

The Third World and the Free Enterprise Press

JEFFREY ST. JOHN

The Russians and their Iron Curtain allies seek to foster news media control worldwide because control of media is a major element in their political system, and they want their system to penetrate the world. Third World nations are strongly drawn to controls because for the most part they have fragile and authoritarian governments lacking a secure popular base.¹

Clayton Kirkpatrick
Editor,
Chicago Tribune

The main mechanism for this attempt to erect a global dictatorship of thought is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), using a campaign cleverly camouflaged as “developmental journalism.” The United Nations, since its founding, has promoted state economic planning at the expense of private enterprise. The idea, therefore, that the state should plan and control the content and own the means of communication is only an extension of state ownership of the means of economic production embraced by Communist and some Third World nations.

Chicago Tribune editor Clayton Kirkpatrick, at a November 1977 Nairobi UNESCO conference, rebuked delegates who sought to pass a resolution sanctioning state ownership and control of the means of communication; not only was the resolution, he said, “truly revolutionary for UNESCO,” but a complete repudiation of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Draft declaration 19C/9, [argued Kirkpatrick] reflects the views of some nations that regard the mass media as a political arm of the state. It reflects the view that information media are to be used as a tool or implement to further the aims of the state. In these states the interests of the state take precedence over the interests of citizens as individuals. Therefore,

1. Transcript, speech before Newspaper Publishers Association, April 2, 1977, San Francisco, California.

the media must be responsible to the state. They must submit to the control of the state. The state must constantly be drafting policies to control media as conditions change.²

TV: Threat to Totalitarianism

Apparently, since the late 1960s, the Soviet Union has added control of the means of communication to its long-range campaign to establish a Communist global commonwealth. In 1969 the Soviets saw the growth of global television technology as a threat comparable to that of shortwave radio broadcasting, which effectively penetrates the Iron Curtain via the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. "It is enough to imagine," complained Soviet historian Ylian Sheinin, "what malacious use such information channels for reactionary purposes might lead to."³

It was shortly after this statement was made that a Soviet-inspired campaign against all free information channels began to take shape, surfacing in 1971 at UNESCO. Today, according to former CBS News President and present head of Radio Free Europe, Sig Mickelson, the West "faces a formidable alliance, a combination of Soviet ideology and compatible support from Third World countries. It is this alliance which poses a grave menace to the free flow of information and threatens to make freedom of the press an endangered species."⁴

Leonard R. Sussman, Executive Director of New York's Freedom House, contends that little doubt exists that UNESCO, dependent for 25 percent of its annual budget on the United States, is cooperating with the Communists in this campaign against the free enterprise press. Sussman notes that UNESCO has been cooperating with the Prague-based International Organization of Journalists (IOJ) that provides a flood of Marxist propaganda to Third World journalists. "All this," he writes, "builds on existing Third World complaints against the Western news media in order to advance Marxism's political and economic goal: the ultimate defeat

2. Clayton Kirkpatrick, "United States Statement at UNESCO," published by World Press Freedom Committee, Miami, Florida, 1977.

3. "Russia Sees Peril in World Television," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1969.

4. "The Free Flow of Information," speech, Cleveland, Ohio, reprinted in *Vital Speeches*, January 21, 1977.

everywhere of free market economies, non-Marxist political systems, and their matching 'bourgeoisie' cultures."⁵

Hubris of Human Rights

Until recently, the independent press of the West covered the United Nations with a less than critical eye in the face of blatant Soviet efforts to dominate it. Communist and Third World influence on the U.N. in the 1970s has invoked the observation of some in the media that while the United States in concert with the independent press supported the post-World War II drive for the freedom of Third World nations, it now finds both the United Nations and Third World nations turning against its most valued institution: the free press. At the same time those nations in the U.N. expect of the U.S., which is also the host nation for the U.N., practically unlimited financial assistance.

Third World nations, moreover, have embraced most enthusiastically the human rights campaign of the Carter administration while at the same time becoming active participants in the most basic violations of human rights, specifically, freedom of expression. In fact, any overview of the UNESCO campaign and support by Third World nations demonstrates why the human rights effort of the Carter administration has become so confused and contradictory.

In Latin America, for example, the three nations lauded by the Carter administration for their devotion to human rights and democracy have taken an active role in the UNESCO campaign. Costa Rica was host to a July 1976 UNESCO conference. However, at that conference members of the Inter-American Press Association sought to derail a series of proposals that called for government licensing of journalists, nationalizing private broadcast stations and newspapers, and establishing government-mandated "communications policy" for resident newsmen. The publisher of the *Miami Herald*, George Beebe, an IAPA delegate at the San Jose UNESCO conference, was denounced by the then Foreign Minister of Costa Rica for creating a "hostile climate" for "the noble cause UNESCO was promoting."⁶

5. "Mass Media and the Third World Challenge," *The Washington Papers* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, 1977) pp. 5-6.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Colombia and Venezuela, both considered by the Carter administration as outstanding examples in Latin America of nations dedicated to human rights, jointly teamed up against the free enterprise press when a January 1978 UNESCO conference was held in Bogota. Venezuela sponsored a resolution (unanimously approved by the UNESCO delegates) calling for the creation of government-funded news services operated by Latin governments, a major goal of the Soviets and their Third World allies, at the November, 1976, Nairobi meeting. Moreover, Costa Rica, Columbia and Venezuela all have laws requiring that local journalists be licensed.⁷

In October 1977, Terrence Todman, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, informed the IAPA delegates that the Carter administration was firmly behind a free enterprise press. However, at the Bogota UNESCO conference three months later, *Editor & Publisher*, the U.S. newspaper trade journal, reported that the U.S. was not even represented by an observer, even though the State Department knew that a resolution would be offered sanctioning government-created and controlled news agencies. Robert U. Brown reported that only because of efforts of American free enterprise press delegates was the resolution toned down, not because of any help from the U.S. government human rights advocates. "We blame," Brown observed, "President Carter's appointees at the State Department."⁸

Ironically, nations such as Nicaragua, Brazil, Chile and Argentina—often accused of anti-democratic attitudes—have played no role in the UNESCO campaign against the free enterprise press and do not have laws requiring the licensing of journalists.

Nicaragua has no laws licensing journalists, has refused to take part in the UNESCO-fostered campaign against the free enterprise press and has left *La Prensa* (the opposition daily to President Anastasio Somoza, edited and published by Pedro Chamorro) free to denounce the regime. The Nicaraguan government also allowed many foreign journalists into the country to write stories quoting the opposition as well as active terrorists, while usually referring to President Somoza as a "dictator." For example, Jack Anderson (the noted columnist) over a two-year period wrote 22 separate columns

7. *Editor & Publisher*, October 29, 1977.

8. "Shop Talk At Thirty, U.S. Government Absent At UNESCO," *Editor & Publisher*, February 4, 1978.

describing Somoza's Nicaragua as a bloody dictatorship comparable to Idi Amin's Uganda.⁹

In January, 1978, *La Prensa's* Chamorro was assassinated on a downtown Managua street. Immediately, some of the North American press, Anderson included, blamed Somoza. Anderson, however, made a striking admission that compromised his claim to objectivity or even fairness. In the wake of the Chamorro murder, he admitted the slain editor "was a source of ours for several years."¹⁰ Anderson made this revelation allegedly to protect the life of a Nicaraguan Congressman, Julio Molina, an active foe of Somoza and a participant in a series of hearings on alleged human rights violations before a U.S. House and Senate committee.

When this author sought on two different occasions to interview Chamorro concerning his charges of human rights violations by the Nicaraguan military, Chamorro avoided submitting to critical and searching questions. In the aftermath of his assassination, the Latin and U.S. press lionized him as a crusading journalist. In reality, Chamorro used *La Prensa* as a vehicle for personal aggrandizement in Nicaragua.

The writer Otto J. Scott observed, after a recent visit, that what the North American media did not grasp about the Chamorro and Somoza split is a long-standing local personal-political family feud that stretches back to when both were 8 years old.

"A unique aspect of *La Prensa*," writes Otto J. Scott (a Latin American specialist), "is that the Somoza government has never tried to run the paper financially. In some periods, as in a recent State of Siege (mandated by a terrorist wave) . . . the paper has been censored."¹¹ However its supply of newsprint has been supplemented by the government newspaper, *Novedades*.

While Nicaragua never sought to run *La Prensa*, Jamaica's Prime Minister Michael Manley has sought not only to gag the remaining Jamaican opposition press, but to put them out of business. In a two-part series, the opposition Jamaican *Daily Star* was highly critical of the substandard medical care provided by Cuban doctors sup-

9. Jack Anderson and Les Whitten, "Latin Counterpart to Uganda's Amin," *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1977.

10. Jack Anderson, "Nicaraguan May be 'On Death List,'" *The Washington Post*, February 4, 1978.

11. Otto J. Scott, "Economic Freedom In Nicaragua," *Nicaragua—An Ally Under Siege*, (Washington, D.C.: Council on American Affairs, 1978) pp. 132-133.

plied by Castro to Manley's socialist government. Manley's People's National Party first considered hauling the offending reporters before a special Parliamentary Commission, but backed down at the last minute when confronted with a vigorous public outcry. A week later, however, Manley set up a state trading corporation to control imported commodities, including newsprint used by the *Star* and its sister opposition paper, *The Daily Gleaner*.¹²

Jamaica, it should be remembered, was the first stop Mrs. Carter made on her 1977 Latin tour at the request of U.N. Ambassador Young, a long-time personal friend of Manley.

The campaign of UNESCO, the Soviets, and Third World countries seems not to have disturbed Ambassador Young or the Carter administration. Yet, Castro's view of the role of the press in company with the Carter administration's silence on the UNESCO campaign suggests still one more reason that the Administration's human rights attitude seems hypocritical. "An enemy of socialism," Castro stated in 1965, "cannot write in our newspaper. . . . Under present circumstances journalism can have no other function than that of contributing to the political and revolutionary goals of our country. We have . . . an objective to fulfill and that objective controls the activity of journalists."¹³

Tolerance of Third World Totalitarians

This view of the function of journalism is shared by many, but not all, black African states. Third World journalism (*The New York Times* quotes a Tanzanian) should have an educational and inspirational function. "The freedom of the press," he continued, "that permits and fosters cynicism and dejection with the way things are is simply a luxury we cannot afford at this time."¹⁴

Reality, in short, must be replaced by political expediency. David Adamson (*The Daily Telegraph* of London) suggests that this is what Tanzanian President Nyerere has done while extolling African liberties on world tours. His dictatorial regime denies freedom within

12. "Newsprint Takeover Denounced," *Editor & Publisher*, December 31, 1977.

13. Quoted in Lee Lockwood, *Castro's Cuba, Cuba's Fidel* (New York: Macmillan, 1965) p. 245.

14. "Foreign Press In Africa Finds Curbs Growing," *The New York Times*, September 12, 1977.

its own borders, making certain only approved journalists gain entry. "A tourist described to me," he states, "how he was arrested for taking a photograph of the new Chinese-built railway. Suspicion centered not on whether he was a spy but on whether he was a journalist."¹⁵

This neglect of human rights did not deter President Carter from laying on a lavish and laudatory reception for President Nyerere when he made a state visit in late 1977.¹⁶ The same attitude was apparent when President Carter chose to visit Nigeria in the spring of 1978. Not only is Nigeria a military dictatorship, but some of the top officers have participated in the systematic slaughter of dissident Ibo tribesmen, with over a million perishing either through out-right killings or deliberate policies of starvation by the central government. Nigeria, moreover, has expelled all resident correspondents of the Western news media, except Agence-France-Presse, which according to *The New York Times* correspondent, Michael Kaufman, seldom files a story. "The country has made it very difficult," he adds, "if not impossible for visiting journalists to come."¹⁷

The state of the free enterprise press in Africa corresponds directly to the fact that a majority of its states are either military or civilian dictatorships. "There are 25 national news agencies on the continent," observes Leonard R. Sussman of New York's Freedom House, "and only three—Morocco, Rhodesia and South Africa—are independent of the government. In most African countries the news agency is a department of the ministry of information."¹⁸

Significantly, between 1960 and 1977 the number of private enterprise newspapers declined in direct proportion to the growth of newly-independent African nations which have adopted socialist economies; these are African states owning, first, the economic means of production and then the means of communication to manipulate their citizens. "Fully 90 percent of the continental African states," Sussman added, "not only denies press freedom, but in

15. "Mischief Behind The Black Curtain," *The Daily Telegraph*, June 15, 1976.

16. For a good analysis of the hypocrisy in the Administration's human rights campaign see Ernest W. Lefever, "The Trivialization of Human Rights," *Policy Review*, Winter 1978.

17. "Foreign Press In Africa Finds Curbs Growing," *op. cit.*

18. "Mass News Media and Third World Challenge," *op. cit.*, p. 40.

varying degrees bars free elections, individual rights and an independent judiciary.”¹⁹

This bleak picture is in sharp contrast to the state of affairs in Rhodesia and South Africa, both targets of the Carter Administration. Not only did both nations have a largely free press that was critical of the existing regimes, but they are two of only six African states that still permit private enterprise newspapers to flourish (Gambia, Kenya, Liberia and Morocco being the other four states). John Platter, United Press International bureau chief in Johannesburg, moreover, claims that, prior to the election of the Carter Administration, the country permitted greater freedom for foreign newsmen than he was allowed in the 17 black African states he covered in nine years. The International Press Institute, based in Zurich, Switzerland, reported in May of 1976 that South Africa had the freest local press on the African continent.²⁰ *The Daily Telegraph* (London) contended in June, 1976 that “no nation offered as much security to the international media as South Africa and that by comparison with any of them Rhodesia is a shrine of liberalism.”²¹

There is at least one piece of evidence to suggest that the Carter Administration has embraced some of the tactics of the Third World in suppressing information. On May 27, 1977, Ambassador Young joined in support of a Security Council resolution that pledged all U.N. members to prohibit the transfer of funds in their territories to Rhodesia. Kenneth Towsey, director of the Washington-based Rhodesian Information Service (RIS) believes that the resolution was really aimed at silencing Rhodesia’s effort to present its side of the dispute. “It is my great regret,” he observed, “that this action does not permit the exercise of freedom under the First Amendment which your constitution seems to promise.”

“I think it’s a question,” Towsey added, “of whether a country like the United States, and this may apply to other Western countries, is going to allow its own basic values to be subordinated to U.N. dictatorship. I think that does present quite a problem.”²²

19. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

20. “Africa: Where a Free Press Suffers From Wawa,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 25, 1976.

21. “Mischief Behind the Black Curtain,” *op. cit.*

22. Transcript, *Mutual Broadcasting’s Reporter’s Roundup*, Washington, D.C., July 10, 1977.

The administration also made clear to Towsey that if private resources in the United States were offered to help the Rhodesians "then the administration would regard that as being inconsistent with the Security Council resolution."²³ Only a vigorous public protest by several U.S. newspapers (including *The Washington Post*) and many Congressmen forced the administration to delay shutting down the RIS office in Washington. A year after the action of the Security Council, Towsey contends, "the State Department is still quietly trying to find ways to shut us down."²⁴

A Crisis of Western Values

It is apparent that the Carter Administration's foreign policy, as reflected in its human rights campaign, with its attendant confusion and contradictions, reflects a crisis in Western concepts of freedom. What has been substituted for traditional liberalism is the support of regimes expressing ideas alien to those values and intent on destroying them. The administration's African policy appears rooted in a perception of race that so heavily influenced the U.S. Civil Rights cause. This imposition of black race consciousness on U.S. African policy has resulted in the U.S. siding with the Soviet and Cuban-supported black terrorist organizations which have murdered innocent men, women and children, be it in Zaire, Rhodesia or South Africa.

The administration's lack of vigorous opposition to the UNESCO/Soviet/Third World's campaign for the total takeover of all means of communication is an indication that the U.S. is abandoning its traditional values of freedom and opposition to totalitarianism.

The short-range response to this threat has been undertaken by such newly-formed groups as the World Press Freedom Committee, headed by the publisher of *The Miami Herald*, George Beebe. The Committee's secretary-treasurer (former director of the United States Information Service, Leonard Marks) warned a gathering (May 1978) of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, that the "world was on a collision course with African, Asian and Latin nations" over state controls of the news media. Marks predicted, moreover, that UNESCO at its October, 1978, Paris meeting would seek to pass a resolution, under consideration since 1972,

23. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

24. Telephone interview with the author, May 25, 1978.

sanctioning state controls over the media. He also forecast that the Soviets at the 1979 U.N. General Assembly session would seek to gain sanction for a resolution offered six years before that would prohibit the dissemination of programs by satellite in any nation without the consent of the individual government. "If such a principle is accepted," Marks warned, "the trend toward state controls will be increased and the international wire services and correspondents for leading newspapers and radio and television networks will be excluded from news gathering in much of the world."²⁵

Marks urged U.S. newspaper publishers to support the Committee's programs of cash grants for scholarships, training sessions and seminars that seek to show non-aligned nations the operations of a free press. This, of course, is a positive response to the problem. It does not, however, confront the crisis facing the free enterprise press here at home.

For Whom Does the Totalitarian Bell Toll?

The rise of authoritarian regimes and outright dictatorships since the end of World War II is a trend that has been widely recognized. Unfortunately, in recent years, American Administrations have sought to accommodate themselves to this trend. As dictatorships move to control their economies, they inevitably control the media, as well.

The Third World nationalization of its economic enterprises or the refusal to allow private firms to flourish has led, in turn, to the nationalization of political, intellectual, and press freedom. "There is no way of separating economic freedom from political freedom," the Nobel Prize economist, Dr. Milton Friedman, has warned. "If you don't have economic freedom, you don't have political freedom. The only way you can have one is to have the other."²⁶

Indirectly, this point was made by the Inter-American Press Association when it warned of the totalitarian trends in the Third World. "Increasing state control of the economy in many countries," observed the Association, "has caused newspapers to depend to a

25. William H. Jones, "Publishers Told of Dangers to a Free Press," *The Washington Post*, May 4, 1978.

26. "The Future of Capitalism," Speech before Pepperdine University, Malibu, California, February 9, 1977.

dangerous degree on official advertising at the whim of government agencies.”²⁷

The landmark decision in late April of 1978 by U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger upholding free speech for corporations under the First Amendment was viewed by many in the media and in the political world, who were intent on regulating private business by government power, as an ominous warning as well as a bad decision. But the news media business in recent years has not been immune to this growing trend by powerful governments to try to regulate and restrict its activities.

The Wall Street Journal asked the logical, but largely overlooked question: Why is it bad for a Mobil Oil Corporation to express its opinion in paid advertisements, but a good thing for *The Washington Post* Corporation to express its point of view in editorials? “Would *The Post* be happier,” added *The Journal* “if Mobil, implementing an idea it has toyed with, goes beyond buying ads to buying whole newspapers?”²⁸

Washington Post press Ombudsman, Charles B. Sieb, acknowledged that, indeed, substantial segments of American news media are big business and there is every reason to believe they will get bigger. “It would seem that the court’s decision,” he pointed out, “gives the press nothing to worry about. It extended First Amendment freedom to other corporations; it took nothing away from the media corporations.

The questions Burger raised are not legal nit-pickings. They go to the heart of our system of government. In his opinion, he quoted the late Justice Felix Frankfurter, who said the liberty of the press is no greater and no less than the liberty of every citizen.

That is the point. Legal complexities aside, a free press is inextricably entwined with the freedom of each of us. To lose one is to lose the other. The trick is to keep sight of that central fact in the face of changing technology, changing economic structures and a society that is changing before our eyes.”²⁹

The year 1971 was a turning point for the free enterprise press both at home and abroad. It was the year that Communist and Third World nations began in dead earnest their UNESCO cam-

27. “Freedom Under Assault,” *Editor & Publisher*, April 13, 1974.

28. “Bellotti And Beyond,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 5, 1978.

29. “The First Amendment As Corporate Business,” *The Washington Post*, May 26, 1978.

paign to sanction the use of the State as an instrument to gain ownership of the means of communications just as a number of nations own the means of economic production. In this same year the clash between the free enterprise press and the Nixon-Agnew administration came to a sharp climax. The most famous and historic case concerning this issue resulted in the U.S. Supreme Court's refusal to sanction the first attempt by the Federal government in the history of the American Republic to impose restraint on the newspapers—those that had published the Pentagon Papers. The reason the newspapers chose to publish the documents was largely in order to influence government policy toward U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It was not solely, as the newspapers contended, because they believed the people had a right to know, although this principle played a part.

The clash over the Pentagon Papers and later the Watergate affair was the clash of two powerful institutions. In both instances the free enterprise press won what must be judged momentary victories. The price the free enterprise press paid for those two victories was the undermining of public confidence in their function as a fair and disinterested institution—it was using and abusing its rights under the U.S. Constitution. This loss of public confidence in the free enterprise press leaves the way open for the legislatures, the courts and executive agencies to impose restrictions and regulations while a mass of Americans look on with little sympathy for a free enterprise press that, in their view, is deserving of such potentially draconian measures.

Since the 1971 Pentagon Papers decision, important and powerful segments of the free enterprise press and media in America have supported or allowed themselves to be manipulated by various political movements that have vastly extended the power of the state over the private economic sector; civil rights, labor, consumer, environmental and feminist groups have all had one thing in common—the enlarging of powers of Federal and state governments at the expense of the private individual and economy.

The campaign of the Communist and Third World nations via UNESCO in the name of “development journalism” is a totalitarian bell tolling the death of press freedom.

Intellectual and economic freedom are twins born of the same revolution. They will perish together if the free enterprise press, both here and abroad, fails to understand that you can't destroy one without destroying the other.



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Four Thousand Years of Wage and Price Controls

ROBERT L. SCHUETTINGER

As President Carter's anti-inflationary program is being perceived as a failure by more and more Americans (largely because he has been trying to blame everyone except the prime villain in the case, the government itself), he is being urged to turn toward wage and price controls as a last desperate measure.

In late 1976, for instance, the economic columnist for *The Washington Post*, Hobart Rowen, wrote that "To make both goals—greater employment and control of inflation—compatible, fiscal and monetary policy must be supplemented by voluntary wage-price restraints—sometimes called "income policies."¹

Ralph Nader, in a recent column warned that "... should inflation remain at current or higher levels, Carter will find it difficult to avoid imposing a selective, mandatory price-wage control policy in ... key industries."²

And, of course, the talented novelist from Cambridge, Massachusetts, John Kenneth Galbraith (who has never been happier than when he was serving his country in the trenches of the Office of Price Administration) chimes in periodically with the same advice.

All of these learned gentlemen (who ought to know better) appear to be blissfully unaware of the dismal record of government attempts over a period of at least the last forty centuries to exercise control over wages and prices.

Such efforts have been made in one form or another periodically in almost all times and all places since the beginning of organized society. In all times and all places they have as invariably failed to achieve their announced purposes. Time after time an historian has laconically concluded, "... the plan to control rising prices failed utterly." Or, "... the laws were soon repealed since no one paid any attention to them."

1. Hobart Rowen, *The Washington Post*, December 12, 1976, p. M1.

2. Ralph Nader, *The Washington Star*, June 17, 1978, p. B2.

Nader is by no means alone in this view. According to the Gallup Poll of February 10-13, 1978, 44 percent of those polled favored controls while 40 percent were opposed. In a poll taken during April 14-17 the percentage favoring controls rose to 50 percent.