

Liberty and the News (The James Madison Library in American Politics)

Walter Lippmann

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Liberty and the News is Walter Lippman's classic account of how the press threatens democracy whenever it has an agenda other than the free flow of ideas. Arguing that there is a necessary connection between liberty and truth, Lippman excoriates the press, claiming that it exists primarily for its own purposes and agendas and only incidentally to promote the honest interplay of facts and ideas. In response, Lippman sought to imagine a better way of cultivating the news.

A brilliant essay on a persistent problem of American democracy, *Liberty and the News* is still powerfully relevant despite the development of countless news sources unimagined when Lippman first published it in 1920. The problems he identifies--the self-importance of the press, the corrosion of rumors and innuendo, and the spinning of the news by political powers--are still with us, and they still threaten liberty. By focusing on the direct and necessary connection between liberty and truth, Lippmann's work helps to clarify one of the most pressing predicaments of American democracy today.



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