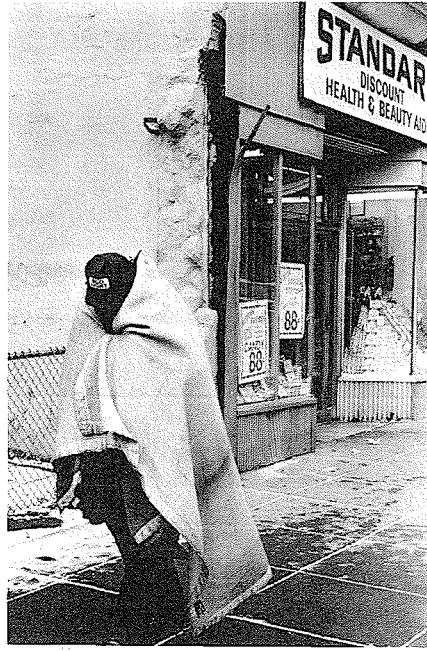


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Cloaked in an old-blanket, a resident of Washington, D.C., searches for a sidewalk steam vent to warm himself. According to the District of Columbia Commission on Homelessness, there are roughly 5,000 homeless persons in the nation's capital.



*Helping
The Homeless*

"Homelessness: Not One Problem, but Many" by Nelson Smith, in *The Journal of the Institute for Socioeconomic Studies* (Autumn 1985), Airport Road, White Plains, N.Y. 10604.

Homeless people can be found everywhere in America, but exactly how many there are, nobody knows. The Community for Creative Non-Violence, a Washington-based advocacy group, estimates two to three million. Smith, a U.S. Department of Education consultant, believes that 300,000 to 400,000 is a more accurate count.

Although critics blame President Reagan's federal budget cuts for the vagrants' plight, Smith does not hold Washington wholly responsible. Noting that U.S. state treasuries collectively ran a \$6.3 billion surplus in 1985, he points to less obvious causes. Since 1963, the "de-institutionalization" of the mentally ill has pushed some 388,000 patients out of state hospitals. During the 1970s, inflation and real estate speculation squeezed one million low-cost, "single room occupancy" units—about half the total supply—out of the U.S. housing market.

At the same time, rent hikes in the remaining units have outpaced rises in welfare housing allotments. According to the U.S. General Accounting Office, for example, the Illinois General Assistance grant of \$144 per month in 1985 supplied only one-half of the official minimal subsistence level of \$286 per month in Chicago.

Despite the Reagan administration's "inexplicable" two-year delay in implementing a 1983 federal voucher system to assist low-income renters, the White House has mounted "an impressive response" to the

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problems posed by the homeless, says Smith.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has allocated \$210 million in direct aid to 3,650 volunteer organizations. And by January 1985, the Housing and Urban Development Agency had distributed roughly \$53 million in Community Development Block Grants to U.S. cities. On Capitol Hill, legislation to create a National Endowment for the Homeless is awaiting Senate approval. Costing \$160 million per year, the endowment would supplant FEMA in financing programs for the homeless. It would act as a "clearing house" for information about them. And it would coordinate public, private, and voluntary measures to help them.

Smith opposes the congressional measure. Endowing the homeless, he argues, will bureaucratize the problem. Instead he urges an immediate expansion of the federal voucher program, and more money for FEMA—since the existence of hundreds of thousands of Americans in need of public shelter *does* constitute a national emergency.

PRESS & TELEVISION

Monopoly's Effects On the News

"Newspaper Competition and First Amendment Ideals: Does Monopoly Matter?" by Robert M. Entman, in *Journal of Communications* (Summer 1985), The Annenberg School of Communications, Univ. of Pa., 3620 Walnut St. C5, Philadelphia, Pa. 19104-3858.

If competition is needed to ensure a healthy press, then U.S. newspaper readers are in trouble. In 1985, only 30 U.S. cities had two or more completely separate, competing newspapers.

Not to worry, says Entman, a Duke University political scientist. After analyzing a 1974 survey of 96 newspapers by the University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies, the author reports finding "little convincing evidence that competition independently and strongly influences newspaper content."

Entman variously categorized each newspaper as one of three: a monopoly, a quasi monopoly (sharing its market with a jointly owned competitor), or a competitive vendor. Rating them on quality, diversity, fairness, and public responsiveness, he noted nearly indistinguishable scores for monopoly and competitive papers. One significant difference: Quasi monopolies exhibited "superior quality," as measured by the number of staff-written stories (versus wire service), and greater fairness, as measured in terms of balanced reporting on issues.

If market pressures do not have a major influence on the journalistic end product, why do so many "rival" newspapers fold? Entman suggests that marketing, rather than reporting, makes or breaks a big-city paper these days. Writers and editors usually work without interference from