

The Philippines Mass Media

by

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Revised Paper

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- The mass media, it has been said time and again, are nothing more than the mirror of the society of which they are a part. This is true generally, and specifically in the case of the Philippines.

The Philippine mass media are owned by private, vested interests, rich businessmen referred to as "oligarchs" in a democratic capitalist society.

The Philippine mass media speak in many languages, mostly in English, in a country that speaks 87 languages and dialects.

The Philippine mass media are the sworn enemies of the government in a country where private enterprise is the rule.

These media are centered in the Manila area, which is also the political, industrial and educational center of the country.

These media have been accused of harboring corrupt and unprofessional personnel, the same charge that has been raised against Philippine officialdom, and for that matter, against Philippine society.

It is these same media that take pride in their vaunted freedom, which is envied by some Asians and scoffed at as license and a luxury by others.

What manner of mass media are these found in the Philippines?



History: Spanish Period

To understand the Philippine mass media at present, one has to look at them in the light of history. Our mass media have roots that go back quite a way to the country's colonial past. It has a history that is relatively ancient. For example, the first book, Doctrina Cristiana, was printed in the Philippines in 1593,¹ just a little over a century after John Gutenberg introduced printing with movable types in Europe, in 1425. Compare this with the fact that the first book was not printed in the United States until after 1638.²

The first Philippine newsletter, Successos Felices (Glad Tidings), the equivalent of the European broadsheets, was published in 1637, while the first American newsletter, Harris' Public Occurrences, both Foreign and Domestic, was put out in 1690.

Although Successos could not be called the first Philippine newspaper, because there is no record of other issues after this first one, it is, nevertheless, a remarkable achievement. While the British corantos picked up the news freely from Dutch and German sources, the Successos was more of an original work, and not merely a compilation or a translation.³ The first Filipino printer, Thomas Pinpin, who was responsible for putting out Successos, wrote about two major national events: a Spanish naval victory over the Dutch in Cavite and a military victory over Moslem Filipino rebels.

So, if we date the beginnings of Philippine mass communications to the invention of the printing press in 1425, it did not take long for mass communications to reach the Philippine shores from Europe. In spite of these early beginnings, however, the Philippine mass media have not advanced as much as those of other countries in Asia, like Japan, Hongkong and Singapore, for example. It seems that after that initial period of activity, the Philippine mass media went into hibernation for more than a century, until the first real newspaper came out in 1811.

Del Superior Gobierno was the first regularly issued publication in the Philippines, and while it did not discharge the fundamental tasks of a newspaper by modern standards, at least it intended to be a newspaper. It carried news about the Spanish-American war, the proceedings of the Spanish Cortes, and in general news from the mother country for the benefit of the Spaniards in the Philippines. The Spanish occupation of the Philippines lasted from 1521 to 1898.

Although there were a number of important happenings in the Philippines during the early 1800's - including volcanic eruptions and Filipino rebellions - Del Superior carried only news from abroad because the paper was meant for the Spanish elite. The paper was edited by the Spanish Governor-General himself, and therefore, it was more of a government organ than anything else.

After 15 issues, Del Superior Gobierno stopped printing for the peculiar reason that there was no more news to print. In other words they had run out of European materials to reproduce.

The first daily newspaper was started in the Philippines in 1846. This was La Esperanza (Hope), which turned out to be a colorless and dull newspaper, in its attempt to avoid trouble with the censors. There was strict pre-publication censorship in the Philippines during this time. La Esperanza dealt mostly with non-controversial subjects - historical, scientific and religious - in order to be on the safe side.

Of the dailies that followed La Esperanza, the best-edited during the Spanish period was Diario de Manila, which started publication in 1848. The paper had its own foreign correspondent in Spain and at one time spent P3,000 in one month for promotion because it was competing with another good daily at the time, El Comercio.⁴ Diario was staffed by competent men headed by Felipe del Pan, who was considered by historians as the ablest journalist of his time.

With one exception, Diario lived the longest among many Philippine dailies established during the Spanish period - 38 years.⁵ This paper was suppressed by the Spanish Governor-General in 1898 because it allegedly incited the Filipinos against the Spaniards. The worthiest rival of Diario was El Comercio.⁶

Because of more efficient management, El Comercio became the most stable newspaper during its time. It had the biggest circulation and the longest life span of any paper during the Spanish regime, a total of 56 years.

El Comercio was at the peak of its success when U.S. Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila Bay on May 1, 1898 and brought the downfall of the Spaniards in the Philippines. El Comercio subsequently lost all its provincial circulation and gradually declined during the American regime until it ceased publication in 1925.

Another paper that marked a milestone in the history of Philippine journalism was La Opinion, started in 1827. It marked the beginning of political

content, format and appeal. They were meant for readers in the rural areas. Their contents were mostly fiction, entertainment and how-to-do-it articles.

An institution in the Philippines press today was founded in 1907,¹⁴ foundered, and was taken over by Robert McCullough Dick in 1908. Dick built the paper into the leading English language magazine today - the Philippines Free Press. The Free Press built its reputation on its fearless crusades against government corruption. In recent years it has also become a staunch nationalist.

The Mass Media Today

The Philippine mass media today may be described broadly in the following terms:

1. They are privately-owned and pursue their objectives independently of government control;
2. They are multi-lingual, but leadership is exercised by the English language press;
3. They are Manila-centered and needs to be developed in the provinces;
4. They are politically free (until August 21, 1971), but is controlled by big business; and
5. They lack professionally trained people, and is beset by problems of ethics.

Privately owned

All of the 21 daily newspapers and 100 or so community newspapers which come out weekly are privately owned. All of the 16 leading magazines and an estimated 100 other magazines sold on the news stands are privately owned.

Of the 18 television stations in the country, only one or two are government owned. Of the 245 or so radio stations in the country, only half a dozen are owned by the government.

There is only one domestic news agency, the Philippine News Service, which is a cooperative of the Manila newspapers.

All of the 24 book publishers in the country are private entities. The government, however, has its printing arm in the Bureau of Printing.

The government has one weekly government paper, Government Report, which is scoffed at by the mass media people and by the elite.

The government is also planning to put out another paper, a daily this time, but the tradition of hostility to government propaganda in the Philippines is so strong that we doubt whether the paper will sell.

There is no question that the mass media are almost entirely in private hands in the Philippines.

The government, therefore, has to rely on other information channels which are non-media in nature--the government bureaucracy at various levels and in various departments--agriculture, health, education, etc. It also has the PACD, the Presidential Assistant on Community Development, which works in the rural areas, using the interpersonal channels of communication.

There is the National Mass Media Production Center, which produces films, pamphlets and other audio-visual aids used in the government information drives.

There is the Malacañang Press Office, which grinds out the press releases and other features telling the story of government day after day.

As privately-owned business enterprises in a democratic capitalist society, the Philippine mass media see their greatest role as the watchdog on government. Hence, the traditional enmity between the Philippine press and the government.

They also believe in the other traditional roles of the mass media in a democratic society: to inform the people and comment on issues so that the people may be more intelligent and active participants in government, to entertain and to educate the people.

Educating the people in a purposive manner, if you will note, ranks lower than the other roles assumed by the mass media in the Philippines--unlike other countries in Asia. That role in the Philippines is left mainly to the government.

The role of the Philippine mass media in national development is of a different kind. It is something pursued independently by the private press--the less government intervention the better. The goals are set by the private press itself, not by the government.

The Philippine press does not accept partnership with the government in national planning or pursuit of objectives. The following quotation from one Manila newspaperman illustrates the feelings of the others very well:

"They believe that the fundamental premise that justifies the existence of the press is freedom, not collaboration. In other words, the usefulness of the press lies in its freedom to report and comment, not on being an additional member of a planning body."¹

¹Eduardo Sanchez, "Print Media in the Philippines," a paper written for the Press Foundation of Asia Congress in August, 1971.

Multi-Lingual

On the second point, it is interesting to note that information in the Philippines is disseminated in at least 16 languages and dialects, with English and Tagalog as the main vehicles of communication. This is because the Philippines is a nation that speaks 87 languages and dialects, although only five of these are spoken by the majority of the Filipinos. These five are English, Tagalog, Visayan, Ilocano and Bicolano. The average educated Filipino is bilingual, speaking usually English and one of the dialects.

It is interesting to note also that the Philippines is the only country in the world that has three official languages - Spanish, English and Pilipino. Pilipino (based on Tagalog) is the national language.

The 1958 census figures show a total of 769 publications in the country printed in 16 languages and dialects with a total circulation of 4,917,583.¹⁵ Of course, these are old figures, and need to be updated. But at least they give us an idea of the approximate distribution of papers among the different languages and dialects. Approximately 60 per cent of all Philippine newspapers in 1958 were published in English.

The Philippine Mass Media Directory, the most comprehensive in the Philippines, lists 1,193 print journalists in the country. Of this number, 986 write in English and 116 write in the Philippine languages and dialects, mainly Pilipino.¹⁶

In the Manila press alone, only 37 journalists write in Pilipino compared with 279 in English, 77 in Chinese, and 14 in Spanish.

Very few papers are published in Spanish, the majority of which are school and religious organs. Spanish is spoken only by the old aristocracy in the Philippines, a few rich families of Spanish ancestry, and by the religious. The readership for Spanish magazines, therefore, is very limited.

According to the 1958 figures, 328 periodicals were published in the various dialects, wholly or in part. A few of these vernacular papers are weekly newspapers but the majority are monthly magazines, led by Liwayway, with a circulation in 1968 of 161,000.¹⁷

The Chinese language press in the Philippines is also very limited. There are four Chinese dailies publishing in Manila: Great China Press (12,000), Chinese Commercial News (12,000), Fookien Times (14,338), and Kong Li Po (12,000).

English has become the language of metropolitan journalism in the Philippines and opinion leadership is exercised by the six leading Manila dailies and the leading Philippine weekly, which are all published in English.

Of the 17 dailies that are published in Manila, nine are in English, four in Chinese, two in Spanish and two in Tagalog.¹⁸ The leading dailies, all published in English, are the Manila Times, Manila Chronicle, Philippines Herald, Manila Bulletin, the Daily Mirror and the Manila Evening News. The leading weekly magazines are the Philippines Free Press and the Weekly Graphic.

Manila-Centered

A casual visitor to the Philippines, who stops over only in Manila will leave with a wrong impression of the Philippine mass media. From reading the Manila newspapers and magazines, he will go away thinking that the Philippine press is outspoken, unbridled, and impossible.

After hearing the 43 radio stations and viewing the six commercial television stations in the Greater Manila area, he will leave with the impression that the Philippines is saturated with the mass media.

But, of course, this is the wrong impression. Because the Manila mass media are not necessarily the Philippine mass media. Out there in the provinces, where three-fourths of the 37 million Filipinos live, the mass media are poorly developed.

The 17 dailies in Manila, for example, had a total estimated circulation of 985,674 in 1970.¹⁹ Of this, however, 60 per cent, or 591,404 were circulated in the Greater Manila area where 8 per cent of the 37 million Filipinos live. Table 1 will show earlier figures.

Table 1 - Manila Newspapers

1966 - 1968

<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1968</u>
Manila Times	186,000	220,000
Manila Chronicle	74,000	74,000
Daily Bulletin	55,000	69,000
Philippines Herald	49,000	65,000
Daily Mirror	40,000	45,000
Evening News	39,000	46,000
Taliba	<u>24,000</u>	<u>77,000</u>
TOTAL	467,000	596,000

Source: 1966 figures are summarized from Annual Report of Bureau of Posts, June 30, 1966. The 1968 figures are the publishers' estimates of the average monthly circulation from January 1 to June 30, 1968.

The 16 leading magazines in 1970 had a total estimated circulation of 970,000.²⁰ Of this number, about half went to the three million people living in the Greater Manila area. The other half went to the 34 million Filipinos in the provinces.

Table 2 - Circulation of Selected Magazines

<u>Magazines</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>1966 - 1968</u>	
		<u>1966</u>	<u>1968</u>
Sunday Times Magazine	English	186,000	220,000
Asia Magazine	English	186,000	220,000
Lidayway	Tagalog	182,000	161,000
Tagumpay	Tagalog	123,000	111,000
Bulaklak	Tagalog	103,000	150,000
Free Press	English	99,000	102,000
Graphic	English	98,000	89,000
Women's Magazine	English	97,000	89,000
Bisaya	Cebuano	90,000	65,000
Hiligaynon	Ilongo	60,000	46,000
Weekly Nation	English	56,000	89,000
Bannawag	Ilocano	48,000	43,000
Movie Confidential	English	31,000	34,000
Free Press (sa Wikang Pilipino)	Tagalog	30,000	30,000

Source: 1966 Figures are summarized from the Annual Report of the Bureau of Posts, June 30, 1966. The 1968 figures are the publishers' estimates of the average monthly circulation from January 1 to June 30, 1968.²¹

Let us take television. Of the 18 television stations²² in the country, seven, or almost half of the total, are located in the Greater Manila area.

If we consider the number of tv sets, the picture becomes even more centralized. According to 1966 figures, there were 180,000 television sets in Manila, compared to 74,000 out in Cebu, Bacolod and Davao City. Outside of these places, television was practically non-existent. Of course, television has grown since then, but the approximate proportion of set distribution is still the same - 40 per cent in Manila and .5 to 3 percent in the provinces.

Or let us take the movies. Out of 732 theatres surveyed in 1969,²³ 121 were found to be in the Manila area. This means that one out of seven theatre is in Manila, where one out of twelve Filipinos live.

Of all the mass media, only radio is perhaps more evenly diffused throughout the country. Yet, even this shows a greater concentration in the Manila area.

A look at Table 3 will show that radio is found in 88 per cent of the homes in the Greater Manila area, compared to 51 per cent of the homes in Luzon, 42 per cent in Mindanao, and 36 per cent in the Visayas.

Table 3 - Media Homes by Regional Breakdown
in the Philippines, 1966

	Total Philippines	Greater Manila	Luzon	Mindanao	Visayas
<u>Media Homes</u>	<u>N = 5550</u>	<u>n = 440</u>	<u>n = 2451</u>	<u>n = 1048</u>	<u>n = 1611</u>
Newspapers	12%	60%	11%	7%	4%
Magazines	22%	49%	23%	17%	16%
Comics	5%	11%	8%	3%	2%
Radio	48%	88%	51%	42%	36%
TV Sets	4%	40%	3%	.5%	.5%
No Media	44%	6%	40%	52%	57%

Source: Derived from Table 12 of the Nation-wide Communication Study conducted by Robot-Gallup Research Group for Media Research Foundation of the Philippines, March-April, 1966.

There is, in other words, a communications gap in the rural areas, where 34 million Filipinos live. This gap, of course, must be filled, if we are to develop as a nation.

This gap can be filled by the rural radio, and there are already indications that radio is growing at a rapid rate in the Philippines.

Another forgotten sector of the Philippine mass media, the community newspaper, can also help fill in this gap. In its present state, however, the community paper is in no position to do this. At present, the provincial press is weak and anemic.

Until recently, the community press was so neglected and disorganized that data on number of newspapers were conflicting and unreliable. Guesses put the number between 80 and 165. The 1965 Bureau of Posts list of second class publications shows 57 papers published in the provinces either daily, thrice a week, or weekly, with an estimated total circulation of 300,000. This list, however, may be misleading since there are a number of papers published that are not registered with the Bureau of Posts. The Regional Research Centre of Manila sent out a questionnaire in August, 1965, to serve as the basis for an up-to-date listing of community papers. Of 160 inquiries mailed, only 75 were answered.

In 1968, the Philippine Press Institute published the Philippine News Media Directory. It lists 136 community newspapers. The Federation of Provincial

Press Clubs has a list of 165 community newspapers - but nobody, not even the Federation, can say how many of these are legitimate newspapers.

In an effort to help gather basic data on this segment of the Philippine press, the School of Journalism and Communications, Silliman University, in 1965 surveyed 112 rural editors. Only 44 replied. This number, plus another eight who answered the same questionnaire by the Philippine Press Institute, compose the 52 respondents whose answers are discussed in a paper²⁴ which is quoted here.

Generally, the results of the survey show that:

(1) A typical Philippine community newspaper is a weekly tabloid in English or English-dialect, owned by its editor, and politically independent. The paper does not own its printing press, but is either earning a small profit or just making both ends meet. Although the press serves a community which has a radio station, it rarely considers radio as competition. It has improved its situation over that of five years ago.

(2) An average community newspaper editor is middle-aged, married, Catholic, finished college (most likely with an A.B. degree), has not travelled abroad, does not hold a government job but occasionally works in public relations or advertising for others, is active in community work, and works only part time at running the paper. The editors' profile also indicates he would rather work in the province than in Manila. He has attended one or two journalism seminars and has had some journalistic experience previously, either as Philippine News Service correspondent or with some paper. He reads the Philippines Free Press and the Manila Times regularly.

English is still mainly the language of the community press in the Philippines because newspaper readers are still confined to the English-speaking elite. The one page in the dialect is a concession by the editors to the few newspaper readers who do not read English.

Of the 52 papers in the Silliman survey, 37, or 71 per cent, appear weekly. The majority publish on weekends (12 on Saturday and 12 on Sunday). Seven out of ten were either earning a small profit or barely breaking even. One out of ten admitted he was losing money and two out of ten said they were making reasonable profits. Most, therefore, are marginal operations.

Almost three-fourths of the community editors studied are married and have five children. About the same number are Catholic. The majority are between 21 and 50 years old.

More than 80 per cent hold at least one college degree, ranging from a dentistry diploma to a Ph.D. in theology. The editor of the Misamis Weekly is a dentist, and the editor of the Baguio Mountain Sentinel, a Catholic paper, is a Ph.D. in theology. Of the college graduates, almost all have a bachelor's degree,

and almost one-third have law degrees. Two have journalism degrees. Two hold master's degrees.

Two comments might be made on these data. First, it seems that the editors of the community papers are highly educated. More than four-fifths have college degrees, and this gives them a broad background. However, and this is our second observation, most of the college degrees are in fields other than journalism. This means that these people are in community newspaper work without any formal journalism training; although as we shall see, they are highly experienced in the profession, most showing previous experience and averaging seven years in their present positions.

These people, so it seems, have wandered into the threshold of journalism from other fields. And even so, they have only one foot in journalism for 70 per cent are working only part time with the paper; the rest of the time they are teachers, businessmen, dentists, lawyers, pastors, engineers, etc.

The potential role of the community paper in national development is great. But certainly the community press needs to be developed first before it can fulfil its role.

Press Freedom

Up until August 21, 1971, when President Marcos suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, the Philippine press was considered the freest in Asia. The suspension of the writ has tarnished that image.

We will discuss the implications of this writ suspension later in our paper. Forgetting it for the moment, let us analyze this vaunted freedom of the Philippine press.

The Philippine Constitution guarantees that "no law shall be passed abridging freedom of the speech and the press."

Outwardly, the Philippine press (especially the Manila newspapers and magazines) appear free, because it can criticize government officials, including the President, bluntly. Some foreigners even think that the Philippine press is too critical, too outspoken, and irresponsible.

Philippine and Austrian newsmen are the only journalists in the world whose sources of news are protected. Filipino journalists are also protected by the laws of libel and privilege. There is no prior censorship.

Anyone capable of using a typewriter can dish out a letter berating his congressman, or put together a newspaper column that peddles opinion on everything under the sun.

The Philippine press enjoys great political freedom, in theory. In practice, however, such political freedom is limited. For example, government can withhold news from newsmen. According to an old time Filipino newspaperman, now a political science professor,²⁵ "it is in the essential access to government news that the Philippine press is weakest and its freedom restricted."

Government management of news hampers this freedom. Press secretaries are paid to keep away unfavourable news from the newspapers and to feed them the good news. But again this is a situation not by any means unique to the Philippines. This eternal conflict between government and journalists is true to all democratic systems.

Another, more subtle, way of eroding press freedom in the Philippines is through economic control - by big business. Even if the Philippine press is politically free to a great extent, it is not truly free in the economic sense, because it is owned by vested interests.

Five families with vast business empires own about 90 per cent of the country's mass media - newspapers, magazines, radio and television. A look at Table 4 will show the extent of this monopolistic situation. Looking at radio alone, in 1967 there were a total of 203 stations in the country with a total wattage of 702,000 watts. Of this total, 24.6 per cent were used to run 19 stations owned by one family - the Lopez family.²⁶

In the case of television, there were 15 stations in 1968, with a total wattage of 49,320 watts. Of this total, 40.6 per cent were used to run the five stations owned by the same Lopez family.

There are two aspects of this problem that worry students of press freedom in the Philippines: 1. The fact that the mass media are concentrated in the hands of a few families, and 2. The fact that these families have vast networks of business interests.

Point number one means that a few families could control public opinion in the country, because they control the outlets. This, however, is open to question, considering that the mass media are not widely diffused here, and considering that these monopolistic media chains counteract each other.

Point number two means that a few families could use the mass media to promote their business interests. There is some evidence of this, based on testimonies of key people in the mass media business, although the problem should be subject for further research.

The publisher of the Philippines Herald, in an interview with Lent,²⁷ said: "It is largely true that the newspapers in Manila push vested interests. I feel we need some mergers here. Maybe we need only two newspapers in the city but these four giants (Soriano, Lopez, Roces and Menzi) can't find any reason for getting together."

Table 4 - Multi-Media Combines and Networks, 1968

<u>Owner & Business</u>	<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>Radio Stations (AM)</u>	<u>TV Stations</u>
<u>Don Eugenio Lopez:</u> Public Utility (Meralco), sugar, finance,	Manila Chronicle Philippine Farms and Gardens	ABS-CEN (Alto Broadcasting System - Chronicle Broadcasting Network: 20 stations in: Manila (6), Bacolod, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Catabato, Dagupan, Davao, Iligan, Iloilo, Laoag, Legazpi, Lucena, Naga, Zamboanga.	ABS-CBN: Channels 3, 9: Manila Channel 5: Cebu Channel 4: Bacolod Channel 10: Baguio
<u>Andres Soriano Jr.:</u> San Miguel Corporation, mining, lumber, textiles, fertilizers, paper industry, oil development, copper pro- ducts, insurance, finance	Philippines Herald	RMN (Radio Mindanao Network): 8 stations in: Manila, Baguio, Butuan, Cebu, Davao, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro (2).	IBC (Inter-Island Broadcasting): Channel 13: Manila Channel 13: Cebu Channel 13: Davao
<u>Manuel Elizalde:</u> Mining, insurance, shipping, import and export, Steel and Iron Corporation, paints, oil, rope.	Manila Evening News	MBC (Metropolitan Broadcasting): 8 stations in: Manila, (2), Cebu, Dagupan, Laoag, Legazpi, Roxas.	MBC: Channel 7: Manila Channel 7: Cebu
<u>Hans Menzi:</u> Mining, lumber, agricultural enterprises, school and office supplies and equipment, finance	Manila Bulletin Liwayway Hiligaynon Nannawag		
<u>Joaquin Roces:</u>	Manila Times Daily Mirror Taliba Women's Magazine	ABC (Associated Broadcasting): 5 stations in: Manila (3), Dagupan, Davao.	ABC: Channel 5: Manila

The former editor of the Evening News, in an interview also with Lent,²⁸ said: "Most newspapers here are extensions of business empires. We are a country where, unfortunately, keeping a newspaper is a good defense weapon for big business."

A top executive of Radio Mindanao Network and columnist of the Herald,²⁹ has declared in a speech:

"Big business can use their media for the promotion of special interests. Or negatively, they can hold back legitimate criticism for fear of antagonizing political allies. At the moment, this is infrequently the case. There are only two media groups that consciously and overtly use their ownership to further their business and political aims.

"The other media owners tend to use their stations and newspapers as some kind of passive defence against political attack. In other words, the media are not used on behalf of their owners unless provoked. This is not all a desirable situation. But because in the Philippines politics affects every aspect of our lives, businessmen have also been forced to go into media even at a big loss.

"In the worlds of one exasperated publisher, 'We need our paper like some people need guns - to protect ourselves!' Considering however that the business interests owning papers are also in other enterprises, it is not hard to see how they can be influenced or coerced into cooperating with the government."

Training for Mass Media and Ethics

The Philippine mass media people, especially the journalists, are being bombarded left and right with criticisms. From one side, the government is training its guns on the members of the Fourth Estate, saying in so many words that they are irresponsible. They are irresponsible because all they do is carp and contribute to the building of a negative attitude towards government and whatever it is doing for national development.

From the other side, there are the self-appointed critics of the mass media, both in and outside the Fourth Estate, who write self-confession articles, or inside stories, all relating to how corrupt the mass media people are.

It cannot be denied that there are many journalists in the Philippines who are not above accepting bribe money, or even blackmailing people. Perhaps there are too many of them for the good of the Philippine press.

One thing that must be said in favour of the Philippine press, however, is that it is its most vocal critic. It admits its sins, *mea culpa*.^{mea culpa} Furthermore, there are institutes and institutions trying to do something about the problem.

The first aspect of this problem, of course, is economic. Some publishers and mass media owners, it seems, are beginning to realise that the responsibility for keeping the noses of journalists clean is to a great extent theirs - by giving good salaries.

The second aspect of the problem is that spirit of professionalism, which is sorely lacking in the rank and file of the mass media people, especially the radio and television personnel and the community newspaper. We lack trained people in these media.

This is where the institutes and schools of mass communication come in.

Training and Research

Communication and journalism education in the Philippines is still in its infant stage, although the first journalism school was set up by the University of the Philippines in 1919. One reason for the slow development of journalism education in the Philippines, as in the United States, is the traditional disdain, indifference and suspicion that the practicing journalists have had for journalism schools and their products.³⁰

According to the Philippine Press Institute, there are 12 schools or departments of journalism and communication in the Philippines today (see Table 5). This list does not include colleges offering one or two journalism courses as electives under English departments. It also does not include the department of agricultural communication at the College of Agriculture, University of the Philippines, which can be counted as a separate unit, for a total of 13.

It is interesting to note that of these 13 schools or departments of communication and journalism, only one is located outside the Manila area - the School of Journalism and Communications at Sillman University. Because of this location, Sillman decided to specialize in community journalism (newspaper and radio).

In a country where the community press is notoriously weak in comparison to the metropolitan press, the Sillman School of Journalism and Communications sees its mission as the improvement of community journalism in the Philippines.

Table 5 - Schools and Departments
of Communication and Journalism

<u>University</u>	<u>Unit and When Established</u>	<u>Degrees Offered</u>	<u>Area of Emphasis or Strength</u>
1. University of the Philippines	Institute of Mass Communication - 1965	A.B. in Journalism A.B. in Broadcast Com. M.A. in Journalism M.A. in Broadcast Com. M.A. in Communication	Metropolitan journalism, mass communication theory, research & public service
2. Silliman University	School of Journalism and Communication 1966	B.J. A.B. in Creative Writing-Journalism Minor in Journalism for B.S.E. and M.A. students	Community journalism (Newspaper and radio)
3. Ateneo de Manila University	Department of Communication Graduate Programme 1966. Undergraduate Programme - 1968	A.B. in Communication M.A. in Communication Concentration on: Radio-TV Film Theatre Arts	Developmental communication, theatre and film arts
4. U.P. College of Agriculture, Los Banos.	Department of Agricultural Com.	B.S. in Agri. Com. M.S. in Agri. Com.	Agricultural Communication
5. University of Santo Tomas	Faculty of Arts & Letters - 1964	A.B. in Journalism A.B. in Communication Arts	Metropolitan journalism advertising, public relations
6. Lyceum of the Philippines	School of Journalism - 1952	B.S. in Journalism A.B. in Journalism	Metropolitan, nationalistic journalism.
7. Far Eastern University	Institute of Arts - 1934	A.B. in Communication Major in theatre arts, speech arts, mass communication	Speech and theatre arts
8. Centro Escolar University	College of Liberal Arts		
9. Maryknoll College	Department of Communication Arts		
10. Philippine Women's University	College of Liberal Arts		
11. St. Paul's College	College of Liberal Arts		
12. St. Theresa's College	School of Journalism and Communication Arts		
13. San Beda College	Department of Communication Arts.		

The establishment of the Philippine Press Institute in 1962 contributed greatly to the upgrading of the journalism profession in the Philippines and to the refurbishing of the journalism educator's image. The PPI has led the way in conducting seminars and institutes for working journalists and sending them abroad on various training programs. The PPI, in other words, has made the words journalism education respectable in the eyes of the hard-nosed working newspapermen in the Philippines.

Problems of Communication/Journalism Education

The most common problem of these communication and journalism schools or departments is the lack of facilities. Only the University of the Philippines, because of UNESCO aid in getting equipment, does not have this problem.

The consultant for journalism at U.S.T. told us that his school lacks facilities for practical training. All they have is a small radio studio. He said newspapers and other mass media in the city are reluctant to accept their interns, because of the responsibility involved in case of accidents.

The interim dean of the Lyceum School of Journalism said that because his school is privately owned, and relies mainly on tuition fees for its income, it cannot afford to acquire the expensive equipment needed for the journalism students.

Another common problem to Philippine communication schools seems to be lack of local instructional materials.

The chairman of the Ateneo communication department viewed the problem of lack of instructional materials from the dollar angle. Even if the instructional materials relevant to the Philippines are available in the United States, and even if the Ateneo students (who belong to the upper class generally) can afford to buy them, Ateneo cannot import them because of lack of dollars.

At Silliman we view this problem from another angle. First of all, even if we can import these American instructional materials (and we are able to most of the time, because we have American church support in dollars), our students (who come from the middle, or lower middle, class) cannot afford to buy them. The prices become too prohibitive when the dollar costs are translated into pesos.

Which leads us to a related problem--faculty. Two of the private schools in Manila, Lyceum and U.S.T., look at this problem similarly. First of all, they cannot afford, or do not want to, hire full time faculty just to teach communication and journalism courses. Because the enrolment is relatively small, a faculty member (full load in these schools is 24 units) might end up teaching all the subjects to all the students, which is not a desirable thing.

Secondly, they find it difficult to find qualified people to abandon the mass media for the halls of academe. So they end up with part time teachers, who work with the media full time.

Research, which should go hand in hand with teaching, is also being developed, mostly at the University of the Philippines, Silliman University and Ateneo de Manila.

The U.P. Department of Agricultural Communication in Los Banos is considered the "cradle" of mass communication research in the country. It was in the early 1960's that communication research started there, although there were already a few research studies in the Philippines conducted by American sociologists before that.

When the Institute of Mass Communication of the University of the Philippines was established in 1965, research went into high gear, under the leadership of Dr. Gloria Feliciano. The early communication research were readability studies, audience surveys, case studies, content analyses, opinion polls, mass media studies, radio and television personnel studies, advertising research, and diffusion studies. These studies were supported by government, the institutions themselves, foundations, and in some cases, by the mass media industry itself.

Silliman University joined the research game in 1967, when its School of Journalism and Communications was in full operation. Like its teaching programme, Silliman's research programme is focussed on the area of the mass media, especially the community press. Because of its more limited resources and facilities, Silliman's research programme is not as well developed as that of U.P.

Ateneo is doing a number of research projects in the field of the electronic media. It is currently researching into the history of movies in the Philippines.

Prospects

What are the prospects for the mass media in the Philippines?

First, it looks like a long, hard struggle to make the mass media truly mass media in the Philippines. Despite its high literacy rate (about 65 per cent) the Philippines has a low diffusion rate for newspapers - 30 per 1,000 in the Manila area, and 1 per 1,000 in the rural areas, where 75 per cent of the 37 million Filipinos live. Compare this with the Asian average of 40, which is already distorted upwards by the high figure for Japan: 487.³¹ With the exception of radio and movies, the mass media are not accessible to the masses in the Philippines. A review of Table 3 will bear us out.

There is a need for enlightened government policies regarding lending and taxation of the mass media business to help them develop and reach the masses. There is a need for the use of the dialects by the mass media in the rural areas, if they are to reach the masses. There is a need for dedicated trained and competent men and women to run these mass media.

How about freedom of the press? Will the Philippine press remain the freest in Asia? It is difficult to tell at the moment. First, there is need to regulate the mass media empires in the country. There must be a limit to the number of newspapers, magazines, radio stations or television stations that one individual can own and operate. Unless this is done, our mass media will end up as the mouthpiece of the oligarchy in the country.

Second, the suspension by President Marcos of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus casts doubt on the viability of press freedom in the country.

The suspension of the writ means that the government can pick up anyone it suspects of the crimes of rebellion, sedition and subversion. After President Ferdinand Marcos suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus on August 21, 1971, one Manila radio newsman was picked up by military authorities and another had to go into hiding to avoid being picked up.

This action of the president of the Philippines is the biggest threat to this vaunted freedom of the Philippine press since the early period of the American occupation of the Philippines, when we had pre-publication censorship. The power is open to abuse, and even granting that it has not been abused so far, it becomes a sword of Damocles over the heads of Philippine journalists who are critical of the regime.

To the extent that President Marcos has instilled fear in the hearts of his critics, he has succeeded in tramelling press freedom in the Philippines.

Footnotes

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¹Jose Luna Castro, The Manila Times Journalism Manual (Manila: The Manila Times Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), p.2.

²Edwin Emery, The Press and America (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962), P.29.

³Castro, loc. cit.

⁴Armando J. Malay, "The Philippine Press," Philippine Life, one in a series of pamphlets issued by the Cultural Foundation of the Philippines, 1960. p.1.

⁵Carson Taylor, History of the Philippine Press (Manila, 1927) p.6.

⁶Ibid., p. 6.

⁷Castro, op. cit., p. 6.

⁸John Lent, Philippine Mass Communications, Before 1811 After 1966 (Manila: Philippine Press Institute), p. 53.

⁹In an address delivered at the National Press Club in 1958, as quoted by Castro, op. cit., p. 79.

¹⁰Lent, op. cit., p. 79.

¹¹Ibid., p. 107

¹²Ibid., pp. 11-12

¹³Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁴Castro, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁵As quoted in Crispin Maslog, The Philippine Press, an unpublished paper submitted in partial fulfillment for a master's degree in journalism at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1962.

¹⁶Eduardo Sanchez, Print Media in the Philippines, an unpublished paper available at the Philippine Press Institute.

¹⁷Carlos A. Arnaldo, "The Philippine Mass Media," Solidarity, January, 1969, p. 74.

¹⁸Philippine Mass Media Directory 1971 (Manila: Philippine Press Institute).

¹⁹Sanchez, op. cit.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹This table and all other tables in this paper are adapted from Arnaldo, op. cit.

²²This figure was given by Eduardo Sanchez, deputy director of the Philippine Press Institute, in an interview August 28, 1971.

²³According to a survey of the movie industry by Geoffrey W. J. Conwell, as reported in the Manila Times, September 22, 1970, p. 20.

²⁴Crispin Maslog, "Profile of the Philippine Community Newspaper and Editor," Journalism Quarterly, Vol. 46, No. 2.

²⁵Vicente Albano Pacis, "Philippine Journalism, 1968," in the Weekly Nation, August 26, 1968, p. 4.

²⁶Sen. Rodolfo Ganzon, in the explanatory note to a bill he proposed at the seventh special session of the sixth Congress of the Philippines, to regulate radio and television ownership in the Philippines. The bill did not pass.

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²⁷Lent, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Reuben R. Canoy, "Politics is Everybody's Concern," a speech delivered at Silliman University, October 3, 1969.

³⁰For a more detailed discussion of journalism training in the Philippines, read Crispin Maslog, Communication and Journalism Education in the Philippines, an unpublished paper available at the School of Journalism and Communications, Silliman University.

³¹Sanchez, in an interview with the author on August 28, 1971.