

The Missouri "News Monopoly" in the Far East

BY THOMAS F. MILLARD

In the *New York Herald-Tribune*

SHANGHAI, December 28, 1927: Some foreigners in China profess to "view with alarm" what is called variously the "Missouri news monopoly", the "Missouri oligarchy", and by less euphemistic names. There even is a movement afoot supported, according to report here, from a propaganda fund devoted to the "education" of the American people and Government about conditions in this country, to "expose" and to offset the alleged pernicious influence of that "monopoly". Its suppression is said to engage the attention of the recently organized Shanghai Facisti.

As the *Herald Tribune's* correspondent is credited with being the father and, as some say, the "master mind" of this "sinister" group, a short account of its beginnings and eventuation may be interesting. Your correspondent was born in the State of Missouri and was educated at the University of Missouri. Later he worked on newspapers at St. Louis and, in 1898, joined the staff of the *New York Herald*. In the late Nineties a College of Journalism was established at the University of Missouri, the first of its kind, I believe, in the world. Its "father" was Walter Williams, then editor of a "country" weekly paper published at Columbia, and a Curator of the University. Dr. Williams is now known internationally as "Dean" Williams (for he became Dean of that College of Journalism), President of one or two world congresses of journalism.

In 1910 your correspondent, in association with B. W. Fleisher (publisher of the *Japan Advertiser* at Tokyo) founded a newspaper at Shanghai, *The China Press*. The original staff included C. H. Webb, of St. Louis, who died at Shanghai late in 1926, and Carl Crow, a graduate of the Missouri College of Journalism. So began the Missouri news monopoly in the Far East.

Thenceforth, whenever a man was wanted for American newspaper work in Shanghai, or for the *Advertiser* at Tokyo, a letter or telegram was sent to Dean Williams. That started a "chain" which during the last fifteen years has brought about twenty-five students of the Missouri School of Journalism to Japan and China. From this end it has sent a score or so young Chinese, and a few Japanese, to study journalism at Columbia, Missouri.

In time those Americans, when their contracts expired, either went home, where a number of them now are working on foreign news desks of home papers, or came back to the Far East as correspondents for American publications. In time those Chinese and Japanese students returned to their native countries and engaged in journalism out here. I have just been looking at a photograph made at a dinner last winter, when ten University of Missouri journalistic alumni (seven Americans and three Chinese) held a little reunion at Shanghai, as the guests of Y. P. Wang advertising manager of *Shun Pao*, an important Chinese daily here.

At this time the principal news services sent from Shanghai to America have Missouri School of Journalism men at this end of the wires. Those are John B. Powell for the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Manchester Guardian*; Morris Harris for the *Associated Press*; Francis Misselwitz for the *New York Times*; and your correspondent. At Peking is Glenn Babb, chief *Associated Press* correspondent in China. At Tientsin, Hollington Tong directs a newspaper and corresponds for publications in America and England. At Hongkong Hin Wong edits a Chinese page in one of the foreign papers and sends correspondence to America. Kan Lee handled publicity for the Ministry of Finance in the National Government. Miss Eva Chang is now connected with the *Kuo Min* news agency. Margaret Powell helped on the *China Weekly Review* and formerly did publicity for the B. A. T. movie studio. Louise Wilson does the woman's department for the *North-China Daily News*, a British paper. At Tokyo, Frank Hedges is correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor* and other papers. I cannot recall them all.

Why are these Missourians regarded as inimical, even as a "menace", by those foreign elements in China who typify the Shanghai Mind?

Looking back over quite a stretch of years, I can see no reason except that, from the beginning of their work in this part of the world, the Missourians had to be "shown": they always resisted the taboos and inhibitions which compose the traditional treaty-port complex. That is almost a heinous offense in the opinion of some elements of these foreign communities.

I know that Ben Fleisher and myself, in starting the "chain" that produced those results, had no idea that we were

doing anything except to offer a chance for young American newspaper people to get some experience abroad which later, so we imagined, would help in the international political education of the American people; and, on the other hand, by getting young Chinese and Japanese interested in journalism, to implant the seeds of a new outlook in Eastern Asia.

I do not think the members of the "Missouri monopoly" in the Far East are worrying specially about the efforts to relegate them. They consider their present positions as a logical outcome of their experience. They think of themselves merely as pretty good newspapermen who have obtained jobs because they qualified for them.

Editor's Note:—Mr. Millard in the foregoing article overlooked Manila and another well known Missouri newspaperman, Mr. Roy Bennett, Managing Editor of the *Manila Bulletin* and correspondent for important home newspapers,