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"PRESS COVERAGE OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE COLD WAR: AGENDA-SETTING IN WHOSE INTEREST?"

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For over 40 years--from the latter part of the 1940s until the late 1980s--the United States armed itself against the possibility of a war with the now-defunct Soviet Union. During that time the U.S. populace--by direct or indirect consent--agreed to devote increasing amounts of its cumulative energies, natural resources, and tax money to finance that arms race, commonly known as the Cold War. By 1990 the U.S. had 375 major military bases in 35 nations and a stockpile of 12,000 nuclear weapons, 1,000 more than the Soviets. Military expenditures rose until they reached 55% of the federal government's budget. And, as the costs escalated, so did the national debt: In 1991 the military budget was $300 billion and the national deficit was $4 trillion.

The choice became guns or butter. As Cold War costs increased, federal funds for housing, education, mass transit, health care and other social welfare programs diminished. There were also psychological costs. During the four-plus decades of Cold War animosities, people around the globe lived in the shadow of a mushroom-shaped cloud, fearful that those animosities would one day culminate in a nuclear war that could destroy almost all life on the planet and plunge the globe into nuclear winter.

Sanity took hold in the late 1980s when the U.S. and the Soviets, jointly possessing enough nuclear weaponry to destroy the earth 39 times over, began establishing more cordial diplomatic relationships. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START), which called for the elimination of two-thirds of

their nuclear arsenals by the year 2003, was signed in early 1993. The agreement gave formal acknowledgment to the end of the Cold War.

But the question remains: Why? Why was a citizenry so willing to finance a scenario which so often proved to be against its best interest? Of course, there are many answers to this question. Part of any answer, however, must include the role of the media.

To understand the breadth and depth of the media's role in the Cold War, we must begin in the 1940s. While the U.S.'s antipathy to the goals of the Russian revolution can be traced to 1917, the Cold War itself is usually considered to have begun in the latter half of 1945, immediately after the U.S. and the USSR emerged from World War II as victorious allies. That alliance was short-lived.

The broad outlines of the Cold War ideology were first set down in the Truman Doctrine, presented to Congress in March of 1946. To forestall what was perceived as the Soviet's increasing influence, Truman wanted Congress to provide $400 million in military and economic assistance to Greece and Turkey. The long-term implications of the doctrine were contained in a single sentence: "It must be the policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities." In his speech Truman envisioned a far-reaching struggle with almost every nation choosing between a "free" or a "totalitarian" existence.

Few in the press offered a serious critique of the Truman Doctrine. Soon after Truman presented his plan to Congress, one major political figure after another endorsed it, all of them warning about the dangers of Communism and the need for military strength. The press gave a great deal of attention to these pronouncements but offered no real criticism of them--thus failing to fulfill its chief function, that of adversary or critic of the government. It

is no exaggeration to say that, for at least the first two decades of the Cold War, the press almost totally failed to examine the implications of a foreign policy that meant the U.S. would take on the role of international policemen, and would eventually spend billions of dollars annually to develop an arsenal of nuclear weapons that posed a threat to all humanity.

There were notable exceptions to this failure, however. In the very early years of the Cold War, Walter Lippmann, for instance, regularly debated the issue with Cold War architect George Kennan on the pages of the *New York Herald-Tribune*.[1]

Linked to the get-tough-with-the-Russians foreign policy was a fear of the internal Red menace--an almost paranoid fear that communists in this country were undermining the democratic body politic. Suddenly the federal government began questioning the loyalty of its citizenry. Eleven days after the Truman Doctrine was enunciated, Truman issued Executive Order 9835. Commonly known as the Loyalty Order, it placed under scrutiny of the federal investigatory and police agencies 2.2 million federal employees from executives to janitors in small-town post offices. The extent to which newspaper people themselves supported such questionable practices--one so clearly in opposition to the First Amendment--was evident in their choice for the 1947 Pulitzer Prize, one of the most prestigious awards in journalism. The prize that year went to Frederick Woltman of the *New York World- Telegram* for his articles on the infiltration of Communism in the U.S.[2]

By the end of the 1950s Congressional and other government committees--including the House UnAmerican Activities Committee and the Senate's Eastland Committee--had investigated the alleged Communist affiliations of thousands of Americans. The goal of these committees was plain: to seek out all Communists

and Communist sympathizers, to blacklist or keep them from employment and, when possible, to incarcerate them.

Early on the Communist hunters--or witch hunters, as they were called--set their sites on the most powerful architects of public opinion: the ladies and gentlemen of the press. In June 1950, Ted Kirkpatrick, managing editor of *Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts on Communism,* sent his subscribers a special report entitled *Red Channels, The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television*. *Red Channels* listed 151 people in the broadcasting industries who were allegedly linked to Communist causes.[3]

CBS and NBC responded to these accusations by setting up their own internal security systems. CBS created a new vice-presidency to handle such matters and began to require loyalty oaths of its employees in December of 1950. NBC employees had been signing loyalty oaths since the mid-1940s.[4]

Not all networks went along with such demands. In 1951 ABC was awarded journalism's prestigious Peabody Award for resistance to such political pressure. According to media historian J. Fred MacDonald, the network was praised for taking a firm stand "at a time when stations and networks were firing or refusing to hire writers and actors on the basis of 'unsupported innuendoes' in the publication of *Red Channels*."[5]

Naturally, the witch hunting encompassed not only the broadcast media but the print area as well. One of several committees to investigate alleged Communists or Communist sympathizers in the print media was the Internal Security Subcommittee of the U.S. Senate, also known as the Eastland Committee, chaired by Senator James O. Eastland. The *New York Times* was frequently the focus of Eastland Committee attention. In November 1955, it subpoenaed 38 newspapermen for private hearings in New York and Washington D.C. Thirty of the 38 worked for the *Times*.[6]

The hearings themselves were timed to coincide with a referendum held by the New York Newspaper Guild--the newspapermen's union. The referendum asked Guild members if it should be Guild policy to "resist the dismissal of all members discharged after invoking the Constitutional privilege [the Fifth Amendment] when asked by an authorized agency about Communist Party affiliation." Guild members voted 3 to 2 against such resistance.[7] This vote was an important one. It indicates that the majority of New York reporters--members of perhaps the most respected press corp in the country--did not feel that newspapermen and women who had been accused of Communist leanings, deserved the support of their peers.

The *Times'* management sent out conflicting messages on the issue. Although the *Times'* editorial page insisted it was the newspaper's right to hire and fire, and not that of the Eastland Committee, the newspaper fired three editorial workers who had gone before that committee. Three of the four other major New York newspapers remained silent on the firings. The conservative Hearst newspaper expressed approval. However, the *New York Post* commented editorially: "The Eastland Committee...has unwittingly exposed the cowardice and submissiveness which afflicts large segments of journalism."[8]

Broadcasting: The Forties and Fifties

To attribute the media's performance in the early Cold War years to cowardice and submissiveness is simplistic. And to characterize the performance of all media as poor is unfair. The situation was extremely complex. For one thing, the print and broadcast media operate under some very different strictures and thus must be considered separately. Let us first turn to the network television.

The early years of television literally paralleled the early years of the Cold War. In fact, the new medium provided the government with the ideal

outlet for propaganda aimed at popularizing its new "get-tough-with-the-Russians" policy. Convincing the U.S. populace to back this policy was a fairly challenging task in light of the fact that the U.S. and the Russians had just joined forces to rid the world of the Nazi threat. In becoming such a propaganda outlet, the new medium almost totally failed to educate its audiences as to the cost and complexities of such a foreign policy or the dangers that would accompany the development of atomic weaponry.

This failure on the part of early television cannot be taken lightly. It means that the networks failed to fulfill the one obligation the Federal Communications Commission requires of all those who wish to obtain a broadcasting license: to operate in the public interest, convenience and necessity. Television's failure to explore the implications of the Cold War was certainly <u>not</u> in the public interest. In effect, that failure robbed the American public of an early opportunity to look more critically at its chosen path for the next four decades. And, of course, to a great extent, the uncritical acceptance of the Cold War philosophy and aims must also be laid at the door of the American public itself.

The question here is: To what do we attribute television's failure in this regard? Three major aspects of early television are germane: (1) The broadcasting industry's close involvement with the federal government during the World War II. (2) Television's need to establish itself as an economically viable industry and its corresponding need for programming to attract advertisers. (3) The extent to which TV's news/information function was--and continues to be--inextricably linked to its entertainment function.

The need for programming in TV's early years, some have speculated, accounts for television's excessive reliance on government material and thus its airing of the government's Cold War propaganda. Others see the problem

in a different light. MacDonald has speculated that perhaps President Franklin D. Roosevelt's extensive use of radio during the New Deal and World War II led to the government's use of television during the early Cold War years. He notes that during the period May through July 1942, for example, radio stations carried over 1.5 million spot announcements and over 185,000 live and transcribed programs, all supporting the national war effort.[9]

In August of 1950 the Board of Directors of the National Association of Broadcasters, meeting in Washington, declared the broadcasting industry's eagerness to support the government's national security aims. To facilitate this, the Board of Directors grouped themselves under the auspices of the Broadcasters' Advisory Council (BAC).[10] BAC, supervised by John Steelman, assistant to President Harry Truman, had a hand in several television programs produced jointly by network and White House personnel. Steelman also supervised and hosted a weekly NBC-TV show entitled "Battle Reporting." The series was but one of over 25 news and public affairs series made up of government films on network TV between 1948 and 1953.[11]

One of the first documentary series produced primarily for television was administered by the State Department and ran on ABC from June 1950 through January 1953. Entitled "The Marshall Plan in Action" and later called "Strength for a Free World," it aired in more than 200 segments and had a very weak audience appeal.[12]

One major area in which the federal government exploited television was that of civilian preparedness in the event of an atomic attack, also known as civil defense. Of course, one could reasonably argue that showing civil defense information was in the best interest of the public. Citizens did, after all, need to understand civil defense itself. And, of course, this is true. However, the objections to such programming centered on the extent to

which the networks presented this material uncritically, focusing exclusively on the need for preparedness while consistently failing to question the need for expanded nuclear arsenals.

The networks produced such shows in close cooperation with the federal government. One such series, "Survival," airing in the summer of 1951, was so successful that the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) ordered kinescopes of it to be used in the training of civil defense workers.[13] Around the same time the Pentagon made available to local and network television free film of its atomic and hydrogen bomb tests, beginning with the first drops in 1946 at Eniwetok-Bikini in the South Pacific.[14]

A persistent criticism of both types of programming was their total failure to present the incredible devastation that results from the detonation of a nuclear bomb. A realistic television portrayal of such devastation did not happen until the airing of "The Day After" in 1983.

Network television also helped promote the Cold War myths in the documentary, a genre that combines news and entertainment. Many documentaries were based on the assumption that the Soviet Union was a sinister, corrupt and dangerous place devoid of any democratic values whatever. Probably the most startling example of this approach is "Nightmare in Red," a six-segment series airing in 1955 and consisting of footage compiled from existing film archives. Some of the claims made in "Nightmare in Red" were simply untrue. The show viewed Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Revolution, as a tool of the German high command. This is, of course, historically false since he died in 1924. At some points, the film footage used presented a distinctly false impression. For instance, staged scenes from German propaganda films were used to support the idea that the Russians welcomed the German invaders as

liberators--a preposterous notion when one remembers that 20 million Russians died at the hands of the German invaders.[15]

The show's historical omissions also distorted the facts. One segment concentrated on the early Stalin era, including his five-year plan. The narrative here noted that enormous strides were made but at enormous human costs. However, the narrative failed to note that the Soviet Union had been forced to industrialize without outside capital. Despite this, industrial production increased 236 per cent during the five-year plan.[16] As history books have noted, the Russian people were tremendously enthusiastic about economic growth. "People rejoiced at every new advance as a personal triumph. It became a national pastime to watch the mounting statistics, the fulfilling of quotas or hitting of 'targets.'"[17]

The show's harshly anti-communistic view, distortions of fact, and downright lies prompted its General Motors sponsor to withdraw. And, after viewing a prescreening, members of the Soviet delegation in Washington launched a protest.[18]

The Cold War was also a common topic on other public affairs programs. Issues examined regularly on network television included the American military build-up, the possibility of another world war, domestic Communist subversion, and the numerical preponderance of Chinese and Russian troops over American forces. However, the examination of these topics rarely enlightened the viewing public. The viewers were too often presented with simplified emotionalism as opposed to a wide variety of educated opinions. For the most part, high-level administration officials and important politicians made unsubstantiated charges and mouthed half-truths which television journalists failed to question.[19]

The most strident example of such politicized programming, according to MacDonald, was NBC's "American Forum on the Air," which came to TV after 25 years on the radio and ran until 1957. The main function of this type of programming, MacDonald notes, was to popularize fear.[20]

The effect of such shows was somewhat ameliorated by shows which truly attempted to examine contemporary issues. A particularly good example of such an attempt was ABC's "America's Town Meeting of the Air," a radio show from 1935 and a television show until 1952. The show consistently sought a wide spectrum of opinion and solicited uncensored questions from a studio audience. Along with senators, congressmen, and administrative spokesmen appeared people from the conservative-to-liberal political mainstream, including the non-Communist left. One of the more frequent guests was Norman Thomas, six-time Socialist Party candidate for President of the United States. Other examples of excellent Cold War commentary on the small screen included "John Gunther's High Road" and the year-end news wrap-ups presented by each network. The latter often included provocative analysis of Cold War issues.[21]

Perhaps the finest and the most famous of television's public affairs programming in the 1950s was Edward R. Murrow's "See It Now," produced by Fred W. Friendly. On that CBS show Murrow and his colleagues conversed with a variety of world leaders including China's Chou En-lai, Yugoslavia's Marshall Tito, and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. As a perfect example of a hard-hitting, fair and honest investigative journalism show, "See It Now" stands alone. On program after program Murrow examined contemporary issues through his interviews with famous subjects. (Murrow's most controversial subject and show, the McCarthy broadcast, will be dealt with in detail below.)

The enormous popularity of "See It Now" is an excellent indicator of how hungry the American public was for high-quality public affairs programming.

The show had tremendous viewer support for several years. A particularly good "See It Now" entry and one that evoked strong feedback from its audience was Murrow's conversation with atomic physicist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the country's leading experts on atomic weaponry and atomic energy. The segment aired soon after the Atomic Energy Commission, questioning Oppenheimer's loyalty, had revoked his security clearance. The show's producers received so many requests for prints of the show they put together a special forty-eight minute version of it, using some of the footage they had left on the cutting-room floor. The reaction from Oppenheimer's opponents was equally strong. Friendly recalls that the pressure and embarrassment for CBS was so intense that two years later network management canceled an interview with Oppenheimer by newsman Howard K. Smith. Some of that embarrassment and pressure, of course, ended up on the doorstep of the show's sponsor, Alcoa. On May 5, 1955, that company announced it would no longer sponsor the show.[22]

Ultimately "See It Now" was a victim of economics. More specifically, it was the victim of the networks' least common denominator approach to programming. That approach involves the production of shows that entertain the most people, offend the fewest, and, therefore, attract the most advertising dollars. (The networks' wish to maximize advertising revenue has also led them to offer noncontroversial programming. Controversial ideas, advertisers fear, put the viewers in a critical mood, hardly the appropriate setting for a sales pitch.) When "The $64,000 Question" was put into the half-hour time slot immediately before "See It Now," the latter's ad rates jumped overnight. While Alcoa had been paying $50,000 for "See It Now," Revlon was being charged $80,000 for the popular quiz show. Thus the "See It Now" time slot had become too valuable and the CBS executives rescheduled it. Upon losing its weekly half-hour slot, the show was assigned a new format: six

hour-long shows airing throughout the entire season.[23] In effect, this new arrangement made it impossible for "See It Now" to use its strongest journalistic strategy: the rebuttal. Since the program was scheduled irregularly, there was no way to incorporate responses to charges regarding the reporter's lack of objectivity or to correct the subject's error. Perhaps even more important, the new arrangement took scheduling and topic decisions out of the hands of the journalists and gave them to the sales department, managers, and sponsors. "See It Now" left the air in the spring of 1958.

Senator Joseph McCarthy Alger Hiss, and the Rosenbergs

Four figures stand out in the 1950s political scene: Senator Joseph McCarthy, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. How the print and broadcast media presented these figures to the American public is crucial to any understanding of the decade. Interestingly enough, in the judgment of many media historians, the performance of the fledgling television industry outshone that of the newspapers in this regard.

Perhaps the most infamous figure of the 1950s was the Republican Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph R. McCarthy, whose name is forever linked to the witch hunting and paranoid excesses of the 1950s, a shameful chapter in U.S. history. A corrupt political opportunist with little regard for the truth of his accusations or their effect on his victims, McCarthy and his deeds cannot be defended. Nonetheless, it is important to consider them in the broader political context.

McCarthy's national influence began in 1950, a midterm election year. In that year--and for many years to follow--both Democrats and Republicans focused on the necessity for a strong national defense to meet the Soviet threat, each claiming that they were best equipped to rid the nation and the world of the Red menace. The nature and the intensity of that threat had been

altered dramatically in September of 1949 when the Soviet Union exploded an atomic device. The fear this struck in the hearts of Americans immediately became political pay dirt for all but a few politicians, a situation which continued for the next 40 years.

Joe McCarthy stepped into the national spotlight on February 9, 1950, claiming to hold in his hand a list of 205 people whose names, he said, had been made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who were, he claimed, still working and shaping policy in the State Department. The next day McCarthy altered his accusations somewhat, referring not to Communists but to "bad security risks" in the State Department. The day after that, the risks went back to being "card-carrying Communists" but their numbers had diminished to 57. For the next four years, McCarthy was rarely off the first page of American newspapers.[24] From 1950 to 1954, the name "McCarthy" appeared more often in teletyped stories that moved out of Washington than did the name of any other senator. During this time frame McCarthy presented reporters with no documented evidence to support his allegations and accusations. However, the press consistently allowed him to make such unsubstantiated claims without challenge, a privilege allowed virtually no other senator.[25] If McCarthy called a press conference in the morning merely to announce that he was calling a press conference in the afternoon, the press dutifully reported it.

McCarthy's successful manipulation of the press is best summed up by Douglas Cater, a Washington newsman in the 1950s:

> Brandishing the stage prop documents, which he never let anyone examine, he ingeniously mixed the proper proportion of the misplaced concrete and the far-fetched abstraction to meet the requirements of the newsmen. His feat lay in transferring this myth of a spy-infested America to more responsible newspapers.... McCarthy held the headlines day after day... He knew the ingredients for the 'lead,' the

> 'overnight,' the 'sidebar.' Of many things McCarthy was contemptuous, but he never neglected his press relations.[26]

Many journalists would agree with Cater's analysis. Over the years the common wisdom has been to excuse the press, to claim that the reporters' need to adhere to the principles of objectivity forbade them from applying news analysis--a technique developed later--to the McCarthy phenomenon. Not all agree. Journalist James Aronson had this to say:

> The portrait of the press of the United States as an objective entity is a myth. There is nothing in the canons of journalism that compelled reporters to accept and editors to publish information allegedly contained in uninspected documents waved at them by a Senator. Such reports, if their content proved false, might have been excused once or twice on the ground of deadline or overzealous reporting. But when this happened day in and day out for four years...there was no thread of an excuse.[27]

Nor were the Army-McCarthy hearings--which contributed in no small part to the latter's demise--a ringing victory for public affairs television, as MacDonald points out. The only two networks to cover the hearings live were ABC and Dumont, who did so because they had virtually no morning or afternoon programming. CBS gave a 45-minute summary of the hearings at 11:30 p.m. NBC showed the hearings for two days; however, those two days cost them $125,000 in advertising revenues. They too then chose to offer a late-night summary.[28]

Of all TV journalists, it was Edward R. Murrow who ultimately showed the least timidity in his "See It Now" McCarthy broadcast which aired on March 9, 1954. (In a departure from its usual policy, CBS refused to do advertising promotion for the show. Murrow and producer Fred Friendly ended up buying an ad in the *New York Times*.) For the broadcast they chose a simple and effective format: Filmed sequences of McCarthy's speeches and his inquisitions of alleged Communists were interspersed with sequences in which Murrow pointed

out the senator's misuse of facts. Thus Murrow got at the pure essence of McCarthy by merely comparing McCarthy's statements to recorded facts--a simple and common journalistic practice that most of the press had neglected to use in four years. After the broadcast, CBS recorded the greatest number of telephone calls it had ever received about a given program. Friendly estimates that the calls were ten to one in favor of their production.[29]

Although none can dispute the bravery of Friendly and Murrow, James Boylan, former editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, has accurately noted that the program, a serious challenge to McCarthy, came late--"only when McCarthy's exit chute, greased at last by the Eisenhower administration, was clearly visible."[30]

While an astounding success at manipulating the press, as a lawyer and a Communist hunter, McCarthy was a total failure. He accused dozens of people of being Communists or Communist sympathizers, but did not produce evidence to warrant the conviction of any one of them. Nor was he able to set up a single contempt citation that could be sustained in the courts.

Without question, print and broadcast journalists helped McCarthy promote fear and paranoia throughout the country. This anti-communist fervor on the part of print journalists was also apparent in the way the press--particularly the New York press--handled the two most famous spy trials of the era, that of the Alger Hiss and the Rosenbergs.

Hiss, a former State Department official, was charged with conspiracy to commit espionage for passing State Department documents to prosecution witness Whittaker Chambers for transmission to the Soviet Union. When the jury at the first Hiss trial failed to reach a verdict, most newspapers in New York City attacked the Federal District trial judge Samuel H. Kaufman, demanding a federal investigation of his behavior. The *New York Herald-American* published

the names and addresses of the jurors who were plagued with crank phone calls and death threats. Before the case came to retrial, a defense lawyer presented 40 examples of newspaper articles which, he said, could create bias among newspaper readers, asking therefore that the case be shifted to Vermont. It was not.[31] Hiss was convicted in January of 1950. [A historical footnote here: Hiss was basically exonerated in 1992 when an examination of Soviet intelligence archives revealed absolutely no knowledge of him.]

Six months after Hiss's conviction--and three weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War--Julius and Ethel Rosenberg along with Morton Sobell were arrested on a charge of conspiracy to commit espionage; i.e., of conspiring in 1944 to transmit secret information concerning atomic fission to the Soviet Union. From the day of their arrests, the press linked their trial to that of Hiss to show an international Communist conspiracy. In fact, the cases were unrelated. Also, sensational news stories and strident headlines gave readers the false impression that the couple had been charged with treason when, in fact, no such charge was ever made.

The latter part of 1951 saw the formation of a Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case. The Committee was comprised of scores of distinguished professionals in the fields of arts, science, and religion; however, their attempts to get the press's attention failed utterly. The editor of the *New York Herald-Tribune* refused to meet with a Committee delegation. The *Herald-Tribune* and every other New York newspaper "ignored committee press releases reporting pleas for clemency from notable figures in every part of the world."[32] When Pope Pius XII made three intercessions in the case, an almost complete news blackout kept this information from the public. Not until the weeks immediately before the Rosenbergs' execution did the *Times* and others finally acknowledge the worldwide clamor for clemency.

The Rosenbergs were executed on June 19, 1953.[33] Sobell served 19 years in prison as a co-conspirator.

Blacklisting and Redbaiting continued throughout the 1950s. In 1957 the Eastland Committee issued a report entitled "Communists in Mass Communications and in Political Activities." The House UnAmerican Activities Committee (HUAC) held public hearings into the early 1960s.

<u>The CIA and the Press</u>

New light was shed on the press and its coverage of the Cold War when Carl Bernstein published an article on the CIA and the media in the October 20, 1977, issue of *Rolling Stone*.[34] Two months later, December 25-27, the *New York Times* ran a related set of articles written by John M. Crewdson. The December 25th page one headline for the three-part series read: "The C.I.A.'s 3-Decade Effort to Mold the World's Views."[35] What follows was taken from the Bernstein and Crewdson articles.

According to documents on file at the CIA headquarters, Joseph Alsop--perhaps the most virulent of the Redbaiting journalists in the 1950s--was one of more than 400 American journalists who secretly carried out assignments for the CIA. Formal recruitment of reporters and columnists was handled not through direct contact with them but through contact with the media outlet's highest executives. Network and publishing leaders who lent support to the CIA included William Paley, head of CBS; Henry Luce, publisher of *Time, Life,* and *Fortune* magazines; Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times;* as well as heads of ABC, NBC, Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters, the Hearst and Scripps-Howard newspaper chains, the Mutual Broadcasting System, the *Miami Herald*, the *New York Herald- Tribune*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*.[36] Crewdson, in writing for the *Times*, phrases it a bit differently, noting that at least 22 American news organizations had

employed journalists who were also working for the CIA, with some organizations aware of it and some not. The *Times'* list also includes the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.[37]

The aid media executives gave to the CIA took two forms: (1) giving jobs and credentials or "journalistic cover" to CIA operatives who were about to be posted abroad and (2) lending the CIA the undercover services of reporters already on their staff. The *New York Times*, for instance, provided several CIA employees with *Times* cover between 1950 and 1966.[38] According to Bernstein, CBS's William Paley gave the CIA outtakes of news film and access to the CBS news film library. Paley also allowed the CIA to monitor the reports CBS correspondents sent to the Washington and New York newsrooms. The senior editors of *Newsweek* and *Time* also approved arrangements for several of their correspondents and freelance writers to give their services to the CIA. Ironically, *U.S. News and World Report*, whose editorial leanings most closely approximated the CIA's long-range goals, repeatedly refused to allow the CIA to use it for cover purposes.[39]

The CIA's involvement was far-flung and extensive. At various times it owned or subsidized over 50 newspapers, news services, radio stations, periodicals and other media outlets. While some of these were based in this country, most were overseas. For instance, the CIA was part owner of the English-language *Rome Daily-American*.

According to Crewdson, from the late 1940s through the 1970s, at least a dozen full-time CIA officers worked abroad as reporters or non-editorial employees of American-owned news organizations. Their work ranged from tampering with documents to outright fabrication, as with a report that Chinese troops were being sent to aid Vietnamese Communists. Paid agents at

foreign AP and UPI bureaus slipped CIA-prepared news dispatches into news wire stories. However, since AP and UPI people in the United States were not told of the CIA's work in this regard, the wire services often reported these false stories in American newspapers as fact.[40]

Since the early 1950s, nearly a dozen American publishing houses have printed at least a score of the more than 250 English-language books financed or produced by the CIA. The CIA made editorial contributions to books published by G.P. Putnam and Charles Scribner's Sons, both of whom claimed to be unaware of it. However, publisher Frederick Praeger has said he "published 20 to 25 volumes in which the CIA had had an interest, either in the writing, the publication itself or the post-publication distribution."[41]

The CIA also became involved in public opinion polling. A former CIA man is quoted as saying that Hadley Cantril, an acknowledged pioneer in polling, had "just sort of run" the Research Council at Princeton for the CIA.[42]

Perhaps even more alarming than the revelations by Crewdson and Bernstein is the behavior of the Senate Intelligence Committee charged with investigating the CIA in 1976. After several committee members became aware of the scope of CIA involvement with the press, they were persuaded to limit their inquiries into the matter by top CIA officials--including former directors William Colby and George Bush. Of the Committee's lengthy, multi-volume report, only nine pages examine the Agency's use of journalists. In these pages the matter is discussed in vague and sometimes misleading terms with no mention made of the actual number of journalists who undertook covert tasks for the CIA.[43]

Since this corrupt arrangement between the press and an agency of the U.S. government involved a relatively small percentage of the press's

workforce, it can account only in part for the press's failure here. Moreover, while the Agency sharply curtailed its press activities in 1973, the press neglected to provide an adequate critique of the Cold War until the months immediately preceding the warming of US-USSR relations in the late 1980s.

While the press's failure here is of great magnitude, that failure was not total. A careful analysis and critique of Cold War policies has existed since its inception and can be found in the pages of such reputable journals as *The Nation* and *The Progressive*. However, for decades the mainstream press failed to consult the well-researched material available in these pages--as did the vast majority of the American public who must share culpability here.

In the final analysis, however, the press's failure to cover the Cold War is part and parcel of the problems that have plagued American journalism over the last few decades--the general decline in investigative journalism spawned both by the bottom line policies of newspaper monopolies and the reluctance of reporters to do the in-depth research demanded in today's complex world; a Washington press corps on too-intimate terms with the government officials they are charged with critiquing; the television networks' failure to present true public affairs programming and the FCC's failure to demand that they do so, and, finally, the increasing domination of entertainment values over information values on local and national television news. These failings are themselves the result of a larger problem: the citizenry's refusal to demand the information necessary for responsible self-government.

Notes

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3. John Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting II: Radio and Television* (New York: The Fund for the Republic, Inc. 1956), 1-2.

4. Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 166.

5. J. Fred MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1985), p. 25.

6. Aronson, p. 139.

7. Aronson, p. 141.

8. Aronson, pp. 146-147.

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