GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Language offers many clues to the history of power and influence. The fact that the key word in representing the technology of printing came to be applied to the daily and periodical papers developing so vigorously from the eighteenth century neatly reflects this. Indeed, no cultural phenomenon has been more ubiquitous and, many would say, more powerful, than the press. Yet, while there have been many studies of the organisation and the economics, the personalities and the preoccupations of the press in Britain, very little work has been done on the relationship between press and empire, or upon the early efforts of government to manipulate and control its output.

This is surprising because the modern press developed at precisely the time that imperialism, empire, and colonies were becoming a major concern. The removal of fiscal controls, the development of new printing technologies and forms of transmission of information, and the emergence of special correspondents and specialist editors all took place as the British Empire was expanded and consolidated. The press fed off empire voraciously and, in doing so, came to have an influence upon affairs. This was not just a metropolitan phenomenon. As anyone who has examined the British 'provincial' papers knows, empire was a prominent feature of the papers of towns and cities everywhere, including those in the major Centres of Scotland or Ireland. Moreover, a colonial press, often shrugging off efforts at official control, appeared throughout the British Empire, and equally became a force to be watched, to be courted, to be influenced, and also to be owned. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, any politician or official who ignored, or was contemptuous of, the press throughout the British Empire, did so at their considerable peril.

Chandrika Kaul's study focuses on the key relationship between the press and India. As well as exploring the vital technical changes of the period, she examines the manner in which Fleet Street editors and journalists developed a particular set of attitudes towards the British Raj in India. But these attitudes were not permitted to flourish unhindered and uninfluenced. The concept of 'news management', after faltering starts, came to be a significant factor in the three-way relationship of the British Government, the Indian administration, and the personalities of the press. Indeed, an understanding of the complex of personalities involved in each arm of this relationship is vital. The style and wording of press content, the ideas and pressures it attempted to convey to its readership, all emerged from the predilections of these personalities and the considerable conceit that many had in respect of their influence and authority. Of course both the networks and the growing scale of the press complex ensured that such developments were self-sustaining and mutually reinforcing. But they also reflected a considerable advance in the power of the bourgeoisie and its anxieties to reflect and influence the popular attitudes in an age of a growing franchise.

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Personalities, constitutional changes, and key incidents, as mediated to and by the press, abound in the pages that follow. By using a wide range of newspapers and journals, as well as large numbers of private and official papers, Chandrika Kaul unveils the complicated relationships of government and the press over India. In many ways, these form the foundation of the similar sets of connections that obtain to this day. Moreover, it becomes clear that some of the ideas and perceptions relating to India and Indians which continue to prevail have their origins in the carefully modulated press attitudes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This book marks a significant development in studies of the press and it is to be hoped that it will be followed by many more examining the relationship between the 'fourth estate' and the processes of imperialism in all its ambitions and anxieties, follies and fallacies.

John M. MacKenzie