

Editorial:

Propaganda, Ethics, and Media—

Political and Commercial Erosion of Journalism Ethics

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That journalism in its traditional forms is in a precarious state today, few would be likely to deny. Younger people especially do not have the habit of paying regularly for their daily newspaper, and they are likely to be more absorbed by the more personal and immediate news coming from Facebook, Twitter and other social media. To this can perhaps be added a problem of declining credibility. Established media earn the respect of their readers when they assign their best reporters to investigate whether complex financial and other arrangements really do serve the public interest. But those who choose this honourable route face many obstacles.

Government officials have for some decades received special coaching in how to avoid presenting information that could be damaging to the government when dealing with the media. Reporters complain today how difficult it is to get straightforward information from lower level government officials. The kind of investigative journalism I. F. Stone engaged in during the 1950s and 1960s would be more difficult today. For example he found, from interviewing an official in the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, that an underground nuclear bomb test could be detected over a thousand miles away, contrary to anti-test ban treaty government propaganda. (The episode is nicely caught in the film “I. F. Stone’s Weekly”, Dir. Jerry Bruck, 1973). One might today expect public relations coaching to anticipate such an inquiry and recommend muzzling the official ahead of time. Denise Rudnicki has described this kind of thing in “Inside the government’s message-making machine”, May 11, 2009, posted on jsourca.ca.

In the United States, the Government Accountability Office has documented cases where government departments have produced Video News Releases in such a way that they appear to be showing independent reporters interviewing department officials. The whole thing is scripted to favour the government department or its policies. By creating the appearance of independent journalism the government department tricks the viewer into accepting the message less critically. Meanwhile the “independent” broadcaster saves a lot of money by showing well produced content provided for free. The GAO has ruled this activity illegal, as contrary to legislation against U.S. government propaganda directed against its own citizenry. But enforcement of this legislation is itself a government matter and is commonly ignored.

When it comes to local government, a common scenario has developers who stand to make a lot of money buying land zoned for one (unprofitable) use at low cost and then, with a favourably disposed city council, having the land re-zoned to make it much more profitable because of increased development opportunities. In this scenario public relations practitioners often advise how to package proposals and how to anticipate and defuse public objections. When this happens it is up to the media to alert the public to possible disadvantages. But if the media carry a lot of advertising by these same developers there may be a conflict of interest.

Commercial influence on, in, and through the media can be more direct, and Gennadiy Chernov's paper brings us in contact with the problem of stealth advertising, the occurrence of advertising not clearly presented as such. He does not deal directly with the ethics of such advertising, but section two of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards states quite clearly: "No advertisement shall be presented in a format or style which conceals its commercial intent".

The underlying ethical principle supporting this prohibition would seem to be the matter of trust. Our media like to give the impression that they exist to serve readers' interests. Disguised advertisements cloud readers' ability to judge in proper perspective the messages they receive. We are on guard against the salesperson's pitch. We trust the honest purveyor of news. Informants who purport to be the latter, but who in a disguised way are the former, trade unethically in the confusion of roles. When they are found out they can expect loss of trust and comparable loss of influence.

Commercialization of media can be a grey area, but there are notable cases where individuals have spoken out strongly and uncompromisingly against the practice. Not everyone would agree with noted children's book writer (*Stuart Little*) E. B. White's strictures against *Esquire's* publication in February 1976 of a 23-page travel article for which Xerox paid writer Harrison Salisbury \$55,000 and paid for \$115,000 worth of *Esquire* advertising. There seems to have been no obvious promotion of Xerox, but White was quite insistent that "Buying and selling space in news columns could become a serious disease of the press", and that carried too far "it could destroy the press". He said: "I want to read what the editor and publisher have managed to dig up on their own—and paid for out of the till" (*The Boston Globe*, 1976, July 5: 5).

White convinced Xerox to cancel this kind of promotion, but his attitude appears to have become increasingly rare in today's media, with the widespread acceptance of product placement, sponsorships, promotional news and the like. There is of course genuine news value in reporting the opening of a new business in the community, particularly when a lot of jobs are involved. But there are also clear cases of pseudo-events, staged with the express view of getting free publicity. In some cases the commercial element may be embedded unavoidably in a legitimate news story. Ottawa, Canada's capital city, appears to have had such a case early in December 2010, when the newly elected mayor decided to depart from tradition and hold the new council's inaugural celebration in a building named after a prominent developer who is a partner in a controversial development on city land (to be discussed), with catering by a well-known cross-Canada doughnut and coffee franchise; the story angles being that of saving taxpayer's money, and the appropriateness of having the event take place away from the normal venue, city hall.

On December 4, 2010, the Home section of the *Ottawa Citizen* carried on its front page under the heading "Too many choices" a pictorial interview with a Minto Development Inc. design consultant. Under the headline appear the words "It's all about adding personality to the basic house", and reference to the *Citizen's* website proclaimed in bold letters "Take a tour of

Minto's opulent new design centre at ottawacitizen.com". The typography was no different from the *Citizen's* regular news font, so readers might easily confuse promotional material with genuine news. Underneath was a paid display advertisement by Minto Development Inc.

An old (1990s) *Ottawa Citizen* "Ethics and Policies" booklet, aimed at editorial staff states: "All advertising in our paper, whether it is inside the news pages or in an advertorial supplement, should be easily identifiable to any reader as an advertisement and not news" (21). We wonder how seriously this policy is taken today.

Moving from grey to black, the most disturbing aspect of commercial intrusion into the media comes at the point when, to satisfy large-scale advertisers and thereby the media outlet's own interests, the news and opinion columns become promotional rather than critically evaluative of commercial developments arguably pitting public against private interests.

We will be looking at a situation of what we argue to be media bias in Ottawa, specifically with regard to print media only, but as Chernov's paper suggests, the electronic media would also warrant watching. The conditions conducive to such bias are present wherever private enterprise stands to gain handsomely, either directly from the public purse, or indirectly from changes in regulations or zoning. Whether we deal with the Vancouver Olympics, or repeal of the banking controls under the Glass-Steagall Act in the United States, it is to be expected that private corporations standing to benefit would work hard to present a convincing case to the public through the media.

When a great deal is at stake, we can expect attempts to fund the campaigns of sympathetic political candidates, or to fund pseudo "grass roots" organizations to create the appearance of a public groundswell in favour of those private interests, while not revealing that those same interests fund and guide the organizations. A new Australian film by Larrikan Films, with the title of "[Astro] Turf Wars" traces brilliantly and courageously the influence of energy magnates over the Tea Party and other groups who act, wittingly or otherwise, as front groups for their interests.

The Ottawa case involves a 37-acre tract of city-owned land called Lansdowne Park, close to downtown on a beautiful site, overlooking one of the UNESCO designated world class heritage sites, the Rideau Canal, on both south and east boundaries. Part of a neighbourhood called the Glebe, it has a stadium that used to host a national league football team, the Ottawa Rough Riders. The big problem, and a contributing reason why attempts to resurrect professional football of that scale have failed (twice), has been the absence of a roadway environment suitable for rapidly conveying upwards of 20,000 people to and from the site. Unlike most successful stadiums, it lacks any form of rapid transit, whether train, car or bus, and there is no available corridor to establish one. But sports fans have memories of a glorious history of football in that park, and many can be relied on to support almost any scheme that will bring it back.

Much of the land is paved over and in need of development in a way to maximize public benefit. A competition for proposals was underway when the mayor of the time, Larry O'Brien, short-circuited the process in favour of a group of three developers and the owner of a successful junior hockey league team with home ice at Lansdowne. Special treatment was pitched at the time on the basis of a need to have a quick decision about stadium reconstruction so as not to miss out on a Canadian Football Association franchise that had a time deadline.

Glebe residents (the current writer being among them), along with neighbouring communities, had and have reason to fear that the decision by the last City Council to approve handing over management and control of a large section of the park to a developer-driven private consortium known as the Ottawa Sports and Entertainment Group (OSEG) will bode ill for the

surrounding communities and the city as a whole when costs become clearer. The scale of the proposed development on a 10-acre section, consisting of condominiums, retail and office space, dwarfs the neighbouring buildings. Many anticipate traffic gridlock. Models show sight lines to the interesting and historical 19th century Aberdeen pavilion greatly restricted. This showpiece structure near the centre of Lansdowne was restored a few years ago at great taxpayer cost.

Our focus here is on the way in which this transfer of public land to private control came to pass. It happened through the active support of Ottawa's English-language newspapers, the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Sun*. The proposal, called Lansdowne Live, was announced with great fanfare. Dazzling pictures were presented to the public of a lively commercial development. Yet as many critics pointed out, the resemblance was more to a shopping mall than to some new unique development that would add to Ottawa's stature as a national capital and to the immediate heritage significance of the property.

The Lansdowne Live proposal was viewed as significant and valuable enough, in the minds of Mayor Larry O'Brien and fourteen like-minded Councillors to warrant discontinuing an international design competition and supporting this non-competitive bid, technically called a "sole-source" bid. The problem with sole-sourcing is that the City does not get assurance that they are getting the best deal for the handover of public land. There are also political and legal implications to sole-sourcing, which is outlawed in many communities and levels of government, and is currently being challenged in court as not being in accord with Ottawa's own stated planning principles and policies.

To be fair to supporters of the proposal, the politics of the greatly extended Ottawa boundary area amount to this: the rural and part of the suburban population has not shown much interest in spending money on downtown Ottawa projects that have no immediate benefit to themselves. So a proposal to spend lots of money on a park that might raise Ottawa's stature worldwide but not provide immediate benefit to rural or suburban areas, would not have much chance of voter support from those areas. What would and did appeal is the notion that somehow the development would be "revenue neutral" because money would flow from the development to the city and maintenance costs of some \$3 million a year would no longer be a drain on the public purse. The idea of a redeveloped stadium appealed to sports fans, the commercial development seemed at least an improvement over the existing asphalt. So in the minds of many people this private development proposal would result in actually, finally getting something done.

The crucial issue is first, whether the City fairly represented the nature of the business deal with regard to the language used in describing it. Expressions such as "ownership" and "revenue neutral" need unpacking. Secondly, and the point of our focus, is the question whether the media were insufficiently critical of the City's representation of the facts about the deal. Were the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Sun* acting primarily as advocates for the proposal or were they acting as defenders of the public interest? Our argument is that, sadly, their efforts were often in the former direction to the detriment of the latter.

When the question of objectivity arises, we often think of Dr. Samuel Johnson's remark when someone congratulated him on the objectivity of his *Hansard* reports. He replied that he tried to maintain appearances "tolerably well", but all the same he made sure that "the Whig dogs did not get the best of it". Certainly there were instances where opposing voices found expression in the paper, but timing, placement, depth of argument and frequency all play a role, along with photographic and other imagery.

Here are some reasons for seeing bias in Ottawa's newspapers, signalling advocacy rather than just reporting.

1. Both newspapers carried a full-page advertisement in their pages on November 10, 2009, shortly before City Council was to vote on the measure. The text instructed readers that under the plan "The city gives up nothing, assumes no financial risk, and gets so much in return". The truth of the first two statements is highly contestable.
2. The same advertisement proclaimed in large type: "We support the Lansdowne Partnership Plan & encourage City Council to do likewise". It was signed by many city notables, including the publishers of the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Sun*. That might suggest that investigations proving the publishers wrong might not be career enhancing for a reporter.
3. Somewhat ludicrously, a full-page advertisement in the *Ottawa Citizen*, headed by a picture of a green side of the new Lansdowne redevelopment is signed, "space for this ad donated personally by Mayor Larry O'Brien", but the ad is not much more than a puff for the city, and indirectly, for the mayor. It asks "What do all great cities have in common?" and includes "Defining urban core amenities like Lansdowne". When an advertisement is so clearly self-promoting calling the space a "donation" is bizarre. Mayor O'Brien was a candidate for re-election, even if not declared at that time.
4. The issue came to be framed in pages of both newspapers, in remarks by columnists, editorials and in letter selection as largely a matter of local nimbyism ("nimby" = "not in my backyard") versus concern for the interests of the larger city. Care was taken in the *Ottawa Citizen* to note when opponents of the scheme lived in the Glebe; their views could then be discounted as special pleading. This applied even when opponents were highly qualified, such as Ian Lee, professor in the Sprott School of Business at Carleton University. For the first time in our memory published letters were, for a while, regularly identified by neighbourhood rather than the usual "Ottawa" designation. That the issue was misrepresented in this way can be deduced from the consistent voting pattern of 15 votes for the redevelopment scheme and 9 against. The Glebe has only one councillor, so there were eight others whose concern was hardly just a matter of nimby selfishness.
5. Choice of photographs has a big impact on public perception of anybody, but political candidates are particularly boosted or diminished in this way. Mayoralty candidate and City Councillor Clive Doucet, an opponent of the Lansdowne redevelopment, was often shown in the *Ottawa Citizen* unsmiling while Minto developer Roger Greenberg looked smiling and cheerful. When the *Ottawa Citizen* dealt with the matter of vision, Doucet's acknowledged strong point, it carried a dominating picture of rival, developer-friendly mayoralty candidate, Jim Watson, who went on to win the election. An egregiously pro-Watson photograph appeared in the *Ottawa Sun* (October 22: 26) showing an in-focus smiling Watson between out-of focus mayoralty candidates O'Brien and Doucet. The location was Carleton University. We attended the debate and in our view and that of students we talked to, Doucet

came out ahead. He was expected to do well there, with the success of the O-train, a new commuter train built on pre-existing track running through the campus, that he promoted from his first term as councillor. His proposal to extend the track to the airport was popular. As the *Sun* headlined: “Transit issue drives debate”. But the photograph suggested otherwise to the *Sun*’s readership.

6. When the city’s pedestrian and transit advisory committee voted unanimously to take a position against proceeding with the Lansdowne plan “unless a proper solution to the transportation problems can be found”, the *Ottawa Citizen* gave this story coverage, with a small picture of Shawn Menard, vice-chair of the committee, but placed it at the bottom of an inside page of the city section. One might have expected the *Ottawa Citizen* to follow this up with a thorough investigation of the merits of the committee’s claim, but attention to the issue was slender and unsustainable. To its credit, the *Ottawa Sun* gave this matter its full, front-page attention, for one day at least.

Given the dearth of in-depth critical analysis in the two English-language daily newspapers in Ottawa, it was not surprising that a group called “Friends of Lansdowne Park” should have sprung up to provide such analysis. They hired a lawyer, Steven Shrybman, who has filed a court application to challenge the Lansdowne deal. He presented his case to some 350 people gathered in the Mayfair Theatre November 28, 2010 (*The Ottawa Citizen*, November 29, 2010, B2, reported “over 150” and the CBC, perhaps to be on the “safe” side, said “over 100”). The Theatre was packed, and it holds 350 people. The argument, as he presented it there, includes the following points:

1. The City’s move to terminate the competitive bidding process was in conflict with the City’s purchasing bylaw which states that “The guiding procurement principle is that purchases be made using a competitive process that is open, transparent and fair to all suppliers”. By contrast, the City privately solicited and provided preferential treatment to the OSEG proposal while the public process was underway and soon after cancelled.
2. The City unlawfully authorized a sole-source procurement on the grounds that OSEG had received a conditional Canadian Football League offer that was contingent on the use of Frank Clair Stadium. It was later revealed that the particular site was not essential and other locations would have been acceptable.
3. The City was giving special advantages to OSEG in the form of leasing or selling below fair market value or making other arrangements giving the group disproportionate advantage, contrary to Section 106 of the Ontario Municipal Act.
4. The City would be paying \$129 million to refurbish Frank Clair Stadium and related parking facilities, but it would be granting OSEG a 30-year lease to the entire Lansdowne site for one dollar a year. The deal gives OSEG a 50-70 year lease to several acres of Lansdowne for commercial development for the same nominal rent for the first 30 years. OSEG is allowed to capitalize the costs of the Canadian Football League and the Ontario Hockey League

- franchises, and construction cost overruns and to earn an 8% return on these investments and until they are repaid in full.
5. The City meanwhile borrows \$35 million for an urban park, to include surface parking, and to move the Horticulture Building, a heritage designated structure.
 6. The City acted in bad faith in claiming that it would maintain ownership, but the deal in fact privatizes a significant portion of Lansdowne Park.

To this we would add our own argument: that “ownership” is made up of different rights, duties, powers, privileges and immunities. In handing over to OSEG so many of these rights to a large part of the Park it is highly misleading to say that the City maintains ownership in the deal, and false or misleading to say that it “gives up nothing”, as stated in the full page advertisement endorsed by the publishers of the *Ottawa Citizen* and the *Ottawa Sun*.

7. The City repeatedly indicated that the City and OSEG would be sharing revenues generated by the developments on the site through a “waterfall” scheme, without making it clear that none of these revenues are to be allocated to the City to repay the \$172,800,000 that it will spend on the Stadium, parking, urban park, and tradeshow and exhibition space.

That these and other points came as a surprise to many people made one wonder why the local media had not done a better job of informing the public.

There may be a conflict of interest. Both newspapers would likely benefit from the revival of professional football, and the *Ottawa Citizen* visibly benefits regularly from hefty advertising by Minto, headed by Roger Greenberg, who has taken on the role of spokesperson for OSEG.

There was little published in the way of independent professional architects’ in-depth appraisals of proposed designs for the site. The Ottawa Regional Society of Architects put out their own four pages of text headed “Lansdowne Park: Design Matters”, on October 29, 2009. Their conclusion: “ORSA does not support Lansdowne Live and considers it irredeemably flawed and incapable of being improved in any satisfactory or coherent matter”.

The Citizen’s own writer Maria Cook, who has a reputation for writing knowledgeably on architectural matters, ceased to produce her blog some weeks before the June, 2010, Lansdowne vote, and it was rumoured that senior management had demanded it be shut down following critical comments appearing on her blog regarding Lansdowne. The Editor of *The Canadian Architect* for July, 2010, Ian Chodikoff, did not mince words, writing that after Maria Cook posted critical comments about Lansdowne Park, “the *Citizen* unceremoniously shut her down by pulling her off the urban affairs beat and suspending her blog”. Cook was honoured with the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada’s 2010 President’s Award for Architectural Journalism that same June.

If true, the muzzling of Cook would constitute a major lapse in journalistic ethics by the *Ottawa Citizen*. We asked the *Citizen* if the story was true. We will let the reader decide whether the answer constitutes a well-crafted bureaucratic admission of wrongdoing, or whether it is a believable maintenance of innocence. The letter is from Graham N. Green, Executive Editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, July 22, 2010:

The simple answer to your question is no, what you read in *Canadian Architect* is not an accurate reflection of how the *Citizen* covers the Lansdowne project. As an avid reader of the *Citizen*, I am sure you will have noticed that Maria Cook's byline continues to appear on a number of architecture-related stories. It is a testament to the importance of the Lansdowne redevelopment for so many aspects of Ottawa that the *Citizen* has assigned some of our most senior and recognized writers to this issue. Maria has been, and will continue to be, part of our coverage team. Her blog has been suspended as we review our social media policies at the *Citizen*, but in the meantime, her fair, balanced and accurate coverage remains part of the package.

At the time of writing in December, 2010, attempts to access her column through Google led only to the May 4, 2010 and earlier postings.

The news media are the nervous system of our societal existence, without which the body politic cannot function properly. Channels of communication need to be kept above board, straightforward, and without the injection of misleading language or suppression of information for the benefit of private as against public interests.

The articles and reviews presented in this issue each contribute something either to our awareness of how media can be manipulative, or to the question of valuing and maintaining our integrity in a propagandized environment.

In what follows we begin with four fully refereed papers, each dealing with different aspects of propaganda. There are then two review articles, one in English the other in French, followed by a blog review, paying attention to opinion in cyberspace where there is frequent criticism of the mainstream media (a representative of the mainstream media doing some pushback), and a DVD review of an ambitious CBC six-part series on the propaganda of World War II. Finally we offer three book reviews on topics related to the theme of this issue.

Mark Bourrie's paper shows us that press management is nothing new, and how Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King courted the press, using to the full his power to supply or withhold news depending on the kind of coverage reporters and editors would give him. A gagged clam to some, he would be an open oyster to others. King and Ivy Lee were both public relations advisors to John D. Rockefeller Jr. during the Ludlow crisis, but Lee, often thought of as the founder of public relations in the United States, took a back seat to King as far as giving successful advice. The personal approach advised by King was what worked. The use of personal propaganda was later central to British propaganda in World War I, and Bourrie shows King as supporting efforts early in World War II to bring the U.S. into war on the side of Britain. Bourrie has us wondering what kind similar influences on media may be happening today, initiated not only by government leaders and the media, but also heads of powerful corporations.

Gennadiy Chernov's empirical study of stealth advertising (advertising that does not present itself as such) in Canadian broadcasting throws light on the extent of its occurrence in both private and public broadcasting and gives us some insight into the thinking of those responsible for the news and their attitudes to this kind of advertising. Some may feel that these gatekeepers are insufficiently purist and are on a slippery slope leading to total distrust. Others may argue that today so many viewers are aware of "stealth" advertising that it is no longer such a clandestine thing, and that people are accepting of it. Perhaps another study of public attitudes is needed to determine the truth of this contention. Chernov does not deal directly with the ethics of such advertising, but section two of the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards states quite

clearly: “No advertisement shall be presented in a format or style which conceals its commercial intent”. Chernov’s study has taken some necessary first steps to exploration of the ethical import of this kind of advertising as it has established itself in Canada, and it serves an important function in drawing attention to this issue.

Michael Yeo’s study of George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* draws attention to two kinds of surveillance in the novel, each with a different role to play in guaranteeing acceptance of propaganda and submission to mind-control. The highly visible imagery of Big Brother encourages self-censorship, but the invisible kind is designed to catch people off guard and find out what they really think. In a fully Orwellian society, the cost of expressing oneself honestly may land one in a torture chamber. Our actual society may not be so extreme, but the stark portrayal of that imagined world casts the possibilities for our real lives in sharp relief and helps to focus our thinking on the value we place on thinking and expressing ourselves in a way true to our deeply held beliefs, even when these may be unpopular and risk social condemnation or worse. We are reminded of Czech poet, writer and statesman Vaclav Havel’s castigation of his fellow countrymen for widespread hypocrisy and self-censorship under Soviet domination, and his call for honest facing of this fact.

The collaboration of Joachim Neander and Randal Marlin came about after Marlin posted some new information, just acquired, about the Corpse Utilization Plant hoax that formed an important part of British propaganda in World War I. Marlin had published his article on a Web site called MercatorNet and it caught Neander’s attention. The article, http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/view/the_art_of_faking_credentials/, links the means used by the Northcliffe press of the time to some modern techniques. In both cases credentials are faked. Neander has a thorough grasp of the many forms in which the story surfaced prior to and not based on the relevant Northcliffe texts. He has studied in particular the alleged “soap production” stories related to the WWI Corpse story, stories which survived long after the British officially repudiated the story in 1925. Such discredited stories, when presented as truths about the Holocaust, give ammunition to Holocaust deniers. Acknowledging the falseness of such stories and separating them from provable Holocaust history serves the purpose of removing such ammunition. Neander and Marlin have never met, but have corresponded frequently. This is their first collaborative effort.

What follows are two review articles, using recent or current books, or new editions of older books, to explore a theme. After this comes a critique of material on the Internet, which we have called a blog review, then a DVD review and finally three book reviews.

George Wright’s review article delves deeply into the history of U.S. propaganda directed toward Spanish-speaking countries, showing how the background assumptions are so far apart that even when faced with a common enemy in World War II, Mexican propaganda against Germany could not mesh with that of the U.S. Though we are more sensitive to racist propaganda today than in the past, we may forget that such propaganda has fuelled acquisition of territory in the past, under conditions that would today be seen as illegal. Those from whom such land was taken may have a different attitude to “illegal” immigration back to such land, and a knowledge of background propagandas may create a better understanding between the two peoples and thus a better basis for peace.

The focus of Christian Roy’s article is a little known Bordeaux area thinker, Bernard Charbonneau, who inspired much of Jacques Ellul’s thought about technology and the intrusion of media into our perception of the world, taking away our spontaneity and direct contact with nature and our fellow human beings. The mediatized world is not only the world filtered in news

accounts in a way acceptable to the dominant power-holders, as described by Chomsky; it is also the world conditioned by technological progress, in a way threatening to authentic human interaction. Charbonneau's proposal for recapturing individual autonomy, which Roy thinks no less relevant today, is for groups to gather and confront these influences on their lives, and to evaluate their impact so as to counteract the negative influences to the extent possible. He gives examples where people have already started organizing on such lines.

In the blogosphere numerous doubts have arisen about official accounts concerning the sinking of the South Korean corvette Cheonan in March 2010. The widely expressed doubts have been coherently expressed in an article by Hilary Keenan, appearing in the website GlobalResearch.ca. Hilary Keenan is the pen name of a regular contributor to 21stcenturysocialism.com where the article was originally published. Donald Kirk's review is aimed not just at this immediate article but numerous similar expressions of views to be found on the blogosphere. He challenges those who are inclined to be doubtful of official U.S. and South Korean accounts. That includes the current Guest Editor of *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, whose thinking has been affected, perhaps too much, by examples of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident leading to U.S. war in Vietnam, the early 1960s Operation Northwoods documents dealing with pretexts for invading Cuba, and the deceptions behind the U.S. led invasion of Iraq in 2003. For this reason he sought out Kirk's views on the matter. Kirk argues that current U.S. self-interest militates against a parallel with those cases, and that recent history and science point overwhelmingly to North Korea's responsibility for the sinking. To think otherwise, he argues, is to be blinded by ideological filters that block recognition of basic facts. His arguments and observations are enriched by his long experience reporting from that part of the world, and his command of the history of the area.

Reviewing such a hugely ambitious undertaking as the CBC's "Love, Hate & Propaganda", broadcast is a daunting task, but Professor Emeritus Robert Sklar has met the challenge with enviable skill, knowledge and insight. The magazine *Cineaste*, to which he is a frequent contributor, specializes in studying propaganda aspects of film. A New Yorker, his marriage to a Canadian gives him a special affinity for the Canadian perspective shown in this six-part series. Sklar asks some very interesting questions, such as whether the kind of propaganda shown in the film, in the context of more regimented societies, would be effective on today's audiences who are largely split off into their own social media worlds. If not, then is the warning about what could happen still valuable? Yes, we think, although Sklar's observation makes us a little unsure why. Anyway, as Sklar makes clear the CBC deserves huge plaudits for this undertaking. Sklar reviewed the broadcast part, but the DVD on sale at a very affordable price has a bonus of all kinds of additional material, including the 1943 "War for Men's Minds", with Lorne Greene's booming voice. With the self-assuredness proclaimed by his thundering words, Canadians could have the same confidence in victory as Americans inspired by the imagery of John Wayne.

Fotis Xipolitakis review of Shankar Vedantam's book brings us in touch with the relevance of cognitive science and brain studies to possibilities for manipulation. It appears that we do not think all that rationally a lot of the time. That is old news, but the new part pertains to how our brain circuitry develops set patterns that get triggered in ways we may not realize. All this knowledge plays into the importance of framing an issue. Key policy questions are likely to be won or lost depending how they are framed, because even arguments against the policy will reinforce the frame they are in and lose if the frame is against it. Framing tobacco advertising controls as a health issue (win) or a free speech issue (lose) is a case in point. The observations

Xipolitakis describes about the moral impact of the suggestion that one is being watched tie in nicely with Yeo's study of Orwell.

Dennis Murphy puts us in touch with the thinking of Nancy Snow about U.S. propaganda. Her work is well known for its exposure of U.S. propaganda technique, and her desire to replace "public diplomacy" with the more honest word "propaganda" for a lot of communications activity carried out by the U.S. government, its military or its agencies. What Murphy brings out here is her desire to have the U.S. embrace a more positive and empathetic approach to communications relating to foreign countries. The word "propaganda" can also have positive important, and she would like to see a change from domination to mutual understanding. Murphy recommends going farther and taking on board the prescriptions of a Jesuit who came up with important prescriptions for winning the hearts and minds (as we say today) of the people in a foreign land.

Clyde Sanger's review of *Newspeak in the 21st Century*, by the founders of Media Lens, an online critique of the mainstream media, focuses more on the excesses he sees in their disparaging of the capitalist press than on their genuine accomplishments in bringing to light delinquencies of a "wayward press" (to use A. J. Liebling's memorable term). He acknowledges the good work they have done, and gives important examples, but offsets that against what he sees as their giving insufficient credit to those working inside the mainstream media who do manage to enlighten the public from time to time against the interests of the capitalist media owners. Sanger no more than authors David Edwards and David Cromwell is interested in defending what has been aptly called "stenographers to power", but he would like more encouragement and recognition for the efforts of those who rise above the stenographic stereotype in the service of good progressive causes, sometimes at great risk.

Concluding Notes

Every contribution in this issue of *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, has drawn attention to manipulative practices in communication, or to related philosophical or existential problems. We are under no illusion that the manipulative practices will disappear as a result, but we can hope that this issue will contribute to lessening their adverse impact, through the never-ending task of exposure and enlightenment.

Editing this issue has placed on us a high level of indebtedness, first of all to the writers for their fine contributions. Heartfelt thanks are due to all the anonymous referees, for the diligence with which they pursued their task, spurring writers to their best efforts. We thank Elaine Marlin, for her constant understanding and reassurance as a former editor herself, and Martha Attridge-Buften, Carleton University Library, for reference help. Above all we wish to express our deep appreciation to the Editor of *Global Media Journal -- Canadian Edition*, Professor Mahmoud Eid, whose excellent advice, judgement, and guidance, supplemented by his superb eye for detail and willingness to shoulder many responsibilities, were indispensable to the success of this project. We take full responsibility for any remaining deficiencies.

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