



Søren Dosenrode [Ed.]

# Freedom of the Press

On Censorship, Self-censorship,  
and Press Ethics



Nomos





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## Preface

At the Kaj Munk Research Center at Aalborg University it has become tradition to invite for an academic seminar held each year around September 29, the day the Danish cooperation with the German occupying forces broke down in 1943. The topics of the seminars are always related to the Danish priest, dramatist, poet and journalist Kaj Munk, who was killed by a German SS-group in January 1944.

The seminar “From Munk to Mohammed – Freedom of the Press, Censorship, Self-censorship, and Press Ethics” was such a seminar, where a number of known, international experts had been invited to participate and contribute. The reason for the topic of this seminar was two if not threefold. First, the Danish ‘Mohammed Cartoon Crisis’ did cast an immediate light on the question of freedom of the press, censorship, self-censorship and press ethics, but seemingly this discussion goes on now years after the concrete incident and indeed it is important to be aware of threats to press freedom and their consequences. Secondly Kaj Munk, as journalist and author was censored before and during the Second World War, and did show that censorship can be defied; although the price he paid was high. And thirdly, it was our impression, that the newer literature contains certain lacunae as it occurs to be atomized in character in the sense that it looks at press freedom in one single country, or relates to one specific period, or be of a very juridical nature. It is obvious that this book does not fill all lacunae, but it does attempt to give the discussion a historical dimension as well as to draw on the experience of practitioners concerning the situation of the press today, in countries where being a member of the press is not without personal danger.

I let Noam Chomsky remind us of one consequence of the freedom of speech:<sup>1</sup>

If you believe in freedom of speech, you believe in freedom of speech for views you don't like. Goebbels was in favor of freedom of speech for views he liked. So was Stalin. If you're in favor of freedom of speech, that means you're in favor of freedom of speech precisely for views you despise.

I am happy to thank The Jyllands-Posten Foundation and The Obelske Family Foundation for their generous support for the seminar without which we could not have made it, and to thank Andrea von Dosenrode, LL.M., and Jørgen Albretsen, MSc, for their kind, professional help with this manuscript.

Søren Dosenrode  
Director of Research  
Kaj Munk Research Center  
Aalborg University

1 A similar stand you find in Chomsky: Free speech in a Democracy, Daily Camera, September, 1985.





*Kaj Munk in his study in Vedersø*

Section One  
Kaj Munk



## **Chapter One: Approaching the Questions of Freedom of the Press, Censorship, Self- Censorship, and Press Ethics**

*Søren Dosenrode*

[...] the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments (Virginia Bill of Rights, article 12, 1776)

Free circulation of information (and since the invention of the book press, a free press)<sup>1</sup> has always been a thorn in the side of adherents of totalitarianism, be it in a political, a cultural or a religious form. Freedom of the press can be restricted in many ways: through more or less official censorship, but also through self-censorship where the journalist does not write what the state, the society, his superior, or his colleagues would not like to hear. The motives for such behavior are many and could include fear, opportunism or simply the fact that it is easier. This raises the ethical question of how the press should behave when it is under strain, under pressure from the state or from the surrounding society: should it conform, or go into opposition? Thus the purpose of this book is to analyze the role and behavior of the press when it finds itself under pressure from totalitarian forces of various kinds.

Casting a quick glance on history reminds us that free expression of one's thoughts is not an old freedom, and also that it was not always looked upon without reservation, e.g. Socrates was sentenced to death for 'corrupting' the youth with his conversations and speeches. The institution of the censor in Rome was looked upon positively, as it helped shape the youth in the correct manner etc. (Newth 2001). Still, proponents of freedom of expression did exist, as this verse of Euripides, written about 450 BC indicates (cited in Newth 2001):

This is true Liberty when free born men  
Having to advise the public may speak free,  
Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise,  
Who neither can nor will, may hold his peace;  
What can be more just in a State then this?

But the basic freedom of the press was not a topic until the 17th century, where John Milton wrote a tract to the English Parliament, the "Areopagitica" in 1644 (Newth 2001). He did not plead for unlimited freedom of the press, but for unlimited right to publish, and then to defend one's writings in the courts, if one had caused offense. He was strictly against pre-publishing censorship as it was practiced then.

Freedom of the press in our sense of the word first occurred as a legal right in the Virginia Bill of Rights from 1776 (see above) which undoubtedly inspired the founding

1 Where nothing else is explicitly stated, the term 'freedom of the press' is used synonymously with 'freedom of information' and 'freedom of expression'.

fathers of the United States of America to add it to their constitution in 1791 as the first amendment:

Congress shall make no law [...] abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.

In spite of the emerging understanding of the freedom of the press as essential among the ‘enlightened’ elite, this idea was not unchallenged, e.g. the Prussian Georg Hegel (1770 – 1831) was not keen on people’s unlimited right to speak and comment on everything, and he was thus in opposition to his contemporaries like the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), who saw the freedom of the press as *the* main instrument with which to secure freedom. As the liberal revolutions swept Europe around 1848-49 the freedom of the press was guaranteed in numerous constitutions. In the Danish constitution of 1849 as well as its successors; the formulation has been like this:

Everyone is entitled to publish his thoughts in print, although under the responsibility of the courts. Censorship and other rules alike are not to be introduced again. (§84 in the first constitution and §77 in today’s constitution)

Like most freedoms, this freedom is fragile and one of the first to be abolished by totalitarian states; and given up by democratic states in times of hardship, as a sacrifice to ‘*Realpolitik*’. This was also the case in Denmark in the years prior to World War II as well as during it.

### *Censoring Kaj Munk*

The Danish priest, dramatist, poet and journalist Kaj Munk<sup>2</sup> became a victim of censorship in a number of forms, which may be illustrative for the topic of this book, and he shall be looked at in depth in the two following chapters, therefore only a few brief points will be given here.

In the archive of the Kaj Munk Research Center in Aalborg, Denmark, one finds a number of letters and notifications telling of how Kaj Munk – as well as many others – was censored in Denmark during World War II. In a stack of documents one finds a short notice written by the editor of the *Jyllandsposten*. He had had a telephone conversation with Kaj Munk about an article, where Munk had written that Jesus is a Jew. The chief editor did not want to publish it, and Munk replied: “If *one* in *Jyllandsposten*

2 It is hard to come to grips with Danish and Scandinavian *inter bellum* history without including Kaj Munk in the analysis. Kaj Munk was a fierce opponent of the German occupation of Denmark. When Benito Mussolini and later Adolf Hitler seized power, they fascinated him immensely, and the ‘strong men’ were a theme of several of his plays. But when especially Hitler’s prosecution of the Jews became more and more obvious, his enthusiasm faded, and when Denmark was occupied by German forces in 1940, he took up position against Germany. During the years of occupation, he vehemently opposed the Danish policy of cooperation with the occupational forces, and he was killed by the German secret police, the Gestapo, in January 1944. Chapter Two of this book is dedicated to Kaj Munk as a journalist. In Dosenrode 2008, chapter 4, Kaj Munk’s thoughts on resistance are analysed.

cannot write that Jesus is a Jew, *I can no longer write for Jyllandsposten!*<sup>3</sup> (KMF 95.03.01, my translation). In some cases the notifications look ‘official’, but are in other cases anonymous. In a letter from Mr. Egebjerg – editor of *Jyllandsposten* – it is openly stated that “...under the aggravated censorship the Foreign Ministry has prohibited us to publish your works.” (KMF 45.16.04)<sup>4</sup> This letter was dated September 1, 1943, two days after the collapse of the Danish policy of appeasement.<sup>5</sup> Censorship works fast – nothing is more dangerous to an authoritarian regime than a free press!

But Kaj Munk had already been censored before the war, e.g. when some of his plays were prohibited from being performed in the southern part of Jutland, in order not to provoke Denmark’s neighbor Germany. In a newspaper article in the daily *Berlingske Tidende* on January 20, 1939 with the headline “Kaj Munk’s ‘The Melting Pot’ cancelled after Mr. Steincke’s intervention” one could read Minister of Justice K. K. Steincke’s comment on this (my translation):

[...] I find the Rev. Munk’s play very interesting. But it is something quite different that one, especially in a border region, should avoid the public performance of a play which sets the national passions on fire.

Mr Steincke, a Social Democrat, clearly expressed the policy of appeasement the government displayed towards Germany in spite of the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression which are quoted above.

Munk’s own reaction to censorship during the occupation was to defy it. He preached and spoke in public when he got the opportunity, and when his drama *Niels Ebbesen* (about the Danish squire Niels Ebbesen who killed the German occupier Count Gerhardt III of Holstein in 1340) was confiscated, Kaj Munk went on tours, by bicycle, to Danish village halls where he would read it in front of an audience.

An important incident is Kaj Munk’s famous “Ollerup speech” from July 28, 1940. It is famous, or rather infamous, because only parts of it were published in a résumé in *Svendborg Avis*, a local journal. The journalist had, if we are to believe the handwritten résumé by R. Fauerskov Lauersen which also exists, conducted a very strong kind of self-censorship, leaving out all of Kaj Munk’s anti-German remarks, and including only the pro-Hitler ones.<sup>6</sup> This suspicion is proven correct when one reads a ‘letter to the editor’ of the Danish daily *Information* from April 25, 1946 from the journalist who produced the résumé. He wrote that the editor had told him (my translation):

3 My translation. ”Kan man ikke i Jyllandsposten skrive, at Kristus er Jøde, kan jeg heller ikke mere skrive i Jyllandsposten.”

4 Egebjerg himself had to seek refuge in neutral Sweden shortly afterwards.

5 Denmark was occupied by German forces on April 9, 1940. After short sporadic fighting the government and the king capitulated. A policy of (forced) cooperation was established and continued until public rebellion made it collapse on August 29, 1943.

6 Counting the signs in Fauerskov Lauersen’s résumé which was circulated illegally after the speech gives 8206 signs and counting the censored résumé in *Svendborg Avis* gives 4650 signs (Dosenrode 2009, 43.).

Regarding Kaj Munk, [...], then we of course need what he says, but take it a bit easy, because we can't unfortunately write everything we would like to, after the arrival of the Germans. [...] And the editor's order is the law of the journalist.

This shows the risks of self-censorship. The consequences of this journalist's report were of course to harm Kaj Munk's image and the résumé is still quoted to show that Munk was an admirer of Hitler's (cf. Dosenrode 2009).

So, in the 'case' of Kaj Munk we may see how the State may try to oppress freedom of expression and how the press sometimes imposes censorship on itself; but it also shows us that there are ways to fight for freedom of expression – although the price may be high – Kaj Munk was shot in January 1944. As most will know, such killings of people defying totalitarianism are not just a thing of the past. This is demonstrated clearly by the killings, among others, of Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 and Anastasia Baburova in 2009.

### *Why this book, or close to a state of the art reflection*

Looking at the number of publications of newer monographs or anthologies on the topic of 'freedom of the press' is – surprisingly or rather sadly – very limited. But there are a number of newer contributions which may be subdivided in a number of categories. Beginning with what could be labeled '**factual contributions**' *Freedom House* publishes its annual review of statistical facts, as well as analysis, but its approach is global, mainly quantitative and 'present-time oriented'. Then there is a vast bulk, the **juridical literature**, where one finds a number of good contributions, but – as indicated – of a juridical and often, though not always, single country character. Examples are: Lidsky & Wright's *Freedom of The Press – A Reference Guide to the United States Constitution* from 2004; a typical book, being of juridical character and focusing on one individual state. Another contribution of similar kind is Archibald Cox's *Freedom of Expression* from 1999. Especially interesting is Vincenzo Zencovich's book *Freedom of Expression – a Critical Analysis* from 2008, in which he looks at the current legal position of the freedom of expression in a number of European countries and broadens the debate to include sociological aspects. Dario Millo's book *Defamation and the Freedom of Speech* (2008) discusses the clash between the freedom of expression and the right of reputation. It argues that fundamental rules and procedures of defamation law need to be reformed to take into account the dual importance of public interest speech, on the one hand, and the right to human dignity on the other.

Not surprisingly there are a number of **historical books** like Debora Shuger's book *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility – The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* from 2006, Robert Mchesney's *Our Unfree Press – 100 Years of Radical Media Criticism* from 2004, and Daniel Schorr's book from 2006 *The Idea of a Free Press* which focus on the development of the concept during the Enlightenment. Not surprisingly a lot of relevant literature has a 'one state focus', i.e. **national litera-**

**ture.** As an example, much newer literature originates in the US and concentrates on ... the US. Examples are *Freedom of Speech* by Ian Friedman from 2005, as well as Kate Burns' *Fighters Against Censorship* from 2004 and focusing on American 'fighters' only. The same goes for her 2006 book – basically for teaching at sub-university level on censorship in America.

Within the **political sciences** and **media sciences** one also finds a number of important contributions. Raphael Cohen-Almagor's book from 2005, *Scope of Tolerance*, presents an assessment of the risks and limits of contemporary democracy. This is a study concerned with the limits of tolerance. Additionally one finds a global or International Relations perspective in Douglas van Belle's slightly older contribution on *Press Freedom and Global Politics* (2000).

The general impression is that contemporary literature's focus is on the role of the press in relationship to democracy; how media influences democracy, how the political and the ethical aspects are managed etc. (persuasive design as the newest). This book on the one hand is a part of this central discourse, but on the other hand it attempts to broaden the view by its focus on the historical and contemporary experiences made when the press was under strain in significant periods since the 1930s. Additionally its geographical scope is broader than most books. Thus the ambition is to fill some of the gaps noted above.

### *About this book*

In the following chapters of this book, aspects of press freedom are analyzed starting with the 1930s and then moving up through time. An underlying question is whether or not it is possible to conjugate 'freedom of the press', such as 'full freedom of the press', 'nearly freedom of the press', 'some freedom of the press' etc.? After having read all chapters of this book, the reader will understand that the answer is no.

The structure of this book is thematic as well as chronological. Thematic in the way that the chapters are grouped in four sections each analyzing a central aspect of the overall topic indicated in the book title. The sections focus on: A) Kaj Munk, B) The Press under Strain, C) Religion, Politics and the Press, and D) The Press as a Political Instrument. The individual sections are, as mentioned, organized chronologically. In spite of the various headlines, they all look at the working conditions, role and behavior of the press in times of strain and oppression. The book is biased towards Europe with only one chapter on Radio Free Europe, one on Turkey, and one on the Pakistani reactions to the Danish-provoked Mohammed Crisis having parts of their focus outside Europe. If an argument for this should be necessary it would be, that the inspiration for it came from studying Kaj Munk, who was a European. This also explains why World War II occupies so much space in the book. An additional reason could be that Europe and North America were the cradles of the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, and thus worth focusing on.



In the first chapter *Arense Lund* introduces Kaj Munk as a journalist and his life as a writer who cherished and fought for his right to write and publish. She emphasizes that he did not behave as an ordinary journalist, and did not follow the rules of ‘good journalism’ such as beginning your article with the most important information, always trying to be objective and never presenting your own opinion. Instead he was observant, critical and often showed a great sense of humor. His close – but not always faithful – cooperation with the daily *Jyllandsposten* was important and is looked at. Altogether he wrote more than 600 articles. He was fascinated by the ‘strong men’ (Mussolini and, to a lesser extent, Hitler), but he also used his ability to write to defend the Jews against Nazi persecution, in his writings and in his plays. Lund’s contribution is followed by Svend Aage Nielsen’s introduction to censorship in Denmark. He also analyses in-depth how Kaj Munk was indeed censored from the second half of the 1930s onwards, before the German occupation of Denmark. After the occupation of Denmark, in 1940, the Danish censorship of Kaj Munk increased in intensity including orders from the ecclesial authorities not to preach on certain subjects – he refused to obey.

Then follows this volume’s largest section on “The Press under Strain”. It starts out with Beate Schneider’s in-depth analysis of the conditions of the German press under Nazi rule between 1933 – 1945. Schneider stresses the efficiency of the Nazis’ control of the press and how thoroughly the press was misused, and how it can be seen as an archetype of how a state may manipulate the population through the press. Schneider, in her concluding part, accentuates the importance of the negative Nazi heritage in today’s German press landscape. The bad experiences have led to a constitutional guarantee of press freedom, and the constitutional court has been keen to defend this right, thus “A negative heritage has been transformed into positive efforts.” Through Schneider’s analysis one understands the working conditions for the Norwegian and the Danish press analyzed in the next chapters. Rune Ottosen analyzes the conditions of the Norwegian press during the German occupation between 1940-1945, focusing both on the ‘street level’, on how the individual journalists were coping under the occupation, as well as on the Norwegian Press Association (NP). The conclusion, looking at how many journalists were still working in Oslo and in the rest of the country gives a clear picture of the state of Norwegian journalism: roughly speaking 1/3 were still working – this included some supporters of the Nazis, 1/3 were in exile and 1/3 had found other occupations. In the province even fewer had retained their jobs (approx. 1/4). Ottosen concludes that:

The Norwegian press survived five years of a state of emergency, where press freedom was terminated. The choices that were made by the individual journals and journalists created wounds and conflicts that would live on for a long time after the war.

Palle Roslyng-Jensen’s analysis of Denmark, Norway’s Scandinavian brother-country, reflects the different natures of the occupations. Whereas the German occupation of Norway was brutal, the German occupation of Denmark was, at least until August 29, 1943, fairly mild. Roslyng-Jensen discusses what the control and censorship system meant for the degree of adaptation of the press to the authorities exercising the control

of the press, and what it meant for the reception of newspapers and the interpretation of news and comments in a democratic context.

His conclusion is, seen from a democratic as well as a free perspective, positive, in as much as he concludes that:

The existence of a control system and censorship had a significant early impact on the readers creating distrust in news and articles, especially if they were seen as German inspired or from a German source. [...] generally the public were ahead of the press, although the newspapers never were able to take positions or voice opinions directly on German occupation rule.

But hardship as well as censorship did not end with World War II. Peter Schiwy gives an account of the conditions under which the press and the media had to work in Eastern Europe during the Cold War. Summing up Schiwy concludes that:

[...] success or failure of a media was, at best, of secondary interest. The chief purpose always remained the political control of the reader and listener with a view to preserving the power of the party.

Thus the media of Eastern Europe were utterly unprepared when the system changed after the fall of the Berlin Wall with the result being that the present media landscape is dominated by external owners.

After these historical analyses follows a contemporary account of the working conditions of journalists and indeed the strain on the press in Turkey. The present situation for the media in Turkey is not rosy, as Yusuf Kanli describes. Journalists have to strike a balance between the obligation to report on developments as they see them on the one hand, and “the contagious Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), the anti-terror law, the taboos, written and unwritten restrictions on freedom of expression, political pressures, interests of the media bosses [...]” on the other hand. Kanli goes on to define two standpoints concerning the freedom of the press: individualist and communal; where are the limits of the individuals’ freedom of expression versus the ‘communal awareness’ which aims at protecting a majority’s feelings? Going on to analyze today’s situation, Kanli focuses on a structural problem: the growing monopolization of Turkish media combined with a symbiosis of the media-owners with the political elite. When one considers the fact that there is a tension between the secularized part of the elite, the Kamalists, and the moderate-Islamist elite headed by Prime Minister Recep Erdoğan “[...] harassing the media for criticizing the government with some ulterior motives instead of expanding reforms we unfortunately notice an iron fist tightening around our neck.” Also in Turkey journalists are killed for not conforming to the powerful.

The next part of the book is devoted to the discussion of “Religion, Politics and the Press” and focuses on the “Mohammed drawings”.

The ‘Mohammed drawings’ were 12 drawings of the prophet Mohammed published in the Danish daily *Jyllandsposten* on September 30, 2005. The reason for the publication was a number of incidents where Danish artists had refused to express themselves on matters related to Islam out of fear of reprisals, in other words self-censorship. In one concrete example the Danish daily ‘Politiken’ reported on September 27, 2005

that an author had not been able to find an illustrator for his children's book on Mohammed. The artists had excused themselves by referring to the killing of Theo van Gogh as well as to the physical assault on a Danish university teacher who had recited from the Koran in a lecture room at the University of Copenhagen (*Politiken*, September 17, 2005). Muslims residing in Denmark complained about the publication, and 11 ambassadors from Islamic countries asked the Danish Prime Minister to make a public apology which he refused to do. The incident became 'international', as Danish Muslims travelled the Middle East to promote international sanctions against Denmark.<sup>7</sup>

Against this background a roundtable discussion took place at Aalborg University on September 29, 2007, where editor Fleming Rose, who had authorized the publication of the 12 drawings, discussed the question of 'religion, politics and the press' with Yusuf Kanli, *Turkish Daily News*; Herbert Pundik, *Politiken*; and Iben Tranholm, media editor of the Roman Catholic Church in Denmark. Their discussion was reported by *Jyllandsposten* and is reprinted here. *Jyllandsposten* was supported by the press in some countries (e.g. the drawings were published in Germany, Norway and France, but the French editor was later dismissed from his job), but Great Britain – the homeland of John Milton – was critical, and in Pakistan riots took place, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries. Thus, the editor of this book has found it especially interesting to include the reactions and comments in Great Britain and Pakistan.

Julian Petley begins his analysis of the British reaction by asking why no British newspapers re-printed the 12 drawings, as they in fact reflected the British newspapers' general attitude as well. He starts out by looking at the liberal newspapers, and concludes that by not re-publishing they are consistent with their previous attitudes. The same thing cannot be said about the conservative press, which is characterized as hypocritical and basically trying not to offend potential customers. Petley is not certain that freedom of the press actually exists in Britain and asks whether it has to be rethought. The answer is negative, one has to "empower the powerless rather than muzzling the powerful, and [...] newspapers, rather than being censored, should be allowed to 'publish and be damned' [...]". Barry White continues the discussion commenting on Petley. He starts out by looking at the background of Muslims, stating their situation as the poorest minority population in Britain. He then endorses Petley's argument, that:

It's one thing to spew out anti-Muslim sentiment to no one but your like-minded readers, but quite another to do so in the full glare of the global media spotlight [...]. Such a stance would have required both consistency and courage, two qualities conspicuously lacking in Britain's conservative press, [...].

White then raises the question whether or not the publication of the story and the drawings was in the public interest. He concludes that the publication of the drawings indeed was, but he draws parallels to Britain, where other controversial publications were not. He also concludes that freedom of the press is best served by empowering the powerless.

7 To strengthen their case the imams had fabricated drawings themselves i.e. one showing the prophet as a pig.

The Mohammed drawings lead to demonstrations, the burning of Danish diplomatic representations etc., and nowhere were the general sentiments as hostile as in Pakistan. Elisabeth Eide happened to be in the country as the riots broke out. Eide uses a discussion of Occidentalism as a generator of questions for her analysis, asking *inter alia* whether the cartoon controversy “led to an upsurge in essentialist and crude representations of an imagined ‘West’ in Pakistani media, or whether a more differentiated coverage may be found.” In her analysis of the way the press covered the controversy she identifies a number of phases: ‘the discourse of disgust’, ‘tumultuous action and self-flagellation’, and ‘David Irving comes to Pakistan’. One of Eide’s conclusions is that the incident was (ab)used by various groups to promote their causes, but another was that “[The] differing voices, the nuances and the self-reflexiveness [...] reveals a picture of a Muslim nation somewhat unlike the way ‘European’ news coverage represents a country like Pakistan.”

As a chapter in its own right, the political use of the media is described by Arch Puddington who analyzes the story of *Radio Free Europe (RFE)* during the Cold War. *RFE* was a major source of information in Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe, much to the annoyance of the local dictators who, like all totalitarians, expended much energy to control the dissemination of information in their countries. What makes *RFE* interesting was its declared aim: to effect changes of government in Eastern Europe. In his chronological analysis Puddington dwells especially at the role and responsibility of *RFE* in connection to the Hungarian uprising of 1956, where he does not accept the accusation that *RFE* initiated the uprising, thus being guilty of the deaths of many Hungarians, but he does argue that:

... there is little question today that the station’s broadcasts to Hungary during the Revolution’s first eleven days violated – repeatedly and sometimes flagrantly – many of the accepted canons of professional journalism.

Puddington ends his chapter by concluding, that “In the war of ideas between Communism and democracy – [...] – *RFE* proved to be one of democracy’s most powerful weapons.”

The volume concludes with Jesper Strömbäck’s chapter where he discusses the fundamental question of the relationship between democracy and the media today. Strömbäck starts out by stating that democracy and freedom of the press, and speech, belong together, but also asks why or if this is so. To answer this question he discusses and compares four forms of democracy (procedural, competitive, participatory, and deliberative), before he introduces the concept of a social contract between democracy and the press. Then the roles of the press are stipulated as being providers of information and also watchdog of power. Strömbäck’s main conclusion also stands for the other contributions of this book when writing:

[...] democracy and the freedom of speech and of the press are inextricably linked. Democracy requires a free press, and a free press requires democracy. [...] However, not only does democracy require a free press. Democracy requires a press that uses its freedom to provide the information people need to be free and self-governing. [...].

A final note concerns the character or style of the contributions. The reader will soon realize that the chapters are written by ‘different kinds of people’, in the sense that the editor of this book has deliberately tried to combine university academics with journalists or people closely affiliated to the media world to secure first hand contributions from places where the freedom of the press is or was under strain. The hope is that this approach will broaden the scope and depth of the book.

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## List of Abbreviations

KMF: Kaj Munk Forskningscentret (Kaj Munk Research Center). Numbers refer to records in the Center’s archive.

## Chapter Two: Kaj Munk as a Journalist

*Arense Lund*

Kaj Munk wasn't a journalist in the traditional sense. He didn't follow the rules of the "news triangle". That is, that you always start an article with the most important information, that you try to be objective and never ever present your own point of view. He broke all of these rules in all of the articles he wrote.

But he had other qualities that are essential in good journalism. He was very observant, he had an intuitive sense of what was of topical interest and he was very inquisitive. His articles are a mix of commentary, observation and his own unique Kaj Munk brand of humor, Christianity and a lack of respect for authorities.

Kaj Munk wanted to be a journalist when he was a teenager. In his autobiography *Foråret så sagte kommer* (1942) he writes that he visited the local newspaper one day to tell them that he had heard that an old woman had fallen into the moat around the Christianssæde manor house in Lolland. They weren't immediately interested but then he dramatized the story a little and it was printed.

He had an article in a local newspaper *Maribo Amtstidende* April 15, 1913 with the title *Rottejagten* ("A Rat Hunt"). The story itself is fiction so it doesn't really count in this context but it is probably the first thing he managed to get printed in a newspaper. He comments: "How proud I was to see myself in the paper!" (Actually, he creates a little confusion about which article **was** his first because in the addition to his autobiography, *Med Sol og Megen Glæde* (1942, 50-54), there is an article called *Gud er Kærlighed* ("God is Love") from 1916 which he calls his first article).

He writes in his autobiography that these episodes made him want to become a journalist. So he went to his beloved foster mother, Marie, and begged her: "Let me become a journalist! Let me try and get an apprenticeship at a newspaper, Nakskov Tidende." But his foster mother just looked at him and contemptuously said: "Become a journalist! We have decided that you are going to the university so there is nothing to discuss" (Munk 1942a, 169).

In the following years he got an education, a job and a wife. He wrote lots of poems and plays but almost nothing journalistic until 1931. He did have an article in the local news paper *Ringkøbing Amts Dagblad* in 1925, where he defended a priest who had changed the baptismal service (Munk 1925).

1931 was an incredible year for him. His first child was born, he had a breakthrough with the play, *Cant*, and his newspaper career took off. He had met the nonconformist priest Drewsen Christensen who invited him to write for his parish magazine, *Dansk Folkeliv*. Drewsen Christensen made him an offer he couldn't refuse. He would receive no pay, have very few readers, but he could write whatever he liked. Their meeting was decisive because the articles he wrote here were seen by the editor of the large

Danish newspaper, *Jyllandsposten*, who asked him to write regularly about religion for the paper. This started the avalanche of articles he wrote until the German occupation and censorship nine years later put a stop to it.

His first article for *Jyllandsposten* was typical of him and his indifference to public controversy. He was asked to write an obituary notice about a respected Danish professor called Harald Hoeffding. Kaj Munk wrote a very unusual obituary notice where he was extremely critical of the newly dead professor. He called him among other things fussy and irritable, and called his ethics conventional and superficial (Munk 1931b). The readers were furious and wanted Kaj Munk fired.

But for Kaj Munk it was all-important to be truthful. The truth bites, scratches and strikes. The truth is not for cautious people, he said.

He wrote to *Jyllandsposten* to say that if they lost too many readers because of his article they were welcome to dismiss him. They did no such thing and probably gained more readers out of it.

He wrote for *Jyllandsposten* for several years but from the beginning he also wrote for many other newspapers. That same year he travelled to Berlin to visit the theatres. He wrote about his impressions in the newspaper *Politiken*. The trip was paid for with some money he had been given by The Danish Union of Journalists and his letter of response to them shows his ambivalence towards journalists. He wrote:

The damn journalists. I write a fantastic play, "An Idealist", which they criticize thoroughly. The wonderful journalists! God bless them! Then they gave me some travelling money. (Munk 1931a).

In a more serious moment he complained in a letter to *Jyllandsposten* that he didn't like journalism. It was too superficial and it took him too long to write the articles. But he didn't mind their fees.

In 1931 he became with one stroke a very successful playwright and therefore sought by the press. But he avoided them and wouldn't let them photograph him. That of course only made them hunt him all the more. However, ambivalent as he was about the press, he was a very prolific writer; during his career he wrote more than 600 articles. Apart from that he wrote a weekly sermon, plays, poems, hymns and books.

Early in 1932 he again provoked the readers of *Jyllandsposten* when he decided to modernize the Christmas Gospel making Joseph a bricklayer driving his pregnant girlfriend to the hospital in an old Ford. This resulted in demands for a case of heresy being brought against him.

He used his journalism and writing talent as a weapon in many different regards. In 1933 he threw himself into the defense of a priest called Otto Larsen. Otto Larsen had written a book wherein he suggested that The Gospel needed to be brought up to date if it was to interest modern society, and that the miracles of Christ were not to be believed. Kaj Munk did not agree with Otto Larsen, but he admired his honesty. So when the bishops threatened Otto Larsen with dismissal Kaj Munk fought for him. However Kaj Munk couldn't save Otto Larsen who lost his job. It is interesting to note that at the same time *Ordet* – Kaj Munk's miracle play – was being performed and debated by everyone.

Also in 1933 he went on a sabbatical and travelled for a couple of months through Europe to Jerusalem. He spent around ten days in each country and sent his impressions home in the form of travel articles to *Jyllandsposten*. When he returned home the articles were published as a book called *Vedersø-Jerusalem Retur* (1934).

These articles are the closest he ever came to traditional descriptive journalism. Of course he can't refrain from giving his own point of view, but still the articles give a very good impression of the conditions in Europe at the time.

In his article about Germany he quotes different people he has talked to such as an old lady, a priest, a scientist, an artist, a farmer and a worker. He also quotes the German newspapers, the prices in the shops and gives a quick overview of the political situation in the country and German foreign policy. Now this is very close to traditional journalism. About Hitler he is questioning, and describes him having a face alight with a lack of intelligence. Kaj Munk asks: Is he a keeper of the peace or is there the clink of knives in his background? (Munk 1934, 38).

His article about Austria also takes as its starting point the international political situation where Hitler is threatening to take over Austria. Kaj Munk is always good at leveling a complicated situation so that anybody can understand it. Here he does it by describing a flirtatious encounter between a young Nazi woman and an Austrian man, who supports Dolfuss (Munk 1934, 39-40). Otherwise the article is his impression of travelling through the Alps.

In his article about Rome under Mussolini he says that all laziness has been banned and everybody, even the dogs are wearing muzzles (Munk 1934, 46). His article about The Vatican is a masterful mix of fact and fiction as he lets Peter visit The Cathedral. Kaj Munk comments critically on the Catholic Church as he lets Peter laugh at the might and splendor of the Pope (Munk 1934, 59-60).

In several of the articles he puts forward the question: what is best, democracy or dictatorship? In 1933 his answer is: dictatorship by vote of the people. It is important to him that the German people voted Hitler into power. In the last article in the series he praises Hitler for the murder of Röhm (Munk 1934, 147). It is Kaj Munk's opinion that Hitler did it for Germany's sake and that he acted strongly and wisely.

His admiration for Hitler soon began to dwindle. In 1936 Hitler passed the discriminating special laws for Jews. Kaj Munk wrote an article called *Det kristenffjendske Tyskland* ("Germany – the enemy of Christianity") (Munk 1936) where he thoroughly criticized the laws. This resulted in a very strong reaction from Germany. The German Foreign Ministry complained to the Danish government. The Ministry for Church Affairs told Kaj Munk's bishop to order him to apologize to the Germans. Kaj Munk angrily refused and said: "From Jesus the Jew I have learnt that when one fights for a principle one will often have to be incautious, provocative and hurtful."

In 1936 he also criticized Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia/Ethiopia in articles and the play *Sejren*.

In 1937 he again used his journalism to fight for a priest. Pastor Laier in Hjallerup in Jutland used colorful language in church and he was also an accomplished sculptor. There had been complaints over his language and his art. He had among other things



made a large, very realistic sculpture of Jesus on the cross. The complainants didn't like that he showed Jesus disemboweled. Kaj Munk fought for Laier's right to tell the truth in all its horror. Laier was eventually dismissed. The final straw was when he fashioned sculptures of the disciples, modeled on the faces of the Parish Council. The foreman's face was put on Judas.

There is no limit to the different topics he wrote about. He wrote about the swimming girl Jenny Kammergaard (Munk 1937a), he wrote obituary notices, and he wrote reviews. For example, he authored three articles about the communist Norwegian playwright, Nordahl Grieg, whom he had great respect for as an artist. He wrote about his play *Nederlaget* ("The Defeat"): "this is not communism it is art." (Munk 1937b).

His obituary notice about the famous Danish author Henrik Pontoppidan, who became an atheist, was very harsh. He wrote: "There are vessels of honor and dishonor, but Henrik Pontoppidan's vessel was empty." (Munk 1947).

In 1938 he was so provoked by the persecution of the Jews in Germany and Italy that he wrote an article in *Jyllandsposten* called *Aabent brev til Mussolini* ("Open Letter to Mussolini") (Munk 1938a) where he appealed to Mussolini to stop the persecution. The same year he also wrote the play *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* ("He Sits at the Melting Pot") (Munk 1938b) that condemns the discriminatory treatment the Jews were being subjected to.

The plight of the Jews engaged him deeply. He received many different reactions from people after the "letter" to Mussolini. Some of the reactions were very critical of him. He answered them in another article ("Skyld eller ikke Skyld – Hjælp Dem" (Munk 1938d)) where he wrote about the situation of the Jews being so desperate that he was ready to ask anybody – even a thief or murderer – for assistance if that would help them. He wrote that in the name of human dignity and Christian charity we have to do all we can to help.

He wrote several articles criticizing the treatment of the Jews. When the Danish government stopped performances of "He Sits at the Melting Pot" in southern Jutland so as not to antagonize the Germans he wrote an article called "Cowardice will get us nowhere".

Kaj Munk expected the war to come to Denmark and warned of it several times. In May 1938 he confronts the issue of whether a Christian can go to war and makes a case against pacifism. His argument is that if one sees perversions being committed it is a Christian deed to kill the pervert (Munk 1938c).

In January 1940 he writes an article with the title *Dagen er inde* ("The Day has Come") in *Jyllandsposten* (Munk 1940a) with the same theme. He says that when you see innocence and weakness threatened with violence and murder God teaches us to defend them without further thought. He praises the Danes who at this time went to Finland to help them defend themselves against the Russians.

The occupation of Denmark in April 1940 made him very sad. But already in May he writes an article about the times being a test of the Danish people, that it is up to the people whether the country will become free again. In September he writes that something actively Danish ought to happen in Denmark now. He is violently against

the Danish policy of cooperation which he criticizes in an article (Munk 1940b) by writing “we have tried to buy life too cheaply”. From then on he writes very few articles as his access to the newspapers was censored. His message of resistance against the occupation was primarily expressed through speeches, poems, plays and sermons.

His plays had made the theater-going public sit up and listen but his articles were read by a wide spectrum of the Danish public and when Kaj Munk was murdered by Nazis on January 4, 1944 I am quite sure it was just as much because of his journalism as his art.

This book is also about censorship and more topically the Mohammed cartoons. Kaj Munk believed in ‘publish or perish’ and I am convinced that he would have defended the right to publish the Mohammed cartoons.

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## **Chapter Three: Kaj Munk in and between the World Wars. Official and Political Censorship.**

*Svend Aage Nielsen*

### *I. Censorship related to written and unwritten rules.*

Democracy emerged gradually in Denmark

It is often said and written that Denmark's constitution launched democracy and civic rights. However the transition to democracy as we understand it today was gradual. The Constitution of 1849 permitted men over 30 years of age to vote, provided they had their own household and never had accepted social security benefits from the government. Parliamentarism, as form of democracy, was introduced in 1901. It was not until 1915 that women were allowed to vote.

The Constitution's §77 explicitly secured freedom of speech:

Any person shall be entitled to publish his thoughts in print, in writing, and in speech, provided that he may be held accountable in a court of justice. Censorship and other preventative measures shall never again be introduced.

Kaj Munk came close to the truth about this when he said: "In Denmark, everything is taken into account – except the reality."<sup>1</sup>

Examples of limits of freedom of speech

When Kaj Munk attended high school the general rule was employed that students did not speak at general assemblies. The original paragraph of the Constitution upheld that anyone on financial aid or not head of a household was not permitted to vote.

In Toreby Parish an incident occurred while Kaj Munk was a high school student at Nykøbing F. Katedralskole between 1914-17. Kaj Munk attended an election meeting in Øster Toreby School. It was here he opposed the then social democratic representative to the Parliament, Valdemar Olsen, in such a way that the then mayor of Nykøbing Falster, H. P. Jensen, because of the impact of this impertinence, asked Kaj Munk's school principal to have a word with his students to advise them that they were not welcome as active participants at election meetings (Nielsen 1984).

1 According to Arne Munk, son of Kaj Munk, quoted during 'provstikonvent' (convention of pastors) at Toreby Vicarage 24 November 1987.

Another example occurred during Kaj Munk's time at high school. When the Government decided to sell the Danish Virgin Islands to the USA, a public meeting was held in Toreby Community House on December 12, 1916. This meeting was called only two days prior to the referendum date.

However, it was not similar to the Sydslesvig vote in 1920, in which locals voted on their nationality; whether or not to belong to Germany or to be Danish citizens. On the contrary, the Danish government in 1916 overruled the votes of the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands, and sold *en bloc* the population as slaves, ignoring the individuals' rights by selling their nationality as a commodity.

In his biography *Foraaret saa sagte kommer* (Spring arrives so slowly) Kaj Munk (1942) tells about his experience. He states:

A meeting was advertised to take place in Toreby concerning the sale. The two speakers were the social democrats from Nykøbing F.: Member of the Parliament Valdemar Olsen and editor J. P. Jensen.

They both were keen on the sale. "So I requested to speak; because after all it was my municipality." (Munk 1942, 211-212).

Kaj Munk was polite, as his mother had taught him, when posing his question which opposed the sale. This unexpected opposition created a stir and both speakers denounced him. He in return responded accordingly.

However, Kaj Munk does not recount how he got the better of the old teacher of the parish, Mikkelsen, to such an extent that it caused a scandal at the start of the meeting. Here, angry outbursts from the crowd expressed "that he certainly was a bit too green and cheeky to take part in public meetings." (Nielsen 1984, 23).

The outrage committed by Kaj Munk soon spread like ripples on water, and in his biography he remembers:

A few days later the principal of Nykøbing F. Katedralskole showed up in my class. He just did not show up, no he trembled with rage. He charged towards me like a dancing dervish, while he ranted and raved in the presence of the entire class:

"I know about you people from Maribo. And whom do you think you are to stand up this way? Such a poor chap who comes here, and that we squander scholarships on, has the audacity to think he can disgrace our entire school." (Munk 1942, 212).

Kaj Munk does not comment on the 'censorship' of this infringement of freedom of speech, as it may be referred to in retrospect. However, it is evident that it is very typical of the constrained way of thinking prevalent in the past.

More than any other episode in his high school years, it had an impact on things to come. The episode fortified his dismissive attitude towards Nykøbing F. Katedralskole for the rest of his life. This was not surprising as he had been humiliated by the principal's slander and peculiar behavior that denounced him in the presence of all his classmates.

Presumably this was the first significant denunciation of his opinions and freedom of speech even though the mayor in Nykøbing F. and the principal of Nykøbing F. Katedralskole might have thought that they merely handled the situation appropriately for the time.

Kaj Munk finishes chapter 20 in his biography: “With an overwhelming majority, Denmark decided to sell its colonies. Was this an omen that it was also ready to sell itself?” (Munk 1942, 212).

## II. *Censorship by the Danish Authorities*

### Censorship of Kaj Munk’s play *Sejren* (The Victory) 1936

Kaj Munk’s play *Sejren* (The Victory) (1936) had its first performance in 1936. For good reasons he also subtitled it *Et skuespil om verden i dag* (A play about the world today). It opens with a thought-provoking prologue on the stage before curtain call:

The playwright stands outside life’s periphery and looks into its substance. It is not real events and people he will interpret as he is not a historian. Consequently, Italy in the play is not the one on the map, its chancellor not the fascist dictator... Only the faces are similar... Does he succeed in finding not the individual’s human heart but time’s ...he will seize it with trembling hands... and if he is able to move hearts to smile with and have mercy with the one rightfully condemned, then the playwright gives thanks for his vocation that allowed him the position outside life’s periphery – the post of a watcher. (Munk 1936, 5).

This indicates that plays are in a category by themselves. A writer cannot completely be outside life if his message is to move the audience to “smile with” and “have mercy” with “the one rightfully condemned.” This refers to Mussolini after a bombing raid in his conquest in Africa, indicating that he is more involved with life than an outside onlooker. Another example of his involvement with life is the play’s subtitle “A play about the world today.” (Munk 1936, 5), as observed by a poet – not by a historian or a judge.

Parallel with his plays and poetry there were many other signs from his own life in the period. However, in the play he cannot be held accountable for the dialogs that differ from one’s own opinion if one fails to consider the anti-dialogs in an evaluation. The playwright is responsible for all the lines but the main point is that when the words alternate between agreement and disagreement in every play, the writer has now authoritatively declared that challenging words and opinions is a good thing on stage as well as in conversation – in concurrence and divergence – so it is in real life?

Which of Kaj Munk’s contemporaries insisted that democracy is also conversation? Hal Koch reasoned the same way and therefore Kaj Munk was invited to speak at Askov Højskole during the war.

Thus it is absurd that Knud Hansen, first at a lecture at Tidehvervs summer meeting June 3, 1942, and later in a publication, now a book in The Royal Library, scrutinizes nine of Kaj Munk’s plays and, in the light of them, makes judgment on what he also entitles his book: *Forkyndelsen i Kaj Munks Forfatterskab* (The Preaching in Kaj Munk’s Authorship) (Hansen 1942).

His conclusion is and he reasons as follows: “In every one of his hero plays there is a kneeling admiration for the one who is the hero even if he – in the majority of plays

in the last act – lets go of his hero and surrenders him to suffer defeat.” (Hansen 1942, 88).

This sounds clever and is plausible but it is based on shallow thinking or a flawed logic attack launched at Kaj Munk, and Knud Hansen ought to have been inspired by the dialectical theology. It simply aborts the category of a play because it lacks the attacks and counterattacks that are so essential to a play.

Hans Brix, who was Kaj Munk’s long-standing sparring partner in regard to his drama, expresses a more nuanced picture about *Sejren*: “While Christianity is the absolute authority for Munk, his Christians are not sacred in their religious beliefs. They are infested with many flaws, especially the Jesuits...” (Brix 1946, 162)

He continues:

Behind the plot of the play is the tragedy of the states. States can only be run by manipulation, lies and fraud...It is the tragedy of all politicians, all rulers, all legislators. (Brix 1946, 164).

Hans Brix also notes:

The Royal Theater could not play it. For this purpose, we have diplomats to prevent the art from offending dictators. (Brix 1946, 164).

It is surprising that Hans Brix refers to The National Stage which first and foremost by obligation to the Constitution of freedom of speech ought to maintain the artistic freedom, but in reality this was different.

This is underscored with the information that Kaj Munk and his family planned to immigrate to Norway because “Det Norske Teatret” in Oslo intended to play *Sejren*.

In February 1936, J. C. Normann, censor at The Royal Theater wrote to Kaj Munk. It caused a fury. Hans Brix recounts:

“In a letter to pastor Munk in the vicarage, Normann, this clown of the town, had forbidden the performance of the play.” And with a postscript: “He himself had written to Steincke. No attorney general in Denmark has ever had a more attentive ear than his.” (Brix 1946, 165). *Sejren* was played a year later at Folketeatret in Copenhagen.

On the other hand, the management of The Royal Theater not only continued to cooperate with the Government. It also cooperated with Nazi Germany with guest appearances before and during the occupation by Nazi Germany.

Bjarne Nielsen Brovst quotes in his *Kaj Munk og den stærke mand* (Kaj Munk and the Strong Man) from Kaj Munk’s article in *Jyllands-Posten*, February 9, 1936:

Where will we see “Sejren”? It will not be seen...the Department of Education and the State Department and the Italian Legation and censor and quaestor, or what is his name, the Pope’s censor.... When finally there is a play that is genuine... so many eiderdowns will be heaped on top of it that it will suffocate in the first round... (Nielsen Brovst 1992, 271).

This was precisely what happened with The Royal Theater.

Even so, Minister of Justice, K. K. Steincke, uttered in an interview in *BT* on March 14, 1936: “A democratic parliamentary government acknowledges the freedom of religion, speech, press, association and the right to assembly...” (Nielsen Brovst 1992, 273).

This statement of his was short lived. Two years later he directly disregarded these constitutional rights.

Afterwards, it was established that Kaj Munk had verbally sided with Mussolini during his rise, but in reality turned against his abuse of power. Steincke had verbally sided with democracy and the constitution, but in reality turned against its ideas and its promise of freedom.

Such opposing norms of behavior relates to Jesus' parable about the two sons in the gospel according to Matthew chapter 21:

A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterwards he repented and went. And he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say until him: "The first."

The ban on freedom of speech against the performance of *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* (He Sits at the Melting Pot) in Sønderjylland, the southern part of Jutland

On January 29, 1939 Kaj Munk published an article in *Jyllands-Posten* entitled *Ved Fejghed opnaas intet* (By Cowardice Nothing is Attained) (Munk 1949, 92-94).

He begins with the reasons: "Only 10 days ago the author of *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* was notified through his *Jyllands-Posten* that a public performance in Sønderborg was cancelled by theater director Gerda Christophersen after a pressing request from the office of the Minister of Justice.

Several days passed while Kaj Munk regained his composure about this notice that he found "simply incredible." (Munk 1949, 92).

The year before Crystal Night, 1938, the play repudiated the Nazi regime's discriminatory persecution of Jews. Kaj Munk believed that the ministerial demand ought to be defied and wrote, that the banning of the play *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* in Sønderjylland "is unthinkable. It would be a foolish, undignified and preposterous act." (Munk 1949, 92).

"Foolish because, firstly, it gives a few irresponsible and excitable young people the impression that they are the ones in control, and, secondly, it would agree with a perception of the play that is completely incorrect.." (Munk 1949, 92 f.)).

To the contrary, Kaj Munk insists that in recent Danish literature there are hardly any works like his play "that, to such a degree, have shown insight for Der Führer and his masterwork and contributed to realizing his accomplishments in Scandinavia." (Munk 1949, 93).

Undoubtedly, Kaj Munk recognizes Hitler's measures in dealing with depression and mass unemployment that were a consequence of the crushing defeat experienced by the German people after World War I.

He did consider the Versailles treaty as the victors' orders. The way he prophetically had looked at the treaty in his play *Fugl Fønix* (The Phoenix) from 1926 (Munk 1939).

This rationalization was not appropriate after Hitler's cleansing, abuse of power, Chrystal Night and continuous infringement on civil liberties for Jews and other groups made into objects of hate among the people.

Of this he readily admits that *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* is a protest "against a sin in the national socialistic regime." (Munk 1949, 93). It is the persecution of the Jews.

He could have very well made use of the main line in the play, Bishop von Beugel's words: "But to deny people their civil rights makes oneself a criminal." (Munk 1938, 51).

He goes into further details explaining the crucial idea:

Through my vocation as clergy the play's imperative words are Bishop von Beugel's remark to Dorn about Der Führer: "So close to being a God as it is possible to be when in fact he is only human; he needs a church to tell him when he is wrong (Munk 1938, 51-52).

Kaj Munk also points out that throughout the entire play, only positive words are used about the Germans, and he mentions that those referring to it as "a dishonorable attack on Germany" and starting street riots against its performance should be fined. It ought to suffice "as long as we have another parliament than that of the street." (Munk 1949, 94).

"It is a blemish on Denmark's name if the Danish government by threats of unrest gives in to fear and gives truth a muzzle." Finally he sharpens the tone: "The Marxist Steincke as a knight's attendant to Mr. Goebbels – aye, the things one is exposed to." (Munk 1949, 94).

The analysis is very precise. There is a straight line; yes a leitmotif of what Kaj Munk was subjected to in his high school years, and endured during the latter part of the 1930s both nationally and internationally.

The Government did not even defend our constitutional rights.

It was mute about injustice, and it reduced Denmark to a submissive position.

Disguised as a democracy, it submissively relinquished to dictatorship by depriving the people of their right to assemble and see a play. Those of the Jewish faith were deprived of their freedom to have their situation exposed in a play. As a matter of fact Danish theater was deprived of its fundamental right: Freedom of speech.

There is a direct line of continuity from this play from 1938 and Kaj Munk's article on it in 1939 to his clash with just verbal "democracy" in his speech in Ollerup in 1940.

Despite this, Kaj Munk had made his breakthrough with several earlier plays. *En Idealist (Herod the King)* which was first performed in 1928, and was performed again in 1938. *Ordet (The Word)* from 1925 was played in 1932. *Kærlighed (Love)*, written in 1926, was put on the stage in September 1935. It was indeed submitted to self-censorship whether it ought to be publicized because of its strong autobiographical and biographical elements (Munk 1948).

Hans Bay-Petersen writes in his book *En selskabelig invitation* about The Royal Theater's guest performances in Nazi Germany in the 1930s. About *Han sidder ved Smeltediglen* he writes:



The Minister of Justice's appointed censor, J.C. Normann, had enough to attend to. The theater's censorship was not only controlling moral issues but became increasingly political... e.g. about *Han sidder ved Smeltingen* at Folketeatret August 1938, where a Jew after a bloody Nazi assault tumbles into the sitting room of the main character with blood running down his face. At the dress rehearsal, both Normann and the head of the theater found that this stream of blood was too provocative, and it was removed on opening night (Bay-Petersen 2003, 10).

This extremely detailed degree is symptomatic of how widespread the censorship was.

... Normann knew that it was not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' business to interfere in censorship, but on the other hand the film censorship had asked the Ministry several times, so why not? (Bay-Petersen 2003, 10-11).

This information sheds light upon the fact that not only did the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increasingly leave the right to freedom of speech high and dry, but it took place within several departments. This close collaboration that later became known when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that pastors belonging to the Danish State Church were not permitted to exercise freedom of speech when preaching in relation to the Norwegian church's confrontation with Nazism.

Hans Bay-Petersen also touches upon Kaj Munk's version of *Hamlet* in his book: "... it flirted with Nazism and belittled and abhorred democracy." (Bay-Petersen 2003, 11).

Perhaps this play should also be valued for its artistic autonomy to present opposite views and attitudes to free discourse. Is it fair to take some of the lines out of context to browbeat the author with when the intention of the author was an invitation to reflection and possible contradiction?

Was it not primarily the theater censor and the government that failed when they willingly cooperated with violation of the constitution, and thus Denmark as a community founded on the rule of law?

### *III. Censorship during the occupation of Denmark 1940-1945.*

Nazi Germany occupied Denmark April 9, 1940. The consequences of this were that the Danish people faced new rules of censorship from the Danish as well as the German authorities or perhaps, in most cases, by collaboration of both.

This lasted until the Danish government stepped down on August 29, 1943.

Three proclamations on April 9, 1940 establish some guidelines for the coming years during the occupation (Christoffersen 1945).

The first proclamation is that of German commander-in-chief Kaupisch.

He begins his defense for the occupation by stating that it is really against the sincere wishes of the German people, but to protect Denmark against Great Britain, Nazi Germany will shield Denmark and Norway.

At the end of his proclamation he mentions that there will be continuous negotiations between the German government and the Royal Danish government that will secure:

“the Kingdom’s continuation, preservation of army and navy, respect for the Danish people’s liberty and that the country’s independence will persevere.”

There is therefore anticipated by the occupying power an “understanding”, and any omission by anybody to be “passive or active resistance” and:

“The Citizens are asked to proceed with their daily lives and maintain peace and order.” (Christoffersen 1945, 11).

The second proclamation explains that because German troops have crossed the Danish border it is acknowledged: “The Danish Government in protest decided to carry out the country’s dealings in consideration to the occupation that has taken place.”

It is further emphasized that “It is the duty of the people to refrain from any resistance towards these troops...law and order must prevail and a loyal attitude by all for any authority that can be implemented.” (Christoffersen 1945, 13).

The words “in protest” are thought to provide circumstances for the government’s standpoint. Should those two words not shake the population to more thoughtful consideration?

However it is submission that is expressed in the wording. It is copied from some of the German commandant’s proclamations. It is not so much about liberty and independence than about omitting “any active and passive resistance”, and about “law and order.”

It was signed by the King and the Prime Minister: Christian Rex and T. Stauning.

The third proclamation on April 9, 1940 was short and concise and signed by the King alone:

Due to this situation, so grave for our country, I call upon all in metropolitan and rural areas to show correct and dignified behavior, because any rash acts or remarks may have the most sinister consequences. – God save all, God save Denmark.

Christian Rex, Amalienborg, April 9, 1940 (Christoffersen 1945, 13).

The three proclamations were of momentous importance to the administration collaborating with the occupying power. This included also administering terminologies either with direct or indirect censorship or self-censorship that were or were not communicated to the public by the media.

### Ollerup-talen (The Ollerup Speech) 1940

An article in *Svendborg Avis* in July 1940 is a striking example of how clearly the occupying power had expressed itself and the actual effects it had on the public. It gives an idea of the instruction the editor gave reporter H. C. Nielsen before Kaj Munk was to make a speech at Ollerup Gymnastikhøjskole on July 28, 1940.

The reporter was coached: “In regard to Kaj Munk, of course we want what he says but be careful. Unfortunately after the Germans’ arrival here we cannot write anything we may desire.” (Munkiana 1998, Møller 2000).

A few days after the coaching of the reporter in *Svendborg Avis*, July 30, 1940, editor Regner Stenbæk wrote an editorial. He accused Kaj Munk of expressing sentiments as “derogatory democracy.” He also charged Kaj Munk with “irresponsible verbiage.” (Munkiana 1998, Møller 2000).

This signifies that Stenbæk was well informed about the German commander-in-chief’s proclamation of April 9, 1940; he is also submissive to it and refers to it in his editorial. There are several passages to that effect besides this one about the occupying power: “What they demand and what they, within reason, can expect is a correct and comprehensible way of behaving.” (Munkiana 1998, Møller 2000).

This unconditional consent to the occupying power’s orders – at the expense of the Danish Constitution’s law on free speech – is an obvious confirmation where the editor has placed himself with the coaching and the editorial (Munkiana 1998, Møller 2000).

One of the first speeches by Kaj Munk after the invasion was the Ollerup Speech that became a pivotal point for the degradation of Kaj Munk. Although considering the existing censorship it was received with mixed feelings.

The unfavorable critics have ignored the fact that Kaj Munk pronounced markedly against the extract in *Svendborg Avis* in Odense on November 4, 1940:

The last time I spoke here in Funen I spoke about Denmark and Germany. A newspaper reported exactly one half of what I said and published it as the whole truth; it was a Svendborg paper, I do not recall its name, but I denounce this issue as mendacious and cowardly (Munk 1949, 208).

Posterity has dwelled on the fact that Kaj Munk spoke of Hitler “as one of the greatest figures in the history of the world” and “a religious figure.” (Munk 1949, 208).

Presumably none of his critics have noted that it occurred in the same month and shortly after Prime Minister Stauning on July 8, 1940 endorsed “foremost a good and friendly relationship to Germany with whom cooperation will be a very natural thing.” (Brøndsted and Gedde 1946, 136).

And in the very same month, the newly-appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Erik Scavenius, said:

With the great German victories that have elicited worldwide astonishment and admiration, a new era in Europe has begun, which will bring political and economical reform under the leadership of Germany. It will be Denmark’s duty to find its place in a necessary and mutual collaboration with Greater Germany (Brøndsted and Gedde 1946, 136).

The critics did not assess with enough emphasis on the fact that Kaj Munk was a passionate observer of life, and through his plays portrayed the entire spectrum of governmental management and administration. He did this by scrutinizing the leaders in real life and putting them on stage, exposing them to opposing viewpoints. Kaj Munk’s reason for doing this was an exercise in revealing the truth about the different kinds of governments – what they were good or bad at doing – no matter whether they were called democracies, dictatorships or something else.

The critics also dwelled on the fact that Kaj Munk admitted that it had been hard to experience the response to his play *Sejren* (The Victory) 1936, that included the line: “Victory justifies all.” (Munkiana 1998, Møller 2000).

Niels Nøjgaard goes into detail about the consequences of the Ollerup Speech:

In news reports and letters from the readers the conclusion was that Kaj Munk had spoken against democracy...Due to the latent censorship it was out of the question to retaliate...The most abhorrent rumors about what Kaj Munk said thrived exuberantly...The illegal flyers and publishing to remedy the lost freedom of the press had not yet emerged; people had to be content with pretty much what fitted in with the German's version of events. (Nøjgaard 1946, 355).

### Rejection of the government's policy and approval of the King's proclamation

It also was overlooked that in the Ollerup Speech he turned sharply against the government's proclamations from April 9 and henceforward, but stuck to His Majesty's short proclamation to the people of April 9. It emerges clearly by the use of the word "correct" in the King's proclamation and his reasonable interpretation of this word in light of the occupation of Denmark. His intentions were that the occupying power should then be exposed to "correctness and coolness". The rejection of the government's policy and approval of the King's proposal can be spun as a leitmotif through his feelings towards the occupying power right from the very beginning. This opinion was not mentioned in *Svendborg Avis* though it reported Kaj Munk's accolade to King Christian as a soldier Danish to the bone, and held in the highest esteem by his subjects.

The speeches in Ollerup, Gerlev and in Odense in 1940 clearly display this leitmotif. In the Odense speech it shows with the words:

All the great parties have closed ranks behind Stauning who is now travelling around and showing himself in public so that everyone can see how comfortable he is with the chain. [...] Where is the Danish dignity? He, who with a gun pointed at his chest, calls himself a friend whilst being threatened, we know that the gutter shall be the place for his urn.

(Munk 1949, 208f).

It looks as if almost the entire population had endorsed a convincing 'yes' to the monarchical leadership during the occupation.

Munk's interpretation of the King's message threw him into relief as he himself was pressed by the realities of the time and affected by them.

He began a letter to Valdemar Rørdam on February 20, 1941 where, in a later addendum, he broke with Valdemar Rørdam. It was first sent on July 13, 1941 and he wrote:

I am obliged to stick to England and Stauning where the latter is the harder. But when my King demands it and the Germans the contrary there is no choice. (Munk 1958, 223).

“How come a man like Helweg-Larsen disappeared?”

The editor in chief at *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Helweg-Larsen, was dismissed on May 14, 1941 for speaking against the occupation. Kaj Munk related to this at The Student Organization “Hejmdahl”’s welcome to the new students in September 1941:

How come a man like Helweg-Larsen disappeared? Maybe we shall not discuss that. It is said that it can have the most severe consequences. It would not do to say “woof” to a ferocious dog. One says: “Good dog, and then we say: “good dog.” But one man had the courage not to say “good dog”. He can teach us much. I do not serve my country by being a dog and turning its people into a tail-wagging team of dogs (Munk 1941).

When Kaj Munk talks about “severe consequences” it is in the midst of war, not expressed by anyone at any time. It is from the King’s proclamation of April 9. This is how he spins his leitmotif in a time of war; that “honorable behavior” will prove respect for the Constitution in the kingdom of Christ – and also in the realm of the King, honoring “The constitution of Denmark.”

When Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Erik Scavenius, committed Denmark to the “Antikomintern-treaty” led by Nazi Germany in November 1941, Kaj Munk snapped “Down with Scavenius! There can be no coalition in this coalition government as long Scavenius is its dictator!” (Munk 1949, 252).

How incorrect, how unworthy! What an outrage on the King’s message

This remarkable interpretation of the King’s proclamation reached its peak at a convention of pastors in Tommerup on September 2, 1942 when Kaj Munk castigated the men with ideas, the governments, the judiciary and the representatives of the press:

But where are they, all the Pacifists and the Quakers and the Men of Ideas? Have they fallen out with Mr. Hitler? Have they been imprisoned because of their ideas? Are they not enjoying themselves at their adult education schools and vicarages and letting injustice erupt in the streets? Does the Danish government not even emerge from oblivion with its proclamations about friendship with the nation that praises all of the ideas that we reject and despise, and which with treachery and violence has beaten us to the ground? Friendship, the Danish government proclaims. How wrong, how pathetic! How insulting to the King’s bidding! Our courts, whose independence and unquestionable righteousness were our pride, do not they, led by the Supreme Court, get up as soon as the Germans pull a string? How wrong, how pathetic! How insulting to the King’s bidding! Do not the papers print the lies they are dictated and dismiss their best men on orders from outside parties, are not the men of the press, like the unfortunate women in our streets, now in the pay of the foreigners? How wrong, how pathetic! How insulting to the King’s bidding! Alas, I could continue. [...] But Christ says: By their fruit you will recognize them. (Munk 1949, 280-89).

This became the reality in Denmark more and more, as Hal Koch’s article in *Lederbladet* (Leader’s Journal), May 1943 underscores:

The job of an incumbent government is to take care of things...Here, it must act according to its best ability and belief. Often, it has to resort to measures, which are an affront to freedom, often it must make statements that do not correspond with the truth (quoted in Nielsen Brovst 1993, 247f.).

Kaj Munk contradicted this in *Dansk Samlings Julnummer*, July 2, 1943:

A leader of young people gives his government a free hand to act illegally, criminally, yes, committing perjury, if only he can preserve his right to protest. Here Machiavelli certainly lags behind. [...]. About this crude and cynical point of view there is just one thing left to take into account: for such a way to govern we need not a Danish government, then we are better off without one (quoted in Nielsen Brovst 1993, 248).

Advanced censorship of freedom of expression/preaching in relation to the Norwegian Church's opposition

Here it is pertinent to refer to Erik Thostrup Jacobsen's book *Som om intet var hændt* (As if nothing had happened) (1991).

He states with clarity that in spite of the fact that the Church had its own "Master" it was not only submissive to the government's ways, but also extremely obedient when the government infringed upon the guaranteed liberties among those preaching.

*De kirkelige dokumenter fra besættelsestiden* (The ecclesiastical documents from the time of occupation)

Published by Jørgen Glenthøj in 1985, these documents shed light upon what happened to the leaders within the Church when their cooperation with the Danish authorities ran into difficulties (Glenthøj 1985).

On January 15, 1943 the Danish bishops wrote to the Minister of Justice:

[...] firstly because of severe unrest in relation to the law of the land [...] Secondly with regard to the propaganda for the incitement of racial hatred while, at the same time, the priests are rightly ordered to refrain from commenting on the political side of the Jewish question. (Glenthøj 1985, 13).

This document clearly tells that the bishops think of themselves more as government paid public servants than as bishops, when they admit that they have grasped the infringements of the pastors' freedom of speech and proclamation in such an urgent issue as the political side of the Jewish question.

This stand is in deep contrast to their pastoral letter of the same year dated September 29, 1943: "*The Danish Church's position on the Jewish question.*" (Glenthøj 1985, 10) in which they state that:

Wherever persecution of Jews due to racial or religious reasons is taking place, it is the duty of the Christian church to protest against it. (Glenthøj 1985,10)

Between these two dates Kaj Munk sent his courageous letter to the Department for Church Affairs, as well as the Prime Minister and Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Erik Scavenius, on March 23, 1943:

Today, I have received a circular letter concerning the Danish priests' position on the Norwegian conditions.

I hereby allow myself to most respectfully inform the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that I do not intend to obey it, but act completely against it.

Rather than requesting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handles its own affairs and letting the Church handle its affairs (for which Mr. Scavenius is hardly the right person), the Department for Church Affairs has turned in the opposite direction.

Danish priests are swearing an oath on the symbolic books and other good things, however, not yet to the Honorable Foreign Minister.

If I, out of fear, became a passive bystander, I would feel like an offender against my Christian faith, my Danish (i.e. Nordic) disposition and my oath as a priest.

It is better to damage Denmark in its relationship to Germany than in its relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Perhaps one actually ought to take the Department to court. Rightfully speaking, we have here an instance where a superior civil servant will lead his subordinates to misconduct.

For we, the priests, are here to speak the word and not to silence it.

To compromise with injustice – that alone will result in serious consequences for our country and people. Christ has taught us this. [...] This is where I stand; I cannot do it differently [...]

(Munk quoted in Nielsen Brovst 1995, 239 f.)

These statements were refreshing and in plain language concerning the relationship between State and Church and between power and righteousness.

It is not surprising that this has since led to Kaj Munk becoming a great source of inspiration for much liberation theology and stance which derives from the greatest fountain of inspiration that the Church has in the words and example of Jesus Christ.

This too was a moment for reaching the stars in Kaj Munk's life, the last words show where he uses the same words as Martin Luther used to the Emperor at the summons in Worms, when he will give God what God is and the Emperor what the Emperor is.

On September 28, 1941 Kaj Munk gave a sermon just as strong and precise:

The pulpit has become a place of responsibility so we shudder in our black garb when we ascend the stairs. Because here in God's house the word is free – not free in the way that we determine it, but it determines us. In here the only ruler is the censorship of The Holy Ghost and it is this censorship that forces us not to silence but to speak up. [...]

Sure enough the church is not the place for planning economy, the new Europe and ideology of the State, but it is the place where injustice shall be excommunicated, where lies shall be exposed, [...] (Nielsen Brovst 1993, 153).

It is so because the Holy Ghost according to Gospel – John 15, 26 (The little Creed) – is the spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father. About eleven years ago, a person under strict censorship spoke in similar terms. To the Secretary General for the relief programs of Danish Church Aid, Aung San Suu Kyi said about true Christian awe: "A true Christian only fears God's wrath and nobody else's." (Kennedy Society 1997).

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Section Two  
The Press under Strain



## Chapter Four: German Press in the Third Reich

*Beate Schneider*

The National Socialist press and cultural policy is considered to this day to have been so effective that it is still regarded as a model for the successful manipulation and “Gleichschaltung” of the population in dictatorships, i.e., the establishment of a system of totalitarian control over the individual. The key to the success of this fateful manipulation of the masses was its comprehensive strategy, its strict principles and thorough organisation, namely

- strict ideological foundation and control;
- the organisation of the Party;
- a National Socialist press;
- expropriation and takeovers of other publishing houses;
- “Gleichschaltung” and control of the media;
- legal rules to govern journalism;
- daily briefing and control of the press.

Besides these mostly organisational measures the manipulation of the masses was achieved through consonance in news coverage and through rhetorical and stylistic devices; simplification: “One People, one Reich, one Leader” (*Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer*), emotionalization: “National Community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) and personalization: “Cult of the Leader” (*Führerkult*). These rhetorical devices are still considered to be important tools for the manipulation of the masses and they explain the manipulative power of NS propaganda.

### *1. Principles of the Nazi state and the importance of the press*

From the outset, the supremacist and inhuman National Socialist ideology aimed for the mobilisation of emotional forces. It appealed to instinct and emotion, blood and soil, honour and the fulfilment of duty towards the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the national community (Lexikon der Geschichte 2001, 558-559). Intellectual discourse was considered despicable. All sectors of the population and all aspects of social and political life were to be integrated into the National Socialist movement to enforce National Socialist programs (Pürer and Rabe 1996, 63-64). The aim was the elimination of individualism (*die Enteignung des Menschen* = the expropriation of people) and the totalitarian control over the individual. Intellectual freedom therefore had to be suppressed, particularly in under-aged youth (Pleticha 1984, 114).

Particularly the conservative middle classes, which had been robbed of their leading social role following the abdication of the German Kaiser, soon embraced the National Socialist ideology. Unemployment in the years of the Great Depression (1929-1933) made workers, farmers and intellectual workers receptive to the promises of the National Socialists and they increasingly won their support (Pleticha 1984, 76).

Public opinion was no longer shaped by a free press and public discussion, but by a vast propaganda machine. For National Socialists, the press was primarily a political tool to attain and keep political power and to educate the German people in Nazi ideology. It was the organ and the mouthpiece of National Socialism (Hagemann 1970, 13). Hitler himself believed the press to have “truly formidable” significance. It was, he believed, impossible to overestimate its importance as a means of continuing education. Readers were mostly simple-minded and gullible and it was the state’s responsibility to monitor their “education” (Koszyk 1972, 348-349). In the 10 o’clock conference on 3 April 1940, he stated that the press should adapt propaganda to the “intellectual level” and “receptive capacity of the most simple-minded”. “Should the aim, however, be to influence a whole nation it, is essential that you do not overestimate the intellectual capacity of people” (Hagemann 1970, 13). Hitler was convinced that it was his responsibility to “keep close tabs” on the press (Koszyk 1972, 349).

Not only was objective reporting not called for, but forbidden. Facts and tendentious commentary merged together and became virtually indistinguishable (Hagemann 1970, 13). Any press publication, be it a professional journal or a daily newspaper, was forced to submit to daily governmental directives and to maintain strict discipline.

At the same time, the aim was also to instrumentalise the press in an effort to manipulate public opinion to the end of creating the best possible image of Germany abroad (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 64). These two aims were hard to reconcile.

## 2. *The organisation of National Socialist Propaganda*

The man who felt up to the task was Dr. Joseph Goebbels. He had known Hitler since 1925 and as German propaganda minister had been responsible for the organisation of the election campaigns of the Nazi Party (*NSDAP* = National Socialist German Workers’ Party) since 1930. In 1933 he was appointed Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) and became responsible for “the control of all aspects of German intellectual life, propaganda for the state, German culture and science, public relations on a national and an international level and administration of all institutions serving these purposes.”

That same year, the Reich Chamber of Culture (*Reichskulturkammer*) was established at his initiative, with Goebbels in charge. This allowed him total control of the entire German cultural life, including film, music, theatre, the press, literature and publishing, the fine arts and the radio with a total of 250,000 members.

Goebbels was a natural rhetorician and skilled strategist. On the one hand, he was a master of polemics who acted on his conviction that “Nowadays, we do not need

politicians, but fanatics and berserks”, a thought he recorded in his diary on 28 May 1925. On the other hand he was also skilled in gentle manipulation when announcing that the press would be so finely and effectively organised that it would become a willing instrument in the hands of the government. The versatility of his methods made it easy for Goebbels to adapt to all political developments and the progression of the war: Showy propaganda and display of power in times of confidence in victory were replaced by sympathy and understanding for the needs of the population when the tide turned. “We have to go easy on people. (...)” he noted in his diary on 28 April 1940: “The German people are entitled to some relaxation and entertainment in these hard times.”

Goebbels himself was a journalist and had founded the successful Nazi tabloid *Der Angriff* (The Attack) in 1927. He was said to be hard-working and meticulous and was constantly getting personally involved in the production and publication of media products. A fervent admirer of Hitler – and his successor for the duration of one day – he had a genius for the propaganda that Hitler had envisioned in *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle): “To understand the emotional imagination of the masses and find the psychologically appropriate way to attract their attention and capture their hearts”.

The structure and organisation of Nazi propaganda did not always run smoothly nor was the *Gleichschaltung* of the press always achieved. The overlapping of responsibilities of party and government staff led to unclear leadership caused by rivalries and conflicts of competence. Goebbels was head of the Nazi Party's central propaganda office (*Reichspropagandaleiter der NSDAP*), a party organisation, Reich Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda (a government agency) and president of the Reich Chamber of Culture (a professional organisation). As such he was Reich Press Officer Otto Dietrich's superior, but his coequal on party level. Max Amman was their coequal in his function as the Nazi Party's Leader for the Press (*Reichsleiter für die Presse der NSDAP*), but at the same time subordinate to Goebbels in his function as President of the Reich Press Office. On the other hand, however, Goebbels was dependent on Amman who owned the Eher Publishing House and as such published his books and paid his royalties. Thus, within the party there were three Reich Leaders (*Reichsleiter*) with overlapping responsibilities in the management of the media. Personal animosities, mutual dependence and struggles for power therefore often resulted in confusing and contradictory instructions (Braun 2007, [www.shoa.de](http://www.shoa.de)). In the end, however, it was Goebbels who prevailed.

### 3. *Gleichschaltung and control of the press*

The Reich Chamber of Culture, which had been established in September 1933, was a professional organisation with compulsory membership that also included the Reich Press Chamber. It can be said that its president, Max Amman, Hitler's fellow soldier in the First World War and early member of the Nazi Party, was a professional in this field: He was head of the National Socialist Party's main publishing house that pub-

lished the party's newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter* (People's Observer). Amman had achieved the *Gleichschaltung* of the Publishers Association as early as 1934 and thus controlled the entire German publishing industry. The Reich Press Chamber played an important role in preliminary censorship and was responsible for keeping journalists under close surveillance.

The most important tool of National Socialist control of the press was the *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editorial Law) that became effective in January 1934 and obligated each *Schriftleiter*, i.e., each journalist or editor, to perform set tasks. Editors' responsibilities were strictly limited to commercial and administrative aspects. Thus, journalists were freed from their dependence on the editor whose place, however, was taken over by the National Socialist state. Journalists were accountable to the National Socialist state and were therefore forced to toe the party line and to submit to the official press policy. To be allowed to work, journalists had to file a personal application and had to officially register as *Schriftleiter*. This guaranteed complete control over all members of the profession. Moreover, membership in the Reich Association of the German Press (*Reichsverband der deutschen Presse*) was compulsory for every journalist (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 70).

The profession of journalism was only open to citizens of the Reich of verifiable Aryan descent who were not married to non-Aryans and who were qualified for "the task of influencing public opinion". The National Socialist *Schriftleiter* was expected to be biased, to be a propagandist and fighter for the Nazi regime and not merely to relate facts professionally. Professionalism was not necessarily required. Consequently, the intellectual elite in journalism dried up, as numerous publishers were of Jewish descent. Following the coming into effect of the law, 1,300 lost their jobs and 2,000 went into exile. Many were arrested or taken to concentration camps (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 70).

Training of journalists comprised a traineeship and requisite additional courses at the Reich Press School in Berlin, established in 1935 (Wilke 2002, 483). The Reich Press School was a boarding school that had a similar teaching system and organisation as the elite schools and other educational establishments of the National Socialists (Napolas). At 6.45 am sharp, students were roused roughly by the janitor. He acted as staff sergeant of the company and exacted punishments from recalcitrant students like sweeping the hall or wiping the blackboard. An endurance run through the Tiergartenpark was followed by morning ablutions and breakfast and the obligatory study of the morning papers. Classes started at 9 o'clock. Good table manners were important. Latecomers had to donate money to the *Winterhilfswerk*, a National Socialist charity (Müsse 1995, 196-197). The schoolday started with the *Tagesschau* news and their journalistic presentation was discussed. Press agency news had to be edited into commentaries, squibs and reports. The trainer took care that students kept politically in line with Nazi doctrine.

In every lesson and in every exercise, students should be ideologically trained to abide by National Socialist principles by showing them what National Socialist newspapers ought to look like (quoted after trainer Fritz Zierke 1937, 225).

Not every student could be sure to survive until the end of the course – even during the courses, students were sifted and sorted out. Those who did not conform were sent away. Trainees that had been sent away prior to finishing their training courses and had not been barred from the profession had to register again after a certain period of time had elapsed (Müsse 1995, 204-205).

#### 4. Daily press conference of the Reich Government with press directives

In order to gain control over press information right at the source, the two large German press agencies – the *Wolffsche Telegraphenbüro* (Wolffs Telegraphic Bureau) and the *Telegraphen Union* (Telegraph Union) – were merged into the *Deutsches Nachrichtenzentrum*, *DNB*, (German News Agency). The state controlled *DNB* was actively involved in the control of the media: It edited news and enforced their publication. Guidelines for news coverage were dictated by the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda's ministerial conference and the news were then publicized as so-called "circulation news" that newspaper were forced to publish. At times, Propaganda Minister Goebbels himself wrote the news for the German News Agency (Wilke 2002, 486).

The Reich Government's daily press conference was the most important instrument of National Socialist control of the press. Only a selected group of journalists and government representatives were allowed to attend. At these press conferences, that were always scheduled for the morning, the press was given detailed directives, sometimes including official versions of news items stipulating bias and comprehensiveness of coverage down to the smallest details like size of headlines and placement of specific features. Directives regarding events that the press was not allowed to research and topics that had to be suppressed were also issued (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 73).

Initially, prohibitions and official versions were not necessarily predominant. It seems that a uniformity of content in the German press was not considered desirable from the first, as this could have damaged credibility. This only changed with the introduction in 1940 of the exactly worded *Tagesparole* (Message of the Day). There was scarcely any part of life that was not covered by the *Tagesparolen*: politics, art, culture, the party, horse racing, pictures of the *Führer*, midwives, physical exercise, the growing of vegetables etc. The provincial newspapers that did not have a correspondent in Berlin were instructed via the regional offices of the Ministry for Propaganda (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 74). Special press conferences were held for magazines and the foreign press. Therefore, the foreign press was often given less strict directives, which helped maintain a positive image abroad. Magazines were moreover controlled by the official *Magazin Information* (Magazine Information) and from 1938 onwards by the *Zeitschriftendienst* (Magazine Service) (Wilke 2002, 488).

Although all participants in the Reich Press Conference were required to destroy the written directives, it was possible to document them after the war. Scholars estimate their number at approximately 100,000 (Wilke 2002, 487) – evidently the Ministry of



Propaganda left nothing to chance. For the years 1935/1936, the case of Walter Schwerdtfeger, financial editor with the financial paper *Börsen-Zeitung* in Berlin, has been documented. Schwerdtfeger had allegedly passed on press directives to foreign correspondents over a period of several months. The *Volksgerichtshof* (People's Court) sentenced him to life imprisonment for treason – a mild sentence, considering that the death penalty had been demanded (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 120).

It can be therefore considered sheer mockery what Goebbels told the press in June of 1937: Freedom of opinion, he “consoled” them, was a luxury that only a people like the British could afford, while in Germany this question would only be open to consideration in a few decades' time. Thus, freedom of the press was made out to be a deficiency that only National Socialism had been able to eradicate (Hagemann 1970, 17-18). Even the expression “freedom of the press” was proscribed:

Fourth *Tagesparole* (Message of the Day) issued at the press conference of 20 June 1941, at noon: There is cause to remind you that in democracies the term freedom of the press is used as a screen and that therefore measures taken to regulate the press must not be understood as curtailing the freedom of the press. The reason for this reminder is the headline “Freedom of the press curtailed in Sweden” published in a Berlin newspaper. In fact, the freedom of the press is not being curtailed, but deficiencies are eliminated and the true freedom of journalism is restored. (Hagemann 1970, 70)

The first general “guidelines for the behaviour of German newspapers in times of war” were first announced by Reich Press Officer Otto Dietrich to reporters on 3 September 1939. The term “war”, for instance, was to be used with great care. Large headlines about military information had to be based on statements by the *OKW* (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*, the Wehrmacht High Command – the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces). Reports issued by the *NS-Gaudiensst* had to be published in their entire length (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 112-113). It can be assumed that this wasn't beneficial to the appeal of the press.

Military news as well as certain terms were not supposed to be quoted to foreign newspapers, unless they had been confirmed and approved by the *OKW*. Certain “embarrassed commentaries by foreign countries” were to be referred to as “commentaries chewed out of a dip pen”. First-hand reports from soldiers were considered as competing with press conference reports. These “reports from the front” had to be authorized by the author's military superior as well as by military censorship (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 114). Therefore, it was impossible to add vividness to newspaper content using these reports.

Moreover, journalists were required to make sure that everything that appeared in print conformed to party doctrine. As the politics section in most newspapers consisted mainly of prescribed material, the culture, entertainment and local sections had to be adapted accordingly. However, newspapers did not wholly comply with these instructions, to give readers some respite from the war (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 114).

Even the publication of jokes or caricatures was governed by strict criteria without suppressing “healthy humour”. Of course there were also rules for the puzzle pages: They had to be in consonance with the rest of the newspaper in order to avoid politically

sensitive issues (“political impossibilities” in NS jargon) in puzzle questions (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 115).

Particularly during the final phase of the war, the *Hauptschriftleiter* (editors-in-chief) were compelled to make certain without any further delay that the culture sections of newspapers took the seriousness of the situation into account and hence only published contributions that focused on the *Volk's* (German people's) willingness to fight and make sacrifices, on their courage, endurance and loyalty, or on those values that “we are called upon to defend in our fight for freedom: our country, our family etc.”. Publication of any other “neutral” matters for the mere entertainment of the readers was barred and editors-in-chief were held personally responsible for any violation of this order (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 115).

While the *Schriftleitergesetz* (Editorial Law) helped “to breed the creatures needed by the Third Reich”, it also presented some insurmountable problems. Day to day, journalism was governed by fear, as journalists were always in danger of risking their lives for one line of print. The risk, moreover, was incalculable. Some journalists resorted to drab “hymns of praise” while others were literally shocked into muteness. Most newspapers printed pages upon pages of uncommented speeches by NS leaders to stay on the safe side. In editorial meetings, the Reich Press Conference's press directives ordained the choice of topics and distribution of pages and the newspapers were assembled accordingly, mostly without much enthusiasm or care (Müsse 1995, 68). As a consequence, NS newspapers lost readers in droves (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 76).

Head of the Reich Press Chamber Max Amman therefore sought to reduce the number of newspapers by means of closedowns and mergers in order to restore the newspaper industry to its “former financial health”. This way, he could also eliminate competition to National Socialist newspapers (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 72).

##### 5. Closedowns of publishing houses and takeovers

The rise to power (*Machtübernahme*) of the National Socialists in Germany had been preceded by a prolonged period of economic depression. The newspapers of the then Weimar Republic had already been struggling with financial difficulties in the 1920s. The depression increased their economic and hence also their political dependence, intensified the concentration of the press and above all weakened the democratic and liberal press. In 1932, there still existed 4,703 daily and weekly newspapers, including supplements and special editions, half of which had political affiliations (Wilke 2002, 481), as, for instance, the *Fränkische Kurier*, the *Schwäbische Merkur* and the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* (Koszyk 1972, 170, 214, 215).

A large number of these newspapers were owned by the nationalist German Hugenberg trust. Hugenberg, an industrialist, had been building his media conglomerate following strict economic criteria since 1914: Based on the August Scherl publishing house that published influential high-circulation Berlin newspapers (*Berliner Lokal-*

*Anzeiger* and *Berliner Nachtausgabe*) and magazines (*Die Woche* and *Allgemeiner Wegweiser*) as well as an associated directory publishing company and 50 provincial newspapers, Hugenberg had succeeded in converting his trust into one of the three big publishing companies in Berlin (the other two were Mosse and Ullstein). What made the Hugenberg trust so menacing was its unscrupulous political instrumentalisation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 54-55).

Following Alfred Hugenberg's strategy, industrial production methods had to be applied to the press. Only trusts that were organised "the American way" with a large number of newspapers and magazines, state-of-the-art printing presses, joint distribution, propaganda and news services would be able to produce on an industrial level and therefore be interesting to investors. The consolidation of this type of corporation presupposed that "the concentration of capital as well as the character of its publications which catered to mainstream taste were maintained". Hugenberg believed that thanks to mass circulation this type of industrially produced and distributed publications would have a stronger political impact than press publications of the traditional type, notwithstanding their seeming superficiality (Müller 1968, 25). As chairman of the *Deutschnationale Volkspartei* (DNVP, German National People's Party), Hugenberg had been using his media resources to support anti-republican propaganda since 1928 and had thus materially contributed to Hitler's rise, even though he never succeeded in getting a foothold in the National Socialist Party (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 54).

One of the most drastic measures adopted by the National Socialist government was the forcible closedown and takeover of publishing houses by the *NSDAP-Zentralverlag*, the main Nazi publishing house. As early as February 1933, a legal ordinance put an end to the freedom of the press "in order to fend off communist and seditious acts of violence". A law about the "confiscation of communist property" that became effective on 26 May 1933 authorized the expropriation of communist publishing companies. In July of 1933, it was complemented by a law about the "confiscation of seditious and 'anti-Volk' property", i.e., the property of those who were seen as enemies of National Socialism. This specifically referred to the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei*) and the press. Property owned by Communists and Social Democrats was confiscated and assigned to the National Socialist publishing houses (Wilke 2002, 482).

This also served the purpose of ensuring the existence of the National Socialist provincial press publishing houses, many of which were facing bankruptcy. Property that had been confiscated by means of forcible closedowns of publishing houses was mostly sold at a give-away price to the *Gau*-press (the regional press in National Socialist Germany). Another option was for the *Gau*-press to simply take over the premises of the closed-down publishing houses, including printing plants and offices. The *NSDAP-Zentralverlag*, headquartered in Munich, also assumed joint ownership of most of the still existing important and well-known newspapers, buying no less than a 51 % share far below market price (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 72-73).

The systematic expropriations came in waves: In December 1933, the foundation of new newspapers was banned. A second expropriation wave followed in 1934, at a

time when the German press was suffering a severe structural crisis due to dwindling readership. The third wave of *Gleichschaltung* and suppression started in 1941 and was justified with war requirements and paper shortage (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 76-77).

Expropriations during the war took place step by step:

1. In May 1941, 550 small and medium-sized newspapers were closed down,
2. a further 950 newspapers were closed down following the capitulation at Stalingrad and until the end of 1943,
3. from late summer 1944 on, following Stauffenberg's attempted assassination of Hitler.

At the end of 1944, there remained only 625 privately-owned newspapers with 4.4 million circulation (= 17.5 %), while 325 daily newspapers with 21 million circulation were controlled by the NSDAP (Wilke 2002, 486).

## 6. National Socialist Party press

Early on, the NSDAP founded newspapers in Germany in order to propagate its ideas and political slogans. Long before the National Socialists disposed of provincial newspapers, they had already been publishing an official party organ. As early as 1920, the NSDAP purchased the *Völkischer Beobachter* (People's Observer) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 99) that not only served as the Nazi Party's official newspaper but became the flagship of the National Socialist press. This newspaper, that was subheaded Fighting Paper of the National Socialist Movement of Greater Germany (*Kampfblatt der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung Großdeutschlands*), was turned by Hitler into a propaganda organ. The texts were characterised by lurid headlines and bold presentation and abounded with slogans and emotional catchphrases; their tone was rude, aggressive and cynical. Heroic and mystical elements were used in an attempt to convey quasi-religious feelings (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 84-85). The journalistic standard was rather low. The paper did not have any correspondents abroad and therefore largely abstained from reporting on foreign affairs and concentrated on enforcing the goals of National Socialism by means of propaganda, focusing on fighting political enemies within Germany. The layout was not modernised. While all other newspapers had already switched to the more easily readable Antiqua type font, the *Völkischer Beobachter* stuck to the old-fashioned German type font until 1941. The title page with its large lurid headlines often resembled a placard (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 100).

By 1939, circulation of the *Völkischer Beobachter* had gone up to 750,000 copies, reaching just under 1.2 million copies in 1941. Party and government officials were forced to subscribe (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 86).

The National Socialist regional and local newspapers are subsumed under the term *Gau*-press. Typically, these papers only disposed of meagre funds because they lacked long-term subscribers and advertising customers. Editorial offices were housed in provisional-looking rooms and headed by unqualified volunteers. This was reflected in

the primitive makeup of their Nazi propaganda newspapers (*Kampf-Zeitungen*) that abounded in defamations while providing little if any factual information. Sometimes the *Gauleiter* (district governors: each *Gau* or administrative region of the NS government was headed by a *Gauleiter*), seeking to maintain prestige and power, acted as editors-in-chief. In 1928, the *Gau*-press already included 37 newspapers, five of which were daily papers, 31 weekly papers and one biweekly. 19 of these publications were official party organs and displayed the *Reichsadler* (the imperial eagle) and the swastika on the front page. In 1932, an official party news agency, the *Nationalsozialistische Korrespondenz*, was established that supplied the party press with National Socialist-oriented news (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 78-80).

During the war, the regional press gained in political importance in its function as so-called “homeland press” (*Heimatpresse*). Its role was to strengthen the morale both at the “home front” **and** at the “war front”. The local news section was deemed especially valuable for soldiers, as it strengthened “the bond with the family and the homeland” (R. Sulzmann, editor with DP, 1940), while the politics section lacked interest as news items were out-dated by the time the newspaper reached the front. For every 100 soldiers there were about 18 small or medium-sized provincial papers and only two big daily newspapers. The newspaper was supposed to influence “not only the reader at home but also the soldier at the front” (quoted after G. Rzehulka, editor with DP, 1941, 91) (Kohlmann-Viand 1991, 127).

Most of the NSDAP party organs had strangely opposing objectives or missions. While on the one hand, they were supposed to appeal to a wide variety of readers, on the other hand, they had – by all means possible – to fulfill their role as propaganda organs for the regime and the party. This, however, did not hold true for the *Stürmer*. *Der Stürmer*, literally “The Stormer”, had only one objective: the fight against the Jews. The Jews were blamed for every single crime or reputed evil. There was scarcely one edition of this Nuremberg weekly that did not “report” extensively and in detail on sexual crimes allegedly committed by Jews. Thanks to this type of topic, *Der Stürmer* managed to increase circulation from 20,000 copies sold in 1933 to approximately 400,000 in just two years. However, *Der Stürmer* was not, strictly speaking, a party organ, but was privately owned by Franconian *Gauleiter* Julius Streicher. It instigated the continued issuing of anti-Jewish ordinances and created a climate of fear and intimidation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 104). *Der Stürmer* was subject to some controversy within the government. The brutal attacks on everything Jewish provoked negative reactions abroad, a situation that at certain times was considered undesirable. Circulation was temporarily suspended during the 1936 Olympic Games (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 104-105).

## 7. *The conservative middle-class press*

At the time of the rise to power of the National Socialists, there existed conservative newspapers like the *Bremer Nachrichten*, the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, the *Han-*

*noverscher Kurier* and the *Kölnische Zeitung* that were able to maintain, albeit under severe restrictions, their different political affiliations after their incorporation into the NSDAP press trust. In many of the larger cities they competed against newspapers of the *Generalanzeiger* (“General Advertiser”) type, i.e., newspapers which catered mainly to the interests of regional business rather than focusing on political coverage. Among the most important newspapers of this type were the *Düsseldorfer Nachrichten*, the *Hamburger Anzeiger*, the *Hannoverscher Anzeiger* and the *Würzburger Generalanzeiger*. Shares in this type of newspaper were typically owned by the Hugenberg media conglomerate (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 58-59).

In the long run, no major newspaper could successfully elude control by the NSDAP. In 1938, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ)*, one of the major and also internationally known Berlin newspapers, was also surrendered to the party-owned *Deutscher Verlag* (German Publishing House, formerly *Ullstein*). Due to its strictly conservative character, the *DAZ* refused to be intimidated by the National Socialists. However, at the end of May 1933, this refusal to budge cost editor-in-chief Fritz Klein his job. Following Klein's daring commentary on the “fraternal strife” between the Chancellor of the Reich and the Austrian Chancellor (Dollfuss), publication of the paper was prohibited for three months at Hitler's personal order. The publishers appointed London correspondent Karl Silex as new editor-in-chief and the *DAZ* was allowed to resume publication on 8 June. This concession was probably due to the significance of the *DAZ* abroad that Goebbels and Hitler were well aware of. Goebbels was very clear about it: He said to Silex that he would use him and Kircher (from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*) “for his own purposes for as long as they saw fit”. Silex answered: “The minute I get the impression that I am being misused, I will stop being a journalist and will become a sailor again”. Goebbels replied: “This is the first answer I have ever gotten from a conservative middle-class journalist that has earned my respect” (quoted after K. Silex 1968, 141) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 59-60).

The illustrated mass press, for instance the mass circulation women's magazines were also “brought into line” (*gleichgeschaltet*). For readers, this was probably hardly noticeable, given the fact that women's magazines as a rule had not been known to address female emancipation within the family or in business, or political topics, even before the *Gleichschaltung*. The leading *Blatt der Hausfrau* (The Housewife's Magazine), that was published by *Ullstein*, consequently had not warned against the National Socialists prior to 1933. On the one hand, the magazine did not want to lose readers, on the other hand, this behaviour was consonant with its traditionally “apolitical” image (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 74-75).

The National Socialists could therefore tie in seamlessly: They, too, were not interested in raising political awareness among women, so that overtly political issues remained largely absent from women's magazines even after 1933. The *Blatt der Hausfrau*, that had a circulation of 575,000, offered the usual reliable mixture of female heart-to-heart talk, household tips and tricks, needlework, fashion, a bit of fiction, a crossword puzzle and illustrated features. Less bombastic than the biggest women's magazine, the *NS-Frauenwarte*, the *Blatt der Hausfrau* still presented a similar type

of woman: the mother and homemaker. The fact that as early as 1933 many women had jobs and that female labour was increasing was almost entirely disregarded (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 74-75).

The National Socialists handled commercially successful enterprises carefully. Changes were introduced gradually and secretly. The *Ullstein Publishing House*, at that time the largest of its kind in Europe, was sold at one tenth of its value to a NS trust corporation in 1934. In 1937, it was renamed *Deutscher Verlag* (German Publishing House). For the readership hardly anything changed. The well-known sewing patterns *Sei Sparsam Brigitte, nimm Ullstein-Schnitte* (Be thrifty, Brigitte, use Ullstein's sewing patterns) became *Ultra-Schnitte* (Ultra patterns) (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 75).

The religious press also had to be brought under Nazi control. As early as 1933, the National Socialists, using inquisitional methods, succeeded in incorporating all chains of religious newspapers into the holding company *Phönix GmbH* that had been established for this purpose. Thus, they managed to take control over the religious press as well – the big Jewish Publishing Corporations were already in their power. At the beginning of 1938 – by then most of the transactions had been completed – the *Gauleiter* were informed in a secret circular memorandum that the *Phönix* newspapers' mission was to spread propaganda among those parts of the population that were not reached by the party press (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 66-67).

While readers remained loyal at the beginning, many of the former religiously-oriented newspapers soon began to lose subscribers due to the continued harassment by prominent local NS leaders and the pressure to conform and adapt contents. There were cases of clergymen who cautioned their community against reading the newspaper they had once supported and recommended that they subscribe to a religious magazine – or resort to the Bible. This magazine press included a few intellectually sophisticated periodicals like *Gral*, *Stimmen der Zeit* and *Hochland*. They were tolerated by the National Socialists as this was the only way to channel and control potential opposition (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 67-68).

#### 8. *Relaxation of restrictions and opposition*

Despite the comprehensive measures taken, the Third Reich did not completely succeed in gaining total control over the whole of the press. This was due to the complexity of the propaganda machine, to conflicts of competence within the system and personal animosities among its leaders. The press directives, which were not always followed, also failed to establish uniformity in newspaper content. Moreover, foreign policy considerations and the desire to maintain some level of credibility abroad led National Socialists to tolerate, albeit only temporarily, a few critical newspapers and journalists that did not conform to the regime (Wilke 2002, 489).

From the outset, Goebbels tried to refrain from a pedantic National Socialist indoctrination in the sphere of the press and of culture. He believed that German middle-

class culture had to be reconciled with the emotional impact of National Socialist doctrine. Besides films, theatre plays and literature for the nationalistic indoctrination of the German people, the regime therefore also promoted cultural events – either high-class cultural events or light entertainment – that were completely apolitical in character (Broszat 2007, 103).

Another exceptional case was the weekly *Das Reich* that was founded as late as 1940 with the express permission of Goebbels. It was a political and cultural weekly, a mixture of daily newspaper and political monthly, and the first of its kind in Germany. Allegedly, the British *Observer* had served as a model. To guarantee the success of this weekly – also as a publication of international prestige – it was to be freed of *Tagesparolen* that were considered to be the main reason for the monotony of the German press. It aimed for an orientation toward the reader and a non-official character. The magazine was also supposed to engage in a philosophical debate with National Socialist ideology and to appeal to the culturally and politically educated classes in Germany and abroad. Special emphasis was put on the arts pages. Editorial staff worked mostly independently, i.e., the section chiefs were responsible for layout and content. However, they were not – as had originally been intended – wholly freed of the Reich press conference's directives, even though they had more possibilities to elude pressure from the state (Impehoven and Plank 2004, 28-35). However, already in 1942, the first *Hauptschriftleiter* (editor-in-chief) resigned from his post (Impehoven and Plank 2004, 40). *Das Reich* was obviously falling in line with National Socialism.

In order to reach the cultured readers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* was also allowed to continue publication until 1943, following the resignation of its Jewish publishers and editors. The same held true for the formerly Jewish *S. Fischer-Verlag* (the *Fischer* Publishing House) and its philosophical and literary *Neue Rundschau* that made few concessions to the regime thanks to its courageous publisher Peter Suhrkamp (Broszat 2007, 104).

The role of journalists in the Third Reich remains a controversial issue. Some claim today to have “written between the lines” in order to defy the press regulations. Some verifiable strategies that journalists used to oppose the regime were, for instance, the early mention of a current topic before instructions had been issued, disguising topics using historical examples, literary “disguises” (for example use of fables), indirect messages, irony, camouflage, stylistic nuances like the use of the subjunctive (Wilke 2002, 490).

Thus, the non-political sections of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* became more and more important. Here, carefully chosen poems could be published which did not join in the chorus of ever-present propaganda (Wilke 2002, 490). Also the Catholic newspaper *Hochland* took a clear stand against National Socialism – discernible only to the initiated – by means of historical analogies, “fitting” quotations, apocalyptic warnings and other forms of insinuation (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 68).

Journalists required a lot of courage even for small acts of opposition. They, too, risked prosecution by the courts, interrogations by the *Gestapo* (the secret state police), passport withdrawals or being taken to concentration camps. But there were journalists



who had the courage to oppose the regime, as for instance Ursula von Kardoff from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*. Her professional career ended with her flight from Germany in February 1945. Her last lines hit the mark: "I hope that I haven't sold myself to the *Promi* (The Ministry of Propaganda) during these years and that I've never written anything that directly contradicted my beliefs. But I was lucky, because I worked for the arts section, so I've been spared a lot of trouble. Our newspaper will soon be closed down." In 1946, Ursula von Kardoff reported on the Nuremberg trials for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and in 1950 became a member of the editorial staff (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 150-154).

### 9. *The way to today's freedom of the press: Allied press laws*

After the war and the collapse of the Third Reich, all newspapers in Germany were forbidden. The role and functions of the press were laid down in the Allied Control Council Laws of 1945. Publication of newspapers and magazines was dependent on licenses. Only those who had proven to be politically untarnished were eligible for these licenses (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 55).

Altogether the structural changes enforced by the Western Allies (and in different ways by the Soviets) were so fundamental that one speaks of the "zero hour of the press" (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 184). The newspapers had to rely on material provided by the news agencies of the occupation forces and were subject to censorship after the fact by the Allied Press Officers. The Allied High Commission did not issue the general license that marked the end of press control until 1949, four years after the end of the war (Pürer and Raabe 1996, 55-56).

The personnel decisions were far less transparent. The attempt to rid the German society of any remnants of the Nazi regime encountered the same difficulties in the sphere of the press as it did in other areas of German society. The careers of the heads of the National Socialist publication industry, the party press and the propaganda machine had definitely ended in 1945. Those, however, who had done a "normal" job as journalist or publisher in the Third Reich were not held accountable in the process of de-Nazification. Apparently, journalistic work was not in itself relevant to the verdicts reached by the civil courts (*Spruchkammern*), whereas membership and rank within the NSDAP and its organisations was considered a decisive factor. Most journalists were able to return to their profession from 1946/47 onwards, following the de-Nazification process. Until then, however, the strict political selection criteria of the Press Departments of the military governments applied (Frei and Schmitz 1989, 185-187).

Apart from the media companies, publishing houses that had conformed to the regime during the Third Reich also attempted a fresh start. During the Third Reich, the *Bertelsmann* publishing company had published editions of German literature for the *Wehrmacht* (the armed forces) but had also distributed nationalistic and anti-Semitic literature. The license for a restart of the publishing house was issued to the son of the Mohn family, who returned from war captivity in 1947 and was considered politically

untarnished. Only very late on did the publishing house commission an investigation into the company's history that was published in 2002 (*Die Bertelsmann-Chronik*).

Our current press system can be more easily understood in the context of the period of National Socialism. A negative heritage has been transformed into positive efforts. The fundamental right to the freedom of the press is guaranteed in article 5 of the German Constitution. For the past decades, the Constitutional Court has time and again defended the freedom of the press against claims from society, from business and industry and especially against political claims.

There are few nationwide newspapers, most of the press is regional. All newspapers are independent privately-owned enterprises and party-owned daily newspapers hardly exist anymore. And the profession of journalism is free – there is no official job title and the profession is open to everybody.

The newspapers were able to regain their image and their importance for the reader. There are also crises in the press market, but Germany ranks close behind Scandinavian countries in newspaper use.

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## Chapter Five: Betrayal, Heroism and Everyday Life in the Norwegian Press during the German Occupation of Norway 1940-1945<sup>1</sup>

Rune Ottosen

### Introduction

The state of Norwegian journalism during World War II is not *one* unified history. There was no press front during the war. The newspapers and the individual colleagues were caught just as unaware by the German invasion as was the rest of the population. The stories and the individual fates that are brought out in this article therefore tell something in their own way about how the Norwegian journalistic world was turned upside down on April 9, 1940. These stories, whether they deal with deeds that are heroic or treasonous, provide a little of the mosaic that constitutes the history of the war. They are at one and the same time typical and atypical of their era. Because there is no “representative” fate to be found, the accounts can do little more than speak for themselves. Yet the choices taken by the individual staff members and newspapers can constitute some of the changes in press history.

Out of the 650 members of the Norwegian Press Association of 1940, only 298 were still working on February 1, 1943. By the end of the war, only 100 were working. Many of them went into exile, mostly in Stockholm, London or New York. According to an overview provided by the Norwegian Press Association there was a total of 133 journalists in exile. After the war the schism between those who returned from exile, and those who had remained in their jobs in Norway would give rise to a certain number of conflicts between former colleagues.

Viewed from hindsight, it would be interesting to have posed the question of what might have happened had the body of Norwegian journalists constituted of a purely journalistic union at the outbreak of the war. Might one consider that such a union could to a stronger degree have established a united line among journalists – indeed, even contributed to a press front? The Norwegian Press Association functioned more as an association of the whole branch, where the interests of the owners were at the forefront. The Journalist Group (*NPJ*) of the Norwegian Press Association, the nearest that one came to a trade union at that time, was a weak organization, where the division between the labor press and the bourgeois journalists was far from yielding a unified line when the war broke out. “After the annual general meeting of *NPJ* in March 1941, the Journalist Group [went] into hiding due to the fear of intervention”, as the journalist Egil Meidell Hopp expressed it in his role as provisional chairman in 1945. The sources

1 This article is based upon a short and updated version of a chapter in the book *Fra fjærpenn til Internet. Journalister i organisasjon og samfunn*, published by the author in 1996. It has been translated from Norwegian to English by Richard Dailey.

say nothing about the circumstances around these events and the background to Meidell Hopp taking over the chairmanship in *NPJ* from Erling Ruud (Ottosen 1996, 179).

The organization Norwegian Press Association (*NP*), which provided organization to editors and journalists and had the authority to issue press cards, continued its activities after the occupation. The need to keep the newspapers in operation and hold on to jobs stood out strongly in the consciousness of both journalists and employers. Therefore *NP*'s line was just as much determined by having to accept the economic interests of the owners as it was by ethical considerations linked to running newspapers under an occupying power. The economic considerations around access to advertising and market share were also of great significance to the debate within the press in the wake of the war. The newspaper economy is also of highest interest to the journalists as well. Yet it might be asked whether journalists in such a tense situation did not have a greater need for an organization that mainly focused on the moral choices and the ethical standpoints that the individual employee was confronted with in the media firms. Such as it was at that time, there was no one to guide the individual journalist about what he or she should stand for at work (Ottosen 1996, 135-136).

### *April Days in 1940*

Most of the morning newspapers had already been printed in the early hours of April 9 when rumors of the sinking of the cruiser "Blücher" reached the capital city. Although parts of the apparatus that was to implement the planned initiative regarding control over the Norwegian press had been lost with the sinking of the "Blücher", an offensive propaganda detachment was appointed and arrived in the capital on April 10<sup>th</sup> under the leadership of Corvette Captain Klaus-Friedrich Hahn (Hjeltne 1990, 42-43). Hahn had himself survived the sinking of the Blücher, and due to the unexpected problems they experienced, the Germans showed a determined attitude that can be characterized as "an iron hand in a silk glove". They wanted to have an understanding with the press, but on German terms.

*Fritt Folk*, the Party paper of the Nasjonal Samling (*NS*, National Unification) went from being a weekly to a daily newspaper only a few days before April 9, and it was wholly financed by the Germans as a direct result of a personal meeting between Hitler and Quisling already in the middle of December 1939. The self-appointed "Quisling Government" right after the invasion was a textbook attempt at a *coup d'état*, once the government had fled to Hamar. The state coup was also under dispute among the Germans. The military leadership of the occupation and the German legation in Oslo would have preferred a "Danish" solution with an occupation administration based on an understanding with the royal family and the sitting government.

Through cunning intrigue in the wake of the chaos that followed the sinking of the Blücher, Quisling's supporter Hans Wilhelm Scheidt at the German legation in Oslo managed to get Hitler's personal support for Quisling's coup. The Quisling Government was to be of short duration, due among other reasons, to the massive opposition among

the population, an opposition that penetrated far into the *NS* Party and included several of so-called cabinet ministers who had been chosen against Quisling's will. For its part, *Fritt Folk* had functioned as an important means of ideological preparation for the state coup and it actively carried out propaganda for Quisling's plan to project himself as the nation's "savior". This was at a point in time when the Norwegian policy of neutrality had been thoroughly shipwrecked. But the basic subscription to *Fritt Folk* did not nearly cover the cost of spreading the *NS* message and marketing the Quisling Government in a satisfactory manner.

Economy chief Thronsen had had the brilliant idea to secure *Fritt Folk's* mass expansion by sending out a free supplement to all the Oslo newspapers. On the morning of April 11<sup>th</sup> he turned up at the office of General Manager Riddervold of *Aftenposten* with three armed Wehrmacht soldiers who had been put at his disposal by the occupying power. In the name of "the occupying power and the new government" he gave the order that *Fritt Folk* from now on would be printed at the *Aftenposten* premises, and that Riddervold, by virtue of his role as Secretary of the Oslo Newspaper Association, would make sure that *Fritt Folk* would be brought out simultaneously with the issues of Oslo's newspapers every morning. This was a gross invasion of the newspaper's operations and in violation of the German government's declared promise in the Morning Memorandum to the Danish and Norwegian authorities on April 9<sup>th</sup>, where it stated that the occupation power wanted media control such that the press did not take an anti-German stance, but otherwise that the newspapers came out as previously. While the media in Denmark quickly adapted to the new situation the picture in Norway was more complex.

After intense consultations the overall picture was that newspapers gave up their independence and adapted to the situation under German control. After the war critics would see this as an example of a lack of willpower in terms of resistance (Kildal 1945). But again this is not *one* story. The Communist paper *Arbeidet* had already been banned by Quisling, and the *Arbeiderbladet*, the party organ of the Labor party, had been temporarily stopped. This meant that subscribers to *Morgenbladet*, *Aftenposten*, *Tidens Tegn*, *Morgenposten* and *Sjørfartstidene* received every day *Fritt Folk* with its biographical articles about Quisling, material on the cabinet ministers of the new "government" and reassuring articles about the *NS* Party and its tasks at this fateful time for the nation. This led to *Fritt Folk* being printed in incredible runs of 200,000 copies per issue in the few days that the Quisling government survived. But on April 16<sup>th</sup> this fairytale adventure came to an end when the Germans decided to drop the Quisling government. In its stead, the occupying power set up the Administration Council, appointed by the Supreme Court under the leadership of Paal Berg. Quisling and his cabinet ministers had to retreat (Dahl 1992, 103-104).

## *Control of the Press by the German Occupying Power*

As early as the afternoon of April 9 the Oslo press was called in to a press conference where Corvette Captain Klaus-Friedrich Hahn issued directives that the newspapers could not write anything that contradicted German military power. The Germans immediately took control of Norsk Rikskringkasting (*NRK*) – the national broadcasting company – and the national news agency, *Norsk Telegrambyrå (NTB)*. Otherwise the German tactic was to come to an understanding with the press that avoided censorship of political material, while the military censor would secure the Germans against leakage that could itself disturb their conduct of the war. This “soft line” that was so successfully adapted in Denmark was launched at a press conference in the newly established press center in Parliament on April 20. Captain Hahn led the press conference and explained that “Our aim is not to take over the affairs of the Norwegian press”. He assured them that the intention was not to introduce a German press here in the country. Military reports and foreign policy news items of military significance should however be submitted to the military censorship organs before they were published. He gave a further account of the special agreement with *NTB* which meant that the newspapers could use all *NTB* material without submitting it to the German authorities (reproduced in facsimile in Foss 1990, 97). Already by this point in time it was clear that the Germans were devoting special attention to the state of affairs at *NTB*. *NTB* thus became the channel for the daily directives to the newspapers through what was called *Tagesanweisung* (Daily Instructions) that constituted detailed instructions explaining what the newspapers should and should not print.

The occupation power rapidly found out that the policy of allowing the press to govern its own house did not adequately secure and safeguard German interests. They had to beef up their control and on April 24 the Germans launched their “Military Principles for the Press”. If one makes an examination of the long-term lines used by the Germans to control the press, the obvious political aim was primarily to supervise and breakup the socialist labor press, while to the greatest possible degree, the large non-socialist newspapers should continue to publish and present the same appearance as previously (Hjeltnes 1986, 198).

The German military censor followed the Wehrmacht’s directives and got rid of anything that might be considered sensitive military information. After this the material was censored by the *Presseabteilung* (press section). The correspondent of *Tidningarans Telegrambyrå (TT)* (Swedish News Agency), who had to put up with this system on a daily basis, constantly experienced that his telegrams were cut by over half their length before he was allowed to send off material via *NTB*. Jerneck writes that Moser and Presseabteilung treated the Norwegian newspaper articles differently from his own telegram material that was to be sent abroad and which therefore could be construed to be security reports disguised as news items. The Germans were themselves known to use journalistic activity as a cover for his agents (Jerneck 1943, 212-214).

The precondition of the control apparatus of the Germans was that the most important executive control should be carried out with the help of Norwegians who were formally organized through the *NS* administration. The *Reichskommissariat für die besetzten norwegischen Gebiete* (Reich Commission for the Captured Norwegian Territory) was the Germans' organ of executive power, under the command of Josef Terboven. Terboven demanded two reports every day from the *Pressabteilung* with summaries of the day's Oslo newspapers drawn up by the Information Department. In addition he received constant reports from *Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei* (Commander of the Security Police) about the local instances of censorship. Based on these reports Terboven personally implemented the passing of sanctions against the "disobedient". They ranged from warnings, prosecutions, fines, deprivation of freedom – to the prohibition of the newspaper from publishing (Foss 1990, 25).

*Presseabteilung*, which was a sub-department of *Abteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Department of Population Enlightenment and Propaganda), was placed under the direction of the *Reichskommissariat* with Hans Moser at the head. With the establishment of the Department of Culture and Popular Information on September 26, 1940, the Press Directorate became organized as a department in its own right with Press Director Anders Beggerud in charge. Thus it was that Norwegian newspapers were forced to operate in relation to two parallel control systems, and both of these systems issued instructions to Norwegian newspapers, the German-led *Presseabteilung* and the Norwegian Press Directorate.

### *The New Scheme*

From September 26, 1940, the Press Directorate took over the implementation of a series of decisions and decrees that affected the Norwegian press (Hjeltnes 1990, 56). The Department of Culture and Popular Information under the leadership of Guldbrand Lunde had both control over the press and responsibility for its own propaganda activity. A younger, highly energetic Party man Willy Klevenberg was hired as leader of the Propaganda Section at the end of September 1940. In addition, the *NS* had its own Department for Press and Broadcasting, which functioned as the Party's press office with its own "Norwegian Article of Service" that distributed to the newspapers of the country free material to be used for articles. With Quisling's law of February 26, 1942, regarding the publication of printed material, the Press Directorate gained the authority to stop the production of newspapers and weeklies. The *NS* was given the right to lay off newspaper personnel and full authority to replace them with *NS* members. As a rule these were people without qualifications for newspaper work.

Press Director Beggerud is described as having been a weak man who knew that the Directorate could or ought not to have ambitions other than to be an appendage of the *Presseabteilung*. According to the journalists who had to deal with him, Beggerud was insecure by nature, and with a handshake that hid his distaste for personally being touched, and who by his taciturnity in meetings and official relations covered a basic



insecurity. Benkt Jerneck, writes of Beggerud: “one would have to look long and hard to find a worse specialist” (Jerneck 1943, 210). Nonetheless he did exhibit a decisive determination in his efforts to gain control over the press.

So-called press leaders for the *NS* were employed in most of the counties around the country. Some press leaders had responsibility for several counties since the *NS* had been unable to find qualified personnel in every county. The press leader was to carry out press censorship of articles and make sure that the line of the newspapers was in accordance with the tasks of “the new era”. They made reports and showed the newspapers with commentaries about what had happened and imposed the acceptance of material from *NS* newspapers. Moreover, they were to conduct statistical investigations about all the publications in their respective counties (Blichfeldt 1992, 45).

Journalists were not distinguished from other vocations in their behavior toward the occupying power. Some actively joined resistance work and became engaged at various levels in illegal clandestine activities; others were passive and tried to get through everyday life to the best of their abilities. Some joined the *NS*, and among these there were several nuances when it came to motives and levels of activity. Some did so because they wanted to keep their jobs, some used it as a cover for illegal work and some did so out of conviction.

### *How Effective Was the Control?*

The occupying power and the *NS* regime tried as hard as they could to lead the press in detail through appointments and the daily directives that were distributed to the editorial boards. How effective was this control? With the assistance of content analysis of a sample of 321 directives from 1942 and 1943, Camilla Wernersen has investigated the degree that the directives were followed up by three newspapers, the two Oslo papers *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenposten* and the local, regional paper *Møre*.

The conclusion drawn by Wernersen is that the control system by and large functioned according to the intentions of the occupying power, although there were variations in the three newspapers. *Aftenposten* lived up to its reputation as a mouthpiece for the occupying power, with a fundamentally pro-German profile. To a greater degree than the other two investigated newspapers, *Aftenposten* accommodated itself to the demands of the occupying power and repeated the headlines and slants of the directives that took a pro-German direction. More frequently *Morgenbladet* had a more perfunctory rendering of the directives, made bland so that one could from time to time read between the lines and glimpse the newspaper’s opposition to the content of these directives.

Wernersen’s statistical analysis shows that in the period that covered the year 1943, *Morgenbladet* deviated from the directives twenty-five percent of the time. Comparable deviations in the same period by *Aftenposten* amounted to nine percent. The local paper *Møre* took advantage of being on the periphery of the control apparatus. The editorship of *Møre* consisted of one person, the editor, who was able to blame his lack

of compliance on the lack of resources and late printing. When the newspaper was forced to reduce publication to twice a week, this circumstance allowed the editor to argue credibly that part of the directives had lost their newsworthiness by the time the next printing of *Møre* rolled around. Wernersen considers that similar grounds could also have been used by other local newspapers which, viewed as a whole, were under less supervision than the capital city papers.

In summary, Wernersen writes that

”*Morgenbladet* showed a *subtle*, but oppositional attitude toward the occupying power. Conversely, *Aftenposten* can justifiably be accused of having shown a *servile* attitude in relation to the censorship authorities during the war. Finally, but of no less significance, the newspaper *Møre* at times showed a *stubborn* resistance under the iron heel” (Wernersen 2007, 107).

### *The Newspaper Economy*

The restriction of press freedom also had economic consequences of great significance for economic life. The restriction of the freedom of the press affected not only political and military conditions. The occupying power also deemed economic conditions to be sensitive. It was forbidden to interview business leaders and even to refer to economic dispositions that might be construed to have military significance. It was illegal to reproduce the contents of annual general reports of stock companies or information on exports or imports (Dahl 2002, 96). When one knows how important business news pages, stock market columns, etc. are to each economic enterprise one sees how these restrictions functioned as a hindrance to business life. The credibility of the press fell dramatically because it operated to such a great extent within the prevailing restrictions (Kildal 1945, 5-20). Paradoxically enough, they were still in great demand. Despite thinner publications and fewer editions than there had been during the 1930s, due to paper rationing among other factors, the newspapers were in great demand. People had to sign on to waiting lists for subscriptions due to low print runs caused in part by paper rationing (Dahl 2002, 97). The investigation of Guri Hjeltnes shows that twenty-five newspapers where it had been possible to assess and document the issues there was a circulation growth of eleven percent in the period between 1940 and 1945. Part of this increase can be explained by the fact that some profited by their competitors giving up or being forced to merge with other papers. This was a subject of heated discussion after the war. The labor press was particularly hard hit and after the war the representatives of these papers demanded compensation from their local bourgeois competitors for their loss of market share, something that they felt had had a lasting effect. Dealing with this in detail lies outside the framework of this article, but the great newspaper settlement ended with a compromise where some of the large newspapers like *Morgenbladet* and *Aftenposten* gave voluntary compensation (Hjeltnes 1990, 145).

## *The Press Organizations*

Since it is not possible to generalize about the role of the journalists during the war, it could be interesting to examine more closely the positions taken by the press organizations. Since the Norwegian Press Association (*NP*) was led by persons who represented the proprietary and editorial stratum of the press, what came to distinguish *NP*'s evaluations were practical questions about securing the future operation of the newspaper, and not ethical questions that had to do with the individual journalist evaluating how far it was *right* to publish a paper under the existing conditions.

The practical problems were lined up and waiting to be dealt with – the lack of paper and the difficulties of obtaining everything from typesetting machines to printing ink made everyday life in the individual newspapers difficult, indeed, often chaotic. In March 1942 the new power brokers carried out a paper rationing that through four stages in the course of one year reduced the supply of paper by sixty percent. One directive in 1944 ordered that advertising could not take up more than one-third of the column space of the individual newspaper. The supply of advertising fell at the same time that the pricing authorities froze the advertising rates (Giverholt 1985, 31).

In other respects the press organizations were equally as unprepared as the press with regard to what would happen, and Torolv Kandahl, Chairman of the Norwegian Press Association, was immediately assigned new and unexpected tasks such as, for example, to get the stopped newspapers into production again and to obtain the releases of arrested press people – a rather hopeless task. The executive held its first meeting after the invasion on June 22, 1940, after several local branches had irresolutely applied themselves “to the opportunities provided by the conditions under which the press is working”. In relation to the State Council negotiations, the leadership of the *NP* made an enquiry to the governing body with a view to gaining clarification as to “what rights the press has or can additionally be obtained at this time”. In a confidential discussion between Torolv Kandahl and Georg-Wilhelm Müller, the leader of the *Hauptabteilung für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, Müller made it clear that all questions associated with the operation of the press were to be handled by the *Presseabteilung* (Erichsen 1960, 29).

When in 1946 Torolv Kandahl resigned as Chairman of the *NP* and took a look back at the war he still maintained that “the Association had managed its estate tolerably well” (Erichsen 1960, 51). The question is whether a more open-minded inquiry would view things differently. During the summer of 1940 the *NP* actually went a long way toward adapting to the Germans' control functions – indeed, even taking on some of the work itself. The *NP*'s working committee had given instructions to Supreme Court lawyer I. B. Hjort to work out a proposal for an agreement between the *NP*'s executive committee and the *Reichskommissariat (Pressabteilung)*. In this proposal a common committee of five members would be launched “with its seat in Oslo as a central Norwegian organization for press control”. In this agreement the *NP* undertook “according to capacity to assist with control of the assembled Norwegian press” (the whole document is reproduced in Ottosen 1996, 152).

The complete text of this draft agreement was unknown until the present writer published it in *From Quill Pen to Internet: Norwegian Journalists in Organization and Society* (1996). During the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Norwegian Press Association Rolf Werner Erichsen published a book, but reproduced only Point Six from the draft which deals with appeal possibilities in the event that a newspaper is to be shut down. According to Rolf Werner Erichsen it was decided at meeting of NPs board on 18 July to postpone the decision on the proposal, but that board was asked to take up negotiation with the Germans for the release of arrested editors, banned newspapers and imprisoned journalists, based on section 6 of Hjort's proposal. The board also wanted to get warnings from the Germans before any action was directed towards the press. According to Rolf Werner Erichsen NP wanted to be represented in meetings together with representatives of the the occupying forces when decisions to take action against the press were taken, in order to minimize the damage. Whatever reason it must have been controversial that the NP considered to take part in a discussion with the occupying power about conditions for intervention against the press (Erichsen 1960, 31). However, in a confidential meeting with the Presseabteilung in the presence of Moser, Minister Müller rejected the idea of joint meeting but, "he had nothing against the NP immediately being notified by Presseabteilung about such matters. But he was not able to recommend any form of procedure" (Erichsen 1960, 31).

There are very few examples where the press organizations put their foot down and declared, "here and not a step further", in contrast to what happened in many other vocational or professional organizations. The leadership of the Oslo Journalists' Club decided, against the opposition of Erling Ruud to allow *Journalisten* to cease production after the November edition in 1940, in order to stop an article that the Culture and People's Enlightenment Department wanted to see in print. The closing down of *Journalisten* was perhaps the most conspicuous of the protest actions by the press organizations during the war. The reasoning behind this action was that if the NS article had been printed "the periodical would no longer have been an apolitical professional organ" (Meeting Book, Oslo Journalists' Association, January 31, 1938 to February 25, 1943).

### *The Norwegian Press Association under Commissariat Leadership*

On Saturday, September 13, 1941, *Fritt Folk's* editor Arnt Rishovd appeared at the premises of the Press Association with a document from the German authorities that he had been appointed Commissariat Leader of the Press Association. This meant that Ludvig Saxe, who had been Press Association Secretary since 1920, would continue under the leadership of the Commissariat. This decision was in keeping with the same balancing act that maintained the line of "keeping on at one's post in order to make the best of it". In Saxe's own account after the war he mentions examples of where he himself set limits on which types of duties he would agree to take on. In 1944, Bureau Chief Holmboe had asked Saxe to come to a conference and urged him to undertake

different types of journalistic work, but this was refused (Ottosen 1996:161-162). But Saxe continued to carry out his bureaucratic deeds and the leadership of the Commissariat, wrote his recommendations, answered correspondence and attended to the files just as he had done before the war, and which he continued to do until December 1946 when *Journalisten* announced that Saxe “after twenty-seven years finds it appropriate to transfer the work to younger forces”, and thereafter requested the acceptance of his resignation during the first quarter of 1947.

On January 30, 1942, the message came from the Wehrmacht that the Press Association’s offices at Storting Street No. 22 had been requisitioned and that Rishovd had moved operations to the Culture Department’s quarters in the Popular Theater Building on Youngstorget. Later in the year the Press Directorate itself needed these quarters and *NP* was sent into a side room.

After having taken control of the Press Association, the next step in the strategy of Quisling’s *NS* regime was to control all press activity through new laws and to set up its own Press Union that would be the only authorized journalist association. There were two paragraphs to the law put forward by Minister-President Quisling on February 26, 1942:

§1. Press work can only be undertaken by members of the Norwegian Press Union.

§2. The head of the Department of Culture and Popular Enlightenment is issuing instructions on the implementation of this law, together with the organization and activity of the Norwegian Press Union and its members’ rights and duties.

This proposed law met with such powerful opposition that the leading *NS* editors went to the Department and warned them against bringing it to life. There was a fear that the best people in the press would disappear from the newspapers and this would have catastrophic consequences for the whole newspaper business. The law was thus never followed up and was dismantled in total silence in April 1945 (Op. Cit).

The *NS* people tried locally to recruit members for their press organization, the Norwegian Press Union, but this association never had any real significance as an organization other than for the purposes of pure propaganda (Omberg 1945, 53). In many places *NS* journalists had to resort to forced recruitment in order to enlist members from outside their own ranks.

### *The 1942 Law Concerning Printed Texts*

On February 26, 1942, a law was enacted that was intended to contribute to increasing control over publication of printed materials and appointments to the newspapers. Without regard to the provisions of the Constitution, the Culture Department now obtained full power to stop the publication of written texts, and the Department could order the owner of the newspaper to terminate the employment of persons in the owner’s company. Subsequent new appointments were to be made in consultation with the Department.

Norway's Cultural Court was also set up as part of the *NS* regime. This was formed in September 1942. Among those appointed permanent representatives were Press Director Beggerud, together with Director Paul de Glasenapp of *NTB* and the editors Johannes Knudsen, Torstein Lange, Dehli-Laurantzon and Arnt Rishovd. Johannes Knudsen had been editor of *Dagsposten* since 1917, Chairman of the Trøndelag Branch of the Norwegian Press Association since 1934, and during the period 1933-1935 he had also been Chairman of the Norwegian Editorial Association, the editorial grouping outside Oslo. Torstein Lange was editor of *Vestoppland*, a paper that will be more closely examined later in the article.

The Norwegian Press Association reached a low ebb during this period. Dues were not demanded and they almost never held meetings. The *NP* continued to administer stipends but it had not undertaken to award the Conrad Mohr Stipend either in 1942 or 1943. The Culture Department announced that applications would be accepted for 1944. There were only nine applicants and according to the recommendations Mandrup Rokne, Ole Schjerven and Einar Baltzersen (all from *Fritt Folk*) and Erling Nordahl from Bergen would get the scholarships. But in September a small notice was given that nevertheless the stipends would not be awarded in 1944. It would be too embarrassing to pretend that everything was normal in the press organizations.

### *"No Norwegian For Sale"*

Only one newspaper closed down as a direct result of the occupation. The paper *Gula Tidende* under the editorship of Agnar Skreidsvoll and editorial secretary Heming R. Skre warned the newspaper leadership about the interventions and demands for control from the occupying power. The editorial board and the newspaper leadership together decided to close down operations. Heming R. Skre was later condemned to death for his resistance work and was executed. Other papers were ordered stopped, as for example, *Arbeiderbladet*. Other papers were ordered to continue to operate because the occupying power needed a channel of information. Editor Trond Hegna published the article "No Norwegian For Sale" in the Stavanger newspaper *May 1* after Terboven made it known in his speech of September 25, 1940, that the Administration Council had been dismissed and replaced by so-called Commissariat cabinet ministers who were either members or sympathizers of the *NS*. At the same time Parliament was replaced and the King and government were relieved of all authority. Later this article came to be considered a symbol of the spirit of resistance of Norwegian journalists (Ottosen 1996, 140). The following day Hegna was called in to the police chief who announced that a certain person had been appointed as "supervisor" of the editorial board. This occurred on a Friday and the supervisor gave the message that he would take up his role on the following Monday. Hegna wrote his famous leader, but despite this he explained the dilemma which was of his own making by virtue of his having decided to continue with newspaper production in order to secure his employees' jobs, the limit had now been reached (Hegna 1983, 257-258). Such moral choices had to be

taken in most editorial rooms, and by individual journalists. Some left the ranks of the press and never returned. Some wanted to quit but were not allowed to do so by the *NS* and the Germans.

When the war was over, many of those who remained in their jobs had to explain their choice to continue as journalists, both to colleagues and to what was known as the court of honor. Some went further than merely continuing operations; they joined the *NS*; among others, this was the case with a number of *NTB* journalists (see Ottosen 1996, 142-150). Both at the time and later there were many who defended this morally, arguing that it was done in defense of jobs, and some felt it was better that some good Norwegians joined the *NS* to hinder editorial control by the “real” Nazis and agents of Hitler’s Germany. Even Trond Hegna himself, who more than any other was put forward as an example of a straight shooter by virtue of the above-mentioned leader he wrote, writes in his memoirs that he could have been stamped a traitor if things had turned out a little differently. To illustrate how different the choices could be, from within the same newspaper, I use as an example two journalists from the same paper who took routes that were completely different from one another. Erling Espeland and J. R. Ødegaard both started their careers at the newspaper *Vestoppland*. Through the whole decade of the 1930s Ødegaard had strong sympathy for German National Socialism, and from 1933 had been a member of the Norwegian National Socialist Labor Party (*NNSAP*), and was the leader of the Party in Gjøvik. By comparison, after the occupation, Espeland joined the resistance movement and became part of the top-secret organization *XU*. In connection to his clandestine work he joined the *NS* and accepted all the liabilities that that entailed. For his part, Ødegaard took a job in the German- and *NS*-controlled *NTB*. He was contacted by German intelligence and sent to Stockholm as a spy under the cover of being *NTB*’s new Stockholm correspondent. Espeland knew where Ødegaard’s sympathies lay and asked *XU*’s legation in Stockholm to keep an eye on him and warn the Swedish security police. A letter dated October 7, 1941, from Schive, at the Norwegian legation’s press office in Stockholm, written to the government’s Information Office in London, warned against Ødegaard who was “a special correspondent in Stockholm”. The Swedish *TT*, having no communication from the Norwegian legation, wanted a reply to the question of whether or not he was to be considered an accredited correspondent, but, as they put it “[they] maintained that he was not such in practice...”.<sup>2</sup> Ødegaard continued his activities until after the assault on Stalingrad. When the fortunes of war turned, Swedish police arrested known spies. Ødegaard was arrested by the Swedish police on March 17, 1944, while he was on his way up the stairs to the German consulate in Birger Jarlsgatan 8. The Swedish press authorities complained to the Justice Ombudsman that the case took place behind closed doors and that Johan Røken Ødegaard’s name had been stricken from the court lists. In its statement, the press authority asked whether “it was consistent with Sweden’s principles of a just society that secret legal procedures took place and where the court even withholds the names of persons who have been judged.” Of course it was

2 Files on Ødegaard’s case in the Swedish State Archives.

not uncommon that those convicted of spying operated under the cover of being journalists. Janne Flyghed, who has gone through all of the spy cases related to World War II in Sweden shows in her findings that press people are over-represented among those indicted for espionage (Flyghed 1992, 166-168).

The judgment in the Ødegaard case came down on March 29, 1944. He was sentenced to five months' hard labor for spying on behalf of Germany, and after the war he was convicted of treason for his activities. Espeland continued in his dual role, formally an *NS* journalist and actually an illegal activist where, among other things, he took part in the distribution of illegal newspapers. The Home Front gave out its own newspaper in Gjøvik in connection to liberating the country, in which there was an article on Espeland with the headline "The only member of *NS* in Gjøvik with a Good Conscience". When after the war the membership list of the *NS* was posted by the local police detachments, his membership number was nineteen and his name was stricken. He received a written clarification from the state attorney that his case had been evaluated and it had been found that there was no basis for prosecution as a member of the *NS*. It later came out that Espeland himself had asked to be investigated due to the rumors about his *NS* membership. It was known at the highest level of state prosecution that Espeland had assumed the great liability of *NS* membership in the course of carrying out his illegal work (Ottosen 1996, 169).

### *Changes on the Newspaper Scene*

In the course of the war 110 newspapers were stopped by order of the German occupying power. In addition, a number of newspapers had to stop production due to events associated with the war. Most of these were put out of action due to bombings and other acts of war in April and May of 1940.

It was difficult to continue to produce issues in many places due to war damage and supply problems. *Nidaros* in Trondheim had to print on ordinary grey packing paper for many days (Ottosen 1996, 171). Many newspapers reduced their number of issues to two or three days a week and some towns began to produce joint papers.

A number of papers were also started during the war. The majority of them were *NS* organs, but there was at least one example of the establishment of a more ordinary one. When the *Telemark Arbeiderbladet* was stopped by the occupying power in 1940, one of the paper's typographers moved to Ulefoss and took a flat press with him on the moving van. In collaboration with Halvor Toreskaas, who became the editor, he published a test issue of the *Ulefoss Avis* at Christmas 1940. This paper had a badly hidden message about maintaining a national profile. In an introductory article it maintains among other things, "To those who nonetheless might have liked the newspaper to have "a color" we can state that we are with the national colors. As long as we are able we will try to nurture everything from the Norwegian world that is real and good among us. Do you not know us now, esteemed readers?" The occupying power and the *NS* kept the new publication under surveillance after seeing such a clear declaration



of intent. When the paper refused to accept *NS*-material from the local *NS* cadres a complaint was made to the *NS* leadership for the press. As punishment the paper was forced to print the *NS* program. The name of the editor was removed at New Years, 1941-1942 and the paper closed down a short time later (Toreskaas 190-194).

In groups and by different means, a number of papers gradually disappeared. In all, forty newspapers disappeared in 1940, among them a large part of the labor press. *Arbeiderbladet* was stopped for an indeterminate period from the end of August 1940 – and this would prove to be permanent. *Fritt Folk*, which was the major organ of the *NS*, moved into the editorial offices in the Popular Theater Building and put all of *Arbeiderbladet*'s belongings to use (Hjeltnes 1986, 200-201). But the really massive demolition of the Norwegian press occurred in 1942 when fifty newspapers were forced to close. Giving the paper rationing as the reason, and the law of February 22, 1943, on common labor efforts, the Germans defined the goal of having only one newspaper in each city or town. It was in connection with this that a proposal was raised to amalgamate *Dagbladet*, *Morgenbladet* and *Norges Handels- og Sjøfartstidende* and that they should be published under the name *Morgenbladet*. The proposal was dropped but it was the forerunner to the fact that *Dagbladet* and *Morgenbladet* decided to stop production in April 1943 – a decision that most members of their editorial staff accepted with relief. *Sjøfarten* continued as a weekly (Hjeltnes 1993, 149).

It was not only such that the Germans had many newspapers closed down; some of them also had to change their names. This was part and parcel of the German aversion to the word *arbeiderblad* (labor or workers' paper). The Germans scornfully referred to the social democratic press as *die marxistische Presse*. They tried to change all newspaper titles that included the word *arbeiderblad*, and thus, for example, the *Halden Arbeiderblad* became the *Fredriksten*, named for the local fortress (Hjeltnes 1986, 204-206).

### *Illegal Newspapers*

Most illegal newspapers obtained news from radio broadcasts of the Information Office of the Norwegian Government-in-Exile, handled by the BBC's overseas broadcasts using known Norwegian radio voices as announcers. *NRK*'s foreign affairs editor Torolv Øksenvad and historian Arne Ording were the most highly profiled "voices from London". The occupying power and the *NS* found it abhorrent that the Norwegian people got to hear news about German losses. The *NS* organ *Fritt Folk* demanded counter-measures and the Germans devoted a lot of effort to smashing this channel of information. Thus precisely the illegal newspapers and radio-listening became highly important to the resistance work in occupied Norway.

Illegal newspapers came to play an invaluable role in the spreading of information and keeping up morale in everyday life under the occupation. A total of three hundred illegal newspapers were published during the war. The breadth of variation was great in terms of equipment, news formulation, editions, political content and readership.

The quality varied from hand-written publications with limited numbers of copies, to more professionally equipped newspapers with thousands of copies each issue and a well-developed apparatus for distribution. These papers were more than a replacement for a free press. The greatest and most significant was the *London-Nytt*, which came out in several regional editions, with a writing staff at all levels. Its total number of copies during the whole war has been estimated at 1.5 million, divided between 540 issues. This gives an average of 3,000 copies per edition (Dahl 2002, 98). Hans Luihn who has documented the illegal newspapers in several publications, has characterized them as having their own sector in the struggle of the resistance movement against the occupying power (Luihn 1981, 3). Most illegal newspapers carried news gathered from other news sources, the most important of which were the radio broadcasts from London. As such, these were not independent journalistic products, although many of them included some of their own journalism. The Swedish *TT* correspondent in Oslo, Benckt Jerneck, felt that for most Norwegians the illegal press, despite its limitations, was “the only acceptable press” because it “above all [was] free and stimulating, at the same time as it strove to be objective and trustworthy” (Jerneck 194, 229).

On the whole, as a channel of information the illegal newspapers fulfilled the function that otherwise would be the mandate of an uncensored press.

About 20,000 people were involved in the activity at different levels, many took great chances and many had to sacrifice their lives. Following a decree by Reich’s Commissar Terboven issued on October 12, 1942, it was made clear that the penalty for conducting illegal newspapers was death. In all, 4,000 people were arrested for shorter or longer periods for their participation in illegal newspaper work. Almost one hundred persons were executed due to illegal newspaper work. As a result of my questionnaire findings it also became evident that many press people had participated in this activity, and many got their first journalistic experience, and later became journalists, *on the basis of* this activity, while most of the thousands of activists who participated in this dangerous work went back to their civil jobs once peace returned (Ottosen 1996, 172-175).

### *Illegal Activity among Press People*

Journalists were represented from the top to the bottom of the resistance movement’s organizations. *Arbeiderbladet* journalist Ola Brandstorp for example was in the leadership of Milorg, a task he acquired more as a result of being a representative of the labor movement than as a member of the press (Kjeldstadli 1959, 232). Brandstorp had to flee to Sweden in 1943.

In the summer of 1944 the Home Front established its own committee to develop a program for founding a political collaboration for the reconstruction period following the war. For this purpose four press people were appointed as representatives of the parties. This reveals something about the position of the press in party politics, even though the parties had been dissolved since September 1941. The four were Gunnar

Ousland for the Labor Party, Hans Holten for the Farmers' Party, Herman Smitt Ingebretsen for the Conservative Party and Christian A. R. Christensen for the Liberal Party (Smitt Ingebretsen 1961, 75).

Arne Skouen was one of those who stretched the limits of what it was legal to write about, as well as taking part in organized illegal work. One day two men from Moser's office came marching into the editorial office and gave Skouen a thorough dressing down with the clear message that he had to quit the editorial board. This was during the winter of 1941, and other journalists too, for similar individual reasons, were removed by the occupying power. Among others, this applied to Hjalmar Johannesen, sports editor at *Morgenposten*, who was also thrown out around the same time.

When Skouen had to leave *Dagbladet*, his publisher Mads Nygaard offered him a job in the publishing house. He was aware that Skouen was involved in illegal work, and in a way the job in publishing was a cover. Skouen took books that were forbidden distribution, and distributed them in a kind of illegal market via the bookshops. Some booksellers, for example book dealer Quist, were willing to have forbidden books under the counter and these were sold in a discreet manner.

### *Journalists in Exile*

There developed important journalistic milieus in Stockholm, as well as in London and New York. The largest was in Stockholm where almost 43,000 Norwegian refugees found temporary asylum. Many press people were in this category and many found work for themselves at the Norwegian legation's press office in Banérgatan 37 under the leadership of Jens Schive, who had come from *NTB* but remained a foreign correspondent after the war. In all, 160 persons for a longer or a shorter period had ties to the Legation's press office. Out of this number, eighty-one were professional press people – journalists, photographers and representatives of the newspapers' technical and financial departments (Aas 1980, 5).

### *The Office of Information*

The journalist milieu in England was spread out, the press corps was large and took care of the many tasks, and in general there was too little to do.<sup>3</sup> Some journalists enrolled in the Armed Forces. Roald Jøraanstad was in the Navy and aboard the *Eiskdale* when it was torpedoed in the English Channel. Asbjørn Barlaup was in the Army and took part in the Måløy raid. Photographers like Bredo Lind, P. G. Johnson and other still- and film photographers took part in struggles as photographers, and according to Anders Buraas, had "the toughest jobs" (Op. Cit.).

3 Information from Anders Buraas in a letter to the author, July 7, 1995.

The majority of journalists were however linked to the Information Office of the Government-in-Exile in London. The English Section was led by Herman Lemkuhl with the English journalist William Warbey as his assistant. Here materials from the Norwegian Section were translated and processed and put at the disposition of the international press. *NTB* had its own little section headed by Birger Knudsen as liaison with Reuters. The Norwegian Section was filled by increasing numbers of new journalists who had gone into exile, and as focal coworkers, right from the beginning they had Carl Huitfeldt and Einar Diesen. Gradually other journalists arrived, like Per Monsen, Karl Slee and Jørgen Juve.

*NTB* Director Birger Knudsen's report to the *NTB* leadership in 1945 – written after he had returned home from London – reveals that a plan had been conceived to integrate the journalists into the intelligence service leading to an eventual invasion to free Norway. The plans were laid out in detail in a secret memo dated October 7<sup>th</sup>, with the title "On the Establishment of a Military Propaganda Corps Linked to Defense's E Office". Here a propaganda corps was proposed that was to be led by the E Office, together with the Government's Information Office and *NRK* representatives. The corps was to share in military exercises and the task was defined as follows:

- A. Information Service directed toward the Norwegian people during the invasion
  - Normal journalistic reports on the invasion
  - The operation of newspapers and radio broadcasts (partly with the help of equipment brought along)
  - The printing and dissemination of propaganda
  - Film and photo service for newspapers
  - The organization of, and participation in, censorship
  - Radio-listening service and other surveillance of the enemy's propaganda
- B. Information service during an invasion of Norwegian territory  
(Here, among other things, were the organization of news services and reporting to an international news central.)
- C. General information service on military issues that were to be taken up quickly.  
(Among other things, this covered recording reports to the press, broadcasting and film and this would later be incorporated into the State Archives. The journalists were also to participate in the military forces in order to report from exercises, report the attitude of personnel and so forth in a common understanding with the E Office.)
- D. The learning of "military journalism" with a view to full knowledge about what could and should, and what could not and should not be written about in terms of military matters.

The propaganda corps was to be composed of thirty men including orderlies and catering personnel.<sup>4</sup> In Sweden too there were preparations being developed with a view

4 Press History Archives, Box 300, Historical Documents, Box 4 NTB 1940-1945; Knudsen's Report on the NTB during the occupation, 72-73.

toward a possible invasion, and information officers at the Norwegian legation received military training in field maneuvers together with troops from the police at Dalarna (Aas 1980, 178).

This was simply a system for integrating the journalist corps into the Armed Forces through a planned invasion. Journalists who had been living in exile for several years and who dreamed of setting foot again on Norwegian soil certainly had no hesitation about taking on such tasks – indeed it would be more exact to say it was viewed as an honor and a national duty.

During the war there developed close ties between leading representatives of the press and the military. One central presence was Tor Gjesdal who, already in 1940 carried out joint service to the press and the Defense High Command, and in the period 1944-1945, he was appointed by the government to the Allied Committee (SHAEP) for “psychological warfare” (Norwegian Press Association 1950).

And after the war as well, part of military preparedness involved establishing a permanent collaboration between the military and the press organizations, organized through “Government’s press service during the war”. There is much to indicate that the roots of this apparatus, which also includes institutions like *NRK* and *Televerket*, were to be found in this milieu in London during the war. On the whole, there is reason to believe that the whole mentality about the journalists naturally putting themselves at the disposition of “the nation” persisted after the war and led to the way journalists positioned themselves during the Cold War. Both the strong memories of the war, the desire to avoid a new war and the belief that a definite direction existed that “defended the interests of the nation” were something inherited from the war (Ottosen 1996).

### *Imprisoned Journalists*

A number of journalists were imprisoned by the Germans. Olaf Gjerløw of *Morgenbladet* was condemned by court martial to fifteen years in jail in 1941 “for having been a good journalist”, as Per Bang put it (Bang 1994, 66). Many press people were imprisoned both in Germany and Norway. Haavard Haavardsholm was only eighteen years of age and worked on the illegal newspaper *Fri Fagbevegelse* when he was sent to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Another co-worker at *Fri Fagbevegelse*, Kaare Haugen, was viciously beaten during interrogation at Møllergata before, after a spell at the Grini Camp for Political Prisoners, he ended up being transported to Germany. In Sachsenhausen he met other labor press journalists like Olav Larssen and Per Lie. They formed a little brotherhood of journalist colleagues who stood together at the assembly ground in the evening and exchanged the latest news (Larssen 1973, 20).

At Grini, on the other hand, the conditions for serving a sentence were such that it was possible to create a sort of press circle inside the camp. Regular meetings were held in the barracks and these had only little surveillance from the Germans.

When the war ended, a new everyday life could begin, and the plans concerning censorship under the direction of the military were implemented. This occurred without the scheme meeting any form of opposition. The censorship was dismantled after a short while. As a transitional arrangement, common newspapers were published in the largest cities. The provisional regime was very short-lived. In 1945 the journalist Per Johansen tried to pull together an overview of what had happened to the 135 Oslo journalists who had been working in 1940. He found that at the end of the war forty-one were still working, and of these he classified ten as “quislings”. Thirty-seven had left newspaper work, thirty-seven were in Sweden, seven or eight were in prison or concentration camps (of whom three were in Germany, six had died of natural causes and three had died in German concentration camps. Seven were linked to the Norwegian Information Service in London, and five were in the corresponding service in the USA). Six had been arrested but were released. By rough calculation only one-third of Oslo’s journalists were in press work at the end of the war, and every third one was living in exile. In the remainder of the country there were only twenty to twenty-five percent who continued in newspaper work. They had practiced “the art of over-wintering”, as Johansen expressed it (Johansen 1945, 298-301). The Norwegian press survived for five years of state of emergency where press freedom was terminated. The choices that were made by the individual journals and journalists created wounds and conflicts that would live on for a long time after the war. A comprehensive set of court settlements led to many press people being convicted of treason. Internal justice through what was called the court of honor in the press organizations left many press personnel out in the cold, and only a very few of those who lost their press cards and were shoved out into the cold made their way back into the ranks of the press. But no independent investigation was carried out with regard to the Norwegian Press Association which both continued its activities under the war, and after the war, managed to elevate itself, and from its lofty heights proceeded to make judgments with great equanimity as to what was right and wrong.

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## **Chapter Six:**

### **The Danish Press during the German Occupation: Between Indirect and Direct Control and from Dominant to Negotiated Reading**

*Palle Roslyng-Jensen*

Compared with all other occupied countries in Europe during the Second World War the conditions for the Danish daily press, including the dissemination of news and the public debate through the press, was in a category of its own. German control of the press and German direction of the press were carried out with “a velvet glove on the iron fist”. That is, seen in a European perspective, with considerable moderation, except for the last period of the occupation, although practically no Dane was in doubt of where ultimate control was vested.

The goal of this chapter is to discuss what the control and censorship system meant for the degree of adaptation of the press to the authorities exercising the control of the press, and what it meant for the reception of newspapers and the interpretation of news and comments in a democratic context. Radio broadcasting and clandestine press will be considered as they are functioning as competitors and alternatives to the daily “legal” press. The term “democratic” means in this respect the existence of a pluralistic newspaper (and other media) system and the possibility for the editors and journalists to use generally accepted media and journalistic standards of the time and for the public a free choice between different media. The empiric foundation of the chapter is to a significant degree dependant on my own research on attitudes and opinions in Denmark during the Occupation based on personal diaries, where opinions are placed in connection with media messages and media habits during the occupation (Roslyng-Jensen 2007).

The questions asked in the chapter are:

- 1) To what degree did Danish newspapers meet the goals and expectations of the occupation authorities to support the established occupation system in Denmark and to participate in establishing a friendly attitude to the Germans and a positive attitude to the German war effort?
- 2) To which degree did the control of Danish authorities, the professional standards and regulations of the press itself function in accordance with democratic ideals, even though, the press system, as such, was under heavy non-democratic influence and control?
- 3) How were the readers of the newspapers influenced by the media messages?

It is the general conclusion of this chapter, that, by controlling the press, the Germans safeguarded some support for the occupation system until August 1943, while their goals of establishing a friendly attitude among the Danish public to the Germans, their



political system and their war effort were never met, not even to the lowest level of German expectations.

The control system of the press was, during most of the occupation period, in some respects a common interest for the German occupation authorities and for the Danish Government and administration. As long as the German authorities worked within this understanding it safeguarded these interests. In the last one and a half years of the occupation the Germans, in some areas, worked against the interests of the Danish administration, and were therefore weakening their original goals in upholding a system of occupation with indirect German rule. In this period the German indirect occupation rule was, to a large degree, continued by the functioning of a Danish administration working with the unofficial authority and support of the leaders of the main political parties.

On the question of creating pro-German Danes the intervention and efforts of the control system to influence the Danes worked counter-productively. The harder the German efforts and the more extensive the German interventions in the press, the more the attitudes of the Danish population developed in opposition to the political and ideological values of the German system. In these areas the German authorities were functioning as the worst enemy of their own goals. This was not due to the Danish authorities or the press itself, but due to the occupation situation as such, the general attitudes of the Danes to the Germans and Nazism, and the existence of alternative media. To some degree the press, despite censorship, compulsory news and comments, succeeded in keeping manifest German or Nazi propaganda at some distance, or making it obvious for the readers, when such articles and news were printed. For creating this general awareness of the readers the alternative media generally had a considerable significance.

From April 9, 1940 to August 29, 1943 the control system of the press was indirect, while a direct German censorship was introduced after August 29, 1943. In several areas the guidance and control of the Danish authorities and the formally self-imposed regulations of the press were harder to ascertain and evaluate for the public than a direct censorship, seen from the standards of an open and pluralistic formation of opinions. Expectations and rumors of censorship and control meant that readers and the audience met the press and especially news and comments on news with scepticism, also in cases where the control was not active, and the existence of alternative media like British and Swedish broadcasting meant a higher consciousness of foreign control and the existence of attempts to influence the individual reader or listener. Expectations of censorship and control often had more effect than control and censorship itself, and as such served as an effective counter control.

On the question of general support or opposition to the cooperative or adaptive policy of the Danish Government and Danish institutions, the press functioned like other main institutions and generally supported the cooperative policy until the summer of 1943, and their messages and opinions were received much like the messages of political parties, Government ministers and other Danish officials.

In Norway and in most other occupied countries in Western Europe the German occupation system was marked by a more direct rule than in Denmark, and in the case of Norway a much more conscious attempt to create support for and suppress criticism of the local Nazi-orientated party, *Nasjonal Samling (NS)*, and the German occupation rule. The result was a more divided journalistic community than in Denmark. For most Danish editors and journalists some amount of adaptation was necessary to keep their jobs and the majority worked in the controlled press from the beginning of occupation till the end, while Norwegian journalists often only had the choice between participating in direct NS-orientated propaganda or to leave their job or even go into exile. The question of working under indirect control and self-censorship was therefore especially pronounced in Denmark.

### *The media system during occupation*

A general description of the Danish media system during the German Occupation is a necessary background for answering the questions asked. For the majority of the population the media system comprised four different media categories:

- 1) Daily printed newspapers: Under some German control and surveillance until August 29, 1943, but mainly through an indirect system organized and directed by the Press Bureau of the Danish Foreign Ministry and with a tribunal judging violations organized and manned by the press itself. After August 29, 1943 direct censorship was introduced.
- 2) Radio news from *Statsradiofonien* (Danish State Broadcasting), called *Pressens Radioavis* (Radio Newspaper of the Press): Directed by representatives of the printed press, politicians and representatives of the State Broadcasting. Danish Broadcasting was from the beginning of the Occupation under more direct German control than the printed press. All sources agree that there was a clear decline in the amount of listeners to radio from Danish State Broadcasting, especially to radio news, and many listened to it together with news from the BBC or Sweden and made comparisons (Boisen 1965, Christiansen et. al. 1950, 163).
- 3) The Counter-media: Radio news from Britain in the Danish language and from Sweden in Swedish had an extensive audience in Denmark right from the beginning of the occupation. The majority of Danes listened regularly to the BBC in Danish, a sizable minority to news from Sweden, and the most addicted news listeners tuned in to both stations. It should be mentioned that the BBC and Swedish Radio were under British and Swedish Government control, and for the first couple of years, their control was in several respects almost as extensive as the German control of the press and radio in occupied Denmark, although with more open standards and with less use of misleading news.

The clandestine press had some coverage from the end of 1942 and the beginning of 1943, and a more extensive circulation after August 1943. Compared with Nor-

way and the Netherlands, where radios were confiscated, the dissemination of news had less importance in Danish clandestine papers. Instead, propaganda against the adaptive policy of the Government was important until August 29, 1943, after that date the ideological and political differences between different papers were clearly expressed in the papers, and even the main political parties were behind some clandestine papers. At this stage a pluralistic public debate was more often found in clandestine papers than in the controlled press, which grew more and more uniform and uninteresting (Bennett 1966, Stenton 2000; Lauridsen 1997, 261-385).

- 4) Direct personal communication in closed and open meetings, rumours and discussions among people: Personal communication had a larger significance than in ordinary times and it influenced the reception of news in the media in several respects.

Each of the media categories must be seen in connection with the other categories, as they were competing for the attention and trust of the Danes. If the direct influence by the occupation power was increased in one category, then the other media categories were influenced and received more readers or listeners.

### *The historiography of the Danish press during the Occupation*

The historiography of the Danish press during the Occupation follows the main lines of the historiography on the official cooperative, adaptive or collaborationist policy.

Historical research on occupied Europe has stressed a tendency to exaggerate the influence and size of resistance movements and support for resistance. In the first years after the war practically everybody had resisted, if not in deeds then in their hearts. Collaboration was consciously or unconsciously forgotten or hidden. This tendency is called *resistencialism* (Rousso 1987, 19).

The earliest writing on the press in occupied Denmark is unquestionably *resistencialist*: Danes were united in their fight against the occupying power, and Danish traitors and collaborators were few and a distinct group. Politicians and the major institutions were also on the side of the resistance, when it was possible, if not actively, then through passive resistance, and the rest of the population gave the Germans and their collaborators “the cold shoulder”. The press was, of course, a significant part of this general policy, and a number of anniversary publications of individual papers and autobiographies of leading editors and journalists advocate this position.

Later and with lesser vehemence the successful survival of institutions and values, that is democratic and national values, were stressed. This included the survival of democratic institutions, of a Danish administration and the non-Nazification of the institutions, the population and, of course, the press. The press may have given in on minor issues, but in general German demands were fought, Nazification avoided and the public informed with rather open standards as far as it was possible. The Press Bureau of the Foreign Ministry clearly supported this policy, and was generally on the side of the press. This is the main conclusions of the principal historical investigation

of the press during occupation by L. Bindsløv Frederiksen, which was published in 1960 and financed by the organizations of the Danish press. The author was trained as a historian, but was working in an influential position in Danish State Broadcasting and therefore part of the media establishment of the time. The same conclusions are clearly visible in an early anniversary publication on Danish State Broadcasting written by influential employees and board members of the State Broadcasting (Christiansen et al. 1950, 163-293).

A later more critical research was stressing adaptation to the point of collaboration. Only one major publication is included in this category: Rasmus Kreth's study of *Berlingske Tidende* 1933-45, published in 1998. It was financed by the Berlingske publishing house marking the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its main paper and published by the paper, a quite extraordinary example of support for critical research in the past of the institution under investigation. The fairly recent general Danish media history has addressed the subject of the press during the Occupation, but is mainly covering development in press structure and how the pressure of control was met (Bruhn Jensen 2001).

### *The national frame and negotiable interpretations*

In media theory it has been suggested, that media news and opinions are seen in interpretative packages within a more or less fixed frame, defined as "a central organizing idea for making sense of events". The two main frames of the occupation period were the national frame and the democratic frame (Liebes and Rieback 1994, 108-124).

The national frame was organized and structured from the fall of 1940 through mass meetings, national events like the King's birthday, communal singing (*alsang* to use a Swedish-inspired term) and a large amount of articles and broadcasts on Danish history, language and traditions, where mostly a national frame was used and to a lesser degree, the democratic frame. The limits of the control system were attacks on the Occupation authorities, on Germany and German policies and general attacks on the existence of a Danish Government and the April 9 agreement. A rather clear line was drawn during the end of 1940 between Danes inside a community of attitudes where, for instance, different conceptions of democracy and different conceptions on the interpretation of government policies was accepted, and Danes placed outside the community, which were Danes seen as working directly for the Germans, the German new order or Nazism. "A good Danish man or woman" was a loose but strongly dividing term, and it meant being against Danish Nazis, keeping the Germans at some distance and expressing and sharing patriotic sentiments, while working in a factory with German war contracts or producing agricultural products which were sold to Germany and support for the Danish Government was clearly acceptable for the majority population and within the lines for being "a good Dane". Reading the daily press reinforced these two frames into a rather fixed structure, which did not change much during the first almost 3 years of occupation.

From media theory is taken the concepts of a dominant, a negotiated and an oppositional reading of news and opinions in the media. In the first case the message is accepted by the reader in accordance with the intent of the sender. In the second case it is consciously or unconsciously compared with other media messages, and the media message is approached with some distrust. The amount of confidence or distrust in the media in general, the writer, the message, the situation and the interpretation of the intent of the writer are all factors in the negotiated interpretation of the receiver. The last case is when the message is interpreted as the opposite of the intent of the sender: for instance if the German news mentions “a heroic German resistance at the Eastern Front” it is interpreted as a turbulent German flight. The occupation system and the control or censorship system meant that dominant reading of the press declined, negotiated reading was extended and in the last period of the war cases of oppositional reading are discernible.

### *The press structure and the control system of the press 1940-45*

The daily newspaper system in Denmark in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is named the “four-paper” system. A large number of provincial towns each had 3 to 4 different daily newspapers, each one of them associated with one of the four main political parties: The Conservatives, the Liberals, the Social Liberals and the Social Democrats. A local paper covered the town and the surrounding area. The papers were small in circulation and in size (that is number of pages), and the content was mainly: Telegrams from Ritzau (the leading Danish Press Agency), comments and articles from the Press Bureau of the party to which it adhered and local news and ads. The editor was a prominent member of the local party organisation, often member of the local community council, while staff consisted of just a couple of journalists or young people in training to become journalist. The paper was mostly owned by a group of notables connected with the party, or was part of a group of papers owned by leading supporters of the party, or in the social democratic case, trade unions. Local or national notables made up the board of the paper. Generally it was extremely difficult for such a paper to transgress the expectations of local readers and party leaders. Board members and readers expected news and comments within the narrow local and political framework, and to a large degree they got it.

A number of newspapers were regional and these had more resources than the majority of papers. Copenhagen newspapers were both regional with local news on Copenhagen, and national papers. Politically, therefore, the Copenhagen newspapers had a more extensive coverage of national politics, more coverage of cultural affairs and international news than the rest, and they often formed a rather closed circuit, discussing or attacking each other, and attracting commentaries, interviews and articles from the leading politicians. As there was no significant Copenhagen paper connected to the liberal party, a number of liberal regional papers were followed more intensely by the political establishment than other regional papers. The regional daily *Jylland-*

*sposten* (independent bourgeois) had a larger circulation, more resources and bigger influence than the other regional papers. The more specialized papers comprised *Kristeligt Dagblad*, *Børsen*, the communist daily *Arbejderbladet* and the Danish Nazi paper *Fædrelandet* (Fatherland). The Danish yellow press comprised mainly of a few papers printed by the largest newspaper conglomerates in Copenhagen. However for nearly all papers regardless of size or political affiliation, party politics on the national level and local politics came first.<sup>1</sup>

A very high percentage of Danish families subscribed to a newspaper. It was the outward sign of being a member of the local and national community, for the man of the house of being the breadwinner of the family and, very often, a member of a party, and for the working class male to be class conscious and politically conscious. Up to 80 % of all families bought at least one paper, and 20-30 % more than one paper, often a local and a regional or a specialized paper. The papers were written for men, and first and foremost read by men. Reading one or two newspapers was not enough for most; in 1940 approximately 80 % of all Danish families had a radio, and a very large percentage of the population listened to it every day, 80-90 % of the radios were tuned in to the radio news at 12 a.m. or 7 p.m. (Christiansen et al. 1950, 131-162).

Seen from the preconditions of the time Danish men were quite well informed on local and national politics, but less so on international news. They felt secure within their own social and political group, and their opinions and attitudes were confirmed by reading a newspaper and listening to the news. Danish women were catching up, but still a significant step behind their men in attention paid to and time spent on news and politics, although the introduction of female suffrage took place 25 years earlier. Generally, there was a high acceptance of one's chosen media and its content, as the paper in its content and opinions was connected to one's own lifestyle and social and political position. These well established media habits and the reception of the media were changed during the occupation.

Immediately after April 9, 1940 a control system of the press was introduced, with the argument that the Allies in their warfare should not be able to benefit from the information they could obtain from news in the Danish media. It had to be based on arguments connected to the German defence of Denmark, as the Germans had promised not to interfere in the internal affairs of Denmark. Radio broadcasting and radio news were placed under direct German control, with controllers placed at the Danish Broadcasting Headquarters. Radio news was placed under direct censorship, while other kinds of radio programs were under more indirect control. The newspapers were only placed under indirect control. The system was arranged between The Danish Foreign Ministry and the press, with the Press Bureau of the Foreign Ministry acting as supervisor and controller. The Press Bureau issued rules for publication, both on the general level, and on a weekly basis, and papers were requested to submit questions on interpretation of the rules to the Press Bureau. A juridical system for judging violations of

1 Danish press structure and development in this period is described in Thomsen 1972; Thomsen and Søllinge 1991.

the rules was established by representatives of the press organized in a tribunal consisting of leading editors from all four main political press groups, who fined violations, and by severe violations could order a stop to the publication of a paper for one or several days.

The whole system could be described as a self-imposed regulation of the press, to ensure that the press acted in accordance with the general policy of Danish institutions and the April 9 agreement. Like most other arrangements during the period of adaptation or collaboration, it was, of course, only accepted by the Germans as long as it served their interests in the long run. A German Press Attaché at the German Legation, that is the office of the German Plenipotary in Denmark, had the ultimate control. It was used with some moderation until August 1943, partly not to create too much political or popular opposition against the April 9 arrangement, which German authorities at this point saw as being advantageous for their rule in Denmark. At a later stage, this policy was maintained so as not to push the Danes towards listening to and trusting alternative media. Quite often the German authorities sought direct influence on the press, participating in meetings with the leading editors and the Press Bureau, and threatening direct censorship unless there was a more positive attitude towards Germany and German policies in the press. A number of journalists and editors were banned from the press, and in a number of cases, a ban on publication of a certain paper for a number of days, decided outside the juridical system of the press by a direct German order, was demanded.

After the resignation of the Danish Government on August 29, 1943 direct German censorship of the press was established. It was in the afternoon of August 29, 1943, that German Plenipotary Werner Best, after the introduction of martial law, at a meeting for the leading newspaper editors expressed: "That in this ridiculously small country the press has instigated the population with the attitude that Germany was weak, and that Germany would accept everything. From now on directions to the press would be orders." (Bindsløv Frederiksen 1960, 381). Newspapers in Copenhagen would require advance approval for articles, headlines etc. by German Authorities. Newspapers outside Copenhagen received extensive instructions on a daily basis. Gradually the Foreign Ministry Press Bureau succeeded in getting some modifications of the advance censorship, but was also met with German demands for more telegrams and articles written by German propagandists, in some cases without mention of the author or the source. Again here the Press Bureau achieved some concessions, which lead to some identification of source becoming accepted, for instance, when the source was declared as: "We have received from Ritzau's Bureau" or just "We have received". Practically every newspaper reader knew that it was an article emanating from the Germans. Generally Danes became very apt in reading between the lines or discerning half-hidden specifications of source. During the final 20 months of the occupation most newspapers were deeply influenced by censorship and other regulations. Newspapers had fewer pages because of paper rationing. Yet more types of articles and information were banned, and it was demanded that directly misleading telegrams be enclosed in the paper.

Even so, compared with the rest of occupied Europe and with Germany, the Danish press also at this stage had a comparatively lenient censorship. It was possible for the readers to follow the main lines in the development of the war, if they knew that certain kinds of information were not included, and that words like withdrawal or defeat were only used in connection with the adversary. Often war news came from Danish newspaper correspondents in Berlin, where news was passed from the Press Bureau of the German Foreign Ministry. Although all news telegrams from the correspondents had to be approved by the Press Bureau in Berlin and by the German censorship authority in Copenhagen, the accuracy of war news from the Danish correspondents in Berlin was generally higher than readers could receive in most other occupied countries.<sup>2</sup>

The occupation and the cooperation among the main political parties and the national frame of the papers meant that nearly all newspapers were depoliticized compared with the situation before the occupation. There was some political debate on traditional political issues, but the question with highest priority: Responsibility for the occupation and surrender on April 9 and defense policy in the 1930s were only discussed with moderation and with the general understanding that a more thorough political reckoning would follow after the war.

### *German goals and adaptation of the press*

In many respects the daily press was in the same position as many other Danish institutions, which the Occupation authorities were following closely. This meant a general pressure and admonishments from the Government to control the institutions and its employees in order to avoid direct German intervention. The German Plenipotary needed to be able to report to Berlin that he was in complete control and that German interests were fulfilled. In March 1941 during a very calm period in Danish-German relations, before sabotage had begun and with no clandestine papers published, Plenipotary Cecil von Renthe-Fink reported to Berlin on the control of Danish Press (*Beretning til Folketinget ... XIII, bd.4, 248*):

The Danish Press, which before April 9 strongly mirrored the Danish People's prevailing pro-Englishness, has since the Occupation received a completely new face. It was obvious that, with regard to the German troops' presence we neither could allow an anti-German line in the Danish press nor that an atmosphere was created, directly or indirectly, that served our war enemies. Within these limits, the newspapers have consciously been given latitude, although kept under constant observation and influence. In this connection, we do not exercise censorship directly, but turn responsibility over to the competent Danish Government bureau, admittedly scrupulously supervised by us. In this way we have cut off our enemies' propaganda material and in addition avoided the public sabotaging of the press as "German propaganda". A positive achievement is that to an increasing degree, the newspapers on their own initiative and responsibility are begin-

2 Longerich 1987, 281-283; Hvidtfeldt (who served as correspondent in Berlin for *Socialdemokraten*) 1996, 106-108.



ning to take a position to the German-Danish and European problems in accordance with our viewpoint.

The structure of the indirect control of the German supervision of the Press is accurately described in Renthe-Finks report. What is not mentioned, is that calm and order and acceptance of the occupation was the first goal of the German control of the press, a so-called positive achievement of the Danish press. That is to say, a positive attitude to Nazism and the German new order, came only second in priorities for the German press policy. On the question of support for the occupation arrangement the Danish press followed the directions of the Press Bureau rather accurately and willingly, although they sometimes found the directions too meticulous, but generally they did not go further than demanded, except in few and often well-known cases. Renthe-Finks report exaggerates the amount of direct ideological and political collaboration of the press. Generally the press did not participate in direct or indirect Nazification of the population, except of course papers from the Danish Nazi Party, quite the contrary to for instance Norwegian papers, where it was extremely difficult for journalists to avoid participating in pro-German or NS-ordered campaigns to influence the population.

Support for resistance, open anti-government policy and even clear support for the Allies was quite another matter, which was never instigated in the press. The expectations and values of the readers, fear of losing readers and survival of the paper were the ultimate considerations for most editors. In a personal and unpublished diary the chief editor of *Ekstrabladet* summed up his experience November 27, 1941: "In the last couple of days I have once again saved the paper from the intervention of the Press Bureau regarding a couple of telegrams, which the editorial secretariat did not stop ... How many times do the staff not reproach me for my care and caution, but God knows in the end whether or not they will give me full recognition, when the war is over? I expect it and hope it."<sup>3</sup> Actually, they did not give him recognition when the war was over. Then, courage was recognized, not caution. On the other hand he did not get in trouble either, and he shared the cautious editing of the paper not to have trouble with the Press Bureau or the Press Tribunal with the vast majority of editors.

The general policy of all Danish newspapers seen over the whole period was therefore one of adaptation. Historian Rasmus Kreth has concluded: "In general the press adapted to the circumstances ... and no paper or publication company placed itself in a position with absolute standards of freedom." (Kreth 1998, 9). If they had done so, it would of course have meant a stop to publication sooner or later. For the press, like all other institutions during the occupation, the golden rule of the cooperative policy was followed: To avoid what was considered the greater evil by giving in to what was considered the lesser evil. In this case the greater evil would have been a cessation of circulation, or on the political level, to let the Germans or the Danish Nazis have control of newspapers. The problem for the cooperative policy in general and for the press, was that the borderline between what was greater and lesser evils was pushed slightly

3 Ole Cavling, personal diary, 27.11.1941.

all the time, although never into direct and consciously false or misleading news or comments written by the journalists or editors of the papers themselves.

It is not surprising therefore that the press in general accepted and defended the adaptive policy of the Danish Government and Danish authorities, not because they were obliged to do so, but out of consideration for continued circulation of their paper and because of shared beliefs. Fundamentally, the leading politicians, editors and the majority of journalists and the vast majority of the population, until the summer of 1943, shared these values to a high degree, and saw a Danish Nazi Government as the alternative to a Government headed by the main political parties, and therefore accepted adaptation to German demands. The newspapers and the editors, who were closely connected to the main political parties, generally defended Government policy to the last and warned against so-called private foreign policy.

This did not mean that all papers reacted uniformly towards the adaptive policy. There are examples from the first couple of months of the occupation, where articles were out of touch with the expectation and attitudes of their readers, such as *Aalborg Stiftstidende* in the afternoon edition on April 9, 1940 with a report on the occupation of Aalborg Airport almost expressing admiration for the German airmen, who took control of the airport the same morning, and a Viborg paper with a propagandistic picture of Hitler and a presentation of Hitler's birthday parade April 20, 1940 on the front page. Both gave rise to local criticism. Another example is the well known *Politiken* editorial April 28, 1940 on the publication of the official German explanation of the occupation of Denmark and Norway published April 27.<sup>4</sup> The editorial expressed some agreement with the German explanation that the British had instigated the German occupation by violating the neutrality of the Scandinavian countries (which they actually did), with the wording, that under certain circumstances Churchill could be seen as a dangerous man.<sup>5</sup> The reaction was a boycott campaign against the paper, and newspapers in Germany eagerly citing the editorial. The editorial was in fact inspired by Scavenius as chairman of the board for *Politiken* before he became Foreign Minister in July 1940. After the summer of 1940 and the so called "national revival" it is difficult to find such examples. All papers were now framed nationally on a general level, including Social Democratic and Social Liberal papers, and all papers agreed on attacking the Danish Nazi Party as far as it could be accepted by the Press Bureau and by the Press Tribunal. Open attacks on the Danish Nazi Party were later restricted after German demands, but the difference to conditions in Norway is obvious, where in Norway any kind of open attack on *Nasjonal Samling* in the controlled press was impossible.

While open criticism of German policy was rare in the Danish press, and would have been met with heavy sanctions, more or less hidden ridicule did occur. An indirect criticism of the occupation regime could, in some cases, be voiced by cautious attacks on individual politicians or separate government decisions, but only very cautiously

4 Beretning til Folketinget ... IV B, 14-18.

5 Examples from: Palle Roslyng-Jensen 2007; Bindsløv Frederiksen 1960, 44.

in the editorials. More often a limited dissociation from the occupation power was voiced by stressing that Danes, the Danish social and political system and Danish traditions included national and democratic values and respect for individual liberties and everybody knew, without it being said, that this was contrary to German values. But supporting patriotic and democratic values also meant support for the King's and the Government's request for calm and order and support for authorities, and therefore some support for the April 9 agreement. This consequence was in accordance with German goals, and therefore support for national and democratic values was generally not met with opposition by the occupation authorities, if written within an accepted standard. This implied understanding of common interests between German authorities and the Danish Government was never voiced publicly except in the clandestine press, but it was accepted by both parties. The press was an important participant in this implicit and very general support for the occupation system lasting until August 29, 1943.

Some papers were known to enclose more hidden criticism of the occupation authorities than others: *Kristeligt Dagblad* and *Nationaltidende* were the most outspoken, and editors Gunnar Helweg-Larsen and Aage Schoch were forced out of their positions. A German demand for the dismissal of H.P. Sørensen, chief editor of the leading Social Democratic newspaper, *Socialdemokraten*, had as background his refusal to print a laudatory report from a German-arranged tour in Germany written by Harald Bergstedt, well-known author and social democratic journalist, who was in the process of turning closer to National Socialism. In spite of such examples the papers were generally all quite adaptive, even though nearly all major newspapers had examples of journalists who were dismissed after German demands, often after criticism of a single article or after personal attacks in the Danish Nazi newspapers. Fines by the Press Tribunal or a short temporary halt of publication could sometimes function as a national insurance in relationship to the subscribers of the paper. This was the case for *Politiken* some time after the critical editorial on Churchill, where correspondent Andreas Vinding in Paris wrote that Parisians were depressed at the sight of the large numbers of Germans in Paris. The reaction from the editors was that the money paying the fine was well spent.

In some cases in the first year of occupation the same paper had journalists, who were critical voices against German policy and Nazism and at the same journalists, who expressed admiration for the German war and was clearly collaborative. *Berlingske Tidende* employed the well-known journalist and writer Nicolai Blædel, who was forced out of the job after German demands; and at the same time the Berlin correspondent of the paper, whom the Chief Editor eventually transferred to a less prominent position because of his rather open support for the German side. Several papers employed journalists, who had expressed fundamental support for a German new order in Europe in the summer and fall of 1940, but if the journalists did not adapt to the general national and democratic "revival" in 1940/41, they were fired or they themselves changed employment to, for instance, the Danish Nazi newspapers. The more general debate and criticism on the parliamentary system and the call for non-

political experts in Government, which especially *Børsen*, *Jyllandsposten* and *Nationaltidende* supported in the fall of 1940, was stopped in the beginning of 1941. From 1941 the majority of Danish papers had quite uniform positions on national and democratic issues, and traditional political divisions of the Danish press were to a large degree obliterated.

Generally, the constant repetition of the King's and the Government's call for calm and order was halted after August 29, 1943. Seen from the German side, that was the cost of a direct censorship. When there was no Danish Government in office, although still a Danish administration, gradually a more draconian German regime was introduced, with stricter rules for publications, but the Germans did not get the voluntary support for acceptance of the occupation order and their authority. The counter-media, foreign radio and clandestine papers were therefore placed in a position of greater esteem and gained more readers and listeners.

### *Journalists and the clandestine press*

There are autobiographies or written reminiscences from a fairly large number of journalists active during the occupation. The majority of these publications are resistentalist, but a significant number of the journalists were actually active in the clandestine press as well as continuing in their jobs in the traditional controlled papers. News and studies were received at editors' desk, which was impossible to print without sanction from the Press Tribunal or without the refusal of the censorship authority. It was an obvious reaction according to professional standards and impulses to send news, that could not be printed legally, to people they knew could use the stories, and the journalists often had a large local network, and knew which people were engaged in publication of clandestine papers. Journalists were typically recruited in this way into writing for and editing clandestine papers. Therefore the stricter the rules for publication in the official press, the more news and stories were given to the clandestine press, the more professional journalists wrote in the papers and the larger was the attention, which the clandestine press received. Compared with Norway, where the majority of journalists went into exile or left the profession, this double employment of journalists at a controlled paper during the day and at a clandestine paper during evenings, was a typical reaction against open German censorship in the more lenient occupation regime in Denmark.

A number of Copenhagen journalists professionalized the distribution of news, which could not be openly printed, and created a clandestine news agency, called *Information*, which after liberation, was transformed into a daily newspaper. Another group of journalists formed a news agency in Sweden for the dissemination of news on occupied Denmark to the allied and neutral press, *Dansk Pressetjeneste (DPT)*. The result was, that the comparatively modest resistance activities in Denmark compared with other European countries, received substantial attention in Allied newspapers. In most other occupied European countries such work was carried out in press offices

connected to their Governments-in-exile in London. In the Danish case there was no such Government-in-exile, therefore the dissemination of news on Danish resistance to Allied newspapers was significant for Denmark's reputation with the Allies. The conclusion is that the vast majority of Danish journalists stayed in their jobs in the official press, and were following rules and verdicts from Danish and German authorities, but the most radical element of the journalistic community engaged in clandestine activity at the same time, and a few of them went to Sweden or England and engaged in work directly for resistance interests or Allied propaganda.

The illegal press was very diverse, and reflected in the first couple of years the values and the composition of the resistance movement. The largest and earliest paper was the communist clandestine paper *Land og folk* (Country and People). Second in circulation was the left wing *Frit Danmark* and following this a number of conservative or right wing papers, including papers connected to the Danish Unity Party, which was significant in the early non-communist resistance. Social democrats, Liberals and Social Liberals, and papers and editors connected to these parties engaged at this stage, and to a large degree also later; not in the clandestine press or in resistance as such. The main goal of the early clandestine papers was to put pressure on the official adaptation policy and turn public opinion against the occupation regime and collaborators. After August 1943 the democratic and national frames were more uniform and the debates within the clandestine press broader and with more stress on future political development at both national and international level. Discussion for and against the Soviet Union and Communism was significant, although somewhat suppressed in order not to be connected with the heavily anti-Soviet German propaganda. In Denmark radio receivers were never confiscated by the occupation authorities but listening to the BBC was to some degree suppressed through German jamming. Listening to the BBC was not illegal in Denmark, which was the case in nearly all other occupied countries, therefore the need for news in the Danish illegal press was limited compared with for instance Norway, where favourable Allied war news in illegal papers kept up a spirit of endurance and opposition to the occupation authorities.

### *Readers' reactions*

During the first months after April 9, 1940 nearly all papers lost readers, generally 10 – 15 %. Of the papers connected to the government parties in the 1930s, Social Democrats and Social Liberals lost most, probably as a hidden protest against policies of the parties behind the Government seen as responsible for April 9. Economic insecurity was clearly responsible for a general fall in circulation. Prices soared, unemployment rose and fear of economic problems ahead was predominant. Discontinuation of subscribing to a paper was one of the obvious means of reducing expenses. A general lack of trust in news and opinions was another reason.

In the first couple of months after the April 9 war news from Norway and France had a high priority for the readers and listeners, and as news on the war mostly came

from The German Press Agency and the daily bulletin from the German Military Command (*Wehrmachtsberichte*) the war news was met with considerable distrust. Already on April 13, 1940 a diarist wrote: "A really bad thing is that the press and the radio now are regimented. We only hear and read about German victories and statements from other countries which are in favour of the Germans. When I turned off the radio yesterday I said to Ida: "Were I not already in favor of the English, I would have been after such statements, but I cannot help listening to it".<sup>6</sup> The majority of Danes suspected that controlled news was biased and especially German war news, even though the Germans at this early stage of the war did not have any unfavourable war news to hide. The German war news was initially not more inaccurate than the English news, although the German news was cloaked in an ideological language to which many Danes reacted with contempt.

Radio news in Danish from the BBC began on the evening of April 9 and very quickly received a very high audience. At this stage the news from England was not trusted completely, but it was trusted more than news from German sources. An obvious sign of distrust in all kind of media and news was the amount of rumors, personal communication and closed meetings with exchange of news and opinions. The personal diaries have scores of examples that a personal observation, even though it was only on second or third hand, always was seen as superior to and more trustworthy than any media report and news, including the BBC and clandestine papers. This was partly due to existence of control systems and partly due to the war and occupation experience as such.

Therefore the majority of Danes during the Occupation used a negotiated reading of war news from the beginning of the Occupation, and especially if they saw that news or articles came from German sources, but also war news from the counter-media was met with a negotiated reading. The attitude of the readers of the press to articles, editorials and comments in the press until August 29, 1943 depended on the theme or subject, and for the elite opinion also the specification of source, which at least the best educated part of the public noticed. Anything not connected with the Occupation, the war or the Germans was generally met with the same reactions as before the Occupation, and in most cases did not experience control or sanctions.

The issues, which could not be covered or discussed in the press, were taken up especially by BBC broadcasts in Danish and later, by the clandestine press, also a much more critical attitude to the Danish Government was predominant in the counter-media, although both the BBC and the clandestine press was until the summer of 1943 very cautious not to advocate a retreat or dismissal of the Government, because they did not reckon that the majority of Danes would agree in this. Instead they constantly attacked the Government for being too soft on the German demands, and from a very early date a number of political scapegoats were introduced to draw a line between an acceptable Danish policy and outright collaboration, seen as a patriotic policy or an unpatriotic policy. Foreign Minister (and later Prime Minister) Scavenius and Minister of Trans-

6 Edle Beyer, personal diary, April 13, 1940.

port Gunnar Helweg-Larsen were placed beyond this line and suffered heavy and frequent attacks, although they were not put in the same category as Danish Nazis, or Danish volunteers for the Eastern Front etc. Generally these denouncements were accepted by the majority of the population.

The reading of articles and editorials connected with support for Government policy towards the Germans slowly changed into a more negotiated reading, and these articles were seen by readers as something the papers were supposed or even forced to write. The majority of readers who still bought the paper did not turn against it in non-occupied related subject-matters and most of the readers also, in general, supported their usual political party, and voted for it in the March 1943 general election. Introduction of so called "Norwegian conditions" in Denmark was a concept which many Danes could follow with a sense of admiration seen in the Norwegian context, but until the summer of 1943, it was frightening for the vast majority, if the prospect was introduction of such conditions in Denmark, and to a sizable part of the population this was also the case considerably later.

At the same time, a number of readers of the press also eagerly read a clandestine paper and its attacks on Scavenius, the Germans and Danish Nazis, although not everything in it was accepted or believed. In several respects clandestine papers were also met with a negotiated reading. A part of the population from early 1943 turned against Government policies and adaptation in general, despite what they read in their daily paper. This did not lead to an outright rejection of the wish for the continuation of a Danish government. Many wanted the comfort of the April 9 agreement and a Danish government, but at the same time admired anti-German acts.

The influence of the BBC and the clandestine press clearly had its limits. When in the fall of 1942 John Christmas Moeller, the leading Danish spokesman in London from the spring of 1942 and former leader of the Conservative Party, in a BBC broadcast, spoke out in favor of industrial and railway sabotage, contemporary sources are in agreement that the message was met with rejection by the majority of the population. Commentaries and attacks on him in the Danish press were not German-inspired, but written with a personal conviction that weakening the position of the Danish Government in its relationship with the Germans was a harmful, although not an unpatriotic, policy.

Gradually during 1944 with more open German terror, with general protest strikes and with restrictions on the daily life of ordinary Danes the vast majority of the population supported the messages in the clandestine papers and the BBC, and the governing body of resistance movements, the Resistance council (Frihedsrådet), was seen not as a political council, but as a national council. German propaganda in the press or in Danish broadcasts was considered irrelevant or was interpreted oppositional. A German message would under all circumstances be seen as wrong, misleading and unpatriotic. The newspapers survived on the non-occupation related topics and were getting ready for a new start after the anticipated liberation of the country. Surprisingly the circulation of the papers did not fall significantly during this period.

## *Conclusions*

Institutions and large companies often have a capacity for self-preservation and adaptation much like Governments and political parties. The press seen as individual institutions share this tendency. Survival of the paper, protection of the achieved circulation and local standing are first priorities, more general political and national values only second. The press experienced during the occupation the same changes in values and attitudes as the population and other institutions, so the vast majority of papers developed a stronger national and democratic frame than before the occupation. They readily adapted to the indirect control systems as long as it was seen as a part of the general adaptation policy of the Government, and were not ahead of the population in the development of stronger reactions against the cooperative policy. Arguments that adaptation and collaboration were in the interests of the German occupation authorities were generally not clarified or accepted. On the other hand the press clearly resisted attempts from the Germans through the control system or censorship to create understanding for their war, for Nazism or for the German new order.

The existence of a control system and censorship had a significant early impact on the readers creating distrust in news and articles, especially if they were seen as German-inspired or from a German source. From 1943 or 1944 a more critical attitude to adaptation and collaboration developed, but generally the public were ahead of the press, although the newspapers never were able to take positions or voice opinions directly on German occupation rule. The existence of counter media, especially BBC broadcasting, played a significant role in this development, although BBC broadcasting and clandestine papers were also met with negotiated reading and listening, but at the same time with an emotional engagement, which the daily paper could not produce.

The conclusion is that democratic values were fairly well-established in the Danish population during the war, and public opinion developed to a significant degree during the occupation according to democratic standards. It was influenced by war, by the political development and by direct public communication. The control systems of the press or the German occupation authorities were generally not able to influence the public on broader democratic or national questions.

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## **Chapter Seven: The Press in Eastern Europe during the Cold War**

*Peter Schiwy*

### *I. Not only the press – all media*

Even though the title of this chapter expressly mentions the word ‘press’, it would be inappropriate to focus exclusively on the print media in seeking to identify the clear differences between the ways in which East and West handled the dissemination of information. Anyone who studies the East-West conflict between 1945 and 1989 will quickly come to recognise that it was the cross-border exchange of information that had a decisive influence on the eventual outcome.

It would perhaps be going too far to link the technical advances made in radio and TV broadcasting during these decades with developments in media politics within the communist-ruled states of Eastern Europe, but it is worth mentioning the following factors: firstly, the introduction of VHF radio – less susceptible to interference and, though limited in geographical range, very influential within the German border areas; secondly, the improvements made in short wave reporting; thirdly, the increasingly effective use of jamming transmitters; fourthly and most importantly, the growth and increased sophistication of programming. Even now, the impact made by the transistor radio on political developments at the time has not yet been fully appreciated by students of the era. The Internet is also a ‘child’ of the Cold War, or rather a product of the American Defense Department, and we can take heart from the fact that this is now creating problems for party-controlled governments who merely try to pose as being democratic. You could describe the Internet as a pacesetter – if not for democracy itself, then certainly for freedom of the media.

### *II. The media theory of the socialistic regime*

“A newspaper is not just a collective propagandist and agitator but also a collective organiser.” This maxim was first put forward almost 105 years ago to the day. It was uttered by a certain Mr Ulyanov who later changed his name to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. He is the true father of the communist theory of the media, even though he deferred to Marx who, because he never held the reins of power, seemingly formulated his own ideas in a more democratic and libertarian fashion.

Nowadays, we all know full well what Marx and Lenin meant: we have seen at first hand a system which interpreted information as synonymous with agitation and propaganda. And yet, these concepts, which have such negative associations for us, were ideologically prescribed under socialism as defined by Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev and

their criminal ilk and were regarded as evidence of party loyalty. Consequently, the media were subject to rigid state control in all Eastern Block countries. This meant that the instrument of censorship was actually superfluous under most of these regimes. However, wherever loopholes were left by communist centralism, censorship was elevated to an important state institution. According to Paul Roth, Soviet policy on the dissemination of information set the standards for the other Eastern Block countries and was characterised by the following criteria:

1. The basic human right to freedom of opinion and information was rejected as the right of the individual.
2. The Communist Party's monopoly of power was taken to include the monopolisation of the press and all other instruments of opinion and information.
3. The dissemination of the state doctrine of Marxism-Leninism and of foreign policy objectives was exclusively under the competence of the political elite.
4. All resources for the dissemination of information – be they of personnel, economic, or technical nature – including those that could be used for its suppression were strictly centralised and came under party control.

Yet both in its planning and in its effect, this rigid system had a flaw. The relative acceptance or resistance of the population to information is dependent on the existence of competing media.

### *III. Human beings as instruments for instruction and control*

Essentially, communist regimes considered the media as having a duty to educate people in the ways of socialism and thereby reinforce the Party's hold on power. Information was never regarded as a commodity in its own right, but rather as a means to an end. As a result, journalism in the Eastern Block produced a picture that corresponded to the ideas and wishes of the Party but failed to reflect reality, in many cases ignoring or deliberately distorting it.

This observation should not, however, be taken to mean that Western journalism was always thorough and accurate in representing and recording reality. But the very purpose of journalism is to communicate information and the journalist's mission is to serve the needs of society as a whole rather than one particular cause or party political interest. I appreciate that this is not universally the case and acknowledge that, if reality actually conformed to my somewhat idealised portrayal, there wouldn't be any conflict with regard to the balance of programming of the public service broadcasters in our own country. But I'm not here today to talk about internal German media affairs. What concerns me here are the contrasting principles of journalism. This contrast or even conflict had a decisive influence on the way that reporting took place in the media of Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

#### IV. *The effective CSCE proceedings*

Back to the socialist times: The communist leaders of the Eastern Block saw their authority threatened by the influence exerted by Western media on their subject populations. I would remind you here of the debate surrounding Basket III in the Final Declaration of the Helsinki CSCE Conference. The inclusion of the principles concerning the improvement of access to information in the Helsinki Accords highlights the close connection between media activities and politics in practice. In retrospect, we can see how decisive the insistence of the Western Block on these principles was for the further course of events. It is to the lasting credit of the Western politicians – in particular the Americans – that they recognised this at the time, although from my own practical experience I can barely conceal my regret that so little attention was paid by the politicians at the time to the importance that Western media, mainly of the electronic kind, had for listeners in the Eastern Block. Those in the West who followed political developments with interest were aware of the existence of broadcasts by Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, but only to the extent that these were American organisations operating on German soil whose presence led to constant protests from the East.

Confidential exchanges with ordinary people behind the Iron Curtain and also with functionaries in the Eastern Block revealed the true impact of these broadcasts. This extended beyond the German-speaking part of Europe and its particular situation with a common language to other countries where the Voice of America, the BBC, the *Deutsche Welle* and the *Deutschlandfunk* were broadcasting foreign-language services to the Eastern Block. In 1980, when the then Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt visited Leonid Brezhnev in Moscow, Pravda published the German statesman's speech made at the evening reception in the following day's edition. Pravda censored the speech, suppressing the clear statements made by Schmidt on the Soviet war in Afghanistan at the time and summarised the contents of the speech as follows: "The Chancellor also addressed various issues concerning Afghanistan." On the same day, I happened to be in another Eastern Block country where, true to the Leninist principle of never trusting foreign journalists, I was accompanied by members of the State Broadcasting Committee. I didn't listen to the news on the radio in my hotel that morning as I couldn't speak or understand the local language and when I arrived at the studio I was met by my hosts who said: "Have you heard? Pravda has censored Schmidt." "No, I haven't. But how do you know?" The answer came back quickly: "Because RFE have just reported it." And here follows another example, this time from Hungary. West Germans and West Berliners – a distinction that was made at the bidding of the East German regime – were allowed to enter the country without formalities and get a visa at the border crossing. There were only two professional groups who had to submit a written application for a visa with photos and questionnaires sent several weeks ahead of their visit: priests and journalists. This is another prime example of the ideological significance that the communist rulers attached to journalism.

## V. The defense against “media aggression”

States which asserted their monopoly over the media did not simply resign themselves to the possibility that information might filter through from outside to influence their subjects, the very citizens that they had claimed for themselves and for their own ideology. They had an array of resources at their disposal for combating information regarded as ‘interference’ in the affairs of the East. The GDR certainly had the most difficult task of all, given the shared language and the geographical proximity. Any encounter with undesirable information was often offset with an attempt to stir up a political scandal. We all remember the expulsion of the West German TV correspondents from the GDR, the closure of the SPIEGEL office, the refusal to allow a West German radio station to attend the Leipzig Trade Fair – all clear examples of Eastern pressure against the media in general and individual persons in particular to tip the political scales in their balance.

One further technique in which the Soviet Union, with its huge technological expertise and security budget, particularly excelled was the jamming of broadcasts. Expert opinion suggests that they invested around 250 million Euros in setting up the equipment used for this destructive activity. This particular ‘industry’ cost over 100 million Euros per annum to operate, employed a workforce of approximately 500 and, in energy terms, consumed 1 billion kilowatt hours per annum. Even then, the network of jamming stations had by no means full coverage. Effectively, they only managed to cover the major population centres. The stations worst affected by the jamming were RFE and RL, the Voice of America and – depending how serious the political situation was – the BBC and *Deutsche Welle*. This led to vigorous protests, particularly from the British who, especially in the light of events in Poland around 1980/81, objected most strongly to this action which was clearly contrary to the accord reached under the auspices of the CSCE. Other Eastern Block countries also indulged in similar jamming practices and actually spent more on what they saw as measures to defend the political *status quo* than they did on directly informing the public. Even today, it is more expensive to generate interference than to broadcast information.

The political climate could generally be measured in terms of how much or how little jamming was taking place at the time. Heavy interference accompanied the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 and the Polish Crisis in 1980/81. And it was no coincidence that jamming diminished in the mid to late 60s during the period of *détente*. Just how embarrassing foreign broadcasts could be is illustrated by the Bulgarian affair. In the notorious ‘Case of the Poisoned Umbrella’, the regime even resorted to assassination to rid itself of disagreeable reporting in Bulgarian by the BBC. Another method could best be described as ‘poaching instead of jamming’.

As a result of careful opinion polling in their own countries, there was a growing awareness in the East that the official state media were heartily detested, perhaps for the very reason that they were seen to have this special instructive role in upholding party ideology. The national media were seen as boring, old-fashioned, uninformative

and lacking in credibility. This was the same picture that emerged from regular surveys conducted by stations such as Radio Free Europe.

As a result of various state directives, for example, in the Soviet Union during the latter period of Khrushchev's office, the media were instructed to provide the populace with more information and, most importantly, to do so more rapidly. In this way, they hoped to knock rumours on the head and diminish opportunities for information emanating from abroad to exert a greater influence on public opinion. The essential tedium of state broadcasting was countered by boosting the entertainment content. They were desperate to keep their own people tuned to the state-controlled media and tried every trick in the book. *Heide Riedel* wrote: "The singer Wolf Biermann was deprived of his GDR citizenship in November 1976, a move which was met with worldwide protest..." In order to divert attention in the GDR away from the storm caused by the Biermann affair and to dissuade the ordinary people from trying to tune into West German stations as a source of information, the GDR government embarked on a major entertainment offensive in 1977. The stars of this campaign were not recruited from other socialist countries but rather – and here's the irony – from Western commercial pop culture.

#### *VI. The unexpected consequences of the turn of events in Germany*

Now to return to the print media, although for the duration of communist rule, the distinction between print and electronic media was far less significant than it would have been under free market conditions. There simply was no competition. The commercial success or failure of a particular media was, at best, of secondary interest. The chief purpose always remained the political control of the reader and listener with a view to preserving the power of the Party.

For this reason, media managers in the Eastern block were all the less prepared for the events of 1989. They were ill-equipped to rise to the challenge presented by free journalism. Editors-in-chief who had spent decades acting as loyal party hacks struggled to adjust to their new responsibility to serve the interests of their readers rather than slavishly adhere to the official line as laid down by communist spin doctors. During the weeks and months after the implosion of the communist regime, while the official state and party publications were both helpless and rudderless, numerous opposition publications sprang up in competition, though these were to vanish again after 'normalisation' and the switch to constitutional government, as they not only lacked capital but also the commercial expertise to survive in a free market.

Even though each of the former communist states experienced the changeover in a different way, a general pattern emerged whereby West European media companies were able to turn to their own advantage this lack of understanding of how the free market and, perhaps more importantly, the lack of know-how regarding free journalism.

They skilfully positioned themselves in the new market, particularly in the print media. In Poland, the Czech Republic and the Balkan states, a new and diverse media

landscape is now flourishing under foreign ownership, one more after-effect of the Cold War.

And after such an immense turnabout in fortunes, it does no harm to pay tribute to the victors in this theatre of the Cold War. Their victory was itself a form of tribute to the man who gave his name to this seminar. Kaj Munk died for those very principles that unite journalism and the spirit of academic enquiry: namely, human dignity and freedom.

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## **Chapter Eight: Walking on a Knife's Edge: Freedom of Press in Turkey**

*Yusuf Kanli*

Freedom of thought and freedom of expression are not just luxury concepts of Western democracies. Free press is not a right just for newspapers, TV and radio stations or newsmen, it is at the same time a requirement of the public's right to be informed. Freedom of opinion and the right to information as well as a free press are fundamental rights in the absence of which there cannot be democracy. I couldn't agree more with what Wilhelm Staudacher, the secretary-general of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, underlined in the preface of a "Media and democracy" book published in 2005:

The relationship between media and democracy is one of interdependence, with the free media leading to informed decisions and to qualified political participation. Conversely, a democracy as a free expression of political convictions of a people rests on the firm foundation of a free media.

Are we first journalists reporting developments as we see and observe them? Or should we first be patriotic servants of our states' august interests? Where is the line between the two?

The contentious Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (*TCK*), the anti-terror law, the taboos, written and unwritten restrictions on freedom of expression, political pressures, interests of the media bosses and the shackles on the Turkish public's right to be informed...

Shall we allow people "curse at Turkey and get away with it" rhetoric of the conservatives against demands to amend Penal Code Article 301 and remove the shackles on freedom of thought, or shall we stand by the international perception of "There cannot be a crime undefined in the laws" and thus defend that in modern societies there can be no crime such as insulting the Turkishness?

Are the beatings of women by police on International Women's Day at an Istanbul square and European Union Trio meeting in Ankara next day coincidental, or do they reflect some sort of an organized reaction of the establishment against EU imposed reforms? What about police tearing down posters of a Kurdish film from the walls in Diyarbakır just a day before a Turkey-EU Association Council meets in Brussels?

Catering to national taboos and sensitivities, respecting the norms of the profession, abiding with the "right of people to be informed" and not violating the vaguely described crimes in laws of the country... Growing monopolization of media ownership, increasing pressures and intermingled relations between the political administration and media bosses and journalists and writers trying not to give up free expression and free speech...

This is like walking on the knife's edge.



A society is not “free and democratic” just because there are free elections in that country. Free elections are vital, but not sufficient. The supremacy of law, equality of all in front of the law and the separation of powers and human rights and liberties are all hallmarks of any democratic order. Civil rights and liberties must be safeguarded. They cannot be traded for something else.

While discussing freedom of expression at conferences from Copenhagen to Bali, it became all the more clear that irrespective of ideology, nationality, ethnic background and to a certain extent geography, there are two different perceptions of the issue.

One of these two perceptions is based on “individualism”, while the other is more related to the degree of communal awareness a person possesses. The first could also be described as “neo-liberalism” -- an ideological stance that could care less what other people may think on any issue but is rather apprehensive about the no-limits liberal approach of the individual on issues of concern to his/her own self.

What other people think on an issue, how strongly they feel on any subject, and religious or communal values and norms bother the neo-liberal not at all. What is important is what and how he/she perceives that subject. Although individual freedoms are being defended with lofty words, in reality what's important are the freedoms of one's own self, people sharing the same position and compatriots -- a term that has a wider connotation than its classical meaning and which indeed could mean a nation, as was seen in the Danish cartoons controversy.

This is an understanding that could best be described as “egocentric,” a approach that could not care less what others may feel or think on an issue or how severe the damage that could be inflicted on their sentiments if, for the sake of “testing the limits,” some adventures are undertaken by an irresponsible editor.

The other perception is built on the concepts of “communal responsibility” and “communal awareness.” Even though there should be no limit to freedoms on a conceptual basis, in real life there is indeed a limit to all freedoms. That limit is erected by communal realities.

In a land that has suffered so much in its recent history from xenophobia, rejectionism, discrimination and hate speech, it is impossible to accept defamation of any religion, the ridiculing of prophet of a religion as a terrorist, and the portrayal of a religion as the root cause of backwardness of the societies practising that religion. Closing off streets, forcing a group of people have a certain emblem on their lapels to vividly demonstrate their “difference” and such developments might be tolerated as “individual unpleasant developments,” but it's with such small steps that a calamity starts to build up.

It is a fundamental duty for any government to take measures and provide security for its citizens. There should be no letup in the fight against terrorism. But, the moment we start to sacrifice democratic norms and civil liberties, particularly from the freedom of press hallmark, then that means we have started to lose this fight irrespective of how seriously we might have crushed the terrorist elements. That is because a prime target of terrorism is to kill society's freedoms.

Censorship and harassment of the media cannot be reconciled with the notion of free and democratic society and governance. “They are criticizing the government because we have stood against their interests” and other such remarks by government members must be either substantiated with facts, or this harassment must be stopped. Similarly, it is impossible to reconcile with any norm of democratic understanding a remark by a prime minister calling a senior columnist to relinquish his Turkish citizenship and leave the country just because he said he would not recognize his president if an Islamist was elected as the new president of the country. Such a “Love it or leave it” fascist understanding has unfortunately made that columnist a target of Islamist activists and the increased number of death threats he started to receive since then is testifying to that. To better understand how serious such threats might be, I would like to recall the recent murder of my friend and colleague Hrant Dink after he was sentenced under the contentious Penal Code Article 301 on grounds that he insulted “Turkishness” and thus was made a target, or just send a glance to the long list of journalists murdered in Turkey since the 1900s.

In the aftermath of the 1980 coup in Turkey, Bülent Ulusu, a retired admiral, was named prime minister. Assuming that one of the duties of a reporter was to ask questions and thus help bring clarification to issues, at the first press conference of the retired admiral premier I asked a question. I cannot recall what the question was, but I remember today as an example of political pressure on journalism what my boss told me upon returning paper that day. The premier had called him and asked for my expulsion from the paper because I had asked an “inappropriate question.” I was not expelled, but for some time, I was confined to my desk.

In mid-August 2007, the Turkish media was shocked with a statement from the biggest media group of the country. Emin Çolaşan, a daily columnist with the daily *Hürriyet* for the past 22 years and an arch-opponent of political Islam in Turkey, was sacked. Çolaşan will definitely soon find a platform and continue expressing his views, but the message is clear: If a senior writer as popular as Çolaşan could be sacked, all journalists who would not want to risk their jobs should better mind what they report and how they analyze developments in the country.

Unfortunately, neither the “request” of the 1980 coup premier to my boss, the sacking of Çolaşan, nor Prime Minister of the country Recep Tayyip Erdoğan asking a senior writer “love our presidential choice or leave the country” are exceptional cases in the Turkish media.

The growing trend of monopolization in the Turkish media; media bosses getting engaged in many fields of economy and thus developing some sort of a “happiness ring” state of relations with the political administration; growing authoritarian style in the governance of the country; last but definitely not the least, the widening Islamist-secularist polarization in the country on the one hand and increasing separatist threat on the other hand all indicate that pressures on the Turkish media and free speech in Turkey are likely to increase in the period ahead.

Ever since the new penal code entered into force in Turkey, we have been complaining about some of the articles of this basic legal framework that were written with

a rather primitive and obsessive mentality. Irrespective of whether this country will continue its European Union accession process or not, widening our democracy and enhancing liberties must be the goal. Turkey's EU process is helping accelerate reforms, for sure. However, these reforms are required for a better governed, democratic and prosperous Turkey, where all citizens enjoy equal rights and are afforded equal opportunities to reflect their cultural heritage and where people are not placed behind bars because they have views that are not compatible with those of the administration, the establishment or the majority.

Not only do we rarely have a day when the Turkish prime minister is not harassing the media for criticizing the government with some ulterior motives, instead of expanding reforms we unfortunately notice an iron fist tightening around our neck. While we are expecting the government to abide with the pledges it made during debates before the new penal code and to eradicate Article 301 and such paragraphs of that basic law that reflect a rather ill mentality, we see further restrictions being imposed on the freedom of expression and freedom of press through a law amending anti-terror legislation.

No one can dispute that in a democratic society there ought to be no taboos. Discussion on any issue must be possible, and people must be mature enough to accept that there might be differing opinions, perceptions and even people's affinity to certain matters. This is, more or less, what we keep on stressing: "freedom of thought" or "freedom of expression."

Governments of semi-democratic or totalitarian countries may have trouble understanding it, but in true democracies it is none of their business to make editorial decisions on behalf of newspeople and journalists. Governments may not want to see it happen, but in democracies the media may report on issues that might be considered "taboo" by some establishment or group of people or that may damage "national interests", according to some. In democratic countries, governments, rather than acting with political considerations and thinking of clamping down on such reporting, generally take such issues to court and let them be resolved through the judicial process, as do the establishments, interest groups and individuals who feel their rights were infringed upon or their interests hurt by such reporting.

In the absence of a court decision to the contrary, publishing articles, commentaries, photographs, cartoons or sketches cannot be restricted in a democracy, and people who might feel their rights were infringed upon or interests unjustly damaged through the publication of such material have the right to go to court and demand legal action against those responsible, seeking an apology or compensation, or both.

Thus, to what extent can avoidance of graphic content that could offend the public or the censoring of a news article or some graphics because of national security concerns, or as a voluntary contribution by the media to the fight against terrorism, conform with the "freedom of the press" concept? And particularly in view of the fact that such an act would not limit the liberties of the journalist alone but at the same time would restrict individual access to information.

The problem at hand is – at a time when the international community has been unable to define what terrorism is – how to strike a balance between “responsibility,” a fundamental right, and journalism's principle of objectivity.

Even in the most difficult times, the Turkish media has always found a way of evading the toughest judicial obstacles to free press and free expression, and we are confident that it will succeed in that task today as well. Will it help Turkey's progress or image to put scores of journalists and intellectuals behind bars? Will it help in the fight against terrorism to put intellectuals in prison? Criticism is a right and cannot be curtailed with obscure descriptions of crimes in the criminal laws.

We have to be clear and must say it loud: There is no room for undefined crimes in a democracy.

The current furore of prosecutions and convictions for insults under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (*TCK*) comes from a conflict between an old way of thinking and a new one. It is the difference between life under the rule of autocratic sultans and life under democracy. In earlier centuries under Ottoman rule, the sultan – who was also the caliph – the state and its apparatus were paramount. The individual, relatively, was nothing. Under the democracy of today, the individual has a heightened, more important significance while the state and its apparatus have become secondary.

Turkey's current law on insulting the state needs to be brought up to date to reflect this emphasis on the individual in a democracy. Insults to abstractions need to be eliminated and the focus changed to insults to individuals. Further, the idea of insult itself needs to be eliminated and replaced with clearer ideas of what constitutes harm. In fact, Article 301 should be completely eliminated and replaced with a new law.

Until a complete change is made, Article 301 as it is or as it might be amended will continue to be used to prosecute intellectuals, writers, and activists – to threaten them with jail, put them in jail and choke free thought and expression.

Here is how it presently works:

First, Article 301 deals in terms of the idea of “insult,” but there is no definition of the term. This allows a court to see an insult any way it wants to. If a person is found guilty, he can receive a suspended or actual jail sentence of from six months to three years, depending on the circumstances.

Second, under Article 301 a person can publicly insult “Turkishness,” the Parliament of Turkey, the government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the state, the military and security organizations.

Thus, the current law makes it possible to bring charges for alleged insults to abstract ideas or to entities, while the modern concept of law makes it possible to criminalize insults only to individuals. For example, “Turkishness” is an abstract idea. You cannot find it in a field like a tree. Judicial and government bodies are vague terminologies. Under modern law, it is not possible to consider criticism as an insult to the “judiciary” or any of the other things listed in the contentious Penal Code Article 301.

And painful though it is for some to accept, it would no longer be legally possible to insult “Turkishness.” A Turk's blood may still boil when hears Turkey or something Turkish maligned, but under modern law it is not an insult. Nonetheless, it would still

be possible to insult individual people – but to do so, new laws that are clearer than the vague general idea of insult will be needed. In the case of American law, the two major types of law are slander and libel. Both terms apply only to an individual, not to an abstraction.

Slander is saying something false and damaging. More particularly, it is the act of saying something false and malicious that damages somebody's reputation. Slander pertains only to a person and to something that is said. To be guilty of slander a court or jury must find that there has been a lie, that there has been a desire or intention to harm, and that harm or damage has been done to a person's reputation.

If you are an engineer and I say you are incompetent, for that to be slander it must:

1. be false; that is, if you have designed bridges that collapse, calling you incompetent is not slander;
2. it must be malicious; that is, there must be a desire or intention to inflict harm or suffering; and
3. it must damage your reputation.

Roughly, libel is slander that is published rather than spoken. It is a false and malicious published statement that damages somebody's reputation. Libel may also involve defamation, which is a personal attack, an attack on somebody's good name, character or reputation. The engineer in the example above would have been libeled if what was said against him had been published.

Note that with both slander and libel, there must be actual harm or damage to the reputation of an individual person. That harm or damage must be proven in court with facts. Mere feelings of damage on the part of the individual are not sufficient. If you are accused of slander or libel, truth is the best defense. If what you said was true, then the legal case against you falls. It is too bad if another person is harmed by the truth. The fact that you made a fair comment, even if it turned out to be false, is also a defense.

Public figures can be subject to a wider range of comment before possible slander or libel occurs. That is because they have chosen to be in the public eye and to be perceived and misperceived, and commented upon. In addition, they are often members of the government, and as such serve the individual in a democracy. And here we return to the change from an old style of government in which the individual served the state to the modern democratic form of government in which the state serves the individual.

In a democratic state, there is no room for an undefined crime of insult, and there is no room for crimes against abstractions. There can, however, be crimes of slander or libel against an individual, so there is still justice whenever an injury has been sustained. Thus expression in Turkey can be freed from an old yoke, leaving people free to think more, create more and accomplish more.

These ought to be the hardcore issues of discussion between Europe and Turkey today, not the Cyprus issue and its byproducts, such as the failure of Turkey to keep its pledge to open its ports and airports to the Greek Cypriot state, a state that due to the unfortunate political shortsightedness – or shameless hypocrisy – of Europe to-

wards the Turkish Cypriot people, is enjoying EU membership as the sole representative of the east Mediterranean island.

*Annex I – List of murdered journalists since 1909*

As reported by the Turkish Journalists' Society  
(<http://www.tgc.org.tr/oldurulengazeteciler.html>)

<b>Murdered Turkish journalists</b>	
<b>Journalist / Organization</b>	<b>Place and date of assassination</b>
1. Hasan Fehmi Bey / Serbesti	Istanbul 6 April 1909
2. Ahmet Samim / Sada-yı Millet	Istanbul 19 July 1910
3. Zeki Bey / Şehrah	Istanbul 10 July 1911
4. Şair Hüseyin Kami / Alemdar	Konya 1912 or 1914
5. Hasan Tahsin / Hukuk-u Beşer	İzmir 27 July 1919
6. Silahçı Tahsin / Silah ve Bomba	Istanbul 27 July 1914
7. İştirakçi Hilmi / İştirak, Medeniyet	Istanbul 1922
8. Ali Kemal / Peyam-ı Sabah	İzmit 1922
9. Hikmet Şevket	1930
10. Sabahattin Ali / Marko Paşa	Edirne 1948
11. Adem Yavuz / Anka Ajansı	Kıbrıs 27 August 1974
12. Ali İhsan Özgür / Politika	Istanbul 21 November 1978
13. Cengiz Polatkan / Hafta Sonu	Ankara 1 December 1978
14. Abdi İpekçi / Milliyet	Istanbul 1 February 1979
15. İlhan Darendelioğlu / Ortadoğu	Istanbul 19 November 1979
16. İsmail Gerçekşöz / Ortadoğu	Istanbul 4 April 1980
17. Ümit Kaftancıoğlu / TRT	Istanbul 11 April 1980
18. Muzaffer Fevziöğlu / Hizmet	Trabzon 15 April 1980
19. Recai Ünal / Demokrat	Istanbul 22 July 1980
20. Mevlüt İşıt / Türkiye	Ankara 1 June 1988
21. Seracettin Müftüoğlu / Hürriyet	Nusaybin 29 June 1989
22. Sami Başaran / Gazete	Istanbul 7 November 1989
23. Kamil Başaran / Gazete	Istanbul 7 November 1989
24. Çetin Emeç / Hürriyet	Istanbul 7 March 1990
25. Turan Dursun / İkibine Doğru and Yüzyıl news magazines	Istanbul 4 September 1990
26. Gündüz Etil	1991
27. Mehmet Sait Erten / Azadi	Denk Diyarbakır 1992
28. Halit Güngen / İkibine Doğru	Diyarbakır 18 February 1992
29. Cengiz Altun / Yeni Ülke	Batman 25 February 1992

<b>Murdered Turkish journalists</b>	
<b>Journalist / Organization</b>	<b>Place and date of assassination</b>
30. İzzet Kezer / Sabah	Cizre 23 March 1992
31. Bülent Ülkü / Körfeze Bakış	Bursa 1 April 1992
32. Mecit Akgün / Yeni Ülke	Nusaybin 2 June 1992
33. Hafız Akdemir / Özgür Gündem	Diyarbakır 8 June 1992
34. Çetin Ababay / Özgür Halk	Batman 29 July 1992
35. Yahya Orhan / Özgür Gündem	Ceylanpınar 9 August 1992
36. Hüseyin Deniz / Özgür Gündem	Ceylanpınar 9 August 1992
37. Musa Anter / Özgür Gündem	Diyarbakır 20 September 1992
38. Yaşar Aktay / Serbest	Hani 9 November 1992
39. Hatip Kapçak / Serbest	Mazıdağı 18 November 1992
40. Namık Tarancı / Gerçek	Diyarbakır 20 November 1992
41. Uğur Mumcu / Cumhuriyet	Ankara 24 January 1993
42. Kemal Kılıç / Yeni Ülke	Şanlıurfa 18 February 1993
43. Mehmet İhsan Karakuş	Silvan 13 March 1993
44. Ercan Güre / HHA	20 May 1993
45. İhsan Uygur / Sabah	Istanbul 6 July 1993
46. Rıza Güneşer / Halkın Gücü	14 July 1993
47. Ferhat Tepe / Özgür Gündem	Bitlis 28 July 1993
48. Muzaffer Akkuş / Milliyet	20 September 1993
49. Nazım Babaoğlu / Gündem	12 March 1994
50. Erol Akgün / Devrimci Çözüm	1994
51. Seyfettin Tepe / Yeni politika	28 August 1995
52. Metin Göktepe / Evrensel	Istanbul 8 January 1996
53. Kutlu Adalı / Yeni Düzen	Kıbrıs 8 July 1996
54. Selahattin Turgay Daloğlu	Istanbul 9 September 1996
55. Reşat Aydın / AA, TRT	20 June 1997
56. Ayşe Sağlam Derince	3 September 1997
57. Abdullah Doğan / Candan Fm	Konya 13 July 1997
58. Ünal Mesutoğlu / TRT Manisa	8 November 1997
59. Mehmet Topaloğlu / Kurtuluş	Adana 1998
60. Ahmet Taner Kışlalı / Cumhuriyet	Ankara 21 October 1999
61. Hrant Dink / Agos	Istanbul 19 January 2007

## References

Turkish Journalists' Society <http://www.tgc.org.tr/oldurulengazeteciler.html> (accessed October 20, 2009)

Section Three  
Religion, Politics and the Press





## **Chapter Nine: A Battle for Freedom of Speech**

*Anders Raahauge*

*Seminar: The Mohammed crisis in centre of discussion at Kaj Munk seminar.  
Article printed in Jyllands-Posten, 30 August 2007, translated by Hanne Porsborg  
Clausen*

Arguments for freedom of speech were exchanged so vividly that the pugnacious Kaj Munk would have been on edge if he had been able to participate this day at Aalborg University. The University hosted the international Kaj Munk seminar on freedom of speech, “From Munk to Mohammed”.

Professor Søren von Dosenrode and Parish Rector Svend Aage Nielsen presented various aspects of Kaj Munk’s struggle against censorship to the international audience and the seminar also included lectures on the feeble conditions of freedom of speech in Nazi Germany, as well as in the occupied Norway and Denmark.

Extra attention arose as the day was concluded by a round table discussion on the Danish Mohammed crisis. The participants in this discussion were former Editor-in-Chief for *Politiken*, Mr. Herbert Pundik; Cultural Editor at *Jyllands-Posten*, Mr Flemming Rose; Public Relations Manager of the Catholic Church in Denmark, Ms Iben Tranholm; as well as Editor and Commentator of the Turkish newspaper *Turkish Daily News*, Mr. Yusuf Kanli.

Rose stood alone in his defence of the publication of the Mohammed drawings which were condemned by the other participants around the table. Nevertheless, he gained obvious support from the audience during the subsequent session for questions.

*Religion is under attack*

Iben Tranholm regretted the constant attack on religion in the modern society and blamed Flemming Rose of transforming freedom of speech into a weapon of terror. She warned against the freedom-of-speech-fundamentalism of which she also blamed the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. If a concept is deemed higher than the individual person, you have taken the first steps on the path towards totalitarianism, Tranholm argued.

Yusuf Kanli called the publication of the prophet drawings an irresponsible act of an irresponsible editor. The holiest values were violated, Kanli said, and declared that he was not a practising Muslim but nevertheless shared the feelings of the Muslims. “It was a totally unacceptable action”, a clearly angry Turkish editor pronounced. “How can you speak of the co-existence and multiculturalism of civilizations and at the same

time expect that such violations are accepted”, Yusuf Kanil stated – who had given lectures earlier that day on censorship against Turkish media.

### *Move towards absolutism*

Herbert Pundik also attacked the publication of the drawings which, in his eyes, testified a move towards a sort of absolutism. Behind the freedom of speech needs to be consideration and careful contemplation of which price others will have to pay for this freedom. Muslims in Denmark are at the bottom of society in terms of social status. *Jyllands-Posten* therefore brutally inflicted pain upon the weakest point of society, Pundik argued.

No group should be treated as children, Flemming Rose replied and he warned against describing freedom of speech as a “weapon of terror”. If the social debate needs to pay separate attention to religion, this situation will probably be more dangerous in the long run.

“And then what about the hundreds of other groups with other taboos which they want respected?”. “You cannot ensure anyone the rights not to be insulted. I am insulted every day when reading *Politiken*”, Rose directed at Pundik – however, without wanting the newspaper to be censored.

Iben Tranholm shivered by the thought of an inhumane society of robots in which it was not allowed to be insulted. Man is first and foremost a moral being. Society is losing the sense of holiness, she argued, and called for higher moral standards in order to be able to coexist with our new fellow citizens.

### *Lack of consideration*

Yusuf Kanli declared that the more he was listening to this debate in English, the more disbelief he felt. “It cannot be justifiable that man is able to neglect all contemplation, common sense, responsibility and consideration. A man cannot just do whatever suits him”, Kanli argued and stressed the fact that he did not mind depiction of the Prophet unless in the coinage between Islam and terrorism. Herbert Pundik declined the idea of treating Danish Muslims as children.

“I am referring to socially strong and weak groups. And Danish welfare is built upon consideration of the weak groups”, the former chief editor of *Politiken* argued. “You cannot simply demand that Danish Muslims must understand us. They don’t – not until two or three generations. Until then, we need to accept a one-sided dialogue”, Pundik said.

Yusuf believed that it is a problem for Europe that we are not fully serene about the position of religion. “What role does religion play in Europe? The Europeans must make up their minds about this. And if peace-loving people like us in this panel cannot

come to terms with each other – how can we then expect this from the militarists?”, he asked.

As a final remark, Flemming Rose stated that he found the contrast between freedom of speech and religious freedom entirely false.

“When Martin Luther called for battle against the Catholic Church, he conducted a so-called hate speech. He claimed the right to be heterodox. Freedom of speech and religious freedom supplement each other”, he argued.

The intolerance was experienced by the Danish imams, he said and concluded the very lively debate with a wish that the drawings from Jyllands-Posten would appear in children’s schoolbooks some day so that children of all backgrounds would be able to discuss and exchange views just as this panel in Aalborg had.

## Chapter Ten: Time to Re-Think Press Freedom?

*Julian Petley*

In 1997 a report by the Runnymede Trust entitled *Islamophobia: a Challenge For Us All* concluded that closed and negative views of Islam are routinely reflected by the British press, and that such views ‘are seen with particularly stark clarity in cartoons’ (Richardson: 21). Since then, and particularly in the wake of 9/11 and 7/7, these views have been expressed by newspapers with ever greater frequency and intensity – and yet not one British national paper re-published any of the Jyllands-Posten cartoons which caused such a stir in February 2006, cartoons which mirror with uncanny accuracy the attitudes of most of the British press towards Muslims and Islam. Why should this be the case?

Let’s begin with the liberal press, in other words the minority papers in Britain’s overwhelmingly conservative, and indeed illiberal, press culture.

Though by no means above criticism of their coverage of Muslims and Islam, the *Guardian* and *Independent* have been consistently less negative and more open in their coverage than most other national dailies and Sundays, whose Islamophobic tone they have frequently criticised. Their decision not to re-publish any of the cartoons was thus perfectly consistent with their editorial stance on reporting this whole area. Thus a Leader in the *Independent*, 3 February, argued that: ‘There is, of course, no doubt that newspapers should have the right to print cartoons that some people find offensive . . . But there is an important distinction to be made between having a right and choosing to exercise it’, which could be seen both as ‘throwing petrol on the flames of a fire that shows every sign of turning into an international conflagration’ and as infringing the ‘right for people to exist in a secular pluralist society without feeling as alienated, threatened and routinely derided as many Muslims now do’. Maintaining that, in this instance, the responsibility to respect others’ beliefs outweighed the right to publish, the paper concluded that: ‘There is a deceptive borderline between controversial and irresponsible journalism. Especially in these troubled times, we must take care that it is not crossed.’ And the following day, a further Leader argued that re-publishing the cartoons would have been a ‘cheap gesture’, concluding that: ‘There is no merit in causing gratuitous offence, as these cartoons undoubtedly do’.

The *Independent on Sunday*, 5 February, took a similar line, Ziauddin Sardar arguing that the idea that the ideals of liberal secularism are superior to the ideals of other cultures is ‘Eurocentric and arrogant’, and reaching the conclusion that the limits to free expression ‘are to be found in the social consequences, the potential harm to others of an exercise of free speech. Tolerance is easy if there is nothing to offend. We become tolerant only when we defer to the sensitivities of those with whom we profoundly disagree on matters we do not believe can or should be accepted. Forbearance is the

currency of peaceful coexistence in heterodox society'. In similar vein, the paper's Leader stated that, in its view, re-publication would be regarded by Muslims as a 'deliberate insult' adding: 'When the deeply held beliefs of so many people has been made so clear, it requires a particularly childish kind of discourtesy to cause offence knowingly'.

Meanwhile the *Guardian* adopted a similar stance. Thus a Leader on 3 February stated that: 'The right to publish does not imply any obligation to do so', especially if putting that right to the test inevitably causes offence to many Muslims at a time when there is 'such a powerful need to craft a more inclusive public culture which can embrace them and their faith'. In the following day's paper, Gary Younge argued that: 'The right to freedom of speech equates to neither an obligation to offend nor a duty to be insensitive. There is no contradiction between supporting someone's right to do something and condemning them for doing it', whilst Emily Bell made the point that the paper could and should not ignore the impact of publishing the cartoons – 'not least on our correspondents working in Europe and the Middle East'. Unsurprisingly, then, the paper's Leader announced that: 'The *Guardian* believes uncompromisingly in freedom of expression, but not in any duty to gratuitously offend. It would be senselessly provocative to reproduce a set of images, of no intrinsic value, which pander to the worst prejudices about Muslims ... Freedom of expression, as it has developed in the democratic west is a value to be cherished, but not abused'.

Whilst one might wish that liberal newspapers put a higher premium on freedom of expression, one cannot in all fairness accuse the *Guardian* and *Independent* of inconsistency. The same, however, most certainly cannot be said of the conservative press, given its past (and current) representations of and attitudes to Muslims. Not, for example, of *The Times*, whose Leader on 3 February pompously intoned: 'To duplicate these cartoons several months after they were originally printed also has an element of exhibitionism to it. To present them in front of the public for debate is not a value-neutral exercise. The offence destined to be caused to moderate Muslims should not be discounted'. (This did not, however, deter the paper from having its cake and eating it by providing weblinks to sites displaying the cartoons). Nor of the *Sun*, which the same day published a credulity-busting Leader which argued that it was not re-publishing the cartoons for two reasons: 'First, the cartoons are intended to insult Muslims, and the *Sun* can see no justification for causing deliberate offence to our much-valued Muslim readers. Second, the row over the cartoons is largely a manufactured one. They were printed first in a Danish dispute over free speech. The *Sun* believes passionately in free speech, but that does not mean we need to jump on someone else's bandwagon to prove we will not be intimidated'. Similarly, it is impossible to take seriously, given its past record on this and other matters, the pious protestations of the same day's *Telegraph* Leader to the effect that the paper had chosen not to re-publish the cartoons since 'we prefer not to cause gratuitous offence to some of our readers ... Our restraint is in keeping with British values of tolerance and respect for the feelings of others'.

However, the first prize for sheer gall and breathtaking hypocrisy has to go to the *Mail*, whose Leader on 3 February attempted at a stroke to airbrush out its history of

110 years of bile-spewing and hate-mongering. Freedom of speech, it tells us, is a 'treasured characteristic of a civilised society', before making one disbelieve the evidence of one's own eyes by adding: 'But great freedoms involve great responsibilities. And an obligation of free speech is that you do not gratuitously insult those with whom you disagree. While the *Mail* would fight to the death to defend those papers that printed the offending cartoons, it disagrees with the fact that they have done so'.

As it is impossible, given the past record of the conservative press on all matters Islamic, to take any of these protestations remotely seriously, one can only conclude that papers normally only too happy to misrepresent Islam and to heap opprobrium on the heads of Muslims decided on this occasion to self-censor themselves for fear of reprisals. It's one thing to spew out anti-Muslim sentiment to no-one but your like-minded readers, but quite another to do so in the full glare of the global media spotlight, and when you're well aware of the treatment meted out to those papers which, for whatever reasons, did re-publish the cartoons. Such a stance would have required both consistency and courage, two qualities conspicuously lacking in Britain's conservative press, which is a byword for hypocrisy and which is perfectly happy to attack the weak as long as there's no chance of the weak retaliating. As Gary Younge quite correctly pointed out in the *Guardian*, 4 February: 'The right to offend must come with at least one consequent right and one subsequent responsibility. If newspapers have the right to offend then surely their targets have the right to be offended. Moreover, if you are bold enough to knowingly offend a community, then you should be bold enough to withstand the consequences, so long as that community expresses displeasure within the law'.

The other aspect of the conservative press which this affair all too clearly illuminated was its utterly cavalier attitude to freedom of expression. For most press owners, press freedom means simply freedom to exercise a property right, in other words to own and to make money from newspapers. In the hyper-competitive British newspaper market, money is not made from what we might call 'public service' journalism but from sensationalism, salacious gossip, the cult of celebrity, and, above all, pandering to readers' prejudices and reinforcing what they think they know already. In such a culture, press freedom no longer automatically means the ability to tackle difficult issues from quite possibly unpopular stances, still less to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, and can indeed be airily dismissed as something of interest only to mischief-makers and foreigners – witness Simon Jenkins' characteristically *ex cathedra* (and equally characteristically pompous and wrong-headed) pronouncement in *The Sunday Times*, 5 February that: 'To imply that some great issue of censorship is raised by the Danish cartoons is nonsense. They were offensive and inflammatory. The best policy would have been to apologise and shut up'. The re-publication by certain European papers of the cartoons is dismissed as 'the idiot antics of a few continental journalists', whilst the mere suggestion by some of these papers that at least one or two of their British counterparts might consider following suit in the interests of press freedom is met with the lordly rejoinder that: 'The demand [sic] by foreign journalists that

British newspapers compound their offence shows that moral arrogance is as alive in the editing rooms of northern Europe as in the streets of Falluja’.

The conservative press in Britain is never happier than when calling for the censorship of broadcasters and film-makers, and equally prone to self-censor stories which don’t fit its own peculiar news agenda. Rarely, however, is the latter process quite so overt and unashamed as it was here. Such a situation is almost beyond parody. Almost, but not quite, thanks to an absolutely spot-on editorial in *Private Eye*. Entitled ‘A Free Press’, it deserves reproducing in full:

In this country we are fortunate to have a long tradition of press freedom ... jewel in the crown ... absolute right to publish cartoons ... cornerstone of liberty ... John Milton ... John Wilkes ... valiantly fought for ... hallmark of a truly civilised society ... bulwark of democracy ... naturally freedom not absolute ... John Locke ... need to respect others’ beliefs ... no licence to give gratuitous offence ... excitable chap, Johnny Muslim ... might get bomb through window ... got to be careful ... funny-looking bearded bloke in the car park ... perhaps this editorial’s a bit strong ... jolly good chaps, these Muslims ... we are right behind them in banning these cartoons ... those Danes should be strung up if you ask me ...

The ubiquitous Jenkins notwithstanding, the Danish cartoons affair does raise extremely pressing issues concerning press freedom. On the one hand, that freedom is generally taken to be one of the chief hallmarks of a democratic society. On the other, as I suggested above, the notion of press freedom has come to some extent to be re-defined in Britain, and now appears to include the ‘right’ of newspapers to say whatsoever they want about whomsoever they want – and in particular about ethnic communities, which, for years now, have been subjected by most of the press to a rising tide of misrepresentation, hostility and abuse which can only be described as institutionally racist. As Onora O’Neill (2002, 2004) has argued, the notion of press freedom based on a nineteenth century model in which a free press was seen as a bulwark against an overweening state and a champion of the powerless needs seriously re-thinking in order to take account of the fact that the modern media in general, and the press in particular, are now themselves some of the most powerful institutions in society. As O’Neill put it in the *Guardian*, 13 February: ‘Once we take account of the power of the media, we are not likely to think that they should enjoy unconditional freedom of expression. We do not think that corporations should have unrestricted rights to invent their balance sheets, or governments to damage or destroy the reputations of individuals or institutions, or to deceive their electorates. Yet contemporary liberal readings of the right to free speech often assume that we can safely accord the same freedom of expression to the powerless and the powerful’.

This question of power brings us right to the heart of the matter. For all newspapers’ daily espousal of neo-liberal economics, the British press can in no sense be described as a free market of ideas, and, sadly, we are a long way indeed from the ideal outlined by Ziauddin Sardar in the *Independent on Sunday*, 5 February, in which he argued that: ‘Freedom of expression is not about doing whatever we want to do because we can do it. It is about creating an open marketplace for ideals and debate where all, including the marginalised, can take part as equals’. My own view, however, is that this admirable



ideal is best served by empowering the powerless rather than by muzzling the powerful, and that newspapers, rather than being censored, should be allowed to ‘publish and be damned’ – damned in the marketplace, damned in the courts both of law and public opinion, and encouraged to become more accurate and less abusive by a statutory right of reply. Why? Because history shows us that censorship is used just as frequently, if not more frequently, against the powerless and marginal as against the dominant and mighty. Because, post 9/11 and 7/7 the last thing that the coinage of civil liberties needs is yet more clipping. And because we need to remember what was said by Salman Rushdie in the wake of the *Satanic Verses* affair:

What is freedom of expression? Without the freedom to offend, it ceases to exist. Without the freedom to challenge, even to satirise all orthodoxies, including religious orthodoxies, it ceases to exist. Language and the imagination cannot be imprisoned, or art will die, and with it, a little of what makes us human. (1992: 396)

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## Chapter Eleven: Comments to Julian Petley's article

*Barry White*

Before commenting on Julian's paper I would like to set it in a wider social context, and make some references to our experiences in the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF). A good background can be found in Tahir Abbas's collection of works in the book *Muslim Britain: Communities under Pressure* (2005). It provides real insight into the complexities and personalities of the south Asian Muslim communities, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The book is in four parts and its interdisciplinary approach is what gives it the edge over other books in the genre of "British Islam". Topics range from the historical and social background of Islam and its presence in the UK, the sociological concepts and phenomena of Islamophobia, identity politics and multiculturalism, and an important section on media representation of Islam. Specific issues include attitudes to *jihad*, Pakistanis in Northern Ireland, and the personal turmoil that Bangladeshi women went through as a result of post-11 September reactions, both from within and outside the community.

In Britain today there are some 1.6 million Muslims (2001 Census). The majority originally came from south Asia and the numbers peaked in the 1960s. They are the second largest religious group with 2.7 % of the UK population as against 71.6 % who considered themselves Christian. Most are concentrated into a small number of large urban areas such as: London, Birmingham, Greater Manchester, Leicester and Bradford.

Pakistanis and Bangladeshis represent the poorest minority populations in Britain. The same 2001 census showed them to be the most economically marginal of the minority ethnic groups in Britain. The broad picture of the census confirms that Muslims as a whole occupy an underprivileged position. They are also increasingly targeted by the extreme right, the British National Party, who use their religion to mask racist attacks. So much for a limited journey into background.

In his contribution Julian Petley identifies much of the British press as conservative and illiberal and only too willing to repeat and reflect closed and negative views of Islam post Rushdie and 11 September. They are, in the words of Friedrich von Hayek, one of the 'dealers in second hand ideas' and it is the press that more often than not influences the national agenda for the broadcasters and thus reaches a wider audience. There are national rather than regional daily newspapers, in England and Wales, which are London-centred – and there is a close relationship between editors and politicians. Despite all the concerns about falling circulation, the British still buy more than 11.7m national papers each weekday and 12.5 million on Sundays (Professor Peter Cole, *Media Guardian*, 20 August 2007). Readership is of course greater than sales, between two and three times it is estimated.

There is still a liberal press in Britain and although Julian Petley outlines his concerns about them, he also argues that they are less negative and more open in their coverage of Muslims and Islam. He also highlights editorials from these newspapers during the coverage of the Danish cartoons debate.

But then we come to the question of why Britain's conservative media refrained from reproducing the cartoons. As Gary Younge quite correctly pointed out in *The Guardian (UK)*, 4 February 2006:

The right to offend must come with at least one consequent right and one subsequent responsibility. If newspapers have the right to offend, then surely their targets have the right to be offended. Moreover, if you are bold enough to knowingly offend a community, then you should be bold enough to withstand the consequences, so long as that community expresses displeasure within the law'. As Julian Petley says: 'It's one thing to spew out anti-Muslim sentiment to no-one but your like-minded readers, but quite another to do so in the full glare of the global media spotlight, and when you're well aware of the treatment meted out to those papers, which, for whatever reasons, did re-publish the cartoons. Such a stance would have required both consistency and courage, two qualities conspicuously lacking in Britain's conservative press, which is a byword for hypocrisy and which is perfectly happy to attack the weak as long as there's no chance of the weak retaliating...

Of course we have been here before with the publication in 1988 of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. Julian Petley's closing remarks in his paper refer to it. I think it is worth revisiting this period for a few minutes. In his book *A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam*, (1990), Malise Ruthven offered a number of thought provoking theories about the Muslim campaign against Rushdie in Britain: that it had a great deal to do with inter-communal problems between Muslims and Hindus who originated from India; that it was a legitimate cry of despair by strictly religious people who were offended, but was subsequently taken over by the fundamentalist ideologues in an effort to control Muslim life in Britain; and that the protest had more to do with offended honour than matters of faith.

This penultimate point was taken up in the pages of *Free Press*, the journal of the CPBF. Writing on the formation of the Group 'Voices for Rushdie'. Elizabeth Block said of the group's founding statement that Voices rejected the attempts of fundamentalists in all guises to use the Rushdie affair to promote their own ends. The statement concluded: 'Salman Rushdie's right to write and publish is also our right to read, to think, to criticise, to dissent. In the face of appalling distortions of these issues by fundamentalists and racist forces, we cannot be silent.' These are indeed echoes of the debates we are having today.

Having touched on one of the responses of the CPBF to the Rushdie debates, I would like to discuss a few thoughts on the CPBF's responses to the cartoons.

The CPBF is an organisation linking trades unions and civil society who share concerns about media ownership and freedom. It is generally, but not completely, located 'on the left'. The publications of the cartoons in September 2005 created the largest amount of traffic on the CPBF's web site ([www.cpbf.org.uk](http://www.cpbf.org.uk)). In response to the increasing debate we put out the following statement on our web site 4 February 2006:

... The case has also been seized on by far-right groups to fuel race hatred, and, whilst certainly some of the papers which published the cartoons are politically conservative, this should not deter freedom of expression groups from stating their own positions clearly.

There are important principles, which need to be defended. One of these is that the right to freedom of opinion and expression is a fundamental right that safeguards the exercise of all other rights. It is a critical underpinning of democracy and applicable not only to 'information' or 'ideas' that are favourably received, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb.

Some of the cartoons published in the Danish paper may well be offensive to many Muslims (and may well be offensive to others, including cartoonists – some of the published cartoons are of poor quality), but charges of offence and blasphemy should not be deployed to curtail freedom of expression. The CPBF's position is that restrictions on freedom of expression which privilege certain ideas or beliefs cannot be justified.

European newspapers are also being put under unacceptable pressures, which can compromise the freedom of the press. Aidan White, General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, said that the dismissal of the editor of *France Soir*, 'sends a dangerous signal about unacceptable pressure on independent journalism.' The IFJ points out, 'Arab governments calling for political action against media are guilty of undue interference in the work of journalists.'

Clearly the row over the cartoons has dramatically revealed how fragile some of these important principles are. We need to avoid generating ever-more anger and confrontation in this case, but at the same time restate firmly that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are important foundations of European democratic society and need to be strongly defended.

What emerged from the ensuing debate was that sections of the left believed that Jyllands-Posten was not an innocent party to this controversy but an active participant in fomenting a political culture in Denmark that is systematically anti-immigrant and has led to the electoral success of the Danish People's Party (for whom a halt to immigration is a key demand). 'People who are genuinely interested in freedom of speech would do better to confront their governments who have stepped up their attacks on press freedom as part of anti-terror laws rather than focusing on an incident that was deliberately designed to provoke Muslims in the current political climate...' ran an article on *Free Press* 151 (March-April 2006) 'Freedom of speech – The need for context' by Des Freedman. A different view was put in the same debate by the then editor Granville Williams who wrote in defence of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. He pointed out that, in terms of context, the cartoons were published as part of a specific Danish debate concerning self-censorship and were in fact published with an article on self-censorship and freedom of expression. Granville went on to say that in his view the defence of freedom of expression and the press in no way diminished our ability to challenge racism. He concluded that the controversy had certainly made him more aware that there was not one single global definition of freedom of expression and that different viewpoints and cultures need to be respected, but the basic core issues still remained: the right to publish and the right to offend have to be defended.

I think there is another question to be considered – was the publication of the story and the cartoons in the public interest? Having heard Flemming Rose's arguments which confirm the background to publication I believe it was. We could of course take

up the entire session debating what is the public interest? Does publication serve the interests of citizens? Journalists can be guided by ethical codes. The BBC has published such a code which refers to this and so has the National Union of Journalists. Both include the phrase: 'There is a public interest in the freedom of expression itself.'

If we fast forward to the present we can see a new controversy shaping up. In January 2007 Channel Four broadcast a current affairs Dispatches documentary 'Undercover Mosque'. It followed an under-cover investigation into 'hard line Islamic fundamentalism' being preached in some British mosques. Ofcom, the broadcasting regulator, received some 350 complaints, including one from the Crown prosecution service and the West Midlands Police (the area in which the film was shot). It is this complaint, which alleged the programme's editing resulting in heavy distortion, that has aroused media and wider public interest. Channel Four remain confident that no-one in the film was misrepresented or taken out of context.

The complaints follow a period of intensive news media coverage of TV fakery and investigation into the misuse of premium rate phone services in games, quizzes and votes programmes, which has aroused considerable concerns about trust in the media. In addition one independent film company was shown to have misedited pictures of the British Queen. The affair became known as 'Queensgate'.

Whatever the outcome of Ofcom's investigation similar arguments that appeared in the Rushdie and Cartoons controversies are already emerging and the argument is unlikely to go away.

To return to the cartoons and the title of Julian Petley's chapter 'Time to rethink press freedom?' Julian Petley writes that ...

the Danish cartoons affair does raise extremely pressing issues concerning press freedom. On the one hand, that freedom is generally taken to be one of the chief hallmarks of a democratic society. On the other, as I suggested above, the notion of press freedom has come to some extent to be redefined in Britain, and now appears to include the 'right' of newspapers to say whatsoever they want about whomsoever they want – and in particular about ethnic communities, which, for years now, have been subjected by most of the press to a rising tide of misrepresentation, hostility and abuse which can only be described as institutionally racist...the notion of press freedom based on a nineteenth century model in which a free press was seen as a bulwark against an overweening state and a champion of the powerless needs seriously re-thinking in order to take account of the fact that the modern media in general, and the press in particular, are now themselves some of the most powerful institutions in society... the British press can in no sense be described as a free market of ideas. Freedom of expression is not about doing whatever we want to do because we can do it. It is about creating an open marketplace for ideals and debate where all, including the marginalised, can take part as equals.

In conclusion, I would echo Petley's view that freedom of expression is best served by empowering the powerless rather than by muzzling the powerful and that newspapers and other media rather than being censored, should be allowed to 'publish and be damned' – damned in the marketplace, in the courts both of law and public opinion and encouraged to become more accurate and less abusive by a right of reply.

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## Chapter Twelve: Conflicting Readings: The Cartoon Crisis seen from Pakistan

*Elisabeth Eide*

A view of ourselves as disconnected – as absolved from the obligation to know the “other” – is, given the nature of a system, to occidentalize by misinterpreting who we are, including the effects we have in the world.

Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington (1991,84)

Occidentalism seems poised to become the dominant discourse of the future. This means that attempts to theorise, understand and do something about it will become more common – and more necessary.

Ziauddin Sardar, 2004

The caricature controversy became a world issue which gave the Samuel Huntington phrase “Clash of Civilizations” extended attention in Pakistan, where one popular view was to see the caricatures as part of a Western conspiracy against the Muslim world. On the other hand, the leading Pakistani newspapers were significantly less unified in their approach than one might imagine from Europe.<sup>1</sup> The Pakistani background is complex. My ambition here is not to venture into fully-fledged explanations of the way in which the controversy happened, but to present a study of the press coverage in a country in which reactions to the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed were particularly strong.

### *A young nation*

Pakistan won its independence on 14 August 1947 after a controversial and bitter struggle prior to the partition of India. The country was initially – contrary to popular belief – not to be “based on Islam”, but would serve as a “home to Muslims”, the largest religious minority in Hindu-dominated India. The founding father of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was a secular-oriented president. After his death in 1948 followed both military and democratically elected rulers who gradually tended to be more lenient towards religious parties, and from 1956 Pakistan was constitutionally an Islamic state. The president at the time of the crisis, General Pervez Musharraf, had ruled the country since his military coup d’état in 1999, launching his slogan “enlightened moderation”, which may rhetorically be interpreted as a wish not to follow the path of leniency toward extremism.

1 This researcher became a special observer during a stay as a post-doctoral researcher at The University of the Punjab, Lahore. I landed in Pakistan just when the “cartoon crisis” broke out and stayed for almost half a year. I also have previous experience from Pakistan from 1987-1988.

Since its foundation, Pakistan has harboured a rather secular-oriented middle class. Simultaneously various religious parties have wanted the state to put more emphasis on Islam in the running of the country's affairs by fully implementing the Shari'a.<sup>2</sup> These parties experienced an upsurge of influence during the Afghanistan war (1979–), particularly in the period of Soviet occupation (1979-1989). This was due to their alignment with the more fundamentalist parts of the Afghan resistance to the Soviet occupants and (in some cases) the military dictator Zia ul-Haq's sponsoring of these (supported by the U.S. via ISI – Pakistani secret intelligence). The Soviets' attempts at modernization and secularization of Afghan society through military means; occupation and coercive violence were met with a growth in fundamentalist movements, but traditionalists<sup>3</sup> also gained political ground.

The war in Afghanistan has not come to an end, and the post 9-11 US invasion of the country has implied a growing opposition to Western states, in particular to the US, among the general public of Pakistan. Although President Musharraf was considered a close ally to President Bush in the global "war on terror", there were pockets in Pakistan where Taliban leaders seemingly move freely, implementing their codes of behaviour and recruiting a growing number of young men for the "jihad" against the US-led "Enduring Freedom" (and other foreign troops) and the present leaders in Kabul.

Although probably only a minority of people in Pakistan would want to side with Taliban, a degree of sympathy for them and other opposition to the Kabul leaders is rather widespread, as is the scepticism towards "the West" and what is considered its double standards.<sup>4</sup> A long-lasting critique of 'Western lifestyle', exposing what is widely considered as "against Islam" is another feature of parts of the press; thus (directly or more subtly) recommending a more religiously "pure" lifestyle. This scepticism may have been somewhat modified in some circles due to the upsurge in terrorist activities in Pakistan, leaving several hundred civilians dead, in 2008-2009; 2010 started with yet another attack, killing 93 in North West Frontier Province. Simultaneously the majority of the media and journalists would in 2006 warn against the "street power" of the "religious parties"<sup>5</sup> and their exploitation of controversies for their own political benefits. On the other hand, the media in controversies where Islam is threatened may tend to gravitate toward a "centre" of consensus which to a certain extent may benefit the same parties.

2 Jamaat-Islami (JI) and Jamiate Ulema Islami (JUI), part of the political coalition MMA.

3 I interpret fundamentalist as a movement emphasising the application of the Qur'an literally and strictly while opposing more liberal approaches. Traditionalism is considered as a direction blending fundamentalism with the local traditions of a given society – Taliban in Afghanistan may serve as an example of the latter, while the distinctions between the two are not always crystal clear.

4 Regarding human rights; Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib are frequently mentioned in Pakistani papers, as was also the Western non-acceptance of elected Hamas and previously the Algerian FIS.

5 "Street power" is a concept used by many Pakistani observers to describe the influence of parties like JI and JUI, while also emphasising that they do more poorly in national elections.



## *The press and press laws*

Pakistan has a considerable number of Urdu dailies and publications in regional/local languages (Punabi, Sindhi, Gujrati, Pushto), as well as 13 English language dailies largely catering to the educated elite of the country. The total number of publications considered to be nationwide is 173 (Orient Blue Book 2005). A commonly held view is that the English newspapers tend to be more liberal than the other press, partly due to their elite readership.<sup>6</sup> Their net publications probably reach much further than to the “paper audience” and are often read among the Diasporas living in Europe, North America and the Gulf States.

The laws in Pakistan have been gradually modified due to pressure from religious parties to become more in line with the Islamic Shari’a law, and this has led to a situation in which freedom of expression is more limited than when the state came into being.

As may be seen below, the present constitution of Pakistan implies important restrictions on the freedom of expression.

Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court or commission of or incitement to an offence.<sup>7</sup>

This article leaves much to interpretation, and may be used to severely limit freedom of expression if applied literally. By the constitution, blasphemy is considered one of the most serious crimes, in contrast to most European countries, and this has been used to attack religious minorities<sup>8</sup> In May 2005 Reporters Without Borders (RSF) published a list of 34 countries whose governments directly curbed Press freedoms, and there Pakistan was named alongside Iran, China, Bangladesh and Cuba, and in 2009 Pakistan was ranked number 159 on their Press Freedom Index for 2009, with Afghanistan number 149 and Saudi Arabia 163. This may seem partly unjust, since the multitude of press is very different from some of these states – and since the press, even under the country’s various dictatorships (the last one ending with the elections in 2008), has been able to voice a fair amount of harsh critique of leaders and powerful institutions.

6 On the whole, the newspaper readership is small, due to large illiteracy (appr. 50 %, UNESCO) and poverty.

7 Article 19 in the Pakistani constitution. In contrast, see for instance Article 19 in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

8 One example of alleged blasphemy happened in 2005, when Mr Ashiq Nabi from Nowshera was charged with blasphemy after, during a quarrel with his wife, was accused of hurling a copy of the Quran to the floor. The wife was the only witness, Nabi afterwards asked forgiveness, but a local cleric issued a *fatwa*, thus igniting local violence, and subsequently Nabi was killed by a mob of villagers (HRCP 2005.).

### *Materials: eight publications*

The amount of coverage of the cartoon issue in the Pakistani press was impressive. In this study it has been necessary to limit the scope mainly to the editorials and comments of six important papers, with special emphasis on the representation of “Freedom of expression” and representations of the “West”. Two prestigious monthlies and their comments are included to demonstrate the variety of views. In addition, some emphasis will be put on the first days of news coverage, concentrating on the two largest English language dailies, *The News* and *The Dawn*.<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the publications, see appendix 1.

The examination of the editorial material has been inspired by the methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), viewing editorials and comments as an important contribution to (and part of) discourses in the Pakistani public sphere and society, and thereby also as social practice and power relations. A model of analysis starts from the linguistic level, then considers the genre (here: editorials and comments) and finally the institutional-professional framework, thus finally aiming at understanding the editorials and their positioning in Pakistani society at-large (Fairclough 1995, Bhatia 1999, Eide 2002, 2006). Additionally, I will treat journalism as a ‘field’ of its own with a relative albeit weak autonomy (Bourdieu 1998, Benson & Neveu 2005), a field influenced by other fields, particularly the economic and the political fields. In Pakistan the *religious* field may be considered either as an important part of the political field, or as a field of its own, due to the important role played by religion in the country’s affairs. Since religion seems to be exploited by various politicians in their contest for power, the former seems more feasible.

### *Orientalism and Occidentalism*

The cartoon issue may be studied from various angles and perspectives. One perspective is the tradition of the Orientalism critique – and its presumed adversary Occidentalism (Said 1978, 1981, 1994, Carrier 1995, Buruma & Margalit 2005). The problem with both terms is that they are applied in several ways. While the world has become familiar with Said’s way of interpreting *Orientalism*, anthropologist James Carrier is said to have coined the term *Occidentalism*. By emphasising the dialectics between *Orient* and *Occident*, he claims that when defining what the *Orient* is like, Western anthropologists and other researchers define it in relation to something else, “habitually the environment in which they are situated. The *Orient* only took meaning in the context of another term, ‘the West’, and in the process (also) the West was subject to “essentializing simplifications” (Carrier 1995, 3).

9 Due to time and resources, it was difficult to obtain access to more than translated versions of a selection of editorials and comments from the main Urdu papers. In this respect I owe my gratitude to assistant Beenish Cheema, then part-time lecturer at Punjab University.

According to Carrier, another brand of Occidentalism occurs “in studies of the ways that people outside the West imagine themselves, for their self-image often develops in contrast to their stylized image of the West” (Carrier 1995, 6). The latter approach may however be less influential at the global level, where the *Orientalist* tradition is still considered strong, but at times maybe *more* influential on a local scale, due to the fact that it may be less challenged academically.<sup>10</sup> Adding Carrier’s to Said’s critique (1978, 1981, 1994), one may assume that simplified stereotypes travel both ways. But as Carrier mentions: “In this larger, inter-social arena, Westerners have been more powerful and hence better able than people elsewhere to construct and impose images of alien societies as they see fit” (Carrier 1995, 10).

Thus, the question of whose definition will be influential on an international scale may be viewed as linked to the nature of the prevailing hegemony. It is important to keep in mind that ‘the West’ constructed in studies of ‘the East’ may be a tacitly pre-supposed version of (a prototype of) the white, middle-class male U.S. Westerner, more than the “real” West, which harbours a diversity not taken into account in processes of simplification. And assuming the existence of such a West (when situated ‘outside’), the images constructed of the ‘we/they’ gap may be perceived as larger than reality, leading to polarization.

Another interpretation of Occidentalism has been presented with Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit (2004), as:

...the expression of bitter resentment toward an offensive display of superiority by the West, based on the alleged superiority of reason. More corrosive even than military imperialism is the imperialism of the mind imposed by spreading the Western belief in scientism, the faith in science as the only way to gain knowledge (Buruma and Margalit 2004, 95)

The four most important elements of Occidentalism mentioned by Buruma and Margalit are hostility to the city, revulsion for the material life, abhorrence of the western mind and hatred of the infidel.

In short, the two writers define Occidentalism as the “dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies” (op.cit.: 5). But when trying to clarify the term, they seem to exclude various other ways in which Othering of the west may take place, for example in the non-western media. This definition also seems less subtle in its suggestion of relations between representation and hegemony than the Orientalism critique. Buruma claims that wherever it occurs, *Occidentalism* is fed by a sense of *humiliation* or defeat (Buruma and Margalit 2004). While it is easy to recognise these factors, a question remains: May one not assume Occidentalist “counter-discursive” expressions, at times being fed by a feeling of *superiority* towards an imagined West and thus harbouring other than the ingredients mentioned above?

Ziauddin Sardar writes that Occidentalism, as constructed by Buruma and Margalit, “cannot be equated with Orientalism”, since Orientalism has a very long history and “is a discourse – a coherent structure of knowledge through which the west has un-

10 The traditional Orientalism (as discipline, studies of the East, and as literature) has been subject to critique for decades – as has Said’s critique by several scholars (Lewis, Al-Azm, Berg etc.).

derstood and represented the “Orient” and through which the west produces self-confirming accounts of the non-west (Sardar 2004). Sardar also questions Buruma & Margalit’s Occidentalism as “hatred of the western material life”, and suggests that the hate may have more to do with the state of poverty prevailing in the former colonies (op.cit.).

For this endeavour a broader approach seems more feasible, in which *Occidentalism* may be carefully interpreted as counter-discursive expressions of sorts, essentialising and simplifying “the West” as Other. This often takes place in a process often of equally simplifying self-definitions, and often from a defensive position or “defeat and humiliation”, but also at times from a position of ambition and rejection. Thus, an important question is whether the cartoon controversy led to an upsurge in essentialist and crude representations of an imagined “West” in Pakistani media, or whether a more differentiated coverage may be found. Do Pakistani media reject *freedom of expression*, thus demonstrating their difference from a presumed Western liberalism when it comes to certain religious issues? Or, do the interpretations of fundamental freedoms just differ to a degree from many views also found in Western countries? One hypothesis from the materials would be that the more elitist the publication, the more liberal and ‘understanding’ when it comes to pluralist perspectives on the cartoon issue.

### *The early news coverage*

As the news coverage of the issue in Pakistani newspapers was massive, this analysis will concentrate on news items only from a few early days of February, after the first demonstrations broke out.<sup>11</sup>

In *The News* a front page article carried the headline “Worldwide protests against blasphemous cartoons: Passions inflamed in Muslim world” (3. February.2006), thus from the early phase indicating the global character of the issue and the presupposed unified reactions of the Muslim Ummah. This news report carries stories from Gaza, from Paris and from two cities in Pakistan where early rallies took place (Lahore and Multan). It is illustrated by a picture from Gaza, in which two activists point their machine guns at a signboard of the European Commission. The paper also cites the Danish Foreign Minister and foresees more anger after the Friday prayers which were to take place on the same day.

The concept “blasphemous cartoons” was to be one of the main denominators for the *Jyllands-Posten* caricatures throughout much coverage in Pakistan – both in news, editorials and comments. In this early phase the most important demand of the demonstrators seems to have been an apology from the Danish government – and, addressing the Pakistani government – a call for severing of diplomatic and trade ties with Denmark, France and Norway. Speakers simultaneously condemned the “apathy of Muslim

11 It has been difficult to gather complete material, due to problems with archive systems and access to these, therefore this chapter does not carry a comprehensive quantitative analysis.

rulers towards the attack on the most sacred personality” (op.cit.). *The News* cites a religious leader from Multan stating that “It is no justification that press is free” (op.cit.). On the other hand, *The News* also quotes both the apology of *France Soir*’s owner – and the French paper’s editorial, the latter defending the publication. Furthermore it refers to the Muslims in Denmark as being not satisfied with an apology from *Jyllands-Posten*, but simultaneously the paper is also calling for less harsh reactions from the rest of the Muslim world.

The other articles in the same issue are shorter, and when illustrated they show angry, shouting men with banners and/or raised fists. There were many more of these to come in the following weeks, but all were not showing aggression.<sup>12</sup> Already the next day several papers – among them both *The Dawn* and *The News* – report about official Pakistani reactions to the publication. The Senate, the National Assembly, Province Assemblies and President Musharraf all condemned the cartoons, and the parliament called for government action. Musharraf is quoted as saying that “such acts would encourage those who speak of clash of civilizations. [...] “They have inflamed our sentiments and in the strongest terms I condemn it. [...] Any educated person who has any understanding of the situation around the world would not like to hurt the sentiments of the Muslims,” the president said.” (*Dawn* 4. February 2006)

The reactions from the assemblies were cautious, calling for diplomatic protests and summoning ambassadors, but no boycott was mentioned. On the same day, *Dawn* reported from a large demonstration in Karachi, under the headline: “Govt asked to withdraw envoys from EU states” (4. February 2006), under a photo of enraged men. These photos, often found in the European press, are typical for coverage also in Pakistan, but supposedly do not carry the same, negative connotation in a Pakistani audience, where the anger is more understood, even supported, at least as long as the demonstrations do not cause any damage.

All in all, the first news coverage may be summarised in three categories: the representation of national official reactions; government, parliament, or provincial level institutions,<sup>13</sup> all moderately angered); the representation of national “street reactions”, i.e. demonstrations in various Pakistani cities (more aggressive); and of international reactions, both on the street and in higher circles. The coverage faithfully referred the reactions from both above and below, while the illustrations tended to deal with the “street reactions”, both at home and abroad. It remained rather loyal to the political elite and establishment, and the cartoon issue seems widely regarded as uniting the nation.

12 Some were of female demonstrators, some veiled and even more unveiled, while still others showed people in specific peaceful positions (lying down) signalling sadness.

13 Already on 5 February, the Foreign Office in Pakistan summoned nine diplomatic envoys over the cartoon issue: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Holland, Hungary, Norway and the Czech Republic; Danish envoys having been summoned before. The note to the various missions is harsh: “Such irresponsible acts would seriously jeopardize our common endeavours for enhancing understanding and cooperation between cultures and encourage sinister agendas for clash of civilizations.” (*Dawn* 5. February 2006.).

It is a feature of much early coverage that the Pakistani press – referring to the public opinion (some exceptions may be seen below) – does not seem to differ between the Danish (or Norwegian or other) *state* and the *press*. This may be linked to historical experience: in Pakistan as well as many other countries one is used to the state having much of a say when it comes to media content.

*Phases: From anger to worry and reflexivity*

In the following, some texts, mainly editorials, are selected for special scrutiny, and others grouped around them as comments to such “mainstream opinions” reflecting the political thinking of the various publications and opinionated intellectuals. The coverage of the cartoon issue in Pakistan – now focussing on editorials and columns – may be divided into three phases.

Phase 1: The Discourse of Disgust (Feb 1-14)

The initial reactions also in the editorials were communicating anger and condemnation of the European publishers, accompanied by reflections around the concept of freedom of expression and its limits. An undercurrent warned against exceeded and violent reactions; other undercurrents (some columnists) advocated punishment for the publishers and cartoonists as well as trade boycott of the countries in which the cartoons were published. Several comments suggested that the caricatures were part of a larger Western conspiracy against the Muslim world.

The traditionally liberal and prestigious English newspaper *Dawn* in its initial reaction had a harsh tone in characterising the caricatures: they are “offensive [...] blasphemous material”, also labelled as “the warped output of some cartoonist’s weird imagination” (*Dawn*, editorial, 4. February 2006). The sincerity of the Danish and other publishers is doubted: “This is *supposed to be* an assertion of press freedom on the part of these newspapers” (e.a.) Furthermore the editorial appeals to tradition:

There is an old conundrum about where one person’s freedom ends, and the other’s begins. In the subcontinent, with its multiplicity of religions and beliefs, newspapers (as indeed the broad mass of the people) have learnt to respect religious and ethnic sensibilities and do not confuse freedom of expression with freedom to ridicule a religion or a religious figure. The media here believes that, with its reach, it has a special responsibility in this regard as opposed to political groups or individual writers, etc., who can say or write what they want to. The “Christian West” and “Jewish Israel” are often referred to in derogatory terms in the political discourse in the Muslim world, but none of the revered figures in the two religions are ridiculed or caricatured because they are all equally revered by Muslims (op.cit.).

Interestingly, this editorial does not refer to Pakistan, but to *the entire subcontinent* (at least including the original India, with Bangladesh) and lauds the press for its sensibility. This lauding may be interpreted as a euphemism, considering past communal

conflicts and mutual accusations of terrorist acts (“foreign hands” involved), especially seen in Indo-Pak relations.

The unity of the three religions is emphasised by mentioning the fact that prophets in Judaism and Christianity are also sacred to Muslims. Interestingly, this text also reflects critically on discourses of the Muslim world and their derogatory ways. Furthermore, the way *Dawn* underlines the special responsibility of the *media* – as opposed to politicians and others who “can say and write what they want to” – may be interpreted in two ways, both as giving the media a status as the nation’s consciousness, and on the other hand an euphemism for the actual situation for freedom of *expression* in Pakistan.<sup>14</sup>

This unity finds an echo in *Nawa-e-Waqt* who also describes the caricatures as blasphemous, hurtful, shameless and undignified – thus demonstrating a *discourse of disgust*. The editorial sees the publication as part of a larger strategy:

Freedom of expression does not imply freedom from morals, values and regulations but stands for the protection and respect of religious and social values. [...] Every enlightened Jew and Christian scholar and journalist is well aware of Muslims’ sentiments and beliefs regarding Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).<sup>15</sup> In this context the publication of cartoons and their defence on the pretext of freedom of expression appears to be a well thought out strategy. (*Nawa-e-Waqt* 8. February 2006)

What this Urdu newspaper adds here, is the *discourse of conspiracy*. They suggest that the cartoons were meant to provoke, and the headline repeating Huntington’s title underlines the *we/them*-theme of the text.

Already from the start *Dawn* found it necessary to warn against exaggerated reactions. Another factor which is underlined in many comments as well is the reference to *Diaspora*:

The media in Europe has perhaps *yet to become accustomed to* the large and growing Muslim presence on the continent and finds it even more difficult to be understanding of Muslim beliefs in the current confusion about Islam and terrorism. The right to blasphemy is not one of the rights of the press, however free it may consider itself to be, and the extensive reproduction of blasphemous material cannot be seen as anything but a deliberate affront. (*Dawn*, 4. February 2006, e.a.)

With the expression “deliberate affront”, *Dawn* joins the conspiracy discourse, but otherwise it tries to balance its approach with the discourse of *freedom under responsibility*, which is frequently seen also in various opinion pieces.

The editorial hopes that “a greater sense of responsibility will gradually evolve” toward the religious sentiments “of the many communities in Europe”. Thus this editor from Karachi offers advice to his colleagues in the West about responsible journalism, the whole editorial contrasting the sensibility of the “eastern” media to the “western” ones seemingly lagging behind (“has perhaps yet to ...”) and in need of adjustment to

14 *The News* carried a small item about a college teacher who defended the cartoons in class, and subsequently was sacked from his position, having to leave the same day.

15 PBUH means “Peace be upon him”, very often added when mentioning the Prophet Mohammad.

modern-day development as well as a better understanding of the responsibilities of the press. Between the lines one may read an essentialisation of the sensible *we* as opposed to the irresponsible *they* (“media in Europe”), not taking into consideration the various practices of the latter or diverging views on Free Expression. A *reversed development discourse* may be seen; here the western media are taken to task and asked to adjust themselves to modern-day development, a world of migration and Diaspora. The editorial reflects on and tries to understand the sentiments of the people, showing more knowledge of the western media than the ‘common man’:<sup>16</sup>

On the part of the Muslim countries, most of them are used to a controlled media and whenever something gets written in the western press about Islam, they think that the government of the country concerned is somehow complicit. This leads to governments getting involved, as the authorities in Syria, Libya and Saudi Arabia have done. If there is a moral to be drawn from the present episode, condemnable as it is, it is that we must all respect each other’s religious sensitivities and be more tolerant of each other’s views. (op.cit.)

Furthermore, the editorial appeals to tolerance and warns against “violent action”. A few days later *The News* also warns against violence in an editorial commemorating the martyrs of Karbala,<sup>17</sup> and advocates that Muslims should “learn from history” and “follow the original message of Islam that has been distorted by our enemies as well as those from within who besmirch the good name of this great faith through acts of demagoguery and senseless violence”, thus joining the ranks of the moderates (*The News*, 9. February 2006).

Two regular columnists in *Jang* strongly condemn the caricatures. M. Tufail raises the question of whether the European media have used freedom of expression as a *pretext* to insult *other* prophets or religious leaders: “Legally freedom of expression does not permit anyone to hurt the feelings or violate human rights, but why were such restrictions not placed on the media in relation to 140 crore<sup>18</sup> Muslims?” Tufail also underlines what he perceives at the double standards of the west and asks whether this kind of freedom of expression is equivalent to terrorism, or provocation of violence... (*Jang*, 07. February 2006). Syed Anwar Qidwai laments the fact that ...

Muslims all over the world are protesting over the blasphemous cartoons but neither Europe nor UN has taken any positive steps in relation to such sacrilege or to stop the publication of cartoons. [...] Democracy ensures the right of religious freedom, such religious freedom is also included in the charter of the UN. Why, then in the presence of such articles are the Muslims being insulted on the pretext of freedom of expression and freedom of the press. [...] Cartoons are a blow to

16 As it were, I got used to lines like “Norway printed the blasphemous cartoons” from men in the street and from students as well as some academics, although in Norway most people had barely heard about the small periodical *Magazinet* that printed the twelve cartoons.

17 This battle took part in year 680 in Karbala, present-day Iraq, between relatives of the Prophet Mohammad, particularly his grandson Hussain bin Ali – against the Umayyad Kalif Yazid I, who had several thousand men against Ali’s less than hundred, who were surrounded and starved before they were slaughtered.

18 One crore = 10 million, i.e. the number suggested is 1400 million Muslims. Other estimates are lower.



interreligious dialogue and the cartoonists should be punished to set an example for others” (Jang 11. February 2006).

Qidwai both underlines the need for dialogue and asks for punishment to avoid further insults. This may indicate a lack of willingness to see the world from the European side and may be seen as mirroring a similar kind of unwillingness on the part of the newspapers in Europe publishing the cartoons: lacking the sensitivity to imagine the magnitude of the insult or its consequences for the ongoing interreligious dialogue. *Jang*'s columnist seems to posit freedom of religion above freedom of expression, the latter a potential threat to the former.

*Daily Times* appeals to European editors asking them to consider cultural sensitivity, while first referring to the printing of “a cartoon strip” and the protests that followed. The editorial also mentions *Reporters without Borders* and their support to the ones who decided to publish the cartoons.

... saying that the reaction in the Arab world “betrays a lack of understanding “of press freedom as “an essential accomplishment of democracy”. None of this has served the cause of bridging the gap between the Muslim world and the West, already torn by a growing chasm since the events of September 11, 2001. (The Daily Times, 4. February 2006)

This editorial places the responsibility for the increased gap on the shoulders of what it sees as irresponsible Western press leaders by combining printing of the caricatures with references to armed groups' threats and unrest in several Arab countries. Furthermore the editorial points at European secularism and double standards and thereby advocates a more complicated approach to freedom of expression:

The decision to publish the cartoons is indefensible and the employment of freedom-of-expression argument is the worst excuse that can be used to justify it. Let's consider.

Europe has evolved along a certain trajectory that has seen the influence of religion wane to the point of becoming non-existent. There is a general acceptance that Christianity can be caricatured even though Christian groups that still put some premium on religion continue to protest such acts. However, even as religion has been displaced, in its place we have theologies like the French Jacobin secularism and political correctness. [...] The French decision to not allow freedom of religion is one manifestation of it; the use of language in a certain way and the non-acceptance of certain categories of social behaviour are others. This shows that the issue of freedom of expression is more complex than the way the European newspapers printing the highly offending cartoons have posited. (ibid)

The metaphor “Jacobin” secularism may be meant to provoke negative sentiments, since the Jacobins were held responsible for the harsh second phase of the French revolution in which there was little tolerance for deviant views and consequently killing of many innocents. In other (more modern) terms; how can the French, who do not allow hijab in their schools, raise the banner of freedom? “Political correctness” is equalled with fundamental secularism. Between the lines one may read an analysis of political trends in line with Tariq Ali's and Johan Galtung's suggestions of what really is at stake: a “Clash of Fundamentalisms”, not civilizations (Ali 2002, Galtung 2002).

The editorial also quotes a phrase which is found elsewhere in the press material from Pakistan: “The reason [for the Muslim reaction to the caricatures] is simple: the

limit of one's freedom to punch ends where the other person's nose begins." This view, popular among Pakistani writers, may be interpreted as being in line with the warnings against hate speech and propaganda found in the UN charter and also in the constitutions of many countries as they looked in 2006. Or the appeal to always stop where another person's nose begins may if interpreted more rigidly, lead to a brutal curb on critique against religious practices and standards; which would seriously encourage both censorship and self-censorship. The editorial invites a dialogue though, and warns against violent actions:

What the European newspapers have done is deliberate and aimed at provocation. If there were a violent Muslim reaction to this insult, it would only feed into the current atmosphere of hate and the feeling of resentment and that is definitely not in league with efforts at bridging differences. If Europe really wants a dialogue with the Muslim world, it must begin by understanding the sentiments of Muslims and how much the Muslims revere their religion and the Prophet (PBUH). Real understanding comes with respecting others, not denigrating them.

This is where Europe has fallen short. The governments and the peoples of Europe should begin to appreciate the world they live in. Not long ago the Europeans fought each other on the basis of sects and religions. It was because religion played a very important role in their lives. It still does in the lives of some people (Ibid).

Here, the concept of "development" is conceived differently from the Dawn editorial: Europe has abandoned religion, while in Pakistan it "still" lingers on. What Europeans did in history, Muslims and others on the subcontinent *still* practise. Stuart Hall quotes Roberts, stating that "Modern history can be defined as the approach march to the age dominated by the West" (Hall 1992, 278). The editorial may be said to refer – and maybe ironically so – to the traditional *linear development discourse*, well known from other press history (see for example Eide & Simonsen 2008).

The difference (in level of this approach) is also emphasised by positing an incommensurable binary: *Muslims* versus *Europeans*, underlining the secularisation of Europe, and the "still" not so secular Muslim world. Another aspect of the above is a suggestion that the caricatures represented a repetition of the *conspiracy discourse* ("deliberate"), and a third, the way the editorial puts "governments and people" (presumably also media) of Europe in one basket, unlike *Dawn*, emphasising the independence of European media from their governments. In one specific article in *the News* journalist Shahina Maqbool interviews several Pakistani cartoonists "on blasphemous sketching".<sup>19</sup> They unanimously condemn the caricatures, with very strong statements indeed ("third rate", "bigoted approach", "bad-taste cartoons", "planted by some wicked person", "huge injustice", "extremely immature and sadistic sense of humour based on ignorance and hatred", "a mischief of the Zionists", "the extremist approach of the Western media"). Javed Iqbal from *Jang* reflects upon the situation and tries to explore the differences between societies:

Every cartoonist has to follow a code of ethics. I, for one, would never discuss religion. Cartoons on sex and religion are prohibited in our culture. In the west, however, their best cartoons are on

19 This is not part of the editorials or columns, but a special case, where the Pakistani cartoonists speak, thus of great importance.

these two subjects. [...] On the one hand, they [Westerners] call us fanatics, and on the other, they themselves have inflamed the sentiments of the Muslims. No matter how modern we are, no Muslim can tolerate an attack on his religion and on Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). (The News 9. February.2006)<sup>20</sup>

His conclusion is rather optimistic, since he is “sure they will not repeat this in the future”. Others ask Westerners to do some rethinking when it comes to freedom of expression and express their concern at the “widening gulf between the West and the Muslim world”.

One of the regular columnists of *The News*, Shireen M. Mazari,<sup>21</sup> investigated the texts of the French and Norwegian constitutions on freedom of expression and defamation. She also quoted the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Her aim was to demonstrate that the political authorities in Europe could have taken action, and “sued the paper [Jyllands-Posten or others] for breaking the law of the land”. She demonstrated that the paragraphs concerning freedom of the press in Europe are not without reservations that may be used legally.

So let us be clear about this so-called “freedom of expression” and the claimed legal helplessness of the European governments to take action against the papers printing the offensive cartoons. All this is absolute rubbish and this is where Muslims can take on the guilty in a non-violent and legal manner. (Shireen M. Mazari, *The News* 8 February 2006)

By not being simultaneously aware of the dormant character of paragraphs concerning blasphemy or defamation,<sup>22</sup> Mazari treated the case as a “straight legal issue”: The laws should be respected. She ended her column by stating that violence always backfires, and thus echoed the warnings from several other voices in the press. It did not help much.

## Phase 2: Street Rage and Self-flagellation (Feb 15-22)

This short period may be labelled “The horror”. Five persons in Pakistan were killed, mainly after some demonstrators in Lahore and Peshawar “went wild” and started burning down what seemed like Western property.<sup>23</sup> The press demonstrated its self-flagellating abilities by turning emphasis more inward, towards the unruly elements destroying Pakistani lives and property and the authorities not preventing them from doing so. Important arguments put forward were how the misbehaviour might hurt

20 It should be mentioned – from a generic perspective that the journalist in this case starts the enquete with a rather strong condemnation of the caricatures; in other words a rather hybrid genre is at play here.

21 She is Director General of the Institute of Strategic Studies in Islamabad.

22 The Norwegian paragraph on blasphemy was last applied in 1933.

23 This might often be symbols of the West, like Junk food cafés, Telenor signboards, and Pakistani-owned houses partly leased by Western companies, but also ordinary Pakistani trucks, banks and cars were destroyed and burned, and looting took place demonstrating how criminal elements saw their opportunity.

Pakistan's international reputation – and also make life more difficult for people belonging to the Pakistani Diaspora. Much blame was also directed at the Islamist leaders and organisers of some rallies. On the other hand, the anger was still kept up by both editorials and comments – blaming *Jyllands-Posten* for having incited this controversy.

After two days of violent demonstrations Karachi-based *Dawn* accused the authorities of not preventing the riots, challenging the chief minister of Punjab in particular. Thanks to the unruly elements, the initial protests risked being overlooked:

The hurt and outrage felt by Muslims at the blasphemous cartoons published in European countries is in danger of being pushed into the background by the wave of destruction that has engulfed us; justified protests, made legally and peacefully, and in concert by Muslim countries, will lose force. The image now in vogue of Muslim societies as volatile and excitable will be reinforced. [...] Governments in Muslim countries seeking to sponsor or participate in the anti-blasphemy demonstration should be careful: in their effort to take the sting out of the fundamentalists' frenzy or to prove themselves more Muslim than the latter, they might only be weakening their own position. (Dawn editorial, 16.2.2006)

This editorial explicitly states that the fundamentalist forces in Pakistan may have everything to gain by the continued protests, and thus voices its liberal fear of such a development. The context is the declaration of new plans for protest demonstrations in the weeks to come. The paper further asks whether the riots may scare foreign investors away and admits that riots turning violent may also make Western governments “realize that the cartoons [...] have handed Muslim extremists with a new issue on a platter” (op.cit.). The editorial presupposes a shared “hurt and outrage” by all Muslims faced with the cartoons. But while it is certainly the case for a majority of Muslims, there may also be exceptions to the rule.

In the end, the editorial also admits that the protests against the caricatures have been used for other issues (amply shown by demonstrators burning effigies of Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and George W. Bush, and Danish and U.S. flags):

A fresh opportunity has been provided to give a religious turn to what is essentially a political issue – America's colonial obsession with controlling the world and its readiness to transgress all lines and borders in pursuit of its aggressive intent. Trying to prevent this needs wisdom, a sense of responsibility and courage rather than the foolhardiness of burning buildings and looting shops (Ibid).

Compared to the previous editorial from 4 February, the main advice of this text is not addressed to Europeans being insensitive to recent developments and religious feelings, but to the leaders of Pakistan as well as politically engaged groups and individuals. The perspective had shifted: The cartoons were first perceived as a bone of contention from the West, but the violent protests converted some of the anger into introspection and internal blame.

The more conservative *The Nation* seems to have a more ambiguous approach. In its first editorial after the clashes, the paper defends the Muslims' right to be “agitated and express their anger”, while simultaneously blaming the authorities for the unruliness which lead to burning, looting and the killing of two men. (*The Nation* 15. Febru-

ary 2006, *Delicate handling*). A few days later the editorials express concern of the violence and advocate more peaceful reactions (17. February 2006: *Writing on the wall*). Still the main blame is addressed to the authorities: “Indiscriminate arrests are likely to add fuel to the fire instead of improving the situation.” (19. February 2006: *How not to handle protests*).

The editor of *Daily Times* characterises the situation in the streets of Lahore (where the paper’s headquarters are situated) as “mob rule” and furthermore focuses at Pakistan’s image problem:

The destruction was seen on TV by the rest of the country and the world at large. School and college boys had entered the streets with clubs in their hands. It was obvious that the march was planned to be violent. The way they set about breaking the cars and then setting fire to them was no spontaneous response to provocation. [...] Intelligence sources told Daily Times that the chain of violent incidents was orchestrated by a group of trained young activists of religious organisations. (Daily Times, editorial, 16. February 2006)

Since the whole world now witnessed street hooligans changing the protest to looting and burning, the shame of the situation was underlined. The editorial voices worry over businesses losing profits: “This destruction will hurt Pakistan’s economy.” (Lahore shops were deprived of special custom from thousands of Indian visitors who had to remain locked up in their hotels.)

The editorial in large parts narrates what went on during the “day of shame”. The bitterness toward religious parties who exploited the situation and did not prevent the mob from going wild, is emphasised by the way certain religious institutions are presented: ...“after the provincial government allowed the “ulema” of 22 organisations [...] to stage a protest march in Lahore against Denmark in particular and Europe and the West in general”. Ulema is a concept used for an assembly of religiously learned people, but *Daily Times* clearly does not want to recognise any of the rallying groups as being part of a *real* ulema. The editorial concludes using a universal analogy:

In their attempt to be holier than the mullahs, the Chaudrys of Gujrat have lost their bearings. It is time General Musharraf knocked some sense into them. This sort of nonsense cannot be allowed to continue to hurt the nation-state (Ibid).

Here is a parallel to the European idiom “more Catholic than the Pope” in the shape of accusing the authorities who should have provided law and order but instead seemed to yield their power to the extremists. In addition, the appeal to the country’s unelected dictator is somewhat surprising from a paper normally adherent to critical and democratic ideals, but may be interpreted as a “lesser of two evils”-philosophy.

*Jang*’s editorial view is expressed in the headline: “Protests should be discontinued after newspaper’s [*Jyllands-Posten*] apology”, and shows concern about the violence with a dual perspective, stating that “freedom of expression and journalism” has led to various instances where Muslims have become the target (*Jang* 21. February 2006).

### Phase 3: David Irving comes to Pakistan (Feb 23- March 5)

In this period of aftermath, there seems to be more room for reflection, but religious parties tried to keep the issue hot (according to several columnists: for their own benefit), while others gradually lose interest. Now the protests against the cartoons were increasingly merged with other issues, for example protests against the coming visit of George W. Bush (3. March 2006) to Pakistan and the soaring food prices. In other words, the anger was still there, but now more distinctly diversified.

In Austria, British controversial historian David Irving was sentenced to three years imprisonment for speeches he made in 1989 denying the authenticity of the Holocaust. Pakistani media covered this issue broadly, and this coverage was often linked to the caricature issue.

One of the regular commentators for *Nawa-e-Waqt*, Qazi Mustafa Kamil, calls the Western defence of freedom of expression “false” by referring to David Irving’s lack of freedom to air his views or to insult Jews (28 February.2006).

*The Nation* in its editorial on this issue also highlights what it considers to be European double standards and states that in spite of David Irving having expressed his regrets, he is still sentenced.

Mr. Irving’s sentence comes at a time when the West is dishing out the popular theory of freedom of expression to the Muslim World in support of publishing blasphemous cartoons. This lays bare the hypocrisy lying at the very roots of Western ideology. [...]It goes without saying that the intensity of the blasphemous cartoons is much more on religious grounds compared to the ethnic context of the Holocaust. Still the West makes it an issue of freedom of expression. (The Nation, editorial, 22. February.2006)

This is a rather unique example of characterising the right to freedom of expression – as a “popular theory”, but may be interpreted as sarcasm linked to the way in which Irving in practice is denied this right.

*Dawn* points to the European countries “aggressively defending the right to freedom of speech” and concludes that the sentencing of David Irving is “bound to open a debate on Western double standards” (22. February 2006). The editorial reminds readers that the cartoons were defended by both editors and the European Union itself “which attaches a great deal of importance to the freedom of expression but criminalizes any denial of the Holocaust.” (op.cit.). Furthermore, the editorial states:

If Europe is sincere about defending its societies’ right to freedom of speech, it must also concede the right to question the veracity of historical experiences, however uncomfortable it may make society feel in some cases. The Holocaust was a tragic event but any study or analysis of it cannot be hampered by laws that do not allow an honest exploration of the events surrounding it. [...] If the Muslim world has to learn to respect ideals that go against its beliefs and convictions, the same must be true of Europeans. People must be allowed to hear all views and come to their own conclusions. (Dawn, editorial, 23. February.2006)

In the above text a presupposition is embedded: that David Irving may be viewed as an “honest explorer” of the Holocaust events, and that more exploration into this history

is needed, even if “uncomfortable”. The Holocaust itself is euphemistically characterised as a “tragic event”.

*Daily Times* addresses the same issue two days later, and the editorial starts very distinctly by declaring that “Free Europe is not so free after all”. It then gives an outline of David Irving’s sentence and the law he was violating. The text also compares Irving to other academics who have been disgraced for plagiarism or faking research, plus athletes caught using drugs: “But none has ever gone to jail. The disgrace itself is enough.” The editor questions the fairness of jailing Irving for his views, “even if he is wrong”.

Furthermore, his sentence could not have come at a more unpropitious time, just as Europe is raising the flag of “free speech” to justify the publication of grossly offensive caricatures of Prophet Muhammad [...] If free speech indeed means no holds barred, then Mr Irving should be a free man. That he is not makes it important to put the cartoon affair in the proper context. [...] Europe cannot afford to go back to its anti-Semitic past whose name still stands out in the existence of the word pogrom. All this is fine. But why can we not apply the same benchmark to other sensitivities involving over a billion people? If it is clear that some people – forget the Muslims – revere their prophet, should others be allowed to make fun of their beliefs, especially if it can be proved – and is clear – that such an action is based on racism and double standards? (Daily Times, editorial, 25. February.2006)

The editorial recommends universalist thinking by the excerpt “forget the Muslims”, implying that this controversy is more about decency toward religious people in general. It is also, more explicitly than *Dawn*, in line with the “European” view on Holocaust, demonstrating knowledge about how the history of anti-Semitism paved the way for Nazism. But the *double standards discourse* seems to be the most prominent: where to draw the line when it comes to insulting other people’s feelings and beliefs? Should the threshold for freedom of speech be lower when it comes to Muslims than insulting Jews?

Again “Europe” is treated as an entity, in the same way as European media often treat “Africa” (more seldom Asia, more often Muslims) as an entity, a country of sorts, thus depriving the continent its variety of nations, cultures, religions and points of view.

### *The monthlies*

Due to practical reasons (routines & schedules) the magazines *Herald* and *Newsline* covered the cartoon controversy only in the third phase, both in their March issues. Their coverage differs substantially from the daily newspapers, by being more lenient towards a “Western” perspective. Since the readership of these is even smaller than in the case of the English language newspapers, it is likely that the editors and writers can afford a larger degree of liberality.

Nadir Hassan in a three page comment in *Herald*<sup>24</sup> tries to explain the motives of Jyllands-Posten's publication, by stating that the caricatures were created

... not in a void, but in response to the very real climate of fear created by Islam in Europe. [...] The cartoonists' fears seem well grounded on a continent where the Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh was stabbed to death by a radical Muslim and Dutch politicians, including the Somali-born Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who has converted from Islam to Christianity and spoken out against the treatment of Muslim women, must live in protective confinement. Such examples seem to justify Rose's original concern that Europe's hard-fought freedom of expression is now at stake. (Nadir Hassan, *Herald*, March 2006)

This columnist furthermore considers the radical Islamists as a threat to European freedom of expression, the "real controversy here is not that the Europeans hate Islam but that the continent has taken secularism so far that any public acknowledgement of religion is considered a threat to liberty" (op.cit.).

In this comment, "Europe" is again largely treated as an entity, and so is "Islam" on that continent, supported by a few extreme examples. The writer also challenges the views of Tony Blair and other leaders who claim that "free speech does not include the right to offend one's own or another's faith". According to him this argument

... fails to note that freedom of speech, if it has any purpose at all, exists to protect unpopular political speech. By printing the cartoons, Jyllands-Posten has exposed the violence of radical Islamists and highlighted Europe's increasing willingness to curtail certain freedoms. [...] Without the right to offend, the world would be bereft of important satirical and dissenting voices. [...] A little over a decade ago, British author Anthony Burgess wrote an epic poem *Byrnie* in which a European Union conference is bombed by Muslim extremists offended by a statue of the anti-Muslim poet Dante. With radical Islamists winning the battle over their right to censor the media and European governments serving as their enablers, Burgess' dystopian nightmare seems to have come to pass (Ibid).

These expressions made by the one comment highlighted in the March issue, demonstrates the willingness of *Herald* to challenge a rather massive consensus in Pakistan of freedom of expression being accepted as limited by certain sensitivities. In addition, the writer highlights his own (Western) cultural capital in the punchline by quoting a famous author – and by possessing detailed knowledge of European events. This text is the most "secularised" and "understanding-of-presumed-European-values" in the sample.

*Newsline*<sup>25</sup> invited the Director General of the Human Rights Commission (HRCP) in Pakistan to deliver the comment which, as in *Herald*, is placed after the cover story. I. A. Rehman states that the events "constitute one of those exceptional cases when something can be said for all the parties involved and much more can be said against

24 "Crossing the line", *Herald*, March 2006.

25 *Newsline* was the magazine that covered the story of "Reconciliation in Oslo", in which it is exposed that "Norwegian-Pakistanis played a key role in defusing a potentially explosive situation in Norway."



them.” This very first paragraph of the comment signals a “balanced” approach.<sup>26</sup> Rehman then moves on to (one of) the cartoonists:

Whatever the provocation, he stumbled into a grave error when he apparently tried to trace the roots of terrorism in the Islamic belief. Muslims have only recently joined the roll of terrorists. Those senior to them belonged to other religious denominations, while some claimed to be non-believers. Their actions were not attributed to the founders of their faiths. The singling out of Muslim faith for the authorship of terrorism amounted to a dangerous provocation. (I.A. Rehman, Newline March 2006)

The magazine’s selection of commentator is important, as the Human Rights Commission is associated with the defence of freedom of expression in a large number of cases. Besides, Rehman, a seasoned editor and journalist, is associated with professional authority. Rehman disagrees with “some Muslim groups” who have demanded new laws to prevent attacks on sacred personages, since “the human rights code already bars attacks on founders of religions and the beliefs of various communities”. He also refers to several other conventions, among them the European convention of Human Rights.

However, what is involved here is not a point of law but a matter of culture. The Christian societies of Europe have developed their culture of free debate to such an extent that writers and filmmakers can discuss Christianity and Jesus Christ in any manner without angering their majorities or hurting their feelings. Colonial bondage over long decades denied large populations of Asia and Africa, and they include the whole of the Muslim world, the possibilities of developing traditions of free discourse, and of tolerance for dissent. [...] The Muslims, in south Asia specially, have been forced to fall back on what Iqbal called the defence mechanism of dogma by suffering denial of their political and economic rights for centuries. They will not be helped to overcome their intellectual and cultural lag by being offensively reminded day in and day out of their inadequacies (ibid).

In this comment the *development discourse* is embedded, but here there is no “blaming the victim” (Shohat and Stam 2004: 57), rather an account of the effects of colonialism generating the “intellectual and cultural lag” and appeals more strongly to the audience by referring to Iqbal,<sup>27</sup> a revered person in Pakistan’s history. Continuing, Rehman’s tone turns harsher:

All restrictions on the freedom of expression as well as on academic and artistic freedom are bad and can never be accepted as anything more than a necessary evil justifiable in consideration of the shortcomings found among a community’s children or its grown-ups who display underdeveloped minds or mindsets that are not amenable to reason (ibid).

26 The lead, placed inside a picture most likely from the riots in Lahore Feb 14th, underlines such an approach: “The arguments advanced by opposing sides of the cartoon controversy are far from convincing.”

27 Muhammad Iqbāl (1877 – 1938) was an Indian Muslim poet, philosopher and politician, known as the first man to propose the idea of an independent state for Indian Muslims, thus inspiring the creation of Pakistan. He worked closely with Pakistan’s first leader Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and is referred to as Allama (scholar) Iqbal.

This passage might be read as an adapted Orientalist expression, representing the Other as child-like and thus inferior, and in addition adhering to the binary opposite of (Western) reason against (Eastern) emotion. However, when simultaneously leaning to the “theory of unequal development”,<sup>28</sup> the comment may be interpreted as less hostile to the minds “not amenable to reason”.

The dilemma of this commentator is obvious: On the one hand, he displays an anti-imperialist attitude and thus remains critical of the West (and the caricatures); on the other he wants to signal his distance to politico-religious obscurantism and – not unlike other commentators – will not let his own leaders remain protected from critique of double standards:

.. Pakistanis have entered the fray with unclean hands. A state that permits discrimination on the basis of belief, and that too by constitution and by law, and gloats over it, is not entitled to protest against such discrimination by others, whether real or imagined. We have to put our own house in order before we can set out to teach others justice and fair play. (ibid)

By this ‘self-reflexive’ passage, referring to universal popular words of wisdom, Rehman seems to issue a warning directed at the more ‘superior’ attitude of some editorials and columnists, who in their texts have tended to “teach the Europeans” a lesson of sensibility.

### *Variety and simplification*

In its first phase, the cartoon controversy seemed to create a Pakistani national consensus. The overall characterisation of the cartoons in the national newspapers examined remained negative; the most frequently used characteristics being “blasphemous”, “provocative” and “sacrilegious”, while a similar consensus seemed to prevail when it came to the limits of *freedom of expression*: symbolised by expressions like “with responsibility” or “sensibility” when it came to suggesting how this freedom should be practised. Thus traditional national adversaries (liberal-progressives and conservative Islamists) partly reached a temporarily unified point of view on “the general situation” concerning the cartoons, seeing them as a Western provocation and revealing a lack of sensitivity for the feelings of the Muslim Ummah. This may be summarised as the *discourse of disgust*, accompanied by the *discourse of sensitivity*.

Besides, two other discourses may be observed. One is the exposure of *double standards* in the West, by editorials and columnists mentioning both David Irving, who has been sentenced for his views on the Holocaust, and *Jyllands-Posten*’s previous refusal to print some cartoons of Jesus Christ.<sup>29</sup> Yet another observation is that columnists in some English language papers conduct in-depth research and quote from the constitutions of, for example, Norway and France (see above) or the Danish penal

28 Also called *Dependencia theory* (Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank etc).

29 Since Jesus is considered one of the Prophets of Islam, mocking or caricaturing him is considered equally harmful as the caricatures of Prophet Mohammed by many writers in Pakistan.

code,<sup>30</sup> thus demonstrating both a willingness to *understand how the Europeans operate* (global consciousness) – and appealing to what is considered “dormant” paragraphs on blasphemy in mainstream Europe.

In their coverage the English language papers, to a degree, gave space to Danish media players and politicians, as both the cultural editor and the editor-in-chief of *Jyllands-Posten* have been allowed space to explain their views, as well as Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, other Danish politicians and scholars, and other Western commentators. James Carrier’s wisdom of representation of the Other often implying a simplified representation of the (Occidental) “we”, may be observed adversely in these editorials, in the sense that “Muslims” are largely treated as an entity with a certain (wounded or offended) attitude to the cartoon controversy. This corresponds also with Buruma and Margalit’s approach of the *Occidentalism* as a response to humiliation. But although it may hold true that “most Muslims” in Pakistan and many other countries were offended by the cartoons (helped by the media coverage), it is equally true that “most Muslims” *never saw them* and they were not – or poorly – informed of the initially expressed intention of the publication, linked to a certain understanding of relations between Diaspora and the majorities of their country of settlement. And as shown especially from the monthlies, not all were equally offended.

In the texts, other general categories like “Europe” and “The West” are also frequently applied – as they are indeed in Western media. But categories are interpreted differently. “Europe” is represented both as *backward* – not understanding how the world is developing into more complex societies also ‘at home’ – and *advanced*, as in the continent’s rapid move towards secularism. Thus two varieties of the *development discourse* are demonstrated. In several texts, there are hints at conspiracy theories, that is, seeing the cartoons as part of a larger attack on the Muslim world.

The overall impression is that the English dailies are more liberal and, to a certain extent, accommodating when it comes to representing “European” ways of thinking than the Urdu newspapers, and that the English language monthlies are more liberal (and in one instance even supportive of the *Jyllands-Posten* position) in their approach than the dailies.

The importance of the Diaspora is highlighted in several ways: in the monthlies (and some comments in the dailies) by mentioning the way some Muslim clerics from Denmark contributed to the spreading of the protests against the caricatures and thus to ignite the general uproar more than four months after the initial publication. Secondly, the Diaspora is referred to when ‘appealing’ to European general opinion to take the feelings of the Muslim population in their countries more into consideration. Could this also be seen as an appeal to traditional European citizens to adapt to an important aspect of post-colonial modernity?

In the demonstrations against the caricatures several issues were merged, like the forthcoming visit of President George W. Bush and the soaring food prices. This was also reflected in the newspapers, especially in the last phase of intensive coverage. The

30 M.J. Akbar: The answer is boycott, Dawn 17.02.

merging may have been universal, varying with the level of general discontent in the respective countries.

The differing voices, the nuances and the self-reflexiveness seen in the aforementioned editorials and comments, reveals a picture of a Muslim nation somewhat unlike the 'European' news coverage representations of a country like Pakistan. Often, the coverage concentrates on aggressiveness and rage, and thus gives more credit to the parties with 'street power' than they may quantitatively deserve. Thus also, to use Fairclough's terms, other protests and other voices may be backgrounded or absent (Fairclough 1995,106), and a more bipolar picture occurs.

The diverse voices and points of view emerging especially in the aftermath of the controversy's first phases, also demonstrate that there is indeed a struggle going on in the journalistic field in Pakistan, a struggle influenced both by the religious-political field 'at home' and by discourses in European media. Although this struggle may be registered only by an elite due to the character of the publications analysed, the elite certainly consists of 'decisive intellectuals' and people in powerful positions, and thus the coverage examined may have had a larger impact than a limited audience would indicate.

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### *Appendix 1:*

The publications

PUBLICATION	CHARACTERISTICS
<b>Dawn</b>	English language. Founded by the first leader of independent Pakistan, Mhd Ali Jinnah in 1947. Traditional-liberal Elite oriented. Main office in Karachi. Largest in circulation of the English language papers
<b>The News</b>	English language, founded in the early 1990s, the second largest English language newspaper. Considered liberal. Linked to Urdu daily Jang (same newspaper group, same main office in Lahore)
<b>The Nation</b>	English language newspaper, considered more conservative than the above. Linked to the Urdu Nawa-e-Waqt
<b>Daily Times</b>	English language. Newcomer, radical-liberal. Headquarters in Lahore. Very elite oriented. Small circulation
<b>Jang</b>	Urdu language. Headquarters in Lahore, largest national newspaper. Linked to English daily The News.
<b>Nawa-e-waqt</b>	Urdu language. Headquarters in Lahore, founded in 1940. Conservative. Linked to English daily Nation.
<b>Herald (magazine)</b>	English Language monthly, belongs to the Dawn group, published from Karachi. Widely read abroad, largest English current affairs magazine in Pakistan
<b>Newsline (magazine)</b>	English Language monthly, published from Karachi. Critical: "born of a dedicated band of journalists' refusal to toe the line".

## **Chapter Thirteen: The Cold war Triumph of Radio Free Europe**

*Arch Puddington*

Radio Free Europe (RFE) was arguably America's most successful venture in what has come to be known as public diplomacy and among America's most notable non-military initiatives during the Cold War. RFE went on the air in 1950, beaming a pro-democracy, anti-Communist message to five of Eastern Europe's Soviet satellite states: Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. (It later added the services beamed to the three Baltic republics). For nearly two decades, the station was covertly funded by the Central Intelligence Agency, as was America's other "freedom radio," Radio Liberty, which broadcast a similar message to the Soviet Union in both Russian and the languages of the non-Russian peoples.

In its heyday, RFE boasted a huge listenership throughout the satellite bloc. Poles regarded RFE with reverence; the station played an important role in bringing down at least three party leaders and was instrumental in sustaining the trade union Solidarity when it was forced underground by martial law. During Nicolae Ceausescu's time, RFE was Romania's most popular source of news. Ceausescu responded with fury; he dispatched hit squads to assassinate RFE journalists and hired the international terrorist Carlos the Jackal to bomb the station's Munich headquarters. The émigré writer Georgi Markov was murdered in the infamous umbrella assassination incident on direct orders of Bulgaria's party chief, Todor Zhivkov, because of broadcasts over RFE that touched on Zhivkov's personal life.

Radio Free Europe derived much of its credibility from the popularity of its commentators: men who, had they lived in normal societies, would have been the editors, columnists, and news anchors of a free press. When Ceausescu dispatched his thugs to kill or maim RFE journalists, he chose as his targets those who were the most beloved by the Romanian people. Each of RFE's services could place before the microphone commentators who had the rare ability to give quiet inspiration to oppressed people without polemics, pontification, or condescension.

The station's appeal was strengthened further by its diligence in reporting facts that the Communist authorities either distorted or ignored. This was a major challenge due to Communism's ability to seal off practically all sources of accurate information. RFE thus hired a team of researchers who specialized in ferreting out whatever information was available and then providing the broadcast services with reasonably reliable information to counter whatever fabricated success stories filled the regime press.

Although everyone understood that RFE was an American project, it consciously cultivated the image of a European radio station. Its broadcasts did not emphasize American popular culture, and when it pointed to examples of Free World achievement,

it was countries like West Germany and Austria – Central European societies that had attained both freedom and prosperity – that were cited.

Finally, from the very outset RFE had an intelligently strategic approach to the question of whether to target the masses or the elites. In its early years, RFE broadcasts deliberately tried to reach the East European masses through harsh condemnations of Communist leaders and personalized attacks on individual Communists, even to the point of denouncing by name a Hungarian factory manager who demanded sexual favors from women workers. Eventually, the station's message evolved: it was accessible to a mass audience (a legendary Hungarian broadcaster introduced rock music to his country's youth) while concentrating on comprehensive coverage of political developments. The core RFE audience included, naturally enough, the democratic opposition (RFE devoted little coverage to opposition groups that advocated violence or ultra nationalist ideas), but also included members of the governing apparatus, military officers, and high party officials who understood that the day of reckoning with the people would eventually come.<sup>1</sup>

### *Origins*

Radio Free Europe was not, of course, the only foreign radio station to which the people of Eastern Europe listened. But while the BBC was appreciated for its professionalism and the Voice of America valued for its programs on American culture, only RFE was given the status of honorary member of the democratic opposition. This treatment attests to RFE's unusual character. The Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty model is unique not simply to the Cold War, but to the history of diplomacy. Many countries have established international broadcasting entities, ranging from respected journalistic services like the BBC to the crudely propagandistic global networks sponsored by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. But only with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty did a country establish broadcast services whose purpose was to change the form of government in foreign nations by airing news not about the country from which the broadcasts originated, but about the countries which were the broadcast targets. Radio Free Europe did not conceal its American origins, although the fiction that RFE was funded by private contributions was maintained for two decades. And certainly American affairs were covered in RFE news programs, especially as they related to the Cold War. From the outset, however, RFE concentrated its focus on developments within the target countries, particularly on the rule, or misrule, of Communist regimes. Radio Free Europe was to become a surrogate home service, the only reliable source of news and commentary on domestic matters for the people of Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe.

For the United States to have initiated this unprecedented project in peacetime propaganda—for RFE was publicly described as a propaganda instrument at its creation

1 For general discussion of origins of Radio Free Europe, see Puddington 2000.

—represented a radical departure from this country’s political tradition. Until World War II got underway, America had shown no inclination to participate in the global war of the airwaves. During the war, the United States created a propaganda agency, the Office of War Information, and an international radio network, the Voice of America. But while the American public supported international radio during wartime, there was considerable sentiment that, with the end of hostilities, the government should close down its propaganda and information projects; by 1947, the VOA’s budget had been slashed and influential members of Congress were advocating the elimination of what remained of American international radio (Browne, 1982, 96-100).

The impulse towards a revived isolationism was checked by the onset of the Cold War. Having defeated, at great cost in life and resources, one great European totalitarian power, the United States found itself confronted by another, and in some respects more insidious totalitarian state, the Soviet Union. Communism seemed a more rational, even inspirational, creed than was the Thousand Year Reich, and could count as allies the local Communists who existed, in some cases in impressive numbers, throughout Europe. Furthermore, the Soviets approached the challenge of constructing a totalitarian social order with utmost seriousness. Within the satellite countries of Eastern Europe, the Soviets and the local Communists moved expeditiously to silence opposition voices, eliminate an independent press, outlaw non-Communist political parties, neutralize religion, and seal off the borders from foreign influence.

Radio Free Europe was the brainchild of some of the most prominent architects of America’s early Cold War strategy, particularly those who believed that the Cold War would eventually be fought by political rather than military means. Here the most important figure was none other than George F. Kennan, the author of the famous “X” article and father of the containment doctrine. Unlike some others involved in the creation of America’s “freedom radios” – as Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty came to be known – Kennan was not a proponent of an American policy to liberate Eastern Europe from Soviet domination. But a program of aggressive ideological warfare did not clash with Kennan’s preferred strategy of preventing the spread of the Soviet empire beyond its East European boundaries. The logic of containment demanded a policy of creating complications for the Soviets within their own sphere of influence, since the more Moscow was preoccupied with keeping the restive peoples of Eastern Europe in check, the less likely it would cast a hungry eye on Western Europe (Mickelson, 1983, 14-16).

During the early 1950s RFE was committed to a muscular brand of political warfare. The men who represented RFE before the American public made no secret of the station’s combative nature. Frank Altschul once described RFE as a “citizens’ adventure in the field of psychological warfare” which sought to “sow distrust and dissension among our enemies.”(Frank Altschul memorandum, July 17, 1950)

Radio Free Europe was conceived at a time of great concern over the prospect of Moscow’s expansion into Western Europe. Three events – the establishment of a Communist dictatorship in Czechoslovakia, the Berlin Blockade, and the Italian elections – convinced many Western politicians that Stalin’s ambitions stretched well be-



yond his East European “sphere of influence.” The inevitability of Soviet expansionism was, of course, the basic assumption behind George Kennan’s proposals to contain Soviet power within its Eastern perimeter. This nervousness over Soviet adventurism seems also to have influenced the early direction of RFE programming. Clearly, some planners believed that fomenting trouble in Moscow’s backyard was one mean of diverting Stalin from westward expansion.

The early impact of RFE was exemplified by what was called the Swiatlo affair. In December 1953, Lieutenant Colonel Josef Swiatlo, one of Poland’s highest ranking secret police officials, slipped away from a traveling companion during a shopping expedition in West Berlin, made his way to a Western embassy, and asked the astonished officials there for asylum. Swiatlo was not the first Communist functionary to have defected to the West. But Swiatlo was no ordinary member of the party apparatus. He had served as chief of Department Ten of the U.B., as Poland’s secret police were popularly known. Department Ten was responsible for the political and ideological purity of Communist Party officials, a counterintelligence force against deviation. Swiatlo was uniquely positioned to know the most intimate details about the private lives of the men who had reached the pinnacles of power, details about their financial affairs, their mistresses, their acts of betrayal, and their relations with high Soviet officials (Karpinski, 1982, 30-35).

Swiatlo’s revelations would lead to a major shake-up of the Polish Communist Party, contribute to a softening of Soviet control over its East European empire, and they would accelerate the pace of de-Stalinization. Swiatlo’s defection would, furthermore, have widespread implications for the future of Radio Free Europe. For it was over RFE’s Voice of Free Poland that Swiatlo told the inside story of Polish Communism. His scripts were aired almost nightly for three months; Swiatlo recounted the details of secret police torture, rigged elections, and, especially, the mechanisms through which Soviet officials controlled Polish life (Radio Free Europe, undated press release).

Swiatlo’s sensational accounts represented much more than a tabloid version of political journalism. Swiatlo was an intensely political man; he had personally arrested Wladyslaw Gomulka when Gomulka was purged from the party ranks for nationalist tendencies. His message was that in People’s Poland, a hierarchy existed in which the party was ruled by the police and the police were ruled by the Soviet Union. That Poland lacked genuine sovereignty was hardly news. But by piling on one episode after another, by naming names, by providing places, times, and dates, the Swiatlo broadcasts aroused the nation and rattled the Communist Party. Jakub Karpinski, a historian of Polish post-war politics, believes that the Swiatlo commentaries rank with Khrushchev’s secret speech and the Poznan worker riots as events which changed the course of Communism in Poland (Karpinski 1982, 102-106).

Thus Radio Free Europe became the most influential source of news in Poland, a remarkable achievement for a foreign radio station whose signal was frequently rendered unlistenable by jamming. During the Swiatlo broadcasts, residents of Warsaw, where reception was often dreadful, tuned in during the late-night hours when jamming

was least effective, and spent their days in conversation over the incredible things they had heard through the static. The Polish service had attained what RFE had originally set out to do: win acceptance as surrogate home service, with all that implied for the totalitarian project.

Radio Free Europe was unusual in that while its message was intensely political, its principal appeal was to a popular audience, rather than to the elites who ordinarily make up the core supporters of political journalism. Workers and peasants – the very classes exalted in Communist scripture – were the prime targets of RFE’s message, not intellectuals. In later years, as dissident intellectuals and disillusioned party members began to press for democratic reforms, RFE’s broadcast focus would change as well.

The program schedule was divided into two broad categories. The first group consisted of programs aimed at specific audiences. Each language service broadcast programs for workers, peasants, young people, women, religious believers, and those interested in the arts. The second category consisted of programs with generalized anti-Communist themes. One program, called “The Other Side of the Coin,” offered refutations of party propaganda. Another program, “Messages,” consisted of denunciations of spies and informers.

All programs except the newscasts featured some political content. For example, a musical program on the Hungarian service might include a composition by Bela Bartok, whose works were effectively banned by the regime. A Polish literary program might consist of readings from a nineteenth century patriotic poem in which the tyranny of Russia was decried. A youth program might contrast the freedom which young people enjoyed in the West to the regimentation and constricted opportunity under Communism (Michie, 1958, 52-58; Interviews with Paul Henze, Ralph Walter, and William Griffith).

In the station’s early years, its leadership was convinced that the collapse of Communism was likely in the relatively near term. How the collapse was to be achieved – whether through internal resistance, the intervention of the West, or an implosion triggered by the system’s internal contradictions – was never made clear. But there could be little doubt that the East European regimes were on shaky ground. Radio Free Europe hardly needed to exaggerate the difficulties facing East European Communism. Reports of food shortages, plan failures, police state terror, and internal party division, as reflected in wave after wave of purge trials, represented powerful testimony to the inherent instability of East European Communism.

By 1953, some within the American government, and within RFE as well, were convinced that the hour of decision was at hand. Indeed, the pace of events did seem to be accelerating. First, Stalin died, triggering a Kremlin power struggle that was to stretch over many months and lead to the execution of one of the leading contenders for the succession. Rather quickly, many satellites adopted a political New Course entailing a shift away from crash industrialization, forced collectivization, and the hunt for deviationists from the party line.

In this period, broadcasts to party members were regarded as especially important in the post-Stalin period. The goal was to unnerve Communists by reminding them of just how dangerous a career in the party could be. RFE had powerful evidence to fortify its arguments. Purges and counter-purges had occurred throughout the bloc, and some of those who had been persecuted a few years previously were now regaining their freedom and undergoing rehabilitation, a process which raised questions about the fate of those implicated in their persecution. Furthermore, the ghost of Lavrenti Beria, Stalin's secret police chief, hovered over the Communist parties, and especially over the security forces. Beria had been arrested and liquidated during the summer of 1953, a chilling development for the many "Beria men" – Josef Swiatlo was a prominent example – in the satellite parties. Beria's fate carried a message for all Communists: if the most powerful party officials can be brought down, the same fate could just as easily befall the humble party official serving as a trade union steward or collective farm manager. Radio Free Europe reminded Communists of the untrustworthiness of party bosses and of the impossibility of honest initiative in an environment of suspicion (RFE policy guidance, July 11, 1953).

### *The Impact of Hungary*

The tone of RFE broadcasting was to undergo significant change after the failed Hungarian Revolution. Before the Revolution, RFE was a respected and valued institution of American Cold War strategy; after Hungary, RFE's reputation would be forever tarnished, as historians, diplomats, and journalists accused the station of having made a bad situation worse or, in the most extreme cases, of actually having triggered the Revolution through shrill and irresponsible broadcasts. The latter charge is unfair; Communist oppression caused the Revolution, not American propaganda. And it is typical of the tendency of Americans to exaggerate their own power and the power of their institutions. But the charge of incitement became embedded in Cold War mythology; one latter-day commentator even coined the phrase, "Radio Free Europe syndrome," to describe situations where the United States eggs on a tyrannized people to rebellion without providing the means for victory.

While in the past the question of RFE's performance during the Revolution has been a source of bitter controversy, it is now possible to reach a reasonably definitive conclusion about the station's broadcasts. If the ultimate charge of incitement is unjustified, there is little question today that the station's broadcasts to Hungary during the Revolution's first eleven days violated – repeatedly and sometimes flagrantly – many of the accepted canons of professional journalism.

One reason for RFE's troubles was pointed to by Richard Condon, the director of the Munich operations when he raised serious questions about the competence of the Hungarian staff. He described the Hungarian service as containing many rightists who "tended over the years to become more and more shrill, emotional, and over-general in tone, to an extent where we have for some time felt that rather drastic measures are

needed to de-emotionalize their scripts, make them more specific, and prevent them from antagonizing our listeners.” (Condon memorandum, November 20, 1956).

The most thorough, and blunt, evaluations of RFE’s performance came from within the radio station. One report declared that RFE’s Hungarian broadcasts were “inexpert due to poor content, emotional tone, and inadequate programming techniques.” The report was scathing in his comments about the Hungarian subeditors, describing them as “out of touch with the situation in their country, inadequately trained in professional radio techniques, and politically out of tune with the patriots.” (Internal RFE report, issued December 7, 1956).

The Hungarian debacle has haunted Radio Free Europe ever since. During the Cold War, the myth of RFE as the nerve center of the uprising was carefully cultivated by Communist authorities in Budapest and elsewhere. In 1981, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Revolution, the Chicago Tribune noted that, “The party’s position on what happened...remains basically unchanged: that naive workers and students, urged on by Radio Free Europe and the late Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, took to the streets without knowing what they were doing.” The question of RFE’s role was a point of bitter contention even after the collapse of Communism; a 1996 Budapest symposium on the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution featured a loud debate over the Radio’s guilt or innocence. If they deal with RFE at all, Cold War histories usually mention two, and only two, facts: RFE was funded by the CIA, and RFE was widely blamed for inciting the Hungarian people to a doomed revolution (Tyner 1981).

The charge that RFE was responsible for the Revolution is absurd. William Griffith, the chief American program manager at the time, is almost certainly right in asserting that, “Propaganda cannot control or decisively influence events within a country in a state of revolution.” A more relevant question might be whether the very existence of Radio Free Europe contributed to popular discontent and therefore laid the foundation for the Revolution. This, basically, was the argument of Senator J. William Fulbright when, in the early 1970s, he attempted to eliminate American support for both RFE and Radio Liberty. There is, of course, a risk in broadcasting even straight news reports to societies under totalitarian control, whose only recourse to misrule is resistance, violent or otherwise. Under totalitarian conditions, people are prone to hear what they want to hear. Where a Western audience will understand a politician’s ritual denunciation of tyranny for what it is, a person living in a state of oppression may interpret boilerplate rhetoric as a promise of help. In any event, important changes were afoot in Eastern Europe in the period leading to the Revolution, and those changes were reflected in RFE broadcasts. As a memorandum prepared by the CIA observed (Central Intelligence Agency memorandum, “Radio Free Europe,” November 20, 1956):

During this period RFE...played the Khrushchev “secret speech” heavily; reported Western reaction and the reaction of various Communist party leaders in the West to the secret speech; gave fullplay to the Belgrade Declaration of “differing roads to socialism”; gave appropriate treatment to the rehabilitation of various “titoists” and national Communists throughout the satellite area; reported all evidences of the liberalization process wherever takingplace; and gave full play to the attempts of Gomulka to establish greater freedom from Soviet control in Poland.

In addition, RFE gave extensive coverage to the declarations of President Eisenhower, Secretary of State Dulles, Democratic presidential nominee Adlai Stevenson, and other political leaders pledging that the cause of East European freedom would remain a fundamental goal of American policy, and informed its listeners of congressional resolutions and party platforms calling for freedom of the captive peoples.

Some critics fault RFE for failing to present an accurate picture of Communism's strength. In the years leading up to the Revolution, RFE pounded home the notion that the regimes were weak and the people were strong. As the events of 1956 demonstrated, this was a reasonably accurate assessment of East European reality in 1956. Indeed, Griffith and other RFE analysts were anticipating a crackdown in Hungary and Poland during the summer; instead, the forces of change continued to gather strength while the Communist parties in both countries seemed on the verge of collapse. A more appropriate question was whether RFE was sensitive to Soviet determination to retain control over the satellites. Yet even here, events could lead to different interpretations. The Soviets were not engaging in the sabre-rattling which preceded the 1968 intervention in Czechoslovakia. And without Soviet intervention, or the threat of Soviet intervention, Communism would have been overthrown in both Hungary and Poland; ultimately, the people were much stronger than the party. Nor is it fair to describe the Hungarian Revolution as predestined to fail. That the Soviets would use force to keep Hungary in the socialist camp was by no means certain; the power struggle which divided the party after Stalin's death was unresolved, and recently released evidence from the Kremlin archives indicates that Khrushchev went through a period of profound uncertainty before opting for military intervention.

### *Change in Policy*

After Hungary, the State Department assumed responsibility for policy guidance. In 1957, the State Department, in conjunction with the interagency Committee on Radio Broadcasting, an entity which included representatives from the State Department, CIA, and United States Information Agency, issued a series of policy documents which were to provide a framework for American broadcasting to Eastern Europe, both for the VOA and RFE. But instead of drafting five distinct country guidances which took into account the often striking differences between one country and another, one basic document was issued for all five RFE countries. The purpose of the guidances, then, was less to provide political direction than to drive home the point that American radio propaganda was to proceed along a much more cautious path in the post-Hungary environment (State Department for Czechoslovakia, 1957).

Thus in spelling out American policy objectives, the guidance for Czechoslovakia observed that while the ultimate goal was freedom from Communism, the short-term, realistic objective was "to foster an evolutionary development resulting in the weakening of Soviet controls and the progressive attainment of national independence." To accelerate the slow march towards liberty, the guidance declared that American policy

favored the “establishment of a ‘National Communist’ regime which, though it may be in close military and political alliance with the USSR, will be able to exercise to a much greater degree than in the past independent authority and control in the direction of its own affairs.

The guidance reaffirmed RFE’s unique role by referring to it as an instrument of “grey” propaganda as distinct from the VOA’s position as the official broadcast service of the American government. As such, the guidance declared, RFE might sometimes be used for the dissemination of “unannounced” government policies.

Of more practical significance was a statement that henceforth RFE was to regard itself as a European rather than as an American or exile station. In covering world news, RFE broadcasts “should generally be in the European context as seen through European eyes.” Radio Free Europe was encouraged to provide more coverage of European news, broadcast more interviews with European leaders, and emphasize the success of the movement towards European integration as an example of voluntary cooperation in contradistinction to the imposed unity of the Warsaw Pact (State Department for Czechoslovakia, 1957).

The strategic goal was modest compared with the ambitious agendas of previous years. Radio Free Europe’s broadcasts were to encourage common people, intellectuals, and party members to think and act independently of Moscow, to the degree that prudence permitted. The guidance recommended that RFE should seek to “keep the people in touch with Western life and thought,” and acquaint the listeners with alternatives to Communist methods of organizing and administering society (State Department for Czechoslovakia, 1957).

In July 1961, *Foreign Affairs* magazine published an essay which urged a new direction in American policy towards Eastern Europe. The article was of more than passing interest to RFE, since the authors were Zbigniew Brzezinski, then just emerging as a leading expert on the Communist world, and William E. Griffith, the former policy adviser in Munich. Brzezinski and Griffith advocated a policy of “peaceful engagement” towards the satellite countries, with the aim of stimulating greater diversity within the bloc, encouraging independence from Moscow, and, ultimately, creating a neutral belt of countries, not hostile to the Soviet Union, but enjoying freedom of choice in domestic affairs (Brzezinski and Griffith 1961, 642-654).

The authors argued that America should adopt a dual approach to Eastern Europe, seeking improved relations with the Communist leadership where feasible, while expanding the range of contacts with the East European people. They explicitly warned against a policy which seemed to recognize the permanence of Communist rule and Soviet domination. And they described Western radio broadcasting as the most effective instrument for maintaining indirect contact with the East European people (Brzezinski and Griffith 1961, 642-654):

Given the Soviet violations of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, the West has a right and obligation to maintain direct contact with the peoples involved....In broadcasting to the captive peoples, the West is performing one of the roles of a free democratic opposition which the Soviet

Union and the East European Communist parties deny to their peoples. We should not consider stopping these broadcasts in return for some Soviet concession.

As prescription for American policy, the *Foreign Affairs* article made eminent sense, as the authors balanced realpolitik and moral values and never lost sight of the eventual goal of freedom for Eastern Europe. But despite its endorsement of foreign broadcasting, the article pointed to looming dangers for Cold War radio broadcasts, and for RFE most of all. For anti-Communists like Griffith and Brzezinski, the value of a home service radio for Eastern Europe was self-evident. But there was no guarantee that officials with their sophisticated understanding of the Communist world would be setting the tone for American policy. What would be RFE's fate if America sought détente with the Soviet Union and stability in Europe? Would RFE be seen as an obstacle to peace, a relic of the past, something to be bargained away in return for the suspension of Soviet broadcasts, which had a tiny Western audience and even less influence?

But despite the lessening of Cold War tensions and a growing East European cynicism over Western intentions, RFE clearly stood as the most popular foreign broadcast service in the Eastern bloc. A survey conducted in 1959-60 by several European research institutes for RFE found the station with far more regular listeners than either the BBC or the VOA. While the BBC was regarded as the most objective station, RFE was deemed the most influential (Nowak 1963).

### *RFE Under Peaceful Coexistence*

The period between August, 1961, when the Berlin Wall was erected, and 1968, with its upheavals in Poland and Czechoslovakia, was a time of relative calm in Eastern Europe. Political developments in the people's republics moved at a glacial and often obscure pace. There were no leadership purges, popular upheavals, or reform initiatives; organized dissent hardly existed. Nevertheless, the esprit de corps at RFE remained high, a reflection of the strong sense of mission which the exile journalists retained. Their commitment may have derived from the belief that in what some were calling a post-Cold War environment RFE remained the one institution committed to East European freedom. "Resolute, strong, and dangerous," is how Mieczyslaw Rakowski, an official Polish journalist, described the station in 1964.

One of the most important stories of the 1960s was the rise of Mieczyslaw Moczar and his group of "Partisans" in Poland. A leading party member, Moczar could count on a core of support from the security forces and from a group of army veterans, thus the name, Partisans. Moczar harbored ambitions to replace Gomulka as party chief and sought support by portraying himself as a populist nationalist who was prepared to purge the country of alien elements, namely Jews. In 1962, Jan Nowak, the director of the Polish language service, was summoned to Rome for an urgent meeting with a high ranking Polish Communist, who demanded anonymity and thus was dubbed by Nowak, Mr. X. Mr. X told Nowak that the Moczar group posed a serious danger to Poland,

given its ties to the police, the support it enjoyed from certain elements in the Soviet party, its anti-Semitism, and its access to security files. Mr. X claimed that the Partisans were readying a power grab, and begged Nowak to mount an anti-Moczar campaign in RFE broadcasts.

The RFE Polish section was divided over involvement in Communist Party factionalism; some reasoned that it was no concern of RFE whether one group of scoundrels prevailed over another group of scoundrels. Nowak, however, believed that it was important that Poland not fall under the control of the Moczar group, and in 1963 RFE began what was to be an eight-year campaign against the Partisans. Radio Free Europe here benefited from inside information provided by party and security sources. The campaign eventually found its way into the European press, and Nowak claims that he was at one point asked by the State Department to keep out of internal Polish politics. But the Polish section persevered, and many believe that RFE's campaign played an important role in thwarting Moczar's ambitions (Interview with Jan Nowak).

Radio Free Europe also played an important role in its coverage of the 1967 Israel-Arab war. With the exception of Romania, the Communist press gave the conflict thoroughly distorted coverage, placing blame for the conflict on Israel and the United States. Radio Free Europe provided factual coverage, emphasizing Arab battlefield defeats and the loss of Soviet prestige both in military action and in maneuvers at the United Nations. A professor who was visiting Warsaw during the conflict reported that every social gathering was interrupted as Poles listened to RFE war coverage; even party members acknowledged reliance on RFE for accurate news of the war.

Finally, RFE devoted hours upon hours of coverage to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. It broadcast the complete text of President Kennedy's October 22 speech revealing the crisis, and stressed the themes of American determination, the risk of nuclear war, and the subservience of East European governments, most of which were giving various forms of aid to Cuba, to the dangerous policies of the Soviet Union. When the crisis finally ended and Khrushchev agreed to withdraw the missiles, RFE received, for perhaps the only time in its history, instructions which veteran staffers claim emanated directly from the White House: "Don't gloat." (Interview with Richard Rowson).

### *Time of Troubles*

In the late 1970s, opposition to the Vietnam War and the rise of revisionist interpretations of the Cold War led to a series of journalistic investigations into the Cold War's impact on American domestic life, and led, inevitably, to the Central Intelligence Agency, with its far-flung empire of proprietary organizations, foundations, and publications, which had been set up to ensure that the West would be well-armed in the war of ideas with Communism. Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were the largest, most expensive, and most successful of the CIA's intellectual properties; it was thus



only a matter of time before the relationship between the radios and the CIA was made public.

In its March 1967 issue, *Ramparts* magazine, a freewheeling forum of New Left journalism, published an article which probed the CIA's role as funding agency for putatively non-governmental domestic political organizations. The article concentrated on the National Students' Association, for years the recipient of CIA subsidies. Neither the radios nor the Free Europe Committee were mentioned. Yet even before the magazine's official publishing date, journalists who had seen advance copies were asking pointed questions about the source of the radios' funding. Thus in a column on the broad issue of the CIA's domestic projects, Max Frankel of the New York Times asked: "How can the citizens be protected against campaigns which solicit financial contributions to Radio Free Europe, an intelligence agency operation represented as a non-profit enterprise." For a few weeks thereafter, the "open secret" of CIA funding became a matter of frequent press comment.

There is, ironically, evidence that by the late 1960s the radios did not enjoy universal support within the CIA. According to Victor Marchetti, co-author of *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, many high-ranking agency officials were convinced that the radios had outlived their usefulness and favored phasing them out or placing them under different sponsorship. While those urging the elimination of the CIA's relationship were not necessarily dissatisfied with the radios' broadcast performance, they felt that RFE and RL no longer served the interests of the agency to the same extent as in their early years, when RFE maintained its network of information bureaus, conducted interviews with thousands of refugees, and functioned as a scholarly and informational nerve center on matters concerning East European Communism. The radios were expensive; furthermore, some CIA officials believed they were widely infiltrated by Soviet bloc agents. Although those favoring elimination were fortified by the conclusions of several internal studies, the radios survived, Marchetti claims, because they continued to enjoy the support of important CIA veterans, presumably including Richard Helms, the Director of Central Intelligence at the time (Marchetti and Marks, 1972, 67-170).

Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty were also prime targets of J.W. Fulbright, an influential member of Congress who was opposed to the entire direction of Cold War policy. Fulbright laid out his critique in *The Crippled Giant*, a 1972 book which was remarkable for the radicalism of its analysis, given the author's position within the political establishment. Fulbright was especially concerned with what he perceived as the immature unwillingness of America's cold warriors to accept Moscow's domination of its neighbors. He thus declared: "Insofar...as we raise false hopes with provocative propaganda, maintain high troop levels, and continue the arms race, we retard the natural process of European reunification, lingering morbidly and uselessly in the graveyard of cold war relics." (Fulbright, 1972, 20-21, 34).

To reassure the Kremlin of our peaceful intentions, Fulbright proposed the withdrawal of American troops from Europe and the liquidation of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Fulbright was particularly churlish towards the radios: "Purporting to

show [East Europeans] that there is a better ‘way of life’ outside the ‘Iron Curtain,’” he wrote, “we foster futile discontent, not for any discernible purpose of policy, but for purposes of ideological mischief. In this way we detract from the broader purposes of our own policy and of world peace, which requires us to live in the greatest attainable harmony with the Communist governments of the world....” As chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Fulbright carried out a two year crusade to put these purveyors of “ideological mischief” off the air. Fulbright’s single-minded campaign did not succeed, but it did represent the most serious threat to the radios’ existence during the Cold War (Fulbright, 1972, 35-36).

In fact, Fulbright’s efforts to win support for his anti-radio drive were a notable failure. Congress, including most Democratic doves, favored retaining RFE and RL under non-CIA administration; over half the Senate endorsed a statement supporting the radios sponsored by Senators Hubert Humphrey, the former Vice President, and Illinois Republican Charles Percy. Subsequently, Congress passed legislation that provided federal funding for the radios while establishing an independent governing entity, the Board for International Broadcasting, to function as a firewall against efforts to politicize the radios’ policies.

### *Reform Communism*

By the mid-1970s, the proposition that Eastern Europe would be transformed through gradual liberalization of the ruling Communist parties was increasingly being rejected by Western experts, and at RFE as well. The one exception was Hungary. Radio Free Europe had excoriated party leader Janos Kadar as one of the great villains of the Hungarian Revolution, but shifted its perspective in the mid-1960s, when Kadar made his famous pronouncement that those Hungarians who “are not against us are with us.” While Kadar remained a grey, undynamic figure, a reliable supporter of Soviet foreign policy, and cautious in his approach to domestic affairs, he did permit a carefully controlled policy of cultural and economic change. In response, RFE covered the regime’s policies with a more approving eye, praising the reforms and attacking those figures who were regarded as impediments to liberalization.

Eventually, RFE became more deeply involved in internal Hungarian politics. Joseph Szabados, who became Hungarian director in 1972, was a proponent of aligning RFE with the positive aspects of Kadarism. “If we praised the positive policies,” he reasoned, “the reformers would be encouraged to continue and expand on those policies....We did not criticize the reformers.”(Interview with Joseph Szabados).

Szabados went one step beyond simply promoting the reform agenda in RFE commentaries. He would hold meetings with representatives of the regime at discreet locations in Western Europe, usually Vienna or Rome. The Hungarian delegation included acknowledged leaders of the reform camp, as well as a more controversial figure, Gyorgy Aczel, a Politburo member whose abilities were recognized but whose reform credentials were a matter of dispute.

In discussing the meetings years later, Szabados said it was clear to both sides that each was trying to put across its own agenda. "They tried to manipulate me, and I in turn tried to out-manipulate them." The Hungarian goal was to convince RFE to put its muscle behind some new policy that was running afoul of conservative resistance. The Hungarians would pass along information which was not available in the Hungarian press, enabling the radio to broadcast expert, informed analysis unavailable anywhere else. The Kadarists, for example, urged RFE to support the breakup of large industrial enterprises into smaller entities which could be run as cooperatives. Such a request posed no problem for Szabados, since he favored almost any proposal which contributed to the dismantling of the Stalinist economic structure (Interview with Joseph Szabados).

A major priority for RFE during this period was to ensure that its Polish audience was fully informed about the activities of the Polish-born Pope, John Paul II. The general rule was to give his every action extensive and favorable coverage. As Zygmunt Michalowski, the Polish director, observed: "In my view, RFE was obliged to cover the entire scope of his work, his every movement, every word, all the echoes in the Western press, and to expose all the tricks employed by the Communists to censor him." Radio Free Europe hired a Polish correspondent for assignment to the Vatican, from where he provided daily reports on the latest papal developments. It also gave minute-by-minute coverage of the Pope's first visit to Poland in 1979. Even though it was prevented from assigning correspondents to cover the pageantry on the scene, RFE kept its listeners informed by the simple trick of reporting the event as it happened from American and West German television. Radio Free Europe devoted a full 13 of its 19 on-air hours to the Pope's visit; Western reporters quoted Poles who claimed to listen to RFE's coverage eight hours each day (author's correspondence with Zygmunt Michalowski). Meanwhile, official Polish television limited its coverage to two minute segments on the evening news, and edited out the Pope's calls for religious freedom while stressing his politically safe comments about peace, cooperation, and the Church's traditional stance against divorce, abortion, and materialism.

### *Solidarity*

Radio Free Europe responded to the emergence of Solidarity with a combination of enthusiastic support and caution. Michalowski, who was editor-in-chief from Solidarity's founding in the summer of 1980 through the early stages of martial law, was determined that RFE would not be accused of destabilizing an already precarious situation (author's correspondence with Zygmunt Michalowski):

We supported the democratic opposition by spreading information about their program and commenting favorably when the situation warranted. But we were careful not to increase the existing tensions. On the contrary, on numerous occasions we urged restraint on both sides, pointing to unforeseeable and potentially dangerous developments if the situation became uncontrollable. Sometimes we referred to the possible drastic response of the Soviets.

In its coverage of martial law, the Polish service was, if anything, more cautious in its news coverage than were Western newspapers and press services. The station refused to report accounts of massacres or alleged atrocities unless they could be verified, and refused to broadcast information about casualties unless there were corroborating reports from several responsible Western media. Almost always, RFE's judgment was vindicated, as the rumors of mass killings, assassinations, and burial sites never proved accurate (Interviews with James Brown, Robert Hutchings, Marek Latynski, and Michalowski).

Coverage during the martial law period was notable for its measured critique of Communist policies. Zdzislaw Najder, the new service director, created a program entitled, "The Poland That Could Be," in which he speculated on the future of Polish society after Communism. Radio Free Europe also concentrated on the woeful condition of the Polish economy. Leszek Gawlikowski, the editor of the economics program, explained why it would be impossible for Poland to emulate the model of authoritarian economic change set by Chile, an important subject given Jaruzelski's well-known fascination with General Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean strongman who instituted economic reforms while keeping his country under dictatorial grip (Interview with Leszek Gawlikowski).

### *Chernobyl*

The first big story of the Gorbachev era was the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, a major embarrassment for the new leader and a near catastrophe for his country. On April 26, 1986, one of the four reactors at the Chernobyl complex in Ukraine exploded, killing 31 people and sending clouds of radiation throughout Eastern Europe. The disaster was seen as the first important test of *glasnost*, the policy recently announced by Gorbachev of candor and honesty in discussing the Soviet Union's shortcomings. The official response to Chernobyl was not impressive. Indeed, the Soviet press gave every indication of trying to cover up the accident just as it had ignored or lied about previous disasters, natural as well as man-made.

Here, then, was the ideal story for Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. All the elements were present: Soviet incompetence, censorship, the lack of sovereignty of the East European countries, whose press, following the Soviet lead, downplayed the incident. Chernobyl also stoked the fires of anti-Russian sentiments among the Soviet Union's non-Russian peoples, especially in Ukraine and the Baltic republics, whose people lay in the direct path of the fallout. The radios understood the ramifications of Chernobyl, and devoted hour-after-hour to the story. Broadcasts gave instructions on the decontamination of food and clothing and the protection of children. The radios interviewed Western nuclear experts, energy officials, and anti-nuclear activists. They explained the accident's implications for neighboring countries. They covered the accident's internal political repercussions, such as the resistance of army reservists from

Estonia, who had been called to help decontaminate the area around the Chernobyl reactor.

This would be one of RFE's finest hours. All indications suggest that listenership rose dramatically throughout the early stages of the crisis. The Communist media fumed and complained about what Poland's regime spokesman, Jerzy Urban, called RFE's "unjustified, unfounded, but deliberate actions intended to scare [the] population." But there is no evidence that RFE practiced irresponsible journalism. As was usually the case in times of crisis, the station was more cautious than the mainstream Western press; it did not, for example, broadcast the wildly exaggerated claims of 2,000 deaths in the Chernobyl area which had been reported by the UPI and had run in many newspapers (Whittle 1956, Kaufman, 1986).

### *Covering the Baltic Spring*

Until the late 1980s, Baltic programming consisted of the usual mixture of émigré voices, cultural news, and reports about political dissent. Although many Baltic broadcasters harbored strong anti-Russian sentiments, they were under strict instructions to avoid ethnic slurs, and in identifying the adversaries of Baltic independence, RFE broadcasts concentrated on a combination of Russian imperialism, Communism as an idea, and the functionaries of the local Communist parties. They did not, as one editor put it, distinguish between bad Russian Communists and good Lithuanian Communists. Once Gorbachev launched his reform program, however, events began to move swiftly, and RFE was compelled to make adjustments in its political strategy and programming approach (Interview with Kestutis Girnius).

One immediate problem was the coverage of Gorbachev. Was he a reformer, as many in the West claimed, or simply another Russocentric Communist bent on economic modernization? The Lithuanian service decided initially on a cautious approach. "We were sensitive to the Western proclivity to treat each successive Soviet leader, from Malenkov to Andropov, as a reformer," explained Kestutis Girnius, the Lithuanian section chief. "Given that history, we were skeptical about Gorbachev for some time." (Interview with Kestutis Girnius).

For Toomas Ilves, the chief editor of the Estonian service during the crucial years of the independence struggle, the broadcast mission was to accelerate the freedom process by whatever means prudence allowed. Ilves was an Estonian-American who combined a fierce commitment to the Estonian cause with a shrewd instinct for American politics. He pushed the limits of the permissible right to the edge, but was careful to avoid rash acts that would embarrass Radio Free Europe and set back the cause generally. Thus when in 1988 the old-line leader of the Estonian Communist Party was replaced by a Gorbachevian man of Eurocommunist sympathies, Ilves was unimpressed. "I felt that my job was to show that this Gorbachev idea of Communism with a human face was still Communism."

Ilves believed that RFE should be a participant in the struggle for the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Fortified by a sense of historic mission, he and his small staff worked twelve hour days – longer in times of crisis – to inform the Estonian people about the fast moving developments in their own country and in the greater world. But Ilves adhered to the established guidelines. When in 1991 President Bush betrayed a lack of sympathy towards Baltic demands for independence – an attitude which infuriated most Balts – RFE avoided editorial comment, and instead kept its listeners informed through reports on what the world press was saying about the American policy. A similar, if more nuanced, approach was adopted by the Lithuanian service. In reporting on the Western reaction to Baltic events, Kestutis Girnius stressed the distinctions between a newspaper editorial, the declaration of a member of Congress, and an official State Department position. Girnius also endeavored to explain the realpolitik behind the official statements, why, for example, America might not want to support Baltic independence given its stake in Gorbachev’s survival. “We tried to explain why Denmark could openly support independence, but why Germany might be less enthusiastic. We didn’t dampen hope. But we tried to give a realistic picture of the outside world’s thinking.” (Interview with Toomas Ilves).

### *The Wall Comes Down*

For Radio Free Europe, 1989 represented the culmination of nearly forty years of service in the cause of East European liberty. To say that it was a year of astonishing developments is an understatement. No one, and certainly not RFE, believed that by the end of the year, Communism would no longer survive as a governing system in its target countries.

It was apparent that Communism was facing serious challenges as the fateful year began. This was especially true in Poland, where talks between Solidarity, which until recently seemed a spent force, and the Jaruzelski regime produced an agreement calling for partially free elections. For the Communists, this represented a remarkable concession. It was an article of anti-Communist faith that Communism could never compete effectively under democratic conditions, and Communists historically had given every indication of agreeing with that assessment.

Marek Latynski, RFE’s chief Polish editor, took the attitude that the elections constituted a remarkable opportunity – both for Poland and for the radio. He proceeded on the assumption that the balloting would not be rigged and that the Communists faced the prospect of a devastating setback. Elections had already been conducted in Lithuania, and the result was a complete rout for the party. Latynski therefore believed that the Polish election might revolve around the single issue of whether a candidate was or was not a Communist (Interview with Marek Latynski).

The elections were conducted on a non-party basis; candidates ran without affiliations, a policy insisted on by the Communists. Radio Free Europe therefore saw its job as making sure that the Polish people knew which candidates were representing the

party and which were not. During the campaign, RFE attempted to interview as many non-Communist candidates as was possible by telephone. As polling drew near, RFE announcers read out the names of the non-party candidates for each election district, dull radio for sure, but quite possibly helpful to the opposition. The radio also summarized the most important articles in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the leading opposition newspaper, which was unable to print enough copies to reach its potential audience (Interview with Robert Gillette; Latynski).

Radio Free Europe's coverage was thus non-polemical, but hardly non-partisan. Its pro-Solidarity tilt was likely not welcomed by the State Department, which privately fretted that a Solidarity landslide would erode Gorbachev's precarious standing in Moscow. Some high American officials, in fact, were known to be favorably disposed towards Jaruzelski. Yet despite its high interest in the Polish elections, the State Department did not intervene in RFE's coverage, and after Solidarity scored a smashing victory at the polls, RFE moved quickly to establish bureaus and assign correspondents to cover news from inside the country.

Events in Czechoslovakia were moving at a much slower pace than in Poland, or so it seemed. But beneath the surface, elements within the party were increasingly dissatisfied with the leadership's course. They were unhappy with their country's pariah reputation, embarrassed by the mediocrities who dominated the government, and convinced that the forces which were threatening party control in other countries posed a threat to the system in Czechoslovakia as well.

In the fall of 1989 came the incident of the Jakes tape. Milos Jakes had only recently been elevated to succeed Gustav Husak as party leader. Jakes was an uninspiring time-server who was committed to the status quo. Earlier in the year, he had addressed a conference of local party activists. The speech was an embarrassment to the leadership, in every respect. It was candid about the party's woeful standing among the people. It was also ungrammatical, rambling, incoherent. Within a few weeks, a tape of the speech made its way to Radio Free Europe. Irena Lasota, an activist on behalf of East European democracy, was given the tape by Jan Ruml, a dissident who later became a government official in the post-Communist period; she then passed it along to the radio. But the original source of the leak came from within the party, from those who hoped to undermine Jakes and others in the leadership. This goal was certainly achieved. The Jakes tape was the talk of Prague, as people passed around cassettes recorded from RFE broadcasts and mimicked the semi-literate words of their country's leader (Lucas 1989).

Even more important than the Jakes tape was RFE's intense coverage of the massive movement of East Germans to Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and from there to West Germany. The significance of East German events in accelerating the pace of Communist disintegration throughout the rest of Europe cannot be overemphasized. The GDR was notorious for the strict control of its citizens; it was also the most economically successful Communist state. Moreover, it had always been assumed that however much experimentation and liberal change Moscow might permit in the other people's democracies, its tolerance for change in East Germany was limited. Yet here was East

German Communism coming apart at the seams, and a passive Soviet Union unwilling to utter a word of support for the party leadership. Events in East Germany at once lifted the fear of Soviet intervention from the people of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, while sending the message to the dispirited party leaderships that they could no longer depend on the Soviet Union as the ultimate guarantor of their survival (Interview with Irena Lasota).

### *The RFE Legacy*

In the aftermath of Communism's collapse, RFE was hailed by its audience countries as among the heroes of the Cold War. When the émigré journalists returned to their home countries, they were treated like members of a victorious army. And the United States was given due credit for having supported RFE even during times of duress.

Why was RFE so highly valued by the democratic opposition of Eastern Europe? What accounts for the credibility of what the Communist leadership and many in the West regarded as an instrument of American propaganda?

Part of the answer lies in the nature of Communism. In its very essence, Communism relied on a series of lies and myths – about capitalism, about the nature of democracy, about religion, about the achievements of the Soviet Union, about Lenin, Stalin, and their lesser acolytes. To compensate for the weakness of their argument, Communists sought absolute control over the means of communication. The state or the party owned the media, foreign newspapers were banned, and foreign broadcasts jammed. The subjects of Communist regimes understood that they were living under a system constructed on a foundation of lies. They were eager for a free press and truthful commentary, and in the absence of indigenous alternatives, they cared not at all whether the sponsor was the American government, the CIA, or a committee of concerned American citizens.

If Communist repression created what amounted to a captive audience, the fact that the radios were free from direct American government control made an enormous contribution to their success. Operating under the covert and relatively relaxed oversight of the CIA ensured that the radios could avoid the meddling of congressional critics, be they rightwingers on the lookout for ideological softness or liberals who feared that criticism of the Soviet Union might impede the progress of detente.

Finally, the radios were instrumental in thwarting Communism's attempt to isolate and atomize its subjects. Especially in its early years, Communism succeeded in demoralizing the people of Eastern Europe by convincing them of the futility of united opposition. Marcin Krol, a prominent historian and essayist, has written of RFE's impact on Poland during the Cold War's early years (Krol 1992, 431):

Several conditions defined the situation of the individual under totalitarian rule in Eastern Europe. Persecution and terror were among them; so was an endless amount of lies. What is perhaps less known – and has not yet been properly described – is how lonely everyone felt and how cut off from the greater tradition of Western learning and thought....Listening to Radio Free Europe



created for a vast number of Poles the perhaps artificial but nevertheless essential sense that one was living in larger company.

Some commentators cultivated a radio style through which they seemed to speak directly and personally to each listener. They projected the message that others understood their plight, not simply the commentator, but millions in the Free World as well. The radios paid particular attention to the acts of protest and rebellion, and by instantaneously relaying accounts of dissent, promoted the idea that events in Krakow carried important implications for listeners in Kiev, Brno, and Sofia. Through RFE-RL and the other foreign broadcast entities, the Communists were never able to gain a media monopoly, and were thus deprived of the most potent tools of totalitarian control.

It is unfortunate that most histories of the Cold War deal with RFE and RL as footnotes, or as CIA manipulated propaganda instruments. For in fact the radios proved one of the most successful institutions of America's Cold War effort, and made an important contribution to the peaceful nature of Communism's demise. Their success can be measured by the gratitude expressed by millions of listeners, for whom the radios often served as a voice of hope and sanity in an often hopeless and insane world. Or by the fury their broadcasts generated among the Communist party elites – who listened in spite of their anger in order to find out what was really going on in the world. In the war of ideas between Communism and democracy—and this, after all, was the central conflict of the Cold War – RFE proved to be one of democracy's most powerful weapons.

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Jan Nowak  
Richard Rowson  
Joseph Szabados  
Ralph Walter

## **Author's correspondence**

Zygmunt Michalowski



Section Four  
The Press as a Political Instrument



## **Chapter Fourteen: Democracy and the Media: A Social Contract Dissolved?**

*Jesper Strömbäck, Mid Sweden University*

### *Introduction*

There has always been a close relationship between democracy and the freedom of both speech and of the press. As ideas they were born together; hence, some might say that if they do not live together, they will die together. From such a perspective, a democratic regime without freedom of speech and of the press is a contradiction in terms. A regime is not democratic save for freedom of speech and of the press alongside the right to vote, the right to assemble and associate, the right to seek information, inclusive citizenship and rule under the law. At the same time, democracy is a prerequisite for freedom of both speech and the press. Democracy requires a free press, and a free press requires democracy. Together they stand, together they fall, and separate they are unthinkable.

This depiction of the relationship between democracy and the press certainly has much truth to it, and at least in theory appears to be rather non-controversial. From this follows the implication that the fight to protect or expand the freedom of the press is simultaneously a fight for democracy, while all attempts to circumscribe or regulate the freedom of the press are simultaneously and by definition attempts to circumscribe democracy.

However, such a conclusion begs a number of questions: Exactly why are democracy and freedom of the press so closely intertwined? Are regulations or restrictions to the freedom of the press always unacceptable from a democratic perspective, and if so why? What exactly is meant by freedom of the press, and should it be perceived as unconditional or conditioned by some kind of responsibility on the part of the press?

The number of too seldom discussed questions is actually quite paradoxical, considering the writings of the great philosopher John Stuart Mill in his classic treatise *On Liberty*, which has, directly or indirectly, influenced most thinking since on the subject of freedom of speech and of the press. There are four reasons, he argued, as to why it is so essential to have freedom of both opinion and of speech (Mill 2002, 54).

First, if any opinion is compelled to silence, that opinion may, for aught we can certainly know, be true. To deny this is to assume our own infallibility. Secondly, though the silenced opinion be an error, it may, and very commonly does, contain a portion of truth; and since the general or prevailing opinion on any subject is rarely or never the whole truth, it is only by the collision of adverse opinions that the remainder of the truth has any chance of being supplied. Thirdly, even if the received opinion be not only true, but the whole truth; unless it is suffered to be, and actually is, vigorously and earnestly contested, it will, by most of those who receive it, be held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational grounds. And not only this, but, fourthly, the meaning of the doctrine itself will be in danger of being lost, or enfeebled,

and deprived of its vital effect on the character and conduct: the dogma becoming a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good, but cumbering the ground, and preventing the growth of any real and heartfelt conviction, from reason or personal experience.

Never again has someone defended freedom of speech so elegantly, and this alone makes it worthwhile to quote him. However, this is not the main purpose of quoting him: the main purpose is to suggest the possibility that the thesis of the close relationship between democracy on the one hand, and freedom of speech and of the press on the other, has not been sufficiently contested, with the end result that for many, it is “held in the manner of a prejudice, with little comprehension or feeling of its rational ground”: the thesis has, for many although not all, become a “dogma” and “a mere formal profession, inefficacious for good”.

Against this background, the purpose of this chapter is to critically examine and elaborate upon the relationship between democracy on the one hand, and freedom of the press or the media on the other. The main argument will be that unless the press and defenders of press freedom understand the deeper meaning of this relationship, and the responsibilities that follow from the freedom of the press, this will undermine the legitimacy of press freedom and cause there to be an opening for policies that would restrict this freedom in a manner that would endanger democracy.

As democracy is ultimately the most important rationale for freedom of both speech and of the press, the next section will discuss and analyze this multifaceted concept.

### *Democracy: A multifaceted and contested Concept*

If freedom of speech and of the press ultimately concerns democracy, then a thorough understanding of democracy is a pre-requisite for an understanding of the relationship between democracy and freedom of the press. At the same time, democracy is a multifaceted concept: A brief look at democracies around the world quickly reveals that democracy can exist in many different shapes and forms. Three examples might suffice in this context: Some countries have proportional elections whereas other countries have majoritarian or mixed systems. Some countries emphasize separation of powers and the importance of an independent judiciary – with the right to overrule political decisions if they are found to be unconstitutional – whereas others do not. And while all democratic countries give their citizens the right to vote, some have compulsory voting whereas others do not.

In addition to differences such as these, there are conflicts and differing views with regards to, for example, the democratic importance of a high turnout, an informed citizenry, a high level of citizen participation in politics and a high quality of democratic discourse. Likewise, some see a major democratic problem whenever financial resources can be translated into political power, some when the realms of political decision-making become too extensive, and some when evidence suggests that political participation is unequal across social, cultural or economic groups in society.

Not only is the concept of democracy surrounded by conflicts and ambiguities; this is also true with regards to political freedom versus press freedom. In fact, looking at Freedom House's annual survey on *political rights and civil liberties*, they characterize 90 countries (47 %) as free – and hence democratic, 58 countries (30 %) as partly free and 45 countries (23 %) as not free (Freedom House, 2007a). In addition, Freedom House's annual survey on *media freedom* categorizes 74 countries (38 %) as free, 58 countries (30 %) as partly free, and 63 countries (32 %) as not free (Freedom House, 2007b). Thus, 16 countries are considered to be free with regards to political rights and civil liberties – but not with regards to media freedom.

Underlying conflicts and ambiguities such as these, one can identify at least two common misunderstandings. The first is a tendency to think about democracy as a one-dimensional concept, where, in fact, it should be considered as a complex and multi-dimensional concept. The second is the failure to make a clear distinction between two, conceptually speaking, separate issues: the first issue concerns how to define democracy as such, and the second concerns different normative models of democracy.

What then are the basic characteristics of a democratic country? According to most observers, a country is democratic if its political officeholders are elected in free, fair and recurring elections and if the basic democratic (or human) rights are respected. These include the right to vote and run for office, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble and associate, freedom to gather information, religious freedom, and rule under the law (Dahl 1998, 1999; Hadenius 2001; Karvonen 2003; Sartori 1987). Thus, the fundamental concern of democracy is a pre-defined set of institutions and procedures. However, of equal importance is that it is not about the outcome of different political decisions – providing that these do not undermine the democratic institutions and procedures – nor is it about whether or not people choose to make use of their democratic rights.

While it is highly probable that the majority would agree that democracy basically concerns the aforementioned institutional and procedural arrangements, many would nevertheless argue that this is a very “thin” definition of democracy. Surely citizen participation, or the quality of democratic discourse, or how political office-holders are held accountable, must also matter?

This is exactly when the discussion shifts from being about the definition of democracy to being about different normative models of democracy. Stated in a slightly different manner, the question is then no longer “What distinguishes a democratic country from a non-democratic country?” but rather becomes: “What determines the quality of democracy?”

As is well known in political science and political theory, several complementary or competing normative models of democracy exist (Elster 1998; Fishkin and Laslett 2003; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Held 1987; Manin 2002; Sartori 1987). Four of the main models of democracy are: Procedural democracy, Competitive democracy, Participatory democracy and Deliberative democracy (Strömbäck 2004, 2005. See also Gilljam and Hermansson 2003; Oscarsson 2003). As each has different normative im-



plications for the media and journalism as well as for the freedoms of speech and of the press, a brief description of each will now follow.<sup>1</sup>

### *Procedural democracy*

The basic idea of the procedural model of democracy is that democracy ultimately concerns the institutionalization and respect for the democratic institutions and procedures previously discussed. While people living in advanced and affluent democratic countries might take these democratic institutions and procedures for granted and thus not consider them as normative but rather as value-free descriptions of democracy, proponents of this model argue that it must be remembered that the basic democratic institutions and procedures in essence are normative. When viewed from a global perspective, this is rather obvious and should act as a warning that these should not be taken for granted. Instead, democracy as a number of institutions and procedures must always be defended as a matter of principle. As long as these institutions and procedures are in place, protected and respected, all is well. Whether people actually choose to make use of their democratic rights is less important.

From this perspective, freedom of speech and of the press is part of what makes a country democratic and, as such, must always be defended. All efforts to circumscribe freedom of either speech or of the press are essentially perceived as efforts to circumscribe or undermine democracy. Thus, these freedoms are not perceived as a means to some kind of higher end – they are perceived as part of the higher end of a democratic regime.

### *Competitive democracy*

While the competitive model of democracy agrees that the basic democratic institutions and procedures are what ultimately make a country democratic, it disagrees in the sense that it perceives these institutions and procedures as insufficient. What is needed in addition is some kind of mechanism for securing the primacy of the common good. According to the competitive model of democracy, that mechanism is the competition between different political elites for the votes of the citizenry. As Schumpeter wrote, originally in 1942 (1975, 269):

The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote.

Sartori (1987) labels this model “electoral democracy”, which points to the fact that in this model of democracy, there is a strong focus on elections. It is during these that

1 A more thorough discussion on these models of democracy and their normative implications for media and journalism can be found in Strömbäck 2004, 2005.

political candidates or parties compete for the support of the electorate, and it is in elections that people can exercise their power. One implication of this is that it is the political elites that act, whereas the citizens react. Another implication is that possessing effectively competing elites is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy.

With regards to the freedom of speech and of the press, the competitive model of democracy agrees with the procedural model that these freedoms are essential and part of the definition of democracy. However, it also perceives of these freedoms as a means towards another end: If people are to be able to choose between the competing elites, and to hold the office-holders accountable, they require all kinds of information which can assist in increasing their knowledge and their ability to form opinions. Restrictions to the freedom of speech or of the press are thus restrictions of the citizenry's opportunities to gain knowledge and thus to cast their votes in as informed manner as possible.

From this perspective, although proponents of the competitive model of democracy perceive that the freedoms of speech and of the press are ends in themselves, they also stress the importance of information that is politically relevant and that can assist people to make judgements and to form opinions concerning political office-holders and their opponents. In other words: Freedom of speech and of the press is necessary to allow those "below" – ordinary voters – to scrutinize and hold accountable those "above" – those with political power. Thus, the media should use their freedom to provide such information.

### *Participatory democracy*

The participatory model of democracy agrees with both the procedural and competitive models of democracy that the basic democratic institutions and procedures are fundamental and ultimately what matters most. However, it also considers these insufficient, and it is highly critical of the limited role ascribed to ordinary people in the competitive model of democracy. The democratic institutions and procedures are necessary prerequisites, but what makes democracy strong and viable is citizen participation in politics and civic life (Amnå 2003; Jarl 2003; Pateman 1970; Putnam 2000). Democracy is thus not only an institutional arrangement for electoral contests every third, fourth or fifth year: Democracy is a value-laden system with a strong ethos of political equality and tolerance (Dahl 2006), and democracy thrives when people engage in public life and political action, and when they bond through their civic and political activities. The more people participate in civic and public life, the stronger democracy is or becomes.

Freedom of both speech and the press thus are of vital importance, although perhaps with a greater emphasis on freedom of speech. Freedom of the press might rather be perceived as an extension of the freedom of speech than as a separate freedom on its own. Proponents of this model thus emphasize the importance of a press actively encouraging citizen participation and focusing on the public agenda. Although the press

should certainly provide information that allows people to scrutinize and hold political actors accountable, it should also function as a channel for the people in their communication to the political actors. Although political communication involves both bottom-up and top-down communication processes, the emphasis is on the importance of bottom-up processes. This model of democracy would even argue that people have rights of access to the media, that is, to communicate through the media (Hachten and Scotton 2007, 23).

Once again, however, the freedoms of speech and of the press are important mainly with respect to information that addresses people in their role as citizens and voters. All information is not equal: politically, civically and societally relevant information is what matters most. In addition, while freedom of speech is valued as a goal in itself, freedom of the press is perhaps rather perceived as a means towards a higher end – a democracy where as many ordinary citizens as possible participate and communicate with one another and with the political actors.

### *Deliberative democracy*

The deliberative model of democracy can be considered a close relative to, or an extension of, the participatory model of democracy. There is, however, one crucial distinction: whereas the participatory model of democracy emphasizes the need for citizen participation in politics, it remains rather silent when reference is made to different forms of participation. The deliberative model of democracy, in contrast, emphasizes one distinct form of participation: participation in political discussions that are deliberative. What is meant by this is that political discussions are characterized by virtues such as impartiality, rationality, intellectual honesty, equality among the participants and a search for a common good (Elster 1998; Gilljam and Hermansson 2003; Habermas 1995). As noted by Gutmann and Thompson (1996, 2): “The core idea is simple: when citizens or their representatives disagree morally, they should continue to reason together to reach mutually acceptable decisions”. Similarly, Fishkin and Laslett (2003, 2) write that: “At the core of any notion of deliberation is the idea that reasons for and against various options are to be weighed on their merits”.

Obviously, there is immense importance attached to freedom of speech and of the press from the perspective of the deliberative model of democracy. In fact, it might even be that the importance of these freedoms is stressed more from the perspective of the deliberative model than from the perspectives of the procedural, competitive and participatory models of democracy. At the same time, proponents of the deliberative model might also be more critical with reference to how people or the press make use of their freedoms than the other models of democracy. Although freedom of both speech and the press are absolutely essential in order to make a deliberative form of democracy work, they are not the complete answer. People and the press also have a shared responsibility to make use of these freedoms in a responsible – that is deliberative – manner. Thus, while the freedoms of speech and of the press are important in

themselves, they are also considered as means toward the higher goal of deliberative political discussions.

*Four models of democracy: A comparison*

In summation, all the four models of democracy consider that the freedoms of both speech and of the press as necessary democratic freedoms, and all would oppose attempts to circumscribe these freedoms. The four models and the central mechanism for securing the primacy of the common good is summarized in table 1, which also summarizes some of the core normative demands upon journalism as well as the perspectives of each model on the freedoms of speech and of the press.

**Table 1. Four models of democracy: a comparison.**

	Procedural democracy	Competitive democracy	Participatory democracy	Deliberative democracy
Central mechanism for securing the primacy of the public good	Free and fair elections	Competitive elections	Citizen participation in public and civic life	Deliberative discussions among all sections of the public and their representatives
Distinguishing and core normative demands upon news journalism	Act as a watchdog exposing wrongdoings	Act as a watchdog; focus on the record of officeholders and the platforms of political actors; focus on the political actors	Act as a watchdog; let the public set the agenda; mobilize people to participate in public and civic life	Act as a watchdog; mobilize people's interest and participation in public discussions; foster political discussions characterized by rationality, impartiality, intellectual honesty and equality
Perspectives on the freedoms of speech and of the press	End in themselves	End in themselves but also means for securing that people can find information which can help them scrutinize and hold political actors accountable	End in themselves but also means for securing that people can communicate their views and influence political decisionmaking, in addition to finding information needed for effective participation	End in themselves but also means for securing that all relevant information is available so that discussions can be deliberative, and so that arguments can be weighed on their merits

As suggested by the discussion above, there are differences in the extent to which these freedoms are perceived as ends in themselves or means towards other and higher goals. Those most likely to take a fundamentalist perspective on the freedoms of speech and of the press are the proponents of the procedural model of democracy, who are also the least likely to have opinions regarding how people and the press make use of their

freedoms. Those least likely to take a fundamentalist perspective in this regard are the proponents of the deliberative model of democracy, followed by proponents of the participatory model of democracy, while the proponents of deliberative democracy probably might be the most likely to have opinions regarding how people and the press make use of their freedoms.

However, this does not imply that proponents of the deliberative model of democracy might argue in favor of restrictions on the freedoms of speech and of the press. However, there might be different perspectives with regards to what would be considered to be a restriction rather than a regulation, with the former being unacceptable but the latter, under certain circumstances, sometimes being an option. The models also differ in how self-censorship – as opposed to politically decided censorship – is perceived. Whereas all models are opposed to censorship by the state, they are not necessarily equally opposed to self-censorship. Furthermore, what some considers self-censorship, with its negative connotations, might by others be considered as restraint, with its more neutral connotations. To understand why, it is necessary to think about the relationship between democracy and the press as a social contract.

### *The social contract between democracy and the press*

A democratic regime can, as such, be considered as a social contract between the citizenry and its representatives. According to this thinking, people abstain from some of their power and allow their representatives to govern in their stead, on the precondition and as long as their representatives provide them with some basic security and further the common good, as opposed to the private good of the representatives or some other groups in society (Locke 1988). People require some form of government, and a democratic government requires its people. Thus, entering a social contract is a rational solution. As long as such a social contract is in place, people are obliged to follow the laws and rules of their society, and their representatives are morally obliged to further the common good. If people do not follow the laws, it follows that the state has the right to punish them. If the representatives do not further the common good, it follows that the citizenry has the right either to vote them out or, in an extreme case, to mount a revolution.

The relationship between democracy and the media can also be considered as a social contract (Kieran 2000; McQuail 1992; Strömbäck 2005). Just as democracy requires its people, it requires a system for the flow of information, for public discussions and for a watchdog function independent of the political system. By securing freedom of speech and of the press, democracy creates such a system for itself. The necessity of a system for free discussions and a free press is further underlined by the constitutional guarantees for the freedoms of speech and of the press in democracies around the world. In fact, there are no other private businesses that enjoy such strong legal protection as do media companies.

Thus, the main purpose of the press is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing. It is as much or more about the rights of the people to know as it is about the media's right to publish. The press provides people with the information required to be free and self-governing mainly by facilitating the communication flows between the governors and the governed, by providing a public forum where political discussion can take place, by scrutinizing and holding accountable those in power, and by providing people with information that is verified and reliable (Baker 2002; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston 2007; Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007; McQuail 1992; Strömbäck 2004, 2005). The media do of course provide content in a variety of other forms, not least in the form of entertainment, but from the perspective of democracy and the social contract between democracy and the press, the overriding importance of the press lies in its ability and willingness to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing.

If the media – and in particular journalism as one specific genre, activity, process and form of media content – fulfill their part of the social contract by providing people with the information they need to be free and self-governing, then democracy fulfills its part of the social contract by providing strong legal protection for both freedom of speech and of the press, by facilitating the information-gathering activities of journalism through, for example, laws that give journalists as wide access as possible to information, and through granting the media independence from political control. Thus, any form of political censorship would be a violation of this social contract, and the press has all the rights to protest as loud as possible if or when attempts are made to curtail their freedom.

On the other hand, the press can expect criticism and even suggestions for regulations – which might be perceived as restrictions by the press itself – if or when people find that the press does not provide the kind of information people need in order to be free and self-governing. If the press functions as a lapdog rather than as a watchdog, why does it require special protection, or what can be done to create incentives for the press to investigate those in power more thoroughly? If the main focus of the press is on entertainment, celebrities or other soft news and thus failing to address issues of societal and political significance, then is it not fair to criticize the press and call for regulations? If the press does not check the accuracy of the information they transmit in the form of news, but rather spread rumors or speculation, then why does the press expect to be trusted and enjoy special privileges? If the bottom line is all that appears to matter to increasingly commercialized media companies, is that not a sign that the press has failed to fulfill its part of the social contract, and does that not demand that democracy should act to ensure that the press once again contributes to democracy by providing people with the information they need to be free and self-governing?

As much as all democrats value freedom of speech and of the press, these types of questions are fair for proponents of all models of democracy except the procedural model of democracy. The reason is that the freedoms of speech and of the press are valued not only as ends in themselves, but also as means towards making democracy work.

The response from the press and self-acclaimed defenders of press freedom typically rest on one of three main arguments, or a combination of them:

- (1) Any attempt to regulate the press is an attack upon press freedom and hence democracy, and as such it is by definition unacceptable and must be opposed. This argument has much truth to it, but it is not likely to convince anyone already convinced that the press misuses its freedom and through that misuse undermines democracy. If people do not find that the press actually fulfills its part of the social contract, attempts to avoid regulations by referring to press freedom and democracy will in the end sound self-serving and hypocritical.
- (2) The media are essentially commercial enterprises – with the exception of public service media – and as such they must respond to their readers, viewers or listeners. Even if the truth was that the press was not acting as watchdogs in an entirely desirable manner, or focusing sufficiently on relevant and hard news as opposed to merely interesting and soft news, the blame cannot be laid on the press only. The audiences must take part of the blame. If people were only more interested in politics, foreign affairs or investigative journalism, then the press would provide it. This argument also carries some truth, but it presumes that the media cater mainly to the wants and needs of their audiences, while in truth, it is often the interests of advertisers that are more important to the media (Baker 2002, 2007; McManus 1994; Hamilton 2004). Furthermore, while commercial media certainly have to make sufficient revenue to survive, an excessive focus on the lowest possible denominator is another matter, and it should be possible for responsible media to provide more information of a politically and societally relevant nature while still surviving economically. In addition, this argument rests on the assumption that the media only respond to the wants and needs of their audiences, while these are, to a large extent, created by the media themselves. Finally, this argument ignores the fact that people, when it comes to news journalism, are not in a position to know what their interests are. News, by definition, concerns events and processes not yet known to the majority of the people and the main reason why they want to consume news journalism is to discover what is actually happening in the world. How could they then know beforehand what it is they want to know? In the language of economics, news is an experience good – the quality of which cannot be judged beforehand. Instead, it has to be experienced (McManus 1994). This is also why professional journalism is required.
- (3) While it might be true that the media do not provide the information that people need to be free and self-governing, who is to decide what kind of information that is? Although the press might be imperfect, allowing politicians or other groups to regulate the media would be to throw the baby out with the bath water. As Benjamin Franklin once asked: “Abuses of the freedom of speech ought to be repressed, but to whom dare we commit the power of doing it?”<sup>2</sup> While this is a strong argument, it is insufficient in the sense that it presumes that people have enough trust in the

2 Cited in Hachten & Scotton 2007, 15.

media to conclude that it would be worse to allow others to have a decisive say over the media. But what if people increasingly lose trust in the media and come to believe that it might be better if laws were put in place that were able to restrain the media in their – perceived – abuses of the freedom of speech? What if people in general are less supportive of the freedom of speech and of the press than media representatives would like to think they are? Considering the low levels of media trust in many countries (Campbell, 2004; Gronke & Cook, 2007; Westlund, 2006) and the rather weak support for the freedoms of speech and of the press among significant parts of the citizenry (Dalton, 2004; Petersson et al., 2007), it might indeed be rather risky to assume that the media enjoy sufficient trust to stave off attempts to regulate them by using this argument.

The conclusion that can be drawn is thus: While the major arguments by the press for the freedom of the press all possess some elements of truth, they are not sufficiently strong if or when enough people find that the press has become so commercialized and self-serving that their actions no longer contribute towards making democracy work and that they no longer deserve to be trusted when claiming to be contributing to the common good. If people find that the press has dissolved the social contract with democracy, they will no longer feel that democracy has to fulfill its part of the social contract with the press. In other words: In the long run, the best defense for the freedom of the press is for the press to fulfill its part of the social contract with democracy.

This conclusion calls for a re-evaluation of the *social* and *moral responsibilities* that the media and journalism have in democracy, and which they are expected and required to fulfill, to at least some extent, in order to avoid a threatening re-evaluation and extension of the *legal responsibilities* of the media and of journalism.

### *Provide information and act as a watchdog*

The most important role of media and journalism in democracy is to provide the information people need in order to be free and self-governing. This is the conclusion to be drawn from numerous interviews, focus groups and surveys of journalists, politicians and citizens in democracies around the world (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; Petersson et al. 2005; Strömbäck 2004). At the same time, it is not self-evident what kind of information people really need to be free and self-governing – this is even a controversial issue (Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996; Lupia & McCubbins, 1998; Page 1996; Petersson et al. 1998; Popkin 1994; Zaller 2003). This is not surprising, however, as the question regarding the type of information people need cannot be separated from the model of democracy being advocated. Different models of democracy have different implications in terms of what kind of information people need; hence, different models of democracy have different normative implications for what type of information should be provided by the media and journalism in order to fulfill their part of the social contract (Strömbäck 2004, 2005).



There are, however, at least two areas where all models of democracy largely agree, with the exception of the procedural model of democracy, which basically only demands that the media respect the democratic institutions and procedures and sound a burglar alarm (Zaller 2003) if these are threatened. The first area of relative consensus is that journalism should provide information that is verified and reliable, whereas the second area is that the media must act as a watchdog against abusive use of power.

### *A discipline of verification*

Journalism is but one specific form of media content alongside, for example, entertainment, advertising, cartoons and consumer services such as weather reports or stock reports. While media consumers might enjoy all these different forms of media content, there is something that makes journalism special, and most discussions regarding the role of the media in democracy are actually, although implicitly, discussions about journalism. At the same time, journalism is not synonymous with the media. In an age of media globalization and conglomeratization, news departments and journalistic divisions have become a very reduced section of most major media companies (Campbell 2004; Hachten & Scotton 2007; McManus 1994; Stanyer 2007) and this, in turn, has renewed calls for a stronger separation of the “church and state” – news departments and advertising and marketing departments.

What ultimately sets journalism apart from other forms of media content is not self-evident and the boundaries are often unclear (Strömbäck 2004, 76-78). Nevertheless, perhaps the most distinguishing feature of journalism is its commitment to some kind of truth: Journalism is supposed to inform people who, what, when, where, and why, in a way that is as truthful as possible and that people can rely upon when informing themselves. For this to happen, it is essential for journalism to check all the facts and verify all the information made use of in their news stories. Consequently, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007, 79-80) have suggested that journalism in essence is a discipline of verification:

In the end, the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art. Entertainment – and its cousin “infotainment” – focuses on what is most diverting. Propaganda selects facts or invents them to serve the real purpose: persuasion and manipulation. Fiction invents scenarios to get a more personal impression of what it calls truth. Journalism alone is focused on getting what happened down right.

The importance of verification and procedures for making sure that the information is accurate is largely independent of different views regarding what kind of information people need in order to be free and self-governing. Some might argue that people need more information on how the political system works or on the actions of politicians, whereas others might argue that people need information on how to become engaged, and yet others that people need more foreign affairs or local reporting. Such differences notwithstanding, most can agree that the information should be verified and accurate. This is why ethical codes for journalists in democracies around the world stress the

importance of accuracy, correctness, objectivity or truthfulness (Pettersson & Bertrand 2007). Consequently, journalism should never add anything that was not there, should never deceive the audience, should be as transparent as possible about methods and motives, and it should rely on original reporting (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007, 89). When journalism fails to do this, and instead provides false or distorted information, or mere speculations or assertions, it fails the public and its core mission as a discipline of verification. It might appear to be journalism, but should rather be characterized as pseudo-journalism.

### *A watchdog and independent monitor of power*

The second area of relative consensus relates to the media's role as a watchdog and an independent monitor of power. This is a reflection of the understanding that in the end, this is the most important role of journalism in society. As the American Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote when the Court decided in the Pentagon Papers-case: "The press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government"<sup>3</sup>.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the media acting as a watchdog, monitoring and scrutinizing those in power. The media form the main institution in society that are simultaneously 1) independent of the state, 2) have resources to perform investigative reporting, and 3) can reach sufficient people to make a difference if or when the results of investigative reporting show that people need to react (Strömbäck 2003). This is why the media is often referred to as the "Fourth Estate", and the importance of the media acting as a Fourth Estate is as important, or even more important (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007), in times of wars and crises as it is in times of ordinary business.

As long as power is being exercised, it must be monitored and checked. This is the best defense against corruption and abuse of power. From this it follows that there is a positive correlation between investigative reporting and acting as a watchdog. Anyone can criticize and make assertions about the government, and this is one of the most important tasks of the political opposition in any democratic country. From that perspective, it is important that the media provide the opposition with a chance to be heard, thus acting as a facilitator and as a forum for public debate. If the media were to ignore opposing voices, the result would be a one-sided debate and thus the public would not be able to hear all sides of an issue. Considering that the government already starts with more communication resources, this would even turn the media into more or less unwilling propaganda carriers (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007). However, for the media to act as true watchdogs, they must base their reporting on thorough investigations – and publish the results of their investigations no matter whether this shows

3 Cited in Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007, 142.

wrongdoing by the government or that it is working as intended. With regards to this there is a common misunderstanding that investigative reporting, almost by definition, must be critical, but this is not the case. If the purpose of investigative journalism is to add to the information people need in order to be free and self-governing, then the results are as relevant whether they show that government does or does not work. As a consequence, merely reporting critically is not a substitute for investigative reporting.

Another consequence of this understanding of the media's role as a watchdog is that the investigative reporting should focus on the exercise of power or societal developments that are related to the exercise of power, no matter where power is located in society. In other words, it is as important to monitor the exercise of economic power as it is to monitor the exercise of political power.

A third consequence is that investigative reporting is ultimately about providing people with the information they need to be free and self-governing, that is, the role of acting as a watchdog is subordinate to the role of the information provider. Thus it is of critical importance that journalistic investigations are thorough and that they rely on verified and relevant information, and it underlines the importance of not fusing a critical journalistic attitude towards power with the role of acting as a watchdog.

This is not to deny that there are different forms of investigative reporting. As noted by Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007, 145-150), one can distinguish between *original investigative reporting*, *interpretive investigative reporting*, and *reporting on investigations*. However, in all these cases it is equally crucial that the information provided to the public as a result of the investigations is accurate, verified and proportionate. Otherwise it should be characterized as pseudo-investigative reporting – and hence a distortion – rather than true investigative reporting (Strömbäck 2003).

To sum up: The most important task for the media in a democracy is to provide people with the information they need to be free and self-governing, and to do this it is of immense and equal importance that the media act as a watchdog and independent monitor of power, and that the information provided by the media is accurate, verified and proportionate. This is considered as being equally important from the perspectives of all the models of democracy, notwithstanding the differing views relating to what should further be done by the media. It is by providing people with accurate, verified and proportionate information and by acting as a watchdog the media fulfill their part of the social contract with democracy, and it is by fulfilling their part of the social contract that the media can build confidence and solid support for the principles of freedom of speech and of the press. The best defense for the principle of freedom of the press and against censorship or other regulations is thus for the media to act in a manner that builds trust and shows that they take their social and moral responsibilities seriously to further the public and the public's interest.

However, the public and the public's interest are not necessarily the same. In fact, one of the major dangers in contemporary democracies is the conflating of the public and the public's interest and the media populism which this results in.

*Media populism as a threat towards both the media and democracy*

One of the most difficult concepts to define is arguably that of the concept of public interest. Still, the notion of a public interest or common good, as opposed to the private interests of various groups or individuals in society, is a prerequisite for holding a society together and for the legitimacy of political power. It is also a prerequisite for the media's legitimacy. If the media were to be seen only as private and profit-seeking businesses, then it would be difficult to argue for the special legal protections and privileges enjoyed by the media in democracies around the world. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the media, when facing proposed new regulations, fall back on the important defining role of the media in democracy.

Yet the difficulty in defining what is in the public interest makes it amendable for distortion and corruption. One prime example of this is the tendency for commercial media around the world to increasingly argue that the choices people make in their news consumption define what is the public interest. One prominent proponent for this view is the former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) during Reagan's presidency in the United States, Mark Fowler, who said not only that "television is just another appliance. It's a toaster with pictures",<sup>4</sup> but also that: "The public's interest, then, defines the public interest".<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the audiences want, they should have. This is the only possible conclusion that can be drawn from this line of reasoning. All suggestions that there is a public interest over and above the public's interest is, at best, thinly disguised elitism. Thus, being as commercial as possible by catering to the public's want is a virtue, not a vice.

There are, however, numerous problems associated with this line of reasoning. Firstly, as already noted, commercial media do not only cater to the wants of their audiences but also to the wants of their advertisers, which more often than not take precedence over the wants of the audiences (Baker 2002; Hamilton 2004; McManus 1994). Secondly, it equates the will of the majority with what is right, something that would make John Stuart Mill turn in his grave, especially if or when this argument is made in the name of freedom of speech which he so vigorously fought for. Thirdly, it opens up the way for media populism, that is a tendency to cater to the prejudices, stereotypes and fears that might be commonly held by the audiences. What Stanyer (2007, 125) writes about the right-wing populist media is equally true for other populist media: they "exploit their audience's fears and concerns about a range of Others and the threats they pose. They pander to their prejudices, feed their arrogance and hystericalize the threat of the Other; the Other is stereotyped and lampooned, and the threat they pose is exaggerated". Thus, populist media do not provide people with the information they need in order to be free and self-governing. Populist media do not strive for accuracy and the reporting of verified information. Populist media do not conduct investigations on how things really are. Instead, populist media give people the infor-

4 Cited in Croteau & Hoynes, 2001, 25.

5 Cited in Hamilton, 2004, 1.

mation that supports what they already believe; they strive for popular acclaim no matter whether the information is true or not, and they only conduct investigations that will strengthen people's prejudices, stereotypes and already held views. Thus, populist media is seriously at odds with a media that strives to fulfill its part of the social contract with democracy.

Fourthly, populist media would only act as a watchdog if or when political or economic powers are unpopular. They would not act as a watchdog when people are rallying around the flag or when they are generally in support of whoever has political or economic power. The great irony is that the populist media would be the least likely to act as a watchdog when it would be most needed – when political opponents fall silent due to the popularity of the political power and when people are cheering instead of scrutinizing the behavior of the political power in place (Bennett, Lawrence & Livingston 2007). In such circumstances, populist media would merely become a propaganda device to be used by the powers that be. Populist media would not afflict the comforted and comfort the afflicted. Populist media would comfort the comforted and afflict the afflicted – no matter whether the comforted and the afflicted refer to individuals, groups, opinions or worldviews.

Not only is populist media at odds with media contributing positively to democracy by providing accurate and verified information and by acting as a watchdog – the tendency for the media to become populist has grown stronger as media companies increasingly form part of large media conglomerates, focus on profit-making to satisfy owners and investors, and focus on garnering the largest possible audience that the advertisers are willing to pay to reach.

Somewhere there might thus be a point of no return, when commercialized media cease to increase diversity and freedom of choice, and start to decrease diversity and freedom of choice in terms of worldviews and opinions while they simultaneously reinforce commonly held stereotypes and prejudices. If or when the media pass this point of no return, unregulated freedom of the press might actually be at odds with the freedom of speech, as such media would suppress facts, opinions and worldviews that are at odds with what is commercially viable or in line with populist preconceptions.

In other words: When the media fall prey to populism instead of providing accurate and verified information and act as a watchdog, they dissolve the social contract with democracy. If and when that happens, the media should not be surprised if there are renewed calls for regulations and restrictions of the freedom of the press – in order to restore the social contract by saving the media from themselves and in the name of a freedom of speech and of the press. That would indeed be ironical.

### *Conclusions*

The main conclusion of this chapter is that democracy and the freedoms of speech and of the press are inextricably linked. Democracy requires a free press, and a free press

requires democracy. As James Carey (1999, 51) writes: “Without journalism there is no democracy, but without democracy there is no journalism either”.

However, democracy does not only require a free press. Democracy requires a press that uses its freedom to provide the information people need to be free and self-governing, and this is mainly done by the press by acting as a watchdog and providing verified and proportionate information about societally and politically relevant issues. Other differences notwithstanding, the different models of democracy agree on this point. By providing people with the necessary information to be free and self-governing, the press fulfills its part of the social contract with democracy. By doing this, the press can build trust and prove the necessity of always respecting and protecting the freedoms of speech and of the press.

As much as democrats should thus always defend the freedom of the press, they should also monitor the press and how it uses its freedom and power. This means that state censorship should be fiercely opposed – but also that the press should take responsibility for how it makes use of its freedom. Thus, self-censorship is not necessarily something that should be condemned. In fact, journalists and media personnel have to make a range of choices each and every day regarding what to cover and how to cover it. Journalism is a selection process as much as it is about specific media contents. In these selection processes, some issues, sources or frames will be included whereas others will be excluded. Thus, to some degree, self-censorship cannot be avoided.

In addition, what amounts to self-censorship to some amounts to restraint to others. It is as much in the eye of the beholder as a matter of objective truth. Just as family life would break down if the parents always told their children what they were thinking, or social life if people always told the truth about their thoughts or feelings to others, democratic life would break down if the media, in addition to politicians and citizens, did not show some restraint.

From this perspective, populist media are not only a threat to a media that fulfills its part of the social contract with democracy, populist media are also a threat to a public life where politicians and ordinary citizens show restraint. In addition, the threat of a social contract dissolved comes primarily from the media and the mechanisms that create incentives for the media to become populist, not from democracy. If the trends towards increasing commercialism and media populism are not discontinued, there is a clear risk that people will come to think of the social contract as being dissolved and hence call for regulations that would endanger the freedom of speech and of the press.

Some restraint and a renewed sense of the responsibilities that goes with the freedom of the press are thus required. In the long term, the freedom of the press has to be supported by actions that show that the press indeed contributes positively to democracy and thus deserves its freedom.

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## List of Contributors

*Søren Dosenrode* graduated from the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, and earned his DPhil in Political Science from the University of Zürich, Switzerland, in 1992. He is Jean Monnet Professor at the Department of History, International and Social Studies at Aalborg University, as well as the founder and Director of Research at the Kaj Munk Research Centre at Aalborg University. He has published widely, mostly within the field of European studies, and also on Kaj Munk.

*Elisabeth Eide* is Associate Professor, Ph. D. at Oslo University College. She has written edited and co-edited a number of articles and books on journalism and media. Among the latest publications is "Transnational media events. The Mohammed Cartoons and the Imagined Clash of Civilizations", a textbook on foreign reporting and two books on the history of transnational journalism. She has also published five novels.

*Yusuf Kanli* is editor-in-chief of the *Turkish Daily News*, Turkey.

*Arense Lund* is a journalist at the Danish television channel TV2. She is the granddaughter of Kaj Munk. She produced a TV movie about Kaj Munk in 1993, called "Med ordets sværd".

*Svend Aage Nielsen* is a pastor and author, as well as the chairman of the Kennedy Society of Denmark. He has written several articles and books on Kaj Munk.

*Rune Ottosen* graduated in Journalism in 1973 (Norwegian College of Journalism) and in Political Science in 1984 (University of Oslo). Since 1996 he has worked as an associate professor at the Journalism education programme, Oslo University College and became a professor in the same institution in July 1999. His latest publications are *VG, Saddam og vi* (2009), and he is one of the editors of the four volume *Norsk Presses Historie (Norwegian Press History)* (1660-2010).

*Julian Petley* is Professor of Screen Media and Journalism in the School of Arts at Brunel University, UK. The chair of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and a member of the board of Index on Censorship, his most recent publication is *Censorship: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld 2009).

*Arch Puddington* is Director of Research at Freedom House. He previously worked as research director for the A. Philip Randolph Institute, as executive director for the League for Industrial Democracy, and as a bureau manager for Radio Free Europe – Radio Liberty. He is the author of three books: *Failed Utopias: Methods of Coercion in Communist Societies*, *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty*, and *Lane Kirkland: Champion of American Labor*.

*Anders Raahauge* is a journalist at *Jyllands-Posten*, Denmark.

*Palle Roslyng-Jensen*, DPhil, is Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of Copenhagen. He wrote his Doctoral thesis on the relationship between political leaders and the Danish military in Denmark during World War II. In 2007, he published *Danskerne og besættelsen. Holdninger og meninger 1939-1945* (Danes and the Occupation. Opinions and attitudes 1939-45) based on personal diaries. Present research focuses on propaganda, public opinions and media discourses during World War II and the Cold War.

*Peter Schiwy*, Prof. Dr., is a journalist and lawyer. He is the former CEO of major public and private radio and television networks in Germany. Since 1991, he is professor of Media Law and Media Policy at the University of Speyer. His major teaching and research interests include the legal, economic and organizational principals of the media, international communication, media-management, media-politics, media-law, health-law. He has written and published various books on media law.

*Beate Schneider*, Prof. Dr., is Professor of Media Science at the Institute of Journalism and Communication Research at the University of Music and Drama Hannover, Germany, and teaches Media Management. Her research and teaching is focused on the legal, economic and organisational foundation of the media and international communication. She has published widely about media systems and media innovation and about journalism in Germany and abroad.

*Jesper Strömbäck* is Lubbe Nordström Professor and Chair in Journalism as well as Professor of Media and Communication at Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden. He is also Research Director at the Centre for Political Communication Research at Mid Sweden University. His research focuses on comparative political communication, news journalism, political public relations, marketing and campaigning, and the mediatization of politics. His most recent books are: *The Handbook of Election News Coverage Around the World* (co-edited with Lynda Lee Kaid, 2008), *Communicating Politics: Political Communication in the Nordic Countries* (co-edited with Toril Aalberg and Mark Ørsten, 2008), and *Global Political Marketing* (co-edited with Jennifer Lees-Marshment and Chris Rudd, 2009).

*Barry White* is a freelance journalist and since 1997 has been the national organiser for the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, a UK pressure group set up in 1979 to campaign for policies to promote diverse, democratic and accountable media and the right of reply. Prior to that he was a full time trade union official for a public sector trade union. He is currently on the national executive council of the National Union of Journalists (UK) and is their delegate to the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) from the spring of 2010.



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