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Artikel in: Liberty.

Lucturer's Lot.

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1945-03-24

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You're not fussy about transportation. Even milk trucks will do.

LECTURING is a strictly American existence. Nowhere else in the world is it a full-fledged profession. In no other country I know of can you spend your life—and earn your living—merely traveling about and making speeches.

I have been at it for seven years now. I have filled some 400 engagements, covered some 140,000 miles, and addressed some 200,000 people. So perhaps I'll be forgiven if I consider this an authoritative account of a lecturer's chatty and lonely existence in the United States.

If you want to be a professional lecturer, the first thing for you to do is to "sell" yourself to an agent. You may be booked as a "celebrity speaker"—as somebody famous less for his speaking than for something else he has done, suffered, shot down, overthrown, or invented. If so, the choice of your subject won't be a matter of negotiation; you'll have to keep talking of the very thing that has brought you fame. Or you may be considered a "personality speaker"—a person whose background and personal history, whose experiences and special knowledge enable him to discuss a variety of topics with a certain authority.

The organizations for which you are to work start building their programs many months in advance. Thus your agent will insist on signing you up early in the year, even though your actual "season" does not begin before October. It's up to you to decide how long it is to last. But after you decide on three, four, or eight months of lecturing, matters are exclusively in your agent's hands. He may send you wherever he pleases, whenever he sees fit. He is the only one through whom you may be approached, and you must turn over to him even your own personal customers.

If you are a fairly attractive "number," your fees will range from \$100 a lecture to \$1,000, although rare is the speaker who can command the latter amount. As a rule, your agent will pocket 50 per cent of your fees in exchange for services rendered and transportation paid. Hotel rooms, meals, taxis, redcaps, etc., are your own financial responsibility. Your publicity material will be furnished and distributed by the agency. You may or may not have to bear the expenses.

Four or five months of lecturing a season, with four or five lectures a week, is a fair average. There may be weeks when you talk ten times, and others when one speech is all you manage. In his own interest, your "slave driver" will see to it that you are sensibly routed. He'll try to spare

Lecturer's Lot

Lecturing must be a great life—you think. Well, there's more to it than strikes the ear and meets the eye. Listen to a lecturer who knows

BY ERIKA MANN

you huge expensive jumps in between dates. But since your organizations cherish their own ideas about whom they want to lecture to them and when, this may not always be possible. One evening you may have to address a convention in Detroit, the next evening rush back to New York for some special occasion—and just hope you'll be able to finish in time to make your train for Chicago.

The size and quality of your first tour will be determined by the drawing power of your own name and the timeliness of your subject, and by the reputation and efficiency of your agent. Your later tours will depend on the success of the first. Your organizations are mysteriously inter-related and keep one another very well informed. Even though the press doesn't "criticize" your offerings, a failure of yours in Los Angeles will soon be known in Birmingham. And, somehow, they'll learn in Iowa City about a hit you've made in Spokane.

The career of a celebrity speaker won't outlast the source of his fame. Once his book—or his flight, his trial, or his revolution—ceases to be a topic of conversation, he is through as a lecturer. As long as it lasts, however, he needn't even be good. In fact, he may have an unpleasant personality, even be a stutterer, and still get himself an enviable tour. In attending his lectures, people go lion hunting. Let the lion be scabby—they don't mind.

Personality speakers are apt to last

longer if they keep their material up to date and get along with their audiences.

The character of an American lecture audience depends on social rather than on geographical factors. Student audiences are much the same at Yale and at Stanford, whereas a town-hall crowd in Boston differs greatly from a women's club audience in the same city. Californians may be especially interested in the Pacific war, while New Yorkers may feel more strongly about the European conflict. But that's about as far as geographical influences go—if, indeed, they go that far.

In certain areas political tradition leaves its mark on all types of audiences. There is no mistaking the "solidity" of the South; and no matter what sort of group you address in Maine or Vermont, an invisible elephant will always be present.

There are scores of different audiences, but they fall roughly into a few main categories. Let's look at some of them.

Women's clubs—their chosen representatives, chairmen of program committees, etc.—are likely to meet you at the station. You don't know them, but their determined looks and enterprising bearing make them easily discernible.

"Miss Mann?" they say. Then, "We are glad you've come!"

They say it in a tone of relief, as if lecturers were in the habit of never showing up.

"Now, then," they say, marching you to the car, "let's get organized!"



Audiences in general are delicate instruments, and a crowd of 500 people is infinitely more sensitive than any one of its members.

The familiar battle cry makes you shudder a little. Quickly you announce that, while you'd be delighted to stay for tea, you'd rather not have luncheon before the lecture. "I always talk too much," you say apologetically, "and it tires me out!"

At the luncheon you're made to talk ceaselessly. You rather enjoy it, too. The company is friendly and open-minded and seems deeply interested in all you have to say. They tell you about past programs and you marvel at the versatility of their interests. What they've been listening to recently embraces India, forestry, astrology, juvenile delinquency, hats, and After Hitler—What? This last topic being up your own alley, you're quite hoarse when the lecture finally begins.

The audience numbers anywhere from one to four hundred. They are well-trained listeners, very quiet and attentive. They prefer the human approach to the dryly-learned one. They want to be at ease and to enjoy, as well as to inform, themselves. Also, they want to like you. In fact, they will like you if you like them, are natural and at ease, and know what you are talking about. When you're through, there may be a question period. If you've been



Representatives of women's clubs invariably greet you at the station with the old familiar battle cry, "Now let's get organized!"



Lecturers hop around too fast to make friends. Usually you're good and lonely.

talking about the war, you may be asked questions like these:

(a) What about Russia? Can we trust her? Won't she try to bolshevize the Continent? How much help is she going to give us against Japan? (b) What percentage of the German people are behind Hitler? Are the Nazis incurable? How could the Germans have fallen for an uneducated man like Hitler? Who is the real power in Germany—Hitler or the Junkers? (c) Do you have a postwar plan? (People ask this as they might ask: "Have you got the measles?") (d) Just when will the war be over?

Women's clubs tend to hold their meetings in the afternoon—more or less exclusively for members. The fees paid range from \$100 to \$300, only very exceptional "numbers" being more highly rewarded.

Town-hall forums convene in the evenings and embrace both sexes, although even in peacetime there will be a majority of women. Their representatives are unlikely to meet you at the station. Nor will there be a lot of social doings connected with your town-hall appearances. You may not even hear from the organization till you get to the place, wondering whether you've journeyed to the right city. From 300 to 2,000 people may be present. If the

hall is much larger than the crowd, it is advisable to acknowledge this dreary fact cheerfully: "So glad you've come—both of you!" This will fortify your position.

Town-hall audiences are less polite, and thus rather more revealing, than women's clubs. Their larger size makes the individual listener feel anonymous: if he coughs, snores, or walks out, the lecturer won't notice—he thinks. Besides, he has probably paid for his seat and feels entitled to do with it, and on it, precisely what he pleases.

There'll be a public-address system and a number of people will sit on the platform with you. One of them turns out to be the moderator. Questions are usually submitted in writing and selected by the moderator. Some are insulting, and you watch the moderator putting them aside. I don't really care for the written-questions system. It makes people think you've "planted" the things you want to answer, while skipping those you don't like.

Students' groups are the toughest in a way—hard to get, hard to keep, hard to convince. Probably without realizing it, they're likely to be noisy. They cough a great deal and are very easily distracted. Let anyone in the audience drop a couple of books, and the entire crowd will watch him pick up his belongings. And no matter how fervently you talk, the sound of an ambulance or fire engine going by in the street will start them buzzing.

The younger they are, the more skeptical I have found them. They've been taught to distrust "propaganda" and feel that anyone who tries to convince them of anything at all is a "propagandist." That it might be a good thing to propagandize the truth just isn't one of their notions. Moreover, their inbred liberalism, their habit of looking at all matters from all sides and of distrusting simple classifications such as "good" and "evil," makes it hard for them to conceive of the enemy as something plainly bad—all the more so since our own performance doesn't always strike them as plainly admirable.

Although during your talk they don't seem enthusiastic or even attentive, you'll discover later that they've been listening. They may have actually liked you. If so, they'll applaud frantically. In their questions they'll betray both their youthful curiosity and their puzzling skepticism,

which, incidentally, is often well founded. Here are some of the things they'll throw at you: (a) During the last war there was a lot of talk about German atrocities. But afterward we were told it was all propaganda. Are we to believe the atrocity stories that come out of this war? (b) I understand we'll have to crush Nazism in Germany. How can we suppress an ideology without violating our own democratic principles? (c) What's the truth about Rudolf Hess?

Fees vary. Anything between \$100 and \$400 may be expected. Also, you may be asked to turn up in one of the classes and answer questions connected with the curriculum.

AUDIENCES in general are delicate instruments. In fact, a crowd of 500 people is infinitely more sensitive than any one of its members. Often they'll react unconsciously, but almost always with uncanny precision. If you're absent-minded for a moment and talk without thinking, they too will get absent-minded, and you'll have a hard time regaining their attention. If you're nervous and not sure of yourself, they too will turn fidgety and restless. And if you're talking down to them, they'll know it before you become aware of it yourself.

If, on the other hand, you are composed; if you're fond of your audience and, instead of courting them, take it for granted that they are your friends, they'll feel at home in your presence. You may even have a chance to convert them if your opinions happen to differ from theirs. But it's up to you. There must be a current between you and them. Once you slacken and take things easy, the spark will go out and you'll find yourself disconnected.

Heckling is not confined to any one type of audience, but it is not so common now as it was before Pearl Harbor. At present any lecturer advocating a powerful prosecution of the war and the establishment of some kind of international security system will hardly be violently contradicted. But before December 7, 1941, some hecklers could be counted upon almost everywhere. And they did not limit themselves to asking vicious questions. They'd insist on making speeches.

The "professionals" among them seemed

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"You know, I wouldn't do this for anyone but my wife!"

cial as the back line of a Minsky chorus."

Gypsy has her servant problems in this luxurious establishment. She started out with a butler, a cook, and two maids. Soon she was down to two maids. "One of them went to the preview of my picture," she says, "and then there was one." With her ex-Theater Guild secretary, Josephine Healy, helping her with the cleaning and cooking, and with house guests held down to a minimum, she manages fairly well. Gypsy is no slouch at a mop or a dishpan, and she's a whiz at canning and jamming.

WHEN she gives parties, Gypsy hires a waiter from one of the Third Avenue bars to act as butler for the evening. Occasionally the very smart and correct butler's uniform she keeps in the kitchen closet doesn't fit. Then the butler wears anything that can be gotten in a hurry. At one of her very chic affairs in honor of Lady Mendl, the butler was a bit startling in a coat with "Copacabana" in red on its lapel. In case anyone missed it, Gypsy pointed it out.

Eric's nurse evidently had expected better of a twenty-six-room mansion. "She caught Jo Healy scrubbing the dining-room floor once," says Gypsy, "and she hasn't spoken a civil word to her since. Then she went on a slumming tour and took in the basement kitchen, where she glimpsed me catching up with the laundry. That tossed her good. The secretary scrubbing the dining-room floor she'll put up with, but the lady of the house doing out the weekly wash I'm afraid was too much. 'Nana, she calls herself yet! I should pay fifty a week and call her a stage name! She wears full wardrobe day and night, and she has standard dialogue. I say, 'What a nice body Eric has,' and she says, 'Look who bore him.' People say, 'What a handsome boy,' and she says, 'Look who bore him.' That goes on and on. Sometimes when I don't toss her the cue she goes into the script anyway. Some day I'm going to look her straight in the eye and say, 'Look, girlie, you'll get your dough. You don't have to con me out of it.'"

"As soon as I finish my vaudeville tour and get the dough in the bank, I'm going to take care of Eric myself. I didn't traipse from class to class in the hospital learning how to take care of him for nothing."

Now that she is back on the road, Gypsy feels that she will be able to finish at least one of her books. "Between seven

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LECTURER'S LOT

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to follow certain patterns by which you'd recognize them as members of your "rightist" or "leftist" opposition.

Nazi-inspired questioners never ceased asking if it wasn't true that Germany's honor had been restored by Hitler, and whether it was any of our business what sort of regime the Germans liked. Weren't we having enough troubles of our own, such as strikes, etc.?

Party comrades and fellow travelers, on the other hand, had a manner of inquiring about India and—up to June 22, 1941, when the Axis made war upon the U.S.S.R.,—of denouncing the European conflict as a capitalistic enterprise.

Like the professional hecklers, the number of threatening letters addressed to the speaker has decreased noticeably since Pearl Harbor. In fact, this lecturer hasn't been threatened for a long time. But I recall the night in Milwaukee when three messenger boys waited for me at the stage entrance. The letters they carried were quite unkind. One assured me that my days were numbered and that "we have the rope all set and ready for you." Another contented itself with a challenging "Don't you dare!" and a swastika for a signature.

So much for the lecturing. There are other important aspects of the lecturer's life, and one of the most important is traveling—particularly today. Not infrequently now you have to spend about 100 per cent of your strength just to get where you ought to be.

In the middle of the night you may notice that your train is eight hours late, and that, if you hang on to it, you'll never make the lecture. Crouching wretchedly

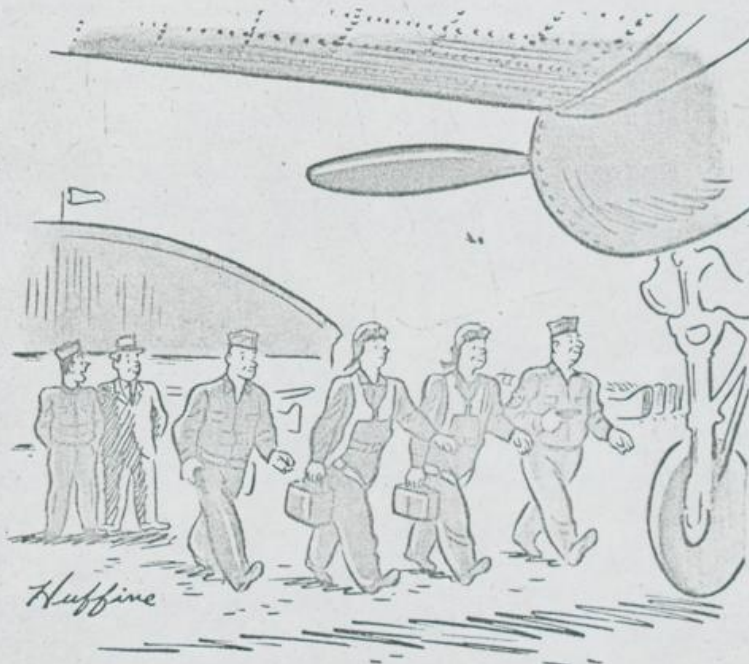
in your upper berth, you consult your map for the nearest airport. Your train doesn't stop there, and you get off at a point fifteen miles from the field. The station is closed and there is no taxi. You leave your luggage and set forth in search of a vehicle. When you've found the milk truck, you'd better be impressive. That you are in a truly pitiable situation is only one side of the picture you've got to draw. The other concerns the importance of your errand, the size and impatience of your audience, and the weight of the responsibility which now rests upon your milkman. Not having a heart of stone, he'll break down sooner or later, and deliver you at the airport, luggage and all.

THERE is a plane that will take off in a couple of hours, but it's sold out. You are not a priority holder and you haven't even got a reservation. Actually, your hanging around here at this unseemly hour doesn't make any sense to the air-line official in charge.

The official must be won over. Your patience and perseverance, as well as your unshakable faith in him personally, must fill the air like an insinuating fragrance. But while he must be ever aware of your presence, he must not for one moment feel oppressed by it. Granted an excellent performance on your part and a reasonable one on the part of luck, you'll make the plane. Even so, however, you'll arrive barely in time for the lecture. Naturally, you will be exhausted, and you will be starved as well. You won't have been able to get into the diner on the train. You'll mount the lecture platform a hungry wreck.

It's not always as bad as that; but I have been through that particular routine a number of times. I remember that on one bus trip we had three flat tires. After the

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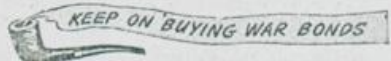
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third, I got off, walked to the nearest hamlet, and talked the local delicatessen man into a deal. I was to help him deliver his groceries, whereupon he was to drive me to my destination. My arrival there—it was Lewiston, Idaho—in a delivery truck proved more sensational than my lecture.

Many hours of your life as a lecturer are whiled away in hotel rooms, movies, and coffee shops. That is where the great loneliness sets in, or, rather, where it makes itself most felt, for a lecturer is always lonely. So far, you've seen him chatting ceaselessly—talking to audiences, to luncheon and dinner companions, to fellow tourists. But always it is strangers with whom he is chatting. For no sooner does he make friends somewhere than his "marching orders" demand an immediate departure. And in between trips, his solitude is complete. Theatrical road companies have their colleagues to fall back upon. Violinists, singers, and dancers share their gypsy lives with their faithful accompanists. The lecturer is alone.

DOES he mind? In a way he does, I suppose. He understands that the life he's built for himself is not a soft and cozy one. If he is vain by nature, he'll be compensated by success. If he's not vain, yet convinced of the importance of his particular "message," he'll measure his success not by the loudness of the applause and the number of compliments received, but by the number of people who, to his mind, may actually have profited from his endeavor. And unless he is a fairly immodest sample of his breed, he's happy if an average of two or three listeners leaves the lecture hall enriched by a measure of lasting comfort, insight, constructive criticism, and hope.

In his turn, the lecturer learns many things from his audiences. The most reassuring piece of knowledge he may gain from them is this: They are earnest, grown-up people endowed with reasoning minds and feeling hearts. They are neither fools nor children and they won't stand for being "handled," "managed," or "manipulated." At this most crucial moment in the history of their country they are far more concerned, far more deeply aroused and disquieted, than some of their leaders may choose to realize. Never worry about the state of the nation! Just give your listeners the facts—all of them—and let them decide for themselves. The chances are that they'll be doing fine!

THE END