

BOOK REVIEW

PROBLEMS OF LAW IN JOURNALISM. By William F. Swindler, Ph.D. The Macmillan Co., N.Y., Copyright, 1955. Published simultaneously in Canada. Pp. xii, 551. Appendix. Glossary. Abbreviations. Index. P11.50.

A conspicuous landmark in a democracy is the free press, one of the most effective media of disseminating information. The press must be a repository of facts, contradistinguished from fiction, hence the obligation to report current events as they actually happen. A newspaper acquires acceptance only when its credibility is beyond reproach.

News reporting is complicated, the general opinion to the contrary, notwithstanding. The day's news is made possible *only* after the publisher, editor, and generally the reporter have been subjected to the mile-long gauntlet of legal do's and don't's akin to journalism. Ultimate source of the multilateral phases of law affecting this profession is the constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech and of the press. This cardinal right has elevated the rank of the press in the hierarchy of socio-legal values now expressed in the cliché *power of the press*.

Why do we have a thousand and one press cases clogging court dockets all seeking the mantle of this constitutional protection? Because there is an equal, if not greater, mass of law involved in journalism.

In order to understand what these problems are, William F. Swindler, Ph.D., presents his PROBLEMS OF LAW IN JOURNALISM—a compendium of pertinent jurisprudence explained in the layman's language. The author underscores the significance of knowing what and how law affects journalism as a profession:

"It is no mere platitude to say that the constitutional protection of the liberty of utterance is indispensable to our system of journalism as well as to our system of government."

In driving home certain points, the author starts with a historical background of law, the practical and philosophical basis and cases construing each problem. Replete with leading authorities, the problem thus presented could easily be understood.

Swindler tries to approximate the beneficent objective of informing the reader of the tremendous responsibility reposed in the powers-that-be behind the press, for indeed, to muffle the press spells but the crossroads of the free world and the iron curtain.

The book treats of libel, privacy, contempt, copyright and property in the news, law and other news problems, business side of the newspaper, administrative law, labor relations, public notice advertising, related fields of journalism, law and radio journalism—all these, and some 200 leading cases on the subject explained in simple language.

The reader who regards the role of the press as a militant guardian of people's liberties would welcome Swindler's contribution to law and journalism. The successful harnessing of the law on the Press may yet channel man's efforts toward world peace and understanding, which is the desired end of law and order.

Roman D. Tanjuakio *

* LL.B. (U.P.), 1956; Member, Student Editorial Board, *Philippine Law Journal*, 1955-56.

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