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Whom Does the Press Serve? The Four Theories of the Press

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In one country a newspaper cannot print a single line without the government’s permission, while in another, articles sharply criticizing the government run every day. Both carry the same name, “the press,” yet what they do and the promises they must keep differ this much by country and era. So for whom should the press exist, and by what principles should it operate? The book that first offered a systematic framework for this question is Four Theories of the Press, published in 1956. Written jointly by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm, it divided the world’s press into four