

ARTICLE
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1 October 1985**MEDIA ANALYSIS / Don Kowet****The dual personality
of Wall Street Journal**

The Wall Street Journal seems the picture of perfect health.

Nearly 2 million Americans purchase the newspaper every day. Eager advertisers queue up weeks in advance.

But behind that ruddy-cheeked, reassuring front page (still six columns, no photographs), critics say that The Wall Street Journal is suffering from a severe case of schizophrenia, one that threatens to blur its identity as a newspaper.

The Journal, they argue, has become a confusion of contradictory voices, its traditional Keynesian cant colliding against the syllogisms of supply-side editorials. Critics even claim to hear Karl Marx babbling in the background. In mid-September, the Soviet news agency Tass was crowing over a Journal article alleging that members of the Nicaraguan resistance were committing atrocities on unarmed Nicaraguan civilians.

The seed of this schizophrenia charge, said Journal editor Robert Bartley in an interview, was sown at "an acrimonious dinner I had with the Washington bureau in 1980. The way I handled that was a

mistake, and it's spawned this endless series of stories."

At that dinner, members of the Washington bureau accused Mr. Bartley of heavy-handed editing of their columns and keeping them from his editorial pages.

Now, said Mr. Bartley, "We run pieces by the Washington bureau on our editorial page. You don't see that in most newspapers."

Mr. Bartley called the "schizophrenia" charge "one of the most overdone stories in the history of journalism."

Yet others insist that the tension between various parts of the newspaper existed long before 1980 — and persisted long after it. Earlier this year, for instance, several Jour-

nal editors and writers reportedly wanted the newspaper to punish Gregory A. Fossedal, after the young conservative editorial writer had turned up "across the table" at a White House Star Wars briefing, helping White House staffers.

As late as last week, a front-page Journal headline blared "Military Secrecy Rises, With Pentagon Hiding Billions of Outlays." The article charged that the Pentagon's "black

budget" (alleged secret expenditures) "has shot up at least 50% for fiscal 1986 . . ."

The specific source of this revelation was The Center for Defense Information, which Journal writers Roy J. Harris Jr. and Robert S. Greenberger identified as "an independent research group often critical of administration policies . . ." Critics contend that if The Center for Defense Information is an "independent research group," then so is The Institute for Policy Studies. The Center is a spinoff of the institute, which is putative father of the fanatic Mother Jones and a family of left-wing propagandists.

Mr. Bartley and The Institute for Policy Studies are about as compatible philosophically as Jack Kemp and Fidel Castro.

Mr. Bartley, hired by the newspaper in 1962, worked as a reporter in Chicago and Philadelphia, and as an editorial writer in New York, before being assigned to Washington, D.C.

At the time, recalled a former Washington-based Journal staffer, "everybody in Washington loved everybody in New York. There were no turf problems, mainly because the editorial page never left New York."

Both Washington and New York shared a common world view, added the source, — "the old guard Republican view of the world."

Robert Bartley changed all that.

In 1971 Mr. Bartley moved to New York. In 1972 he became editor of the Journal's editorial page. He surrounded himself with conservative writers who were seeking

fresh solutions to the problems plaguing the American economy. A young Bartley protégé named Jude Winniski started shuttling between New York and Washington.

"That was the first conflict that Bartley had with Al Otten, the Washington bureau chief," Mr. Winniski recalled. "Otten protested that 'Winniski is going to Washington once a month at least, and intruding on our turf.'"

These rumbles over turf soon turned ideological. Mr. Winniski was discovering, through the work of others, supply-side economic theory. At first Mr. Bartley was skeptical. It took Mr. Winniski two years to convince him, Mr. Bartley said later, at the rate of "an inch a day."

But once Mr. Bartley was convinced that supply-side could be the savior of America's sagging economy, he would become its most resolute prophet in print. The Washington bureau refused to swallow the new editorial sacrament.

The schism was also aggravated by Watergate.

"Bartley decided that the Washington establishment was not giving Nixon a fair shake, and more or less appointed me to be Nixon's defense attorney on the editorial page," said Jude Winniski. "That upset the guys in the Washington bureau."

The special prosecutor's office stopped leaking stories to the Journal's Washington bureau, reserving its tips for the rival Washington Post and The New York Times.

Mr. Bartley became editor of the newspaper in 1979.

In 1983, Peter Kann became associate publisher and Norman Pearlstine his new managing editor.

The Journal's internal structure only added to the confusion. Unlike other periodicals, such as The New York Times, where A.M. Rosenthal is editor-in-chief of all the newspaper, "Bartley and Pearlstine are on the same level of the organizational chart," a source noted. "They can't pull rank on one another. If they have a conflict they have to take it outside of the Journal to Dow-Jones [owners of the Journal] and of course that almost never happens."

Worse, under Mr. Kann and Mr. Pearlstine The Wall Street Journal was about to assume a brand new persona, swelling, say the critics, the symptoms of psychosis.

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