

## Abstract

French historians have often considered the power of journalism in France as a strong influence behind the French Revolution. The familiar newspapers and personalities of those years have seen repeat attention perhaps beyond journalists of any other country or any other era.

A close relationship with the press reflected in succeeding French governments continued after 1815. But the historical attention to individual journalists waned. By the First World War a scant few would be remembered, and those that historians did consider mostly worked for the press of Paris.

Despite that, the influence of the provincial press in France had grown dramatically by the eve of the war. Provincial journalists played a central role in responding to the Third Republic's call for *union sacrée*, the social sentiment intended to unite a country under siege and partial occupation.

History has mostly forgotten the provincial journalists from that pivotal period. One is Camille Ferdy, pen name for Ferdinand Cottalorda, of *Le Petit Provençal* in Marseille. Ferdy for a half century wrote and edited one of the most important socialist-leaning daily newspapers in the south. In addition to his voluminous commentary during the war, Ferdy became prominent internationally in journalism organizations both in France and in the rest of Europe. His success as a writer and editor, and the esteem of government and colleagues, saw in 1933 his advancement to *Commandeur* of the French Legion of Honor.

This research proposes to rediscover the significance of one of the most important journalists in what was then the second largest city, and largest port, in France. We propose to examine Ferdy's influence through his work during key periods of the First World War, when journalists probably more than any other group kept morale together during four and one-half brutal years.

## Bio

Ross F. Collins is a professor of communication at North Dakota State University, Fargo, USA. He holds a Ph.D. in French history from the University of Cambridge. He has published a variety of books, book chapters and research articles on aspects of French mass media history and other topics of mass media history. He is a former president of the American Journalism Historians Association. A full vita can be accessed at [rossfcollins.com/vita.html](http://rossfcollins.com/vita.html).