

New Orleans *Times-Picayune* lays off its entire staff

Aaron Murch
7 May 2019

Following the sale of Pulitzer prize-winning newspaper the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* to a local competitor, the entire staff of the 182-year-old newspaper was told their jobs would be eliminated in 60 days.

The media conglomerate Advance Publications, which purchased the New Orleans daily in 1962, sold it to a smaller, Baton Rouge-based newspaper family the *Advocate*. Last Friday, after announcing the firing of some 200 workers and reporters, the *Advocate* detailed plans to combine the two papers into a single daily paper using the masthead of both brands and combining their online presence into the *Times-Picayune* affiliated site nola.com.

Before the devastation of Katrina in 2005, the *Times-Picayune* had a circulation of over 250,000. That dropped to around 85,000 after the storm but the paper won the respect and admiration of the New Orleans community due to its principled and consistent coverage of the storm and its aftermath. This devotion to serving the local community and honest reporting of the devastation following the storm won the paper two Pulitzer prizes.

“When Katrina hit, the *Times-Picayune* not only detailed the disaster, it connected us while we were scattered,” local attorney and law professor William Quigly told the media.

One of the *Times-Picayune* reporters found out of her firing while receiving a journalism award in New York, “Last night, I stood in Pulitzer Hall at Columbia and accepted The Dart Award,” Haley Correl tweeted, “Today, I ugly cried on an airplane as I heard @NOLANews was bought and we’re all losing our jobs in 60 days. The whole newsroom.”

The move follows previous efforts by the Advance Publications group, owned by the billionaire Newhouse

family, to cut back staff and reduce the publication’s print output to three days a week back in 2012 as part of a general shift away from print toward more online presence and video content.

Advance Publications, which owns glitzy, online media group Conde Nast, made similar shifts away from print to video content creation with its other owned properties around the web and, using its Advance Local subsidiary, across the United States’ local newspaper landscape.

This follows the general shift across all printed media to a more digital focus. Between 2014 and 2017 some 5,000 media jobs across the country have been cut, with another 2,400 cuts in 2019 alone. With newspapers across the country shrinking, reporters and photographers are increasingly being downsized in an ever more monopolized online media market.

This shift to digital is likely to hurt local publications the most. It has been reported that since 2004, 20 percent of US local newspapers have folded and most are now under the umbrella of major media conglomerates like Advance Publications, which owns local papers in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Alabama, markets where it has pursued similar strategies for cutbacks as in New Orleans.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact