

CJFE

reporter

2002 – Issue 1

U.S. media reconsidering post-September 11 patriotism

By Kokila Jacob

From emotional, patriotic jingoism to gradual critical introspection, post-September 11 media coverage appears to have been a cathartic experience for the North American media, particularly in the United States.

A critical post-mortem, muted in the beginning, seems to be gathering steam.

"The way to support independent journalism abroad is to practise it ourselves," said Joe Lelyveld, former executive editor of *The New York Times*, in an address to the Committee to Protect Jour-

nalists (CPJ) annual press freedom awards dinner on November 28 in New York. That succinct observation serves as a critical indictment of the U.S. media coverage of the terrorist attacks.

What was apparent to outside observers, alternative press and foreign media is finally being accepted by an increasing number of mainstream journalists: North American media, shell-shocked by the events, lost their ability to report impartially, thus greatly tarnishing their credibility.

The organization Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), a major critic of mainstream media

in America, found the coverage in the first days acceptable. But when President George W. Bush called for a "war on terrorism" in a September 20 speech, FAIR observed a change in the tone and content on American TV networks.

A French journalist who covered the NATO intervention in Serbia said from New York that American television had "gone to war."

"Instead of news broadcasts, Americans are watching advertising spots to the glory of their country," he said.

In *The Globe and Mail*, Lawrence Martin observed, "In times of crises involving foreign en-

emies, the U.S. media, with some exceptions, rally round the flag. They become Tass, Pravda and Izvestia rolled into one. Pack patriotism takes over. No hard questions are asked."

Initial alarm bells were rung by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Reporters sans frontières (RSF) and the CPJ. They expressed concern at the lack of objective reporting and critical questioning of authorities, as well as efforts by governments and corporations to censor reports and journalists. This was apparent not only in the Western world but in other countries as far away as China.

RSF recorded incidents of press freedom violations directly linked to the events in America, in countries such as Pakistan, Israel, the territories under Palestinian authority, Liberia and Jordan.

"A number of regimes find the temptation too great to exploit the genuine emotion produced by these attacks on the U.S. on September 11 to restrict freedom of press and more generally to silence domestic opposition under the cover of the strug-

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AP / NASSER NASSER

Israeli soldiers walk in front of an army bulldozer destroying the Palestinian Authority's radio station in the West Bank town of Ramallah on December 13, 2001. For more on the media crackdown in Israel and Palestine, see page 6.

CJFE hires new executive director

Journalist Joel Ruimy is CJFE's new executive director. He replaces Sharmini Peries, who left last November to pursue other projects.

Ruimy brings many years of experience working as a producer, editor and reporter for various print and broadcast media outlets, including CBC, *The Toronto Star*, *The Gazette* of Montreal and Canadian Press. He is fluently bilingual.

Canadian media concentration a growing concern

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Canadian media convergence grows despite regulatory efforts

By Petty Bozonelos

Cross-media ownership in Canada continues to grow, despite efforts by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to control its spread. Many journalists and citizens say this trend goes against democratic principles and the public interest.

Last summer, the CRTC renewed television licences for CTV and CanWest Global for full seven-year terms on the condition that both agree to manage their respective print and broadcast operations separately.

Integrated newsrooms

"This commission is concerned that cross-ownership of television stations and newspapers ... could potentially lead to the complete integration of the owner's television and news operations," the CRTC ruling said. "This integration could eventually result in a reduction of the diversity of the information presented to the public and the diversity of distinct editorial voices."

Neither CanWest Global nor CTV was keen on separation of their newsgathering operations. In order to comply with the CRTC's Statement of Principles and Practices, both companies proposed to separate editorial management bodies but not newsrooms.

The CRTC decision attempted to strike a balance between con-

cerns that media concentration would result in fewer voices in news reporting and the corporate view that merging would create more efficiency.

Critics, including unions, say the ruling did not go far enough to protect diversity in Canadian media. They say media giants aim to create "synergies" that would benefit the companies and their shareholders, thereby reducing the market share of independent media outlets and the diversity of news coverage.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) and the Canadian Media Guild worry about a diminishing quality of

journalism. For example, one reporter scrambling to cover an event for both broadcast and print media means fewer reporters covering an event and fewer perspectives, they say.

Journalists and unions say convergence is the predominant motive for media powerhouses, and that this pursuit will continue irrespective of CRTC efforts to curtail it.

Sandra Farias, a journalist who has done extensive research on media concentration, says, "It's like a fungus that is under the system and it's spreading. These media giants have the power to make their companies more open

and diverse. The owners ... see media ownership as good business, and it's not good business to produce diversity of thought and of information in media."

Fighting monopolies

But Farias also says Canada is one of the few countries that tries to resist convergence. "There is a big movement in Quebec to fight media monopolies. Journalists, universities and citizens are very active in preventing further media monopolies."

Hélène Pichette, president of the Professional Federation of Quebec Journalists (FPJQ), agrees. "There are not enough voices in cross-media ownership. Now, there are only two major newspaper owners in Quebec: Gesca and Quebecor Media. They own 90 per cent of all French-language newspapers in Quebec."

Pichette explains, "It is dangerous for one company to own so many newspapers. Conflict of interest becomes a big problem. There would be a reluctance for a journalist to investigate, for example, an insurance company owned by the same powerhouse."

Last spring, the FPJQ requested that the Quebec National Assembly create a special commission on media convergence. It demanded cross-media ownership limits in regional markets and a fund to diversify small independent media. The government agreed to co-ordinate a study, and a report is expected soon.

Quebecor received CRTC approval to take over the communications company Vidéotron, but has promised to maintain independent newsrooms, unlike CanWest Global and CTV. Despite the promise, Quebecor's Web site boasts that "synergies between the Internet, cable, television broadcasting, telephony and publishing media are now a reality".

Pichette fears that the current arrangement of independent newsrooms is provisional, given the power and determination of media giants. "Everything could change tomorrow."

Petty Bozonelos is a student at the Ryerson School of Journalism and a volunteer with CJFE.



ANTHONY JENKINS / GLOBE AND MAIL

CanWest centralizes editorial positions

Media giant CanWest Global is demanding that all of its 14 newspapers run the same national editorial each week. Within a year, CanWest plans to run national editorials in its newspapers three times a week.

The first national editorial, which ran December 6, urged the federal government to lower taxation on private charities. The majority owners of CanWest Global (CanWest) – the Asper family – run a charity of their own.

In response, at least 55 staff from CanWest's *The Gazette* in Montreal signed a petition denouncing the national editorials. The journalists "feel both their independence and the diversity of media opinion across the country have been attacked," it said. *The Gazette* had pulled some cartoons and columns critical of CanWest Global's decision.

CanWest Global became the largest media empire in Canada in 2001 when it bought the Southam newspaper chain from Conrad Black for more than \$3 billion. The chain owns 13 daily newspapers (including *The National Post*), Global Television, 130 small publications and close to 80 magazines and Internet sites.

– Geoffrey Chan

Membership renewal letters mailed out

Letters have been sent asking all CJFE members to renew their membership. The cost is \$25 per calendar year; for any donation beyond that, a charitable tax receipt will be issued. Benefits include reduced-price tickets to the annual press freedom awards banquet, this newsletter, a monthly e-bulletin on CJFE activities, plus an invitation to CJFE's annual meeting.

If you haven't done so, please send in your renewal today!

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Canadian Journalists for Free Expression

(formerly the Canadian Committee to Protect

Journalists) is an independent, non-profit

association of journalists, writers, producers,

editors and publishers promoting freedom

of expression.

CJFE membership costs \$25 per calendar year.

For any donation beyond that amount,

a charitable tax receipt will be issued.

CJFE administers a Clearing House for the

International Freedom of Expression Exchange

(IFEX), which operates an Action Alert Network

and globally disseminates information to

organizations and individuals.



September's attacks on New York and Washington spurred widespread flag-waving in U.S. media and ostracism of dissenting voices.

U.S. media reconsidering post-9/11 patriotism

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gle against terrorism," it reported.

In October, the IFJ published *Journalism, Civil Liberties and the War on Terrorism*, based on a survey of media coverage in more than 20 countries. On October 23, the IFJ called for governments to lift pressure on journalists reporting events surrounding the war in Afghanistan.

"Once again journalists are being bullied and harassed by all sides in a conflict that calls for professionalism and independence from media – not propaganda and censorship," said IFJ secretary general Aidan White. "What is developing is a profound crisis for journalists both in terms of attempts to manipulate the media message and incidents of violence in which reporters and media staff find themselves under attack."

While the alternative press was vigorously critical early on, the mainstream media response was more muted. It was almost a month after the September 11 attacks that calls for journalists and media to stop "cheerleading" and inform without "bias" started being heard.

Carol Goar of *The Toronto Star* commented: "We lost something, too: our critical judgment. It's beginning to work its way loose from the wreckage."

"But 55 days after the world's worst terrorist attack, we remain intellectually traumatized. We are too credulous, too timid about asking important questions, too intolerant of dissent, too afraid

of honest debate. But we can't go on this way. Until we recover our ability to think critically, we'll be hostages to every half-baked idea that comes along.

"Cowering won't make us safer. It will just make us less free."

When U.S. film director and writer Michael Moore dubbed the U.S. media embarrassing and pathetic, he was shunned by them.



ROGER HOLMES

HarperCollins is reported to be scrapping thousands of copies of his new book, *Stupid White Men and other Excuses for the State of the Nation*, that it was to have published last fall.

Canadian professors Sunera Thobani (University of British Columbia) and Shyamal Bagchee (University of Alberta) were accused of being insensitive for taking the U.S. to task over its own aggressive policies. Thobani was widely condemned and received hate mail for saying U.S. foreign

policy was "soaked in blood."

CPJ, RSF, the International Press Institute and others listed with growing concern incidents from around the world of officials suppressing critical coverage. Among others:

- China's government banned its media from expressing any opinion about the attacks.
- The U.S. government tried to

the attacks.

- Two main sponsors – Federal Express and Sears – withdrew from the ABC show *Politically Incorrect* after critical remarks by host Bill Maher enraged viewers.
- The Pentagon bought exclusive rights to photos of Afghanistan taken by a commercial satellite, preventing anyone else from accessing pictures of the U.S. bombing there.
- Washington urged media not to broadcast or publish statements of bin Laden without "judicious" editing.
- CNN chairman Walter Isaacson ordered the station's reporters "to make sure people understand that when they see civilian suffering there, it's in the context of a terrorist attack that caused enormous suffering in the U.S."
- ABC unexpectedly decided on September 19 to no longer broadcast images of two planes slamming into the World Trade Center towers.

The New York Times said in a September 28 article that the "surge of national pride sweeping the country after the terrorist attacks on September 11 sparks the beginnings of a new, more difficult debate over balance among national security, free speech and patriotism." It is a debate that has, perhaps belatedly, but nevertheless crucially, come out in the open and, as the paper noted, "is being played out on stages large and small."

CJFE questions anti-terrorism legislation

Following the September 11 attacks on the United States, several governments rushed to bring introduce counter-terrorism legislation. Canada was no exception.

In a brief submitted in November to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, CJFE expressed concern about potential threats to free expression in the Justice Department's Bill C-36 (the Anti-terrorism Act). CJFE said that true security depends on rigorous respect for civil liberties.

"The restrictions on freedom of expression contemplated in Bill C-36, far from enhancing security, are likely to breed insecurity,

as unpopular ideas whose expression runs the risk of attracting attention from law-enforcement agencies are driven into the shadows. The bill raises the prospect that dissent will be forced underground and confidence in Canada's security forces will be eroded."

Moreover, the organization said, there is no reason to threaten freedom of expression as it is threatened in the bill. "Law-enforcement and security agencies already have extensive powers to investigate crime, conduct surveillance and restrict access to information," CJFE pointed out.

"Information now in the public domain

regarding the September attacks suggests that extraordinary powers would not have prevented them, and are not needed in the continuing investigation.

"On the contrary, what is needed is better co-ordination, together with the will to commit resources backed by the powers governments now possess. The challenge of Sept. 11 is surely best met through precise detective work on well-known and long-identified threats, not vast new surveillance networks that invite abuse."

The legislation, with some changes, received royal assent and officially became law in December.

Tajik, Burmese journalists win CJFE International Press Freedom Awards

By Jessica Kosmack

An exiled Tajik publisher and an imprisoned Burmese journalist received the 2001 CJFE International Press Freedom Awards at CJFE's annual fundraising dinner held in their honour.

More than 600 journalists, business people and NGO representatives came together for the fourth annual awards gala, which took place November 8 at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel in Toronto. A large portion of the proceeds of the dinner go to CJFE's Journalists in Distress Fund, which issues financial grants to journalists in need who have been persecuted because of their work.

This year's awards recognized Myo Myint Nyein of Burma and Dodojon Atovulloev of Tajikistan for their courage and determination in the face of persecution.

The keynote speaker, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson, applauded the fearlessness of the two men.

"Whenever I meet journalists like them, or learn about them, I think of how real their lives are, how much they have given of themselves to the credit of our society," she said. "We must acknowledge those who fight that battle and who win it for us."

Myo Myint Nyein, editor of the satirical Burmese publication *Pay Phu Hlwar*, has been imprisoned in his home country since 1990. His daughter Dali accepted the award on his behalf.

"[This] is a significant award for many people who have recog-

nized what we are going through in our country," she said.

In a country with more journalists in jail than any other in

and 1995, the group produced and distributed the *Weekly News Bulletin*, a publication that highlighted life in the prison.



CJFE president Arnold Amber presents a plaque honouring 20 years of service to CJFE to Nick Fillmore, who founded the organization in 1981.

Asia, Dali's father was imprisoned for attempting to have an independent voice. He was arrested for allegedly organizing youth and students to create instability in Burma.

A 1990 sentence of seven years in jail did not stop Myo Myint Nyein's desire to tell the truth. From behind bars, the 50-year-old journalist worked in secret with other inmates and formed the 'Press Freedom Movement', a group that documented and published reports on prison conditions and abuses. Between 1993

Myo Myint Nyein's involvement in the Press Freedom Movement led to a further seven-year prison term in 1997. His treatment worsened, and for eight months he was forced to live in a prison dog kennel.

"As far as I know, my father felt embarrassed for [being singled out] among other detained journalists in Burma," said his daughter. "On the other hand, [this award] is a symbol to have more freedom of expression in Burma."

Horrifying conditions and hard labour have had debilitating effects on Myo Myint Nyein's health. Dali is hopeful, however, and visits her father regularly.

"I was quite young when my father was arrested [but] I'm hoping for the release of all political prisoners in Burma."

Dodojon Atovulloev has suffered from an equally repressive regime. He is one of Tajikistan's leading journalists, reporting on a government that regularly flouts press freedom.

"Sometimes I'm asked if a citizen of Tajikistan can actually tell the truth," said the journalist while accepting his award. "I say to that, 'yes, if he is outside of Tajikistan and never plans to go back.'"

Atovulloev is the publisher of the independent newspaper

Charogi Ruz, which often criticizes President Imomali Rahmonov and his government. While still in Tajikistan, Atovulloev and his staff were constantly harassed and persecuted by the government. People associated with *Charogi Ruz*, including news vendors and readers, were deemed "enemies of the state."

Atovulloev and his family fled Tajikistan for Moscow in 1992 after the newspaper's offices were broken into. Though threats persisted in Russia, the journalist continued to publish, arranging for 20,000 copies of each issue to be smuggled into his native country.

"It's incredible that this powerful regime, this mechanism, is afraid of one newspaper," said Atovulloev. "I'm proud of the fact that the territory of influence of our president is several streets inside the capital, while the territory of influence of our newspaper is the entire country."

In May 2001, Atovulloev was informed of an assassination attempt against him plotted by Tajik authorities. The journalist and his family left Moscow for Germany. Two months later, Atovulloev was detained in Moscow en route to a

HONOURING



Trina McQueen, deputy chair of CTV (left), former federal cabinet minister Barbara McDougall and National Post publisher Gordon Lightfoot attend the annual International Press Freedom Awards at a Toronto hotel, attended by



Exiled journalists (from left) Kokila Jacob (a CJFE Board member), Zdenka Acin, Morteza Abdolalian and Pedro Valdez with award winner Dodojon Atovulloev.



Dodojon Atovulloev, forced to flee Tajikistan and then Russia, says a Tajik can tell the truth “if he is outside of Tajikistan and never plans to go back.”



Dali Myo Myint Nyein accepts the International Press Freedom Award on behalf of her father, editor Myo Myint Nyein, imprisoned since 1990.

family visit in Uzbekistan. The Tajik government wanted to extradite the journalist, where he would have faced certain death. An international outcry allowed him to return to Germany.

“[Russian authorities] wanted to give me up to the Tajik regime,” recalled Atovulloev. “At the time I was living in Germany under the auspices of the Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted. That’s what saved my life.”

Atovulloev has been committed to ensuring a free press. In a country where at least 60 journalists have lost their lives over the past decade, he represents a voice for many who are not allowed to say what they want.

“This award is not just important to me because it’s an award to me, but it’s an award to all journalists who are fighting for freedom,” he explained.

Atovulloev is not prepared to give up his fight, and from Hamburg continues to publish *Charogi*

Ruz, both in print and on the Internet.

“I’m often asked why, despite all the persecution, I continue to publish this newspaper,” he said. “For a long time I didn’t have an answer, but today I found one: I thought that if I don’t burn, if

you don’t burn, if he doesn’t burn, who’s going to stop the darkness?”

Jessica Kosmack worked as a program assistant for CJFE this summer. She is currently doing post-graduate work at Centennial College.



AND COURAGE

CJFE PHOTOS BY ANDREW STRAUSS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other dignitaries all spoke during the International Press Freedom Awards banquet attended by more than 600 people.

Journalism after September 11 requires a rethink, Clarkson says

IN HER KEYNOTE SPEECH to guests at the International Press Freedom Awards dinner, Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson spoke about the work that journalists do and why they do it, particularly in light of the terrorist attacks of September 11:

“Sometimes when I read about what is going through people’s minds since September 11, I wonder if they actually do not remember any history or did not know it. Many times it is as though the word ‘anarchist’ had never existed or represented a violent movement. Or as though the 19th century – with its clashes between the dramatic rampages of capitalism and the growth of Marxism and revolutionary struggle – had never existed or influenced later events.

“It is at that point that I am in despair about the education of journalists. It was a week after September 11th that I first saw the name Bakunin in the daily press, and any mention of the political movement of anarchism.

“We cannot talk about freedom of expression unless the journalists have something to truly express. This lies in the education of journalists. Journalists need to know more than how to construct paragraphs and conduct more or less adequate interviews, eliciting



Canada’s Governor-General, Adrienne Clarkson, was keynote speaker at CJFE’s annual banquet.

ing more or less accurate information. A background of history certainly wouldn’t hurt most journalists, even some of the elderly ones writing today.

“There is a line of thought that runs through human history and there is also a continuing presence – that of the human being. It is distressing, to say the least, to see that reporting on the moment means that background history and knowledge of motivations simply don’t seem to exist

“I worry that we don’t make the appropriate distinctions in our own minds about what journalists actually do and what motivates them

“For those of us who live in a free society, constrained only by libel laws and the desire to keep a paycheck coming in regularly, such analysis does not take on a burdensome meaning. But actually, that’s not really what it’s all about. We have to examine our own lives in order to know what our freedoms are. We have to do the examination that Plato told us made life worth living.

“Because if we don’t, we cheapen the idea of freedom. And we make the efforts of the people like those whom we are honouring tonight seem superhuman and also, in some way, irrational.”

Media under the gun in Israel and Palestine

By Petty Bozonelos

In a region where press freedom violations are not uncommon, attacks on journalists in Israel and Palestine have continued unabated since September 11, 2001.

Both the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) security forces have carried out acts of intimidation and censorship. International press freedom organizations report that journalists working in Israel and Palestine are often targets of aggression, taking great risks by merely reporting facts.

"There is a clear effort to smother any type of negative news coverage" in the countries, says Joel Campagna of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

On the day of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Palestinian police barred news photographers and cameramen from events in the West Bank city of Nablus, where some Palestinians took to the streets in celebration. A freelance cameraman working for the Associated Press did document the celebration, but was immediately

threatened by Palestinian security forces, who warned him not to broadcast his footage.

Three days later, Palestinian police in the Gaza Strip detained several photographers and cameramen working for international news agencies and confiscated their equipment. The journalists had been covering a rally in the Nusseirat refugee camp organized by the militant Islamic group, Hamas, to commemorate a Palestinian suicide bomber.

Journalists in Israel and Palestine are often targets of aggression, taking great risks by reporting facts.

On September 20, Palestinian police and security agents raided offices of the private television station Al-Roa TV, and ordered it to cease broadcasting immediately. No reason was given.

Four days later, Israel Defence Forces banned journalists from entering the Palestinian villages Bait Reema and Deir Ghassana, where armed clashes were taking place. Both had been declared closed military zones, but no reason was given for obstructing the

media's work.

When a group of journalists protested, IDF soldiers assaulted them and hit a journalist's camera lens. Israeli and Palestinian news reported that inhabitants from these villages had been killed due to Israeli army incursions.

The same day, IDF also barred journalists from the Israeli army post of Hamlish, where Israeli soldiers were giving the corpses of Palestinians killed in the clashes to the Red Crescent.

The CPJ's Campagna said, "Both sides show that they are more than willing to prevent images getting to the outside world.... This is done in varying forms."

Moreover, the IDF routinely attacks journalists, physically assaulting them. In many cases journalists have been shot at with rubber bullets.

"The circumstances of shooting incidents have raised the question that journalists are in-

tionally targeted," says Campagna. He added that the IDF does not safeguard journalists even when Jewish settlers are physically attacking them.

CPJ and other press freedom organizations have persistently pressured local authorities to redress abuses by security forces against journalists.

"With Israel, most cases are not dealt with properly or not investigated at all. We have not been pleased with the result," Campagna said.

"With the PNA, I'm not aware that there has been any investigation done on cases where the police have acted above the law, violating journalists' rights and confiscating their material."

For Campagna, the ideal of freedom of the press must not be forgotten, even after the events of September 11.

"We are trying to spotlight these problems by bringing international attention to them. The media play an important role in highlighting these abuses, and it has prominently raised the issues internationally.

"Various media organizations are trying to keep these issues on the public stage," he added. "It is important that we continue to do this."

Petty Bozonelos is a student at the Ryerson School of Journalism and a volunteer with CJFE.

Albanian media struggle in post-Communist society

By Genc Tirana

Media freedom was the main goal of media workers in Albania following the collapse of Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989.

Unfortunately, this has been difficult to achieve. Most of the population and journalists are conscious of a wide gap persisting between laws that defend the rights of journalists and everyday practice. In recent years, hundreds of journalists have been threatened, beaten or detained for their reporting.

The worst occurrence was during the clashes of 1997 when Albanians lost huge amounts of money on corrupt pyramid schemes. Wherever revolts broke out, police and other security forces zealously mistreated journalists. Not only were individual journalists attacked but also media outlets.

In one incident, about 20 men armed with assault guns burned down the Tirana offices of the daily *Koha Jonë*, and tortured a

security guard and a journalist.

Harassment of the media has continued under the ruling Socialist Party. Legal pressures have become particularly prevalent.

In 1999, Albanian courts sentenced Ndreke Gjini of *Rilindja Demokratike* for denouncing police misappropriation of a solidarity tax at several border checkpoints. The court ignored the fact that the journalist had taken the information from an official document.

Last year, the editor-in-chief of *Rilindja Demokratike*, Astrit Patozi, journalist Redin Hafizi and the editor of the independent newspaper *Tema*, Shemsi Peposhi, were heavily fined after a lawsuit was brought by Monika Kryemadhi, wife of Albanian Prime Minister Ilir Meta.

Judges failed to consider the evidence that the journalists had used to prove the veracity of their articles. They had reported that Kryemadhi was the real administrator of a quarry where two workers had perished as a result of a

lack of safety measures.

Journalists have been similarly unlucky in the legislative sphere, as lawmakers during the past several years adopted the mentality and methods of the closed society during Albania's Communist Party rule. In 1993, the Albanian Parliament approved a press law under which many journalists were detained, fined or sentenced. Albanian journalists, together with international campaigns on their behalf, eventually forced Parliament to revoke the legislation.

But the battle is not over. Currently, Parliament has prepared another, equally restrictive, draft law on the press. It calls for the creation of a Journalists' Order, which all journalists must join. The draft bill forbids publishers from employing journalists who are not registered with the Order.

Moreover, various organs of the Journalists' Order would be mandated to oversee registered journalists' adherence to the "principles and rules of the journalist's

ethics and legal acts in force" and to judge and discipline those who break them.

Another section of the legislation obliges the press to print the truth and to ensure that information be adequately checked. The implementation of such false news provisions would set back the free flow of information.

The Albanian judiciary still does not operate independently of political power. Journalists who report on such sensitive matters as corruption and contraband are at the mercy of judges and state prosecutors, who function according to politicians' interests.

Economic censorship also exists, further paralyzing the independent media. State entities such as the National Privatization Agency and the National Commercial Bank provide pro-government newspapers with funding. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been disbursed to these newspapers as compensation for positive coverage.

For 16 years, Genc Tirana was an Albanian newspaper journalist who also served as Secretary General of the Association of Professional Journalists of Albania. He lives in Toronto.



Genc Tirana



Les radios cambodgiennes : en route vers l'indépendance

Par Jane McElhone

Deux petites filles m'accueillent à la porte de la station FM96 à Phnom Penh, où leur père, Sarom, travaille à titre de journaliste. En fait, la famille habite dans l'une des petites pièces de la station, située au rez-de-chaussée et divisée par un drap suspendu au plafond.

Sarom est âgé de 36 ans. Son maigre salaire de quinze dollars par mois ne lui permet pas d'avoir un logement et encore moins une maison. Il me confie : "Nous mangeons tout ce que je gagne, alors j'ai demandé la permission de vivre ici. En échange, nous faisons le ménage".

La station est dénudée: plusieurs pièces, meublées par quelques tables et chaises. Il y a deux petits studios radiophoniques, toutefois ils sont très rudi-

des priorités futures, une garante du professionnalisme et de l'éthique.

C'est ce qui ressort de l'expérience de la station FM96. Avant l'implication d'IMPACS auprès des journalistes de la station, leur travail se limitait à un exercice de retranscription du seul quotidien khmer qui se trouvait à la station. Désormais, depuis un an, ils préparent leurs propres reportages.

Il faut souligner que la rémunération insuffisante des journalistes constitue également un obstacle majeure à la réalisation de leur travail. Les salaires sont généralement très bas au Cambodge, le milieu journalistique n'y fait pas exception. Par conséquent, la tentation de succomber à la corruption est très forte. À cet effet, un journaliste de FM96 explique qu'on leur offre ce qu'il appelle un "pourboire".



Le journaliste Sarom a une entrevue avec le chef d'opposition Sam Rainsy.

JANE MCELHONE PHOTOS



Sarom, son épouse et ses enfants posent devant leur domicile.

mentaires et comme seule source d'information: un journal khmer, lu et relu par une dizaine de journalistes.

Je suis à la station FM96 pour discuter de la radio et du travail qui y est fait. Avec un collègue de CBC, je donne un cours de deux semaines aux journalistes qui y travaillent. Tôt le matin, nous les accompagnons en entrevue et l'après-midi, nous réfléchissons sur le métier.

Wayne Sharpe dirige ce projet pour l'*Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society* (IMPACS).

"Le journalisme n'a pas encore beaucoup de crédibilité au Cambodge", admet-il. "Néanmoins, depuis quelques années, on constate des progrès. Je crois que la formation journalistique y joue un rôle important".

Les nombreux groupes journalistiques qui naissent au Cambodge semblent partager ce sentiment. Lors d'une conférence récente à Phnom Penh, ils identifiaient la formation journalistique comme étant l'une des gran-

D'un autre côté, certains journalistes exercent du chantage sur des personnes, du type: "Donnez-moi de l'argent où je publierai tout ce que je sais".

Les salaires à la radio sont particulièrement modiques. Comme la grande majorité des radios au Cambodge, FM96 appartient au gouvernement. Et dans ce pays, les fonctionnaires sont très mal rémunérés.

Dans ce contexte, comment parler d'indépendance des médias? Lorsqu'on lit que le Cambodge est parmi les pays de l'Asie du Sud-Est, où règne une des plus grandes libertés de presse, on fait davantage référence à la presse écrite. En effet, la radio et la télévision demeurent essentiellement sous contrôle des autorités du pays.

Il est certes difficile, en deux semaines, de mesurer adéquatement l'ampleur du contrôle gouvernemental sur la station FM96, mais j'ai été, à plusieurs reprises, témoin d'auto-censure, telle que: "Pas la peine de couvrir cette

histoire" ou "Trop controversée. Trop critiquée par le gouvernement".

Comme dans de nombreux pays pauvres, la majorité de cambodgiens n'ont pas les moyens d'acheter le journal ou n'y ont tout simplement pas accès, tandis que d'autres ne savent pas lire. Par conséquent, bien qu'elle soit contrôlée, la radio demeure la principale source d'informations.

"C'est dans les radios plus ouvertes – comme FM96 – qu'il faut donner un coup de main", constate Sharpe. "Il y a une réelle possibilité de changement. C'est la philosophie de l'engagement. Et j'y crois fermement".

J'adhère à cette opinion, mais lorsque je vois la pauvreté au FM96, je me demande quel pourcentage de cette aide a bénéficié à Sarom et à ses collègues jusqu'à maintenant. Dans cette station, il n'y a ni dossier ni dactylo. Il y a un téléphone, mais il est utilisé uniquement par les auditeurs qui veulent participer aux tribunes téléphoniques. Pour leur part, les journalistes qui veulent organiser une entrevue ou faire des recherches doivent se déplacer en moto. En effet, il nous est arrivé de rouler pendant des heures à la recherche de quelqu'un qu'on n'a jamais trouvé.

En outre, afin de pouvoir se

déplacer, il faut une moto – dépense impensable pour Sarom. Bien qu'il soit le journaliste qui produise le plus de reportages à la station, il dépend d'un collègue pour ses déplacements.

La dernière journée du cours, Sarom décide d'interviewer le chef de l'opposition officielle au Cambodge. Nous sommes surpris, mais pas plus que le politicien qui a du mal à croire que le journaliste avec qui il s'entretient travaille pour une radio d'État. "Écoutez la radio", il nous conseille. "Vérifiez s'ils diffusent ce reportage."

À 18 heures, on l'entend au bulletin de nouvelles.

Je retourne au FM96 avant de quitter le Cambodge. On m'annonce une grande nouvelle. Sarom participera à une session de formation journalistique à Bangkok avec des collègues de toute l'Asie du sud-est.

Il quittera donc son pays pour la première fois.

Autre bonne nouvelle: avec l'argent emprunté de sa famille, Sarom vient d'acheter une moto. "Pas très belle", il me chuchote. "Très usagée". Je suis toutefois ravie pour lui. Lorsqu'il reviendra de la Thaïlande, il pourra enfin faire, seul, ses propres reportages, quand et où il le voudra.

Jane McElhone est journaliste indépendante qui habite à Montréal.

Press Club seeks nominations

The National Press Club of Canada seeks nominations for its press freedom award and its editorial cartoon competition.

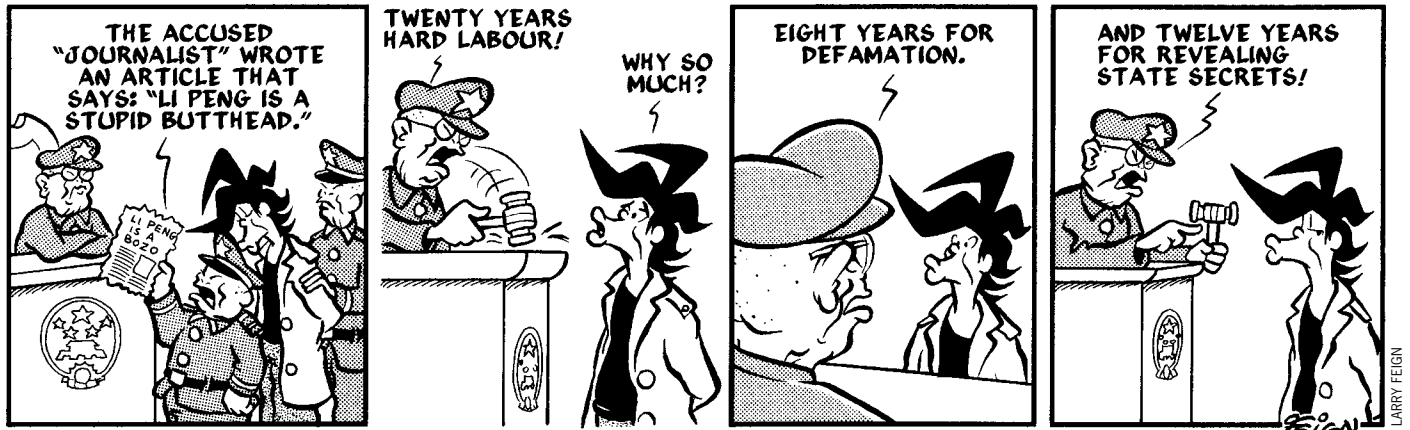
Candidates for the former must be journalists or media workers or workers whose contribution to press freedom was through Canadian print or electronic media.

Entries for the editorial cartoon competition must be on the theme of press freedom/free expression. The cartoons may be new or from the cartoonist's port-

folio, but they must not have won an award.

Nominations are due March 28. Winners will each receive \$1500, to be presented at the NPC's annual World Press Freedom Day luncheon in Ottawa on May 3.

For more information, or to submit a nomination, write Spencer Moore, c/o National Press Club of Canada, 150 Wellington St., Ottawa ON K1P 5A4, fax 613-233-3511, phone 613-233-5641 or e-mail combroad1@rogers.com.



This cartoon by Larry Feign, part of the Lily Wong strip published in Hong Kong's *South China Morning Post*, resulted in anonymous faxed threats. The newspaper discontinued the controversial series in 1995, but it lives on in the book *Banned in Hong Kong*.

China cracks down on cyber-dissidents

By Geoffrey Chan

Zhu Ruixiang is no ordinary criminal. He forwards e-mails containing articles to friends in China – e-mails that include articles on democracy from a U.S.-based publication. For that, Zhu has been convicted of “using the Internet to instigate subversion of state power, and instigating the overthrow of the socialist system led by the Communist Party,” according to a municipal court in Shaoyang.

Zhu Ruixiang is a cyber-dissident, the 19th to be detained in China for spreading information deemed subversive, says Reporters sans frontières (RSF). As the number of Internet users in China continues to grow exponentially – to 26 million as of July 2001 – authorities are resorting to harsher measures to monitor and suppress dissent.

In recent months, authorities have closed down more than 17,000 Internet cafes, according to the BBC. China also ordered 28,000 other cafes to install filtering software that monitors Internet traffic and blocks access to Web sites such as www.amnesty.org or www.cnn.com.

Those who choose not to install the software have been told their operating licences will not

be renewed.

According to the Shanghai-based newspaper *Wen Hui*, law enforcers have swept 94,000 Internet cafes since April, partly in response to parents' complaints that their children were becoming addicted to the chat rooms, computer games and pornographic sites accessible at the cafes.

However, authorities are also using the opportunity

to clamp down on human rights activists and pro-democracy dissidents who are using the Internet to spread information, according to the BBC. That information can include news reports from foreign media Web sites such as the BBC, *The Washington Post* or Reuters, which means these sites are routinely blocked by government censors.

For the 15 per cent of China's Internet users who patronize Internet cafes, being denied access to foreign Web sites such as [amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) or bbc.co.uk is not

unusual. Whenever the government hosts important foreign delegations, access to these sites is lifted a few days before and after the visit to give the appearance of openness. But once the last delegations head home, censors promptly resume blocking.

For individual Web users, looking for and distributing online information carries great personal risks. Several cases in recent months point to the dangers of seeking online information that is deemed a threat to national security by the government.

In September, Zhu was sentenced to three years in prison for spreading “subversive” information on the Internet. He had been caught forwarding articles from the pro-democracy online newspaper www.bignews.com to 12 friends.

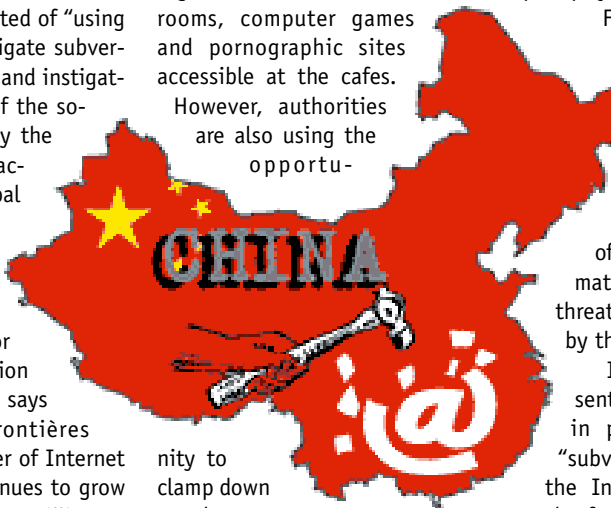
That same month, Qi Yanchen was sentenced to four years for posting sections of his book *The Collapse of China* on the Internet. According to Human Rights Watch, the book raises criticisms of China's social situation.

In August, Huang Qi, creator of the Web site www.6-4tianwang.com, was tried 14 months after being detained for the same crime. Accused of publishing ar-

ticles by Chinese dissidents and posting reports that denounced the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, he was beaten while under interrogation, according to RSF.

A report released by Human Rights Watch last year says the rapid growth of Internet usage in China has triggered increased government attempts to tighten controls.

Since 1995, authorities have issued at least 60 sets of regulations aimed at controlling online content. And in January 2001, distributing “secret” or “reactionary” materials over the Internet became a capital crime.



REPORTERS SANS FRONTIÈRES

Congolese IFEX group loses leader

The international free expression community lost a valued colleague on December 2 with the sudden passing of Mwamba wa ba Mulamba. The secretary-general of Journaliste en danger (JED), the IFEX member organization in the Democratic Republic of Congo, died of cardiac arrest in the capital, Kinshasa. He was 38 years old.



Mulamba

Mulamba was a pioneer in the human rights movement in the DRC, having worked

for the Zairian League of Human Rights, heading the journalists' union UJAC and, in 1998, co-founding JED. As head of that organization, he worked for almost no pay for two years.

In January 2001, he and JED colleague M'Baya Tshimanga went into hiding for 15 days after denouncing the then minister of communications.

In a statement following Mulamba's burial – attended by a

thousand people, including journalists, politicians, diplomats, friends and family members – JED reaffirmed that it “will continue, with the same resolve and determination, to work towards our common dream: the absolute freedom to inform and be informed.”

Mulamba leaves behind a wife and four young children. JED has made a special appeal for individuals and organizations to donate money to the family, which no longer has a source of income. To make a contribution, please contact CJFE.

– David Cozac

Is Nortel assisting?

Canadian telecommunications giant Nortel Networks may be inadvertently helping the Chinese government spy on its citizens when it exports its Internet technology. That's the opinion of Rights and Democracy (ICHRDD), which recently released a report called *China's Golden Shield: Corporations and the Development of Surveillance Technology in the People's Republic of China*.

Written by Greg Walton, the report singles out Nortel's \$10 million contract to build a city-wide fibre-optic broadband network (OPTera) in Shanghai, which would allow central authorities to monitor subscribers' online activities.

According to ICHRDD, this technology will also make it more difficult for dissidents to communicate secretly and make it easier for police to track Internet users who may be attempting to access Web sites deemed inappropriate.

“It will provide Chinese authorities with an unprecedented ability to conduct surveillance and monitor the activities of human rights and democracy advocates,” says ICHRDD president Warren Allmand.

To read the report, visit www.ichrdd.ca. – G.C.