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GEORGE GERBNER

*The Press and the Dialogue in Education*

THE CASE STUDY OF A NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION  
AND ITS DEPICTION IN AMERICA'S DAILY NEWSPAPERS

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DR. GERBNER is dean of the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania. This report is part of a larger study of the image of education projected by the mass media which he has carried out for the U. S. Office of Education.

# Contents

## Preface

Introduction . . . . .	1
The Context of National Press Attention . . . . .	5
Procedure and Preview . . . . .	6
Reporting the Convention . . . . .	13
Sunday: The Day of Presidents . . . . .	15
Monday: Attack on "Machines" . . . . .	17
Tuesday: Attack on Complacency, Communism, Clergy . . . . .	23
Wednesday: Midweek Doldrums . . . . .	25
Thursday: Attack on Schools; Promise of "Fights" to Come . . . . .	26
Friday: "Fights" Fizzle on Convention Floor but Not in Press Coverage . . . . .	27
The Speakers . . . . .	28
The Pattern of Issues . . . . .	30
Political Issues . . . . .	32
Curriculum and Teaching Issues . . . . .	39
Professional and Community Issues . . . . .	43
The Final Pattern . . . . .	44

## List of Tables

1 Number and Average Circulation of U.S. English Language Daily Newspapers in Four Circulation Classes . . . . .	7
2 Convention Press Coverage by Circulation Classes and Time Periods . . . . .	8
3 Comparison of Total U.S. Circulation and TOTAL NEA Convention Coverage Circulation by Four Circulation Classes . . . . .	8
4 Length of All NEA Convention Stories by Circulation Classes . . . . .	9
5 Sources of Stories in Convention Press Coverage . . . . .	9
6 Sources of Stories and Topics Featured Before and After Opening Day . . . . .	14
7 Ten Most Frequently Cited Speakers in the Convention Press Coverage . . . . .	29
8 Types of Issues Featured in the Convention Press Coverage . . . . .	31
9 Front Page Stories in the Convention Press Coverage . . . . .	31
10 Editorials in the Convention Press Coverage . . . . .	32

## Preface

**T**HE COVERAGE OF A COMPLEX AFFAIR such as a large conference is a selective process. Its product is a system of mass-produced messages presenting to newsreaders across the nation a synthetic image of aspects of events, and reflecting many influences. The organizers of the event supply the raw material. The publicity staff pre-forms and makes visible certain aspects. Reporters shape their own selection to the image of the conventions of their trade and to the specifications of their newsrooms. Editors sift again, re-shape, headline, allocate and display. The outcome is a collective "report to the nation" selected, organized, weighted and presented from the vantage point of an institution.

The press coverage analyzed in this study was both the record of such institutional behavior and, as the actual representation of real events, a source of public information and ideas about educators and education expressed through the reporting of an education convention. In a sense, this was a case study of how one institution, the press, views and represents another, organized education, at least in the limited context of a national education convention. The specific events reported are of less consequence now than the process of representation, the vantage point of the "coverage," the institutional dynamics of collective image-making, and the patterning of issues that results. But it was through an examination of the events and aspects selected for representation and weighted by circulation and emphasis that this case study attempted to explore that process.

This study was part of a larger investigation reported in the author's technical report to the U. S. Office of Education: "Mass Communications and Popular Conceptions of Education," Cooperative Research Project 876 (Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, U. S. Depart-

ment of Health, Education and Welfare, 1964), but only a small part of the material reported here is contained in that report.

I would like to thank for their invaluable assistance and cooperation Roy K. Wilson, Beatrice M. Gudridge, M. Ruth Broom, Phyllis Marcuccio and others on the staff of the National Education Association who made available clippings and other materials essential to this study.

GEORGE GERBNER

*Philadelphia, Pa.*

## Introduction

EDUCATION, THE BIGGEST PUBLIC ENTERPRISE of the nation, makes about 4 percent of all news in the daily press.<sup>1</sup> Most of that news is of local origin. Few regular events shift the educational news spotlight onto the national scene. One of these occasions is the annual convention of the National Education Association.

The NEA is the largest educational, and indeed the largest professional, association in the world. Its top governing body, the Representative Assembly, meets once a year in conjunction with the Annual Convention. The 99th Annual Convention and 40th Representative Assembly of the NEA met in Atlantic City, N.J., from June 25 to June 30, 1961. The affair drew a total of about 12,000 conventioners, visitors and observers from the U.S. and abroad. Representatives of commercial and professional media were on hand to report through press, radio, television and specialized publications what the NEA had to say about the state and problems of American education to the profession and to the public.

For six days, the convention plowed through a schedule of speeches, panels, business meetings, banquets, receptions, demonstrations and exhibits. Delegates met in four General Assemblies, six Business Sessions, some 29 Department, 24 Committee and Commission and 17 Section meetings. They attended 46 film showings, viewed some 150 commercial exhibits and saw five demonstrations of "Nike in the Attack." There were well over 500 speakers and other scheduled (and many unsched-

<sup>1</sup> This estimate is based on our own measures and several published studies e.g. Paul Deutschmann, *News Page Content of Twelve Metropolitan Dailies*, (New York: Scripps-Howard Research, 1959). Similarly based estimates for front page news space range up to 1.4 percent, and editorial space about 2.4 percent.

uled) participants to hear and—potentially—to report. Needless to say, no one could encompass it all. The *Proceedings* of the General Assemblies and Business Sessions alone ran to 240 closely printed pages. But even what could be encompassed and reported faced tough competition.

Voluntary associations list over half the adult population of America on one or more memberships rolls.<sup>2</sup> A respectable amount of public visibility has become a virtual requirement for organizational survival and success. Little service could be performed, funds collected, members enrolled or public influence exerted without some organizational facade attracting the attention of non-members who, in one way or another, affect the climate of both private and public giving and decision-making. Wrote Frank W. Hubbard, NEA Assistant Executive Secretary for Information Services, in the foreword of the NEA booklet on *How to Win Convention Headlines*:

Most conventions need to have publicity. This need is especially important with regard to conventions organized by members of the teaching profession. Educators simply must have the cooperation of the communication channels—newspapers, radio, TV and magazines—in order to promote public understanding of education and of the profession.

Newspapers, too, must perform several functions and cater to diverse interests. Their primary need of self-preservation requires servicing the industrial order and promoting the sale of goods (and copies) from which revenue is derived. This function accounts for most of the space, dictates the basic policies and permeates the content of the American daily paper.

<sup>2</sup> Murray Gendell and Hans L. Zetterberg, *A Sociological Almanac for the United States* (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1961), Table 35.

## The Context of National Press Attention

NATIONAL NEWS IS LIMITED to an average of less than 12 percent of the total news space, even in large metropolitan dailies.<sup>3</sup> Organizations are among the most vociferous news-makers on the national scene. If every one of the over 8,700 national associations in America held only one major annual meeting lasting only three days, 72 national conventions would be competing for press attention every day. And they probably are.

The main business of that clamor for attention is business itself. More than 57 percent of all national associations represent manufacturing, trade and commercial interests.<sup>4</sup> The industrial and business establishment itself is the main sponsor, client and information source of the press, supporting it with about 34 cents of every \$100 worth of goods sold, and filling at least three-fourth of all newspaper space with paid (advertising) and unpaid (financial and business) messages.

The rest of human events and interests compete for the remaining fourth. Sports, comics and society news take from one-third to half of that space. About 20 percent of the still remaining space goes to popular amusements such as "news" of the world of TV and movies, about another 20 percent to that elusive category called "human interest" (including obituaries and the weather) and roughly 10 percent is devoted to crime, accident and disaster news.<sup>5</sup> This leaves about one-sixteenth of the average newspaper to cover and comment upon the world of governments and politics; wars and revolutions; defense and diplomacy; public health, welfare and justice; science, invention, reli-

<sup>3</sup> Deutschmann, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Gendell and Zetterberg, *loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Deutschmann, *op. cit.*

gion, education, literature and the arts—and the activities of persons and organizations in these and related fields.

It was in this general context that the educational news spotlight came to rest, as it does each year, upon the NEA convention. The annual affair symbolizes more than any other single event the nature of professional, press and public concern with education as a national enterprise. In an advance memorandum alerting editors across the country to the Atlantic City convention, Roy K. Wilson, director of NEA's Division of Press and Radio Relations, announced:

In almost 400 sessions the teachers and administrators will cover topics which reflect large social problems as well as specialized educational needs. Some examples: education for the "disadvantaged American," education in a creditcard society, understanding today's families, what to teach the future Peace Corpsman, the implications of teaching machines and instructional technology and the place of the individual in the American school.

Here was to unfold the story of national issues and problems in American education in a microcosm from which the observer could fashion almost any kind of picture. The selective and synthetic image which actually emerges in the press of the nation is the "real" story shaping common national awareness of and approaches to national issues in education. What that story was, and what it implies for education, as well as for an understanding of the institutional dynamics of press attention on the national level, was the subject of the study reported in these pages.

#### *Procedure and Preview*

**T**HE RAW MATERIAL FOR THIS CASE STUDY was a collection of newspaper clippings mentioning the Atlantic City convention and collected by Press Intelligence, Inc., of Washington, D.C., a commercial clipping service striving for complete coverage of all English language U.S. daily newspapers.

The period covered was from May 25, 1961, a month before the convention opened, until July 30, a month after its closing. The extended period made it possible to check on pre-convention publicity, and to obtain delayed editorials inspired by the convention press coverage. About 90 percent of all stories appeared after opening day.

A total of 2,240 clippings were analyzed. The average weekday circulation of every daily paper printing a convention item was recorded. Each news or feature story or editorial was checked for type, length, source, page position, headline-and-lead content and the incidence of selected topics and names in the story. Pertinent convention information was obtained through personal contact with convention staff and reporters.

It was possible, then, to compare the highlights of the convention program with the subjects, names and "angles" featured in the convention press coverage. We could compute and tabulate the total estimated circulation, number of stories and average circulation per story for each classification at the time of the coverage. Average circulation per story in a certain content category could be used to determine whether that type of story was printed mostly by larger or smaller circulation papers. The average net paid daily circulation per paper in each circulation class, shown in Table 1, was used to arrive at the circulation estimate for each story in this study. Every clipping analyzed was classified into one of the circulation classes, according to the actual declared average weekday circulation of the paper in which the story appeared. The findings of the analysis were multiplied by the average circulation of the class into which the story had been classified. For example, results for stories in circulation class I (over 100,000), were multiplied by 267,717;

TABLE 1  
*Number and Average Circulation of U. S. English Language Daily Newspapers in Four Circulation Classes<sup>a</sup>*

	Newspaper Circulation Class			
	I	II	III	IV
	over 100,000	50,000 to 100,000	10,000 to 50,000	under 10,000
Number of daily papers in each class	123	111	545	809
Average net paid daily circulation per paper	267,717	71,597	21,506	5,323

<sup>a</sup> Based on *Newspaper Circulation and Rate Trends*. (New York: Association of National Advertisers, Inc., 1959), p. 1.

TABLE 2

*Convention Press Coverage by Circulation Classes and Time Periods*

Newspaper circulation class	Before June 25		After June 25		Totals	
	Circ. in 1000s	Number of stories	Circ. in 1000s	Number of stories	Circ. in 1000s	Number of stories
I Over 100,000	6,425	24	86,472	323	92,852	347
II 50,000 to 100,000	2,506	35	16,753	234	19,259	269
III 10,000 to 50,000	2,602	121	22,452	1,044	25,054	1,165
IV Under 10,000	245	46	2,199	413	2,444	459
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11,778</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>127,876</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>139,654</b>	<b>2,240</b>
Percent of total circulation	8		92		100	
Percent of all stories		10		90		100

results for stories in circulation class II (50,000 to 100,000), were multiplied by 71,595, and so on.

It was possible to tabulate circulation information for headline-and-lead topics, as well as for topics occurring in the body of the stories. As only one headline-and-lead topic was recorded for each item, stories featuring several topics could be added to arrive at the total number featuring a group of topics in headlines and leads. As there were usually several topics noted in the body of a story, topics could not be added across content categories.

Table 2 summarizes the number and circulation of all convention stories before and after opening day by newspaper circulation class. About 10 percent of the total of 2,240 stories appeared before opening day, the rest afterwards. If evenly distributed, this would have given every daily paper between one and two items to publish about the convention. Actually, as Table 3 shows, the larger circulation papers tended to publish more, and the smaller circulation papers less, than their pro-

TABLE 3

*Comparison of Total U. S. Circulation and Total NEA Convention Coverage  
Circulation by Four Circulation Classes*

Newspaper circulation class	Percentage share of each circulation class in total U.S. daily press circulation	Percentage share of each circulation class in total convention story circulation
I Over 100,000	58	66
II 50,000 to 100,000	14	14
III 10,000 to 50,000	20	18
IV Under 10,000	8	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

TABLE 4  
*Length of All NEA Convention Stories by Circulation Classes*  
Newspaper circulation class

	I over 100,000	II 50,000 to 100,000	III 10,000 to 50,000	IV under 10,000
Number of stories <sup>a</sup>	(347)	(269)	(1,165)	(459)
Length in column inches <sup>b</sup>	%	%	%	%
under 5 inches	14	28	30	30
5 to 10 inches	31	42	37	42
10 to 15 inches	31	20	24	22
15 to 20 inches	14	5	6	4
over 20 inches	10	5	3	2
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

<sup>a</sup> Numbers in parentheses represent *total number* of stories appearing in each class.

<sup>b</sup> Numbers represent percent of total number of stories in circulation class in each length category. For example, 14 percent of all items printed by newspapers in the largest circulation class (over 100,000) were under 5 column inches; 10 percent were over 20 column inches.

portionate share of both number and circulation of all convention stories. Large circulation papers (100,000 or more) averaged almost three stories during convention week; medium circulation papers (10,000 to 100,000) averaged about two; and at least half of the small circulation papers (10,000 or less), which number more than the other two groups combined, printed nothing. And, as shown on Table 4, the larger circulation papers also tended to print longer stories more frequently, and shorter stories less frequently, than did smaller circulation papers.

Table 5 shows the distribution of number and circulation of all items according to the source and type of story. With 28 daily newspaper reporters in attendance, less than 5 percent of all stories carried the by-line of a staff correspondent. However, these stories appeared in the

TABLE 5  
*Sources of Stories in Convention Press Coverage*

Source of Stories	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s
AP, UPI, Syndicated	85,192	1,471	58
Staff byline	23,962	109	220
Editorial, column	3,140	86	36
Letter to editor	692	7	99
No source of dateline	26,668	567	47
TOTALS	139,654	2,240	62

larger circulation papers (all of them east of the Mississippi). By-line stories accounted for 17 percent of the total circulation.

If smalltown and rural America read about the convention at all, it read fewer stories, shorter stories and more local-name and wire stories than did readers of the larger papers. On the other hand, smaller papers were more likely than were the larger papers to print pre-convention and other NEA-staff-written news releases, to run stories on the front page and to offer editorial comment.

The key factor in national coverage was clearly the wire service distribution, originating in the work of no more than two or three reporters. Wire service and syndicated stories dominated the coverage with 65 percent of all stories and 61 percent of the combined circulation of all stories. After opening day, the share of wire service and syndicated coverage climbed to 72 percent of all stories and 66 percent of the combined circulation.

An even more striking indication of the influence of the centralized national news distribution system was the fact that ten Associated Press wire stories filed after opening day achieved a combined circulation of 63,690,000, or nearly half the aggregate circulation of all 2,240 stories about the convention.

The news value of local publicity is shown in that one-fourth of all convention news stories carried no dateline. Small circulation papers carried more of these stories than did the larger ones. Most of the local stories featured names of hometown convention delegates. Local names were in the headlines or leads of 22 percent of all convention stories, again more frequently in the smaller than in the larger circulation papers.

TV comedian and ex-teacher Sam Levenson told the assembled convention delegates that their voice "will have to go out of Atlantic City with a big drum and big bell, because, believe me, this convention generally is not going to make the front pages of most newspapers in America—it is going to make page 37." In fact, about one in ten stories, or 6.7 percent of all convention news circulation, made the front pages of perhaps one of every 70 (mostly smaller) daily newspapers, competing for headlines with trouble in Katanga, tension over Berlin, revolt in Venezuela, floods in Japan, two satellite launchings at Cape Canaveral, and local news.

SO MUCH FOR SOME GENERAL CATEGORIES of the coverage. But what about its substance? How did it represent the events of the convention? How did it reflect the ways in which the press as an institution relates to, and views, public education? A case study cannot give the full answer. This study focused on a single national professional meeting. It involved events which also made news at other times and places. It did not attempt to investigate the day-to-day working relationship of reporters with their local schools. Another study, reported elsewhere, suggests that the dynamics of educational press coverage in a local context might result in a different overall picture and tendency than when attention is focused on national issues.<sup>6</sup>

But, with these qualifications, our findings suggest some of the answers. Briefly, more than three-fifths of all stories called attention to a national political issue in education. Curriculum and teaching topics (with strong undertones of national educational politics) were in the limelight in less than one-fifth of all convention stories. Professional issues such as salaries, certification and bargaining rights appeared in the headlines or leads of one in every nineteen stories.

News of President Kennedy's message to the convention made the circulation of stories devoted mainly to federal aid the largest on a single convention issue. An expected battle over desegregation (which never materialized) resulted in the largest *number* of headlines and leads printed about the convention (more frequently by smaller circulation papers), and claimed the lion's share of front-page attention. The third most frequent issue in the press coverage was that of communication technologies in education, especially "teaching machines." Several ingredients of newsworthiness made an attack on "machines" appear to some reporters the "significant story" of the convention.

Communication technologies also inspired almost half of all 90 editorials dealing with the convention—most of them critical of "machines." Sixty-nine percent of all editorial comment on the convention was hostile or critical.

<sup>6</sup> George Gerbner, "Newsmen and Schoolmen: The State and Problems of Education Reporting," *Journalism Quarterly*, 44: 211-24 (Summer 1967).

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How this came about, and what it all adds up to as far as the shaping of a national pattern of issues is concerned, is the subject of the rest of this report.

## Reporting the Convention

**W**HEN THE CONVENTION opened in Atlantic City, the NEA's Division of Press and Radio Relations had much of its work behind it. A series of advance releases, reports and special stories with "hometown" local angles had gone to newspapers and other news and feature outlets across the country. A "Memorandum to Editors" listing convention highlights and "name" speakers was mailed a month in advance of opening day to alert editors and to invite correspondents to the convention.

A week before opening day, a general release reached nearly 1,800 news outlets. The suggested headline was "NEA SEEKS HIGHER STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS." The lead stressed a proposed move to strengthen professional qualifications required for membership. Two days later another general release emphasized the "curriculum theme" of the convention. "TEACHERS TO STUDY PROMISING NEW PRACTICES AT NEA CONVENTION" was the suggested headline. Another "Memorandum to Editors" accompanying the release announced news conferences with NEA President Clarice Kline and Executive Secretary William G. Carr. The final advance release gave "news" of the Clarice Kline press conference scheduled for opening night. Accompanying the release was a study on "Financing Education in the 1960s," giving a state-by-state breakdown of population projections by age groups.

Two of the three advance stories contained names or figures providing local angles for newspapers in each state. Some newspapers also received special releases before (and during) the convention featuring names of local delegates.

What was the result of these pre-convention publicity efforts?

Almost 10 percent of all newspaper stories written about the conven-

TABLE 6

*Sources of Stories and Topics Featured Before and After Opening Day*

Source of Stories	Pre-convention coverage			June 25 and after		
	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s
AP, UPI, Syndicated	120	8	15	85,072	1,463	58
Staff byline	1,071	4	268	22,891	105	218
Editorial, column	22	1	22	3,118	85	37
Letter to editor	.....	..	....	692	7	99
No source or dateline	10,565	213	49	16,103	354	45
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11,778</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>127,876</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>63</b>

  

Topic in Headline and Lead	Pre-convention coverage			June 25 and after		
	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s
Local names only (with up to one paragraph of explanation)	5,752	110	53	5,776	163	35
Local name lead followed by other convention topics	4,510	70	64	8,586	155	55
"Higher standard" or "promising practices" release used in lead of story	218	10	22	364	7	52
Other	1,298	36	36	113,150	1,689	66
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11,778</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>127,876</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>63</b>

tion appeared before opening day. Most of this was the result of advance staff work. Eight wire stories and four special bylined reports were among the 226 pre-convention stories published in nearly 12 million copies across the country. (See Table 6.)

Four out of five pre-convention stories highlighted local names and local angles. Half of all pre-convention stories carried *only* local delegate's names with up to one paragraph of explanation. One out of five stories made use of advance news releases containing program information and convention highlights. Ten small circulation papers used a release verbatim in news story leads.

Professional and other convention issues noted in NEA releases received scanty press attention and appeared to have no effect on subsequent coverage of the convention. Among the "name" participants featured in advance releases, that of Dr. Jonas Salk attracted most press attention before the convention.

*Pressroom Arrangements*

When the convention began, the Press Office and Hometown News Center, manned by the Press and Radio Division staff of eleven and a clerical staff of more than a dozen, were in full operation. Correspondents were registered, supplied with folders (kept up to date with new material each day), given badges, working space, typewriters, reference materials, telephone and wire facilities, on-the-spot information, tickets to meals and meetings and a never-ending supply of hot coffee.

Reporting the convention was considered the reporters' job. Few general news releases were given out during the convention and most of these had been prepared in advance. The care and feeding of 31 representatives of commercial media, 29 representatives of educational and miscellaneous publications and 1,008 convention-delegate "hometown correspondents" kept the publicity staff busy at Atlantic City.

Two scheduled news conferences were held and others arranged upon request. Taped interviews were prepared for use by broadcasting stations. Copies of speeches were requested from 90 key speakers—and eventually received from 21. Pictures of officers, groups and several hundred "hometown delegates" were processed and mailed to the press. The "hometown news service" mailed out more than 4,300 special stories and pictures during the week.

Reporters at the convention filed, on the average, about two stories a day. Their knowledge of the news potential of forthcoming events, texts of speeches circulated in advance, and staff cooperation in arranging for newsworthy occasions, helped them meet close deadlines.

*Sunday: The Day of Presidents*

Reporters checking in at convention headquarters in Atlantic City on Sunday, June 25, 1961, found the texts of three major speeches prepared for Sunday delivery. The speeches were the keynote address of NEA President Clarice Kline, a "Report to the Profession" by NEA Executive Secretary William G. Carr and a message on pending federal aid legislation by President John F. Kennedy.

Delegates were still pouring in from every state of the Union and many foreign countries when the traditional Sunday afternoon Vespers Service opened the convention. A handful of pre-convention news stories had noted that the Reverend James A. Robinson of New York, author and leader of world student tours, was to give the opening address. The Reverend Mr. Robinson, a Negro, called for direct educational aid to

underdeveloped countries. The speech was one of 13 major addresses published in the convention *Proceedings*. Only the Atlanta (Ga.) *Daily World* (a Negro newspaper with 28,600 circulation) reported it.

One of the texts circulated to reporters in advance was the presidential address of Clarice Kline. The speech included a pointed argument for the federal aid bill then pending in Congress:

Statistics reveal that the average total expenditure for education (including capital outlay and interest) per pupil in average daily attendance is \$496 with a range between the highest and lowest expenditure of \$700. Into this level of local and state expenditure for education the federal government would add approximately \$15 per pupil in the first year. The amount would vary on a formula so that all children everywhere may have more nearly equal educational opportunities.

This philosophy of shared responsibility is nothing new—it has been practiced in the highway program, the development of airports, hospitals, irrigation projects, flood control, old age security benefits, welfare activities for the blind, to say nothing of the funds being made available to the so called federally-impacted areas. What then makes it evil or subversive when it touches the schools? . . .

Dean Anderson of New York University recently pointed out that the most vicious kind of control which can be exercised over the schools is not resolved in an academic discussion of Federal vs. Local control. Rather, it is achieved at any level by the simple expedient of withholding the necessary funds for a quality program. By refusing to appropriate the money one controls what the schools can do.

Although the subject of federal aid was featured in over 400 convention stories circulating in more than 20 million copies, none cited the substance of Miss Kline's argument. The most frequent mention of her speech was at the end of accounts of President Kennedy's message delivered later in the evening. The few items featuring Miss Kline's views included several editorial attacks on federal aid, and a story in her hometown Waukesha (Wis.) *Daily Freeman* (circulation 15,000). The story dealt with a Waukesha bank president's request that "the school board go on record showing they did not agree with Miss Kline's statements. . ."

The same newspaper also carried an editorial assuring Waukesha readers that "Miss Kline does not represent the thinking of the community from which she comes, the school board that employs her or the heads of business who contribute so much to the financial support of Waukesha's public school system."

The speech of NEA Executive Secretary William G. Carr, also delivered at the Sunday night session, rated no news copy at all. The press spotlight of the evening was on President Kennedy's message.

Although President Kennedy did not address the convention in person, his name ranked highest of all persons cited in the convention coverage. Congressman Frank Thompson, Jr., a New Jersey Democrat who sponsored the federal aid bill in the House, conveyed the President's message. It was cited in 267 stories of nearly 14 million combined circulation. A single Associated Press dispatch accounted for about five-sixths of all this coverage. The story struck a note of "cautious hope" tempered by "past disappointments:"

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—The cautious hope that Congress will pass a program of federal aid to education hung over the 99th annual convention of the National Education Association today.

Many of an estimated 10,000 delegates and observers were buoyed in spirit by a guardedly optimistic message Sunday night from President Kennedy who said he hoped to sign such a bill before the end of the summer.

But their optimism was tempered by the remembrance of many past disappointments. . .

The United Press International story of the Kennedy message, somewhat less guardedly worded, ran in only 19 papers with less than one million combined circulation. It reported that the convention opened "on a promise from President Kennedy that the fight for better schools will continue," and that the "battle . . . will not end even if Congress passes a federal aid to education law." The UPI also cited NEA President Clarice Kline as sharing "the President's optimism on passage of the bill," and quoted two paragraphs from her speech at the end of the story, which were deleted in all but a handful of papers.

*Monday: Attack on "Machines"*

Monday, June 26, was the first working day of the convention. A dozen NEA Departments sponsored major meetings during the day. The Representative Assembly was to meet in the evening. The speaker of the evening assembly was to be Dr. Jonas Salk. A copy of his speech was circulated to reporters in advance. It appeared technical and downbeat. He was not about to reveal a new discovery.

Five other Monday speeches had been circulated in advance. Four of

these dealt with what was to become, in the view of some reporters, "the significant story of the convention."

An address to a morning session of school principals and curriculum workers was prepared for delivery by Frederick M. Raubinger, Commissioner of Education of the host state of New Jersey. The title was "A Realistic View of Practices Which Tend to Increase the Lock-Step, Destroy Diversity and Place Pupils in Molds." In four brief, quotable pages Raubinger lashed out at "educational schizophrenia;" federal "centralizers;" external testing programs; "impersonalized, dehumanized teaching" through television, teaching machines and other technological devices, and tampering with the existing structure of schools.

Climaxing on a note of high tension, Raubinger ripped into "mounting, school inspired, needless pressures, tensions and anxieties." He charged that we may be on the road "to doing actual damage to children and young people." He warned that it is "later than we think," and concluded with the dark hint that if the "schizophrenic" teaching profession doesn't stand up and resist, the public "will react in its own best interest."

Two other speeches circulated for delivery that day were by Dr. William Van Til, chairman of the Department of Secondary Education of New York University. One preceded the Raubinger talk at the same meeting. Under the title of "Some Educational Practices and Programs Which Offer Promise for Greater Development of the Individual Pupil," the text revealed no striking themes or pungent comment, and was ignored by the press. However, Van Til's other speech, prepared for delivery at an afternoon meeting, offered some possibilities.

Van Til's intention was to suggest a priority of concerns. The major burden of his speech was the suggestion that the great issues of our time were the "genuine curriculum frontiers." These issues were nuclear and social revolutions; human relations and citizenship; individual, social, intellectual development, and the uses of knowledge in democratic society. On the theme of "individual development," Van Til observed that:

... Students are often treated as though they were identical members of a vast anonymous mass. Individuals are drowned in the tide of humanity. Personality is lost in the academic lockstep.

The fourth prepared text of the day's speeches was that of a national leader in audio-visual education, Dr. Edgar Dale of the Ohio State University. Dale's speech bore the title "Training or Education—A Critique

of New Teaching Materials.” “New ideas in education,” the text said, “are subjected to rigorous analysis and criticism not demanded of old ideas.” “It’s almost like buttonholing Gutenberg shortly after he developed his printing from movable type and demanding an exact statement as to . . . what print can do that manuscript cannot,” he said, declaring that *all* teaching methods and materials should be able to prove their value.

Then Dale proceeded to his major point: “Programed teaching suffers from weakness of all systematic approaches to learning;” it helps to solve problems rather than to frame them, to answer questions rather than to raise them, to assimilate perspectives rather than to create them.

The rest of the program revealed other possibilities. “Today’s Technological Aspects in Education” was the title of an address by James D. Finn, professor of education and director of the NEA’s Technological Development Project. Also on the program was Kenneth Komoski, president of the Center for Programed Instruction. And there were to be “technological” demonstrations of potential relevance to what was to become the major theme of the day’s press coverage.

**O**NLY HEADLINES ATTACKING the new technologies made the front pages. “NEA SPEAKERS ATTACK / GADGETS IN TEACHING,” declared the Providence (Rhode Island) *Journal* (circulation 61,000); “SCHOOL EXPERTS LASH / MECHANIZED EDUCATION,” cried the Madison *Wisconsin State Journal* (circulation 53,500); and so it went in all other front page headlines reaching over a million total circulation.

Three-fourths of all headlines and leads dealing with communication technologies in education played up attacks upon “teaching machines,” educational television and other means of technological audio-visual instruction. Eighty-five percent of the editorials written upon these subjects used the occasion to cite these attacks or to launch their own.

A single Associated Press wire story accounted for half the total circulation of all “communication technology” stories. This story was printed in a total of over seven and a half million copies by 91 papers. It began:

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—Educational gimmicks and gadgets such as teaching machines and television are being peddled to the public like soap, cigarettes and toothpaste, New Jersey's state commissioner of education charged today.

Frederick M. Raubinger, speaking out at the annual convention of the National Education Assn., loosed a blistering attack on what he called "impersonalized, dehumanized teaching."

"We are not only moving toward lockstep and conformity," he said, "but I suspect that we may be on the road to doing actual damage to children and young people."

After establishing the charge, the story pinpointed the "issue" and broadened the base of the attack by reference to "other convention speakers" who "echoed" the charges:

Raubinger's charge that all classroom devices must be used as tools by the teacher rather than substitutes for him, was echoed by other convention speakers.

"Other convention speakers" "echoing" Raubinger's "charge" (at different times and places during the day, and from texts prepared in advance) were Van Til, Dale and even Kenneth Komoski.

Ignoring Van Til's disclaimers (including his remark that "Of teaching machines I am as yet innocent . . ."), and omitting mention of the major burden of the speech, the story picked those passages from text and extemporaneous remarks which would best fit the context of the major theme:

"In our schools," Van Til said, "students are often treated as though they were identical members of a vast, anonymous mass. Individuals are drowned in the tide of humanity. Personality is lost in the academic lock-step."

Van Till also told convention delegates that improper use of teaching machines and television is really not progress but a step backward. Those who would substitute machines for teachers, he said, threaten a return to the 18th century industrial revolution when "children were enslaved to machines."

About one million of the 7,619,000 copies of the AP story ended on the colorful note of children "enslaved to machines." The story, however, went on to paraphrase Edgar Dale: ". . . teaching machines are useful only in helping students to solve problems. It is just as important for students to learn how to ask questions as to answer them, he said."

The stories which went beyond Professor Dale concluded by interpreting the remarks of an exponent of programmed instruction (i.e., "teaching machines") as (at least "indirectly") supporting the attack:

P. Kenneth Komoski, president of the Center for Programmed Instruction, didn't attack teaching machines directly, but he told the delegates they should save any money they might be planning to spend on the box-type teaching machines.

In a few "clarifying" paragraphs (eliminated from the end of the story by most newspapers), Komoski explained that "box-type" teaching machines (a meaningless distinction for most readers) are "the model Ts" of the industry, are "inflexible," and, along with programs to go into them, are "extremely expensive." These remarks derived their significance and validity from the total context of Komoski's speech. In the context of the news story they became part of Raubinger's charge to do battle with "the machine."

Most other stories followed the AP line. The second largest bloc came from United Press International. The UPI story repeated all the "good" quotes, paraphrased the same points, and came to the same synthetic conclusion. Only the lead was basically different:

Atlantic City, (UPI)—It washes your dishes and it tabulates your inventory—but should a machine teach your child?

The increasing use of mechanical devices in overcrowded classrooms to aid understaffed schools was the subject of a severely critical attack by leading educators at the annual convention of the National Education Association.

The third major source of stories on the subject was written by Terry Ferrer and syndicated through the New York *Herald Tribune* News Service. It took essentially the same line. The *Herald Tribune* (circulation 337,000) headline proclaimed "TEACHERS HEAR TV CLASSES / ASSAILED AS 'SCHIZOPHRENIA'." The story began:

Atlantic City, N.J.—Teaching machines, television and other educational "gadgets" were soundly rapped by educators here yesterday as destructive of pupil individuality and as symptoms of "educational schizophrenia."

Several speakers told sessions of the convention of the National Education Association that machines were threatening to "place pupils in molds" and increase educational conformity rather than individuality.

Among the few significantly different twists was a report written by Georgie Anne Geyer and distributed through the *Chicago Daily News* Syndicate. About half way in the story (where several of the subscribing papers stopped the account), Miss Geyer went on to note Van Til's major point that "The greatest challenge of the '60s is not technology or organization:"

"Instead," he said, "the greatest challenge is developing democratic human relationships among young people of varied races, religions and social classes and helping young people to understand and come to grips with the international social realities of their time."

James D. Finn spoke briefly on the implications of technology for education, and touched on the NEA project on Technological Development of which he was principal investigator. His remarks were reported in one news story by Herbert G. Stein for the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) *Post-Gazette & Sun-Telegraph* (circulation 272,000), and later noted in an editorial in the Albuquerque (New Mexico) *Journal* (circulation 45,000). The news story was a "reaction piece" to the major line of coverage. "AUTOMATION / IN TEACHING / IS DEFENDED," stated the headline. Finn declared, according to the story, that "I have never seen a classroom teacher who had her hands on this stuff who was afraid of it . . . but the teachers don't make speeches."

The "blistering attack" of Commissioner Raubinger catapulted him to third place among all convention speakers. His remarks were printed by 134 papers in nearly ten million copies. Other speakers cited on the subject of "machines" were selected for attention in direct relation to their contribution to Raubinger's charges.

A DIFFERENT COMBINATION of circumstances resulted in the development of the minor theme of the day's "technological" coverage. The chief factor in that selection appears to have been quasi-commercial advance publicity given to a demonstration on "speed reading." The demonstration was listed in the convention program simply as "WOOD DYNAMIC READING PROCESS—Evelyn N. Wood, assistant professor of reading, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware."

The "dynamic" reading process offered little more than what had

been taught in reading development programs across the country. But the name of Mrs. Wood was likely to ring bells in the minds of alert reporters. She was founder of a rapidly expanding business enterprise. Her first publicity coup had been getting Senators Symington, Talmadge, Bennett and Proxmire to demonstrate her technique on television to a national audience. Her second master stroke appeared to be the exhibition of a 17-year-old "reading wizard" at the NEA convention.

Thirty-six papers carried the news to well over three million readers. Only one news story in the *Christian Science Monitor* (circulation 156,000) noted educational authorities viewing the "revolutionary reading method" without gasps of astonishment, and posed the pertinent question: "... Is this a stunt or a standard?"

Two other Monday speeches were circulated in advance. Buena Stolberg, President of NEA's Department of Classroom Teachers, outlined the educational implications of increasing population mobility and changing occupational patterns. Her address was headlined in ten stories and noted in a total of 18 newspapers with a combined circulation of less than half a million.

The much-heralded speech of Dr. Jonas Salk also turned out to have little news value. Only 14 papers made reference to it. The text revealed the forbidding subhead which was indeed the theme (even if not the title) of his discussion:

Biologic Mechanisms Mediating Effect of Nurture, Education and Culture.

No wire service picked up the speech. Two of the largest papers carrying stories exhibited similar headline-writing reflexes in associating Salk with "vaccine" and "shots," despite the lack of any such association in the speech. "PREJUDICE / SHOTS URGED / BY SALK," wrote one; "SALK URGES / EDUCATION / AS 'VACCINE'," proclaimed the other.

*Tuesday: Attack on Complacency, Communism, Clergy*

NEA committees and commissions held open meetings on Tuesday. Statements were made and proposals discussed on a wide range of issues. Speakers included two U.S. Senators, the U.S. Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner of Education and some of the most prominent educational leaders of the country. Subjects ranged from academic freedom, financial and legislative problems, international relations, professional ethics and the U.S. Office of Education, to the launching of a study on the effects of automation.

Assistant U.S. Commissioner of Education Homer D. Babbidge explained the reorganization plan of the U.S. Office (a specific target of Raubinger's attacks) to reporters gathered at the Awards Luncheon of the Education Writers Association. Only two stories contained reference to the speech. U.S. Commissioner of Education Sterling M. McMurrin did much better. Although he spoke without notes or a prepared text, a wire story picked up his comments on complacency, communism and teacher education. Sixty-four papers carried news of the speech in a total of over seven million copies. Half of these headlined his attack on "complacency" in the face of the "communist menace."

Other stories were divided on what the Commissioner said. "EDUCATION COMMISSIONER / SEES SCHOOL REGIMENTATION / AS ASSURING U.S. FUTURE" (*sic*), declared the headline in the Newark (N.J.) *News* (circulation 270,000). The lead cited McMurrin as saying "the future of the nation and the success of democracy may require greater regimentation in school programs." On the other hand, Ruth Dunbar of the Chicago *Sun-Times* (circulation 566,000), reported that McMurrin said "one of the greatest problems schools face today is to find ways to serve national goals without regimenting the individual."

McMurrin's warning of "a resurgence of civic distrust in the form of various kinds of fascism" was cited in two stories; his reference to communism in many more. The other reports of rightwing attacks on education rated scanty press coverage, and no editorial attention.

The major news break of the day came when, after his prepared address (which received little press attention), Senator Wayne Morse was prompted by a questioner to comment on Catholic opposition to federal aid to public schools. In his speech to the NEA's Legislative Commission, Senator Morse had sketched the U.S. position in the world power struggle before giving a detailed account of pending educational legislation. The UPI wire story of three paragraphs (printed in 13 papers) made no reference to legislation at all. Most of the 52 stories reporting the speech, giving it a combined circulation of over five million, played up the off-the-cuff religious conflict angle under such headlines as "MORSE CHIDES PRELATES ON AID" and "MORSE SAYS SPELLMAN ERRED ON SCHOOL AID."

The second of two news conferences failed to attract the circulation of the Morse comment. The conference was called to announce the launching of a major NEA project to study the impact of automation

on the future of American education. Executive Secretary Carr outlined the project and announced that it will be directed by Luther H. Evans, former Librarian of Congress and ex-Director General of UNESCO. No wire service picked up the news. Thirty-eight papers of less than three and a half million combined circulation carried news of the project. Twenty-two of these stories came not from the news conferences at all but from a special "hometown" news release prepared by the staff and mailed to local papers.

*Wednesday: Midweek Doldrums*

Wednesday was a slow news day. Few "name" speakers appeared on the program, and texts of speeches circulated in advance revealed no newsworthy angles. The major business of the morning Representative Assembly was to receive a report on an NEA life insurance plan, and to admit the Department of Foreign Languages into the Association. Both motions passed unreported. Before adjournment, a motion was passed suggesting that delegates support federal aid to education by writing their Congressmen. Under headlines exclaiming "LETTER BARRAGE," and "TEACHERS TO BOMBARD CONGRESS," 83 papers printed nearly three million copies of an AP dispatch announcing the news.

Fifteen NEA departments held afternoon sessions on subjects ranging from Home Economics and Industrial Arts to Art Education, Exceptional Children, Social Studies, Mathematics, Speech and Music. Two texts—one on family life education, the other on "problem children"—were circulated in advance. The speech on family life education rated four paragraphs in a story in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* (circulation 358,000) which pointed out that the speaker was a former St. Louisan and an ex-*Post Dispatch* staff member. No other paper reported the talks. The only other coverage of the events of the afternoon cited criticism of "modern mathematics" programs voiced by two educators speaking at a session of mathematics teachers. The news was headlined in three stories, and noted in two more.

The speaker of the evening Assembly was Sidney Hyman, author and historian. Only the local *Atlantic City Press* (circulation 47,000) reported the talk. The only talk of the day to attract significant press attention was a brief message to the General Assembly by Mrs. Clifford N. Jenkins, president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. A United Press International story, printed by 17 papers of over half a

million combined circulation, featured Mrs. Jenkins' comment on the need for home, community and mass media reinforcement of the schools' efforts. The Trenton (N.J.) *Trentonian* (circulation 35,000) headlined the story "PARENTS ARE SHORT-CHANGING / SCHOOLS, PTA PRESIDENT RAPS."

It had been a dull day, and by nightfall reporters were clamoring for "news."

*Thursday: Attack on Schools; Promise of "Fights to Come"*

The convention theme of "Promising New Practices in Education" was designed to attract attention to Thursday's program. Discussions and demonstrations of "promising new practices" ranged from the subject of foreign language teaching through curriculum developments and biology to instructional technology, PTA conference techniques and school camping. Restive reporters saw little news potential in "promising new practices." Special interviews were held with delegates and officials predicting "strong debate" and a "major floor fight" over the resolution precluding the use of strike by teachers, and forecasting an "integration fight" for next day.

The remarks of the day which attracted most press attention were made by a Florida high school principal, Frank Brown, a proponent of non-graded schools and "team teaching." Brown spoke at a session on "Promising New Practices in Staff Utilization." Making little or no reference to "promising new practices," the stories concentrated on Brown's attacks on "self-contained" (one-teacher) classrooms. The AP story, based on an interview, was printed by 38 papers under such headlines as "SCHOOL OFFICIAL SNIPES / AT ELEMENTARY SYSTEM," and "PRINCIPAL BLASTS GRADE SCHOOLS." Special stories swelled the combined circulation of the attack to well over four and a half million copies.

A publicity staff release on new equipment to "support the modern teacher," given to all reporters and mailed to local papers, was noted by only five small papers. A discussion of NEA's "project on the Instructional Program of the Public Schools," an ambitious attempt to define educational objectives for the 1960s, was unreported. The subject of instructional technology, which blasted its way into the headlines on the basis of Monday's attack on "teaching machines," attracted no press attention when presented by some of its practitioners on Thursday.

*Friday: "Fights" Fizzle on Convention Floor but Not in Press Coverage*

Adoption of a platform stating the principles, policies and goals which guide the NEA was not noted in any news story. A motion passed during the discussion of the platform commending the Arlington Education Association for integrating Negro and white chapters (a move for which the AEA had been expelled from the Virginia Education Association) was headlined in only three papers.

The federal aid resolution passed with little debate. Seven delegates spoke in support of the resolution, two in opposition. Most stories reporting the action cited only the opposition. Editorial comment was all opposed. Another resolution expressed belief "in the necessity for world understanding and in the solution of international problems through peaceful negotiations." It was not reported in any news story. Neither was a much-debated resolution on "Evaluation and Subjective Ratings" opposing so-called merit rating schemes.

Next came the resolution on "Desegregation in the Public Schools." The discussion was lengthy but one-sided. Efforts to strengthen the compromise resolution were partly successful. Only one voice was raised in opposition to the substance of the resolution. The NEA stand supporting the desegregation decision of the Supreme Court attracted more front page attention than any other single issue at the convention. The only individual view cited in most of the stories was that of the delegate opposing the resolution. *This made him the best-publicized person present at the convention.*

Another major resolution set aside for consideration pertained to "urban problems." "Urban problems" had a double meaning for the convention. The resolution expressed concern over the "severe challenge" that the "special problems of the great cities" present to public schools, and urged intensive effort "to meet urban needs." These words had reference to the deterioration of the inner areas of city school systems where rapid suburban development shifted money and care to the peripheries. But behind the words of the resolution loomed the threat of the rival American Federation of Teachers, with its strength concentrated in the big cities. The press coverage concentrated on the second theme. Most of the stories which featured "urban problems" did so in the context NEA's "war with the AFT."

Sir Ronald Gould, president of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, was the guest speaker of the last

General Assembly. Sir Ronald delivered a pointed and provocative address. On the subject of federal aid to education, for example, he said:

Now, if you say to me, this is a danger to freedom, let me say this: There is no body of teachers with greater freedom anywhere in the world than the British teachers. We have freedom in our curriculum, we teach what we like, how we like, with what textbooks we like, we determine what we do in the classroom; in spite of the fact that more than 60 percent of the running cost of education comes from central funds, our local authorities still have freedom of movement.

Sir Ronald had no text to give to reporters. Although he was cited in 27 news stories of well over two million total circulation, none made reference to his Assembly speech. Instead, the stories were based on off-the-cuff remarks made during a press news conference, commenting on Sputnik, teaching machines, teacher tenure and the year-around school term.

The formal convention program closed with a speech by the new president of the Association, a high school teacher from Oregon, Ewald Turner. Turner stressed the importance of the "professional image of teaching." He called for "greater visibility to our efforts and achievements to build a strong and effective educational program." Turner himself achieved considerable visibility in the convention press coverage. Nearly 100 papers carried his picture. His views appeared in 63 stories of over four million circulation, but came not from the speech but from a special "feature interview." Remarks selected for citation appeared under such headlines as "TURNER RAPS TEACHING," "NEA PRESIDENT TAKES CRITICAL LOOK AT PROFESSION," and "KID PARTIES / FOR 'STATUS'; / PARENTS HIT."

### *The Speakers*

Speakers make news. News also makes speakers. The most widely quoted "speaker" of the convention was the President of the United States, who did not attend in person. The best publicized name of those actually present was not listed on the program. It was a delegate from North Carolina, Bert Ishee, cited in opposition to the desegregation resolution in more than 11 million copies of stories printed in 130 papers.

The ten most frequently cited speakers in the convention press coverage (see Table 7) also included New Jersey's Commissioner Raubinger in third place with nearly ten million copies of 134 stories lashing edu-

TABLE 7

*Ten Most Frequently Cited Speakers in the Convention Press Coverage*

	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s
President Kennedy ( <i>in absentia</i> )	13,719	267	51
Delegate Bert Ishee	11,366	130	87
N.J. Commissioner Raubinger	9,749	134	73
Professor Van Til	9,607	118	81
Professor Dale	7,298	86	82
U.S. Commissioner McMurrin	7,216	64	113
NEA President Clarice Kline	5,352	83	64
Senator Wayne Morse	5,245	52	101
Principal Frank Brown	4,754	40	119
NEA Pres.-Elect Ewald Turner	4,350	63	69

cational “machines,” and Professor Van Til in fourth place “echoing” Raubinger. Over seven million copies of 86 stories placed Professor Dale in the position of supporting charges by Raubinger and Van Til. Almost as many stories featured U.S. Commissioner McMurrin lashing out at complacency, communism and teachers’ training. Over five million copies of stories stressed Senator Morse’s elicited attack on the Catholic church, but few cited his remarks on federal aid legislation. Nearly as many stories had Principal Frank Brown “blast grade schools,” and NEA President Ewald Turner “rap” teaching and “hit” parents. Only NEA President Clarice Kline made the top ten without attacking anybody (but also without getting the burden of her speech into the stories).

Five of the ten major addresses delivered before the Representative Assembly were not reported at all. An education writer’s impression was summarized in the headline of a convention roundup article in the *New York Herald Tribune*. The headline said:

**SCHOOL ISSUES  
PUZZLE EXPERTS**

**Pity the Parents, if Even Educators  
Disagree on Just About Everything**

## The Pattern of Issues

IT WAS IN THE FIELD of hometown press service to organizational life that efforts of the NEA publicity staff were most noticeable in the press coverage: names, announcements, procedural and ceremonial functions. One out of five stories featured local names; one-third of the total circulation highlighted no issues.

But this, of course, is not enough. Self-aggrandizement or disinterested service, or both, may be among the purposes of all organizations, but the prime mover of most is the desire to influence public policy. Dealing with issues becomes not only unavoidable but the heart of the news-making process.

The issue-laden story is the jealously guarded domain of the press. The reporter out to get "the story" usually has a sense of independence from his news sources, and an equally keen sense of working for a publishing organization with its own interpretation of the public interest. As G. K. Hodenfield of the Associated Press wrote, he may feel like a "grandstand quarterback" observing the organizational game. Hodenfield described "part of the fun" of reporting an educational conference "the opportunity to second-guess the manager or find fault with the way the quarterback is running the team. You can stay aloof from the practicalities, the responsibilities, and the pressures, and let sheer logic prevail."<sup>7</sup>

After the publicist with his "nose for headlines," the reporter with his sense of "news values," the national distribution network and the local editorial and circulation processes are through with their respective functions of selecting, treating and disseminating the news, the logic that prevails in the final pattern is the logic of institutions.

<sup>7</sup> G. K. Hodenfield, "Nobody Asked Me, But . . ." *Saturday Review*, January 20, 1962, p. 51.

TABLE 8

*Types of Issues Featured in the Convention Press Coverage*

	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s
Headline and Lead Reference to:			
No issues (general mention of NEA, teachers, elections, appointments, awards, other names and convention procedure)	40,904	296	138
National and political issues (federal aid to education, desegregation etc.)	55,281	1,296	49
Curriculum and teaching issues (communication technology, "team teaching," etc.)	24,573	316	78
Professional issues and relations with the community (right to strike, certification, salaries etc.)	7,118	106	67
TOTALS	127,876	2,014	63

Table 8 summarizes the figures. National political issues dominated the press coverage. They were headlined in 64 percent of all stories and 43 percent of all circulation. Curriculum and teaching topics were highlighted in less than 20 percent and professional issues in less than 5 percent of all stories and circulation.

More than one in every ten convention stories made the front page, and this was more frequently true in smaller than in larger papers. The circulation share of all front-page convention stories was 6.7 percent of the total. The desegregation issue was headlined in three times the number of front-page stories of its closest rival, federal aid to education (Table 9).

TABLE 9

*Front Page Stories in the Convention Press Coverage*

Topics in Headline and Lead	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s	Percent of total circulation of stories on topics
Federal aid to education	2,384	54	44	10.1
Desegregation	4,335	152	29	23.2
Other national issues	389	10	39	3.0
Communication technology	1,176	11	107	7.9
All other topics	288	17	169	-----
TOTALS	8,572	244	35	6.7

TABLE 10

*Editorials in the Convention Press Coverage*

Editorials on:	Circ. in 1000s	No. of stories	Ave. Circ. per story in 1000s	Percent of editorials on topic opposed or critical
Federal aid to education	365	7	52	100.0
Desegregation	295	5	59	60.0
Communication technology in education	1,868	50	37	85.2
All other topics	655	28	23	33.7
TOTALS	3,183	90	35	69.0

The convention evoked 90 editorials of over three million total circulation (Table 10). The "teaching machine story" inspired almost half of all editorials dealing with the convention. Sixty-nine percent of editorial comment on all convention topics was hostile or critical.

*Political Issues*

The major political problems of federal aid to education and school desegregation dominated the press coverage. These two issues, however, were not publicized alike, reported alike or selected alike by newspapers.

The federal aid issue was stressed in messages by the presidents of both the United States and of the NEA, featured in releases and a news conference, emphasized in numerous speeches during the week, discussed and voted on in the Representative Assembly. Desegregation, on the other hand, was mentioned in no news releases and in few major speeches. There were no press conferences or other attempts to dramatize the issue. Yet 681 stories headlined the desegregation resolution and 407 headlined federal aid. Although federal aid stories ran in larger newspapers and achieved a total circulation of over 23.5 million compared to 18.7 million on desegregation, editors gave front-page emphasis to three desegregation stories for every one on federal aid.

All other national political issues combined rated 208 stories of 13.0 million total circulation.

*Desegregation.* The draft resolution submitted at Atlantic City made no reference to the Supreme Court decision. Yet the Associated Press, in an advance story published in 182 papers of five and a half million combined circulation, termed the proposal "the strongest policy statement on desegregation in NEA history." Later on, however, it noted

that the resolution "appears strong only by comparison with action at other NEA conventions."

The same day, the *New York Times* (circulation 614,000) reported under the headline "INTEGRATION FIGHT / GROWING IN N.E.A.:"

ATLANTIC CITY—Delegates from New York, Illinois and Arizona appealed to the National Education Assn. Monday to take a firm stand for school integration.

At an open hearing, they urged that the association call on school authorities to comply with the 1954 Supreme Court decision banning segregation. A resolution expected to be adopted calls simply for the promotion of goodwill, without specifically taking a stand on segregation. . .

Most other special stories followed the *Times'* lead angle. "NEA DELEGATES FACE / BATTLE ON INTEGRATION," proclaimed the *Milwaukee Journal* (circulation 369,000). "SCHOOL INTEGRATION PROPOSAL / DIVIDES EDUCATORS' MEETING," declared the *Baltimore Sun* (circulation 219,000). "NEA CENSURED FOR SILENCE ON INTEGRATION" was the headline in the *Philadelphia Bulletin* (circulation 695,000). The *Colombia (S.C. State)* (circulation 87,000) played up the opposition in its own correspondent's report, headlined "NEA DELEGATES MAP RESISTANCE TO INTEGRATION 'PUSH'."

As finally passed, the resolution included an amendment pledging "continued support" (for the first time!) to the Supreme Court decision. Most stories announcing the vote termed it "strongest stand" and "firm support." But the only quote went to the sole opposition speaker, Bert Ishee, a high school principal from North Carolina. He was cited as pleading for "more time" and against "outside pressure" in 130 stories of over 11 million combined circulation.

This made Bert Ishee the best publicized individual present at the convention. It also made it easier for Southern papers to play up the opposition in such headlines as "NEA MEET / FIGHTS 'MIX' / RESOLUTION," and "STATE DELEGATE OPPOSES / NEA SCHOOLS RESOLUTION."

The headlining of the news in Southern papers followed a consistent pattern. The term "integration" appeared in headlines only in the context of words indicating resistance, opposition or lack of unity. When the headline reported support of desegregation, the terms "mix" or

"mixing" were used, as in "NEA BACKS MIX POLICY," "NEA SUPPORTS / ORDER TO MIX," or "NEA STAMPS MIXING APPROVAL."

ALTHOUGH ONE-THIRD of all stories written about the convention noted the desegregation move, only five editorials, or one out of every eighteen, commented on the issue. Two editorials applauded the action but called it "mild" and "belated." These were published in the Des Moines (Iowa) *Tribune* (circulation 128,000) and the Lincoln (Neb.) *Journal* (circulation 43,000).

The Charleston (S.C.) *Post* (circulation 35,500) called the NEA stand "not surprising" as "that organization is the chief lobby that has been urging a federal school aid program which would lead to still further government control and meddling in public education." The editorial declared that

. . . Southern educators who oppose compulsory integration and at the same time call for federal aid work at cross-purposes, however unwittingly. In demands for federal money and for desegregation the National Education Association strays far from the field of education.

In a reference to desegregation the Greenville (S.C.) *News* (circulation 80,000) hinted that among "beneficial side effects" of an educational television demonstration linking South Carolina with the Atlantic City convention might be a realization that ETV offers "equal" education without integration. "Perhaps some of those present from other parts of the nation will realize," the editorial said, ". . . that South Carolina is determined to educate its children, regardless of color or creed and despite agitation for changes in its social patterns."

The Thomasville (Ga.) *Times-Enterprise* (circulation 8,000) argued that NEA approval of desegregation "should be sufficient reason for Southern educators to drop their membership in that outfit." The editorial warned:

Control of the nation's schools has long been the aim of those who would subvert the thinking of the American people and there are many who

believe that the Communist element in this country is trying to use the integration issue as a part of the over-all brain-washing program, for controlling the minds of our young people and the acts of many of our educators.

*Federal Aid.* The sources of news and comment on the federal aid issue were, in order of the number of stories, (1) President Kennedy's message and NEA support of the federal aid bill pending in Congress; (2) news of an NEA recommendation that delegates write to their Congressmen supporting the bill, headlined in most papers as the "Letter Barrage" resolution, and (3) Senator Morse's critical comment on the Catholic church's position.

The Kennedy message story, its cautious tone virtually forecasting defeat of the federal aid bill, pre-empted the major share of headline and lead attention given to the federal aid issue. The AP report of "guarded optimism" alone achieved a circulation of nearly 12 million.

Another Associated Press account provided the source of most of the news of the NEA action. The story appeared to balance the "official" NEA call for "a strong program of federal aid" with the usual note that "some expressed fears that it would lead to federal control." One paragraph cited the views of the opposition which "few other delegates supported," and another paragraph raised the religious conflict angle by citing a floor motion which died for want of a second. Supporting views were not cited.

Nearly all the special stories reporting the floor discussion—the least heated in years—focused on what there was of the "conflict." One headline exclaimed "FOE OF U.S. AID." Another spoke of "REVOLT IN NEA AGAINST FEDERAL AID."

Next to President Kennedy, Senator Wayne Morse was the source of the largest number of press references to federal aid. The bulk of these came from an Associated Press story printed in 31 papers with a combined circulation of over 3 million. The lead centered on a remark made by Morse in response to a question after his speech, injecting the religious conflict (missing from the speech itself) into the story:

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)—Sen. Wayne Morse, D-Ore., Tuesday said the Catholic Hierarchy made a great mistake when it threatened to oppose any federal aid to education bill unless parochial schools were included.

Four of the five special stories followed the AP lead. Those informed

by United Press International learned that Morse attacked communism. Under such headlines as "REDS IMPLACABLE FOE IN FREEDOM RACE," "MORSE SAYS SPELLMAN ERRED ON SCHOOL AID," most readers were treated to a variety of conflicts.

One exception to this pattern of emphasis was a story by Harvey Ford of the Toledo (Ohio) *Blade* (circulation 182,000) which observed:

"I never lose sight of the little boys and girls," Senator Morse remarked, explaining that he had introduced or sponsored an aid bill in every session since 1947, when he and the late Senator Taft sponsored legislation for federal aid to education.

CONVENTION COVERAGE of the federal aid action sparked seven editorials across the country. *All attacked the proposal and its proponents.*

The Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) *News* (circulation 61,000) took its cue from the remark reported in Harvey Ford's Toledo *Blade* story. The *News* headlined its two-column, 26-paragraph editorial, "WHEN LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS / BECOME PAWNS OF POLITICS." The editorial commented:

"When you're talking to the people, keep their eyes focused on those little boys and girls. . ."

"Keep them thinking about those little boys and girls. . . ." This advice was given to the nation's school teachers last Tuesday as they met at the National Education Assn. convention at Atlantic City. . . .

Morse was suggesting that the teachers become active lobbyists for legislation that will give Big Government a strong grip on educational matters which rightfully belong to the local and state level of government.

Unabashedly, he was instructing the teachers to engage in appeals to emotions of the parents and taxpayers to overcome the resistance of reason.

The speech was a travesty on the responsibility of a United States senator to the nation as a whole. It was calloused (*sic*) counsel to a special interest

group to be self-serving behind a tender disguise—"those little boys and girls."

The South Bend (Ind.) *Tribune* (circulation 111,000) picked up the "pressure tactics" implication inherent in the "letter barrage" story and made it the spearhead of its editorial attack on federal aid to education. Under the title "DANGEROUS FIRST STEP," the editorial began with a rhetorical question: "If a fellow is up to his ears in debt it wouldn't make sense to try to fast-talk him out of some cash, would it?" Yet, the editorial continued, "this seems to be what the National Education Association is bent on doing" when it suggests that members "bombard congressmen with letters urging support for the federal aid-to-education bill."

The editorial went on to claim "that the federal government is no more financially able to take over the added burden than the individual who is up to his ears in debt and without prospects for changing his status." At the same time it warned that the proposed bill "would be only the beginning of a sensational fiscal binge."

An editorial in the Waukesha (Wis.) *Daily Freeman* (circulation 15,000) concentrated its fire on the Waukesha high school teacher who made it all the way to NEA president. It published a demand by a Waukesha bank president that the school board disavow Miss Kline's efforts on behalf of federal aid, and it also published a reply headlined "TEACHER DEFENDS POSITION / ON FEDERAL AID TO SCHOOLS." The *Freeman* also proceeded to make known its own editorial position. "MISS KLINE PLUGS NEA FEDERAL AID LINE," the headline declared. The editorial decried an NEA booklet entitled "Taxes Are Good" and declared it "forgery" and "hopelessly irrational," and argued that despite "highly satisfactory" teacher salaries, "the big teachers' lobby that sees in federal aid another pot of gold at the end of a rainbow" has become so greedy that "it wouldn't hesitate to sell our free system into the bondage of federal bureaucracy." Furthermore, the editorial warned, "once teachers go on the federal payroll, how could they possibly view the world around them in terms other than central government solutions to all economic and social problems? And how could they but indoctrinate their pupils with this same philosophy?" In a note of re-assurance, the editorial declared:

So that the rest of the country doesn't get the wrong impression about the source of such strange doctrine, it should be pointed out Miss Kline does

not represent the thinking of the community from which she comes, the school board that employs her or the heads of business who contribute so much to the financial support of Waukesha's public school system.

The lure of federal gold, and the schemes of a "national lobby" whose favor Washington is "currying" were also themes of an editorial in the Waterbury (Conn.) *Republican* (circulation 23,000). The editorial "CURRYING FAVOR" took its cue from President Kennedy's convention message which, it declared, "must have sounded like happy words to the pedagogues, but opponents of the Kennedy package react sharply to the blandishments of federal munificence." The editorial took special exception to "the scheme to make the federal bureaucracy responsible for partial payment of teachers' salaries."

A long editorial in the Little Rock (Ark.) *Democrat* (circulation 88,000) also started out stating that President Kennedy "told the teachers exactly what they wanted to hear." It envisaged federal aid leading to federal control "by hooking local school financing to appropriations handed out by the U.S. Office of Education." It forecast a conflict between the USOE and the NEA, with the NEA holding out for lower standards of teacher certification.

The Charleston (S.C.) *Post* (circulation 35,000) warned Southern white educators that federal aid would lead to "compulsory integration." "Should the measure be enacted," the editorial warned, "proponents of compulsory integration would work through the executive and judicial branches of the government to achieve their aims. . . ."

*Other Political Issues.* Communism and U.S. "complacency" were in the headlines and leads of 63 stories printed in over six million combined circulation. Most of these came from an AP wire report of a speech by U.S. Commissioner of Education Sterling McMurrin which observed that "the American people are so complacent they have not even begun to sense the importance of education to the nation's future," and warned of "the deadly seriousness with which the Communist nations are taking the task of obliterating the freedom of the individual in our society."

Although McMurrin also scored rightwing attacks, only two special stories took notice. For every five headlines alerting "complacent" Americans to the dangers of communism, there was one featuring reports of stepped-up rightwing attacks on education. Nine stories noted, but none headlined, discussion of threats to academic freedom.

Five stories—three of them syndicated through the New York Times News Service—reported an interview with Edwin W. Davis, associate

secretary of the NEA Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education. The *Times* story lead stated:

ATLANTIC CITY—Ideological attacks on the nation's public schools have increased sharply this year, the National Education Association was told today.

In quantity and in variety, according to Edwin W. Davis, the N.E.A. Defense Commission's associate secretary for special studies, the attacks are strongly reminiscent of those in the early Fifties, when the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy was conducting investigations.

"We went through the McCarthy period and now we have the John Birch era," Dr. Davis said in an interview after addressing a meeting at the N.E.A. convention here. "In the name of anti-communism and anti-socialism, these people lash out at everybody from Eisenhower and Kennedy to the local school teachers."

As syndicated by the Times News Service, the first word was changed from "ideological" to "destructive," and the third paragraph on "McCarthy period and . . . John Birch era" was omitted.

Senator Oren Long's appeal to teachers to be active in politics was reported in a brief wire story used by five small papers. Other references to social and political responsibilities of teachers came from special stories based on the speech by Professor William Van Til. Although Van Til's speech was cited in 118 news items of nearly ten million combined circulation, most stories noted only those remarks which appeared to "echo" Commissioner Raubinger's attack on educational "machines," including the Office of Education.

All but one of the 12 stories which mentioned the U.S. office cited New Jersey Commissioner Raubinger's attack upon it. "Raubinger accused the U.S. Department (*sic.*) of Education of trying to standardize curriculum and teaching practices," said one story. "Raubinger criticized the U.S. Office of Education for its recent publication 'A Federal Education Agency for the Future,'" explained another.

Assistant U.S. Commissioner Homer D. Babbidge gave an account of the reorganization plan outlined in "A Federal Agency for the Future." The occasion was the Awards Luncheon of the Education Writers Association. Two stories noted but none reported the speech.

#### *Curriculum and Teaching Issues*

About one-fifth of the convention press coverage featured curriculum and teaching topics in headlines and leads. Communication technology

attracted the lion's share of that attention.

The free-swinging blast against "machines" delivered by the chief educational officer of the host state captured all the front-page space, most of the headlines and the bulk of news and editorial attention given to curriculum and teaching topics.

The Raubinger attack on "machines" established the major theme of the coverage as the issue of "teacher *vs.* the machine." The primary source of stories featuring that theme was an AP dispatch printed by 91 papers in over seven and a half million copies.

The catchy lead and provocative slant of most stories on the subject were well suited to the requirements of vivid headlining. A check of all terms used in headlines showed "GADGETS" and "GIMMICKS" led in frequency of usage (used in 32 and 29 headlines, respectively), followed by "ACADEMIC TRICKS" and "PROPS," "IMPERSONALIZED" and "DEHUMANIZED" schools and teaching, "CANNED," "MECHANIZED" and "MACHINE" teaching or education or methods. Typical combinations were "PEDDLED LIKE SOAP; / TEACHING DEVICES LASHED: / DEHUMANIZED GADGETS;" or "MACHINES NO SUBSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS," or "EDUCATORS RAP MACHINE USE."

A count of headline verbs used to indicate what "educators" did to "machines" showed "HIT," "RAP," "LASH," "BLAST," "ATTACK," "CRITICIZE" and "ASSAIL," leading with frequencies ranging from fourteen to five. These were followed by "DEPLORE," "RIP," "FLAY," "SCORE," "LAMBAST" and "DECRY." The arsenal of headline terms was supplemented by having "machines" declared "THREAT TO STUDENT," "DAMAGING TO CHILDREN," and "HANDED DUNCE CAP," or education seen as their "VICTIM."

The news coverage gave the subject the dramatic twist of a great human battle. Editorial writers rose to the occasion in 38 editorials of over a million combined circulation. This was twice the amount of editorial comment devoted to the major national issues of federal aid and desegregation combined.

The vision of "Johnny and his school friends" being "identical members of a vast anonymous mass," is "properly a matter of concern," declared the Lancaster (Pennsylvania) *Intelligencer Journal* (circulation 33,300). "America, in the international jungle of the latter half of the

twentieth century, cannot afford a Johnny who is an automaton, whose thinking depends on a machine."

"Individuals are drowned in the tide of humanity," exclaimed the Spartanburg (South Carolina) *Herald* (circulation 33,600), but "some educators and some Boards of Education—Spartanburg's among them—are actively battling the tide of mediocrity."

In a similar gambit, the Roanoke (Virginia) *Times* (circulation 51,600) compounded the confusion. After identifying "teaching machines" and television with "education gadgetry . . . destructive of pupil individuality . . . symptoms of 'educational schizophrenia,'" asserting that they "place pupils in molds" and are "causing impersonalized, dehumanized teachers" (*sic.*), the editorial hastened to assure Roanokers that "the NEA speakers were leveling their guns at machines, not the programmed type of instruction used in Roanoke." Then it struck the theme of ulterior motives causing all this furor:

But we can't escape the suspicion that, since the NEA membership is made up of teachers, any new idea, good or bad, which might result in fewer teachers would automatically bring down the wrath of those who make their living by teaching.

The suspicion of economic motive was noted in other editorials, and embellished in some. Thus the Montgomery (Alabama) *Advertiser* (circulation 65,000) commented:

Teachers who merely parrot their lectures, who fail to inspire and encourage, are merely human machines. And they are neither as efficient or as cheap as some of the "gadgets" replacing them.

The NEA bleats are thus undeserving of much public sympathy. The arguments against mechanization, in a profession already mechanized by tired dogma and time-serving teachers, are essentially the same as organized labor's attacks on new machines to do the job better.

An editorial column in the Salt Lake City *Deseret News & Telegram* (circulation 88,000) was typical of a more restrained tone on the same theme. It ascribed Raubinger's chamber of horrors to "stolid opposition to change," and identified it with the lethargy of the profession. "Perhaps no major undertaking of the human race is as difficult to reform as that of teaching," it continued. "Educators would render the nation and themselves a tremendous service if they'd adopt a more positive

attitude toward changes that give promise of increasing teacher productivity."

But the Bangor (Maine) *News* (circulation 76,000) was not so considerate. Referring to a "union-style package deal" pay for teachers, and noting "actual damage to children and young people" done by "teaching machines and television," the editorial came to the conclusion:

These are rather alarming words for parents and taxpayers. It makes the layman wonder if all the additional money being spent for education these days is being spent sensibly.

Eight editorials rallied to the defense. *Their combined circulation was little more than one-tenth of the total.* All took their cue from critical comment reported in the news. But they made an attempt to clarify the issues and to take the discussion out of the "battle" of the headlines.

THE WOOD SPEED-READING PUBLICITY inspired another eight editorials of over half a million combined circulation. The comment was not all unappreciative. The Albuquerque (New Mexico) *Journal* (circulation 45,000) thought that the demonstration "proved" the point of "mechanical means in education." And the Durango (Colorado) *Herald* (circulation 4,000) envisioned the possibility of a "scientific breakthrough" toward "higher life" beginning "with the current reading experiments."

The Fostoria (Ohio) *Review-Times* (circulation 6,000) admitted that "for utilitarian purposes, speed reading is desirable." But it also struck a theme running through most other editorials when it commented that "This is the kind of progress that awakens the latent reactionary in us all."

As the issues were structured, it was difficult for a story to gain much currency unless it could be perceived in Orwellian shades. A story in the New York *Herald Tribune* contrasted commercial exhibitors' "endless demonstrations of the teaching devices in the basement" with speak-

ers upstairs depicting education "through shadows on the silver screen, lights flashing and bells ringing to proclaim 'tilt' on academic pinball machines, and ghostly voices whispering persuasively over headphones." A major NEA study on the long-range impact of automation on education, announced at a special press conference, rated half as many headlines as Raubinger's lambasting of "machines," and less circulation than the feat of the "reading wizard."

As the Raubinger blast captured the limelight of the "technological" press coverage, so an attack upon the "self-contained" classroom dominated the coverage of all other teaching issues.

Little was said about "promising new practices."

#### *Professional and Community Issues*

Professional issues and community relations were featured in less than six percent of all convention stories. More than two-thirds of the over seven million circulation headlining these issues was devoted to the "right to strike" and to the NEA's "rivalry" with the American Federation of Teachers.

Assembly action concerning financial and organizational problems of big-city school systems was reported mostly in the context of labor rivalry. The only editorial commenting on the resolution calling for teacher participation in policy making appeared in the Freeport (Tex.) *Brazosport Facts* (circulation 7,300). It was entitled "SCHOOL GROUP CHIPS / AT BOARD AUTHORITY." The editorial remarked that "This year the NEA board of directors is carrying a step further an apparent lack of confidence in local school boards." Although the resolution specifically acknowledged the legal authority of school boards, the editorial asserted that if the objectives "of this organization were achieved, there would be little point in having a school board at all." The comment ended on a note of taxpayer exasperation:

If the federal government is to provide uniform standards and financing, and a faculty organization must be in accord with what local decisions remain, there is little prerogative left for the representative of the taxpayer.

Teacher salaries, relations with parents, certification standards, teacher education and a code of ethics were the other professional and community issues featured in the convention press coverage. References to teacher salaries came from stories on President Kennedy's message. Toward the end of one wire story, the President was cited as telling

teachers that "you bear a responsibility for the nation's future that is as heavy as that of any officeholder, and that is . . . why I think it imperative that our federal aid to education program include funds for teachers' salaries." Congressman Frank Thompson, Jr., who delivered the President's message, also took the opportunity to reiterate that "rumors that we are preparing to abandon teachers' salaries as part of the federal aid bill . . . are without foundation." (Shortly thereafter the teacher salary provision was dropped from the bill.)

Editorial comment on these issues was scarce and scattered. The Columbia *Missourian* (circulation 6,000) waxed indignant about children "taught by C-plus teachers." The Waukesha (Wis.) *Daily Freeman* (circulation 15,000) implied that teachers' salary raises were out of proportion. A syndicated editorial printed in five small papers compared teachers' salaries with bonuses paid to baseball players, commenting that "It's quite a contrast, especially since the upgraded bonuses don't improve the quality of the ballplaying."

And an editorial in the Champaign (Ill.) *News Gazette* (circulation 29,000) reviewed figures on salaries and the teacher shortage, and concluded with restrained enthusiasm:

For those putting service above wealth, and satisfaction above some of the greater emoluments that might come from other endeavors, teaching has its good points.

And this may be a field in which employment opportunities are good for many years to come.

### *The Final Pattern*

Demonstration of the case for federal aid was the major single public effort of the convention. The \$2.5 billion general school aid bill, passed by the Senate, was pending in the House, and needed all the support it could get. NEA's endorsement of the bill President Kennedy termed "probably the most important piece of domestic legislation" received wide notice but little press support or emphasis. The pattern of press coverage tipped the odds in favor of playing up the "conflict angle." Top billing went to NEA's overdue support of desegregation, an issue the organization made no attempt to publicize.

Of course, school desegregation touches on raw nerves of the economic and political as well as the educational structure of the nation. Ever since the Supreme Court decision of 1954, it has been a controver-

sial issue of NEA conventions. Proposals to support the Supreme Court decision had been defeated at each convention. The press was primed for another battle in Atlantic City.

Two scheduled speeches by Negro leaders were reported only in Negro papers. But when the issue came up in the context of a floor debate, it became the biggest front-page and headline attraction of the convention.

Widely predicted "floor fights" failed to materialize. The most frequently selected wire stories "balanced" news of the resolution by citing only the opposition speaker. Passage of an amendment pledging (for the first time) "continued support" of the Supreme Court order was hailed as "strong" and "firm" "action." Defeat of another amendment which would in fact have directed officers to "plan and initiate action" was scarcely noted.

Federal aid was favored by 65 percent of Americans in a Gallup poll released February 1960, opposed by 55 percent of school board members in a survey released by the National School Boards Association in April, 1962. *It was attacked in every editorial noting NEA support of the bill.* Shortly after the convention, the already compromised bill was defeated in a House vote, 170-242.

Such publicity as was given to facts of the case emphasized the mounting "burden on taxpayers" "fears of federal control," and "conflicts" over the bill, despite the overwhelming support given by the convention. The contention that British teachers were free of control, or that federal aid would offer relief to states which now devote more of their personal income but still spend less for the education of children than the others, could not be found anywhere in the press coverage.

Stories of President Kennedy's "guardedly optimistic" message of "cautious hope" tempered by "past disappointments" accurately foreshadowed defeat of the bill in the House. Selected statements from otherwise unreported portions of Senator Morse's speech, coupled with the "Letter Barrage" story, lent themselves to editorial development of themes of "a well organized pressure group" using children as "pawns" in a cynical game of power politics.

The "blandishments of federal munificence" were seen as spurring efforts of "teacher lobbyists" to "fast talk" Congress "out of some cash." The school aid bill was to be only the beginning of a "sensational fiscal binge." "Appeals to emotion of the parents and taxpayers" characterized the means of a "big teacher's lobby." "The logical inference"

was drawn that teachers would not hesitate to blackmail "parents and taxpayers," or even to "sell our free system into the bondage of a federal bureaucracy" so as to grab "another pot of gold at the end of a rainbow."

Several convention reports documented the nation's need—and ability—to improve teacher pay depressed by local tax limits. None of these was featured in the press coverage. Editorial defenders of local control exhibited particular sensitivity to what one of them called "the scheme to make the federal bureaucracy responsible for partial payment of teachers' salaries." Reference to "overpaid" teachers and "highly satisfactory" salaries counterbalanced the ingratitude of an NEA President who, an editorial hastened to point out, "does not represent the thinking of the community from which she comes, the school board that employs her or the heads of business who contribute so much to the financial support" of schools. There was no mention of the keynote of Miss Kline's keynote address that "the most vicious kind of control" is achieved "by the simple expedient of withholding the necessary funds for a quality program," or of her contention that federal aid programs which are "somehow immediately translated into more business activity" receive the support of guardians of local control.

Sensational charges against "machines"—federal, teaching, professional—claimed third place in the amount and prominence of press attention, and first place in editorial comment.

Terry Ferrer, writing in the New York *Herald Tribune*, pointed out that New Jersey Education Commissioner Frederick M. Raubinger, "one of the NEA's most conservative protagonists, inveighed against proposals which advocate 'in one guise or another a national curriculum.'" Raubinger's speech had a double edge. In attacking "educational schizophrenia," "impersonal, dehumanized teaching," and tampering with the existing structure of schools, Raubinger was dealing not only in communication technology but also in educational politics.

The press coverage built Raubinger's pincer-movement into a national crusade of "teacher vs. the machine" with unmistakable undertones of rugged local-controlism. Professor Van Til, who acknowledged "innocence" of "teaching machines" was nevertheless brought into the scrap with dramatic quotes depicting "individuals drowned in the tide of humanity" and "children enslaved to machines." Others not so "innocent" of the educational implications of communication technology

(but free of any intention of supporting Raubinger), were made to “echo” his charges whether they did in fact or not.

When “machines” were perceived as expensive innovations with no hope of “alleviating the teacher shortage,” but probably adding to the total tax bill, they were seen as robots threatening to replace “good” teachers. But when “machines”—robots though they be—were seen as offering some hope of “increasing productivity” without a proportionate increase in cost, then they were seen as being opposed by already mechanized, selfish, time-serving, featherbedding teachers. “The NEA bleats” were editorially judged “undeserving much public sympathy.” All these “alarming words for parents and taxpayers” made the editorial writer “wonder if all the additional money being spent for education these days is being spent sensibly.”

The minor theme of the “technological” coverage suggests that the anti-“technological” tone and “man-machine conflict” angle are more likely to dominate when the news comes from a public education source than when it originates in an industrial or commercial setting. At Atlantic City, quasi-commercial publicity extolling the “wonders of technology” in speed-reading was the only “promising practice” to make headlines.

The dominant theme of a “crusade” against the “machine” was likely to arouse, but not clarify, deeply felt fears and frustrations about the quality of education—and of life—in a technological age. It combined these fears with popular anxieties about Madison Avenue bogeymen “peddling” “gimmicks and gadgets” like “soap, cigarettes and toothpaste,” and “ghostly voices whispering persuasively over headphones” in Johnny’s classroom. Raubinger’s remarks, and the voluminous editorial comment (more than on all other convention issues combined), helped find outlets for all the uneasiness. Whether these were “federal centralizers” “doing actual damage to children” and “producing a Johnny who is an automaton,” or whether “time-serving teachers” themselves were suspected of “stolid opposition to change” in striving for “a union-style package deal”—stirred-up emotions found targets far more vulnerable than communication technologies in education.

Some of the sharpest barbs were directed against the U.S. Office of Education. But Assistant U.S. Commissioner Babbidge reporting to a

meeting of newsmen on the plans and policies of the federal "machine" under attack was no longer news.<sup>8</sup>

A drama of national conflicts unfolded in the press coverage. The crises swirled about the head of that central figure of editorial hyperbole, the stalwart but hapless "taxpayer." Robot-like forces seemed to tug at his reins of "local control." No strong voices of domestic solution found a place in his newspaper universe. The most acceptable release was to rouse him from his "complacency" in the face of the "communist menace."

The convention's message to the nation was that joint planning and vigorous action were needed to relieve national inequalities, shortages, deficiencies and deterioration in many areas of educational opportunity and quality. No doubt there was a good measure of organizational promotion in the event. But behind much of the publicity, the reports, statistics, debates and oratory, there was the insistent concern of public school people with needlessly wasted lives and squandered human resources in the richest country on earth.

The pattern of issues implicit in the press coverage is a record of industrial behavior in the communications field. It exhibits earmarks of tension and of a crossing of institutional purposes. The NEA's attack on national problems of American education clashed with news values serving commodity markets, and with the producing industries' dominant ways of construing the public interest. The pattern of conflicts and threats was likely to obscure issues, confuse readers and inhibit politicians.

<sup>8</sup> Shortly after the convention and the defeat of the school aid bill, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Abraham A. Ribicoff commented, "Here was a good program and the long knives were out against it." Ribicoff told the annual meeting of the American Council on Education: "I was advised against it. But I knew this: That I was going to stay in there to try to get an educational program through until the last bell was rung and until I was bloody and laid out on the floor. As a matter of fact, that is just exactly what happened to me." The average tenure of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare is about a year shorter than that of all other cabinet members for the same period. Ribicoff cut that average in half. He was the first member of the new administration to resign his post. Ribicoff's resignation was preceded by that of Assistant U.S. Commissioner of Education Homer D. Babbidge, and followed by the resignation of Commissioner of Education Sterling M. McMurrin, all within a year of the convention.