

# NBC: friend of Moscow, terrorists

by Kathleen Klenetsky

If an award for "Treason in Journalism" exists, the National Broadcasting Corporation more than earned it May 5, when the "NBC Nightly News" broadcast an interview with Abul Abbas, in which the international terrorist vowed to bring terrorist violence to American soil.

In the course of the interview, Abbas told NBC Correspondent Henry Champ that President Reagan "has now placed himself as enemy No. 1," and threatened: "We . . . have to respond against America in America itself."

Worse than NBC's decision to provide Abbas—who is wanted by the United States and other Western nations for masterminding the *Achille Lauro* hijacking—with a national forum to air his threats, was the agreement the network made not to reveal his whereabouts.

This drew an immediate condemnation from the Reagan administration—and even from some media. Robert Oakley, head of the State Department's counterterror unit, called the interview "reprehensible" and added: "When news organizations make arrangements to keep secret the whereabouts of a terrorist suspect in exchange for an interview, they are saying: 'We've become his accomplice in order to give him publicity.'"

But NBC's executives were unfazed. Lawrence Grossman, president of NBC News, said he was "dismayed" by the criticism, while his deputy, Timothy Russert, a former top aide to Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N. Y.), accused media critics of "competitive envy."

NBC's decision to protect Abbas is in keeping with the network's standard practice. Of the three major American broadcasting networks, NBC has been the most brazen in its contempt for U.S. national security. It has also been the network with the closest ties to the Soviet Union. As *EIR* documented in its Oct. 16, 1984 issue, NBC reached an agreement with Moscow several years ago, to work with the Soviet Union to "change the perceptions of the American population about the Soviet Union," as one of the parties involved in the negotiations put it.

One channel being used to that end is the Alerdinck Foundation, a Netherlands-based entity with close ties to the Soviet hierarchy, which has sponsored several conferences on East-West media relations, one of which took place in Moscow last year. Established by Dutch moneybags Frans Lurvink, Alerdinck's stated aim is to promote convergence be-

tween Eastern and Western coverage of such issues as the Strategic Defense Initiative. Obviously, since the Soviets aren't going to adopt a pro-Western position on these issues, what Alerdinck is really working for is to have the Western media become even more of an outlet for Soviet propaganda.

This became apparent at a conference which Alerdinck held in New York May 2. Co-sponsored by the New York University Center for War, Peace, and the News Media—whose board of directors includes such anti-SDI luminaries as McGeorge Bundy, Hans Bethe, and Kostas Tsipis—the meeting brought together NBC's Larry Grossman, David Shipler of the *New York Times*, Leonid Kravchenko, first deputy chairman of the Soviet State Committee for Television and Radio, and Vladimir Lomeiko, the chief Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman, among others, to discuss how to end Western press "distortions" of Soviet society, the most appropriate ways for journalists East and West to cover arms control, and so forth.

Not one representative from the U.S. side criticized the Soviet delegates, when they launched into venomous attacks against the SDI, or when they insisted, as Lomeiko did at the press conference, that the real "disaster" is not the Chernobyl accident, but continued U.S. underground nuclear testing! Instead, the Americans leveled one criticism after another at their own country. For example, the *Times*' Shipler, claiming that "Soviet society has changed immensely since Stalin's time," blasted American textbooks for failing to portray the supposedly positive changes that have taken place.

NBC's Grossman not only participated in one of the conference's major panels, but also appeared at a press conference, where he came to the defense of the Soviet handling of the Chernobyl disaster. This was not unusual, according to Alerdinck's executive director Gerd Ruge. Ruge said that NBC "has been involved with the Alerdinck process from the beginning." Although Alerdinck works with the other major U.S. networks, "NBC has by far been the most involved," Ruge said. NBC "would like to do some major things with the Soviet Union. NBC is looking for more direct contact with the Soviet Union."

Ruge said the two individuals at NBC most involved in the Moscow back-channel are Grossman and his deputy, John Angotti. Grossman is one of four members of the U.S. board of the Alerdinck Foundation. Angotti belongs to Alerdinck's East/West Media Board, a distinction he shares with G. Yuskevitchus, vice-president of Soviet TV.

Although the Soviet delegates lied about the Chernobyl incident, claiming that Moscow had fulfilled its international responsibilities, and accusing the West of fomenting "anti-Soviet hysteria" and "disinformation," their behavior did nothing to dissuade Alerdinck's Western sponsors from going ahead with plans for further "dialogues." Ruge privately disclosed that Alerdinck has scheduled a conference to work out television co-production schemes, where NBC is expected to be heavily represented.