

The First Freedom. By Morris L. Ernst. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1946. Pp. xiv, 316. \$3.00.

President Roosevelt defined the first of the four freedoms to be: "Freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world." Mr. Ernst's book is an analysis of the extent of the first freedom—here in the United States. The author subjects the press, radio, and movies in our own country to scrutiny from the standpoint of the constitutional premise that maximum liberty of expression is a necessary foundation of an enduring democratic structure. His conclusion is that monopolization in these fields of mass communication has reached such a state as to menace the free flow of ideas.

Mr. Ernst's book is in the Brandeis tradition. Its philosophy, as well as its style, stems from the late Justice. The danger which is to be most feared is monopolization of the media of expression. Bigness is the curse. The cure is to reverse the trend and to restore competition. The remedy for the ills of democracy is more democracy. To prove these basic tenets, Mr. Ernst has arrayed an impressive and startling body of facts.

Our newspapers proudly champion freedom of the press, even to the extent of futilely claiming exemption from the wage-and-hour and antitrust laws in the name of the first freedom. It would seem axiomatic that a free press presupposes a competitive one to insure a sufficiency of divergent opinion. Yet a competitive press is fast vanishing in the United States. In ten states there is not a single city with competing daily papers. In twenty-two states, Sunday newspaper competition has disappeared. One quarter of our total daily circulation is controlled by eighteen newspapers owned by fourteen companies. Three hundred and seventy chain newspapers own about one-fifth of all our circulation. One company dominates more than three thousand weeklies. In the entire country there are only one hundred and seventeen cities where competing dailies still survive.

But we have the radio. It is true that during the Roosevelt period, access to the radio tended to equalize the almost unanimous opposition of the press to the New Deal. Unfortunately, however, the trend toward monopolization has likewise embraced radio. One-third of all regular radio stations are interlocked with newspapers. Before the war, the four major networks had 95 per cent of all the desirable night-time broadcasting power. Eleven advertisers contribute about 50 per cent of all the network income. In more than one hundred areas, the only newspaper left owns the only radio station. Major Armstrong's great discovery of frequency modulation presented a golden opportunity to curb the cartelization of the radio industry and to restore freedom of the air to the people. Unfortunately, the Federal Communications Commission is not taking advantage of this last chance. More than 83 per cent of all applications for FM permits outstanding in October, 1944, were from the present operators of AM stations. The FCC has more or less adopted a policy of bestowing FM licenses upon present AM operators.

True, a few of the more enlightened labor unions have applied for FM licenses, driven to this course of action by the denial to labor of access to the radio for the presentation of its viewpoint. While this action of labor organizations is to be welcomed as insuring more diverse and, hence, more free expression and discussion of public issues on the air, nevertheless, it is safe to assume that the dominant position of the giant networks will not be thereby seriously challenged.

The most popular medium of communication of ideas is the movies. Yet, but five companies dominate the entire movie industry. They control the twenty-eight hundred key motion picture theatres of the nation. Two of these companies produce approxi-

mately 90 per cent of all our raw film stock. More than 75 per cent of the money paid by the American movie audience goes into the coffers of the Big Five. This concentration of power has given us unexcelled technical achievement in the field of the cinema, but also an inhibiting and unenlightened censorship and an end product intellectually and emotionally substandard.

The foregoing are some of the principal facts which Mr. Ernst forcibly and effectively presents in support of his thesis. He enlists popular support for the "Crusade Magnificent" for freedom from economic restraints on the minds and habits of our people, and appeals to the Congress to initiate this crusade.

Mr. Ernst recommends certain specific remedies. Ownership of radio and press should be divorced. Similarly, movie companies from radio and television. Theatre chains should be kept out of the movie production business, and the production companies forced to sell all their theatres. Networks should be required to make network programs available on equal terms to all stations and should not be permitted to own radio stations. Taxes of a chain-store type should be imposed on multiple ownership of newspapers, radio stations, and movies. Small enterprises in these fields should be encouraged by more favorable tax exemptions and greater mail subsidies in the case of newspapers. Most of these remedies require legislation; some the restoration of the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice to the vigorous state enjoyed by it under Thurman Arnold.

Peculiarly enough, Mr. Ernst makes only a casual, and, on the whole, slighting reference to a much more widely discussed and controversial proposal designed to eliminate monopoly in the communication of ideas, namely a TVA of the air and of the press. The fact that it is a drastic suggestion does not excuse Mr. Ernst's failure to analyze this controversial proposal. It is the one weakness of this otherwise excellent book.

Mr. Ernst throughout many eventful years has made important and valuable contributions toward furthering the first freedom. His book bearing this name is the latest and perhaps the most important one.

ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG*

Toward a Democratic New Order. By David Bryn-Jones. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1945. Pp. viii, 288. \$3.50.

Professor Bryn-Jones's book is in three main divisions. Part I examines the theoretical structure of democracy. Part II reviews four basic concepts: liberty, equality, the rights of man, and fraternity. In Part III the author relates the democratic ideal to current problems of social equality, industry, nationality, world order, and international relations. The magnitude and number of the issues which the author has elected to discuss is somewhat breathtaking; the plan, however, is clear, and the presentation orderly. To the intent and scope of such a book no objection can be raised.

This reviewer, unfortunately, often finds himself unsympathetic to Professor Bryn-Jones' approach to his subject, dissatisfied with the statement of issues, unilluminated by the argument, and irritated by the rhetoric.

In dealing with so large an abstraction as democracy an author will be fortunate if he can give to his reader a coherent statement deriving from a single, well-defined point of view. Eclecticism will yield confusion, or—as with this book—induce apathy of the logical functions. In one place Bryn-Jones offers a moral basis for a judgment: "The

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