The identification of personalities with news programs was one factor which influenced the development of news commentary. Another was the Press-Radio War.

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5Ibid.
The Press-Radio War

The Beginnings of the War. Friction between individual radio stations and newspapers occurred before the national radio networks were in existence. As early as 1924 the Associated Press criticized the New York Sun for giving news to radio stations, and threatened expulsion if the Sun did not stop. Eighteen months later, a group of New York newspaper publishers made a joint appeal to the American Newspaper Publishers' Association to pass a resolution forbidding news agencies to give news to radio stations. It is not surprising that the conflict was intensified when national radio networks began programming news broadcasts.

When radio networks began programming news broadcasts, the American Newspaper Publishers' Association opposed their use of newspapers as sources. Abel A. Schechter, who supervised news at NBC, has described their attempts to avoid copyright infringement by clipping only from foreign newspapers. Paul White, who supervised news at CBS, has referred to the period from 1927 till 1933 as the "verification period," in which it was necessary

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7 "A. P. Cites N. Y. Sun for Radio Violation," Editor & Publisher, December 5, 1924, p. 1.

8 "News Agencies Asked to Keep Off the Air," Editor & Publisher, August 21, 1926, p. 1.

9 Schechter, op. cit., p. 1.
for the networks to "scoop" newspapers frequently to avoid charges of plagiarism. The struggle did not affect network news seriously, and, consequently, news commentary, until 1933.

In the summer of that year the advertising manager of General Mills asked if CBS would produce news broadcasts for their sponsorship. If the cost of establishing a news-gathering organization were $3,000 or less, he said, General Mills would pay one-half, and the news would be used on Boake Carter's regular newscast sponsored by General Mills. With less than a month to organize, the Columbia News Service began operations in September, 1933, with bureaus in New York, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles.

The service provided the material for newscasts by Boake Carter and H. V. Kaltenborn and two newscasts of five minutes duration at noon and 4:30 p.m. each weekday. In addition, CBS affiliates were offered a fifteen-minute news summary at 11 p.m.

The news service was noted in the magazines of the period, two of them noting that it succeeded in beating newspapers several times during its first weeks. The news service put CBS at a

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11 Ibid., p. 38.
12 Ibid., p. 40.
13 "Columbia News Service Has Troubled Start," Newsweek, October 2, 1933, p. 27.
competitive disadvantage, however, when the American Newspaper Publishers' Association requested that newspapers stop carrying listings of CBS programs.

Additional provocation was supplied by claims that radio was superior to the newspaper in its manner of addressing its audience. As early as 1931 H. V. Kaltenborn had claimed:

Radio listeners are in a more pliable and responsive mood than newspaper readers. Listening becomes a social function shared by several members of the family. Listeners chat about the things said with the neighbors and business associates who have heard the same speech. Few newspaper editorials are read aloud, but speeches that come in over the radio stir debate at home and abroad.

The leader of the newspaper opposition to radio news broadcasts was Mr. E. H. Harris, editor of the Richmond, Indiana, Palladium, who maintained that smaller local papers would suffer more than metropolitan newspapers from radio competition. He was instrumental in the formation of the Publishers' National Radio Committee, was named chairman of the group, and authored many public statements concerning the relationship of the press to radio.

The basic problem which confronted newspaper publishers from 1921 to 1933 was as follows: the existing democratic news and the independence of the eighteen hundred daily newspapers had to be protected, because within them lies the foundation of a free press.

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and the safeguard for our principles of government. On the other hand, this new means of mass communication under government license had captured the imagination of the people and they were demanding news through the means of radio broadcasting.\textsuperscript{15}

Mr. Harris recommended that newspapers receive credit for news used on the air, that bulletins be limited in length so as to reserve for the newspapers the details of lead stories, and that no station or network logs be printed in newspapers.\textsuperscript{16} At the 1933 meeting of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, the group's Bureau of Advertising reported that, although newspaper income from advertising had declined during the years 1930-32, radio advertising had increased.

\begin{table} 
\centering
\caption{Comparison of Newspaper and Radio Chain Income from Advertising} 
\begin{tabular}{lcc}
\hline
Year & Newspaper Income From Advertising & Radio Chain Income From Advertising \\
\hline
1930 & $230$ millions & $27$ millions \\
1931 & $205$ & $36$ \\
1932 & $160$ & $39$ \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Of the 600 radio stations on the air in 1932, 97 were owned by newspapers. One writer maintained that the conflict was

\textsuperscript{15}E. H. Harris, "Radio and the Press," \textit{Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science}, 1936, p. 166.

"not a fight between newspapers and radio, but between newspapers owning radio stations and those which do not."^17 Noting that twelve newspapers had applications for broadcasting licenses before the Federal Radio Commission, Codel said opposition was concentrated on networks because the newspapers were involved in the management of many local stations.

The Solution of the Press-Radio War. The position of the publishers was made clear by the Chairman of the Radio Committee of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association:

The contention of the newspapers is: (1) that no agency directly under government license should function as a news-gathering organization; (2) that important news bulletins should be supplied to the broadcasters by the newspapers, in order that the general public may enjoy complete protection on news obtained from reliable sources; (3) that the broadcasters must not sell those news bulletins to an advertiser because this news service must be supported by the broadcasters as public service to the listeners.^18

In an attempt to resolve the conflict, members of the ANPA, the news services and the networks met at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, on December 10, 1933. Those present were:

William S. Paley, President of CBS
Merlin H. Aylesworth, President of NBC
Roy Howard, Scripps-Howard Newspapers
Harry Bitner, Hearst Press
J. H. Gortatowsky, International News Service

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^18 Harris, _op. cit._, p. 169.
Karl Bickel, United Press
Lloyd Stratton, Assistant to Kent Cooper, Associated Press
Alfred J. McCasker, National Association of Broadcasters
L. E. Palmer, General Manager of ANPA
E. H. Harris, Chairman of the Radio Committee, ANPA

Four other members of the Radio Committee were also present. Abel A.
Schechter and Paul White, who supervised news at NBC and CBS respectively, were not present.

After two days of discussion, an agreement was reached. The
nine basic points contained in the agreement are summarized below:

1. Radio networks would no longer gather news. CBS would abandon its news service.
2. Radio networks would present only interpretation and comment upon the news.
3. Two five-minute newscasts daily would be allowed on each network.
4. One of the newscasts would have to be presented after 9:30 a.m., the other after 9:00 p.m.
5. The news would be provided free by the wire services.
6. News was not to be sold commercially by the networks.
7. If a news event of "transcendent importance" occurred, bulletins of not more than 30 words would be provided.
8. The wire news was to be re-written by a "Press-Radio Bureau" to be supported by the networks.
9. Each newscast was to end with the announcement: "For further details, read your daily newspaper." 

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The Radio Committee of the ANPA passed a more detailed resolution which suggested the policies to be followed in preparing network news:

The Press-Radio Plan:

That a committee consisting of one representative of the ANPA, one representative of the United Press, Associated Press and the INS, one representative from the NAB, and one representative from NBC and CBS, totaling seven members, with one vote each, should constitute a committee to set up with proper editorial control and supervision a bureau designed to furnish to the broadcasters brief daily news bulletins for broadcasting purposes. All actions of this committee will be in conjunction with the Publishers' National Radio Committee.

The newspaper and press association members of this committee are authorized and empowered to select such editor or editors, and establish such a bureau as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this program, to wit:

To receive from each of the three principal press associations copies of their respective day and night press reports, from which shall be selected bulletins of not more than thirty words each, sufficient to fill two broadcast periods daily of not more than five minutes each.

It is agreed that these news broadcasts will not be sold for commercial purposes.

All expenses incident to the functioning of this bureau will be fully borne by the broadcasters. Any station may have access to broadcast reports upon the basis of this program, upon its request and agreement to pay its proportionate share of the expense involved.

Occasional news bulletins of transcendent importance, as a matter of public service, will be furnished to broadcasters as the occasion may arise.
The broadcasters agree to arrange the broadcasts by their commentators in such a manner that these periods will be devoted to a generalization and background of general news situations and eliminate the present practice of recital or spot news.

By this program it is believed that the public will be served by making available to any radio station in the United States for broadcasting purposes brief daily reports of authentic news collected by the Press Association, as well as making available to the public through their radio stations news of transcendent importance with the least possible delay.

Reaction to the Biltmore Agreement. A number of weekly news magazines reported the agreement was a defeat for the networks. Newsweek captioned an early story "Publishers Would Curb Radio in the News Field." Business Week reported that "The big radio chains capitulated to the press." Edwin C. Hill was quoted as saying that "In these days a news commentator must kneel like Lazarus before the rich man's kitchen door."

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20 Harris, op. cit., p. 167.
Two magazines carried reports that there was a widespread demand for more news, although they did not indicate specific instances of such demands.  

Senator Clarence Dill protested against the agreement when he addressed the National Association of Broadcasters in Cincinnati and charged that the agreement resulted in censorship.

As operated today the Press-Radio Agreement simply results in the press associations censoring all national and world news by radio. From the standpoint of radio it is tyrannical and indefensible . . . . It cannot continue because radio stations will not submit to it.  

The general reaction to the agreement was summarized by a Newsweek writer:  

Though called an armistice, it was, in reality, a defeat for radio and it came at a time when radio had demonstrated it could be independent of the press.  

Results of the Press-Radio War. There were several immediate consequences of the Press-Radio Agreement. CBS dropped the Columbia News Service, after less than six months of operations, in January, 1934.  

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21 Newsweek, June 21, 1934, p. 20.
28 Paul White, op. cit., p. 40.
Another result was the formation of the Press-Radio Bureau as specified in the Committee's plan. On March 1, 1934, the Press-Radio Bureau began operations. It had 125 subscribers in the area served by its New York Office, and 48 subscribers from its Los Angeles Office. Within six months the number of subscribers grew to 160 in New York and 64 in Los Angeles.

A third result of the agreement was that radio network news programs became identified as "commentaries." By so doing, the news programs were kept on the air despite the Press-Radio Agreement. The identification of news programs as "commentaries" has one additional advantage for the networks: "commentaries" could be sponsored, while the terms of the Agreement forbade sponsorship of news programs. Paul White has written that the use of the term "commentary" was specious:

The first thing that happened was an arbitrary decision by the networks that Winchell, Thomas, Carter and Kaltenborn weren't news broadcasters, but commentators. Hence they could be sponsored. It is hard to say how this specious idea was ever put across. Maybe publishers and press association executives, who might have objected, just liked to listen to those 'commentators.'

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30 White, op. cit., p. 43.
As the number of commentators on the radio networks increased during the years between the Biltmore Agreement and the outbreak of World War II, a number of changes occurred. The first was that radio news commentary became a respected journalistic activity.

David Bulman has argued that there were only two full-time professional newsmen in network radio before 1934: H. V. Kaltenborn and Lowell Thomas.\footnote{David Bulman, *Moulders of Opinion*, 2nd ed. (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1946), p. 58.} Kaltenborn, who had appeared on radio as early as 1922, was persuaded to resign his job on the staff of the *Brooklyn Eagle* and join the CBS staff when the *Eagle* management announced a pay cut in 1931.\footnote{Ibid.} Thomas, who had been touring as a lecturer after the publication of his biography of T. E. Lawrence in 1924, accepted radio work in 1930 because it increased the demand for his services as a lecturer.\footnote{Lowell Thomas, *With Lawrence in Arabia* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing Company, 1924,).} Thomas and Kaltenborn are also important because they possessed two of the characteristics which Bulman later identified with most news commentators: authority and knowledge of foreign places and problems.\footnote{White, *op. cit.*, p. 25.} Kaltenborn demonstrated what Bulman has called
authority" when, with only five minutes to prepare, he followed Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address with an extemporaneous analysis. On another occasion, he simultaneously translated a speech by Hitler for 24 minutes, and followed the speech immediately with a 15-minute extemporaneous analysis.

Giraud Chester credits Kaltenborn with establishing the news commentator as an "independent authority" on foreign affairs, whose authority was not derived from his institutional connection, but from his personal experience and his effectiveness as a radio personality.

Radio news commentators frequently enjoyed status derived from their newspaper experiences. David Lawrence's program "Our Government," heard on NBC during the 1932 and 1933 seasons, was based on his national reputation as a Washington correspondent. Lawrence had extensive experience in Washington where he went as an Associated Press reporter after graduating from Princeton in 1910. "Not content to give simply the who, what and where of Washington events," said one writer, "he gave the why also."  

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37 White, op. cit., p. 46.


A number of other commentators who appeared on the networks during the 1930's also had newspaper experience. Among them were Boake Carter and Raymond Clapper.

Carter was the "Globe Trotter" for the Hearst newspaper chain, writing feature articles before becoming a network commentator. His newspaper experience was mentioned frequently by him, and was a source of prestige. Raymond Clapper gained journalistic experience during the seventeen years he worked for the United Press. He eventually became the manager of the Washington Bureau of the United Press.

In 1935 Raymond Swing argued that radio news was "reasonable" and "professional" only to the extent that it made use of "qualified editors" with adequate "journalistic experience." He further noted that, although he had misgivings about some, many radio news commentators were "professionally qualified."

The Popularity of Political Columns

Another factor in the popularity of radio network news commentary was the increase in the number of interpretive news columns

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appearing in daily newspapers. Most of them were signed, personal in style, and datelined Washington. They were, to some extent, a product of the depression.

*The Golden Age of the columnists can be pegged to the period of the Great Depression. One authority has estimated that anywhere from one hundred generally syndicated Washington columns came into being in the years between 1930 and 1934, most of them to expire after a brief but gaudy existence.*

The political columns of the 1930's were preceded by the Broadway gossip columns which had become popular in the 1920's. Mark Hellinger, Walter Winchell and O. O. McIntyre were the most successful of the pioneer writers who "brought the fascinatingly wicked fripperies of stage and screen stars and the headliners of the Speakeasy Set straight to the breakfast tables of Omaha and Dogpatch." Cabell Phillips claims that the political commentator may have derived from the Broadway columnist:

*It required no stroke of managerial genius to figure out that if this paid off for Broadway, it also ought to pay off for Washington, too, whence a great many people were beginning to turn their eyes and thoughts.*

Another related reason for the popularity of both radio network news commentary and syndicated columns may have been what

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145 Ibid., p. 176.
146 Ibid.
Frank Luther Mott has termed "news hunger." The New Deal created not only a demand for news from Washington, but also for an interpretation of the news. 147

Frank Luther Mott divides political commentators into two categories: the "sober-sided columns" and the "dope and gossip" column. 148 The older columns, he says, tended to be more thoughtful and included such writers as Arthur Brisbane, syndicated in 1917, David Lawrence (1916), Mark Sullivan (1923), and Walter Lippmann (1931). The news interpretation columns whose beginnings coincided with the New Deal tended to be of the "dope and gossip" variety. Among them were the "Washington Merry-Go-Round" by Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen (1932), Paul A. Mallan's "News Behind the News" (1932), Leonard Lyons' "The Lyons Den" (1934), Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's "My Day" (1935), Dorothy Thompson's "On The Record" (1936), Ernest K. Lindley's column (1938), and Samuel Grafton's "I'd Rather Be Right" (1939).

In 1935 Raymond Clapper, who was both a syndicated columnist appearing in the Washington Post and a radio news commentator, wrote that "conjecture and speculation have a value if they come from a good man in a ringside seat." 149 The popularity of radio

network news commentary was a product, not solely of the Biltmore Agreement, but also of the widespread demand for interpretation of national developments which made possible the popularity of newspaper columnists.

**Increasing International Tension**

During the 1930s a number of events occurred which increased international tensions, particularly in Europe. In Spain, a civil war between Francisco Franco and loyalists attracted widespread news coverage when Franco landed troops from North Africa on July 19, 1936. By 1937, Italy and Germany were openly siding Franco, and the Spanish Civil War had become sufficiently interesting to cause H. V. Kaltenborn to originate a number of broadcasts from the battle lines.

In 1937 the Japanese attacked China. In March 1938, Germany occupied Austria. In the autumn of 1938 England and France consented to the partial occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany at the Munich Conference. The next spring Germany occupied the remainder of Czechoslovakia and Italy invaded Albania. In the late summer of 1939 Hitler announced an alliance with Russia, and Germany attacked Poland. In June, 1940, France surrendered to Germany, and

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52 Frederick Lewis Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

eighteen months later, in December, 1941, Japan attacked the United States installation at Pearl Harbor. This, in summary, is the sequence of events which was reported in the headlines of many newspapers.

The American role in these international events was not entirely clear. In three successive years, 1935, 1936, and 1937, the Congress of the United States passed Neutrality Acts aimed at preventing the United States from selling arms or munitions to a belligerent. Shortly after the occupation of France in 1940, the United States began selling arms and ships to England and, in the autumn of 1940, the Selective Service system was in operation. Yet, despite the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, both presidential candidates in the 1940 national election insisted that they opposed American entry into the war. Historian Frederick Lewis Allen has described the confusion about the American role in the emerging conflict:

During the following year, as Hitler desolated British cities with bombs, overran the Balkans, and invaded Russia, and as the Japanese began to threaten the subjugation of the Far East, opinion swung by degrees toward more and more direct intervention; the Lend-Lease Act went through Congress with a strong majority, American warships began convoying American supplies.

54 Frederick Lewis Allen, op. cit., p. 72.
56 Ibid.
part way to England, and the United States found itself in a virtual state of undeclared war with Germany. Yet as the month of December, 1941, arrived, the country was still sharply divided emotionally.  

European developments were not only complex, but exciting. H. V. Kaltenborn made what he claims was the first battlefield broadcast when he concealed himself and a small transmitter in a haystack as the opposing Spanish forces fought for Iran.  

Raymond Swing reflected this excitement in these excerpts from his news commentaries during 1937:

There is more than enough war news to occupy a commentator tonight.  

The League of Nations Council is meeting at Geneva this week, and that's an item of such unimportance in this time of two big war (about which the League is doing literally nothing) that you may wonder at my mentioning it.  

This last week has been, I think, one of the most important, if not the most important, that Europe has experienced in years.  

The excitement of the events created an audience for news of international developments. Their complexity, and the uncertainty of the American role in the conflicts, created a need for interpretation. The news commentators who analysed and interpreted the

57 Frederick Lewis Allen, op. cit., p. 162.  
58 H. V. Kaltenborn, op. cit., p. 104.  
events abroad rose rapidly to places of importance in American network broadcasting.

**Audiences and Staffs**

**Increased Audiences.** During the years immediately preceding American entry into World War II the amount of time devoted to listening to the radio increased. The following chart, based upon Hooper ratings, and assembled by the editors of Broadcasting magazine, shows that the 1940 average sets-in-use figure was higher than the average for the years 1937-39.62

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>37-39 av.</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>Point Inc.</th>
<th>% Inc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table indicates that the number of sets-in-use was consistently higher in 1940. This increase, according to the editors of Broadcasting, made it possible for established news programs to hold and even expand their audiences despite the number of news programs scheduled on the networks. One of the commentators who was

62 "How the War Affects Radio Listening," Broadcasting, August 1, 1940, p. 76.
able to substantially increase his audience during this period was Raymond Swing. The following table, prepared by the editors of Broadcasting, shows a substantial increase in Swing’s Hooper rating during the first six months of 1940. 63

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>8.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>12.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the period from 1937 till the American entry into the war, there was a considerable increase in the size of radio audiences. If the editors of Broadcasting are correct in attributing much of this increase to interest in news programs, this one additional factor was important in the developing popularity of news commentary.

Innovations in Staffs. Following the Austrian Anschluss of March, 1938, the networks began expanding and rearranging their staffs to cover the emerging conflict. H. V. Kaltenborn explained the difficulty facing the networks:

The present war may continue for one, two, three years. What can be done during a three-week crisis cannot be continued for months. Neither listeners nor broadcasters

63 Ibid.
could stand the strain. Obviously, the broadcasters have now had to settle down to a basis of operations that will meet the test of a long-drawn-out conflict.

As the networks prepared to cover a major conflict several changes were introduced into practices. The first was that the term "Commentator" was reserved for a relatively small number of men who did not report news, cover news events in person, or follow any specific portion of the day's news; it was reserved for those who analyzed the news. Kaltenborn explained that:

Many people, hearing that war was declared (September, 1939), felt that radio stations would shut down on news analysis and confine themselves to news bulletins and on-the-spot stories. Some stations have, but CBS has shown how important it feels the news analyst to be by retaining not merely one, but two home-office men to study and interpret the news--Mr. Elmer Davis and myself.

A. A. Schechter, who prepared a statement of NBC news policy at the request of the editors of Current History, placed less emphasis upon interpreters of the news.

The National Broadcasting Company reported the war of nerves leading up to the European war with the realization that no one man--no groups of men, for that matter--could cover and make a pattern of the swift-moving events that started off the war of 1939.

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64 H. V. Kaltenborn, "Covering the Crisis," Current History, October, 1939, p. 39.
65 Ibid.
Knowing fully well the responsibility that rests with radio, the NBC news policy called for this war coverage—as well as the crisis coverage of the past—to deal strictly with the facts. Facts shorn of personal feelings, personal thoughts and personal opinions. Above all, in all news reports, and observations, Order Number One was 'No gazing into a crystal ball.'

At the same time, the networks were expanding their overseas staffs. In February, 1939, CBS's European staff consisted of Edward R. Murrow, William Shirer and Thomas Grandin. One year later, CBS claimed as its European staff: Murrow, Shirer, Grandin, William L. White, Mary Marvin Breckinridge, Betty Wason, Bill Henry, Larry Leseur, Erland Echlin, Eric Sevareid, Cecil Brown and Russel Hill. Kaltenborn and Elmer Davis were listed as "analysts" and not included in the European staff.

Mutual had a less extensive group of European newsmen. John Steele in London and Louis Huot in Paris were the core of the overseas staff. Mutual did not originate programs in Europe, but depended upon cables to get information to New York where its staff, including Raymond Swing, interpreted the material.

67 "News Staffs," Broadcasting, February 1, 1939, p. 79.
69 Broadcasting, November 15, 1938, p. 36.
Mutual benefitted from the crises of 1939 when their commentators began to attract sponsors. Arthur Hale, who had been carried on a sustaining basis during the 1938-39 season, gained two sponsors in September, 1939, for his Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday programs (7:30-7:45 p.m.). In addition, Raymond Swing was given a thirteen week contract by the General Cigar Company for a news broadcast heard on Mutual Mondays and Fridays from 10:00 till 10:15 p.m. The sponsorship of Swing began on September 25. At the same time, NBC strengthened its news staff by adding H. V. Kaltenborn, who moved from CBS.

Mutual attempted to meet the opportunity created by the increased audience for news programs by hiring experts in fields of various kinds. Colonel Charles Kerwood became their aviation expert; Paul Schubert reported naval affairs; and Raymond Swing remained as the political analyst. Unable to afford the expensive facilities necessary for originating programs in Europe, Mutual hired Arthur Mann to make recordings in Europe which were flown to New York for broadcast. In addition, during the summer of 1940, Mutual began re-broadcasting news broadcasts from

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70 "Kaltenborn Switches Programs to NBC; Swing and Hale New Series Expanded," Broadcasting, April 1, 1940, p. 26.

71 Broadcasting, June 1, 1940, p. 15.

72 Ibid.
European capitals, identifying them as "propaganda." Although they had used portions of broadcasts during the preceding years, only in 1940 did they begin broadcasting foreign programs in their entirety.

During the period 1939-1941 the networks expanded their news staffs. Mutual, although restricted by its budget, was stimulated by sponsor interest to increase its staff and to increase the amount of time its two principal commentators, Raymond Swing and Arthur Hale, spent on the air.

Statements by the Networks. As World War II approached, the networks issued a number of statements to their news staffs and to the public indicating the plans they were making to provide news coverage of the conflict.

Abel Alan Schechter prepared the following policy statement, based upon memoes circulated among the news staff at NBC, for a magazine article. It is interesting because of the emphasis upon facts, and the lack of emphasis upon news commentary or analysis.

The National Broadcasting Company reports the war of nerves leading up to the European war with the realization that no one man—no group of men, for that matter—could cover and make a pattern of the swift-moving events that started off the war of 1939.

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\#73 \emph{Broadcasting}, June 8, 1940, p. 21.
Knowing fully well the responsibility that rests with radio, the NBC news policy called for this war coverage—as well as the crisis coverage of the past—to deal directly with facts. Facts shorn of personal feelings, personal thoughts, and personal opinions. Above all, in all reports, observations, Order Number One was 'No gazing into crystal balls.'

It was our feeling that Hitler may not have known what he intended to do up until the very moment he sent his troops into Poland. For that reason, it was decided to stay away from opinion and from tea leaves.\(^7\)

CBS prepared the following memorandum for its news staff, but later released it to the public. When compared with the NBC statement, the role of the analyst is shown to be much greater.

Columbia, as an organization, has no editorial opinions about the war. It has no editorial opinions about what this country or any other country should or should not do. Those, therefore, who are its voice in presenting the news must not express their own feelings.

In being fair and factual, those who present the news for Columbia must not only refrain from personal opinion, but must refrain from microphone manner so designed to cast doubt, suspicion, sarcasm, ridicule, or anything of that sort on the matter they are presenting.

An unexcited demeanor at the microphone should be maintained at all times, though tempo can, of course, be varied with the nature of the news. Dire forebodings, leaving the radio audience hanging up in the air and filled with suspense and terror, of our own creation, are not good broadcasting.

\(^7\)Abel Alan Schechter, quoted in Current History, October, 1939, pp. 35-39.
We must be careful at all times to label information for what it is. We must try to distinguish fact from rumor, official information from semi-official 'high sources' and so on, and from mere gossip. Of course, the greatest weight should be given to those things known to be factual. We should make known at frequent intervals that the news received from many sources is censored and that, therefore, it may be incomplete and, at times, even inaccurate.

If all our own people presenting news will present it in this way and analyze it with due weight given to these factors, we can keep the American public very well informed on every phase of things as they develop, help them continually to appraise and weigh the news, and make them well aware of current opinion throughout the world. It must be recalled that this opinion is, in itself, a fact. For instance, if the British people believe that the Germans are committing atrocities, the fact of their belief is important. That these atrocities are real, false, or unproven is another fact.75

There was disagreement at CBS about the amount of freedom that was to be extended to a news commentator. In a memorandum sent to members of the CBS news staff in the autumn of 1939, Edward Klauber, assistant to Paul White, insisted that the commentator's job was not to judge news events.

In being fair and factual, those who present the news for Columbia must not only refrain from personal opinions, but must refrain from microphone manners . . . .

What the news analysts are entitled to do and should do is to elucidate and illuminate the news out of common knowledge, or special knowledge possessed by them or made available to them by this organization through its news sources. They should point out the facts on both sides, show contradictions with the known record, and so on. They should bear in mind that in a democracy it is important that people not only should know but should understand and it is the analysts' function to help the listener to understand, to weigh, and to judge, but not to do the judging for him.

It is impossible, within any reasonable limits, to define completely this last-mentioned aspect of news analysis. Fairness and temperateness are of its essence.

These memoranda to the CBS staff were received with some criticism. H. V. Kaltenborn attacked the CBS policy, claiming that no news commentator could submit to it:

No news analyst worth his salt could or would be completely neutral or objective. He shows his editorial bias by every act of selection or rejection from the vast mass of news material placed before him. He often expresses his opinion by the mere matter of shading and emphasis. He selects from a speech, or interview, or public statement the particular sentence or paragraphs that appeal to him. Every exercise of his editorial judgment constitutes an expression of opinion.

All networks were faced with similar problems of locating and evaluating information. Even reports by American newsmen stationed

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overseas were subject to suspicion. NBC's Max Jordan found that London was the only location from which accurate European news could be broadcast, because Paris and Berlin were both under heavy censorship. Foreigners, he said, were not allowed to originate any news broadcasts from Moscow. The attempts to work out a systematic, rational basis for handling news took place at all three national radio networks, although only NBC and CBS allowed the public occasional glimpses of the discussions. At Mutual, according to Raymond Swing, the network felt that the commentators were the best qualified persons to make news decisions, and so they were allowed considerable latitude.

As the war approached, news commentators played an important role in providing background, evaluation and interpretation for news broadcasts.

**Summary and Conclusion**

Radio network news commentary was popularized, as a radio program form, by a number of incidents during the decade preceding World War II. The initial incident, though not the most important, was the Press-Radio War which forced the networks to identify their news programs as commentaries so that they might avoid the ban on network-gathered news programs.

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78 Max Jordan, quoted in *Broadcasting*, June 1, 1940, p. 13.
A more important factor in the development of network news commentary was the popularity of newspaper columns dealing with political matters in an informal manner. The columns were varied in style and viewpoint. Some featured "inside" information and political gossip, while others, termed "sober-sided" by Frank Luther Mott, attempted serious analyses of the political events of the day.

Despite both the Press-Radio War and the newspaper columnists, radio commentators might not have become phenomenally popular had it not been for the increasing political strife in Europe. From 1936, when France landed troops from North Africa, to 1941, when the United States entered the war, radio listeners heard reports of a series of political and military acts which led to World War II. The complexity of the European situation, the obscurity of the motives which prevented France, England, Czechoslovakia and the Low Countries from working together to contain German aggression, and confusion about the American role in the developing European conflict made interpretation of the news essential. Radio news commentators offered a readily available, comprehensible key to the understanding of international politics. In this, primarily, is contained the reason for the popularity of news commentary.

This interest was reflected in increased audiences. The average sets-in-use figure for April, 1940, was, 5.7 per cent higher than the average for the years 1937-1939. This made it
possible for the many news programs on the air to expand their audiences. Raymond Swing, during the first six months of 1940, found that the national audience rating of his evening news commentary climbed from 8.4 to 14.5.

Networks expanded their staffs to cover the European and Far Eastern news, and a distinction emerged between news reporters and news commentators. At CBS H. V. Kaltenborn and Elmer Davis, who remained in New York, were the network’s commentators. The overseas correspondents were to function only as reporters. The distinction was never exact, however, and Edward R. Murrow’s “reports” from London contained much interpretive material.

Propaganda broadcasts by foreign governments, of doubtful reliability, were frequently the only reports available about important events, and the news commentator provided an essential service by evaluating the propaganda. So important was propaganda analysis that Clyde R. Miller, describing the CBS facilities for recording European propaganda broadcasts for later analysis, concluded “It is from the angle of what the belligerants would have us believe that the CBS commentators interpret the news.”79

The news coverage and analysis provided by the networks brought praise from many sources. James L. Fly, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, paid this tribute to the networks in 1940:

Radio was ahead of the public demand in moderating the dramatizing of war news. At the outset there was a tendency toward flash news interruptions of programs, but now the broadcasters have settled down to a thorough, yet interesting, coverage of the war.80

The radio news commentator was an essential figure in this war coverage. Historian Dixon Wecter has indicated the importance of the commentator:

The public's thirst for news analysis and clarification lent a new popularity to commentators—Raymond Swing, H. V. Kaltenborn, Lowell Thomas, Gabriel Heatter, and others—to whose opinions about the Munich crisis, the Sino-Japanese conflict, the invasion of Poland and the fall of France, millions intently listened.81

This was the situation in which Raymond Swing began his career as a radio news commentator. In the next chapter we will see how Swing's own talents and preparation fitted the need of the age.


CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Raymond Swing enjoyed an international reputation as a news commentator before and during World War II. Not only was he heard on a regularly scheduled program on an American radio network, but he had a weekly program heard in Canada on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's Trans-Canada network, and a semi-weekly program of news commentary heard in England through the British Broadcasting Corporation. In addition, he wrote a weekly essay on current events for a London newspaper, and his domestic news commentaries were re-broadcast for overseas audiences by the Office of War Information.¹

One writer summarized Swing's unusual status this way:

More than any other commentator he expounds the United States government policy for a global audience. He is something like a private, ex-officio State Department. In any other country his functions would be governmental. To his millions of foreign listeners from Bombay to Rio, Swing represents the United States and is a sort of radio Uncle Sam.²


The relationship between Swing and the Roosevelt administration was complex. Although he worked as an independent news commentator on a commercial radio network, his programs were rebroadcast at government expense. Swing was known to be a "liberal" who had been a supporter of New Deal legislation in the 1930's.\(^3\)

One writer called Swing an "unofficial spokesman" for the administration.\(^4\) Another called his commentaries "research pieces" and suggested that Swing's thoroughness, rather than his government connections, was responsible for his reputation.\(^5\)

Swing has denied having access to "inside" information, and has maintained that such information is useless because it becomes dated before it can be used. At the same time, he has admitted that he had "excellent contacts" in government, including members of the Department of State, Department of the Navy, the Library of Congress, and the Office of War Information.

Statement of the Problem

The problem with which this dissertation deals is the extent to which Swing, in his news commentaries heard on commercial radio networks between September, 1939, and December, 1945, agreed with

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\(^4\) R. O. Boyer, *op. cit*.

and supported administration policy, and the extent to which he had information not available to other news agencies.

These two aspects of Swing's relationship with the administration have been selected for investigation because they may be tested by comparing Swing's commentaries with other published reports from the period.

Another problem which will be considered is: does Swing meet his own standards for a news commentator as he has described them in numerous articles, books, and commentaries.

**Definitions and Limitations**

This investigation will be limited to Swing's wartime news commentaries, heard on domestic commercial radio networks. His news programs for the British Broadcasting Corporation and for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation will be excluded. Also excluded will be a number of special commentaries prepared by Swing for overseas broadcast on government facilities.

These broadcasts are excluded for several reasons. First, the scripts have not been systematically preserved and, as a consequence, only isolated examples are available. Furthermore, Swing has said that he addressed his domestic and overseas
audiences differently, assuming that domestic audiences were more familiar with the situations upon which he commented.\(^6\)

The word "commentary" is used throughout this paper. By it we mean a program in which the opinions, interpretations, and personality of the person heard on the air are given prominence. It is distinct from news reporting, in which the event, rather than the personality commenting upon it, is of primary interest to the listener. This definition is in general agreement with the definition used by Moore:

A news broadcaster whose forte is presentation of background data and implications of events according to his own opinion and judgment and in the light of his experience and training.\(^7\)

The word "commentary" is understood to mean, with reference to Raymond Swing's broadcasts, the entire program. It is impossible to break his broadcasts into two portions, identifying one as commentary, the other as news. The two are mixed throughout his broadcasts.

The time period covered in this dissertation is from September, 1939, until the end of 1945. September, 1939, was selected because it was at 9:45 on the morning of September 1 that Swing

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announced on the Mutual network that Germany had "plunged Europe into war" by the occupation of Poland. This date is particularly appropriate as marking the start of Swing's commentaries, because it was during this month that he began his regular schedule of four commentaries each week at 10:00 p.m.

The end of 1915, rather than the end of the war, was selected as the end date of the study, because a series of broadcasts which Swing undertook in August was not completed until the end of the year. A much more complete description of Swing's activities as a commentator is made possible by including the broadcasts between the end of the war and the end of 1945.

**Previous Research**

Several previous studies which relate to the materials covered in this dissertation are mentioned below.

**Academic Studies.** There are no academic studies of Raymond Swing. There are, however, a number of studies of news commentary which were consulted. The most pertinent was a Master's thesis by Gary Lee Moore. Moore has an excellent compilation of materials relating to the development of news commentary. Much of his material deals with regional news commentators who did not appear on national radio networks.

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Giraud Chester's study of H. V. Kaltenborn was helpful in suggesting sources which also pertain to the study of Swing, and in providing suggestions on the organization of certain sections. Chester's study is also helpful in evaluating the influence of Kaltenborn upon other commentators, including Swing.

David Shephard's study of Henry J. Taylor was helpful in organizing the comparison of Swing's commentaries with the New York Times. Shephard's discussion of the problems of evaluating a commentator's bias would be helpful to others contemplating a similar study.

Murray Yaeger's study of Edward R. Murrow was helpful in providing information about Swing's connection with Murrow over the period 1953-1958. This study deals primarily with Murrow's production methods in television and does not evaluate Murrow as a commentator.

Fulton Lewis, Jr. has been the subject of two academic studies. Reisberg analyzed his commentaries on the basis of the

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issues Lewis discussed and the interpretations he gave to them. 13 Dempsey studied the arguments presented by Lewis and compared them with classical rhetorical theory. 14 Walter Winchell's Sunday evening broadcasts were studied by Goss, who placed considerable emphasis upon his delivery. 15 A Master's thesis by Salter, dealing with the news commentaries of John T. Flynn was not available for study. 16

Articles About Swing. Swing attracted public attention during the early years of World War II, and a number of articles about him appeared in magazines. The most extensive was a biography which appeared in the New Yorker in 1942. 17 This sketch was thoroughly researched and no information uncovered for the present study was inconsistent with the New Yorker sketch. On interpretation of the facts, however, the New Yorker sketch disagrees with impressions of Swing received from others who knew him during the war. The sketch suggests that Swing "is essentially a troubled


man," or, somewhat later, "at heart Swing is an old-fashioned man, and he is vaguely troubled by the feeling that his voice is in a sense competing with God's." Most of the information in the *New Yorker* sketch is selected to support the thesis that Swing's career was devoted to fighting his Puritan background.

Another magazine article about Swing appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*. This article provides a number of anecdotes about Swing's youth and European experiences but does not attempt an evaluation of his career. It is useful for details about the way in which Swing worked.

An interesting interview with Swing was published in the *Christian Science Monitor*, in which Swing discussed the importance of news commentary during the European crises of the late 1930's.

One of the most thorough background sketches of Swing appeared in the *Current History* in 1940. This contains many details of Swing's life in England between 1921 and his return to

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18 Ibid.
21 Earl Sparling, "Let's Listen to Swing," *Current History*, August, 1940, p. 43.
this country. This article also appeared in abbreviated form in the Reader's Digest.

The best evaluation of Swing's commentaries to appear in an article is by historian Dixon Wecter. His article in the Atlantic contains brief sketches of a number of commentators, including Lowell Thomas, Edward R. Murrow, Gabriel Heatter and others. Wecter, in his critical evaluation of the various commentators, rates Swing very high.

In 1918, when Swing left the American Broadcasting Company, Charles Siepmann wrote a critical evaluation of Swing for the Nation. The article not only describes and evaluates Swing's commentaries, but gives an extended discussion of the role of the radio commentator in a democracy.

There are a number of short articles about Swing, or in which Swing is mentioned, which appear in news magazines such as Time and Newsweek. Most of these are topical, dealing with a specific event, such as Swing's move from the Mutual to the National Broadcasting Company. They will be cited wherever relevant.

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22 Earl Sparling, "Let's Listen to Swing," Reader's Digest, August, 1940, p. 43.


26 "Two Commentators," Newsweek, October 5, 1942, p. 78.
There are a number of other articles dealing with Swing as a composer of music. These have been consulted for whatever background information they might yield. The most detailed discussion of Swing, dealing with the problem of enjoying music without becoming involved professionally, appeared in *Etude*.\(^{27}\) Swing's musical activities were also mentioned in another article in *Etude* which appeared in 1941.\(^{28}\)

**Other Books Mentioning Swing.** Swing is mentioned in a number of studies of radio and of journalism. The best source of information about Swing's activities during World War I is Paul Scott Mowrer's *The House of Europe*.\(^{29}\) Mowrer was a reporter in Europe before World War I, and was responsible for Swing's appointment to the *Chicago Daily News*. His study of journalism before and after the war is concerned primarily with the problems of explaining European developments to an American audience. It is highly personal in tone, and deals only with the problems with which Mowrer was personally familiar. He mentions Swing frequently, and provides considerable detail about Swing's activities at times when their paths crossed. Swing


maintains that, on some details, Mowrer is inaccurate. These inaccuracies are discussed in Chapter III.

Another book which provides considerable information about Swing is George Seldes' *Lords of the Press.* Seldes' book is a survey of American newspapers, principally concerned with the major chains and publishers. His sections dealing with foreign correspondents and overseas bureaus depend heavily upon extensive quotations from Raymond Swing. Consequently, the book gives us a good deal of information about Swing's background, and his views on the press.

*Exploring Journalism,* by Roland E. Wolseley and Laurence R. Campbell is of interest because of the judgments about news commentators the authors make. The book is primarily about journalism, and the comments about commentators are incidental to the authors' primary intentions.

A useful background source is Francis Chase's *Sound and the Fury, An Informal History of Radio.* Chase's description of news is rather general, but it provides a colorful sketch of the period.

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Another sketch of the development of radio is Llewellyn White's *The American Radio*. White's history is particularly useful for information about the Press-Radio war. It does not contain much detail concerning news commentary. Mitchell V. Charnley has written a general history of news on radio from 1920, when the *Detroit News* used station 8MK to report a Michigan primary, until the end of World War II.  

Paul White, who directed CBS's early attempt to form a news service, has written a book of considerable value to the student of network news during the 1930's. The book was intended to be a text for persons interested in careers as radio journalists and contains much information and explanation which falls outside our consideration. It is valuable, however, for the extensive quotations from memos circulated at CBS during the war years, and for White's reports of conversations he had with others.

A similar kind of information concerning NBC may be obtained from Abel Alan Schechter's *I Live On Air*. This book is a collection of anecdotes selected by Schechter from his years in NBC News.

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It is not a history of NBC news, since the materials were chosen for their anecdotal value. The Douglas Corrigan flight, for instance, is described in detail, while the Anschluss receives much less space. The book is useful for information about the way in which NBC news commentators worked.

Frank Luther Mott's study of news in America is interesting because of his analysis of the factors which caused the increased interest in national and international news in the 1930's. Mott mentions Swing only casually. A good deal of information about the Nation, and a critical evaluation of Swing may be found in Emery and Smith, The Press and America.

Dowling Leatherwood's study of radio news was found useful for his stimulating discussion of commentators. He suggests that there are three types (featured, interpretive, and editorial), and provides suggestions for differentiating between them. He does not devote much space to individual commentators.

One of the best sources for an understanding of the situation of the news commentator during the late 1930's is Quincy

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40 Dowling Leatherwood, Journalism on the Air (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company, 1939).
Howe's study of news. Howe points out that fear of propaganda was one of the major reasons for the popularity of news commentators. Howe maintained that news must be understood.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{In Spite of the newspapers} \\
\text{In spite of the magazines} \\
\text{In spite of the radio.}^1
\end{align*}
\]

Elsewhere in the book he argues that:

Today we have the most efficient technical equipment to gather news and the most competent correspondents to write it. Yet because of—not in spite of—this technical excellence, we have received far more misinformation about the Second World War, we know far less about what has really been happening in Europe since September, 1939, than we did during the corresponding period of the last war.\(^2\)

Howe sees the news commentator as the only possible solution to the problem of adequate news. The public, he argued, "wants and needs more and better interpretation."\(^3\)

The only book-length study of a news commentator is Roger Burlingame's biography of Elmer Davis, *Don't Let Them Scare You*.\(^4\) It is a highly sympathetic account of Davis' career, restricted, for the most part, to his public activities. It is of interest

\[^1\text{Quincey Howe, The News and How to Understand It (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1940).}\]

\[^2\text{Ibid., p. 1.}\]

\[^3\text{Ibid., p. 25.}\]

\[^4\text{Ibid., p. 11.}\]

\[^5\text{Roger Burlingame, Don't Let Them Scare You (Philadelphia: Lippincott Company, 1961).}\]
to us because Davis and Raymond Swing were good friends during the war years. Swing is mentioned frequently in the biography, and something of the relationship between Davis and Swing can be gleaned from the accounts of their activities in OWI work during the war.

Books By Other Commentators. A number of radio news commentators published books during the years immediately preceding American entry into World War II. Cesar Saerchinger published a survey of European political problems entitled The Way Out Of War. This was only one of what Kaltenborn referred to as a "spate of published and spoken commentaries."

Edward R. Murrow published a collection of broadcast scripts. The broadcasts all originated in London between August 25, 1939, and December 31, 1940. The specific scripts included in the collection were selected by an assistant and, according to the introductory statement by Murrow, were not extensively revised for publication.

H. V. Kaltenborn has published a considerable amount of material from the World War II period. Those commentaries he

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chose for publication were selected to include highlights of his career, and to give an outline of his views on the growth of Fascism, the German leaders, and the future of Germany.\textsuperscript{49,50}

William L. Shirer has provided information for the historian of network news broadcasting in his Berlin Diary.\textsuperscript{51} It is a diary of his personal experiences. Since Shirer, together with Murrow and Thomas Grandin were the core of CBS European news operation, his diary is of considerable interest. It covers the period from late 1937 till 1941 when allied correspondents were forced to leave Berlin. Included among personal reminiscences, notes of friends, and descriptions of Germany, are such entries as the following:

Vienna, April 12 (1938). This crisis has done one thing for us. I think radio talks by Ed (Murrow) and me are now established. Birth of the 'radio foreign correspondent' so to speak.\textsuperscript{52}

In addition to Shirer, other correspondents have provided narratives of their experiences which have been helpful in evalu-

\textsuperscript{49}Hans Von Kaltenborn, I Broadcast The Crisis (New York: Random House, 1938).

\textsuperscript{50}Hans Von Kaltenborn, Kaltenborn Edits The War News (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1938).


\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., p. 112.
ating Swing's interpretations of the war. Cecil Brown, in his study *Suez To Singapore*, gives a detailed account of the difficulties he encountered while trying to get news through the British censorship. Cesar Saerchinger's *Hello America* contains many details about the difficulties encountered in arranging the first trans-Atlantic radio broadcasts. Saerchinger's emphasis is on the first years of the decade 1930-1940 with few details of broadcasting as it was at the time of publication.

Howard K. Smith published an account of the economic problems of the German people and their attitudes towards the allies in 1942. His study, like Eric Severeid's *Not So Wild A Dream*, received considerable praise for its literary quality as well as its news value. The grouping here should not obscure the fact that they were published four years apart. Smith was concerned with the war which had just begun. Severeid wrote at the end of the war, and was concerned about the problems of the post-war world.

These are the major studies written by correspondents, which have been useful for background information or for comparison,


in the study of Raymond Swing's commentaries, 1939-1945.

Sources

A number of other sources have been used, including the Library of Congress collection of Swing's manuscripts, books and articles by Swing, books by other commentators, the New York Times, and interviews and correspondence.

The Library of Congress Manuscript Collection. The primary source for the present study is the collection of manuscripts donated by Raymond Swing to the Library of Congress. The collection, housed in the Manuscript Division, consists of original workdrafts, corrected drafts, and, in some cases, mimeographed copies of Swing's scripts during the period from 1937 to 1948. Occasional scripts are missing, but the total number of missing scripts for the nine year period appears to be less than twenty. Most scripts are in final draft form, and pencilled notations were made by Swing to indicate changes that were made in the script as he read it on the air.

Another useful source has been the collection of transcriptions made of the broadcasts. The transcriptions are complete for the years 1943-1946, although a number of broadcasts during the period of 1939-1942 are missing. The transcriptions were stored in Swing's garage for several years before he donated them to the
Library of Congress and the technical quality is, as a result, frequently impaired by dust, warping, cuts and scratches. The Library's Music Department is now engaged in recording the programs on tape so that further deterioration of the technical quality of the collection will be minimized. All commentaries mentioned in Chapters V and VI were heard in the Library's Music Department. In addition, the commentaries mentioned in other sections were heard whenever the discs were available.

The New York Times. Another source was the news and editorial sections of the New York Times which was used as a standard against which Swing's information and views were evaluated. The Times was used as a standard of comparison with the commentaries to determine the emphasis given by Swing to certain selected events. It was also used as a measure of what was known to the press, so that the charge that Swing had "inside" information could be evaluated. The newspaper was also compared with the commentaries to determine if Swing omitted items which were critical of the administration.

Interviews and Correspondence. Extensive interviews with Raymond Swing were used to get much of the information for Chapter III. Mr. Swing read and criticized that chapter. Paul Scott Mowrer, who was familiar with Swing's career from 1914 until he left England in 1934, was helpful in corroborating and, in some
cases, correcting Swing's recollections. Edwin Ware Hullinger, former Associated Press foreign correspondent who knew Swing in Europe, not only provided information, but read much of the dissertation and suggested alterations.

Books By Swing. Raymond Swing has published four books which were of use. His first book, *Forerunners of American Fascism*, is unrelated to his radio activities. It was written in 1935 during the first years after his return to this country, while he was on the staff of the *Nation*, before he began his radio news commentaries.

His next three book publications were based upon his news commentaries prepared for broadcasts. The first, *How War Came*, was published in 1939. It contained excerpts from his news broadcasts during the years 1937-1939. Four years later he published another collection of commentaries, *Preview of History*. In 1946 Swing published a third collection of scripts, *In The Name of Sanity*.


All three collections have limited use to the student of news commentary, because they consist of only portions of scripts. In most cases, Swing has chosen to exclude from the published collections any inaccuracies, controversial comments, and extended news reports. The emphasis is upon discussions of strategy, political issues, and plans for establishing a permanent peace, including world government.

Swing has also published, as the editor, a series of declarations by public figures entitled This I Believe, and one play, Mr. Man. The play is a political satire dealing with the impact of atomic power on political thought. In addition, he has written a large amount of poetry which he allows friends to read in manuscript form.

Articles by Swing. Raymond Swing worked as a journalist during the first few years of his radio career, and has left a record of his interests and political views. The two most pertinent articles by Swing are "Will Radio Kill Democracy?" in which he examined the use to which radio was being put by Hitler, Roosevelt, Mussolini, and the protections against the political use of

61Raymond Swing, ed., This I Believe (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1953).

62Raymond Swing, Mr. Man (Hong Kong: Printcraft, 1960).
radio. In this article, he also speculated about the "persuasive power" of radio, and suggested that if it were used to inform and reveal it might be helpful in establishing democracy.

Another article by Swing which reveals a good deal about his attitude toward his wartime activities is entitled "The Happiness of Self-Expression." This article, written in 1944 as a speech, expressed his satisfaction at the role of news commentator. He argued that the commentator represents the most responsible kind of journalism. The speech indicates a contentment in his own work, which he felt to be publically useful, commercially successful, and personally satisfying.

The most complete statement of Swing's theory of news commentary was made in an article written for the Reporter in 1953. The occasion was his retirement from the Voice of America, and he took the opportunity to discuss radio journalism as a profession which should not be evaluated by amateurs.

The only other article by Swing which relates to broadcasting is an evaluation of Father Coughlin which appeared in the

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Although it was primarily concerned with the political arguments of the Detroit priest, Swing included a consideration of the effectiveness of the Coughlin radio programs.

Swing published more than fifty articles in American magazines during the period 1934-1962. Most of them are political analyses which do not touch upon Swing's practices as a broadcaster. They do, however, give an indication of his editorial position, and will be cited whenever they help in the analysis of the radio commentaries. The articles are listed in the bibliography.

Method

In order to deal with the problem raised earlier in this chapter, the following procedure will be followed. Chapter III will present a biographical sketch of Raymond Swing.

Chapter IV contains a description of the commentaries. Their length, style, subjects chosen, the way in which the programs were organized, and Swing's work methods will be discussed.

The relationship between Swing and the Roosevelt administration will be the topic of Chapter V. His scripts for a two-week period in March, 1942, will be compared with the New York Times to

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see if his selection of topics agrees with the emphasis given to
events by the Times and by administration officials in public
announcements. Swing's interpretation of events will be com­
pared with administration interpretations whenever they can be
determined. The placement of blame for shortcomings in our war­
time policies will be examined. Stories which were given promin­
ent coverage by the Times, but omitted by Swing from his com­
mentaries will be examined to see if the omission could have aided the
administration.

In Chapter VI the news sources used by Swing will be in­
vestigated. Generally available sources will be discussed, in­
cluding newspapers, news services, and experts who could be con­
sulted by other reporters or commentators. His personal sources
will also be discussed, including Swing's friendships with a num­
ber of administration officials. Swing's commentaries for a two­
week period in March, 1942, will be compared with the New York
Times to see if there are any indications that Swing had access
to information unavailable to the Times.

In Chapter VII consideration will be given to a series of
broadcasts Swing undertook after the use of the atomic bomb as a
military weapon was announced. Swing devoted each Friday to a
discussion of the issues raised by the bomb. He has described
them as "poor journalism" because they were his "personal soapbox." 67

These broadcasts, which were titled by Swing "In the Name of Sanity," will be described, their style analyzed, differences from earlier commentaries noted, and the arguments which they present will be analyzed. The reaction to the broadcasts will be described, including the reaction of literary critics when the broadcasts were published in book form.

Chapter VIII will analyze the role of the radio network news commentator as it has been described by Swing. Swing has made extensive comments about the role of the commentator in a democratic society, the commentator's role in an age in which international relations are complex, about the relationship of the commentator to government secrecy in wartime, and the role of the commentator in war. These statements will be examined to see if they form a consistent theory of news commentary.

Chapter IX will present an evaluation of Swing's wartime news commentaries. The critical reaction to Swing will be discussed, including comments made in magazine articles, citations, and journal-

Swing will be evaluated by his own standards as they were described in Chapter VIII. Swing's contribution to network news will be considered.

Chapter X will summarize the preceding chapters, and evaluate the wartime news commentaries of Raymond Swing.

Summary

The relationship of Raymond Swing to the Roosevelt administration is a matter of speculation. Some writers maintain that he was a spokesman for the administration, while Swing himself defends his independence and integrity as a reporter and commentator. This study will investigate the relationship using the wartime commentaries of Swing preserved in script form and on transcriptions in the Library of Congress. Although there are a number of academic studies of news on radio, many articles on the subject, and a considerable number of publications by the commentators themselves, there are none which deal with this specific problem. Background information has been obtained from Swing, interviews and correspondence with people who knew him, and Swing's other publications. The method of the study is to compare Swing's commentaries with the New York Times to determine whether he followed official administration policy in matters of interpretation, and whether he criticized the administration. The commentaries and the Times will also be compared to see if Swing had access to information
not reported in the *Times*. Swing's broadcasts dealing with the problems resulting from atomic weapons will be discussed, and his views on the role of network news commentary in a democracy in wartime will be analyzed. Finally, Swing will be evaluated by how own standards, as an independent commentator, as a fair reporter, and as a reporter who possibly had access to privileged information.
CHAPTER III

THE BACKGROUND OF RAYMOND SWING

Family and Education

Raymond Swing was born on March 25, 1887, in the upstate New York town of Courtland. His father, Albert Temple Swing, was a minister and professor of theology at Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio. Later, his mother, Alice Edwards (Mead) Swing, also taught at the college. Religious activities held an important place in the family life of the Swings, and Raymond has said that he was an earnestly devout child.\(^1\) Swing has described his father as "the last flower of that ancient America of stern and upright morals."\(^2\) Conversation in the Swing home, he told another writer, often turned to sin, regeneration, and sanctification, redemption, atonement, pardon, and "similar ecclesiastical shoptalk."\(^3\) Swing is quick to point out that this was characteristic of Oberlin faculty homes at that time, and his home was different only in that his parents read widely, were cultured, and were frequently hosts for college guests.


Swing has recounted that Henry Churchill King, then president of Oberlin College, frequently visited their home. His uncle, social psychologist George Mead of the University of Chicago, was also a periodic visitor. Swing had opportunities early in his life to meet people of intellectual distinction and to participate in discussions with them.¹

During this period, Swing was under considerable pressure both to succeed in an intellectual effort, and to remain religiously orthodox. His uncle and grandfather were respected members of academic communities, and there was no hint of religious skepticism in the Swing household.² Swing has said that "doubting seemed on a par with patricide."³ Consequently, he kept his misgivings secret.

Swing entered Oberlin College, where he had studied piano for a number of years, at the age of 18 in 1905. During his freshman year, his parents took advantage of a sabbatical leave to travel to Germany and undertake research on theological history. Exercising his new freedom, Swing proclaimed his doubt, danced and smoked. President King met with Swing to pray for guidance with

²His grandfather also taught at Oberlin. His uncle later joined the faculty of the University of Chicago.
him. Dean Edward I. Bosworth of the Oberlin Seminary, a next door neighbor, also joined him in prayer. Swing says "I tried desper­ately hard to accept, but something wouldn't let me." 7

Swing attempted immersion in a further attempt to bolster his faith, but, on Thanksgiving Day, 1905, he played a prank with the gas pipes leading to the ovens of the Oberlin basement kitchens. He plugged them with putty and, as a result, was dismissed from the college. He later told an interviewer, "I had disgraced my parents. Much of my life has been spent in trying to believe and in losing the absolute values of my home." 8 Swing, in a conversation with the writer, confirmed that his failure at college troubled him in later years.

Thirty-seven years later Raymond Swing addressed the gradu­ating seniors at the University of North Carolina. He used the occasion to examine the early period of his own life.

I first encountered doubt walking down a rail­road track between Oberlin and Elyria, Ohio, with my boyhood chum. He stopped me solemnly and asked me one of the most important ques­tions of my life. Did I believe in the doc­trine of evolution? I didn't know, because up to that moment I had never heard of evolu­tion. But he told me about it and I began to feel that the structure of my Oberlin world was crumbling about me, with its posi­tive belief in a creation some five thousand

7 R. O. Boyer, op. cit., p. 46.
8 Ibid.
years old . . . and in a code of circumscribed behavior. That was my initiation into the faith of doubt. I went on from Oberlin into newspaper work. I became duly excited by the deeds of science, all created by those who doubted the truth as it had been presented to them. I was infected . . . by the sight of change in the human society through conscious informed action by the individuals who composed it. I began saying 'I do not know' in looking ahead.9

**Early Newspaper Work**

After leaving Oberlin, Swing worked as a reporter for a Cleveland newspaper, and eventually joined the staff of the Indianapolis Star. He remained on the staff from 1906 until 1911. During this period he rose from his initial post as reporter to the position of managing editor in 1910 at the age of 23. The problems of operating a newspaper with a small staff caused Swing to have a nervous collapse when he was 24. When asked if he had a career in domestic newspapers, Swing minimizes the importance of the positions he held during those years, saying "I was just a kid."10

After leaving Indianapolis, Swing moved to Chicago with the intention of entering newspaper work again. He did not, however, find work. It was while in Chicago that he met

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9Raymond Swing, "The Validity of Doubt" (speech delivered at the University of North Carolina, June 9, 1942, mimeographed).
Suzanne Morin, a French student at the University of Chicago, and they were married in 1912. Swing's health was once again impaired, this time by a serious appendectomy. His family sent him, with his wife, to Europe on a recovery trip, hoping that he would find improved health.

Swing as a Foreign Correspondent, 1910-1918

The Swing's arrived in Paris and Raymond began the "non-systematic" study of English politics and foreign affairs. During this period he met Paul Scott Mowrer who was instrumental in bringing Swing back once again into newspaper activities. Mowrer, who was working for the Chicago Daily News recounts the event:

For some years our Berlin correspondent has seemed to be sending us less and less news. A whole month might go by without a word from him. He was failing now to answer letters, and although he continued to draw expense money, he would make no accounting. On Mr. (Victor) Lawson's orders, Ed Bell dispatched me to Berlin. I found a man who, probably from abuse of drugs, was a nervous wreck. I felt sorry for the fellow, but the case was obviously hopeless. 

It was at this point that several chance acquaintances worked in Swing's favor. He had met Victor Lawson, the publisher of

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the *Chicago Daily News*, in Chicago. In Paris he had met Mowrer who remembered him favorably:

Our problem was to fill the vacancy. My candidate was a young man who had been studying English politics and was interested in foreign affairs. He had a good background. His father taught theology at Oberlin, and his uncle was a professor at the University of Chicago. Ed Bell looked him over in London, and liked him, and on our recommendation Raymond Swing was duly appointed to Berlin.¹²

Swing's experience in Berlin was different from his domestic newspaper experience. He found, to his surprise, that he was not expected to report news events. George Seldes has written this report of conversation with Swing about his Berlin experience.

Raymond Swing, who was a foreign correspondent before the war, says that the *Chicago Daily News* bureaus in Europe were established chiefly to advertise the paper, to furnish a rest room, reading room and convenient toilet facilities for visiting Chicagoans, and a place to register their names. Swing cabled this list every day. It was his main work. In early 1914, he wrote a series of articles about the war clouds in Europe, practically predicting that the war was inevitable before the end of the summer, but these stories were cut down until nothing but a sort of tourist guide to interesting capitals remained. When he protested his editor told him that back in Chicago they considered the whole matter preposterous: they had previously heard nothing about the British, French, and German rearmament programs, they refused to see militarism

in the German order for two army corps—which was the signal of a coming war—and they did not believe in scaring their readers with bolt-from-the-blue type of stories. Thereby Swing's reputation as a major prophet was killed aborning.\(^{13}\)

Swing has endorsed Seldes' telling of his Berlin experience, adding only that despite the disinterest in foreign news, the Chicago Daily News in his opinion nevertheless carried more than most papers.\(^{14}\)

When war between Germany and England was declared, Swing's wife and their first child left on the last train from Berlin. Swing was isolated in Germany for two and a half years. He did not emerge until 1916. Paul Mowrer has described his meeting with Swing:

> In February, when our breaking-off of relations with Germany occurred, I got word that Raymond Swing would be coming out through Switzerland from that lost world behind the trenches, with Ambassador Gerard. I was fond of Raymond, fond and admiring. Unable to wait, I went to Bern to meet him, where we stayed for a day, avid of talk. He looked older and thinner than when I had seen him last. For more than two years and a half he had been separated from his family. His depression and nervousness did not surprise me . . . . We compared notes on the various trips to the front we had had, on opposite sides.

\(^{13}\) George Seldes, Lords of the Press (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1938), p. 178

His narrowest escape had been when the Turkish transport on which he was riding in the Sea of Marmora was sunk by a British submarine. The British, he told me, could have taken the Dardanelles with their fleet if they had persisted on that last night, for the Turks were out of ammunition.  

Swing had covered the war from behind German lines as an American neutral newspaperman. But, with America's entry into the war, he had to leave. Swing's reputation was apparently high at this point, according to Seldes and Mowrer. Perhaps the most important single event to attract attention was his story on the large-bore gun used on an attack on Liege. His reputation was also based partly upon his apparent closeness to the men who were directing. In December, 1914, Swing had been selected as the personal emissary of Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg to carry a German peace offer to England. As reported on one account, the message was:

Tell Sir Edward Grey that Germany will annex no Belgian territory, but that Germany will want an indemnity for having been forced into war.  

Swing says the clause concerning indemnity was included only for purposes of negotiation. When Swing approached Sir Edward Grey with the message, he omitted the background details. Grey was

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extremely angry, and dismissed Swing without further discussion.

Swing said of the incident in 1914:

As I look back, I admit that I myself may have been partly to blame for the failure of the mission. Why didn't I blurt out that the German Chancellor had perhaps included the indemnity demand only to protect himself in case the German military discovered him talking peace prematurely.\textsuperscript{18}

Swing's misadventures with government officials did not end with his departure from Germany. Shortly after he returned to the United States, Colonel Edward Mandell House, President Wilson's military advisor, asked Swing to undertake a mission in France. The nature of the mission is a matter of some confusion, and has been reported in at least three different versions. According to R. O. Boyer, House sent him to France "to explain Wilson's foreign policy."\textsuperscript{19} Mowrer wrote that "Colonel House had heard of the French mutinies. Before sending over a large force, it was important for our government to find out whether or not France was on the verge of revolution."\textsuperscript{20} Swing says that he was sent over "to evaluate the strength and morale of the French."\textsuperscript{21} Swing


\textsuperscript{20}Mowrer, op. cit., p. 115.

says he was sent on the mission secretly, and forbidden to resign from his post with the Chicago Daily News. Mowrer has written that he was "granted a leave of absence from the Chicago Daily News." 22

Mowrer says that the events which followed can only be understood if it is remembered that Swing had been under considerable strain while he was a correspondent in Germany. He had been existing for a considerable period of time on an inferior diet, because of food shortages in Germany, and was close to nervous collapse. 23

When he reached France on his mission for Colonel House, Swing witnessed the mutiny of fifteen French army divisions. Anxious to get this word back to Colonel House, Swing returned to Paris. He says he met his secret contact at the American Embassy in Paris and gave him the message for House. The man protested that Swing was in error about the French revolt and, according to Swing, attached an addendum to Swing's dispatch claiming that it was in error.

Mowrer provides another perspective on the event:

After a few days of inquiry, Raymond returned to me, pale, nervous, gloomy, convinced, that

22 Mowrer, op. cit., p. 416.

France was on the verge of revolution. I was of another opinion. Without long experience, it is not easy, I told him, for Englishmen or Americans to understand the French. The sooner American troops began to arrive, the better it would be for the morale of both front and rear. Raymond’s report to Colonel House was secret. I never knew what it contained.

Swing says that the conflict between his report and that of the embassy staff put him in "disgrace" with House. Mowrer emphasizes that the wartime strain on Swing was very great. Swing returned to America where he suffered another nervous collapse. His recovery took several months.

The reluctance of the embassy contact to believe Swing’s story of the mutinies is not surprising. Although Swing says the story was widespread in France, no mention of the mutinies is found in three histories of the war published soon after the armistice. John Buchan, in his four volume study, does not mention a French Army revolt. Carlton J. H. Hayes also omits the story from his brief outline of the war. Frank H. Simonds, author of an extensive five volume narrative History of the World War, also makes no reference to the mutinies. The first reference to the


The story of the mutinies is told in greater detail by Charles Cruttwell, who published his *A History of the Great War, 1914–1918*, in 1931, seven years after the publication of Churchill's study. It seems likely that the mutinies to which Swing gave such importance were not generally known of in the United States or England during the war. This is supported by political scientist Murray Levin who has said Churchill is the first, to his knowledge, to discuss the mutinies for an American or an English audience. The reason the information was not published in English before it

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30Murray Levin, interview, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, October 10, 1962.
was revealed by Churchill may be found in the forward to Churchill's study. In it, he remarks "I have been greatly struck in my reading during the last five years with the enormous superiority of French war literature to anything that had appeared in England." He goes on to compare the conditions of public knowledge of the war in France and England:

An immense number of brilliantly written books by responsible persons have enabled the French public to form an instructed view upon the whole inner conduct of the war... an even greater activity of publications and discussion is taking place in Germany. And here again all the material facts and documents have been disclosed through one channel or another.

Churchill continues to explain that until the English public has had "full access" to "authentic documents" he confines himself to documents which he had written himself "or those which have already been published by others here or abroad." It seems likely, then, that the story of the French mutinies was confined to French reports until Churchill, using French sources, included it in his study.

This confirmation of Swing's report, which did not appear until 1927, did little to help his floundering career in 1918. Bernard Baruch was considering buying the New York Tribune, Swing says, [ref: op. cit., p. 10, Ibid.]
and thought of making him editor, but the arrangements fell through. Boyer says Swing was offered a job on the Philadelphia Public Ledger, but it was withdrawn when James Gerard, former Ambassador to Germany, told Ledger officials that Swing was "an irresponsible radical." Swing says there was no job involved, but admits that Gerard was critical of him. Gerard's alienation may have been caused by Swing's sympathy and enthusiasm for Germany. In 1914 Swing had published a collection of articles saying that Germany was not responsible for the war but had been forced into it. Germany, he argued, was as much as any other nation, a victim of the war.

Another of Swing's wartime exploits was recounted in an essay by Rudyard Kipling describing an encounter between a British submarine and a Turkish freighter. When the Captain of the submarine asked the freighter to identify itself, Swing, who was on the bridge, had shouted "I'm Raymond Swing of the Chicago Daily News." Kipling changed this to "I'm Silas Q. Swing of the Chicago Sun."

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Swing repeatedly refers to himself as a "kid" when referring to this period of his career. Of the encounter with the submarine he says "it's the story of a kid's fear and terror." He speaks of the Sir Edward Grey incident as the "story of a kid's immaturity." Summarizing his wartime experiences, he says "my career suffered a terrible eclipse. I came out of the war a failure, unknown and without a reputation."  

Foreign Correspondent 1919-1934

Back in America, Swing worked for a short time as an examiner with the War Labor Board, beginning in 1918. The next year he was offered a job in the Berlin office of the New York Herald and returned to Europe. He had divorced Suzanne Morin early in 1919. He remained in Berlin for three years, during which time he met Miss Betty Gram, a "militant suffragette," whom he married and whose name he combined with his own. In 1922 he became the Director of Foreign Service for the Wall Street Journal. In 1924 he left the Wall Street Journal to move to London where he worked on the London Bureau of the Philadelphia Public Ledger. "It was a dreadful and very useful year," Swing has said of his first twelve years.

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38 Ibid.
39 According to Swing, difficulties encountered in registering in hotels as man and wife under separate names caused them finally to compromise on the usage of both last names. He became Raymond Gram Swing. He continued to use this name until 1944 when, after a divorce, he began using only Raymond Swing.
months in London. "The Chief signed his name to all my pieces."

The Chief resigned at the end of the year, however, and Swing was selected to succeed him as Chief of the London Bureau of the Philadelphia Public Ledger.

During the next ten years Swing and his family "experimented" with the various kinds of living accommodations offered in London. Three children were born to the Swings, two boys and a girl. The needs of the children partially determined their living arrangements. Their country house was called Coneyhurst, and it was here that Swing had an opportunity to develop a number of his interests, including composing piano music and songs and writing poetry. Writing on February 18, 1930, Mowrer said:

I passed pleasant weekends at Coneyhurst, Raymond Swing's country house. The children were charming. The robins, under dull skies, were singing their preludes to spring, and, under hedgerows, or along the edges of woods, already the primroses were out.

Swing found his duties in London left him with considerable free time, and much of it was spent in his country home composing and writing. The product of this effort was a number of compositions, some recorded and available in the Library of Congress, and a substantial body of poetry which Swing has, with few exceptions, not published.

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\(^{41}\) Paul Scott Mowrer, The House of Europe, p. 581.

\(^{42}\) His fantasia, For Violin and Piano, was played in concert in New York, April 9, 1940. He has a clipping from the World Telegram, April 9, 1940, p. 12, describing it as "fluent and craftsmenlike product of a soundly tutored technique." He published a small number of poems in English magazines.
Other writers have suggested that this period was not, however, trouble free. One writer has said:

During this period an ambition to create great art raged within him like a sickness. He turned out sonnets, concertos, sonatas, essays, and plays, all of which went unrecognized. Because he could never manage to get any of his writings published he became so disconsolate, according to his friends, that he could not bear to look at a book. For awhile he could not even enter a bookstore.\(^3\)

Paul Scott Mowrer has suggested that this is an exaggeration, and that Swing's creative activities had none of the elements of compulsiveness or sickness suggested by Boyer.\(^4\)

During this period in London another important development occurred in Swing's life; he became acquainted with radio. During the 1920's Swing spent considerable time amusing himself with radios. According to one author his family described his receiver as "Papa's electric train."\(^5\) He first appeared as a performer on radio in 1930 when he was hired by the BBC to interview a British lecturer, S. K. Ratcliffe. The next year, 1931, Swing was hired by the National Broadcasting Company to do a one-shot broadcast from Geneva, Switzerland. Swing did not, during this period, participate in any regular radio programs, either in England or for broadcast in the

\(^3\) R. O. Boyer, op. cit., p. 27.


\(^5\) Earl Sparling, op. cit., p. 144.
United States. Only one other connection with radio developed during this period 1924-1934: through his journalistic activities he became acquainted with Sir John Reith, the Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

In 1934 the Philadelphia Public Ledger discontinued its European staff, and closed its London office. Once again without work, Swing returned to America where he began a career which included activities in magazine editing, newspaper writing, and broadcasting. He continued, however, to write on American affairs for the London Sunday Express.

America and Radio Work, 1934-1939

When Swing returned to the United States he began work as an editor of the Nation. He prepared a number of unsigned articles, as well as a large number of signed articles cited in the bibliography of this paper. In addition, he made his first appearance in the autumn of 1934, on the Columbia School of the Air, a program produced by the Columbia Broadcasting System. Each week he presented an analysis of foreign events geared to schoolroom use. According to Swing there were misgivings at CBS about his appearances "because I didn't sound like a radio announcer." Pressure

was brought to bear on Swing to improve his delivery or to get off the air. Either he could not, or would not, alter his style of delivery, and his appearances became infrequent during the spring of 1935 and he was finally dropped by the network.

Swing attempted to develop a radio speaking style of his own, and was aided by a clergyman who did a religious program for CBS. According to Swing, the clergyman urged him to whisper for ten minutes a day in order to improve his voice quality. Swing began making phonograph recordings in order to study his voice and prepare himself for any future opportunities in radio. But for the moment, his activities were confined to editing the Nation, writing for newspapers in both America and England, and the preparation of his first book, Forerunners of American Fascism, which in 1935.

It should be noted that the Nation was at this time, according to Edwin Emery, one of "the crusading magazines of opinion operating at the liberal left." The magazine along with the New Republic, with which Emery groups the Nation, "struggled with circulation and advertising shortages and was often beset with inter-staff difficulties." The Nation consistently supported the

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Raymond Swing, Ibid.


New Deal, and Swing became known as a member of what Emery terms the "liberal camp." In addition, Swing was identified with England and was regarded as a specialist on English affairs. A number of his articles in the _Nation_ dealt with England, as can be seen at a glance from the bibliography. This connection with England is important in Swing's career, because it became the reason for his return to broadcasting.

**Sir John Reith Intervenes**

In 1935 Sir John Reith, Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation from its inception in 1927, visited the United States. One of his meetings was with President Roosevelt, to discuss "increasing understanding between their two nations." It was decided that an American news commentator would be asked to do a weekly analysis of events in the United States to be carried by the BBC. Sir John and Roosevelt were both aware of Swing's background and political views and Swing was selected for a series of weekly broadcasts, sent to England by short wave radio, which continued until 1945.

According to Swing, CBS was anxious to have H. V. Kaltenborn get the assignment, and attempted to have the decision altered.

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50 _Tbid._, p. 645.
52 In June, 1940, the broadcasts were re-scheduled every other week.
Swing is proud of the assignment that was given to him. He does not speak of it as merely a job, or radio show, or a news assignment, but as a "unique opportunity to explain one nation to another." The job increased in importance as war became imminent, and the series is mentioned prominently in magazine articles about Swing which appeared during the period 1939-1945.

King George reportedly listened to him regularly, and Swing has a cable indicating approval from Sir Winston Churchill who thought highly of his broadcasts. The formation of an informal "Swing Club" consisting of members of the British Parliament who gathered to listen to the programs marked the high water mark of Swing's reputation in England. The BBC research department in June, 1940, estimated Swing's audience at 30 per cent of all adults. The broadcasts were a success in both audience size and prestige. For Swing, the pleasure he derived from the programs was of a political nature. "If I can have my moment of vanity" he said in 1942, "I like to think that I have contributed to understanding between England and America."55

The broadcasts have one other importance which bears directly on a problem we will consider later. When Swing undertook the job of explaining one nation to another in a weekly broadcast he

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54 Earl Sparling, "Let's Listen to Swing," Reader's Digest, August, 1940, p. 43.
55 R. O. Boyer, the New Yorker, November 14, 1942, p. 24.
assumed the role of an unofficial spokesman for the United States. Swing says he felt a "tremendous responsibility" because the relations of the two countries could be altered by his analysis. Although he had no official position, Swing regarded himself as an "informal spokesman" for a nation. This is of importance because, as we discuss Swing's later wartime broadcasts, we will consider the possibility that Swing was an informal spokesman for the Roosevelt Administration.

The BBC broadcasts mark the beginning of broadcasts in which Swing undertook the responsibility of explaining, without an official role, the meaning of American sentiment and policy. They came about because of the visit to the United States of Sir John Reith in 1935.

The Mutual Broadcasts

Swing's interest in radio increased after his return to the United States in 1934. In a speech, he mentioned with astonishment the ability of radio to reach large audiences. He also indicated a distrust of the new medium because it could be used to "misinform as well as inform," and to support demagogues as well as democratic leaders. Despite these suspicions, Swing was attracted

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to radio. Paul Scott Mowrer has said, "There's a little of the preacher in Raymond and radio seemed right for him to me." 58

In the autumn of 1936 Julius F. Seeback, the program director of WOR, New York, invited Swing to join the staff of WOR and the Mutual Broadcasting Company, with which WOR was affiliated, as a news reporter and commentator. 59

Swing's first newscasts on Mutual were of fifteen minutes length, and were heard once each week, on Friday at 9:00 p.m. They were unsponsored. The following season he appeared twice a week for a salary of $100 a week, an improvement over the $40 a week he earned during the 1936-37 season. In September, 1939, Swing began appearing four times a week on Mutual, at 10:00 p.m. The broadcasts were sponsored by White Owl Cigars and his fee was $1,000 a week.

The war was a boon to Swing's career. The conflict was developing in Europe, in places he knew from his World War I experiences, and was directed in some countries by men whom he had met during the years he spent in England. Time magazine noted the reputation Swing was building when it commented that many listeners depended for understanding of the war "upon the cool,

trenchant voice of Raymond Gram Swing, MBC's one-man brain trust on world affairs, U. S. radio's find of 1939."^60

When King George and Queen Mary of England visited the United States in 1939, Swing covered the event for the BBC. ^61 Time reported this an extraordinary compliment from the English. He was also finding a large international audience. Not only was he continuing his weekly fifteen minute show for the BBC, but his Mutual broadcasts were relayed by WRUL, a short wave station in Boston, which beamed them to South America and Australia.

Throughout this period, Swing had been working on book-length manuscripts as well as commentaries. His second book, How War Came, was published in 1939. ^62 In it he made use of many commentaries as well as some original materials written specifically for the book. His third book, Preview of History was published four years later in 1943. ^63 This was a collection of his commentaries covering the events of the war through 1943.

Swing was enjoying greater recognition than ever before, and allowed himself the pleasure of self-dramatization. "We are in the

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^60 Time, January 8, 1940, p. 34.


worst period of history the world has ever known," he told a Time reporter, "and the job is to keep explaining why, why, why, without being a Jeremiah."64

In a candid moment Swing himself admitted that the success he was enjoying could be largely attributed to the imminence of war:

I began broadcasting five years ago when most Americans were enthusiastically disinterested. I tried to give my attention to the significant rather than what was merely dramatic. Until crisis followed crisis . . . Americans did not have time for significant things. The simple truth of my success is that war has Americans scared to death.65

At this time Swing has several misgivings about his arrangements with the Mutual Broadcasting System. He was allowed complete editorial freedom, and was paid only for his show, having no staff responsibilities, but he was nevertheless uneasy. During 1937 and 1938 the time of Swing's appearance had been altered to accommodate special broadcasts.66 Beginning in 1939, Swing's appearances were regularly at 10:00 p.m., New York time, but Swing was disturbed by occasional variations.

Early in 1942 Mutual shifted the evenings on which Swing appeared from Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, to Monday,

64 Time. January 8, 1940, p. 34.
Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Swing was reported to be irate.

"It's not called the radio industry by mistake," he is quoted as saying, "it hasn't the professional standards of the prize ring." According to one author he began "having morbid fancies . . . took to searching newspaper columns to see if his program was listed; if he didn't find his name he was upset for days." No doubt Swing remembered the anonymity which had caused him, as late as 1939, to be mistakenly listed under dance music radio programs as "Raymond Gram Swing." Swing began looking for other arrangements, and in June, 1942, announced that he was moving to NBC. The announcement was regarded as a coup for NBC:

NBC had cause to crow last week. It signed a first-class commentator for September delivery. NBC's new man was old to radio--Mutual's purry, precise Raymond Gram Swing, who saw in NBC a chance for a bigger audience, a bigger salary.

Swing was forced to delay his departure from June, when he made the arrangements with NBC until September when his contract with the General Cigar Company, manufacturer of White Owls, his sponsor, and his contract with Mutual both expired. The point in the above

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68 Ibid.
69 "Radio," Time, June 8, 1940, p. 34.
quotation concerning "bigger salary" needs to be examined. The New Yorker, in an article published later in the same year, contended that he earned $7,600 per year less by moving to NBC, but that his audience was 15 per cent larger.71 Swing maintains that he did not move for an increase in salary.72

The program continued on NBC's Blue Network, Monday through Thursday, with few changes. Swing says he was allowed complete editorial freedom. His new sponsor, the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, did not insist on a middle commercial.

On October 12, 1943, the Federal Communications Commission approved the sale of the Blue Network to Edward J. Noble.73 Swing stayed with the network under its new management.

Swing had a number of friends during the war years who participated in the distribution of information for the government. Archibald MacLeish, who was placed in charge of the Office of Facts and Figures when it was organized in October, 1941, was one of Swing's friends.74 Robert Sherwood, who headed the Foreign Information Service, shared Swing's enthusiasm for literature. Elmer

Davis, who was appointed Director of the Office of War Information when it was organized on June 13, 1942, has been described as one of Swing's closest friends. In addition, Swing had what he has described as "good contacts" in the Department of State. Swing's relationship with the Roosevelt administration appeared so close that one observer said Swing seemed to be not only familiar with administration policy, but he "may have influenced that policy."  

Shortly after the first atomic bomb was used in the war on Japan, Swing decided to undertake a series of broadcasts expounding his own point of view on the uses of atomic energy. Each Friday evening program, beginning in August, 1945, and continuing for the remainder of the year, was devoted to a discussion of the economic, social, and political changes which Swing thought were necessary consequences of the development of atomic weapons. In part, the broadcasts are devoted to the advocacy of world government. Swing argued that world government was the only alternative to widespread atomic warfare. Swing is now critical of these broadcasts, maintaining that they were "poor journalism" because he advocated his own point of view. His broadcasts were later collected for publication under the title, *In the Name of Sanity.*


On March 18, 1945, it was announced that Raymond Swing had been awarded a Peabody Award for his wartime news commentaries. The award was given in New York City on April 10. This was the first major journalistic award Swing received for his radio work. In this same year he married Mary Hartshorne, who shared his growing concern about world government and, later, peaceful uses of atomic energy.

After the war, Swing continued on the staff of the American Broadcasting Company as a news commentator. When he left the network in January, 1948, he was saluted by Charles Siepmann because "he never failed to speak out."  

Swing's Activities, 1948-1951

Although this study is concerned with Swing's commentaries during the period 1939-1945, the later events in his career will be summarized below.

In January, 1948, Swing left the American Broadcasting Company because the network was unable to find a sponsor for his program. He was active in the affairs of the Americans United for World Government, of which he had become Chairman of the Board in 1946.


In 1950 he began a regular series of news commentaries on WOR, New York, the station on which he had first appeared as a regularly scheduled commentator. The following year his programs were carried on the Liberty Network. His programs did not attract notice in the press, and no further articles by him appeared in magazines. In May, 1951, he retired from commercial network broadcasting.

**Swing and the Voice of America**

Swing joined the Voice of America on May 28, 1951, and began preparing and delivering three five-minute news commentaries each week. The commentaries were read in English by Swing, and simultaneously translated into other languages for broadcast to overseas audiences. Swing was with the Voice of America for less than two years before he became involved in a disagreement which caused his career to take a new direction.

On February 15, 1953, Swing was one of a series of witnesses called before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee which was investigating charges of disloyalty among staff members of the Voice of America. Swing says that after a ten-minute appearance he was excused. He was complimented upon his candor and patriotism. Although no charges were made against Swing, other witnesses

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were criticized by the committee. Following an appearance before the committee on March 3, 1953, Mr. Reed Harris, then head of the International Information Administration, the parent organization of the Voice of America, resigned his post. 84

Swing was angered by the criticism of the Voice of America made by the members of the committee, and wrote an extensive indictment of the hearings which was published in the Reporter magazine. He charged:

The Voice by now has been dreadfully damaged by the indictment of its integrity made on behalf of the United States Senate and it has been mutilated beyond cure by the State Department in advance of its reorganization. 85

Swing admitted that there were shortcomings in the Voice, and that some charges were justified:

As to the question whether the Voice has been effective in the past, as a professional journalist familiar with its output, I must testify that it has not been as effective as it could have been. But let it be stressed that the McCarthy committee did not inquire into the Voice's competence, analyze its quality, measure its services against the best broadcasting standards, or learn whether the Voice held the attention of listeners. The committee was interested only in creating the impression that the Voice was the tool of subversives in the State Department. 86

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86Ibid.
Swing made a plea for the professionalization of broadcasting services, maintaining that they cannot be administered by political groups.

It ought to be understood that professional affairs cannot be carried through by non-professionals. Congressional committees do not undertake to say what medicines should be used in veterans' hospitals. The Interior Department does not write directives to tell engineers how to build bridges and dams. International broadcasting is journalism; and while journalism is one of the less esoteric professions, nevertheless it is a profession. Imagine the State Department and Congress between them trying to publish the New York Times, or operate NBC or CBS.

By contrast, one of the troubles of the Voice is that many Congressmen believe that radio propaganda is not journalism but the 'selling' of ideas with the techniques used to sell toothpaste or cigarettes.

... They challenge the most astute editorial judgment and require the finest editorial integrity. The work should be entrusted to editors who are capable enough to be left alone. 87

After the hearings, Swing waited until he had received his contract for the next fiscal year—"to prove that I was not forced to resign"—and submitted his resignation. 88

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87 Ibid., p. 31.
The Years 1953-1958

Upon leaving the Voice of America, Raymond Swing joined the personal staff of Edward R. Murrow, a news reporter and analyst for the Columbia Broadcasting System. Swing was employed by Murrow to write portions of the daily newscast heard at 7:45 (Eastern Time) Monday through Friday on the CBS Radio Network. During this time Swing did not appear on the air, nor did he receive air credit for his contributions.

Swing's contributions to the Murrow program were short five-minute news analyses which were read by Murrow after he had covered the day's events. Swing was not the only person writing analyses for the program. Other staff members wrote occasionally, and Murrow himself also wrote. These were primarily Swing's responsibility, however, and, according to Swing, he wrote "nineteen out of twenty" of the analyses.

Swing remained with the Murrow staff until 1958, when he was once again invited to join the staff of the Voice of America. Interestingly, Murrow once again became Swing's superior when he was appointed Director of the Voice of America in 1961.

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89 Ibid.
When Swing returned to the Voice of America, he enjoyed both prestige and independence. His position was Chief Political Commentator. His chief responsibility was to prepare and deliver three five-minute commentaries each week. He was allowed considerable freedom in the choice of topics for his program. According to Swing, topics which were in line with official American foreign policy were suggested to him. If he was personally in opposition to official policy, Swing was given the privilege of refusing the topic. As far as could be determined by inquiry, Swing was the only Voice staff member enjoying this independence.

In January, 1962, the Educational Radio Network, a group of educational FM stations extending along the east coast from Boston to Washington began carrying Swing's commentaries as part of their network schedule at 6:25 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This was made possible because of an arrangement between the Voice of America and the Educational Radio Network that any Voice programs could be re-broadcast providing advance notice were given and that no cost (for taping, telephone lines, etc.) accrued to the Voice. These broadcasts marked the first time in ten years that Swing was heard regularly on a domestic radio network.

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90 Details from an interview with Hartford N. Gunn, General Manager, WGBH, Boston, November 20, 1961.

91 His last appearance was on the Liberty Network, June, 1951.
Swing had misgivings about the domestic broadcast of programs intended for overseas audiences. He said they were "too simple" and "obvious" for an American audience already familiar with the points he was trying to make.92

In March, 1962, on his seventy-fifth birthday, Swing reduced his working load at the Voice of America to two days a week. He was responsible for only one commentary each week. He is at present devoting much of his time to a book of memoirs based on his activities and experiences as a foreign correspondent during World War I and the years when he was in England. He is still interested in Music and is participating in a plan to record some of his compositions.

Summary and Conclusion

Raymond Swing's family background and early professional experiences in journalism were important influences upon his work as a radio news commentator before and during World War II. To his home may be traced at least three characteristics found in his radio work: his sense of historical perspective and interest in providing historical settings for contemporary events which was, he says, encouraged by his father; second, his enthusiasm for argument and discussion which makes itself apparent, as will be shown in the next

Chapter, in his commentaries; and, finally, his respect and desire to enter the intellectual life of writers, teachers, scientists and artists.

Swing's experiences in Europe as a foreign correspondent provided him with a sense of the intricacies of diplomacy. It also allowed him to meet and to observe the leading European statesmen, many of whom became central figures in the European crises which he commented upon in his radio broadcasts. Swing's status as an expert on international affairs was derived largely from his European experiences.

During the ten years Swing spent in England he developed a strong affection for the English people and an understanding of their political institutions. Further, his reputation as a journalist was increased by his contributions to English newspapers. Without this long acquaintance with England, it is doubtful whether he could have undertaken so successfully the task of explaining America to the English which was offered to him by President Roosevelt and Sir John Reith.

Swing's liberal political sympathies may be traced in part to his early acquaintance with his uncle, George Mead, who had a strong interest in international education. In part, it may also be traced to his acquaintance with European politics.
World War II provided a unique opportunity for Swing to make use of his journalistic skills, his understanding of international politics and his enthusiasm for the English. Swing had a number of friends who held positions in government and he had indicated his sympathy for the New Deal while he was an editor of the Nation. The combination of skill, experiences, personal qualities and "contacts" enabled Swing to become a successful news commentator during the Second World War. He is still exercising his skill, knowledge and influence as a commentator for the Voice of America.
CHAPTER IV

THE COMMENTARIES

The news commentaries of Raymond Gram Swing written during the years between September, 1939 and the end of 1945 have a number of characteristics which distinguish them from the work of other reporters and commentators. These characteristics will be discussed in this chapter. Swing's style, manner of delivery, subjects, and work methods will be considered.

Length, Times and Changes

Length. All of Swing's wartime news commentaries were fifteen minutes long. With time taken by opening announcements, commercials, and closing announcements subtracted, most of the programs contained between twelve minutes and thirty seconds and twelve minutes and forty-five seconds of actual commentary. These figures were obtained by timing transcriptions of the commentaries in the Music Department of the Library of Congress.

Time Scheduled. The time at which Swing was heard on the air changed during the war. Swing was heard most frequently during 1938 and 1939 on the Mutual Network at 10:00 p.m. His scripts, which have actual broadcast times marked on them in pencil, reveal that variations in scheduling were common, and he also was heard occasionally at 9:45 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 5:45 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. Swing
says he objected to the variations in scheduling because "I was never certain of having the same audience."¹

Beginning in September, 1939, when Sing's commentary became sponsored, he was heard more regularly at 10:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings at 10:00 p.m. In January, 1942, Mutual changed the schedule, and Swing was heard on Monday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday evenings. This schedule continued until Swing joined the NBC Blue Network on September 21, 1942.

From September 21, 1942, until December 28, 1944, Swing was heard Monday through Thursday evenings at 10:00 p.m. sponsored by the Socony-Vacuum Company. There were few variations from this schedule except during the autumn of 1944 when broadcasts by political candidates caused him to be heard only on Tuesday and Thursday during the week of October 11. Aside from brief summer vacations, Swing was heard regularly at 10:00 p.m. The identification of Swing with this time period was so complete for some that Charles Siepmann wrote "many of us think of ten o'clock as 'Swing's time.'"²

Swing was not heard during the first three weeks of 1945 when he vacationed in Jamaica. He returned on January 21, and

was heard Monday through Friday evenings at 7:15 p.m. from that date until the end of 1945.

**Style**

The style of Swing's commentaries is distinctive, though hard to describe. Certain aspects of it, including his use of repetition, paradox, negatives, and qualified statements, are discussed below.

**Repetition.** One aspect of Swing's style was the repetition of words in the same sentence, or in adjacent sentences.

> News about the war with Japan is fragmentary, almost to the point of being insignificant. And since events of utmost significance have happened, and are happening, the scantiness of the news is not only unsatisfactory, it is injurious to national morale.³

In this brief extract, the words *significant* and *happen* were used, in different forms, twice. The same stylistic device may be observed in the following excerpts.

> If this were a good, healthy world, the big news of the week, or of the month, probably of the year, would be the first passenger flight across the Atlantic... But this is not the news that it would be if, as I said, this were a good, healthy world.⁴

The inclusion of the phrase "as I said" is an indication that Swing was fully conscious of the device he used. He occasionally

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³Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 9, 1941, p. 1.
used two or more words in alternate repetition to create a rhythm in his scripts:

Balance can be permanently achieved only with static elements, and society is not static. Hence the balance of power has been an ideal that could not be achieved. But the effort to achieve it was continuously and honestly made.5

In this excerpt, the words static, balance, and achieve are repeated at least twice. By altering the form of the word—achieve became achieved when it was repeated—Swing introduced a subtle variation.

Paradox. Swing frequently used paradoxical statements, as in this example:

What I am trying to remind you is that this result, six months ago, would have seemed wholly impossible. And then I must do my best to explain how this incredible thing has happened.6

That Swing was conscious of the literary device he used is indicated by the fact that he defended his view as "no glib paradox:"

It is no glib paradox to say that the present war became inevitable only because of the stubbornly stupid effort to avert it.7

The use of paradoxical statements was not merely a stylistic device; it was an indication of the complexity of Swing view of political

5Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 10, 1939, p. 2.
6Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 18, 1939, p. 1.
events. At times he was impatient with those who did not understand or agree with his paradoxical interpretations.

It need not appear a fallacy to hail first a system of concentrated power, then to demand decentralization in its use. If the mind is too obtuse to reconcile these concepts, there is little hope for the future. For on this paradox the future of humanity rests.\textsuperscript{8}

Although no attempt was made to count the number of instances in which the device was used, a study of Swing's scripts makes it clear that paradox was used frequently in 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1942, and that he made less frequent use of it during the later war years. Swing has suggested that one reason was that his work load increased during the war years, and he devoted less time to polishing his scripts.\textsuperscript{9} Another reason is that Swing was more certain of his point of view in the later years, and more emphatic in his advocacy of world government. The device disappeared from his scripts as his own view of events became clearer.

Qualifications. Throughout the war, Swing's scripts were characterized by expressions of limitation and qualification. Even predictions were surrounded by qualifying phrases.

If I am even approximately right about the way the problem looks to the statesmen in London, Paris and Warsaw, the advice which London and

\textsuperscript{8}Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 12, 1939, p. 3.

Paris will give to the Poles will be to negotiate with Hitler. But there are in this calculation two uncertainties ... 10

The qualifications in Swing's commentaries were frequently introduced by the word "if."

If by the end of this fall there is still a Russian front in Europe, Germany will have lost the war. If by the end of the fall the Russians should have been pushed back behind the Urals, and no new European front is opened and held by the United Nations, Germany will have command of Europe and Hitler's defeat will have become extremely difficult. 11

Swing used qualifications to emphasize alternative actions which might have been chosen. In his Preview of History, mentioned earlier to demonstrate his use of paradoxes, Swing spoke of the war as "inevitable." After American entry into the war, Swing qualified his judgment:

We did not need to be in this war. If we had been willing to betray our belief in the freedom of the individual, and in his protection under law, which is what the Bill of Rights safeguards, we might easily have come to terms with the powers fighting to establish a world without personal liberties. 12

The qualifying phrases make it difficult to summarize or paraphrase Swing's statements. Listening to the transcriptions

10 Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 23, 1939, p. 3.
11 Raymond Swing, news commentary, April 6, 1942, p. 4.
12 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 15, 1941, p. 2.
of the commentaries, one is struck by the fact that, although he sounded simple and clear in his position, it frequently is impossible to state his editorial viewpoint clearly because of the number of qualifications.

Negatives. Throughout his scripts, Swing uses negatives as a means of providing emphasis. The effect is much like calling attention to a written phrase by partially erasing it rather than by underlining. A few brief examples follow.

For we did not need to be in this war. 13

King Haskon is always described as unostentatious . . . 14

For news of the U-Boat war we must rely on scraps of information which isn't enough to present an overall picture. 15

Cables are coming from Singapore, but do not give much information. 16

Negatives were frequently used to indicate what Swing could not say, but developments which he thought likely. In 1939 he

14 Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 3, 1942, p. 4.
16 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 9, 1941, p. 4.
made a modest prediction, approaching his subject negatively:

It is not in my capacity to say whether it will be an era of peace or an era of war. It may be either. But one thing it will not be, an era of the continuance of blackmail.

Swing also used negatives to replace affirmative statements. Rather than say that Christmas Eve was an appropriate time for a discussion of peace, he said:

No evening of the year could be more appropriate for such a subject, and the fact that we are at war does not make it less appropriate, but more so.

Swing also described situations and persons by suggesting qualities which they did not display. The Dutch defenders on Java were described as showing "no cowardice." The same descriptive technique was used in telling about a speech by Hitler:

When Hitler spoke today there was no note, no emotion, no orator's climax remaining that he had not used over and over again.

The scripts contain many references to the importance of what was not said, to actions not taken, and to information which he did not possess. The effect was to emphasize the limitations under which he worked, and the complexity of the events with which he dealt.

17 Raymond Swing, news commentary, April 1, 1939, p. 3.
19 Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 6, 1942, p. 2.
20 Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 1, 1939, p. 5.
Clarity. Swing has denied that he made a conscious effort to develop a characteristic style "other than trying to achieve clear communication." It is he has said, "a compromise between oral and written style. I make an effort to say exactly what I mean."

When asked if there were any stylistic models whom he followed, Swing mentioned the English poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose "sprung rhythm" he has occasionally emulated in his own poetry.

Despite Swing's assurances that clarity is the key to his style, one is struck by the nuances which characterize his written work and, to some extent, his conversations. Clarity, for Swing, means communicating all of the qualifications which cluster about the idea he is trying to express. In this sense of the word, Swing's commentaries, though not simple, are clear.

Delivery

A number of persons have commented upon Swing's delivery. The recordings of the broadcasts, which are now available at the Library of Congress, make it possible to evaluate these comments.

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Charles Sieppmann, writing in 1918, described Swing's delivery as "lucid and intelligent." Swing himself calls his delivery "sober, but not dull." Dixon Wecter said Swing's greatest asset was a "reassuring" quality, and added that Swing's critics said he was "high-brow and prosey." Other writers have said:

Two newscasters and commentators who achieved international fame did so not only for their dependable analyses, but also for the crispness and directness of their delivery: Raymond Swing and Elmer Davis.

R. O. Boyer wrote that Swing had a tense style, and quoted a studio engineer as saying "If you'd pluck him, he'd twang!" Boyer's own observation was that "his voice rings aggressively enough in the studio, but when it emerges through the world's radios it makes disaster sound like a lullaby and transforms calamity into a soothing caress."

Listening to recordings of Swing's broadcasts, a number of characteristics are noted. First, the pronunciations are consistently general American. Despite his long residence in England, Swing did not adopt British speech habits. Swing did not live in

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23 Charles Sieppmann, op. cit.
the Mid-West after leaving it before World War I, and the consistent general American quality was achieved only at the expense of some effort during the first years after his return.

Swing's articulation was precise, but the rate of his speech was slow, resulting in the qualities that Wecter called "reassuring" and that Boyer referred to as a "lullabye" or "soothing caress." The voice quality was consistently soft, occasionally almost a whisper. It was almost always tense, never a relaxed tone.

Following the recordings with copies of the scripts, one is struck by the clarity with which they can be understood. Sentences which seem highly qualified and complex when read in script form appear simple and direct when read by Swing. The complexity takes the appearance of an effort to say what he means as simply as he can.

The most notable characteristic of Swing's delivery was the attitude he conveyed. He sounded earnest and frequently troubled by what he was saying. Even when making a witty comment, Swing delivered it with unrelieved solemnity.

In summary, the delivery of Swing's commentaries was earnest, serious, and lucid. The voice quality was often thin, suggesting at times the approach of a head cold. The pronunciation was consistently general American, and the rate of delivery slow.
Subjects

Swing has said that the subjects of his commentaries were freely selected. Friends, including government officials and journalists, occasionally suggested topics, but few of his commentaries were selected on the basis of recommendation. They were, he says, selected on the basis of news value and not because of his predisposition toward certain topics. There were certain patterns in the selection of topics which may be observed, however.

Strategy. One is Swing's ability to recount strategic problems and make the decisions made by wartime leaders comprehensible. During the 1942-43 season, Swing devoted four programs to discussions of manpower problems. He began by indicating the limits of American manpower, and the various uses to which it could be put: production of war goods, training of extensive armies, or support of foreign allied armies. The strategy behind the use of American manpower fascinated Swing, and was the kind of problem with which, according to Wecter, he dealt effectively.

Another preference indicated by the wartime news commentaries is for the discussion of what Swing called "grand strategy." On

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29November 2, 1942; November 5, 1942; February 17, 1943; April 20, 1943.
30Wecter, op. cit., p. 34.
31Wecter, op. cit., p. 34.
August 27, 1942, he devoted his entire commentary to what he called "factors of a final victory." In this program he not only reported what was happening, but possible future activities on the part of Germany. This led him into an analysis of the way Hitler approached the war:

If Stalingrad should go, then the Caucasus would be merged in the battle for the Middle East, and there it is that Hitler would try to bring to a climax the year of striking of overwhelming blows. The greater battle of the Middle East would not be in the Caucasus itself, but in Egypt, and here the fighting is expected to explode at any minute. The magnitude of the war is not in the Russian dimension, but in the Russian plus the Middle East dimension. It is in both dimensions that Hitler laid his plans for this, his last year of supremacy.

Ten days earlier, on August 17, 1942, Swing had reported Churchill's visit to Moscow, and predicted that "grand strategy is in the making." A substantial portion of the program was devoted to conjecture about what Churchill and Stalin had planned. On December 30, 1942, Swing devoted approximately half of his commentary to the strategy of supply. "For without a keen appreciation of the shipping crisis," he said, "public opinion cannot appraise the war.

32 Ibid., p. 3.
33 Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 17, 1942, p. 1.
intelligently. He then continued to explain how shipping capacity was a basic determining factor in military expansion. The same problem was considered in terms of war strategy on November 30, 1942, when he discussed the significance of a decision to place emphasis upon domestic production of shipping facilities rather than aircraft. 35

On January 27, 1943, Swing devoted his commentary to a discussion of the Casablanca conference. He reported "the conference was chiefly devoted to the strategy of the war this year." 36 Then he analyzed the fragments of available information about the conference in an attempt to decide what the strategy was.

Running through Swing's commentaries are continual references to grand strategy, and to the ways in which it was determined. Problems of strategy were among his most frequently used topics.

Anniversaries. Throughout the war, Swing kept records of significant events, and frequently used the anniversaries as the basis of his commentary. On December 15, 1941, he observed the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Bill of Rights. Christmas Eve 1941, 1942, and 1943, were devoted to discussions of the

34 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 30, 1942, p. 2.
36 Raymond Swing, news commentary, January 27, 1942, p. 3.
differences between past Christmases and the present, and the possibilities of the future. On March 26, 1942, he discussed the first anniversary of the Yugoslavian resistance to German military strength. On April 5, 1942, he discussed Army Day. May 17 of the same year he discussed the reasons for observing National Maritime Day. August 3, 1942, he paid a lengthy tribute to King Hakaan on his seventieth birthday. August 31, 1942 was the third anniversary of the war, and on October 27, 1942, Swing discussed Navy Day. On October 28, 1942, Swing observed a triple anniversary: the twenty-fourth anniversary of the Czech Republic, the twentieth anniversary of the Black Shirts' march on Rome, and the second anniversary of the Italian attack on Greece.

The observation of anniversaries continued throughout the war. Swing observed not only the well-known anniversaries such as Armistice Day and Dedication Day, but relatively obscure political anniversaries such as the twentieth anniversary of the Fascist Militia on February 1, 1943.

There was a pattern in Swing's observation of anniversaries. Most events were mentioned each year on their anniversary or within a few days of it. For instance, Yugoslavian resistance was celebrated on March 26, 1942. The following year Swing waited until April 6 to note the second anniversary of the German attack on Yugoslavia. Other anniversaries were mentioned only when they
fitted the news of the day, as when Hitler's birthday coincided with
a low point in Italian morale, or when Germany surrendered Tunisia
on the tenth anniversary of the Berlin book burning.\textsuperscript{37,38}

The regularity with which Swing interrupted discussions of
topical events to dwell on what had gone before gave a continuity
to his commentaries. Reading the scripts, the anniversaries pro­
vide a rhythm which becomes familiar. One begins to anticipate
the next anniversary. It is likely that Swing's listeners also
came to expect Swing to call their attention to the political events
of the past which deserve to be remembered.

\textbf{Personality Sketches.} Swing has said that political decisions
can be understood only if the men who make them are understood.\textsuperscript{39}
By knowing something of the man, Swing felt that it was possible to
discover something of the truth of his motives even when they were
concealed.

The human mind is one of the most absorbing of
all studies, just how it happens to think what
it thinks, just how it works under stress, and
what it discloses, of the truth, even when it
is telling a lie.\textsuperscript{40}

Consequently, Swing frequently devoted considerable portions of his
commentaries to descriptions of men, their attitudes and weaknesses,
and then made attempts to relate this information to the news of the

\textsuperscript{37}Raymond Swing, news commentary, April 19, 1943.
\textsuperscript{38}Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 10, 1943.
\textsuperscript{39}Raymond Swing, interview, January 28, 1962.
\textsuperscript{40}Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 9, 1942, p. 1.
day. Characteristic of the way in which Swing used personality sketches to illuminate political decisions was his treatment of the problem of British-Indian relations during 1942.

He introduced the problem at length on February 23, 1942 when he concluded that there was a need for political imagination because "if the triangle (of Hindu, Moslem and British interests) were left to work out its own conflict, Indian independence might have to wait indefinitely."

He returned to the question on March 23 with the announcement that Sir Stafford Cripps had been assigned to a mission in India. Swing suggested that the situation was too complex to hope for a clear solution, and that "the most Sir Stafford Cripps can hope to do now is to get a provisional system going." Swing considered the selection of Cripps important because "Sir Stafford himself is a kind of pledge that the British offer is a good deal better than anything put forward in 1940. Sir Stafford is deeply committed to Indian Independence. The selection of Cripps was not regarded by Swing as a selfless decision on the

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1 Raymon Swing, news commentary, February 23, 1942, p. 4.
3 Raymon Swing, news commentary, March 11, 1942, p. 4.
part of Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Considering that Cripps was a possible replacement for Churchill, he said:

... The net effect of his going to India might well be that his chances of the prime ministership are eclipsed. Whether or not Mr. Churchill thought of it that way in choosing him for the great mission is neither here nor there.\textsuperscript{114}

Swing thus made the solution of the Indian problem dependent upon the personal ability of Cripps to persuade the Indians of his intentions. The selection of Cripps was possibly determined by Churchill's fear that Cripps might succeed him.

The involvement of personalities in the Indian problem continued after the Cripps mission. "It appears," said Swing, "that Gandhi, with his sense of strategy, appreciates that the British can be pushed a step further.\textsuperscript{115} At this point, Swing suggested that the Indian problem could only be understood in terms of Cripps' sympathy, Churchill's fear that he might be unseated because of defeats in the Pacific, and Gandhi's sense of strategy.\textsuperscript{116} The complexity was increased in late July when Swing reported a further development:

From the entourage of Mr. Gandhi comes a hint today of a desire for the intervention

\textsuperscript{114}Tbid.

\textsuperscript{115}Raymond Swing, news commentary, July 13, 1942, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{116}Raymond Swing, news commentary, July 13, 1942, p. 2.
of President Roosevelt. An unnamed 'close friend' of the Indian leader said that 'a few words by the President' could avert a great crisis.\footnote{Raymond Swing, news commentary, July 30, 1942, p. 3.}

The personalities of the men concerned in the question, were, for Swing, inseparable from the question.

Swing approached other problems in a similar way. Norwegian resistance was explained in terms of the "decisive personal part the king took in rallying Norwegian resistance and opposing all temptations to compromise. \ldots \endnote{Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 3, 1942, p. 2.} Swing continued with his description of the Norwegian king:

He is straight, very tall, and has a lean, long face and his mustache is darker than it is gray, so it is hard to realize that he is a man of seventy. He is more than a person of deep political values and of strong spiritual faith. He is a man of feeling and cheer. And it is the combination of these qualities which must have endeared him to his people.\footnote{Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 3, 1942, p. 6.}

Swing attempted to deal with Hitler's decisions and intentions by analyzing his personality. Although he dealt with Hitler frequently, he did so most extensively on November 9, 1942.

\ldots I think I shall start with a mind, and the mind of one man, and the one man
is Adolf Hitler. Hitler made a speech before his old Nazi colleagues in Munich last night. He had the news of the American landing in North Africa. The war had entered a new phase. What was it that popped into Hitler’s mind to tell his old colleagues? He hinted darkly at new frightfulness developed by German inventive genius. And then he made the all-revealing comment. In the last war, he said, the Kaiser had fled from Germany and left it to its fate. But, he, Adolph Hitler, would never do that.

Now wasn’t that a revealing idea to present itself in the mind of Adolph Hitler yesterday? He already was facing the temptation to run away and was rejecting it.

Swing made another use of personal information about leaders: he used knowledge about their special qualities and abilities to guess at the content of conference and plans. Speaking of Winston Churchill’s visit to Moscow in August, 1942, Swing deduced the purpose of the meeting by discussing the personnel.

... The personnel of the conference leads to a fresh field for speculation. Only one British officer was there qualified to talk about a second front in western Europe, Sir Alan Brooke, while three active officers, one of them American and two British, were there whose advice would be valuable primarily on matters affecting the Middle East. And as the German drive to the Caucasus progresses, the Russian and Middle Eastern front are almost merged. So it is legitimate to conclude that at least one subject

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50 Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 9, 1942, p. 1.
under consideration at the conference was helping Russia by supplies and men in the Caucasus.51

Throughout the war, Swing studied and analyzed the abilities and qualities of leaders for clues to their intentions and for an understanding of their decisions.

Descriptions of Battles

Swing, at intervals of approximately one week, devoted a commentary to a description of a battle. Obviously, the selection of such subjects was determined by the progress of the war. Nevertheless, Swing regularly gave extensive battle descriptions. These narratives included not only the details of military action when the details were available, but also geographical details, comments upon the political and social institutions of the area, and reflections about the strategy involved. Such descriptions were made of Singapore, North Africa, Leningrad, Java, Iwo Jima, Tunis, Dieppe, and D-Day. In addition, portions of many other scripts were devoted to the description of battles. This description of the Russian capture of Valikie Luki is similar to many which appear in the scripts.52

In the new language born of the war, Valikie Luki, the northern stronghold recaptured by the Russians,

51Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 17, 1942, p. 6.
is a hedgehog. Last winter the Russians reported their offensives, and then just when the capture of important places and huge numbers of prisoners might have been expected, the news petered out, so that it seemed that the offensives were being exaggerated. Then came the explanation of the hedgehogs. The eastern front is not a line of trenches in the sense of the first World War. It is a series of hedgehogs, and a hedgehog is a strongly fortified nest of defenses around some central point. Between the hedgehogs, the defenses were either light or non-existent. And though the Russians did advance, and did surround the hedgehogs, these were too strong to reduce by assault. They were stocked with food and ammunition, or could be supplied by air. It was not until late in the Spring that the world had confirmation of the bitterness of this winter fighting. It came from the Germans themselves when Field-marshall Goering gave a dramatic account of the extreme perils of the winter campaign. And his report was supplemented later by the Fuehrer himself. From other German sources it was learned that in these besieged hedgehogs, garrisons of thousands by the end of the winter were reduced to half or a third of their number. The men were killed or they died of cold, hunger and disease, and supplying them presented the German staff with one of the worst problems of the war. This winter, however, the High Command promised the German public that the experiences of last winter are not going to be repeated, because better preparations have been made and the science of winter warfare has developed.

The campaign this winter has now brought the capture of the first of the hedgehogs. Last winter not one of the important ones could be taken. Valikie Luk is of real strategic importance. So its loss to the Germans is not only serious intrinsically, it is an omen of a costly winter. And that may explain why the German High Command is still withholding the news of its fall from the German public. It did not mention the fighting of the Valikie Luk garrison in the noon communique
today, though it had represented it as resisting bravely for two days after the garrison had been wiped out. But official military reports from Berlin this morning still clung to the falsehood that Valikie Luk was holding. The improved science of winter warfare, which was promised by the Nazi High Command, is in evidence, all right, but it is being applied by the Russians. They have worked out in all details a much more effective plan of attack. Their ski troops have been trained in cooperation with tanks and mobile artillery. They have a better gun this winter than last. And the ski troops were gathered, along with the equipment some weeks in advance of last year's record. Last winter the offenses could not be launched till well on into January. The fighting around Valikie Luk started in November, and so it did on other sectors of the long front. So the German row of hedgehogs is going to have not only a severer test but a considerably longer one.

The description of the capture of Valikie Luk in the Moscow press shows it to have been one of the bloodiest engagements of the war. The German garrison had been ordered to hold out to the last, and appears to have obeyed. It had powerful field fortifications, with plenty of cannon, machine guns and mortars. In the suburbs it had planted thousands of mines, built tank traps, and placed concrete shields before the blockhouses. Tank hooks had been hidden in the snow. The Russians surrounded Valikie Luk on Christmas morning. The assault was launched after intense artillery and mortar preparation. When the artillery shifted its fire to the depth of the German defenses, Soviet infantry rushed forward under its cover. Artillery accompanying the infantry destroyed blockhouses with point blank fire. At a difficult moment in the battle, the Russians arrived with tanks to assist the infantry, and the battle raged from house to house. Fierce engagements were fought at every street corner, and
every big building. Russian sappers made things hard for the Nazis by using smoke screens to cover the advancing Russian troops. During the battle, remnants of the population, including women and children, climbed out of their basements to indicate to the Russian artillery the firepoints and secret approaches to the German armored trenches. The fighting lasted well into the night, when Russians with automatic rifles infiltrated the German line and threw the defenders into panic. All night a dull red glow hung over the city. By dawn, the Soviet banner flew there in its stead. The Russians captured a large store of supplies, they killed a large number of the enemy. And along with these benefits, they have the prestige of solving the problem of reducing a hedgehog. And that promises to make the story of this winter's campaign still more imposing, as well as easier to follow, than last year's.

Dixon Wecter referred to Swing's sketches of wartime activity as "research pieces" because of their mixture of military, historical, and news information. They constitute one of the most regular features of Swing's broadcasts.

The Middle Commercial

When Swing began his program on a regular nightly schedule on the Mutual Network in 1939, a middle commercial was inserted in the program. Swing did not separate the news and commentary portions of his program, and the commercial, consequently, occurred

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53 Dixon Wecter, op. cit., p. 32.
in an awkward position. Swing referred to the middle commercial as a "painful interruption."54

Swing has recounted that several times during 1939 and 1940, he requested that the advertiser remove the middle commercial. According to one source, "Swing resolved to wait for the day when even the most passionate cigar lover would concede that the news was so overwhelming" that the commercial would seem intrusive.55 On May 10, 1940, the day on which Germany invaded Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg, Swing took a firm stand. He announced that, if the middle commercial were not removed that evening, he would not go on the air. The J. Walter Thompson Advertising Agency representative refused to alter the scheduled middle commercial until five minutes before air time. At the last moment the representative agreed, and the program continued without interruption. From May 10, 1940, until the end of the war, there were no middle commercials in Swing's commentaries.56

The omission of the middle commercial did not have any marked effect upon the organization of Swing's news commentaries. When the middle commercial was included, it had been his practice to recount the major events of the day briefly and then give a comment

upon one aspect of it. Following the middle commercial, he usually continued the commentary, upon the same subject, and ended with "filler" items of spot news.

The presence or absence of the middle commercial did not change the makeup of Swing's news program. The most obvious reason for objecting to it was that since Swing did not have a distinct break in the middle of his program, the commercial did interrupt. There was no indication that Swing attempted to accommodate the middle break into his program planning while the commercial was present, and the omission of the commercial did not cause any change in the content of the program.

Work Methods

Swing's work methods are of interest because they were adapted from his newspaper experience. Swing did not use writers, and throughout the war wrote all of his commentaries. He says he read only one broadcast which was written by someone else, a special program for the Office of War Information, which was broadcast to overseas audiences only.57

During the early months of 1939, Swing settled in a small office on Times Square in New York. His equipment consisted of

a number of reference books on recent European events, a world atlas, wall maps of Europe, subscriptions to major American and English newspapers and one secretary. His secretary served also as a "reader" marking passages in the newspaper for him to read.

Swing observed a leisurely schedule during 1939, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with two hours devoted to correspondence. Luncheon appointments were, he has said, "an important thing" in gathering information. At four o'clock he began assembling data for the days' news commentary. At 6:30 he usually began typing the script, which was usually completed between 8:00 and 8:30 p.m. He reported to the studio at 9:45 and read his script "off mike" before air time at 10:00 p.m. During weekends, Swing did not attempt to remain informed, refusing to read news reports or conduct interviews on Saturdays or Sundays. Swing was attempting to maintain in New York the leisurely schedule he observed while a reporter in London.

The tempo of Swing's work increased rapidly at the time of the German-Soviet pact, and the newer pace was, he says, observed

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58E. Sparling, "Let's Listen to Swing," Reader's Digest, August, 1940, p. 45.

for the duration of the war:

With that event, broadcasting leaped into a furious tempo. The change-over came the night of the news of von Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow. I had my script for that evening comfortably written, and heard the news of the coming Soviet-Nazi pact at 7:30 in the evening, two hours and a quarter before I was due in the studio. I spent fifteen minutes telephoning for verification of the news and wrote an entirely new broadcast, some two thousand words, in an hour and a half. From then on, there was no time for prolonged care with scripts. During the fourteen days, my written output of broadcasts was never less than four thousand words a day.60

After Pearl Harbor, Swing found that government officials in Washington were less willing to talk candidly on long-distance telephone, so he moved to Washington, leaving his family in New Weston, Connecticut. In Washington, he rented a four-room suite in the Hotel Roosevelt which became both his office and living quarters. His staff gradually expanded, and by 1943, he had four women assistants working for him: two readers, one research specialist acquainted with the Library of Congress and government documents, and a secretary. He had little time for his own reading and research, and depended upon his assistants to clip the Washington, London, and New York newspapers, putting materials on copy paper with headings at the top. Research was also delegated

60 Raymond Swing, how War Came, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939), p. 11.
to an assistant. Swing concentrated upon personal consultation with officials and friends, and the writing of the commentaries. His principal work method continued to be the study of newspaper clippings prepared by his staff, the formulation of a number of hypotheses concerning events in the news, and attempts to get the hypotheses confirmed or denied.

Although Swing's commentaries were his major activity during these war years, he continued to do the "American Commentary" which was heard on the BBC, and to write a weekly 1,000 word column for the London Sunday Express. In addition, Swing appeared on the OWI overseas service in special broadcasts.
CHAPTER V

SWING AND ADMINISTRATION POLICY

There are several reasons for inquiring into the relationship between Raymond Swing's news commentaries and the policies of the Roosevelt administration. Swing's critics accused him of being "the voice of the State Department," and one commentator suggested that "in another country Swing's function would be performed by the government."\(^1\) Many of these charges were made during the first months of the war, in early 1942. An investigation of the relationship of Swing's commentaries to the administration may provide evidence to support or refute these charges. In addition, an inquiry into this relationship may reveal information which will help in the evaluation of Swing by his own standards. (Chapter IX)

In this chapter, Swing's commentaries for a two-week period in March 1942, will be compared with copies of the New York Times for the same period. The emphasis given to an item in Swing's commentaries will be compared with emphasis given by the editors of the New York Times and with official administration views when they are reported. Items which were given prominence in the New


\(^2\)Raymond Swing, telephone conversation, July 16, 1961.
York Times but omitted by Swing will be examined to determine whether the administration could possibly have benefitted from the omission.

**Selection of Topics**

For each day during the two-week period, the topics chosen by Swing will be listed and compared with topics given prominence in the New York Times and by administration officials. In some instances, Swing commented on more than one topic. All topics which were analyzed by him will be mentioned. Swing also used some "filler" items of fifteen to thirty seconds length at the end of his program. These will not be included since they were not commented upon.

**Monday, March 2, 1942.** Swing's commentary was concerned with the Japanese invasion of Java. He emphasized the size of the Japanese forces which landed on Java, and the loss of several Dutch cruisers which were destroyed in a naval battle. He also devoted a portion of his commentary to the English battle, with the Japanese in Burma. A final topic in his commentary was the possible recognition by the United States of the Free French claims on Caledonia.

The New York Times gave front page space to the Dutch defense of Java on March 2 and on the following day. The headline
read JAPANESE LAND ON JAVA, BATTLE DEFENDERS. A map of Java was also presented on the front page. The Burmese battle did not receive separate coverage in the New York Times, although it was mentioned in the summary of war news on Page 1 on March 2. The importance of the dealings with the Free French was emphasized much more by Swing than by the New York Times. The New York Times gave it only one short paragraph the following day, and claimed that it "dodged the issue."

There were no official statements reported in the New York Times which dealt with the issues discussed by Swing. At a press conference later in the week, the issue of Java was raised, but it was not used by Swing at that time and will be discussed below.

Tuesday, March 3, 1942. Swing devoted his commentary to the grand strategy of Germany and the allies. He also discussed, as a related topic, the importance of the Berlin Conference, attended by Japan, Germany and Italy which was held the preceding week.

The New York Times did not report any concern with grand strategy on either side. There were many details in the New York Times stories which agreed with Swing's commentary. It was reported that "the war of nerves scheduled to break in the next ten days is

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intended to bring Turkey to her knees . . . ."

The New York Times, in the same article, reported that "Germany is determined to go through with her Spring offensive, cost what it may . . . ."
The next day the New York Times reported that the possibility of a German offensive was in doubt. Although the details with which Swing worked were available to the New York Times, he placed much greater emphasis upon grand strategy than did the newspaper.

A speech by General George Marshall, reported in full in the Times on March 3, indicated that some attention from within the administration was focused on the problem of strategy. In the speech, Marshall indicated that "home fronts are out" and that it was "time to carry the fight to the enemy." Although Swing's concern was with both allied and Axis strategy, he did overlap some of the material covered by Marshall.

Wednesday, March 4, 1942. Swing devoted his commentary to a discussion of the importance of American troops who had landed in North Ireland. He commented in detail upon Marshall's speech, and discussed briefly a raid made by the Royal Air Force upon factories in a Paris suburb.

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The arrival of American troops in North Ireland was reported in a two-column article on the front page of the *New York Times*. The emphasis given to the news agreed with Swing's judgment of its importance. The speech by General Marshall had been reported the preceding day, and was not mentioned in the *Times*. The British air raid on Paris suburbs was also reported on page 1 of the *Times*, although the emphasis in the *Times* was given to reports of French indignation. Swing reported only a portion of the air raid story as it was carried in the *New York Times*.

Swing's discussion of the American landing in North Ireland as part of a general war strategy was not supported by any official announcements reported in the *New York Times*. It was, interestingly, supported by a statement made by Secretary Stimson two days later in a press conference reported in the *Times*. The press conference dealt primarily with the Java problem, however, and not with the items selected by Swing for comment. There were no other official statements reported in the *New York Times* which related to other topics.

**Thursday, March 5, 1942.** Swing selected, as the topic for commentary, a speech made by the Dutch Lieutenant Governor of Java,

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Hubertus Van Mook. He also commented for five minutes on the English defense of Burma.

The New York Times also devoted prominent space to the Dutch fight in Java. The emphasis was different, however, as the Times gave most prominent emphasis to Dutch complaints that U.S. aid had not arrived. The speech by Van Mook, which was the central item in Swing's broadcast was relegated to page six in the Times.

There was no statement by any official sources within the administration concerning the fight in Burma. Secretary Stimson, in a press conference, made a lengthy statement concerning the Dutch problems on Java. Although Stimson's topic was the same as that selected by Swing for his commentary, the Secretary emphasized that American aid was on its way to Java, and that criticism of the American position was unjustified. Swing ignored criticism of American actions, emphasizing the heroism of the Dutch defenders.

Monday, March 9, 1942. Swing's commentary dealt with a revelation of troop movements made by a Daily Mail correspondent in the Pacific who managed to get a story through the U.S. Navy censor. Swing also dealt with the problem of delayed news of casualties from the Navy, and defended Navy practices in the information field. He commented upon the fight on Java, observing critically that, if the Dutch surrendered as reported, they did so with resistance to the end.
The New York Times gave front-page space to the Daily Mail story on Sunday, March 8. The New York Times also reported that the Navy had issued a statement criticizing the Daily Mail reporter. There was no information in the Times concerning the details of procedures for reporting casualties in the Navy. The surrender of Java was reported in a headline: JAVA SILENT, REPORTED SURRENDER DENIED. The Times agreed with Swing about the importance of the Daily Mail story.

On Saturday, Secretary Knox, after consultation with the President, held a press conference outside the White House. He criticized the Daily Mail correspondent, and said he would pursue the matter with British authorities with "a great deal of vigor." There were no statements reported in the Times concerning Naval news procedures. There were no statements by officials concerning the Dutch defeat on Java. The Navy issued a report on the Daily Mail incident which repeated the statements made by Secretary Knox. The Navy's report and the Secretary's statement were in agreement with the position taken by Swing.

Tuesday, March 10, 1942. Swing devoted most of his commentary to Ceylon and Madagascar, and the strategic importance of

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them to the Japanese. He devoted about four minutes to a dis-
cussion of the Riom trial in France staged by the Vichy government. Finally, he discussed the announcement of British policy toward India which was anticipated.

The New York Times reported, in a short article on page five, that "there is a quiet, strategic race" for Madagascar. It did not place emphasis upon this item. There was no report of progress in British negotiations with India, and no mention of the Riom trial in the Times on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week. Swing's judgment varied from that of the editors of the Times.

There was no statement of official policy toward Ceylon, Madagascar, or the Vichy reported in the Times. Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles did make a statement denying that there was evidence that forty French warships had fallen into German hands.

There was no mention of the Riom trial.

Wednesday, March 11, 1942. Swing devoted the largest part of his commentary to a discussion of Sir Stafford Cripps' mission to India and its probable success. He spent two minutes discussing the importance of the German battleship von Tirpitz, and one minute to a statement by Admiral Hart, former commander of United Nations naval forces in the Far East.


The following day the New York Times used the Tirpitz item for its headline: TIRPITZ FLEES AIR ATTACK OFF NORWAY. The Cripps' story was also carried on page one. The statement by Admiral Hart referred to by Swing was included in coverage of a press conference held jointly by Hart and Admiral King. In this instance, the New York Times gave page one space to each of the topics selected for comment by Swing.

There was no comment by government officials reported in the Times concerning the Cripps' mission to India. There was no mention of the von Tirpitz. The statement of Admiral Hart, made in the presence of Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Hart's superior, may be considered an official source. On this day, only one of the three topics chosen by Swing was also used as a topic by a government official.

Thursday, March 12, 1942. Swing's commentary dealt primarily with the "war of nerves" which he said was developing. He also commented upon the possible consequences of a German offensive on the Russian front, and a "psychological war" on Sweden because of her neutrality.

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The day before Swing's comment, the Times carried a report on the propaganda activities of the Berlin Radio, which had predicted "colossal preparations for a spring drive against the Russians." There was no other mention of any activity comparable to Swing's "war of nerves." The German criticism of Sweden's neutrality was not mentioned in the Times. The following day the Times gave headline prominence to Russian activities:

RUSSIANS PUSH FOE BACK IN SOUTH; PIERCE LINE TO TAKE STRONG POINTS.\(^{20}\)

The Times report was restricted to news of the Russian breakthrough, and did not contain speculation about a possible German offensive. On this day, Swing's main topic, the war of nerves, was not reported in the New York Times. The Swedish issue was also not reported. The third topic, the Russian-German conflict, was given prominence by both.

On the same day as Swing's broadcast, Admiral King attended a press conference at which he promised the "offensive will be taken." This is the only official statement which is related to Swing's anticipation of a "war of nerves" in which "new offensives" would take place. There were no reports in the New York Times of official views on the German attack on Sweden's neutrality. There were no reports of official statements about the Russian front.


Interpretations

On a number of occasions during the two-week period under study Swing's interpretation of an event varied from that of the New York Times. Swing's interpretations will be compared with the New York Times and with any official statements to determine if Swing favored the administration in his interpretations.

The Paris Raid. When Swing reported a raid on factories in the suburbs of Paris, he minimized the importance of the alleged lack of consultation between the British and the U.S. State Department.

It is true that the raid was carried out by the RAF without prior consultation between the British Foreign Office and our State Department. But it was a military action, not a political one, and though it may have political repercussions, it would be easy to exaggerate the possibility . . . . This is not the first time the French people have suffered from British air attack. They have been through them time and time again in coastal cities, and credible accounts agree that they understood the necessity for the raids, and indeed were enthusiastic about them.\(^{21}\)

Swing chose to say nothing more about the raids in future broadcasts.

The New York Times gave considerable space to reactions to the raid which were critical of the British. In a page one article

\(^{21}\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 4, 1942, p. 3.
entitled "A Cowardly Slaughter," the Times presented much more
detail than Swing.

In the Paris press, the event is being used to
the utmost to arouse resentment against the
British. One competent observer here said that
the raid could have been directed against fac­
tories in other parts of Europe where the pro­
duction is contributing far more to Axis
success.22

The Times presented an extensive account of the raid which was
sympathetic to the French, and included a picture of wounded and
dead victims with a caption which quoted a French officer as say­
ing "in my military career, I have seen death in many forms, but
I have never seen anything as horrible as this."23

The Times also devoted an editorial to a discussion of the
Paris raid. Entitled "Tragedy in France," the editorial clearly
indicated that the Times editors had misgivings about the necessity
for the raid and the "moral status" of the allies for condoning it.
"Will it justify itself as an act that will save lives by shortening
the war?" the Times asked. "To this question there can be no
answer."24

In his analysis of the raid, Swing ignored the protests rais­
ed against it. The question of whether the raid was justified,

23Caption of picture accompanying Ibid.
which bothered the *Times* editors, was dismissed by Swing because the raid was military, not political. Swing's interpretation of this event favored the British by ignoring criticism of them. There was no indication of the attitude of the administration toward the raids in the *New York Times*.

Java. On March 5, Swing described a meeting at which Hubertus van Mook, the Lieutenant Governor, spoke to the residents of Java about the coming Japanese invasion.

Plain-spoken realistic Hubertus van Mook had foreseen it all. He had warned Washington. The needs of Java had been choked off in the clamp of shipping difficulties, in the necessity of sending most available planes and men to other regions. Java's needs had not been met for reasons which we had not been able to shake.25

Swing then quoted Secretary Stimson who pledged immediate support to the Dutch in the form of supplies and airplanes. Swing concluded:

One can only watch the war news from Java to learn how substantial the help will prove to be and whether it vindicates the hope expressed by Mr. van Mook.26

When, on March 9, word was received that both Rangoon and Java had fallen to the Japanese, Swing ascribed the early surrender

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25 *Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 5, 1942*, p. 22.

to a failure to fight to the end rather than a failure of support.

To have two such blows in a single day is doubly painful, even though the pain was anticipated. And if it is true that the defense forces in Java surrendered at three this afternoon, the end has come there as suddenly as in Singapore, and in both cases without the resistance to the end which had been pledged.27

The interpretation of the fall of Java presented by the Times varied in many details from the account given by Swing. On March 3 the Times reported that van Mook was highly critical of the allies.

A Daily Mail dispatch from Bandung said today the Netherlands Indies Lieutenant Governor, Hubertus van Mook, was bitterly criticizing the United Nations command in the Pacific and quoted him as saying 'this has been a war of lost chances.'28

On March 6 the New York Times reported the press conference held by Secretary Stimson, which was mentioned by Swing. Unlike Swing, the New York Times reported that the Secretary was defensive, and gave detailed accounts of criticism of American action.

Meanwhile informed Netherlands circles in Washington held that the presence of 1000 additional United Nations fighting planes in the East Indies could have turned the tide of battle.29

27Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 9, 1942, p. 2.
On March 9 the New York Times continued to emphasize the failure of the United States to supply the Dutch.

Netherland sources do not understand why the effort was not made, why more American planes and ships were not spared for the defense of the Indies.

It was felt that inefficient and in competent use had been made by the British of the forces that they had available in Malaya and elsewhere in the Far East.

The U. S. plane reinforcements, mentioned in Washington last week were too late. Some never reached Java; some that did get there were never assembled in time to take to the air before being bombed on the fields.30

On the same day the New York Times complained about the allied operations in the Pacific in an editorial devoted to the subject.

Allied resistance has been a three-month record of 'too late' with the United Nations outguessed and except for General MacArthur on Bataan, outfought.31

Swing's brief treatment of the fight for Java indicated sympathy for van Hoo k, but a clear understanding that the Allied had done everything in their power. Swing supported Secretary Stimson's assertion that the shipping difficulties, not American


policy, were the source of the problem. The New York Times gave prominent coverage of criticism of the administration's conduct of the Pacific war. Clearly, Swing defended the administration in his interpretation of the Battle of Java.

Naval News Policy. On Saturday, March 7, the New York Times headline announced that BIG U. S. FORCE REPORTED IN SOUTH PACIFIC. The story which followed gave some details.

A correspondent of the Daily Mail assigned to the U. S. Pacific Fleet said in a dispatch appearing in his newspaper today that 'great convoys of ships carrying American troops, pilots, planes, tanks and guns were heading through the Southwest Pacific.'

The dispatch, datelined 'at sea, Friday,' and said 'naval and air battles without parallel in history are developing.'

'These massive forces will not only help to defend Australia, but mount a great offensive against the Japanese.'

'You will not hear immediately details about some of these engagements, because to announce them would help the enemy.'

The following day the Times reported that Secretary of the Navy Knox charged that the story was in error.

Secretary Knox, on leaving the White House, told reporters that the British correspondent, Walter Fair of the Daily Mail, 'had the courtesy of voyaging on an American ship with the understanding that anything he wrote was subject to check.'

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The Navy has been guarding news of its South Pacific operations by the strictest sort of censorship and American correspondents with Mr. Fair have not yet sent reports home.  

The report sparked speculation about U. S. intentions in the Pacific, and the Times reported that "reliable sources in Washington" believed that a Pacific offensive was near.  

On Monday, the Times reported that the Department of the Navy had issued a report which had denied the truth of the Daily Mail story. The Navy said the story "contains no positive fact having any relation to new convoy operations in the area." It also reported that the communiqué had been written on land, not at sea as it was datelined. 

The Times gave the Daily Mail's side of the story also. 

The Daily Mail said the Navy Department's admission of 'great convoys' is a complete vindication of the story and said protests of the noisier newspapers forced official revelation of the one real military secret involved. 

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36 Ibid.
Raymond Swing, who had not been able to comment on the story during the weekend, devoted the first four minutes of his Monday broadcast to it.

The impressions created by that cable were first, that the Daily Mail correspondent knew what he was talking about and had been given special facilities to find out. And then for some odd reason, the same facilities either had not been given American correspondents, or they had not been allowed to report them. These impressions were all natural, and yet they were all mistaken. The Daily Mail correspondent filed his cable, telling how he was 'at sea' with the Navy and that great convoys of ships carrying American troops were heading through the Southwest Pacific. But this dispatch was not written at sea, but on shore, in Honolulu. And the cable was filed in Honolulu. It is not a censor's function to enforce journalistic ethics to stop a correspondent from saying that he is at sea when he is on shore.37

The story, as interpreted by Swing, was one of faulty journalistic ethics on the part of Walter Fair. Swing did not mention the reply made by the Daily Mail. He continued to discuss the problem of news in wartime, and explained why some Navy releases were and are delayed.

This, on the face of it, looks like a withholding of detailed information by the Navy. But a submarine cannot make a full report until it returns to its base, and this presumably is news transmitted in the briefest report, made as soon as it was safe to file it, from submarines that had not returned to their base.38

38Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 9, 1942, p. 3.
In general, the Monday broadcast by Swing supported the release made by the Navy, and suggested that delays in news were caused by the wartime situation, not by any wish on the part of the Navy to suppress news.

The story continued to receive space in the New York Times and on Thursday, March 12, the Times published an editorial which was severely critical of the Navy's news policy.

The Navy comment does not establish the truth or falsity of the Fair report. It does not establish or explain why American reporters were not allowed to send the same material.

Washington has been neither prompt nor candid in reporting actions in which our ships are engaged.

The Japanese certainly know when we bomb one of their islands, and kill a number of their nationals. They could hardly have been fishing for information when they reported the bombing of an American carrier 1200 miles southeast of Tokyo. As yet Washington has neither confirmed nor denied this attack.

Unnecessary suspense, unwarranted delay, and confusion characterize the handling of war information.\(^{39}\)

The Times further charged that the reply to the Daily Mail story did not answer any questions about the validity of the story, but merely exhibits annoyance.\(^{40}\) Elsewhere in the same issue the New York Times carried a story reporting that a "Washington source" indicated that the Navy did not report all sinkings.\(^{40}\)


A week later, the government released a statement describing the principles guiding the release of war news. The Times carried a report of the statement, but did not comment on it. Swing greeted it as "a minor Magna Charta of news policy."

If it is zealously adhered to, and generously interpreted, the public can rest assured it knows all about the war that can safely be told.\(^1\)

Throughout the period under study, Swing interpreted the difficulties in getting news of naval operations as a problem built into the war situation. The Daily Mail incident he ascribed to deficient journalistic ethics of the reporter. The Times attacked the government policy as early as March 6 when it charged that information about Pearl Harbor which was of no value to the enemy was being suppressed.\(^2\)

The attacks continued, and the government's statement of March 18 did not assuage the Times. Swing's interpretation of these events clearly favored the administration.

The Placing of Blame

On a number of occasions during the two-week period errors, miscalculations or flaws in the conduct of the war were uncovered.

\(^1\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 18, 1942, p. 5.

Someone or some group was responsible for each of these errors. Each instance in which there was blame to be allocated will be listed below. Then Swing's analysis of who was at fault will be compared with the New York Times to determine if Swing consistently differs with the Times' judgment.

**Naval News Policy.** This problem was discussed in the preceding section. Swing placed blame for the problems of news coverage on two places: the journalistic ethics of the Daily Mail reporter who sent the story from Honolulu, and an error made by the Navy officer who censored the story and allowed it to pass.

It happens that the cable was submitted to the American censor in Honolulu, who is a naval officer assigned to the Department of Censorship. Whatever his mental processes were, they certainly did not include the imagination to see what the result of passing the cable would be, so he passes it.\(^43\)

The New York Times placed no blame on the Daily Mail reporter, maintaining that the Navy statement "does not establish the truth or falsity of the report."\(^44\) The New York Times did not mention the officer in the Department of Censorship who passed the story, but placed the blame on Washington for being "neither prompt nor candid in reporting actions in which a U. S. ship was engaged."\(^45\)

\(^{43}\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 9, 1942, p. 2.


\(^{45}\)Ibid.
The New York Times placed the blame on the military officers and civilian officials in Washington. Raymond Swing placed the blame on two isolated individuals.

The Fall of Java. The New York Times, as early as March 3, reported that the removal of Sir Archibald Wavell to India indicated that "the Southwestern Pacific command, which was announced by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill last January 3, had now been abandoned for the time being." During the Battle of Java, the Times reported numerous stories in which Netherland authorities criticized the United States for failing to supply the Dutch defense.

The New York Times reports mentioned several times that the United States had failed to provide supplies and that "inefficient and incompetent use had been made by the British of the forces they had available." The Times published an editorial on the day Java fell which was critical of English and American leadership.

Raymond Swing placed no blame for the fall of Java on either the English or American leadership. Swing attributed the failure

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7 New York Times, March 9, 1942, p. 3.

8 Ibid.

of supplies to reach Java to "shipping difficulties," and concluded that "Java's needs had not been met for reasons which we had not been able to shake."\textsuperscript{50}

The \textit{New York Times} attributed a considerable portion of the blame for the fall of Java on the administration and its war policies; Swing attributed the fall to shipping difficulties which could not be overcome by the administration.

\textbf{The Paris Raid.} When the Royal Air Force raided parts of the Paris suburbs, the \textit{Times} had considerable discussion of the political consequences of the raid. It further suggested that U. S. relations with the Vichy government might have been damaged.

It was asserted here that the "\textit{English Government} was held accountable by the \textit{Times} for a raid which was of unknown value.\textsuperscript{52}

Raymond Swing argued that the raid was "a military decision" which could not be evaluated on any other basis. For him, there was no blame to be allocated.

\textsuperscript{50}Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 5, 1942, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{52}"Tragedy in France," \textit{New York Times}, March 5, 1942, p. 22.
Omissions

Raymond Swing had limited time at his disposal, and consequently was forced to omit much news from his broadcast each day. In some cases, he omitted materials from his broadcasts which had immediate relevance to the story upon which he was commenting. In these cases it is possible that bias was partly responsible for the omissions. In this section, the omissions will be noted to see if the material Swing did not report was unfavorable to the administration.

Second Paris Raid. On March 8, the Royal Air Force attacked factories in a suburb of Paris for the second time. The raid was given headline coverage in the Times, but omitted by Swing from his news commentary.53

The United States was not directly concerned in the raid. The first raid evoked considerable criticism, as mentioned above, and the omission could be considered favorable to the British.

Van Mook's Complaints. Lieutenant Governor Hubertus van Mook, and other persons identified as "Netherland sources" by the Times, were critical of the American aid given to the Dutch on Java, and also of the skill with which the English used their forces.54

Swing omitted all of these criticisms from his commentary, and, when he discussed Secretary Stimson's defense of American actions, talked only of "shipping difficulties." The administration was shielded from Dutch complaints by these omissions.

**Ship Sinkings.** On Sunday, March 1, 1942, the *New York Times* gave prominence to a story concerning the number of American ships sunk off the coast of North America. This information was omitted by Swing from his discussion of naval losses the following evening.

**Abandonment of the Pacific Command.** On March 3, 1942, the *New York Times* reported that the removal of Sir Archibald Wavell from the Indies to India apparently indicated that the Southwestern Pacific command had been abandoned. This apparently meant, the *Times* speculated, that the defense of Java was now up to the Dutch. Swing omitted the story, and did not report any weakening of our support to the Dutch. The omission favored the administration by covering a decision (to abandon the command) which later was a cause of criticism from the Dutch.

**French Reaction to R. A. F. Raid.** The first Royal Air Force raid on a Paris suburb brought forth many bitter complaints from the

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French. The raid was termed "a cowardly slaughter," and the moral justification of attacking a civilian installation was discussed. The question of whether the English should have been blamed was also discussed. Swing's broadcast concerning the raid did not mention any criticism of the British.

Pearl Harbor Information. On March 6, the New York Times reported that repeated attempts to get detailed information about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had failed. It charged the government with failure to provide adequate information, and with attempting to suppress information which might lead to criticism. Swing did not mention the difficulty of getting information about Pearl Harbor on his broadcasts of March 9 or March 18, both concerning government news policy.

Naval News Policy. On Sunday, March 8, the New York Times reported that the Daily Mail story contained information which American reporters had not been allowed to send home. Swing omitted this report, and suggested that the Daily Mail story "did not state any facts which had not appeared in the American press."

60 Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 9, 1942, p. 1.
Secretary of the Navy Knox, according to a *Times* report, admitted that the American reporters had not been allowed to file stories on the convoy. This story was also omitted by Swing. Swing also omitted a claim by the *Daily Mail*, reported by the *New York Times*, that their reporter had been "vindicated." In his coverage of the story, Swing omitted a number of details which were inconsistent with the Navy's release of the incident.

**Unified Command.** The *New York Times*, on March 12, featured a story concerning a suggestion by Senator Clark that the Army and Navy be combined into a Department of National Defense.\(^6\) The *New York Times* reported that the President, in a conference, had opposed the suggestion. The *New York Times* considered the item of sufficient importance to devote an editorial to it as well as space on page one.\(^6\) Raymond Swing did not mention Senator Clark's suggestion, nor the President's reaction to it. The omission favored the administration by keeping out of Swing's discussion a suggestion to which the President was opposed.

**Summary and Conclusion**

such as the Japanese invasion of Java, were apparently selected for
news value. Others, such as Swing's discussion of grand strategy,
were apparently attempts to synthesize various fragments of informa-
tion which were available to the New York Times as well as to Swing.
On March 9, Swing gave much greater prominence to the Navy state-
ment than did the New York Times, and much less to suggestions that
the Navy was at fault. A difference of this kind, not justified
by news values, suggests that Swing was attempting to minimize the
importance of the criticism of the Navy.

The interpretations of events presented by Swing were signi-
ificantly different from the interpretations presented by the New
York Times. In dealing with both the Royal Air Force raids on
Paris suburbs and the problems of defending Java Swing minimized
criticism of the U. S. and British governments. He suggested
the Paris raids were military and could not be judged by political
or moral standards; the faulty defense of Java, he said, was not
to be blamed on the British or American commanders, but on the im-
personal difficulties of transportation. In his discussion of
Naval news policy, which was brought about by the Daily Mail
story, Swing accepted the Navy's interpretation without question.
In this instance, his interpretation varied considerably from
that offered by the New York Times. In his interpretations,
Swing favored the British and the Roosevelt administration.
The blame for deficiencies was selected as another element for comparison between Swing and the *New York Times*. At no time during the two-week period did Swing blame the administration for any problem. The Java problem was attributed to shipping; the news difficulties on an inefficient censor and an unscrupulous reporter; and the Paris raid was a military decision for which no blame could be allocated.

Swing favored the administration by omissions. The Dutch complaints of delayed supplies and inefficient administration by the English command were all omitted by Swing. Charges reported in the *New York Times* that the Navy was suppressing news of losses were not reported by Swing. Complaints that news and details of the attack on Pearl Harbor were still suppressed by the administration were not reported by Swing. Charges by Senator Clark that the administration of the Army and Navy as separate units was inefficient were also omitted from Swing's commentaries. Many of these items should have been included if news value were the determining factor. Clearly, Swing favored the administration by omission.

In this chapter it was established that Swing placed no blame on the administration, favored it in a number of interpretations, and omitted materials unfavorable to it. His interpretations may
represent an honest difference of editorial judgment with the editors of the New York Times, but it is difficult to ascribe the omission of newsworthy material relevant to his subjects to anything but a strong bias in favor of the administration.
CHAPTER VI

THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED BY SWING

Raymond Swing used a number of sources in writing the commentaries he presented. Many of these sources were available to most newsmen, but some depended upon what Swing has called "excellent contacts." This chapter contains a description of the news sources which were generally available, and a description of the sources which were available only to Swing and, perhaps, a few other reporters. In the preceding chapter the charge that Swing favored the administration was investigated by comparing Swing's commentaries with the New York Times. In this chapter the same procedure will be followed to determine if Swing used information not contained in the New York Times.

If Swing does have information not reported in the Times, it does not prove that he was a party to privileged information; it may be only an indication that he used greater initiative than other reporters. If, however, Swing does not have information not reported in the Times, it will weaken the argument that he had "inside information."

Generally Available Sources of Information

Swing had access to some sources of information which were available to most reporters during wartime. They are briefly summarized below.

Newspapers. Among the sources of information available to all Washington correspondents were newspapers from major American cities, English newspapers and European newspapers when they were available. Swing has mentioned the New York Times, the Washington Post and the Manchester Guardian (England) as being particularly helpful. As early as 1939 Swing employed an assistant to search newspapers for useful items. At that time it was one of the duties of his secretary. In 1942 he employed an assistant whose sole duty was to search newspapers and magazines, clip items of interest, mount them on copy paper and put captions at the top.

Swing frequently did not use material from the newspapers for quotation, but to illustrate trends. The following comment is based upon his observations of Italian newspapers over a period of months:

Only a couple of months ago the Italian editorial writers were bravely talking of getting satisfaction from France even if it cost war. Now they are calling the armament program of the democratic nations aggressive, a threat to them, an attempt to intimidate them into peace. And there isn't
a whisper about fighting a war with France to satisfy Italy's imperialistic claims.  

Magazines. Another generally available source used by Swing was magazine articles. He has said that most magazines, because of their early deadlines, were dated before they appeared. He says the Nation, a weekly magazine with shorter delays between editing and its appearance on the newsstand, was "essential reading" for a Washington reporter. Swing did not mention any other magazines that were of particular use to him. Foreign Affairs was, he says, the only other publication which was sufficiently valuable to him to justify the cost of a subscription.

Press Conferences. Press conferences held by Washington officials were usually open to all accredited correspondents. Swing says he attended many of them, and the large number of quotations in his commentaries which originated in a great many press conferences supports his statement. Swing has indicated that he regularly attended Presidential and Cabinet level press conferences, but others only when they were of particular interest to him. He says he also attended most press conferences at the British Embassy.

\(^2\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, September (?) 1939, p. 1.  
\(^3\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 31, 1939, p. 3.  
Enemy Reports. Swing made frequent use of reports from Japanese, German and Italian sources. Broadcasts from other capitals were monitored by both the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System and by the Associated Press. Summaries of the announcements were distributed by the Office of War Information.\(^5\),\(^6\) Summaries of communiques from many foreign countries, both enemy and friendly, were published each day in the New York Times. Swing says he used these reports frequently, and found the reports from Berlin and Vichy particularly valuable "to find out what they were thinking about."\(^7\)

Governmental Releases. After the Office of War Information was founded on June 13, 1942, all information relating to the war originating in government agencies was handled through the O. W. I. Before the founding of the information service, each government agency was free to make its own press releases.\(^8\) These releases were available to all newsmen, including Swing.

Press Associations. Swing minimizes the importance of the press associations because they provided very little background.


He found the Reuters service most useful, and had a Reuters teletype in his office. He also had access to the Mutual newsroom and, later, the NBC newsroom facilities. The wire services were used primarily for the spot news included at the end of his program.

**Personal Sources**

In addition to the generally available news sources mentioned above, Raymond Swing had access to a number of other news sources. They will be discussed below.

**Shipping Companies.** During the period 1939-1941 Swing depended upon friends concerned with shipping to keep him informed of the activities of various ships. He found this information valuable in estimating what kinds of shipments were being sent to various countries. After American entry into the war, this information became harder to obtain.

**Academic Sources.** One source said that Swing used academic experts for information. Swing says that he had no particularly useful contact in a university, and that the magazine writer may have been confused by his friendship with wartime government employees who came from academic backgrounds.

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Friends in Government. One of Swing's greatest advantages as a commentator was his close personal friendship with a number of men who held offices in the executive branch of the government. One of his closest personal friends was Cordell Hull, Secretary of State throughout World War II. Another friend was Adlai Stevenson, who served as Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy from 1935 to 1941, Chief of the Economic Mission to Italy 1941-1944, and Assistant Secretary of State, 1944-45. Another friend identified by Swing was Ray Atherton, who was Chief of the Division of European Affairs in the Department of State from 1941 till 1943. Swing has also mentioned Archibald MacLeish, Librarian of Congress from 1939 till 1944, as a close friend and the person who persuaded him to donate his scripts to the collection of the Library of Congress.

Elmer Davis' biographer has named Raymond Swing as a "good friend" and a supporter of Davis' policies in the Office of War Information. Boyer, writing about Swing's "connections in government," has also identified Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and Harry Hopkins as "close associates."

Swing has mentioned that he also had "excellent contacts" in the British Embassy, including military leaders Field Marshal Sir

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11 Burlingame, op. cit., p. 60.
John Dill and Major General Frederick Deumont-Nesbitt, both of whom served in Washington during the period 1939-1942, and occasionally thereafter until the end of the war. 13

Swing has frequently emphasized the importance of the men with whom he discussed his views. He once publicly acknowledged the assistance provided by them.

"I should like to acknowledge individually all the help I received from my friends. However other men may work, I must draw my ideas from a pool, and I must constantly check my judgments with the judgments of men who are wiser than I." 14

The existence, and acknowledgment, of the "pool" of friends from who Swing sought counsel is possibly one of the reasons he has been charged with having "inside information." Another correspondent has said that Swing's friends in the government were "among the best sources of the country" of war news. 15

A Comparison of Swing's Commentaries with the New York Times

To discover whether Swing actually used information from personal sources not available to other reporters, Swing's commentaries for the first two weeks of March, 1942, will be compared with the New York Times.

14 Raymond Swing, How War Came, p. 11.
Dutch Naval Defeat. On Monday, March 2, 1942, Swing discussed the loss of Dutch cruisers in a naval battle with the Japanese. The information was also published in the New York Times the following day. There was one aspect of the story not reported in the New York Times. Swing reported that "Vice Admiral Helfrich ordered Dutch cruisers to attack at night," and that the Dutch ships were sunk because "they entered a line of Japanese submarines." No mention of the commander's name is found in the Times, nor any indication of the way in which the Dutch ships were lost.

Burma. On March 2, 1942, Swing announced that "Rangoon may fall at any time." The New York Times the next day reported that the British "were fighting successfully." On Thursday of the same week, Swing reported that "even the Allies predict the fall of Rangoon." The New York Times did not report any such predictions, although it did admit that "the loss of the west bank of the Sittang River deprived the British defenders of their strongest natural positions." If the Allies were predicting defeat, the New York Times did not report it. On Thursday, March 5, 1942, Swing reported that the "Japs are across the Sittang River and have turned toward


Rangoon." The New York Times reported on the following day that "The Japanese have made various claims, but there is no confirmation of most of them. Our information is that everything in Burma is quiet." On Saturday, the New York Times reported that the Japanese had been across the river "in several places for some time," indicating that Swing's earlier report was correct.

British Raid on Paris. When Swing reported the raid on Paris factories by the Royal Air Force, he said "it's true it was carried out without prior consultation between the British and the State Department," but said this was of no importance because the raid "was military." The Times did not confirm the assertion of the lack of cooperation between the British and the State Department. The New York Times reported that such charges "were asserted," and expressed concern over a possible rupture in relations between Washington and the Vichy. Swing said "if Vichy wanted to break with the United States, they could have done it long ago." Swing confirmed the truth of a charge which the New York Times could only call "an assertion," and denied the validity of a concern which the New York Times expressed.

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21 Raymond Swing, news commentary, Wednesday, March 4, 1942, p. 3.


23 Raymond Swing, news commentary, Wednesday, March 4, 1942, p. 3.
The Defense of India. On Thursday, March 5, 1942, Swing reported that "a stand against Japan will definitely be taken in India." The New York Times was unable to confirm such plans, and reported only that "concern was expressed" and that "discussions are taking place." Over a week later the New York Times was still unable to confirm the existence of any plan to defend India.

The Free French. Swing reported on March 2, 1942, that, by recognizing Free French control of Caledonia, "the United States is recognizing agents of the Free French movement formally. American-French diplomacy is dominated by strategic considerations," he continued. Then he concluded, "we are willing to do business with the Free French." The New York Times noted that our dealings with the Free French were apparently dominated by "military considerations," when it reported that the "Free French issue came up again yesterday at the State Department when Washington recognized General de Gaulle's authority in New Caledonia." The public statement, according to the New York Times "dodged the issue" of whether we would have future dealings with the Free French. Swing was more certain than the Times of the State Department's intentions.


Guerilla Activity. On March 3, Swing reported that "guerillas behind German lines seized an area covering sixteen towns. As the Russians approach Latvia and Lithuania, they expect more guerilla activity in support of them." No indications of guerilla activity in support of the Russians was found in the New York Times at this time.

Naval News Procedure. On March 9 Swing explained that news of naval operations involving submarines frequently could not be reported for several days after combat because reports could not be made in full until the submarines returned to a friendly base. This, he explained, "accounted for part of the delay" in relaying news reports. The New York Times did not report this information, although an editorial complained that "Washington has been neither prompt nor candid in reporting actions in which our ships were engaged." It charged "Washington" with "unnecessary suspense, unwarranted delay, and confusion." In this instance, Swing used information not reported in the New York Times to defend Navy procedures which the newspaper attacked in an editorial.

Madagascar and Vichy. On March 10, Swing dealt at length with the problem of French control of Madagascar. Vichy, he reported "may make an agreement permitting Japan to share in what

would be called the 'defense' of Madagascar. That is not just a suspicion." Swing then quoted the Vichy Minister of State, Monsieur Jacques Benoist-Mechin as saying the French might "appeal to Japanese aid to reinforce Madagascar." The New York Times reported that "a quiet strategic race was reported to be underway or imminent . . . for the control of the French Island of Madagascar."28 The New York Times reported that no details were available about the conflict. In this instance, Swing was able to supply a quotation from the Vichy Minister of State which suggested the Axis plan.

Parliamentary Discussion. On March 11, Swing reported that a few hours before the German battleship von Tirpitz was sighted in the North Atlantic, A. V. Alexander, head of the British Admiralty, "was discussing the need for better torpedo planes in Parliament." The New York Times did not report Alexander's speech. In this instance, Swing reported on the same day it occurred a foreign event, which the Times did not report.

The War of Nerves. On March 12, Swing reported that "the next weeks are going to be devoted to anticipation—or, what used to be called "the war of nerves." He continued "the spring schedule of German headquarters presumably is divided under two headings. There will be the offensive in Russia, and there will

be one or more offensives elsewhere. The offensive in Russia is beyond question." He added that the Germans needed oil, and "the shortage dictates the Axis objectives. It must have oil, and there it is, in the Caucasus." Finally, he said that "a direct attack on Britain is not taken seriously at this moment.

The New York Times did not report any news concerning the likelihood of attack on Britain. A suggestion of Swing's theme is found in a Times report published nine days before Swing's comment which said:

The war of nerves scheduled to break out in the next ten days is intended to bring Turkey to her knees.29

Two days before Swing's comment, the New York Times published an editorial dealing with the German plans. In part, it said:

For weeks the propaganda loudspeaker of Berlin has been telling the world in general and the German people in particular of colossal preparations for a spring drive against the Russians.

Unquestionably the German drive will be resumed in the spring, but it will probably be concentrated first in the south, and because of events in the Far East, it will have objectives different from those of 1941.30

In his analysis noted above, Swing used much that had appeared in the New York Times earlier, adding information about attitudes toward a German attack on England.

Marshal Timoshenko's Strength. On March 12, Swing reported:

The Vichy radio is the source today of the most important news from the Russian front. Ascribing the information to neutral sources, it reports that Marshal Timoshenko has launched the winter's greatest offensive against the southern section of the front. It is aimed at Taganrog, on the Sea of Azov, Stalin, and is said to involve ninety divisions or well over a million and a half men.31

The following day the New York Times reported that it had checked the reports from Vichy.

Advices to the New York Times discounted reports that Marshal Semyan Timoshenko had launched a massive attack with 1,500,000 troops. These advices put his forces at a maximum of 200,000 men.32

In this instance Swing was in sharp disagreement with the New York Times. The source of his report is indicated (Vichy Radio), and does not imply access to confidential data.

Looters in Caledonia. On March 2, Swing reported that the water supply in Rangoon had given out, and that looters "were abroad" stealing from houses and stores. The New York Times, on the day of the broadcast, and on the following day, carried details of the battle in Burma, but did not report any details about thieves or the water supply. This information finally appeared in the New

31Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 12, 1942, p. 4.
In this instance, Swing's information was later supported by a Times report, but Swing made use of the information four days before the newspaper.

The American Plan. On March 4, Swing reported that American troops had landed in Northern Ireland. He then said: "people ask why, if troops get to Ireland, they do not get to the Far East." The answer he said, was that "they are sent according to some plan." He then discussed a speech by General Marshall which proposed "taking the war to the enemy." Swing related both of these to a Royal Air Force raid on Paris. The three incidents, he said, were related to a "general plan."

The New York Times reported the speech by General Marshall at length, giving the full text. It also reported the arrival of the troops in Ireland. The R. A. F. raid was also reported. At no point did the Times mention a general plan, such as Swing suggested.

Predictions

Although Swing has denied that he makes predictions, there are a number of instances in which he attempted to anticipate developments

In this section, these guesses will be compared with speculations reported in the *New York Times* to determine if they were generally circulated.

**The Fall of Rangoon.** On March 2 Swing predicted the fall of Rangoon when he said "chances of saving South Burma have vanished," and on March 5 when he said, "even the Allies predict the fall of Rangoon." The *New York Times*, on Friday, March 6, considered the possibility in an editorial, but did not consider Rangoon "lost." On Saturday the *New York Times* still held hope for Rangoon and reported that the English were "holding firmly." As late as March 9, the day on which Rangoon fell, the *New York Times* reported that the fall was without confirmation.

Swing eventually proved correct in his prediction, although the fall of Rangoon came later than he estimated. His estimate was not shared by the *New York Times* which placed greater emphasis upon British strength.

**Public Discussion.** On March 3, 1942, Swing predicted that "a time for the public discussion of grand strategy is coming." The *New York Times* reported details of military movements discussed

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by Swing, but at no point did the Times report any extensive public discussion of Allied or Axis intentions, during the two-week period studied, nor any possibility of such discussion developing.

The Spring Offensive. On March 3, Swing reported "Germany is determined to go through with her Spring offensive, cost what it may, according to word from Berlin." On March 10 the New York Times reported that the German radio said that "colossal preparations" were underway for "the Spring drive against the Russians." The prediction made by Swing was an affirmation of rumors apparently in common circulation and reported by the New York Times.

India. On March 5 Swing predicted that "a stand against Japan in India will certainly be taken." The New York Times did not report that any decision had been made, although it did report that General Wavell and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek conferred presumably on the defense of Burma. The New York Times also reported in the same article that a United States mission was being sent to India. No further word on American intentions in India was published during the two-week period.

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Churchill. On March 9 Swing predicted that British Prime Minister Churchill would not be unseated in a Parliamentary reorganization because of setbacks in the Pacific. On the following day the *Times* reported that John G. Winant, the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, "said he did not believe reports that the Churchill government would fall because of reverses in the Far East." In this instance the prediction was supported by the American Ambassador, and was reported in the *New York Times*.

Cripps' Political Career. On March 11, Swing considered the possible significance of Sir Stafford Cripps mission to India.

It is an easy speculation that his present mission may rebound to his credit as to aid him to still greater responsibilities. Reports have come from London recently that Sir Stafford is slated to become Prime Minister in three months. But it would appear that his Indian mission offers more pitfalls than it does stepping-stones. Whatever the solution, it is sure to be a compromise... On the contrary, the net effect of his going to India might well be that his chances of the prime ministership are eclipsed."

In effect, Swing speculated that Cripps chances of elevation in the government would not be increased by his Indian mission. The *New York Times* did not report the possibility of a failure.

"Informed sources said that they were satisfied that there was

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h4 Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 11, 1942, p. 3.
much in the proposals . . . that would appeal to Indian politi-
cians and leaders. On March 13 the Times reported that hope
was still held for a successful completion of the Cripps mission.

There was a parallel between the phrasing of Swing's comments
and some New York Times reports. Swing said "indeed Sir Stafford
himself is a kind of pledge that the British offer, whatever it is,
is a good deal better than anything put forward" two years before.

The New York Times reported:

That the government is prepared to go much
further toward acceding to Indian aspira-
tions for dominion status than when that was
promised in 1940 as a post-war measure seems
to be implicit not only in the Prime Minis-
ter's words today, but in the selection of
Sir Stafford Cripps as the emissary, and his
acceptance at a time when his political star . . .
is in the ascendant. (Underlining by the
author.)

Swing was apparently using the same materials as the New York Times
reporters, but coming to a different conclusion. Swing's position
was justified when, a week later, the Cripps offer was met with
indifference in India.

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45 "Cripps Will Carry New Plan to India," New York Times,
March 12, 1942, p. 4.

46 "India is Hopeful of Cripps Mission," New York Times,
March 13, 1942, p. 4.

47 Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 11, 1942, p. 3.

48 "Cripps Will Carry New Plan to India," New York Times,
March 12, 1942, p. 4.
**Attacks on Java.** On March 2 Swing reported that "a further landing of invasion forces is expected, using the bridgeheads already established." This prediction was in contrast to the optimism expressed by the New York Times when it reported that "everything is on the advance" for the Allies in the "bitter fighting" in Java. There was no indication in the Times reports that further Japanese landings were expected. When the Dutch on Java surrendered the following week, there was no indication that additional landings had been made to support the Japanese invasion force. In this instance, Swing's prediction was not reported in the New York Times, and was neither confirmed nor denied by the New York Times reports during the following ten days.

**Summary and Conclusions**

In our consideration of the sources of information available to Raymond Swing, it is nearly impossible to assign sources to individual stories except where Swing has named them. Nevertheless, a number of instances were found in which Swing had information not included in reports published in the New York Times.

On March 5, Swing had details of the Japanese progress in Burma which were later confirmed by the New York Times. Swing

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reported as fact the lack of cooperation between the United States and Britain on the raids directed at suburban Paris factories, although the *New York Times* did not confirm it. According to reporter Geoffrey Gotsel, who was in London at that time, the lack of cooperation on the raids was "well-known."52 Swing reported on March 2 that the United States would "do business" with the Free French, although the *New York Times* was uncertain about State Department intentions and said the public announcement "dodged the issue." On March 9, Swing defended Navy news policy by describing in detail the difficulties of getting news from submarines. The *New York Times* did not have this information, but was critical of the Navy because dispatches concerning Navy activities were not sufficiently detailed. On March 11 Swing reported details of a parliamentary debate not reported in the *New York Times*. On March 12 he reported that there was little danger of a German invasion of England, although the Times did not have the information.

On March 2, Swing reported that looters were loose in Rangoon, and that the city water supply had given out. The *New York Times* confirmed both reports at the end of the week. These instances are grouped together in this summary because, in each case, Swing had information not available to the Times and, in all cases, he was substantially correct.

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There is a pattern in the kinds of information Swing used. The information about the Navy's information problems and the State Department intentions concerning the Free French could have been obtained from government officials. Similarly, news of American military judgment of the Germans and the information about Rangoon could also have been obtained from government sources. Although the number of cases is small, the consistency with which Swing had correct information before the Times concerning government attitudes and knowledge suggests that he had access to the confidences of government officials. Swing has said that he frequently asked government officials to confirm or deny his hypotheses, but that he had no "inside" information. Nevertheless, the number of instances in which he had correct details suggests that his commentaries were based on information more substantial than confirmed guesses.
CHAPTER VII

THE BROADCASTS CALLED "IN THE NAME OF SANITY"

Shortly after the United States became the first nation to use atomic weapons for military purposes with the attack on Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, Norman Cousins, editor of the (then) Saturday Review of Literature, wrote an extensive editorial for his magazine called "Modern Man Is Obsolete." Cousins argued that, because both sides would be destroyed in an atomic war, warfare was no longer useful as a method for solving international disputes. He argued that atomic weapons made both nationalism and warfare outmoded. The only solution left, he said, was "international cooperation." Modern man, whom Cousins characterized as nationalistic and warlike, was, he said, obsolete.

Raymond Swing was deeply impressed by Cousins' discussion. He read it "many times" and came to the same conclusion as Cousins. The argument for organized international cooperation had particular appeal to Swing because he was Chairman of the Board of the Americans United for World Government. He has said that he wanted to make a


similar appeal. "Early in the morning of August 24, 1945," he has written, "I went for a long walk, in the course of which I came to a decision to announce that night in my regular broadcast that thereafter I should devote each Friday's talk to the influence of atomic energy on our time."  

Beginning that evening, and continuing each Friday evening for the remainder of the year, Swing devoted his entire program to the discussion of problems and changes brought about by atomic power. It is this series of programs, which were later collected under the title In the Name of Sanity, with which this chapter deals.

We will consider first the characteristics of the broadcasts and the problems they created. Then, we will analyze the arguments presented in the broadcasts and finally, we will review the responses to the broadcasts and their importance for the historian of radio network news commentary.

The Nature of the Broadcasts

**Style and Length.** The broadcasts occupied the entire time available to Swing on each Friday night. The commentary portion was approximately twelve minutes and fifteen seconds in length.

The style of the broadcasts was much more personal than that of his regular news commentaries. He referred to his own feelings

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and impressions frequently, and to personal correspondence and
events in his personal life much more often than in his other
commentaries. Typical of the style of the broadcasts is this
excerpt:

World government appears to me to be the greatest political necessity that you or I or any of
our ancestors have ever been asked to face, so there are bound to be intensely dramatic develop-
ments. Louis Adamic wrote to me his idea of a key phrase for this time. It is 'One World or
No World.'

The style varied from his other news commentaries in another
respect: attacks were frequently made upon those who disagreed
with his point of view. President Harry S. Truman was the object
of much criticism by Swing, and this will be discussed in detail
later. On November 1, 1945, Senator Kenneth McKeller, president
pro-tem of the Senate, urged that the secret of the bomb be retain-
ed by the United States. Swing quoted McKeller, then pointed out
that "insofar as there is any secret whatever, the British and
Canadians share it fully." Then he concluded:

It may come as a surprise to many Americans to
learn that Mr. Atlee has full rights as a part-
ner. But that is only an instance of the con-
fused and uninformed way the whole matter of
the bomb has been treated.

1Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 24, 1945, p. 1.
2Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 2, 1945, p. 5.
Swing was equally brusque with his dismissal of a statement by General Groves, who had supervised military aspects of the development of the bomb:

Obviously it is a soldier's business to win a war, cost what it may. But that is why the professional soldier, as such, is not the highest authority in discussing the abolition of war. That is a political problem, a problem for civilians.6

Blunt attacks such as these occur frequently in this series of broadcasts, but very seldom in Swing's other commentaries.

One other characteristic of the commentaries is the lack of a consistent viewpoint. Swing's outlook changed during the period covered by the broadcasts, and there is an inconsistency of view. This inconsistency will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Reasons for the Broadcasts. In the first broadcast Swing explained his reasons for undertaking the series. "I am doing this," he said, "in the first place, to meet my sense of news values."7 He then explained that, even though he planned to devote one full broadcast each week to the subject, it was of sufficient news value to justify even more time.

All the rest of the week I shall deal with the current problems of this country and the world, which you and I know are out of date . . . . My proportions would be nearer right if I talked about an atomic world for four nights and about

6Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 7, 1945, p. 3.
7Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 24, 1945, p. 1.
the doings of the old and obsolete world
for only one night while it dawdles off
the stage. 8

The news value of atomic energy was not the only reason for
the broadcasts, and perhaps not the most important reason. Another
was Swing's sense of urgency. He was convinced that great progress
would have to be made in developing an international government if
atomic war were to be averted. At one point, Swing quoted Oppen-
heimer and added his own emphasis.

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer has said 'Our great
problem is the prevention of war, and the peace-
ful use of atomic power.' To which I may be
permitted to add: there is no time to lose. 9

Swing has since explained that, at that time, he felt that
the chance of forming a world government existed only while the
United States and her allies had a monopoly on atomic weapons.
He felt that between four and five years was the maximum time avail-
able in which to act. 10 Consequently, the broadcasts were, for
Swing, urgent. He quoted with approval a document drawn up by a
group of atomic scientists:

The people of the United States, together with
the peoples of the rest of the world, must de-
mand that their leaders work together to find

8Ibid.

9Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 21, 1945, p. 7.

10On January 28, 1962, he estimated that the time has been
extended to fifty or sixty years.
means of effective cooperation on atomic power. They must not fail. The alternatives lead to world suicide.11

The broadcasts were an expression of an urgent personal desire to bring about world government in the short time of four or five years.

A third reason Swing has expressed for undertaking the broadcasts was to call attention to alterations in individual and national life which he felt would be caused by the use of atomic energy. He looked for large changes in the social and economic organization of the nation. "Domestically," Swing has written, "I was sure it meant socialism, since no people could allow such great resources of power to be governed by an individual or corporation."12 In the broadcasts, Swing argued that such changes were inevitable.

The fourth reason for the broadcasts was Swing's feeling that the importance of atomic energy was being underplayed by other reporters and commentators. The changes which he felt it must bring about were being minimized. "I was on vacation when news of Hiroshima was announced," he wrote later. "I listened to many discussions of the bomb on the air and thought that if I were to talk

11Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 21, 1945, p. 7.

12Raymond Swing, In the Name of Sanity, p. vii.
about it I should be much more extreme in my statements."\textsuperscript{13} Other commentators, he thought, failed to realize that "the atomic bomb had changed warfare, and must change all social life." Swing undertook to improve what he considered a deficiency in the discussion of the "revolution" which atomic power would bring about in political, economic and social life.

Problems Created by the Broadcasts. According to Swing, he encountered no problems in the planning or presentation of his programs from either the sponsor or the American Broadcasting Company. He made it clear to both of them beforehand, he says, that he was departing from news and would express many personal feelings and opinions. Later, when the scripts were published in book form, Swing thanked the network and sponsor for respecting his freedom of expression.\textsuperscript{14}

The two problems which Swing has recounted came about because of his own doubts. First, he was uncertain whether to undertake a whole series of broadcasts on a regular basis devoted to atomic energy, or to devote occasional broadcasts to the subject as the news of the day justified it. He decided on the former course. His commitment was tentative, however, and he indicated the uncertainty of his plans when he began his broadcast:

\begin{quote}
Without promising to be rigid about it, I intend to devote all or nearly all of every
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, p. vi.
Friday broadcast for some time to the world as made new by the release of atomic energy.15

The most pressing problem created by the series, according to Swing, was one of journalistic ethics. Swing intended to express his own opinions in the broadcasts, and to advocate a point of view. He felt, that as a news commentator, he had no right to do so. Yet, the questions of atomic control and world government were so important that a departure from his conventional practices was justified. A year after the series began, he wrote about the ethical question:

I could rationalize the decision by saying that the atomic bomb was the most important news of the age, and that discussion of it was newsworthy. But I knew quite well I was changing the concept of my work, and that I really had no alternative.16

The decision to undertake a series of broadcasts in which he frankly advocated his own point of view has bothered Swing. Sixteen years later he said that the programs were "poor journalism" because they violated the journalist's obligation to keep his own feelings out of his reports.17 The problem of whether he had the right to undertake a series of programs which advocated world government has not yet been settled to his satisfaction.

15Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 24, 1945, p. 1.
16Raymond Swing, news commentary, In the Name of Sanity, p. vi.
The Content of the Broadcasts

The broadcasts do not present a single, consistent argument for one point of view. Partly, this is because Swing did not know what his point of view was, in detail, when he began the series. The commentaries are the by-products of Swing's attempts to work out the problem of controlling atomic energy to his own satisfaction. Swing has written that "the broadcasts are a kind of crude chart of the thinking in the weeks following the announcement of the atomic bomb." Consequently, Swing's evaluation of persons and events varied considerably from one broadcast to another.

Since a discussion on a program-by-program basis would miss the continuity and change in Swing's arguments, the broadcasts will be considered under the major categories with which Swing dealt: government secrecy, world government, President Truman's policies, military control, American relations with Russia, possible solutions to the problems, the role of scientists in public life, and the role of the common man in determining policy.

President Truman's Policies. Swing's attitude toward President Truman and the policies he followed changed considerably during the weeks of the broadcasts. The sixth broadcast, presented on

18 Raymond Swing, In the Name of Sanity, p. viii.
September 28, 1945, was devoted to "Mr. Truman's difficult decision." 19

In it Swing sympathetically outlined the development of the President's attitude toward the atomic bomb, and the decision to use it against Japan. "No single decision in the career of Franklin Roosevelt was comparable in gravity with this," he said. "The decision to use the bomb in warfare was not the hardest one to make. The hardest one comes now. It is what to do with the bomb now that the war is ended."

The following week, after the President delivered a message to Congress concerning control of atomic power, Swing complained that "the President was cautious and inconclusive. He contented himself with a promise to try to get the use of the bomb outlawed in wartime." 20 Swing minimized his disappointment with the international aspects of the President's message, pointing out that the domestic plan for atomic power was "revolutionary" and that the proposed Atomic Energy Commission was a firm statement of "basic principles." He added that the President had set up "a formula which may well be what the world has waited for:"

a formula that combines private enterprise with government control and supervision, without

19 Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 28, 1945, p. 2.
20 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 5, 1945, p. 1.
retaining predatory capitalism of the old kind, on the one hand, or going into totalitarianism on the other. 21

Swing noted that the President did not advocate world government because the Congress was "not ready for it," and that the President was waiting "for public opinion to take the lead."

The following week, after having had more time to examine the President's proposal, Swing was less generous. "President Truman," he said, "has definitely put us into atomic competition with the Soviet Union." 22 He said appreciatively that "President Truman has made a grave decision." He further criticized the President for "committing our security to force rather than agreement, and to the power to kill rather than the power to reason."

After observing that many scientists objected to a system of atomic control which would not encourage research, Swing called attention to the possibilities for increased political power by membership in the Atomic Energy Commission. He ended on a note of alarm:

Obviously there are some men in Washington who know about political power. Atomic power is so great it frightens the sanest men. But so is the political power, and it is high time to be disturbed by what is happening. 23

21 Ibid., p. 4.
22 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 12, 1945, p. 1.
In the eleventh broadcast, Swing was again critical of the President, this time for not pursuing cooperation with our wartime allies.

The President had told Congress he was going to consult the British and Canadians, and then other countries, about the control of Atomic energy. But he had taken no step toward consultation.

A year later Swing restated his evaluation of President Truman when, noting that Truman had a chance to be "a conscious and courageous leader toward world government," it was a "disappointing and chilling realization that he had not chosen this destiny or endeavored to rise to it." During the weeks following the inception of the broadcasts, Swing's attitude toward the President changed from hope and sympathetic appreciation to disappointment.

World Government. One of the most consistent themes in the broadcasts was Swing's hope for a world government. The exact shape of the government varied from broadcast to broadcast. In the very first broadcast he noted that "release of the atomic secret through the United Nations would be going only a little way toward solving the problem of atomic power." The United Nations looked so unpromising that he seriously offered as alternatives a prediction

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25. Raymond Swing, news commentary, In the Name of Sanity, p. viii.
by Sir George Paget Thomson that "future wars will be no worse than past ones," and the thought that "obviously, we can move our cities underground. That is the surest defense."

By the following week he had revised his estimates, and decided that "atomic energy has made it impossible to maintain unlimited sovereignty for nations ..." 27 Throughout the remainder of the broadcasts, Swing consistently argued that the United Nations was obsolete from its inception because it made allowance for war. 28 He argued that the United Nations "must have the power to enforce peace," and that, lacking the power, it was "a yellow butterfly in a high wind."

Swing supported his contention that world government was necessary by calling upon various authorities. Albert Einstein, whose letter to President Roosevelt in October, 1939, had started governmental interest in atomic power, gave an extensive interview to Swing on the subject of atomic power and world government. The interview was the basis for an article in the Atlantic Monthly by Swing, and Swing used extensive quotations from the article in his broadcast of October 26. 29 "The secret of the bomb should be

27 Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 31, 1945, p. 4.
28 Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 21, 1945, p. 2.
committed to a world government," Swing quoted Einstein, "and the United States should immediately announce its readiness to give it to a world government." 30

Swing quoted a number of other scientists in support of world government, including Dr. Philip Morrison of the Los Alamos Laboratory, and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. 31, 32

Men who opposed world government were attacked by Swing. Senator Thomas T. Connally had made a comment in the Senate that he would not run after "some butterfly" of world government. Swing countered that the "remark suggests that the mind which made it might be functioning inside a cocoon." 33 He charged that those who disagreed with him were guilty of "obsolete thinking." 34

Winston Churchill, who had received considerable praise from Swing for his wartime leadership, was attacked as the "apostle of secrecy" because he did not favor sharing atomic secrets through the United Nations. These comments are particularly interesting because Swing seldom used personal attacks in his wartime commentaries, and such attacks occur in these broadcasts only when Swing defended world government.

30 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 26, 1945, p. 3.
31 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 11, 1945, p. 4.
32 Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 14, 1945, p. 6.
33 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 7, 1945, p. 3.
34 Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 21, 1945, p. 3.
Although Swing did not claim to have a grand plan for world government, the consistency with which he referred to it throughout the broadcasts suggested that he was giving considerable thought to it. Finally, in the last broadcast of the series, he made his own suggestions:

I assert that through the present United Nations Organization there must be developed a world government with limited but adequate powers to prevent war, including power to control the development of atomic energy and other major weapons, and to maintain world inspection and police forces. I believe that the world government should operate through an executive body responsible to a representative legislative assembly; that the legislative assembly should be empowered to enact laws within the scope of the powers conferred upon the world government; that adequate tribunals and enforcement machinery should be established; and finally, that prompt steps should be taken to obtain a constitutional amendment authorizing the United States to join a world government.35

The idea of world government recurs frequently in the scripts, which were nominally restricted to a discussion of the problems of atomic energy. Although Swing offered world government as a possible solution to the problem of controlling atomic energy, the emphasis upon it is so strong that one is left with the impression at times that he is using atomic energy as a supporting argument for world government.

35Raymond Swing, undated news commentary, reprinted in In the Name of Sanity, p. 116.
Government Secrecy. Swing concerned himself with government secrecy about atomic energy in several of its aspects during this series of broadcasts. First, he dealt with the "compartmentalization" practiced during the war in which scientists were not kept informed of each others' progress; later, he concerned himself with President Truman's efforts to keep the secret of atomic weapon from other countries.

"Compartmentalization" was an administrative practice revealed after the war. Groups of scientists in different places had been assigned to the same problem, without knowledge that someone else was working on it. The process not only aided secrecy, but provided a check on each group.36

Swing argued that compartmentalization could not be continued in peace time because it would hamper the efficiency of research. Later he suggested that, if scientists had been allowed full communication, the atomic bomb might have been completed eighteen months earlier, perhaps in time for use in the European war against Germany.37 He went on to suggest that scientists "made progress only by breaking the rules."38

Swing's impatience with secrecy grew during the weeks following the beginning of the series of broadcasts. He criticized

37Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 14, 1945, p. 3.
38Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 30, 1945, p. 2.
Churchill for suggesting that scientists should not participate in public discussions of atomic power because they might divulge secrets, maintaining that there were no secrets which could not be broken by competent scientists.

Swing expressed concern over President Truman's decision to keep the secret of atomic weapons from Russia. The form of his concern changed during the course of the broadcasts. Immediately after the President's decision not to share the secret, Swing spoke of it as "grave" but regretted it primarily because it was not a vote for world government. His concern over the decision grew, and in the ninth broadcast he announced that the decision was the beginning of a dangerous rivalry.

Keeping the bomb a secret is, as I have said, launching an atomic competition with the Soviet Union. We start the race ahead of the Russians. But we are and will continue to be more vulnerable than they are.

He referred to atomic secrecy as a "myth" and quoted Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer who said, "it is no secret at all to the scientists of other nations."

Swing was also critical of another form of government secrecy: the suppression of wartime communications between the atomic

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39 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 5, 1945, p. 2.
40 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 19, 1945, p. 5.
41 Ibid., p. 4.
scientists and President Truman. He announced the existence of a suppressed document:

A number of the nation's foremost atomic scientists addressed to President Truman a plea that the bomb itself should not be dropped over Japan before a test demonstration had been arranged, without loss of life, which would convince the Japanese of our power, and so impel them to end the war.42

Swing opposed the refusal of the administration to release the document to the press.

There is no conceivable consideration of genuine secrecy for keeping that document secret, nor for withholding from the public the reasons which prompted President Truman's advisors to argue the immediate use of the bomb . . . . Obviously, there is no more reason for keeping this secret than anything about Pearl Harbor. It is part of the history of the war, and belongs to the American people.43

During the broadcasts concerning atomic power, Swing became increasingly critical of government secrecy in several forms. He opposed the decision not to share the secret with Russia; he attacked both English and American proponents of secrecy, including Sir Winston Churchill; and he opposed the suppression of documents concerning the development of the bomb and the decision to use it against Japan.

42Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 23, 1945, p. 4.

43Ibid.
The Role of Scientists in Public Affairs. During the months following the first use of atomic weapons, scientists concerned with the development of the bomb made frequent public statements, and frequent appearances before Congressional committees. Swing devoted considerable time to coverage of these statements.

When scientists were called before the McMahon Committee as witnesses, Swing noted:

It somewhat astonished Washington to find that so many of these scientists—secluded masters of intensive research—are young men in their middle thirties. Their hair is not long. Their faces are open and clear, their eyes look steadily, and as witnesses before the Senate and House committees, . . . they were quiet, modest, lucid, and compellingly convincing.44

Swing credited the scientists with an understanding of the political and social consequences of the bomb "that you and I cannot well take in." The generous appraisal of the scientists' dedication, intelligence and sense of social responsibility is present throughout the series of programs. Five weeks after the statement above, Swing said:

It has been my privilege to meet a good many of the atomic scientists. They are everything they have been cracked up to be; young, fresh, lucid, and fully aware of their social responsibility.45

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44Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 19, 1945, p. 2.
45Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 23, 1945, p. 3.
Swing maintained that the scientists, because of their special knowledge of atomic power, were in a better position than laymen to assess its importance.

The scientists talk much less about the future peacetime uses of atomic energy than laymen. For them it is an instrument of destruction far stronger than people realize. If the public already is in some terror of atomic bombs, it is not in terror enough.\(^6\)

Swing's generosity toward scientists took the form of praising them as witnesses when they appeared before Congressional committees. Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer was quoted at length during the broadcasts, as was Dr. I. Szilard.\(^7\) When a routine compliment was paid to Dr. Philip Morrison following his testimony, Swing repeated the compliment in full.\(^8\)

On November 5, 1945, Winston Churchill, speaking in Parliament, accused atomic scientists in Britain and America of attempting to use their expert knowledge to get political power. Swing characterized the attack as "pompous statements," and added:

As to the quality of the scientific mind, as compared with the political mind, the politicians will be wise not to challenge comparison.\(^9\)

\(^6\)Ibid., p. 1.

\(^7\)The eighteenth broadcast, December 21, 1945, was based largely on Szilard's testimony before the Atomic Energy Committee of the United States Senate.

\(^8\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 11, 1945, p. 3.

\(^9\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 9, 1945, p. 1.
Relations With Russia. Throughout the series of broadcasts, Swing indicated a concern with Russia, and considerable respect for Russian economic and scientific capacity. In the eighth in the series of broadcasts, Swing indicated that President Truman's decision to keep the secret of atomic power overlooked Russia's access to "the best scientists and scientific and engineering work done in Germany," and Russia's capacity to support scientific research "at a rate more than sixteen times greater than ours." 50

Later, when British Prime Minister Clement Atlee and President Truman held a conference over the control of atomic power, Swing expressed concern that the conference would be considered anti-Russian because of the way in which announcements of the conference were handled. In one broadcast he indicated with despair the difficulties facing those who advocated international cooperation.

Some of the confusion . . . is due to the seemingly insuperable difficulties these days of getting the airplane of peace off the ground. It is so weighted down by suspicion that nothing that anyone can say or do seems enough to help it into the air. 51

Swing argued that suspicion of Russia was causing Russia to suspect the motives of the United States, and that some gesture of trust was necessary. The fear of Russian misunderstanding was a

50 Raymon Swing, news commentary, October 12, 1945, p. 4.
51 Ibid., p. 1.
constant theme in the broadcasts. In the very first script, Swing wrote that "Russia misunderstands our secrecy."^52

Swing first indicated confidence in American strategy when Secretary James Byrnes went to Moscow for Russian-American conferences on atomic power during the week of December 21. "Now we are acting to create confidence," he said.

We have gone to Moscow, have laid at least some of the cards on the table face up, and are asking the Russians to join with us . . . . 53

This was the first indication of approval of any United States action concerning atomic energy and the Soviet Union.

Swing's attitude toward the Soviet Union is not clearly defined. He regretted the decision not to share knowledge of atomic energy with them, and he approved attempts to cooperate with them.

**Subsidiary Subjects.** During the series of broadcasts, Swing mentioned several other subjects which are not of sufficient importance in the series to merit separate consideration. One was a fear of military control of atomic power.

At the risk of making too sweeping a generalization, let me say that the scientists seem to fear an administration of atomic energy in peacetime under the same General Groves who had command of the atomic project during the

52 Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 24, 1945, p. 4.

53 Raymond Swing, news commentary, January 5, 1946, p. 2.
war. They foresee his being given the job with a Navy man as deputy administrator.

Earlier, considering the policy President Truman was pursuing to control atomic energy, Swing had noted with approval:

The easy argument of national security—or international security—is not being used to vest in the Army this tremendous power over civilian life.

Another idea which recurred in the broadcasts was that political leaders and government officials were not yet ready to undertake the changes Swing considered necessary. Swing placed considerable confidence in the electorate.

... The only repository of faith I have been able to find ... is the common people. There has never been a war, which if the facts had been put calmly before the ordinary folk, could not have been prevented. The common man, I think, is the greatest protection against war.

These two ideas, distrust of military control of atomic power, and confidence that the "common man" was much more willing to face drastic changes socially and politically than were government officials, occur several times in the scripts.

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54 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 19, 1945, p. 1.
55 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 5, 1945, p. 5.
56 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 7, 1945, p. 6.
Reaction to the Broadcasts

The reaction to the broadcasts, to the extent that it can be determined, will be considered in two parts: reactions to the initial broadcasts, and reaction to the scripts when they were published in book form.

Reaction to the Broadcasts. Swing has reported that he received "a number" of letters regarding the broadcasts, almost all of them agreeing with his editorial stand. Some, he said, accused him of being "extreme" or "alarmist" in his interpretation of the dangers brought about by the advent of atomic power. According to Swing, the broadcasts did not get more of a listener response in the form of letters than did his other broadcasts. Since his regular commentaries were continued on the other evenings of the week, he was often uncertain of the reaction to any specific broadcast. The letters were not counted or preserved.  

There were no magazine articles or newspaper criticisms in the New York Times devoted to the series. Paul Scott Mowrer, when asked about the series, said he knew Swing was "doing something" about reporting developments concerning atomic energy, and that Swing "felt strongly" about world government, but did not indicate that the broadcasts were important in his assessment of Swing.  

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58 Paul S. Mowrer, interview, September 5, 1962, Chocorua, N. H.
The sole reference to the series of broadcasts is found in an introduction to the interview with Dr. Einstein which was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In the introduction it was noted that Swing "regularly broadcast" about the topic.\(^5^9\)

When the scripts were published in book form in 1916, they were reviewed in a number of magazines and newspapers. Excerpts from the reviews are included below to indicate the variety of reactions to the book.

The greatest weakness of the book, in the eyes of the reviewers, was the failure to present a specific plan for achieving world government. This review, published in *Bookmark*, indicates the weakness.

Mr. Swing's arguments are well chosen and well presented. The difficulties of how to achieve one world and how to persuade the individual nations to come together and give up some of their valued sovereignty Mr. Swing does not state.\(^6^0\)

The *New Republic*'s reviewer indicated general approval of Swing's position:

Raymond Swing has done his level best, which is a good deal, to illuminate the recent history and nature of atomic fission, the necessity of civilian control by a democratic agency, the fallacy of trying to keep a non-

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existent secret and the need of surrendering at least enough sovereignty to an international government so that no national state shall henceforth have the power to make war. It is vivid, logical, forceful.61

The New York Times reviewer, Philip Wylie, ignored the argument of the broadcasts completely, and discussed the novelty of reading scripts which were written for the ear.

Mr. Swing's excellent work interests your reviewer, who never before has read a collection of news commentaries in type. The effect is rather remarkable—easy to understand, yet not precisely reading matter.62

The misgivings about the literary quality of the style in the book was repeated in the New Yorker in a brief unsigned review which ended with the comment, "On the very face of it a sound treatise."63

The most extensive review of the published scripts was published in the Saturday Review of Literature. It is quoted below because it also provided the most pointed criticism of Swing's arguments and presentation.

There is no attempt to conceal the fact that the book is a crusading one, or to sugar-coat the message it carries.

61George Soule, "In the Name of Sanity," New Republic, April 15, 1946, p. 512.
One gets the impression that the author retains a robust faith that man can conquer even this problem and there is sufficient emphasis on moral issues to enable one to put the book down with a feeling that 'after all it will be worthwhile to have tried to do the right thing whatever the consequences may be.'

... The development of the subject is not always as logical as it might have been.

He offers no criticism of those in our government, headed by President Roosevelt himself, who undertook the great two billion dollar adventure for the production of an atomic bomb.

He portrays the changed attitude of the scientists and gives full weight to the importance of their earnest if somewhat belated assumption of responsibility of the social consequences of their discovery.

As for our 'national sovereignty' he points out with clarity and force that in the atomic bomb age it has become nothing short of a positive atavistic danger to the chance of humanity for survival.

The United States has its choice of the risk of being out-voted in a world govern­ ment or the virtual certainty of someday being devastated by atomic bombs.64

This review was the only one in a major magazine in which Swing's arguments were seriously examined. Perhaps more typical was the brief review which noted:

There is not much for me to say about Mr. Swing's book. Except that I

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agree with its urgent warning ... 65

One is left with the impression, after reading the reviews, that Swing's arguments were considered to be well-intentioned, but not providing a serious or practicable plan for solving the problem. There is no evidence that Swing's commentaries upon the atomic bomb provoked any serious discussion of the issue.

Swing has mentioned that many people thought he was waging a campaign of fear, and that others accused him of "panicking" when the bomb was dropped.66 In one of the commentaries, Swing admitted that "I have been chided by several quite thoughtful correspondents for trying to make people afraid of the atomic bomb."67

Summary and Conclusions

Swing began a series of broadcasts during the first week of August, 1945, that were an innovation in news broadcasting. They contained little, if any, news, but were, to Swing, more important than the news of the day. The style was personal and the purpose, to argue for world government and the peaceful use of atomic energy, was frankly admitted.


67 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 11, 1945, p. 5.
Although the commentaries seem to be a sharp departure from his wartime practices as a news commentator, there are a number of similarities. First, his preference for discussing the strategic implications and historical importance of a contemporary event was merely expanded. Instead of discussing the loss of a strategic position, he discussed the end of civilization; instead of discussing the establishment of law in a war-torn country, he discussed world government. Although he was dealing with a larger topic, the approach was the same.

There is another similarity in that a point of view was presented. Although, in his earlier news commentaries, he did not identify his own opinion, he usually presented a point of view. It was, as we have indicated in the previous chapters, internationalist, pro-British and pro-administration. Thus, the broadcasts concerning atomic energy were different only in that he identified his opinion and admitted that he was attempting to persuade his listeners.

These broadcasts are extremely personal in tone, and we learn much about Swing from them. His criticism of President Truman is frequently pointed. His distrust of government secrecy is unexpected if we remember that he defended Navy news policies and the suppression of details of wartime conferences.
These broadcasts mark a change in Raymond Swing's attitude toward his work. The end of the war, the death of President Roosevelt and Swing's divorce from Betty Gram and marriage to Mary Hartshorne are all factors which influenced him. Freed from the responsibility to serve a nation at war, he abandoned his journalistic anonymity and publicly crusaded for world government.
CHAPTER VIII

SWING'S VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF THE NETWORK NEWS COMMENTATOR

Raymond Swing has frequently commented upon the role of the network news commentator and the special problems of interpreting news for a national audience in wartime. Most of these comments are found, not in his speeches or magazine articles, but in the commentaries themselves. Swing frequently found it necessary to discuss the process of news gathering and interpretation in order to make a point about the news of the day.

Swing has also commented upon the role of the network news commentator in the introductions to his published collections of commentaries. In addition, he has been willing to discuss the subject at length with the author.

When these expressions of his view from commentaries, books, and interviews are assembled, they form a philosophy of news. In this chapter, Swing's view will be discussed in four major categories: News in a democracy; the commentator as an interpreter of complex events; government secrecy as it related to news commentary; and the news commentator in wartime.

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The Importance of the News Commentator in a Democracy

Public Rights. Swing insisted, at a number of points in his scripts, that the public's "rights" to full and accurate information about public events are at the core of the democratic process. He said, "as a matter of fact, all news belongs to the public in a democracy, all military news included . . . ."\(^1\) He acknowledged that there are times when national interests cannot be served by full disclosure of military data, but he said that if any limitations were placed upon news circulation, the public should "know the rules of the game."

The rights of the public in news were based, for Swing, upon the need of the public to have trust in its government, and the need of the government to feel confident of public support. The free flow of information into and out of government was essential. "On these principles, and these principles alone," he said, "can the public have faith in the government and can the government depend on the trust of the public."\(^2\) The reader will note the inconsistency between this general statement and the evidence examined in Chapter V.

Swing feels that news became increasingly important in the democracies during the period between the two World Wars. Diplomacy,

\(^1\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 18, 1942, p. 5.

\(^2\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 18, 1942, p. 6.
which was formerly secretive and esoteric, became more public.

Speaking of the world as it was in 1913, Swing wrote:

> Diplomacy was an esoteric subject reserved for the elect. The general public knew nothing about it, intellectuals knew a little and that not too soundly, and the only true knowledge was reserved for those who had been admitted into the fellowship of diplomacy. If as a correspondent in Berlin I sought news at the Foreign Office, a man with a long beard, standing at a desk, received me, and invariably told me there was no news. If I asked a question, he invariably was unable to answer it. If I took him a report I wanted verified, he invariably said the news was not true. But today diplomacy is made both for the inner circle and for every human being in every part of the world.\(^3\)

Swing maintained that public information increased during the period between the wars, and public discussion counted for more at the time of World War II. The difference was not absolute, however:

> Diplomacy, though a public function performed in tens of millions of homes, still remains in part a secret of the elect. The thoughts and decisions of the men in power in the world today still are hidden. But the level of knowledge today is far higher than twenty-five years ago, for a person like myself who spends some time every day reading about international affairs, and for Mr. and Mrs. Citizen, and their sons and daughters in their high schools and colleges.\(^4\)

This change in the general knowledge of public issues Swing felt was highly desirable. He considered the news commentator

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\(^4\)Ibid.
a mediator between the public and diplomatic secrecy and jargon.

As such, the news commentator had to take the public's side, seeking full information at the expense of diplomatic discretion.

Diplomacy and journalism are anti-theretical. The first reflex of the diplomat when trouble is stirring is to hide it, deny it, minimize it, so as to gain time to deal with it. The first function of journalism is to expose it, discuss it, and explain it.\textsuperscript{5}

Since public knowledge had increased notably, Swing felt that his job during World War II was to discuss and illuminate news with which his audience was already familiar.

I was not announcing any news in these talks, but was discussing news which I had to assume my listeners already knew.\textsuperscript{6}

If public knowledge had increased, and he, as a radio news commentator, did not feel that his primary job was to provide additional detail, where, it might be asked, did the public knowledge come from? Swing has accounted for the increase in public knowledge in a way which minimizes the importance of radio.

This is not due to radio alone, or indeed primarily to the radio. The newspapers began the transformation. They learned to discuss international and national affairs with a skill and detail which twenty-five years ago would have been impossible. Newspaper men in that time simply did not know a fraction of what they know today. Nor did their readers.

\begin{footnotes}
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But the radio has brought the world to vast numbers of individuals even more than the newspapers.  

Radio, in Swing's view, was the more recent continuing factor in the transformation in public knowledge which was begun by newspapers. It is important to note that Swing considered radio news commentary as a branch of journalism. Radio and newspapers may be different in many ways, but, to Swing, they were merely different channels through which similar content might be transmitted.

Swing minimized the importance of the news commentators on radio, maintaining that the real importance of radio was that it brought the public into contact with the voices of its leaders.

When it comes to reporting the speech of a dictator, before his home subjects, the newspaper account is as flat as a paper doll. But the radio gives the occasion two important properties: sound and feeling. And that makes it an education, if it is an education to learn about an alien political system.

Swing's view of radio news commentary in a democracy was based on the assumption that the public has a right to full discussion of all public matters. Further, because the general level of public knowledge had increased in recent years, there was an increasing need for discussion and interpretation, rather than reporting.

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7Ibid., p. 9.
8Raymond Swing, How War Came, p. 51.
Limitations Upon News. Swing places only one limitation upon news, and that was the limitation of interference with governmental functions. When the New York Herald Tribune reported a tentative vote trade between Russia and the United States at the United Nations Conference in 1945, Swing attacked the Herald Tribune for interfering in a policy matter. "It is not the function of a newspaper," he said, "to conduct foreign policy."^9

Aside from this insistence that the news services should not interfere in governmental functions, Swing placed no limitations upon the activities of the press. The proper arbiter of what should or should not be reported, Swing suggested, was the editor, not a governmental official. In radio, Swing assigned this reporting responsibility to the news commentator. Swing insisted that governments should disclose all possible details, no matter how unfavorable, "the chips falling where they may."^10

Objectivity, Advocacy and Freedom of Expression. The concept of objectivity in news reporting was not used in Swing's discussions of news. The facts, he said, even when they were available, were usually incomplete. Further, Swing argued, the facts were not nearly so important as the uses made of them. The decision that one was more important than another, that one source


^10Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 29, 1942, p. 2.
was more reliable than another, or that certain facts related or did not relate, were judgments that could never be objective.

The editorial decisions of this kind were, for Swing, more important than a concern with objectivity. The way in which Swing approached the problem is demonstrated in this excerpt:

Tonight I have a sense of the almost painful limitation of the time at my disposal, and of my own mind in grasping the full measure of what has happened.

It will be my temptation to simplify and so unintentionally falsify the story, but you will welcome simplification, because one has to try to understand what has happened and how it could have happened. I must confine my account of what has taken place to a few of the undeniable facts and leave out a great deal that belongs in the story. Let us look first at the results.11

As that excerpt, in which Swing began to discuss the partition of Czechoslovakia, demonstrates, the problem for Swing was not one of facts, but rather a problem of how to deal with the facts.

Limitations are placed upon the commentator, however; Swing would not allow a news commentator to advocate a point of view.

As a news analyst I had never espoused any cause or doctrine in my broadcasts, as I believed that I did not have a right to do so.12

11 Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 18, 1938, p. 1.
12 Raymond Swing, In the Name of Sanity, p. vi.
This limitation was an ethical one. There is no agency which Swing would allow to evaluate a commentator, and no standard to which he could point, except integrity. The responsibility of the news commentator was a personal one, because Swing, although he would not advocate a point of view, felt that his freedom of speech must be absolute.

What I value primarily is the freedom to express myself without outside interference, which, to the credit of American radio—and sponsors—I have been allowed and indeed encouraged to do.\(^{13}\)

The two values which Swing has suggested—non-advocacy and freedom of expression—are contradictory, since a primary emphasis upon freedom of expression would involve advocacy. Swing faced this contradiction in his own outlook when he planned a series of broadcasts advocating world control of atomic energy to be broadcast just after the first atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima. After stating that he had never espoused any viewpoint because "I believed that I did not have the right to do so," he continued:

Now I should do so because I did not have the right not to. The atomic bomb blew up any good reasons I once might have had against taking such a course, I was driven by a large logic into a lesser inconsistency.\(^{14}\)

And so Swing decided in favor of freedom of expression, as opposed to non-advocacy, when it was dictated by a "large logic."

\(^{13}\)Ibid., p. vii.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. vi.
Swing's view of the role of radio news commentary in a democracy was complex. The democratic structure made full and free information necessary in order to give the public and the government mutual confidence. This might be compromised, providing that the public was aware that news is being suppressed, and that the rules governing that suppression were clear. Swing maintained that a news commentator did not have the right to advocate, and yet, when conditions were urgent, he gave prior consideration to freedom of expression.

The central point in Swing's view of news commentary in a democracy was the judgment of the commentator. The privileges he reserved for the commentator were, as one writer put it, "The unquestionable right to discuss whatever is not explicitly forbidden by law, including the wisdom of any restrictive statute."\(^{15}\)

The Commentator as an Interpreter of Complex Events

Foreign news was, to Raymond Swing, an exceedingly complex body of facts, rumors, opinions, and interpretations. Its complexity made necessary a commentator who was experienced in diplomatic matters, whose primary job was to evaluate the materials turned up by news sources. Swing has written that "news is a combination of

facts and a report of trends, and foreign news gets to be so much a report of trends, that facts when they reach the public don't always loom up as they should.\textsuperscript{16} Swing viewed the news commentator as the man whose job was to evaluate the trends and call attention to facts.

As Critic of Other Media. This placed Swing in a curious position in relation to other news reporters, newspapers, and magazines. Frequently, in his commentaries, he did not attempt to beat them with a "scoop," but rather to evaluate them. Swing frequently judged the news media as well as the news they reported. This led Swing to be highly critical of newspapers at various times.

Commenting on the collapse of Loyalists with the fall of Barcelona in March, 1939, Swing began with the comment "I don't think the papers have given a very clear picture of what has happened."\textsuperscript{17}

Similarly, a few days later, Swing reported that Europe was in confusion, and that the news reports were inadequate to evaluate the situation:

\begin{quote}
Affairs in Central Europe have been thrown into a sudden confusion and are making page one news, not I think because they are important in any major way, but because it is the habit of newspaper editors to keep publishing stories from trouble areas. They
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16}Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 9, 1939, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{17}Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 7, 1939, p. 2.
dress them up to look important, and if there is action in them so much the better.18

In Swing's view, the news which was reported was always inadequate to fully understand the events which were transpiring. The commentator worked with the various clues, with his own experience, and attempted to make sense out of the sequence of possible actions. Swing explained this to his audience in one of his news commentaries:

If you have ever lain in a dark room and heard footsteps in other parts of the house, and tried to reconstruct from those sounds what actually was going on, you were doing what all the outside world is doing about Norway. It may not be good promotion of news for me to say that the news available is not illuminating and not convincing. But the events in Norway are so crucial, they mean so much to the course of the war, that even inadequate news has to be treasured.19

Biographical Data. There is one other way in which Swing felt that the commentator could be useful in interpreting complex international developments. That was by providing insights into the men who made the decisions which determined the course of events. Swing had met many of the men in power during his years as a European correspondent. But, whether or not he knew them personally, he placed great emphasis upon understanding the men involved in

18Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 11, 1939, p. 3.
19Raymond Swing, news commentary, April 24, 1940, p. 1.
the news in order to understand the news itself. One early sample from his collected manuscripts deals with Neville Chamberlain.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain has risen to the highest political office that his country can bestow, but still it is true that he isn't a great popular leader. For all we know he may turn out to be an exceptionally able prime minister; but if he does it will be in spite of his deficiency in what might be called Public Personality... More than most Englishmen he lives in an atmosphere of withdrawal, as though he didn't want to be close to others or have them close to him.20

Similar thumbnail evaluations of significant individuals may be found of Chang Kai Shek, Winston Churchill, Norman Davis, Mussolini, and others. One of the earliest examples was a sketch of David Lloyd George written by Swing on the occasion of Lloyd George's visit to Hitler in 1936.

To my mind one of the most fascinating details of the recent story of Europe was the visit to Hitler of David Lloyd George... I was very much startled when he came back to England and it was cabled that he had called Hitler the George Washington of Germany. But it wasn't until I could lay my hands on the London newspapers and read everything that Lloyd George had to say about Germany that the fascination set in. And then I began to see the unfolding of what you might call a psychological drama. Swing then went on to explain that Lloyd George was second only to Clemenceau in responsibility for the Versailles treaty. In other words, Lloyd George, whether consciously or not, carries about on his shoulders a quite substantial part of the

responsibility for the Nazi revolution, and for the existing German regime, and for the whole clashing chaos of Europe. I don't suppose he is conscious of it. I don't know how he could be and function.21

This is a considerable attack on Lloyd George, treating him as the fulcrum on which the events of the world crisis swung. It is more than a simple attack, however. Notice that an understanding of Lloyd George is necessary to understand his decisions. Lloyd George's praise of Hitler, which is news, can only be understood if you understand Lloyd George's guilt in creating the situation which made Hitler's career possible. A knowledge of the men who made events was not separable from the news of the events themselves. This was the way in which Swing used biographical material to illuminate news.

In summary, the news commentator had a multiple responsibility in interpreting the complex events of international relations. First, he evaluated the importance and accuracy of facts. Next, he evaluated the news itself, its accuracy, its thoroughness and its importance. Then he tried to reconstruct for his listener what was happening, using the various news reports as clues. Finally, he related events to the personalities of the men in power, making clear their reasons for their actions.

21Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 9, 1936, p. 1.
The Commentator and Government Secrecy

Raymond Swing was a news commentator during World War II. Consequently, he worked during a period when many governments, both allied and enemy, cloaked many of their activities and plans in secrecy. The problems which resulted from an attempt to inform fully without divulging vital information occupied Swing at various times during the war.

Government Secrecy and Civilian Morale. Swing regularly acknowledged that, since many activities of governments were secret, exact knowledge of them was impossible.

Since the words that fly from capital to capital are secret, it is impossible to give an authentic statement of what is going on. We have to content ourselves with details and deductions.22

Throughout the war years he acknowledged that details were missing, that no one knew exactly what was happening in Washington inner circles or in London or Berlin or Tokyo. He argued, however, that the amount of news made available should be as large as possible, and that the limits of government secrecy should be regularly evaluated and reduced whenever possible.

War news is a highly specialized field, dominated by the requirements of military secrecy, and there is a constant conflict between normal news interest and military requirements. This conflict is in daily need of arbitration.23

22Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 16, 1939, p. 1.
The need for a maximum freedom of news was not a theoretical position for Swing. He felt that civilian morale depended upon a feeling that the public was being accurately and fully informed.

Unless the public knows that it is being told the truth—every bit of the truth that can be told without reducing the national security—it will lose faith in its leadership and the war effort will suffer.24

His argument for full information was based upon the assumption that, at a time when many governments were using propaganda as a weapon, the American public must have confidence in the news released by its own government. Swing went on to argue that some materials must be excluded because of military considerations. When this is necessary, the public must be informed about the restrictions. "If it is going to believe," he said in the news commentary quoted above, "it must know precisely what limitations are placed on news.

When Government Secrecy is Justified. Swing was willing to accept government secrecy on some matters. In most military matters, Swing found secrecy necessary. In addition, certain diplomatic activities were also justifiably secret.

Swing did not protest the withholding of information about damage caused by the attack on Pearl Harbor. When the Teheran

24 Ibid., p. 2.
and Casablanca conferences were held in closed sessions, Swing accepted the need for secrecy concerning the agenda and any decisions which were reached. When the combined staffs of the Allied armies had a conference in Washington in May, 1943, a terse announcement was made:

The conference of the combined staffs in Washington has ended in complete agreement on future operations in all theaters of war.25

Swing accepted this brief account of the conference as an adequate account for public information. All the public needed to know, he argued, was whether or not agreement had been reached. Information about the nature of the agreement was not for public consumption. Commenting on the conference, he said:

A certain gratification can be felt in the quality of the men who took part in the counsels in Washington. But all the gratification has to be abstract, for we don't know the decisions reached, we don't know the considerations weighed, we don't know the decisions that weren't taken. No one will complain that the public should know dates or details about future operations. Enough has been said...26

Swing also viewed government secrecy as a cause of public misunderstanding. In late 1942 he noted that many persons, judging from editorial comments in newspapers, misunderstood what was happening in the capital.

Anyone in Washington following developments here soon becomes aware that many problems

26Ibid., p. 2.
as seen from the inside are totally different from the way they appear from the outside.\textsuperscript{27}

He went on to argue that secrecy could be legitimately extended to diplomatic problems. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Swing's treatment of secrecy is that he regards it as something to be discussed in itself.

The Commentator in Wartime

When a nation is at war, commentators, as citizens, are at war also. Consequently, in Swing's view, the commentator had a dual obligation in wartime: to fight for freedom of information, and to contribute to the national war effort.

Morale. One of the commentator's tasks, according to Swing, was to keep civilian morale high. The credibility of information released by the government was intimately connected with civilian morale, in Swing's view. Two days after Pearl Harbor he voiced this complaint:

\begin{quote}
News about the war with Japan is fragmentary, almost to the point of being insignificant. And since events of utmost significance have happened, and are happening, the scantiness of the news is not only unsatisfactory, it is injurious to national morale.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

During the succeeding months he repeated that expression of concern over national morale many times. It was one of the recurring

\textsuperscript{27}Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 25, 1942, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{28}Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 9, 1941, p. 1.
themes in Swing’s wartime commentaries, and he used it as an argument against the suppression of news.

**Propaganda.** In wartime the news commentator had a special role to play, according to Swing, because of the large amount of propaganda distributed by both allied and enemy governments. The effect of this propaganda was, in Swing's view, to make audiences skeptical.

With the outbreak of war, many Americans set themselves deliberately not to believe most of what they read or were told about it. The memories of the World War were already blurred, but there could be no forgetting the propaganda of that period. Since then, propaganda has been polished to a new perfection by the totalitarian states. With the war came censorship, which necessarily meant suppression... Newspapers reminded their readers that their own foreign dispatches were not to be trusted, radio stations, before the reading of news, repeated their reminders, and for the first part of the war, news was subjected to an initial welcome of incredulity.29

One of the jobs of the commentator was to overcome the skeptical attitude of his audience by evaluating the news which he had to report. Six months after America's entry into the war, Swing devoted a commentary to the problems of understanding European developments. He warned that:

Our news judgments about affairs inside Germany are both better than we think and worse

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than we realize. They are better than we think because we have a general sense of the German situation, based on fragments of evidence. By that I mean that the German conditions could not improve without our knowing it, from the Germans themselves. And they could not drastically worsen without the Germans giving it away.

. . . But I still say our judgments are worse than we realize.30

The difficulty in accurately assessing a situation was aggravated by the fact that many of the sources of news were suspect, and so the commentator had the complex job of listening to propaganda announcements, and deducing the nature of events from those questionable sources. Early in the war he gave this advice to his listeners:

It will not be taken as inappropriate, I hope, if I add some observations about the way the news of the war is to be read and weighed. Every rumor should be met with distrust. Perhaps the best way to react to a rumor is to think for a moment, where did it probably originate? If one realizes right away that the purpose of the rumor is to frighten and disturb, one is less likely to be frightened and disturbed.31

The commentator had the job, not only of guessing at the source of rumors, but of taking enemy information and using it to illuminate the war for his listeners. Throughout Swing's wartime broadcasts there were frequent references to German, Italian and


31 Raymond Swing, news commentary, December 9, 1941, p. 1.
Japanese broadcasts, and attempts to evaluate their accuracy.

Here is one example:

The Germans gave out the news today that the Russians have launched a full-sized offensive in the Kuban sector of the Caucasus. Inasmuch as the Germans admit that the Russians made what were called local breakthroughs and the yielded territory was not all recaptured in counterattacks, the news can be taken as authentic.\(^3^2\)

Another task of the commentator in wartime mentioned by Swing was the analysis of the newspapers, speeches or news releases intended for distribution within enemy countries. On May 24, 1942, he devoted his entire commentary to a speech by Hermann Goering. He used it not only for the information it contained, but as a means of substantiating or disproving earlier reports.

Goering's description of the Russian Campaign is one of the remarkable passages of oratory produced by this war. I shall quote at length from it, but let me point out that it is an official German confirmation of much of the news about that front that came from Russian sources during the winter. Today many persons show doubt of the truth of much of this news and say it must have been propaganda. Hermann Goering disagrees with them.\(^3^3\)

Swing, during the war, did similar analyses of each of Hitler's major speeches and of Mussolini's, as well as Goering's.\(^3^4\)

\(^{3^2}\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 13, 1942, p. 2.

\(^{3^3}\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 24, 1942, p. 3.

\(^{3^4}\)One of the longest analyses of a speech by Hitler was made on September 30, 1942, when Swing devoted an entire program to it.
He treated domestic speeches by the President or administration officials in much the same way, assuming that much of what they said could be used to suggest answers to questions they did not discuss.

The principle effect of the war upon news commentary was that much of what the commentator had to work with was deliberately misleading. Enemy statements could be used only as an indication of what they wanted you to think. Confirmation of news took weeks or months, and frequently had to be implied from an indirect statement. Given these circumstances, Swing viewed the commentator in wartime as a propaganda analyst.

The Scarcity of News in Wartime. One of the recurrent themes in Swing's wartime commentaries was the warning that he knew very little, much too little to make a sound judgment. This lack of information caused Swing to speculate about the long-term effects:

I sometimes wonder how dangerous it is that we know so little about what is going on, not only in Germany, but everywhere else, our own country included. We are slowly slipping into a mental adjustment to life without news. That may be due to requirements of wartime, and that no one has a right to complain about. But its effect on thinking could be injurious. If we are not constantly reminding ourselves that we know very little, we will fall into the habit of reaching firm conclusions, just
as though we knew a great deal. And more and more we are filling our minds with meaningless words.35

Swing explained that part of the problem was the skill with which reporters and commentators inflated slender bulletins until they seemed to say more than they actually did. He continued:

A correspondent abroad, or in Washington, reads a communique. It is brief and uses words chosen with a high skill to convey precisely what is meant to be conveyed. The correspondent sits down at his typewriter and expands that communique with punch adjectives. By the time he has ended he often has puffed it up and made it vibrate with action and resound with thunder. He, too, is skillful. He doesn't fabricate anything. He just fills in. By the time what he has written registers on the reader's or in the listener's mind, the effect is altogether different from anything that would have registered if the communique alone had been read or heard.36

One of the problems of wartime reporting was that, because it was so meager, it tempted the audience to make judgments without sufficient information. Swing, in various ways, repeated the following warning several times throughout the war. He placed such emphasis upon it, that it does not seem unfair to say that, for Swing, one of the jobs of the commentator was to remind his

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35 Raymond Swing, news commentary, June 6, 1942, p. 4.
36 Ibid., p. 4.
audience that they knew very little. Here is one statement of his argument.

All of us want to exercise judgment, on what we are doing, on what our allies are doing, and on what our enemies are doing. Judgment is based on knowledge of essential facts, and is the power to relate these facts to other known facts. But without facts, we are not entitled to judgment. We have only opinions, hopes, and prejudices for judgment. I propose no remedy for this, for the only remedy I can think of is to keep on reminding ourselves that we know so very little.37

Government Policy and News Commentary. Swing agreed that some information must be withheld during a war for military reasons. On March 18, 1942, the day the government announced its wartime news policy, Swing devoted a large portion of his commentary to a discussion of news services in wartime. He argued that, though military concerns come first in war, civilian morale is of extreme importance and can be maintained only by adequate, credible information. Examining the government's information policy, he said the rules were "clear and satisfactory."38

Six months later he was more candid in his criticism of the government policy. At this time he admitted "There are things in the news policy I don't like."

For instance, I don't like the habit of lumping the numbers of ships or planes of the enemy that are sunk or damaged, as though this gave the

37 Ibid., p. 5.
right picture of the situation. A ship that is damaged can fight again. A ship that is sunk as a rule can't. And while it is interesting to be told how many ships of the Japanese Navy have been sunk or damaged, and the number makes a tremendous total, the truth is nothing like so tremendous.39

His principal misgiving about the news policy of the government was not about detail of the plan. Rather he wanted a more extensive accounting of the overall plan and progress of the war. Personally, I wish someone with full knowledge and full authority would report at intervals to the public how the war is going, and do it in strategic terms. Particularly when a situation is in the past and can be talked about safely, it should be disclosed why a given decision was made, what elements went into the consideration, what problems were involved, what mistakes developed.40

The appeal to "someone with full knowledge and full authority" is an apparent reference to the President, a judgment supported by Swing's later comment that "you will recognize here a formula used by Winston Churchill on many occasions."

Swing's most severe criticism of the government's wartime news policy was that it prevented civilians from participating in the war, from knowing what the war was about and how it was progressing.

39Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 29, 1942, p. 2.
40Raymond Swing, news commentary, October 29, 1942, p. 3.
What this country needs most in the way of news, in my opinion, is not so much detail about the exploits of this and that individual, and certainly not news that would enlighten the enemy to our detriment, but candor and instruction about the fundamental problems of war. We all need to be strategists, we all feel it is our war, and we are forced to follow it from day to day, with only the slightest grasp of the elements of the problems of our military and naval leaders have to cope with.

Swing did not charge the commentator with the responsibility for a periodic strategic review of the war, but since the government did not, he thought the commentator might be expected to attempt to fill the gap. Swing argued that the situation involving war news was getting progressively better, "and the appointment of Elmer Davis has produced admirable gains." He said that the news policies of the armed forces was "much better than the public impression of it," but that "the administration of any deficiency is always unpopular."

Swing saw little conflict between government policy and the radio news commentator. The omission of discussions of strategic problems was, he thought, a loss; but the commentator could do little to correct it.

Early in the war Swing gave his listeners advice on how to evaluate a news commentator.

Believe as always the correspondent whose record is trustworthy. True, he gets
most of his information second hand, but so does almost every news gatherer. The good correspondent is the man with good judgment. He knows what to accept of what he is told, what to doubt, how to write about what is reliable, and how to refrain from writing what he isn't sure about. 42

Although Swing later elaborated his conception of the role of the network news commentator, the emphasis upon the integrity and judgment of the individual commentator remained at the core of his theory of news.

Summary and Conclusions

Raymond Swing, in his comments about the role of network news commentators, has concerned himself almost exclusively with the reporting and interpretation of foreign news. Domestic news was occasionally included in Swing's commentaries, but such news is not important in his philosophy of news. He is primarily concerned with the news commentator as an interpreter of international political relationships.

Swing argues that one of the major tasks of the news commentator is to press for fullest possible disclosures, and to remind his audiences of the lack of news so that their judgments are not made without sufficient information. The reader who refers to Chapter V will not that Swing did not always press for full information, and

42 Raymond Swing, news commentary, February 11, 1940, p. 5.
defended the Navy when it was under attack for restricting news. The explanation of this may be found in his reservation that military secrecy and civilian morale were of primary importance and that information might legitimately be suppressed to protect them.

In this complex situation in which several factors—morale, military secrecy and the necessity of information in a democracy—are all operating, some decisions cannot be made by the public. It is at this point that the journalist became, to some extent, the partner of the diplomat and the military leader. By participating in decisions to release or suppress information, he is forced in wartime into betraying some of his most important functions. Swing's precept that "journalism and diplomacy are antithetic" does not hold true for Swing's wartime policies. The reader should note that immediately after the conclusion of World War II, Swing began to oppose secrecy.

Aside from the complications which arise in his discussion of freedom of information, Swing's other main points in his philosophy of news are nearly a description of his own practices. The mastery of biographical data, the emphasis upon historical and strategic analyses and the emphasis upon the evaluation of propaganda are all consistent with his own commentaries.
It is possible to undertake detailed studies of Raymond Swing's news commentaries between 1939 and 1945. Not only are the manuscripts and transcriptions preserved in the Library of Congress, but Swing was the subject of a number of evaluative articles in general magazines. In addition, he received a number of awards, several of them accompanied by citations which explained why he was considered worthy of recognition. In this chapter the critical reactions of others will be summarized. This will be followed by a consideration of a number of evaluative questions which may be answered using information from preceding chapters.

Critical Reaction to Swing's Commentaries

Citations. Raymond Swing received honorary degrees from Harvard University and from the school he attended as an undergraduate, and at which his father taught, Oberlin College. Harvard University gave Raymond Swing an honorary M.A. degree in June, 1942. The citation which accompanied it follows:

A penetrating analyst of the volcanic forces which shake our world, his voice is heard throughout the land—democracy's unflinching advocate. ¹

¹From a letter to the Author from William H. Stiles, News Office, Harvard University, June 12, 1962.
Two citations accompanied the degree, Doctor of Letters, which was given to Swing by Oberlin College on June 11, 1940. The first was written by Professor Howard Robinson who presented Swing for the degree.

Mr. President: It is my privilege to present to you a distinguished American, whose work in the gathering of news and its effective dissemination has made him one of the best known voices of our day. He entered newspaper work in Cleveland some thirty-five years ago. By the opening of the World War, he had begun over two decades of residence in European capitals as a correspondent for well-known American newspapers. He returned to this country in the mid-thirties to interpret the European scene for a larger radio audience. During the past five years his voice has become well-known. In addition to his comments on American affairs for the British Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian networks, he has served Mutual in so distinguished a manner that he ranks high among the political interpreters of our time, with the largest international audience of any commentator.

This opportunity has been carefully and effectively employed, without a hit-or-miss use of material as it comes to the booth, and with no inclination to hysterical interpretations or feverish prophecies. His carefully prepared broadcasts reveal breadth of knowledge and experience, a constant awareness of the dangers of Fascist thinking, a proper condemnation of the cynical savagery of totalitarian states, and a continual emphasis on the virtues of a truly liberal democracy.

He is the more welcome to our campus for his Oberlin connections. As a grandson of Professor Hiram Mead and the son of Professor Albert Swing, his life is deeply rooted in Oberlin. He himself studied in the Academy, the Conservatory, and the College. Because of these connections, on account of his place
in American life, and, above, because of his wise use of a great influence, I am pleased to present Raymond Gram Swing for the degree of Doctor of Letters.\(^2\)

Oberlin President Ernest Hatch Wilkins responded with the following citation:

Raymond Gram Swing, maker of history through his creative interpretation of history in the making, master of the effective moral use of a great scientific instrument, the degree of Doctor of Letters.\(^3\)

In addition to the academic honors mentioned above, Swing was awarded a Peabody Award in 1945. The citation called attention to Swing's "understanding of European events," his "distinguished analyses" and his "calm voice."\(^4\)

The qualities which were emphasized in these citations were his calmness and lack of "hysterical interpretations or feverish prophesies." The size of his audience also attracted comment, Oberlin calling attention to the "largest international audience," and the Harvard citation mentioning that his voice was heard "throughout the land." He was honored also for his moral concern as well as his professional skill. The Harvard citation honoring his advocacy of democracy, the Oberlin citation honoring his "effective moral use" of radio. Swing was honored not only for his skill,

\(^2\)Howard Robinson, citation quoted in letter to the author from Donald M. Love, Secretary of Oberlin College, June 3, 1962.

\(^3\)Ernest Hatch Wilkins, citation quoted in *Ibid*.

he was also honored for the viewpoint and the attitude he expressed.

Comments in Magazines. Charles Siepmann wrote one of the most extensive evaluations of Swing to appear in a magazine. The article does not pretend to be an objective evaluation, but was written in defense of Swing when the American Broadcasting Company announced that it would drop Swing from its schedule on January 25, 1948, because it could not sell his program to a sponsor. Siepmann praised Swing because "he never hesitated to speak out." He then attempted to place Swing in historical perspective and indicate the importance of the commentator's job.

When broadcasting first began it seemed to offer a promise of democratic enlightenment such as surpassed the dreams of a Jefferson. But what it has accomplished, good as it is, is miserably inadequate to the need and it falls miserably short of the opportunity. The world is plunging forward to unprecedented dangers, and only understanding can save it. It seems to me the task of broadcasting is to make news analysis listenable, to devote all its skill and imagination to it. With the best, and with the public listening, the world may still be lost. But without it it is almost sure to be.

Though Swing's voice is not ideal, he conveyed a burning sincerity which produced to the listener the illusion that he was being spoken to personally and in private.

Intimate as was his manner, he yet conveyed like a great actor, the tragic implication of the drama unfolding before us on the stage of the world.


6Ibid.
Siepmann, in evaluating Swing, concentrated upon his delivery. Dixon Wecter, in an article which appeared in 1945, devoted more space to the content of Swing's analyses.

At home his Hooper rating is not so high as formerly—considerably below that of Lowell Thomas, Walter Winchell, or Gabriel Heatter, for example. The growing sunrise of victory has made him seem less indispensable to many listeners than when he was a reassuring voice in the dark, although he is really at his best, and perhaps most useful, in analyzing the non-military problems that loom so large just now. Some think him high-brow, prosey, too solemn.

In prestige, however, Swing stands unimpaired. His research pieces which form the code to the day's spot news, are often masterpieces of fact assemblage and lucid common sense—sometimes reaching levels of highly controlled emotion.

The most common criticism of Swing is that he is the Voice of the State Department.7

Another article concerning Swing by R. O. Boyer presented a brief evaluation of Swing's role as a commentator.

In any other country his functions would be governmental. To his millions of foreign listeners from Bombay to Rio de Janeiro, Swing represents the United States as a sort of radio Uncle Sam.

General George C. Marshall is usually one of his audience, and so is Nicholas Murray Butler, who once said flatly,

'No one can understand the world in which he lives unless he listens regularly to Raymond Gram Swing.'

The authors of a journalism textbook described the qualities which were important in the success of Elmer Davis and Swing:

Two newscasters and commentators who achieved international fame did so not only for their dependable analyses, but also for the crispness of their delivery: Raymond Swing and Elmer Davis.

An article concerning Swing appeared in the Saturday Evening Post in 1940. It contained this brief evaluative comment:

Listeners write in occasionally accusing him of being a British propagandist.

Time magazine called attention to some of the qualities mentioned by Wecter above when it characterized him as "cool, trenchant, and a one-man brain trust."

The general evaluation of Swing which emerges from these comments is that he was reassuring, solemn, sincere, intellectual (high-brow, prosey), and that he was pro-British and favored the

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11"Radio," Time, January 8, 1940, p. 34.
administration. There were suggestions that his connections with the State Department and the British were close. This is the judgment of his contemporaries.

Is Swing a Factual Reporter?

Swing's style makes the question of his adherence to fact particularly difficult to answer. Portions of the program, usually at the end, were devoted to factual reports of "spot news." These usually consisted of brief stories of battles, and were frequently based on official releases.

The major topics Swing chose for discussion each day were not treated in a factual manner. Swing frequently worked by suggestion. For instance, in discussing European development in the late summer of 1939, he made suggestions rather than reports.

The most obvious fact about the news from Europe is that things are going on which aren't being reported. Secret words are flying from capital to capital. Some sort of clear-cut alternative—war or conference—appears to have been defined by Berlin and Rome, and London and Paris are making up their minds what to do. Or perhaps they have already made up their minds.\textsuperscript{12}

The factual content of the preceding passage is small. It consists of speculation by Swing combined with a suggestion that he has more

\textsuperscript{12}Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 16, 1939, p. 1.
reason than his listeners to know that the European capitals are communicating.

When Swing does present factual materials, they are usually presented as the basis for further speculation, rather than as units of information complete within themselves. In the passage below Swing starts with a factual report, but goes beyond the facts in his attempt to explain their significance.

The Germans gave out the news today that the Russians have launched a full-sized offensive in the Kuban sector of the Caucasus. Inasmuch as the Germans admit that the Russians made what were called local breakthroughs and the yielded territory was not all recaptured in counterattacks, the news can be taken as authentic. 13

The only fact involved in this report was that the Germans made a report of a Russian offensive. The remainder is not fact, but interpretation and evaluation of fact.

Raymond Swing regarded facts as elusive, uncertain, and frequently conflicting. One can see his attempt to evaluate facts in the following excerpt:

A correspondent who has just flown to India with General Wavell cables from New Delhi some observations which presumably express opinions and judgments of responsible British leaders. 14

13 Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 13, 1943, p. 3.
14 Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 5, 1942, p. 3.
The fact is that a report had come from New Delhi; the significance of the fact was a matter of interpretation.

When Swing reported factual matters, he does not appear to have been more accurate than the news sources available to the New York Times; for instance, Swing made the following report on March 12, 1942:

> The Vichy radio is the source today of the most important news from the Russian front. Ascribing the information to neutral sources, it reports that Marshall Timoshenko has launched the winter's greatest offensive against the southern section of the front. It is aimed at Taganrog, on the Sea of Azov, Staline, forty miles northwest, and Kharkov, and is said to involve ninety divisions or well over a million and a half men.\(^\text{15}\)

The following day the New York Times carried this comment on the story:

> Advices to the New York Times discounted reports that Marshal Semyan Timoshenko had launched a massive attack with 1,500,000 troops. These advices put his forces at a maximum of 200,000 men.\(^\text{16}\)

Swing's accuracy was limited, during the war, by the accuracy of his sources. He was not a first-hand reporter, but rather an interpreter of the reports of others, and his own accuracy was no better than his sources.

\(^{15}\) Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 12, 1942, p. 4.

One other aspect of Swing's use of facts deserves comment: the suggestion that he had privileged information about the attitudes or opinions of government officials. This suggestion was usually made only in reference to announcements or events concerning the United States government, and may have been partially responsible for his reputation as favoring the administration. An example of it is found in Swing's discussion of the Casablanca Conference.

It may be sound to regret that a United Nations' war council has not yet been formed. But such a council needs preparation and a certain amount of ripening. More was done to prepare for it, in Casablanca, we are told, than the communique even hinted.17

The suggestion that "we are told" more than the official communique "even hinted" clearly suggests special information. The sources do not provide Swing with facts, however, but with attitudes and suggestions.

In evaluating Swing as a factual reporter, one is led to the conclusion that the facts are not as important as Swing's interpretation of their significance.

One concludes that Swing's sources for factual information were as limited as those of other newsmen and newspapers, and as erroneous on some occasions. Finally, the suggestion that he

17Raymond Swing, news commentary, January 27, 1943, p. 4.
had access to information about the attitudes of government officials, and that this information makes his evaluation of facts more "authentic," is frequently made in Swing's commentaries.

**Does Swing Fulfill His Own Standards?**

In Chapter VIII Swing's standards of radio journalism were discussed. It was noted that Swing had a thorough set of principles which he applied. Those standards will now be applied to Swing himself.

**Freedom of Expression.** One of the standards by which Swing judges a commentator is whether the man enjoys and exercises freedom of expression. Swing has stated, particularly in the Introduction to *In the Name of Sanity*, that he enjoyed full freedom of expression. In the broadcasts concerned with the uses of atomic power which began just before the war's end, Swing advocated his own point of view without qualification. In the wartime commentaries which preceded them, however, Swing was much less candid in admitting his own position. His personal expressions were limited largely to expressing enthusiasm for individual leaders. Only in the broadcasts concerned with atomic energy did he frankly identify his point of view.

**Advocacy.** Raymond Swing has argued that a radio news commentator did not have the right to advocate a point of view. He has

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18Raymond Swing, *In the Name of Sanity*, p. vi.
admitted that he consciously deviated when he began his discussions of the atomic bomb. The question remains, did he advocate a point of view during the war years?

An examination of Swing's scripts reveals that he seldom advocated any course of action, but that he was frequently sympathetic to the administration in his explanations. Furthermore, he did practice advocacy by omission when he failed to report facts or opinions unfavorable to the administration.

This sympathy for the administration frequently had the effect of making one course of action seem more reasonable than another, although Swing himself was never an advocate. For instance, on May 5, 1943, Swing devoted a large portion of his program to a discussion of Russian-American relations. He first reported rumors of a possible conference with Russia, then went on to explain that our relations with Russia were difficult because of the suspicion which existed between the two countries.

Until Russia, Great Britain and the United States come to an understanding of their role in Europe they cannot even begin discussing the key question of the future of Germany. And obviously that is the preliminary to any planning of the organization of collective security, of police powers, of a system of international justice, and everything else one hopes will follow on these.

Until now, the United States, Britain, and Russia have not discussed together the future of Germany and the nature of the world after the war, they have not reached the basis of mutual agreement and trust. The British may
be a little further along with the Russians politically than we, but probably the amount of trust between them is not greater than between Russia and this country, if so great. For this country has a century-long history of good power relations with Russia. We conflict nowhere vitally. We do not want what the Russians have, nor do they want what we have. We are not afraid of Russia and Russia is not afraid of us.

But to argue down that wall leads to a blind wall. A better question is whether we are entitled to suspicions on the basis of the experience of the war. Have we not all learned lessons, revised opinions, noted profoundest changes, all of these clearing the way for trust?\(^{19}\)

In this discussion Swing did not advocate closer relations with Russia. Yet, at a time when the Roosevelt administration was attempting to plan its future course of action with the Soviet Union, the broadcast clearly makes cooperation more reasonable than suspicion. Raymond Swing did not advocate any actions, but the impact of his commentaries was frequently to support one point of view. In this sense he falls short of his own standard.

**Complex Events.** As outlined in Chapter VIII, Raymond Swing has said that one of the most important jobs of a news commentator was to interpret complex political events so that they are comprehensible to his audience. This was an activity at which Swing was notably successful. The references in Swing's two academic citations to his "creative interpretation of history" and to his

\(^{19}\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 5, 1943, p. 4.
"penetrating analysis" refer to his ability to retell the events of the day in a manner which makes them fit into a comprehensible pattern. The comment by Dixon Wecter that Swing was at his best and most useful "in analyzing the non-military problems that loom so large just now," refers also to his ability to make complex events clear.

If one were asked to point to Swing's greatest strengths as a commentator, his ability to relate and analyze events would certainly be one of the qualities named.

Government Secrecy. Swing has expressed the point of view that secrecy during a war should be restricted to those matters of military value. All other materials should remain in free public circulation. A question may be asked: did Swing oppose government attempts to suppress information? Did he fight for greater freedom of news?

Raymond Swing's criticism of government news policy was consistently much milder than that of the New York Times. He did not report the misgivings about government policy which were reported in the New York Times. When the government announced its news policy on March 18, 1942, he hailed it as a "magna charta," and

20 Dixon Wecter, op. cit., p. 39.
said that he objected only to the amount of detail in Naval reports. As mentioned in Chapter V, the incident involving a Daily Mail correspondent and the revelation of information about Navy shipping was interpreted by Swing as the result of the ethical shortcomings of the reporter. The New York Times placed much of the blame on the Navy, and on the government’s news policy.

Swing placed much of the blame for problems in news distribution upon newspapers. For instance, when the Casablanca conference was held in January, 1943, the New York Times expressed disappointment at the meager news released. Swing defended the government at the expense of the press.

Some feel that the build-up for the conference justified expectations of sensational developments that did not develop. The fact is that the press was allowed to speculate freely about the conference before it was revealed. If it had not been allowed to do so, anticipation and appetites would not have been whetted. So those who are disappointed on this score really are arguing that the censorship in London and Washington should have been clamped on and kept clamped on.

It is interesting that London fed its advance stories to its readers under Washington deadlines, just as many of our American stories came from London. Unconsciously, the newspapermen in both capitals were elbowing their censors out of the way with the argument that censorship was being more liberal in the other country.

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21 Raymond Swing, news commentary, March 18, 1942, p. 2.

22 Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 12, 1943, p. 2.
Finally, Swing excused government officials for giving few details of the conference to the reporters. They knew that the conference was important for its concrete achievements. But knowing it, they were unable to explain how and why. The preoccupations of the man in the driver's seat can't very well be explained in gestures to the passengers in the back seat. No doubt about it, this is the situation, and it is not one to be remedied.

Raymond Swing, early in the war, argued that the civilian population had rights in the area of news, and that the government should respect them. As the quotation above demonstrates, Swing excused the government and shifted the blame for shortcomings in news to newspapers. Although Swing talked in his early commentaries about the public's rights, in practice he was not an advocate of maximum freedom, but rather defended the government's policies. The fact that he was government decisions as necessary does not minimize his failure to be critical of them. In this respect, Swing fell short of his own standards.

Propaganda Analysis. Swing has said that one of the responsibilities of the commentator in wartime is to analyze enemy propaganda for whatever it may contribute to an understanding of the war. Swing made frequent references to Axis radio and newspaper releases during the war years, and used them as materials for
comparisons. Characteristic of his treatment of Axis war news is this:

In the last few days the Germans and Italians have had it explained to them that the holding of the Tunisian bridgehead has been worth it whatever the cost. The official explanation is that it saved six months, and in this six months the fortifications of Europe could be rushed to completion. If this stand had not been made, it is argued, the Allied landing in November would have come just as the German offensive in Russia was at its most critical phase and while European defenses were still inadequate. This argument is sound enough, but it is out of the sequence of events.\(^2\)

The awareness of the contents of several Axis announcements, and the comparison of them with events, demonstrated above, is one of the prominent characteristics of Swing's wartime commentaries. In this respect he met the standard he set up for himself with success.

Is Swing a Biased Commentator?

In the first section of this chapter a number of comments from magazines were reported. Some suggested that Swing was pro-British and was a spokesman for government policies. The charge is difficult to answer, because Swing seldom took a clear stand on any issue. Some tendencies which recur will be discussed below.

\(^2\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 12, 1943, p. 2.
Does His Selection of Topics Indicate a Bias?  The topics selected by Swing do not indicate a bias except by omission. Swing consistently omitted stories which were critical of the administration. The topics chosen for emphasis by Swing were, with few exceptions, also given emphasis by the New York Times. The exceptions may be explained in terms of personal preference or in a differing sense of news value. Only by omission was bias introduced in the selection of topics.

Are His Interpretations Biased? Swing's interpretations during the two-week period which was analyzed in detail were in agreement with the administration. There is no reason to believe that the commentaries during this period were atypical. Other commentaries from other periods during the war have similar characteristics. Swing's interpretations were biased, and fell short of his own standards.

Did He Criticize the Administration? The only criticism of the administration occurred in the broadcasts dealing with atomic power. At other times Swing was characteristically sympathetic to the administration, although the relationship was sometimes complex. For instance, in May, 1943, he suggested that the administration's performance in holding down inflation could be evaluated.

The administration now has promised to reduce certain prices and to hold all other prices. And workers are now waiting to see if the government can fulfill that promise.\(^2\)

\(^2\)Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 1, 1943, p. 4.
In the discussion which followed, however, Swing made it clear that if the administration should fail, the responsibility would lie, not in the White House, but in Congress.

The administration is not able to do it without collaboration of Congress. Congress so far refuses to grant either kind of power. It withholds subsidies, and it rejects plans to advance credit to small farmers. . . . The only control that will avert inflation is economic control. And that is something the government cannot exercise without the authority of Congress. 24

The most interesting portion of the commentary was the last paragraph in which Swing revealed his own feelings about the question.

If Congress continues to deny the authority then incentives cannot be offered to obtain the required results. It is true that we have had to forego some of the techniques of capitalism because of the war. But it is all the more true that we do and must retain the technique of an incentive economy. And if that is not all there is to the capitalist system it is what matters most to a society whose citizens want to be free. 25

Swing's identification with the viewpoint of the administration was so complete in the excerpts quoted above that opposition in Congress did not seem comprehensible.

Swing once defended the administration by suggesting that operations inside the government are not as bad as they seem, and

24 Ibid., p. 5.
25 Ibid., p. 7.
that most difficulties are caused by impersonal administrative problems:

Individuals in the administration take the rap for delays which are due to defects in directives and organization. And as in all human affairs, persons with drive and ambition and the ability to take advantage of conflict exploit the confusion to promote themselves and add to their own powers.\(^{26}\)

Throughout the war, Swing showed a thorough understanding of the difficulties of the administration, and was generous in his treatment of the administration.

**Was He Fair In His Treatment of Opponents?** In many instances Swing did not present the case for the opposition in his analysis of questions. As mentioned in Chapter V, he ignored the opposition to the raids on Paris factories, the criticism of government news policy, and the dispute over unity of command. When Swing chose to deal with someone with whom he disagreed, it was primarily by attacking their ethical standards, and by making their viewpoint seem unreasonable. He complained of the "journalistic ethics" of the *Daily Mail* reporter. Of Congressional opposition to government subsidies, he said: "Congress so far is acting as though there were a free market when there is none."\(^ {27}\) With the exception of the atomic energy commentaries, Swing did not engage in denunciation of persons or groups, and did not place blame for governmental

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\(^{26}\) Raymond Swing, news commentary, November 25, 1942, p. 5.

\(^{27}\) Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 4, 1943, p. 1.
shortcomings on opponents of the administration except when the President was unable to get Congressional action. His most consistent strategy was to ignore them. In the series of broadcasts in 1945 dealing with atomic power, he was frequently highly critical of those with whom he disagreed.

What Are Swing's Contributions to Radio Network News?

One man who knew Swing during the period before, during and immediately after World War II, has commented that "Swing's contribution to radio is qualitative. He didn't invent any gimmicks." Nevertheless, Swing did contribute a number of innovations in form, style, and function of the news commentator. They are discussed below.

The Unofficial Spokesman. Swing was the first American radio news commentator to develop a reputation as an unofficial spokesman for the administration. In a nation which had no government newspaper, news agency, or radio service, Swing created an unusual position for himself. In discussions with the author, persons who followed his news commentaries have consistently suggested that he spoke for "the New Deal Establishment." Dixon Wecter, as mentioned earlier, has suggested that in any other country Swing's function would be governmental.

The Middle Commercial. According to R. O. Boyer, Raymond Swing was the first major, sponsored, network radio news commentator to refuse to allow a middle commercial in his program. Although the practice of presenting a complete news program without interruption was continued by Swing until he left the American Broadcasting Company in 1948, it does not appear to have influenced other sponsors or commentators. The news commentary without interruption was fought for and achieved by Swing, but had no wider influence.

Swing encouraged the illusion that he spoke for the administration by suggesting at various times what the attitudes and opinions of those in power were. Although he has denied that he had "inside" information, admitting only that he had "good contacts," it is clear that Swing's relationship to the Roosevelt Administration was unique.

The reputation was apparently encouraged by Swing, because he interpreted most events from the viewpoint of the administration during the war. It was also encouraged by his occasional suggestions that he had greater knowledge about the attitudes of government officials than the releases revealed. Swing's reputation as an "unofficial spokesman" was no doubt enhanced by the fact that his programs were carried overseas at government expense, and that the

29R. O. Boyer, "The Voice I," New Yorker, November 14, 1942, p. 34.
British Broadcasting Corporation respected his interpretations of American actions.

**Stylistic Contributions.** The style of Swing's commentaries is marked by the sustained seriousness of his presentation, and by the complexity of the thoughts and the sentences in which they are expressed. In addition, the tone of the commentaries is frequently lofty. There are many references to "a society of free men," "world unity," or to "the grand strategy of the war."\textsuperscript{31,32,33} One man reported that he felt that listening to Swing was much "like reading history."\textsuperscript{34} One of Swing's achievements is the style he developed for his commentaries: A style sufficiently flexible to deal with complex issues in all their subtleties, yet clear enough to be understood at first hearing.

**In The Name Of Sanity.** At the war's end Swing undertook a unique series of broadcasts: all devoted to one subject, and expressing Swing's viewpoint without pretense of objectivity. In the course of the broadcasts he was critical of the government. The broadcasts are a contribution to broadcasting because they represent an experiment. The experiment was not successful, as Swing

\textsuperscript{31}Raymond Swing, news commentary, May 6, 1945, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{32}Raymond Swing, news commentary, August 24, 1945, p. 3.
\textsuperscript{33}Raymond Swing, news commentary, September 21, 1942, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{34}Edwin Ware Hullinger, interview, Boston, Mass., May 16, 1962.
himself has suggested. Despite the importance placed on the broadcasts by Swing, they did not attract great public attention. Even critical reaction, when the broadcast scripts were published in book form, was not enthusiastic. The broadcasts marked an attempt by Swing to undertake on American radio the kind of journalism he had practiced in England and later on the staff of *The Nation*: a news report combined with an editorial which was frankly personal. That he failed in his own estimation makes the attempt no less interesting and no less a contribution to American broadcasting.

**Swing and the Administration**

Some questions need to be answered concerning Swing's relationship to the administration.

**Was He A Spokesman For The Administration.** The evidence suggests that there was a great deal of agreement between the interpretations expressed by Swing on his broadcasts and administration policy. There are some instances in which Swing has greater detail than was available to the *New York Times*. There can be little doubt that Swing was in consistent sympathy with the administration.

The fact that he became critical of the Truman Administration immediately after the war in his broadcasts concerning atomic power suggests that Swing was free to withdraw from his role of spokesman whenever he wished. The arrangement appears to have been voluntary,
caused partly by Swing's conviction that unity in the war was necessary, and partly his deep respect for President Roosevelt. When the war was over, and Roosevelt dead, Swing was a critic of the administration.

**Did He Have Privileged Information?** Swing frequently indicates an awareness of detail not reflected in the *New York Times*. Yet, Swing was not known to have "scooped" other reporters by using privileged information. It appears that Swing's advantage came from having a number of friends in the administration with whom he could discuss issues, and on whom he could test ideas.

The answer to the question concerning privileged information must be qualified. He did have detail, such as membership at Washington conferences, the attitudes of the participants. It appears certain that Swing did have some information unavailable to others, and that he may have participated in government secrets.

**Summary and Conclusion**

This thesis supports the general judgments which were expressed in the critical writings cited in this chapter. Swing was described as reassuring, sincere, solemn, intellectual, pro-British, liberal and favoring the administration. There were suggestions that the strongest parts of his commentaries were the analyses of complex diplomatic or military problems. The evidence presented in the earlier chapters supports all of these statements.
The most difficult problem to be dealt with in evaluating Raymond Swing as a news commentator is the extent of his identification with the Roosevelt Administration. The earlier chapters have clearly established that there was a pro-administration bias in his commentaries which was expressed by omissions and in his interpretations. Swing, however, has argued that he did not advocate a point of view in his commentaries during the war. Furthermore, when he frankly presented his own opinions in the commentaries concerning atomic energy, he devoted a portion of the first program to a statement making his advocacy clear. If Swing had been presenting a viewpoint throughout the war, was the admission of advocacy when he discussed atomic energy merely an act of showmanship? Such a judgment seems unduly harsh.

It appears likely that Swing felt an acute responsibility during the war to contribute to civilian morale and to minimize or prevent criticism which he did not consider constructive. If this interpretation of his motives is correct, Swing made a judgment about what he considered best for the war effort. Such a judgment must have been easier for him to make because the administration contained many of his friends, was known to be friendly to England, and because he was sympathetic to its policies. Swing's admiration for President Roosevelt may have also contributed to his decision. As a voluntary "informal spokesman" or "sympathetic analyst" Swing gave his listeners a dramatic account of the developing
war, informed by the confidences of those who shared his commit-
ment. When the war ended, Swing was free to withdraw his support
and pursue his own goals.

This analysis accounts for the lapse between Swing's theory
of free information and his practice without raising questions of
hypocrisy. One suspects that each decision to omit an item was
carefully weighed and that each interpretation was considered in
terms of its overall significance to civilian morale as well as its
conformity to facts.
CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

Each of the previous chapters has been concerned with one aspect of Raymond Swing's career as a radio news commentator. One dealt with his background, one with the style and form of the commentaries, others with his news sources, his critical standards, and his relationship as a newsman to the Roosevelt administration. In none of the previous chapters was an attempt made to relate Swing to the larger political ideas and movements of the period during which he was heard as a radio news commentator. In this chapter the evidence is summarized and an attempt is made to place Swing in the intellectual and political context of his time.

The Importance of Swing's Background

It has been suggested that Swing's family background and early experiences as a journalist were important influences upon his later career in radio. Each of the major facets of his background will be related to his radio news commentaries.

Early Family Life. It has been noted that Raymond Swing's father was professionally interested in the history of Christianity, and conducted original work in this field. It was also noted that the Swing household was marked by a strong Puritan influence and,
at the same time, an interest in cultural and political affairs. The interest in music and poetry continued into Swing's adult life and are still two of his principal interests. It is more difficult to establish the continuing influence of his family's Puritanism, but Paul Scott Mowrer has suggested that Swing was attracted to radio partly because he was "a preacher."\(^1\) Edwin Hullinger, who knew Swing when he was a correspondent in Europe, has suggested that Swing's "righteousness" and capacity for "moral indignation" were two of his more important characteristics, both as a correspondent and as a radio commentator.\(^2\) Swing has said that he looked upon the possibility of an atomic holocaust as Doomsday, and that he fought for international control of atomic power with "greater intensity than was necessary at that time."\(^3\) In this sense, Swing's broadcasts concerning atomic power called "In the Name of Sanity," are sermons on international morality.

**Newspaper Editorial Work.** In his work as a newspaperman, Swing developed at least two of the attitudes which characterized his later work. First, he developed the concept of editorial control by the newsmen themselves, not by governmental or business agents. From his newspaper work Swing also brought a strong sense

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\(^2\)Edwin Ware Hullinger, interview with author, Boston, Massachusetts, February 21, 1963.

of the importance of freedom of the press. Swing, in his radio work, combined the two by arguing that the public's right to information was absolute, but could be checked for reasons of security or morale by the editor or commentator.

Experience as a Foreign Correspondent. From his work as a foreign correspondent Swing brought a detailed and intimate knowledge of Europe and England and their political leaders. This familiarity was the basis for Swing's authority when, in the period between 1939 and 1941, he attempted to convey a "picture" of events in Europe, despite the lack of detailed news reports about them.

Swing's work as a foreign correspondent was important in other ways as well. It brought him into contact with Sir John Reith who was later instrumental in his appointment as an international commentator, and while abroad he developed a fondness for England and Englishmen which provided a basis in experience for his support of English-American unity during the war. During Swing's career as a radio commentator he dealt almost exclusively with international affairs. Without his early extensive experience abroad it is doubtful if he could have undertaken such a career with authority.

Agreement With President Roosevelt. It has been suggested that Swing was in basic agreement with the policies of President Roosevelt. There are several kinds of evidence to support this statement. The commentaries are completely lacking in criticism
of the President. Swing himself has said that he considered Roosevelt "a great leader." This support came about during the war, however, and did not exist to such an extent prior to American intervention. Swing was so strongly convinced that the New Deal programs were inadequate that he voted for Norman Thomas in 1936. Joseph Wood Krutch, writing about his service as an editor of The Nation, indicates that there was considerable disagreement within the editorial staff of the publication which, publicly, was identified with a consistent liberal policy:

> For obvious reasons I found myself as time went on less and less comfortable at The Nation. From Miss Kirchway I could expect support even though we did not always see eye to eye. The same might be said of Raymond Swing while he continued a member of the board.5

Raymond Swing's identification with the goals of the Roosevelt Administration came about slowly.

> In summary, many of the characteristics of Swing's wartime news commentaries may be traced to his earlier experiences in his family, abroad as a correspondent, and in domestic journalism.

Swing as an Innovator in Radio News

Raymond Swing is of historical importance as an innovator in the style and form of radio news commentaries. The contributions

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and innovations he made were mentioned earlier in detail, but deserve to be briefly commented upon here.

Sing was the first news commentator to insist that the integrity of his news analysis was violated by a commercial announcement and to demand that the commercial be removed at the risk of considerable financial loss.

The stand that Swing took on the matter of commercial announcements is of more than academic importance. Richard L. Tobin, in a recent article in the *Saturday Review*, indicated the contemporary importance of the problem.

> We had thought that close identification of sponsor and newscaster had gone out the window during Gabriel Heatter's heyday... We hope Heatterism isn't on its way back, but from what we have seen and heard lately we suspect it is, this time in a more obnoxious form than ever, coming now in sight as well as sound.⁶

Although Mr. Tobin did not mention Raymond Swing, his arguments were similar to Swing's. If Mr. Tobin should be successful in his efforts, he will be repeating the feat of Raymond Swing.

In addition to his efforts to eliminate middle commercials, Swing was an innovator in his introduction of the extensive historical background sketch and the extensive sketch of strategic problems. Although many news commentators made use of news about strategic

problems, it was Swing who was willing to devote a large portion of his program to such discussions. It should also be noted that it was Swing who received praise from Charles Siepmann and Dixon Wecter for what Wecter called "his research pieces." Swing was an innovator in making background of the news more interesting than the specific details of the day's news upon which he commented.

The style of Swing's commentaries is unique. One does not have to read many of his sentences before the peculiar word choice and involuted sentence structure become easy to recognize and mimic. Similarly, the intensely serious style of his delivery is highly individual. The style did not come about accidentally. It was consciously developed by Swing at the expense of much effort during the years 1936-1939 and is an innovation in style as well as an expression of many of his personal qualities.

Swing was an innovator as the first commentator to explain one nation to another when he was appointed by President Roosevelt and Sir John Reith to originate programs in this country for broadcast in England. In a related sense, he was an innovator when, during the Second World War, he developed a reputation as what Dixon Wecter called "the voice of the State Department." No other commentator maintained such a close and yet seemingly independent relationship to the government.
Finally, Swing made a contribution to the history of radio news by undertaking the broadcasts named "In the Name of Sanity." Although Swing later dismissed them as failures, they are the first broadcasts in which a news commentator self-consciously identified himself as the source of all opinions and judgments expressed and allied himself with scientists in opposition to many major figures, including President Truman. This experiment, in which Swing attempted to use his broadcasts to reform the policies of the administration by bringing about popular opposition, is unique in the history of broadcasting.

Swing as a Defender of Editorial Integrity

Early in World War II Raymond Swing established himself as an advocate of full flow of information to the public. He thought it was of sufficient importance to devote portions of several commentaries to the topic, and he was highly critical of newspapers which did not publish full accounts of international events.

Yet, when the government news policy was announced in 1942, Swing endorsed it wholeheartedly. Further, he did not press for full disclosures of the extent of damage at Pearl Harbor. He did not report criticism of the administration or disagreement with its policies. Swing's advocacy of maximum flow of information does not seem consistent with his practices.

If we are to make sense of Swing's advocacy, we must view it within the context of war. Swing's belief in freedom of the press
was secondary to his belief that the war must be won and that civilian morale must be maintained at a high level in order to win it. When the war was ended, Swing not only exercised greater freedom in criticizing national policies, but attacked the President personally. Whether the change was brought about by the war's end, the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, or a combination of both with other circumstances is unclear. It is clear, however, that Swing failed to report criticism of the administration and interpreted news in a manner favorable to the administration during the war. His advocacy of the public's rights to information is not supported by his record.

It is fair to say that, in practice, Swing supported the public's rights to full information only within the limits of wartime security, the necessities of civilian morale, and to the extent to which the information encouraged belief in our cause and our leaders.

Swing as a Member of a Group

Throughout this study Raymond Swing has been treated in isolation from other radio news commentators. We have made no comparisons, nor have we mentioned the competitive situation which developed during the war as the size of the audiences of radio news commentators began to decrease. Swing's political views and affiliations have not been emphasized. Nevertheless, all of these are important if we wish to understand Swing in his historical and political context.
Swing's audience increased rapidly during 1939. At the same time, as indicated in Chapter I, more news programs were being heard, and network news staffs were increasing in size. Other news commentators, such as Johannes Steele, George Fielding Eliot and Edward R. Murrow found that, like Swing, their prestige and audiences were rapidly increasing. Although Swing differed from many of the other commentators in style, outlook and delivery, he nevertheless, owed his popularity to the same forces which brought about the popularity of the other commentators.

Lloyd Morris and Dixon Wecter have provided information about the political and social background in which news commentators came to prominence.7,8 Novelist John P. Marquand has made a comment about the foreign correspondent's rapid rise to a position of authority and prestige during the years preceding the Second World War.

The Correspondent, we suddenly realized, was a debonair man of the world, a streamlined troubadour who hobnobbed with nearly everyone. There seemed to be no barrier of language, no shyness, no secret repressions when Your Correspondent tapped upon their doors. And they were genial, ordinary fellows, too, not stand-offish or stuck up, but very much like you or me.9

As the public "suddenly realized" the value of men who had experience in reporting foreign affairs, their prestige was enhanced.

Raymond Swing was one of many men who benefitted from increased public awareness of foreign political developments, Washington problems and the complexities of European diplomacy.

In a note to "the reader who takes his fiction seriously," John P. Marquant wrote that So Little Time was "an attempt to depict certain phases of contemporary life."

One phase of life at that time which is of interest to us is Marquand's reaction, not to a single commentator, but to the combined efforts of them all.

Some of the listeners must have felt as Jeffrey did, but they all gave rapt attention to that tinselled, pathetic little story in a nutshell. He realized suddenly that wars were all the same and that he was living in history, and he wished to God that he were not. All at once, even (commentator) Walter Newcombe had assumed a tragic shape, and Jeffrey knew that Walter Newcombe and his colleagues were the chorus of a tragedy too immense for exposition. All of them were a part of that chorus—all the Major George Fielding Eliots, the Raymond Gram Swing's and Johannes Steeles, the Gabriel Heatters and the News and Views by John B. Hughes—chanting an agony which would never fit into words.

In Chapter I we noted that Swing's popularity was the result of interest in governmental affairs because of the New Deal, demand for interpretation of European diplomatic affairs and demand for an explanation of the American role in world affairs.

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10 Ibid., Preface.

11 Ibid., p. 351.
suggested that Swing's popularity was attributable to his close contact with the administration, while another suggested that his thoroughness was his greatest virtue.\textsuperscript{12,13} Although Swing was perhaps more serious in his delivery and more intellectual in style than some other commentators, he was nevertheless a member of a group that came into popularity with the demand for news preceding World War II. He was a member of what Marquand called "the chorus of a tragedy."

**Swing as a Liberal Intellectual**

It has been suggested in several places in this study that Raymond Swing was a political liberal. It is not surprising that a man whose home, early intellectual experiences and travel accustomed him to the political debates, should identify himself with liberal groups. Neither is it surprising that the son of a theologian should become a political reformer.

Swing's liberalism, although based on his earlier experiences, was not an eccentric, private conviction. He shared to a great extent the political views of many of the men who were attracted to Washington by the New Deal and the Second World War. Among those with whom he has indicated he shared political opinions were Robert Sherwood, Elmer Davis, Harry Hopkins, Archibald MacLeish and Max


Lerner. Swing was not an isolated liberal, but a member of a group. His career is better understood if we consider those aims he shared with other liberals.

H. Stuart Hughes, writing about the development of American liberalism, has described the principal goals of liberalism during the decade following the stock market crash of 1929.

Such thinking, when it existed, most frequently focused on the twin concepts of socialism and world government, the recognized path to the better society of the future. The socialism, one might add, was overwhelmingly of the gentle social democratic, utopian, or New Deal varieties. The other half of the credo, while occasionally dreamy, rested on the solid and now familiar conviction that every nation must transfer the essentials of its sovereignty to a world authority. With the war, the pacifism that frequently accompanied this position virtually vanished.\(^1\)

Raymond Swing has indicated that, as early as 1936, he favored socialism. By 1946 he was convinced that, because of atomic energy, socialism was the only possible method of economic organization that would avoid the possibility of excessive (atomic) power in private hands. Swing's advocacy of world government has been well established. In a general way, Swing's views coincide with those attributed by Hughes to most liberals.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., calls attention to one problem which caused Swing great difficulty immediately after World War II: the inability to make sense of Russian-American relations.

See . . . the columns of the New Republic and The Nation. His sentimentality has softened up the progressive for Communist permeation and conquest. For the most chivalrous reasons, he cannot believe that ugly facts underlie fair words. However he looks at it, for example, the U. S. S. R. keeps coming through as a kind of enlarged Brook Farm community, complete with folk dancing in native costumes, joyous work in the fields and progressive kindergartens. Nothing in his system has prepared him for Stalin. 15

Although Schlesinger's ridicule is harsh, the willingness to accept Russian statements at face value, at least for a test period, is characteristic of Swing's attitude immediately following the war. To some extent Swing's hope that the people would encourage President Truman to support world government provides support for Schlesinger's charge that "as a child of eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century romanticism, progressivism was committed to an unwarranted optimism about man." 16

We have mentioned Swing's pacifism and hopes for world government. How could such a man support the Second World War without violating his conscience?

Participation in the war had meant the sacrifice of the pacifist creed, and this sacrifice

16 Ibid., p. 40.
had been justified only as the unavoidable course in keeping open the way to that other ideal goal, the socialist society. To make sense, the war must be a war for socialism—a democratic socialism which (in a phrase now worn and nearly meaningless) would serve as a bridge between the Communist East and the liberal West. This was not what military indoctrination courses taught, not what the average American believed. It was necessarily no more than a personal belief, which frequently wavered, since it was contradicted by the facts.17

Hughes gives us a clue to Swing's motives during the war. Throughout this paper we have noted that Swing advocated full public information, but in practice cooperated with the Roosevelt administration on numerous occasions concerning the omission or interpretation of news. If we remember that, for Swing, the war was a means to an end, the problem is partially resolved. During the war Swing faithfully supported programs to win the war, even at the expense of the public's rights to information. When the war was concluded it was time for action and he made his decision "out of loyalty to my own vision of the truth."18

At this time Swing was convinced that Russian-American cooperation was not only possible but essential. "It would be absurd to undervalue the success at Moscow in assuring a start toward the international control of atomic energy," he wrote following preliminary

17Hughes, op. cit., p. 7.

conference in Moscow in the autumn of 1945.\(^{19}\) In this, also, Swing's position was consistent with that of other liberals.

Some—particularly military men, diplomats, and members of the business community—were convinced that the contradictions between Communism and capitalism were irreconcilable and that the old struggle would be resumed as soon as the war was over. Others—characteristically professors and New Dealers—while less confident, hoped and saw good reason to believe that as the West was moving toward collectivism, the Soviet Union was advancing to meet it by permitting an increasing measure of freedom to its own citizens. Eventually the reconciliation would take place on the common ground of Social Democracy.\(^{20}\)

Raymond Swing's progressive disillusionment with the policies of President Truman and the failure of Russian-American attempts to control the atomic bomb were echoed by other writers. Considering the impact of atomic power, Swing wrote that "Domestically, I was sure it meant socialism . . . ."\(^{21}\) Lewis Mumford indicated a similar willingness to accept broad social changes when he wrote the following:

We must think swiftly, plan swiftly, act swiftly. And our thinking must be as unsparing of our foibles and habits as the atomic bomb itself is unsparing of all the structures and organisms within its range of disintegration.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., p. 109.

\(^{20}\)H. Stuart Hughes, op. cit., p. 110.

\(^{21}\)Raymond Swing, In the Name of Sanity, p. vii.
This means that there is not a part of our modern world that we must not be ready to scrap, if the need to scrap it is the price of mankind's safety and continued development.22

In many of his political judgments, Raymond Swing had much in common with other liberals. Occasionally, he was in advance of others. For instance, Swing based his appeal for international control of atomic power upon the concept of "sanity." Eight years later, when the development of the hydrogen bomb was announced, Lewis Mumford used Swing's argument and phraseology in a letter to the editor of the New York Times.

If as a nation we have become mad it is time for the world to take note of that madness. If we are still humane and sane, then it is time for the powerful voice of sanity to be heard once more in our land.23

Swing once defined sanity as "the capacity to adjust oneself immediately to reality." During the war years Swing, in common with other liberals, shared the view of reality held by military men, business men and government officials. With them, he concentrated on winning the war. When the war ended Swing found that his view of reality was not widely shared and convinced that the nation had not adjusted to the new reality, he questioned the sanity of our policies, our military leaders and our President.


24Raymond Swing, In the Name of Sanity, p. 114.
Conclusion

Raymond Swing was not only one of the most widely praised and well-qualified radio commentators during the Second World War, but one of the most intellectually fascinating as well. Combining Puritanism, journalism and a wide exposure to European culture and politics, Swing brought to his radio commentaries a sense of purpose that gives them significance in the intellectual history of the period as well as in the history of broadcasting.

Swing shared much with others of his generation. He came into popularity as one of a group of commentators. He was politically committed to liberal democracy, and worked with other liberals on a partisan magazine. Like them, he believed firmly in the public's right to information.

Unlike others, Swing had not only an immediate goal (analyzing the news) and a future goal (winning the war), but spurred by the threat of atomic war, he wished to bring about the redemption of the Western world by committing it to world government and socialism.

In this study evidence was found which indicated that Swing consistently favored the Roosevelt administration by omitting criticism or unfavorable reports and by interpreting events in such a way that the administration was shielded from blame. It was found that
this was inconsistent with Swing's commitment to the public's right to information and with his contention that a commentator should not advocate a point of view.

Partially, this was explained by the necessities of military security and the maintenance of civilian morale. The weight of the evidence, combined with indications that Swing had more detailed information on certain occasions than was available to the newspapers, suggest that Swing was a voluntary advocate of the policies of the Roosevelt administration during the Second World War. His personal motives were revealed only at the war's end when, feeling that the atomic bomb created a crisis for Western man, he undertook to develop, and expound, his own views on world government.

Although we have reached the conclusion the Swing favored the administration by omission and interpretation, and that there are indications that he had access to detailed information not generally available, the conclusions are only meaningful in the context of the intellectual history of the time.

Raymond Swing brought to radio a background, sense of purpose and a sense of history as well as a relevance to the intellectual life of the period which are unique.
APPENDIX

Signed Magazine Articles by Raymond Swing 1933-1936


Raymond Swing. "Dr. Townsend Solves It All," Nation, March 6, 1935, pp. 268-70.


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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Robert Rutherford Smith, was born in Buffalo, New York, on November 18, 1933. I was educated in the elementary and secondary public schools of Buffalo and attended the University of Buffalo where I received a B.A. (cum laude) in Speech in 1955. The next year I received an M.A. in Speech (Radio-Television) from The Ohio State University. I continued to study toward a Ph.D. degree at The Ohio State University. While a graduate student I taught as a half-time teaching assistant and was, for a year, producer of the Ohio School of the Air. After completing residency requirements I entered the Army. I became an Assistant Professor of English at Ball State Teachers College in Muncie, Indiana, in 1959. In 1960 I joined the faculty of the Communication Arts Division at Boston University where I am now an Assistant Professor of Communications.