
 PRESS & TELEVISION

"Curiously, the end of that growth was not."

"Information brokers"—e.g., Common Cause, the FEC—help shape the political news agenda, says Sorauf, as do various "expert" commentators: Thus newsmen tend to think money stories dull, "unless one finds knaves, buccaneering PACs, or lavish campaign spending in them."

Moreover, says Sorauf, "stories about declining numbers of PACs or stabilizing spending levels . . . conflict with the fundamental understandings of the Progressive vision [and] with the long-term reality of the corrupting capacity of money in the hands of special interests."

Sherman's Other War

"The New Sherman Letters" by Joseph H. Ewing, in *American Heritage* (July-Aug. 1987), 60 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011.

The American military's relations with the news media have often been strained. But recent confrontations between brass and press pale beside the battles that Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman (1820–91) fought against journalists. Nowadays, senior commanders may chastise reporters. Sherman actually courtmartialled them.

War correspondents, Sherman complained, were "dirty newspaper scribblers who have the impudence of Satan." "A cat in hell without claws," wrote a rueful New York *Tribune* correspondent, "is nothing to a reporter in General Sherman's army."



"If my name must go to History," Sherman wrote in 1864, the year his Union troops burned Atlanta and made their devastating march to the sea, "I prefer it should not [be] as the enemy to the South . . . but against mobs, vigilance committees, and all the other phases of sedition and anarchy which have threatened and still endanger the country which our children must inhabit."

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Ewing, a free-lance writer, inherited letters written by Sherman to the author's grandfather (who was Sherman's stepbrother) and great-grandfather. The letters trace Sherman's rising impatience with the press.

In October 1861, the New York *Tribune* printed the Union "order of battle," listing the strength and location of Sherman's forces. A year later, during the first battle of Vicksburg, Sherman's officers intercepted journalists' letters and refused to mail them. New York *Herald* reporter Thomas Knox then rewrote his account, charging that Sherman's actions were due to "insanity and inefficiency." "You are regarded as the enemy of our set," Knox told Sherman after his arrest for espionage. "We must in self-defense write you down."

Knox was tried by a military court, but found not guilty of espionage. This did not alter Sherman's low opinion of the press, however. Journalists, he wrote in February, 1863, "eat our provisions, they swell the crowd of hangers on . . . they publish without stint . . . accurate information which reaches the enemy with as much regularity as it does our People."

For the remainder of the war, Sherman threatened "instant death" to reporters he suspected of espionage. This, he wrote, made journalists "meek and humble."

Sherman continued to chastise the press after the war ended. Yet, in his memoirs, published in 1875, he concluded that "so greedy are the people at large for war news, that it is doubtful whether any army commander can exclude all reporters, without bringing down on himself a clamor that may imperil his own safety."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

**Santayana's
Detachment**

"George Santayana and the Consolations of Philosophy" by Joseph Epstein, in *The New Criterion* (June 1987), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

The 19th-century American philosopher Josiah Royce once remarked that philosophers should live like the rhinoceros, who travels as a herd of one. George Santayana (1863-1952) followed Royce's prescription, living his life as a wanderer. In his autobiography, Santayana called himself a *déraciné*, "a man who has been torn up by the roots, cannot be replanted and should never propagate his kind."

Epstein, a professor of English at Northwestern University, argues that the detachment Santayana felt toward the world is the key to understanding his philosophy. Santayana, Epstein writes, was born with detachment "the way other people are born with, say, large feet."

Santayana's sense of removal from the world certainly began early. Born in Spain and raised in the United States, Santayana "appears to have been a foreigner in every country in which he lived." For example, although Santayana taught in the philosophy department at Harvard for 23 years (where his students included T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, and Felix Frankfurter), he disliked the United States, which he saw as a nation that