

do not reflect the reality of the information. But in this matter, reflects Pérez Oliva, journalists should be careful when considering the profession's ethical limits and bear in mind that they are part of a mechanism and that therefore there exist some collective responsibilities which should be faced collectively. This demands a constant exercise of reflection and self-criticism.

In the field which the author of the article works in - health -the newspapers receive many superficial news items related to matters which society is worried about, such as Aids and breakthroughs in the illness. Basic norms of prudence demand that this news should be reduced to its "true dimension". In the ethics battle, the author calls upon journalistic enterprises as well as the social and political agents which "complain most about news distortions, although they do nothing to avoid the confusion, and which they often take advantage of", to work together.

158 **We journalists**

JAUME VALLS

The responsibility of journalists lies within the framework of the democratic principles of freedom of expression and of the right to information protected by basic laws.

"We journalists", says the author of the present article, "have the enormous social responsibility of choosing and communicating the significant events which take place in our environment".

In an ever changing society, the author recalls how in the mid-70s and in the years of the democratic transition many journalists developed a relevant role in the conformation of a new "sensitive, plural and democratic" public opinion.

Nowadays, in the present situation of consolidated democracy, he believes that journalists "have lost the best part of the trust of our fellow citizens as points of reference or orientation".

The mass media, written and audiovisual, have generally drifted towards subjects which have more to do with providing a spectacle and banality than information, understood the latter as a pedagogical guideline for a certain ethic or collective consciousness of progress. Less information is given in more media. The items of information are as similar as drops of water. The radio and the television prefer events and vanities. News with a "shock" value is gaining ground. On the other hand, pondered and serious news items are scarce.

As the head of a municipal press bureau, this journalist feels that the information Bureau of a public or private institution should serve, first and foremost, communication. It should be a permanent, stable, consultable and contrastable source of information. That is the way to ethics.

168 The Journalistic creed of Missouri

JAUME GUILLAMET

The author of this article considers that the Deontological Code of the Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya (College of Journalists of Catalonia) has a remote precedent, barely known in Spain. This is the "Creed of the Journalist" written by the American Walter Williams, who was the first dean of the university school of journalism in the state of Missouri from 1908 until 1935. This Creed of the Journalist is, according to the author, a declaration of principles which nowadays presides the activities of schools of journalism in the United States and all over the world.

Guillamet, also a lecturer in journalism at the Pompeu Fabra University of Barcelona, gives an account of the birth of the aforementioned school of journalism in Missouri. Walter Williams, an experienced journalist, was appointed dean of the school. From that moment on the University had its own newspaper which the students worked on, and in doing so they learnt

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