

EIRFeature

The media cartel that controls what you think

by Jeffrey Steinberg

In 1996, the 104th Congress, with overwhelming bipartisan support, and with the backing of the White House, passed a telecommunications bill that removed the last remaining obstacles to the complete cartelization of America's mass media and "news" industry. The door was opened for a handful of predominantly British and British-allied media giants to take over the newspaper, radio, and television markets in the major urban centers of the United States. The legislation that Congress passed was a several-thousand-page digest of modifications of existing laws and federal codes, that was unintelligible to all but the most informed experts in the complex field of telecommunications law. Hardly any members of Congress read through the legislation that they passed, yet scores of congressmen, and Vice President Al Gore, jumped into the media spotlight to claim credit for the new law that heralded yet another downward shift into the post-industrial "information age."

Perhaps one reason that the sweeping deregulation of the communications, entertainment, and news media took place with hardly a whimper of opposition from any factions in government, is that the process of corporate cartelization and mass-media tyranny has already advanced so far, that the new law merely represented a codification of something that had already been consolidated.

What, then, is the state of the American news media today? Unbeknownst to most Americans, a handful of multinational, multimedia conglomerates dominates the airwaves, cable, and the print media, through which the daily news is disseminated into every community in America. Gone are the days when the "local newspaper" was truly locally owned. In a rapidly growing number of cases, these media giants are not even American companies. Many of the most influential media conglomerates are directly British owned and operated.

The Hollinger Corporation, a direct outgrowth of World War II British Secret Intelligence Service operations, housed in Canada and the United States, owns more than 100 daily and weekly newspapers in the United States, concentrated in the Midwest. The Hollinger board heavily overlaps that of the food cartel company



TABLE 1
Hours spent per person per year, U.S.A.

	Network TV	Cable TV	Newspapers	Magazines	Books
1992	930	380	170	100	95
1993	920	380	165	100	95
1994	940	380	165	100	95
1995	930	390	160	105	95
1996	950	390	160	105	95

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census. Figures for 1993-1996 are estimates.

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, Washington, D.C. correspondent of the Hollinger Corporation's Sunday Telegraph, and a prominent member of what the White House has aptly called the "media food chain," regurgitating slanders against the President. On a higher level than Evans-Pritchard, the British-steered media cartel has top-down control over what Americans receive as "news."

Archer Daniels Midland (which was recently indicted on multiple price-fixing charges). So, in parts of the American heartland, where ADM has replaced the family farmer with its vertically integrated food-processing operations, we are seeing the reemergence of the company town, complete with a controlled media, now centrally managed from London.

Hollinger owns the London *Daily Telegraph*, the flagship publication of the British Conservative Party's Mont Pelerin Society-Thatcherite wing. A few years back, Hollinger bought the *Jerusalem Post*, and turned that internationally circulated newspaper into a mouthpiece for the Ariel Sharon "Greater Israel" wing of the Likud party, which is devoted to blowing up the Middle East peace process. It now owns the *Chicago Sun Times*, one of the dominant news voices of the Midwest. Courtesy of a large cash infusion of Hongkong "hot money," Hollinger has taken over much of the media in Canada and Australia in the past several years, giving it unbridled press control over much of the English-speaking world. The Hollinger Corp.'s international advisory board, which shapes the policy of all of the Hollinger media organs, reads like a Who's Who in the hierarchy of the British Club of the Isles oligarchy. But, seated along with Lords Keswick, Rothschild, Weidenfeld, Hambro, and Carrington, and Baroness Thatcher, are U.S. "conservative" pundit William F. Buckley, Jr., self-confessed British agent Henry A. Kissinger, TV news anchorman David Brinkley, and syndicated columnist George Will.

The Hollinger Corp. has been the driving force behind the

campaign to destroy the institution of the U.S. Presidency, through what has come to be known as "Clintongate." Hollinger has been acting as a branch of British intelligence in this effort, employing the most advanced methods of psychological warfare, and deploying its own resources as well as those of allied media organizations, private tax-exempt foundations, and wanna-be Tory factions of the U.S. Republican Party, to sink the Presidency.

The role of Hollinger in the media feeding frenzy against the Clinton Presidency has not gone unnoticed by the White House. In fact, as this *Feature* was going to press, the White House Legal Office issued a 331-page document, lambasting what they described as the "Communication Stream of Conspiracy Commerce," an apparatus of American right-wing publications, linked to British tabloids, and private tax-exempt organizations, that has conducted a media war against President Clinton. At the center of the "media food chain" churning out smears on the President, the report listed the Hollinger Corporation's *Sunday Telegraph*, and its Washington bureau chief, Ambrose Evans-Pritchard. The White House report documented, through hundreds of pages of newspaper clippings, how stories, originating with nutty, obscure anti-Clinton propagandists, are funneled through the British press, back into the United States, where right-wing news outlets, such as the *Washington Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, repeat the lies, citing "credible" British news sources. Then, the Congressional Republicans launch "investigations" into the bogus allegations, which are then reported as "news" by the major es-

establishment dailies and TV news shows.

Hollinger is at the forefront of the Redcoat media invasion of America, but they are not alone.

The Thomson Group, another British media conglomerate with long-standing ties to the British monarchy and British intelligence, owns over 100 newspapers all across America. Pearson, another Fleet Street giant, owns a large stake in the London *Economist*, the chief propaganda organ for the City of London financial establishment.

Rupert Murdoch, the Australian media mogul and personal protégé of Britain's World War II propaganda chief, Lord Beaverbrook, has spread his News Corporation all across the United States, in print media, radio, and television, while at the same time owning the semi-official organ of the British monarchy, the London *Times*. Fox-TV, Murdoch's pornography-laden television network, has recently launched its own 24-hour-a-day, all-news TV channel, which is already up and running in many parts of the United States. The Pearson and Rothschild-owned London *Economist* now owns *Roll Call*, the "newspaper of record" on Capitol Hill; and also the *Journal of Commerce*, the most important trade daily for America's industrial sector.

Even the legal community is not exempt from the Redcoat invasion. Reed-Elsevier, an Anglo-Dutch merger of Reed International PLC of Britain and Elsevier NV of the Netherlands, owns the Congressional Information System, a data source on the activities of the U.S. Congress; Lexis-Nexis, the largest information retrieval database service in the world; and Martindale-Hubble, the standard directory of the U.S. legal profession.

A near total monopoly

Among the American-owned media giants, a half-dozen companies share, with their British cousins, a near-total monopoly over the news. The Associated Press, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times* (Times Mirror Corp.) are, along with Reuters and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, and its U.S. de facto subsidiaries, National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System), almost the sole sources of news for the overwhelming majority of Americans. Except, that is, for the four television news departments at NBC, CBS, ABC, and CNN.

But, these four companies are themselves subsidiaries of even larger multimedia conglomerates: General Electric owns NBC, Time Warner recently absorbed CNN, Disney/Capital Cities owns ABC, and Westinghouse owns CBS. Each of these mega-media entities owns local TV and radio stations in major urban centers throughout the United States, magazines, motion picture companies, and record companies (in addition to their more familiar product lines).

Pick up your daily newspaper—especially if you live outside New York City, Los Angeles, or Washington, D.C. Look at the bylines on every one of the major news stories that appear on the front page, and in the international and national news sections. How many read "Reuters," or "AP," or "com-

bined wire services"?

Read a little further and you find that your "public opinion" is being measured, on an hourly basis, by polling organizations that are joint ventures of ABC, CNN, *USA Today*, the *New York Times*, and Gallup. The *International Herald Tribune*, the English-language "newspaper of record" abroad, is a joint venture of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. The Washington Post Corporation owns *Newsweek*; CNN of "New Age" Anglophile Ted Turner, is now a division of Time-Warner, which publishes *Time* magazine. It's an incestuous world at the top of the news business. Whereas, not too long ago, various trade journals used to compile a profile of the 100 most powerful media executives, the list has now dwindled down to no more than 20 multimedia CEOs.

Several years ago, *Vanity Fair*, another ostensibly American publication that was given a make-over by British editor Tina Brown (whose husband, Harold Evans, another transplanted British national, is the president of Random House—which, like *Vanity Fair*, is part of the S.I. Newhouse media organization), published a series of cover stories on the "New Establishment," media moguls and their bankers who gather every year at the Sun Valley, Idaho ranch of investor Charles Allen, Jr. for several weeks of wheeling and dealing that often shapes the next big corporate consolidation, buyout, or purge. This group, *Vanity Fair* asserted approvingly, is the new power center of American life.

With the average American reportedly spending more time in front of the television set than at the workplace, *Vanity Fair* may, unfortunately, be onto something. Americans may love to complain about the media, but they keep coming back for more. And the net effect is an accelerated "dumbing down" of the population, which, conveniently for the British-led oligarchy, parallels the disastrous collapse of public education in America at every level.

Mass media, mass brainwashing

It's not as if this were unintentional. In the early 1950s, Theodor Adorno, the Frankfurt School social engineer, wrote enthusiastically that Americans' ability to think would be destroyed, once the majority of them had been induced to spend all of their leisure time in front of the one-eyed babysitter, a.k.a. "the TV." (Adorno had worked on the Rockefeller Foundation-funded Radio Research Project at Princeton University, and spent years in Hollywood developing a sense of the mass-brainwashing potential of the mass media.) Nearly a half-century later, America is addicted to television; current history is reduced to sound-bytes of carefully screened and "spun" national and international news "factoids," buried by a barrage of graphic scenes of real-life violence and perversity, which take up well over half of the nightly diet of "the day's news."

Even the live coverage of car crashes, gang murders, rapes, natural disasters, wars, and terrorist acts, is served up on the basis of careful studies conducted at the neurological divisions of the leading medical schools. In recent decades,

psychological warfare experts have unveiled a new pseudoscience called “victimology,” developed by the London Tavistock Institute, which is premised upon the theory that individuals can be put through trauma by being exposed to shockingly graphic visual accounts of violence. To be a victim of a tragic event, you no longer have to “be there” as an observer or participant. You can watch it on TV, during the nightly news hours, or see the graphic pictures on the front page of the newspaper. The disruption of your neurological system, according to the practitioners of victimology, can be nearly as severe, through TV or other news exposure, especially if the victim—you—keeps coming back for more.

Three stories most Americans missed in 1996

The “American” media elites practice a brutal, albeit well-concealed, form of “wartime” news censorship, but the mechanisms of this control are now openly acknowledged. John Chancellor, the longtime NBC-TV news anchorman, in his recent autobiographical account of life in the news room, *The New News Business* (with Walter R. Mears, New York: HarperPerennial, 1995), admitted that, through formal structures such as the Associated Press, informal “clubs” such as the New York Council on Foreign Relations, and the Sun Valley clique, decisions are made, on a daily or weekly basis, about what the American people will be told, and what stories will never see the light of day. The crime of omission, in many instances, can be the far more deadly.

Unless you were a subscriber to *EIR*, or the weekly newspaper *New Federalist*, or possessed the resources to conduct your own exhaustive research, there were three profoundly important news stories that you missed during 1996, that have particularly grave implications for the future of this country and the world. The blackout of these stories by every major news outlet, is symptomatic of the larger pattern of the “crimes of omission” on the part of the news cartel.

The first, was the 1996 Democratic Party Presidential campaign of Lyndon LaRouche. Despite the fact that LaRouche was on the ballot in 26 states, and garnered about 600,000 votes, his campaign was completely blacked out of the national television, radio, and print media—to the point that the standard media line was that “President Clinton ran unopposed” for the Democratic Presidential nomination. LaRouche averaged 6.5% of the vote in the states in which he was on the ballot, and received well over 10% of the vote in a number of those races—far more votes than were garnered by the widely publicized Presidential bids of Republicans Lamar Alexander, Phil Gramm, Bob Dornan, and Pete Wilson. Had LaRouche received proportional media news coverage, his vote totals would have increased significantly; and, more to the point, his policy input into the Presidential debate process would have shaped a very different kind of national election, one that would have, in all likelihood, led to a larger Clinton victory, and a Democratic Party sweep of both Houses of Congress.

The fact that a candidate who fully qualified for federal

matching funds, received over 160,000 votes in California alone (Ralph Nader, the Green Party candidate, who received significant nightly news coverage, got 20,000 votes), and aired four nationwide prime-time half-hour TV campaign broadcasts, received *zero* mass media news coverage, says volumes about the top-down control the media exerts over what the American public is allowed to know.

In stark contrast to the 1996 campaign media blackout of LaRouche, in March 1986, when two LaRouche-backed candidates won the Democratic Party nominations for lieutenant governor and secretary of state of Illinois, the major news networks launched a round-the-clock slander campaign, branding LaRouche “a political extremist,” and demanding (and finally getting) a government frame-up/prosecution. In the span of four weeks, over 8,000 separate media slanders, all bearing the identical ID format “political extremist Lyndon LaRouche,” appeared in the U.S. press. The groundwork had been laid for this systematic attack over several years.

In 1983, after LaRouche played the principal role in convincing President Ronald Reagan to adopt the Strategic Defense Initiative, which LaRouche designed, a secret public-private task force was created, at the behest Henry Kissinger, and with the active support of the George Bush apparatus within the White House, to organize a media slander campaign against LaRouche, to force the President to sever all ties to him, and to shape “public opinion” for an eventual assassination or frame-up against him.

George Bush, crack kingpin

The second story that you didn’t read about, unless you had access to LaRouche publications during 1996, also involved George Bush. On Aug. 18-20, 1996, the *San Jose Mercury News* in California published an important series of articles, revealing that members of a Nicaraguan Contra organization, the Democratic National Front, had bankrolled the war against the Sandinista regime in Managua by dumping tons of crack cocaine onto the streets of Los Angeles. The *Mercury News* story, by investigative reporter Gary Webb, provoked an angry reaction from the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the *New York Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the rest of the media cabal. The publishers, editors, and writers at the *Mercury News* had violated the censorship code, by allowing a story to be published that was beyond the pale of “acceptable,” i.e., toothless, investigative journalism. Ironically, Webb was able to focus national attention on the Contra-cocaine story, by putting the text of the series, along with hundreds of pages of “raw” documentation, on the *Mercury News*’s Worldwide Web site. (Occasionally, even the “information revolution” backfires on its boosters.)

But, the real story behind the *Mercury News* scandal was the dimension of the Los Angeles Contra-cocaine tale that never appeared in the pages of the *Mercury News*: the story of the role of Vice President, and, later, President George Bush, in supervising the cocaine-for-guns operations in Cen-

tral America, that placed segments of the federal government in bed with the Colombian cocaine cartel.

As *EIR* detailed in a September 1996 *Special Report*, "Would a President Bob Dole Prosecute Drug Super-Kingpin George Bush?" A series of Presidential orders issued in early 1982 placed Vice President Bush in charge of the entire crisis management, covert operations, counter-terror, and counter-narcotics program for the Reagan administration. He was in charge of the Central America "secret war," and he was personally aware of the drug operations, which ran through the chain of command that he directed.

The Bush role in the Contra-cocaine business was a perfect instance of rock-solid news. The government documents specifying Bush's role in the Central America program, were all declassified, and publicly available at the Library of Congress and the National Archives. There were thousands of pages of court transcripts, FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration affidavits, and other legal evidence of the Contra-cocaine links. And, an agent who headed the DEA's El Salvador operations at the height of the Contra drugs-for-guns effort, publicly testified that he had personally briefed Vice President Bush, during a diplomatic reception in Guatemala, about the Contra drug trafficking. He even had a photograph of himself with the vice president at the event. Further, the final report of Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh contained additional damning evidence about Vice President Bush's intimate ties to former CIA officer Felix Rodriguez, the man publicly identified as in charge of the El Salvador supply route, linked to the drug flights.

Yet, no news organization apart from *EIR* saw fit to break the story as a high-priority item. When one investigator, Prof. John Newman, assembled extensive evidence for publication, he was turned down by several major daily newspapers, before finally getting a scaled-back story published in a regional daily.

Does the possible involvement of a vice president, later a President, in the launching of the crack cocaine epidemic, not represent the kind of story that should win Pulitzer Prizes, and lead to criminal prosecutions of "citizens above suspicion"?

A foreign-directed coup plot

The third story that never appeared on the front page of the *Washington Post*, or as the lead item on NBC Nightly News, involved the media itself. From the day of Bill Clinton's inauguration as President of the United States, on Jan. 20, 1993, the London-centered Club of the Isles, utilizing British intelligence assets, among other resources, has been running a covert operation, aimed at bringing down the Clinton Presidency. Using a recipe that has been applied over and over again in Africa and in other parts of the Third World, the Hollinger Corp., BBC, Reuters, the *Times* of London, the *Economist*, and other British "news" organs, in league with such U.S. outfits as the *Wall Street Journal*, CNN, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Times*, and the *American Spectator*, have conducted a non-

stop black propaganda campaign against the President and his closest advisers. Millions of dollars have been covertly provided to an underground of newsletter publishers, radio "talk-jockeys," "Christian" broadcasters, and tax-exempt think-tanks, to keep up the "Clintongate" drumbeat. As in the decade-long campaign to railroad Lyndon LaRouche, the Clintongate effort has also drawn on the resources of a permanent bureaucracy inside the Criminal Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, which, in this case, has been operating as a fifth column for the British assault on the Presidency. And, the "Get Clinton" effort has also seen the biggest upsurge in terrorism on American soil in a generation, which, at one point, featured a series of attempts upon the life of the President, and attacks against the White House grounds.

The idea that a foreign apparatus, run by a purported leading American NATO ally, is conducting a covert war against a U.S. head of state—as if the United States were a banana republic—should warrant news coverage. Particularly when one key player in the effort, *Sunday Telegraph* correspondent Evans-Pritchard, boasts frequently about his role in the drive to bring down the U.S. President, and admits to working closely with the MI-6 station "wherever he is assigned." But, the news editors at NBC, CNN, the *Washington Post*, and so on, have chosen, instead, to black out that story, and devote countless front-page stories to a regurgitation of the made-in-London Clintongate baloney.

DO YOU KNOW

- that the American Revolution was fought *against* British "free trade" economics?
- that Washington and Franklin championed Big Government?
- that the Founding Fathers promoted partnership between private industry and central government?

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