

A black and white photograph of a street scene. In the foreground, there is a large pile of white debris, possibly paper or fabric, scattered on the ground. A crowd of people is gathered in the middle ground, some standing and some appearing to be in motion. The background shows several buildings, including a multi-story brick building on the right and a lower building with arched windows on the left. The overall atmosphere suggests a scene of civil unrest or a protest.

**all-out struggle
against the
traitor press**

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ALL-OUT STRUGGLE AGAINST THE TRAITOR PRESS

What is known as the "mass media" in Australia, the daily newspapers and other newspapers, television and radio controlled by the owners of these dailies, is a traitor mass media. For convenience, it will be referred to as "the press".

This press says that Australia has a "free press" and "freedom of the press". It is very free indeed for those who own and control it. The vast majority of the Australian people are excluded from this ownership and control.

Four big monopolies control the press in Australia. They are:

1. THE HERALD GROUP (HERALD & WEEKLY TIMES LTD.): The major interests of this group include control of *The Sun* (Melbourne), *The Herald* (Melbourne), *The West Australian*, *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), HSV 7 (Melbourne), BTQ 7 (Brisbane), ADS 7 (Adelaide), TVW 7 (Perth) and TV 6 (Hobart).

2. THE FAIRFAX GROUP: Amongst other things, this group controls *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian Financial Review*, *The Sun-Herald* (Sydney), *The Canberra Times*, ATN 7 (Sydney), QTQ 9 (Brisbane), CTC 7 (Canberra), 2GB (Sydney), 2CA (Canberra), 3AW (Melbourne), 4BH (Brisbane), 5DN (Adelaide), 2WL (Wollongong).

3. NEWS LTD. (THE MURDOCH EMPIRE): This monopoly controls (amongst others) *The Australian*, *The Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), *The Sunday Times* (Sydney), *Daily Mirror* (Sydney), *Sunday Sun* (Brisbane), *Truth* (Melbourne), NWS 9 (Adelaide), WIN 4 (Wollongong).

4. CONSOLIDATED PRESS (PACKER): This group's control includes 4 Sydney suburban papers, 16 country papers, TCN 9 (Sydney), GTV 9 (Melbourne), 3AK (Melbourne), 6PM (Perth), 6KG (Kalgoorlie).

David Syme, which controls the Melbourne *Age*, *The Sunday Press* (Melbourne - with Herald and Weekly Times) is owned by Fairfax (55%) and the Herald group (45%).

Between them these giants control 219 newspapers, 21 radio stations (and have minor interests in another 10), and 11 television stations (with minor interests in another 33). Further, 76 magazines, at least 111 printing and publishing companies, J. C. Williamson's, numerous theatres, music publishing companies, record manufacturing interests, market research, insurance, electronic data systems, investment companies, K. G. Murray comics, "Little Golden Books", Gregory's Street Directories, book selling, record distributions, real estate, finance and investment companies, "Musak" companies, audio-visual companies, newsprint storage, Atlab Film Laboratories - and the list goes on - all come under their control and sphere of influence. To round the picture off, these four

giants between them also own 75% of Australian Associated Press and 75% of Australian Newsprint Mills Holdings Ltd. They are indeed a good lesson in monopoly capitalism. (Source: "A Study of Interlocking Patterns of Ownership and Control in Australian Media Industries". Initial Progress Report. Planning and Research Section, Department of the Media, December 1974.)

In light of this "free" press, it is worth quoting the words of the great Russian revolutionary leader, Lenin, who said: *"By 'freedom' the capitalists have always meant the freedom of the rich to accumulate profits, and the freedom of the workers to die of starvation. By freedom of the press, the capitalists mean the freedom of the rich to bribe the press, freedom to use wealth for the purpose of fabricating and manipulating so-called public opinion."*

The media monopolists make millions out of the press. News Ltd. more than doubled profit in the last financial year from \$5.6 million to \$11.4 million. John Fairfax Ltd. boosted profit by 62.2% to \$5.9 million in the latest year. Australian Consolidated Press raised its profit by 18% to \$1.97 million. The Herald & Weekly Times Ltd.'s latest *half-yearly* profit was \$5.2 million. In all cases the above profit figures well outpaced the inflation rate. Yet the newspapers, radio and television controlled by these monopolists all preach "wage restraint". What hypocrisy!

The media monopolists set out deliberately to control as tightly as possible all channels of information

to the people. The press uses this tight control to struggle to preserve the system of capitalism in Australia, at the core of which lie the plundering U.S. imperialist multi-nationals. These multi-nationals are coming under challenge from the younger and more aggressive imperialism of the Soviet Union. This too reflects itself in the press, as we shall see later.

We call the press a traitor press because it serves these foreign imperialist interests, it is a traitor to Australia and the Australian people.

The press strives to preserve capitalism by deception of the people, by telling them lies, withholding truth, spreading half-truths and by constantly attempting to undermine people's confidence in themselves. It focusses on "experts" and "great people" or parliamentary "leaders". It ignores the really important people, the working people, except when it attacks, derides, insults and abuses them.

Underlying everything in the traitor press is the view that capitalism is normal, eternal, beyond question. For example, when the press runs articles calling for charity for people in poverty, it never asks why is there poverty in Australia, it never, ever questions capitalism, the cause of poverty.

The traitor press lives on lies. It lied about U.S. aggression in Vietnam. It told Australians that the U.S. intervention was supported by the people of Vietnam. When the U.S. imperialists were driven out of Vietnam its editorial columns said that the aggression in Vietnam

had perhaps been a "mistake". 500 young Australians died for this "mistake" of the U.S. imperialists and their traitor press here.

The press says that workers cause inflation, when it is workers who suffer most from inflation. The traitor press says Australia benefits from foreign investment, when foreign investors take hundreds of millions of dollars in profits out of our country every year.

We have said that the press largely serves the U.S. multi-nationals. We say "largely" because the presence of Soviet social-imperialism (socialism in words, imperialism in deeds) is growing in Australia. Being in reality a *traitor* press, some elements in the press, sensing the growing strength of the Soviet social-imperialists, decide to change masters. The Fairfax press is only the most outstanding example of this. Editorials during and since Prime Minister Fraser's trip to China warned him not to "insult" the Soviet Union. Great publicity is given to statements which falsely assert that the armed forces (including naval forces) of the Soviet Union – the largest in the world – do not pose a threat to Australia. Actual articles by Soviet "commentators" and diplomats are published.

The press attempts to trivialise and numb the minds of the Australian people with sensational articles about suffering, natural disasters, car accidents. It publishes with relish monstrous details about crime, drink, drugs, massage parlours, rape. It sets out to debase methodically the minds and the talents of Aus-

tralian young people, and then complains that standards are "low".

It complains about "political strikes" and strikes in general, yet has never supported any strike in which working people have been forced to engage to preserve their living standards and hard-won working conditions, let alone more obviously political issues. Never does it attack the profits of the multi-nationals. Forever is it attacking the wages of the workers. Their biased, anti-people stand never alters.

Added to this system of distortion and censorship there is an official system of censorship. This is the infamous "D notices" system, a "system by which newspapers, radio and television . . . submit to Government-directed censorship" and for which the Defence Department is "largely responsible". (*Inside Canberra*, February 23, 1973)

When this traitor press reports on the struggles of the people – be they demonstrations, marches, occupations, sit-ins, strikes, stop-work meetings, picketings or whatever – it endlessly strives to distort and misrepresent the truth. Most of the time it ignores the struggles of the people. Occasionally the press appears to report "favourably" of one or another such struggle. It gives television and radio time, or newspaper space, to the views of some leaders in these struggles. But even on the rarest of rare occasions when this is done (and, of course, the most important parts are always cut out and censored) it only does this in order

to say: "Look, see how 'democratic' we are. We even give time and space to the 'other side'."

No thinking working or patriotic people want anything to do with this traitor press. The people will not lend themselves to this press in order to help it bolster its thoroughly tarnished image of "neutrality" and "even-handedness".

The Australian Labor Party has made a certain amount of noise about the biased nature of the press. It should never be forgotten that press baron Murdoch donated \$70,000 to the ALP's campaign for the December 1972 elections. For its own limited electoral purposes the ALP complains every now and then about "press bias". But it has never sought to seriously challenge or undermine this bias. Australian television actors and workers demonstrated this very well when they said, in a speech by representatives of the Australian Television Action Committee on May 10, 1975: "Commercial T.V. in Australia is controlled by four Press Monopolies . . . They have sought to limit Australian T.V. production. Initially when the ALP government introduced requirements for increased Australian content they made some minor moves in that direction. When the commercial stations recognised how much the ALP government was dependent on getting 'good press' from the newspapers (which the same commercial barons owned), they thumbed their noses at the government - they knew the government was afraid to take them on." The press loves to raise the questions of "who runs

Australia", and attack the workers, saying that the "elected government" should run Australia. They should be the last to talk. In reality, the multi-nationals run the country, and parliament (whether controlled by the ALP or the Liberal-National Country Parties) is the instrument of these multi-nationals. It cannot be otherwise.

The press in Australia is isolated. It is despised by the ordinary people. "You can't believe what you read in the papers" is a commonly-heard phrase amongst the people.

The press will become even further isolated, its credibility will be even further undermined and destroyed.

In recent times great struggles have been waged against this traitor press. In August 1975 Melbourne printers employed by the traitor press went on strike, picketed the entrances and exits of the traitor press, and waged a mighty campaign against this press, assisted by Melbourne waterside workers (who blackbanned the handling of newsprint for the press) and printers in other States.

In December 1975 printers in Sydney went on strike. Then, on December 8, in an unprecedented move, journalists employed by the Murdoch traitor press in Sydney decided to go on strike, in protest against many of their stories being cut, censored, rejected and rewritten. In September 1976, Melbourne waterside workers blackbanned the press after it published a series of vicious, lying attacks on them.

In October and November 1976, workers employed by the Fairfax traitor press in Sydney waged a campaign involving strike action, picketing, and the burning of the filthy rags published by Murdoch.

When the working people take such action, the police and courts (with the gaols and army so far being held in reserve) are there to do the bidding of the press barons. In Melbourne printing workers were arrested, bashed, charged, convicted and fined. In Sydney the police arrested printing workers. Everywhere they have acted as strike-breakers and hired thugs of the press barons. For this, they have earned the gratitude of the press barons, who not only eternally promote the police in their press as "friendly" people with a "difficult" job, but also send letters of open thanks to them. For example, Ranald MacDonald, Managing Director of the *Age* during the Melbourne printers' strike referred to above, wrote to the Chief Commissioner of Police: "Thank you and your men for the invaluable help given us here last night . . ." (From the Victorian Police magazine, *Police Life*.)

The people are fighting every day to break the monopoly of the traitor press on what we see, hear and read — on what we know and are "allowed" to know. Many newspapers, broadsheets, pamphlets and leaflets have been and are being produced to demand an end to everything which the press barons promote: an end to poverty amongst plenty, and hypocritical "charity"; an end to domination of Australia by a tiny handful of rapacious multi-nationals

an end to the advances and intrusions of the even more dangerous hand of the Soviet social-imperialists; an end to unemployment, inflation and the economic crisis which has characterised the insane, unplanned system of capitalism since the day of its birth.

At the head of this people's press stands the Australian weekly newspaper the *Vanguard*, which expressed the viewpoint of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), and the numerous leaflets and pamphlets produced and distributed which put forward the political line of revolutionary struggle embodied in *Vanguard*.

The building of an alternate press, of a people's press, is the way to smash the monopoly of the traitor press.

All the Murdochs, Packers and Fairfax's in the world will not be able to stem the tide of the people's thirst for truth, for real knowledge. Nothing can prevent the people's revolt in Australia from growing. The people will expel the press barons' imperialist masters and build a truly free and independent Australia, free from *both* superpowers and all foreign domination, where the newspapers, radio and television will be *really* free, will tell the truth and serve the people because they will be owned and controlled by the people.

Initiative for a great and continuing campaign against this enemy of the people is certain to develop.



NOVEMBER, 1976

Photo: Newspapers burning in the street after being seized by striking workers outside John Fairfax plant, Sydney.

A COMMUNIST (MARXIST-LENINIST) PUBLICATION