

THE UNCHANGING TIMES

By JOSEPH CLARK

WHETHER IT'S flattery or slander the reader will decide. But last Tuesday the N.Y. Times addressed an editorial directly to American Communists and to readers of the Daily Worker.

The Times chides us, because all these years we "chose to disbelieve what our free press has printed so freely these many years."

Now, says the Times, we are learning, "that what the 'bourgeois' press printed was true and what the Daily Worker printed was false." And the Times ends up with an admonition that they will be watching us to see how we react.

Well, Mr. Charles Merz, editor of the N.Y. Times: you are invited to watch this column and we await your comment, or reaction, as you would say.

You are the same Mr. Merz, are you not, who together with Mr. Walter Lippmann, wrote a supplement to the New Republic back in 1920 exposing the lies of the N.Y. Times about Soviet Russia?

We intend to bring that record of N.Y. Times lies about the

Soviet Union more up to date, Mr. Merz. But don't misunderstand us. It is not our intention to show how pure we are by proving the N.Y. Times is most impure.

The Daily Worker has already admitted that it has erred in emphasizing only the positive achievements of the Soviet Union to the exclusion of any shortcomings. In our zeal to refute the scurrilous lies of the big business press about socialism we have often defended things in the Soviet Union about which we did not have sufficient information. Ours have been errors of omission and overzealousness. Our zealotry often made us intolerant of sincere criticism from people of good will.

Often our shortcomings have been due to conditions beyond our control. Take the current coverage of the Soviet Union. Alan Max, our managing editor requested a passport to cover the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and related developments. The State Department turned him down.

We didn't see any editorials
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TODAY ABROAD

by Joseph Clark

The Unchanging Times

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in the N.Y. Times deploring this flagrant violation of free press coverage.

But let's get back to the record. Let's start with the most recent events. On March 17 the headline over a Times page one story by Harrison Salisbury said:

Rioting in Soviet Reported Over Anti-Stalin Campaign

Mr. Salisbury, who has been both an inventive, as well as an objective correspondent is particularly creative when he covers the Moscow, or Tbilisi, beat from Times Square. Thus his March 17 story said: "that an unknown number of Tiflis residents were killed when Soviet troops and policemen opened fire."

NOW LET'S SEE what happened to this "rioting" and "killing" in the Times itself. On March 18 Welles Hagen said Tiflis was the scene of demonstrations March 9, but he said nothing of rioting, nothing of shooting, killing or suppression. He said Tiflis papers attributed the demonstrations to observances of Stalin's death.

Salisbury returned to the scene of his previous day's "rioting" and "killing" in the March 18 issue. He writes: "Some reports said that troops and policemen opened fire and that some demonstrators were slain. However the best diplomatic sources did not confirm these assertions."

He wrote that the only thing that "was established" was that on March 9 "the Tiflis newspaper Zarya Vostoka published a big front-page picture of Stalin and Lenin and a lengthy editorial about Stalin."

Now that's a far cry from "riots" and "shooting" and "killing."

Then on the next day Salisbury returns still again to the scene of his crime. In the March 19 issue Salisbury gives us another version. He said students held demonstrations carrying portraits of Stalin. Any shooting? Any killing? Salisbury writes: "The police did not interfere, it was reported, but some Georgian officials appeared and harangued the students who eventually dispersed."

But the next day in Tiflis, according to Salisbury, there were "second and third-hand rumors" about actual killings of students. "No confirmation of these reports has been obtained."

IN ITS PHONY report about Tbilisi the Times was continuing a long and dishonorable tradition that started when the workers and peasants of Russia first set up the Soviet regime. The earliest lies and calumnies were exposed by the present editor of the Times together with Walter Lippmann.

Always the Times preferred covering Russia from the outside because they could accomplish things that way which were not attainable within Russia. Such as the 1919 spring-time headlines in the N. Y. Times:

March 26: KOLCHAK PURSUES BROKEN RED ARMY.

April 20: REDS COLLAPSING IN THE EAST.

April 22: RED RULE TOTTERS AS KOLCHAK WINS.

After the spring offensive of Kolchak and of the N.Y. Times failed, the Times launched a fall offensive in 1919:

Oct. 18: ANTI-RED FORCES NOW IN PETROGRAD STOCKHOLM HEARS.

Oct. 20: PETROGRAD'S FALL AGAIN REPORTED;

MOSCOW LINE CUT.

We must say however that there were exceptions to this dishonorable Times tradition that starts in 1917 and continues till today's issue of the Times. Walter Duranty went to Russia for the Times and reported brilliantly about successful socialist construction.

True, the Times editors didn't believe their own Walter Duranty. What was that the Times said about the first five-year plan, Mr. Merz? You weren't the editor at that time but you are the present editor who says "that what the 'bourgeois' press printed was true and what the Daily Worker printed was false."

The Times said the first five-year plan was a failure. Just as the Times reported the overthrow of the Soviet regime innumerable times in 1918. Just as they said Kolchak wins. Just as they said Petrograd Falls. Just as they said students were shot in Tbilisi.

The Daily Worker reported the first five-year plan was a huge success, as Walter Duranty confirmed.

All the admissions the Times had to make about the tremendous industrial progress of the Soviet Union, reported by the recent Party congress, proves that the Times lied about the previous five-year plan.

Those amazing figures for 1955 Soviet production, which the Times now sees as such a serious challenge, had to come from somewhere. They came from the success of the first and all the succeeding five-year plans.

LET'S GO BACK to early 1950 for one of the most spectacular stories ever written about the Soviet Union. It appeared in the Times on Jan. 29, 1950. The by-line was C. L. Sulzberger, who may be the nephew of the Times publisher, or he may be a direct descendant of Baron Munchausen. Let the reader, or editor Merz decide.

Sulzberger was in Paris that day. Still he reported what the Russians were going to get from the Chinese in negotiations then going on between Stalin and Mao Tse-tung in Moscow. It was hard enough to get into the Kremlin in those days but Sulzberger didn't bother, he was on the banks of the Seine.

In a story which got a three column main headline, Sulzberger wrote that the Russians were demanding seven, count them seven, Chinese ports. He even named them and there were five besides Dairen and Port Arthur in which the Soviet Union had gotten port rights under war-time treaties. The Times even published a map starring each of the seven cities to be handed over by the Chinese to the Russians.

And then on Feb. 14 the Chinese - Soviet pact was actually signed. Not only were the Russians not demanding, or getting five additional ports, but they agreed to return the two they had, Port Arthur and Dairen, to China.

Still another provision that Sulzberger dreamed up in a Paris cafe was that China would supply 500,000 laborers to the USSR.

Do tell us Mr. Merz, what happened to those "treaty" provisions which received such prominence in your paper? Any reaction yet on how the "bourgeois" press tells the truth and how the Daily Worker lies? The Daily Worker at that time contented itself with reporting the

actual treaty provisions, for which you eventually settled also.

THERE WAS an AP correspondent in Moscow when I was there, Tom Whitney by name. When he returned he earned his living as do most ex-Moscow correspondents who work for the big business press, writing anti-Soviet stories. But Tom Whitney, like your own Salisbury, was an able and often objective reporter.

So, even when he came back from Moscow, Whitney wrote a dispatch, dated Oct. 2, 1953, in which he told some important facts about Soviet society.

Whitney described what he called "the upper class" of Soviet society. This upper class, he wrote, is increasing in size. "As the state grows larger and more complex it needs more and more executives and specialists." He notes that scientists and doctors and officers receive high remuneration. That's where the Times ended the Whitney AP dispatch. But that's not where Whitney had ended it. The Times had "cropped" Whitney's paragraphs which read:

"How do people get into the upper class?"

"The main factor is education. Talent, hard work and occasional intrigue also play vital roles."

"Some sprang from the pre-revolutionary upper and middle class. Most, however, were brought up by the revolution from families of workers and peasants. These people are particularly strong for the Soviet regime, of course, since it gave them their opportunities."

Was it in the interests of truth, Mr. Merz, that you cut this valuable report? Was it because it was so similar to reports which the Daily Worker had sent from Moscow, not to speak of Mr. Salisbury's reports from the Soviet Union?

Concerning Salisbury's reports from the Soviet Union in contrast to those he wrote when he returned, I hope to write about that again in a future column. I'd like to write about my own work as a correspondent and answer a question readers have asked me: why was I not able to report the evils that the Soviet leaders now admit existed in the Soviet Union when I was there.

BUT SUFFICE it for the record to show that the N. Y. Times has maintained a tradition of falsehood first exposed by Mr. Merz and Mr. Lippmann.

We have erred on our side. But we have erred on the side of zealously defending American-Soviet friendship, as urged by the late President Roosevelt.

The Times errors have been on the side of a vile crusade dedicated to the violent overthrow of all socialist governments. It has consciously lied in a campaign to bring ill-will between Americans and Russians. It has sponsored a war policy, so vividly described by Mr. Dulles in Life magazine.

We have as consciously supported a policy of friendship and peace, in the interest of the American people.

We await your reactions, Mr. Merz.

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