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ticularly those associated with colleges and universities, began to organize in opposition. Educational broadcasters formed the National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER) with the aim of getting Congress to reserve 15 percent of the broadcast channels for educational use.

But the opposition movement faced in NBC, CBS, and the National Association of

Broadcasters, "one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington." FDR had more important battles to fight, and on June 18, 1934, he signed into law the Communications Act of 1934 which created the Federal Communications Commission and marked the effective end of the war over the airwaves. The commercial networks had won.

Elite No More

"Reporters Who Cover Congress" by Stephen Hess, in *Society* (Jan.-Feb. 1991), Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Washington reporters not so long ago bore little demographic resemblance to journalists elsewhere in the country. The scribes and newscasters in the nation's capital appeared to constitute (for better or worse) something of an elite. Overwhelmingly male, overwhelmingly white, disproportionately from the Northeast, they boasted more formal education than other journalists. Most held undergraduate degrees in the liberal arts rather than journalism, and one in three had gone on to earn an advanced degree. In recent years, however, according to Hess, a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, the Washington press corps has lost much of its elite cast, especially with the influx of TV reporters from stations in the hinterlands.

For one thing, Washington reporters' Northeastern "slant" has disappeared. In 1978, more than one-third of them came from the Northeast, although only a fourth of the U.S. population lived in that part of the country. A decade later, however, according to a survey of 190 reporters who cover Congress for state, local, or regional audiences, the proportion of Northeasterners in the press corps almost matched their proportion in the population.

The difference in formal education has diminished, too, as more reporters outside Washington have come to possess sheepskins. In 1971, only 63 percent of daily newspaper reporters nationwide were college graduates; in 1988, 85 percent were.

Washington reporters also have changed, with their educational background becoming more like that of those

beyond the Beltway. In 1978, 62 percent of all Washington reporters had majored as undergraduates in the liberal arts. Among journalists elsewhere in the land, the preferred major was less intellectual—journalism. Now, that is true among many of the Washington types, too, especially the TV ones. In part, Hess says, this may reflect "the recent drive of women and minorities to get into journalism" through the proven track of professional education.

Women especially have increased their presence in Washington journalism. Whereas one-fourth of the reporters accredited to the congressional press galleries in 1979 were female, one-third were a decade later. "It can now be assumed that Washington has caught up with the rest of the news industry, which [still] lags behind the rest of the nation's professional population by about 10 percent," Hess writes. Among Washington's regional reporters who worked for radio or TV in 1988, nearly 40 percent were women.

The influx of TV reporters from local stations has opened a new breach within the Washington press corps. Unlike the network reporters of old, today's TV reporters tend to be younger than the print ones, are less likely to have graduate degrees, and are more likely to have majored in journalism. Unlike such giants of television journalism as Eric Sevareid and David Brinkley, few of the new TV reporters ever worked for newspapers or the wire services. The absence of such rigorous reporting experience clearly is no bar to membership in today's Washington press corps.