

The “Alternative Media” Challenges Officialdom’s Views

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Theme: [Media Disinformation](#)

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The mainstream media is under threat. And the threat is in the form of what is known as the ‘alternative media’. Decades ago, the ‘underground’ media took the form of pamphlets and booklets.

These days, it’s no longer ‘underground’ and you don’t need money to cover print and distribution costs. It’s very much alive and kicking above ground and is there for all to access on the net.

The mainstream media includes popular TV channels, newspapers and news websites, from Reuters and CNN to Fox News and NDTV in India. Critics of the mainstream media say that it tends to parrot officialdom’s views, bows to advertising concerns and upholds the prevailing social and economic system, not least because it tends to be privately owned and thus its owners have a vested interest in maintaining a system based on private ownership and thus in manufacturing consent for it. Moreover, media outlets are often part of major conglomerates, which may include armaments manufacturers, banking or industrial concerns. News outlets will not therefore adopt stances or report on stories that are harmful to the wider interests of the organisation.

The public is thus given access to a world view that is distorted in favour of state-corporate interests. And such interests have succeeded in getting across the message that, for example, the ‘free market’ is the best way to deliver goods and services to people, state provided welfare is bad and ‘individual responsibility’ is good, privatisation increases efficiency, a ‘war on terror’ must be waged on designated enemies and that gross inequalities and corporate power are necessary and legitimate.

Over the past decade, numerous websites have sprung up that question these assumptions. Montreal-based Global Research gets around 125,000 unique visitors a day. It forwards an anti-globalisation agenda. The site attracts a diverse readership, but all believe one thing: the mainstream media is failing to tell people the truth about how bankers, corporate oligarchs and governments are working hand in glove to deceive people and strip them of their rights.

It is the one stop site for people who are concerned about uncovering the truth over 9/11 and the reasons for the west’s endless imperialist wars. It sets out to expose the global elite’s agenda to create a ‘new world order’, which is partly being done by spraying poisons into the atmosphere (chemtrails), genetically modifying food, using vaccines or employing any other number of methods to subjugate us.

In the US, talk show host Alex Jones has a massive following on the net. Jones is concerned with how the US government is waging a war against its own population and is stripping

away people's constitutional rights. In the UK, former TV sports host David Icke spreads a similar message. As with Jones, Icke is concerned about a secretive 'illuminati' of bankers, rich families and various other elites who are actively conspiring to bring about a 'new world order'.

From Prison Planet to the 4th Media, the 'alternative media' has gone from strength to strength. One reason for its popularity has been that, since the decline of the Soviet Union, the US has surged ahead with an agenda for world domination through perpetual wars. At the same time, increasing surveillance and an erosion of wage levels and democratic rights in western countries have compelled people to look for answers as to why everything seems to be going wrong. The economic crisis caused by bankers and the resultant austerity for the masses has added further fuel to the fire. To some extent, the boundaries between the traditional left and the radical right have become blurred as fingers are being pointed towards the machinations and motives of 'the global elite', however defined.

The European Union (EU) is now voicing concerns about the 'damaging' effects of this. Apparently, societal consensus is being eroded as people are being 'led astray'. It's not so much 'reds under the bed' that is causing the authorities concern these days, but conspiracy theories on the internet. In the report "A free and pluralistic media to sustain European democracy," the EU feels there is a danger that people are being misguidedly radicalised and advocates EU funding for 'responsible' journalism and getting the EU's viewpoint across regularly and prominently in the media, as well as placing controls on the net. The EU perceives this to be 'pluralism'. As with the targeting of WikiLeaks, it amounts to nothing more than an attempt to reassert ideological control and a clamping down on the 'alternative media' and its ongoing exposure of state-corporate deceit.

In India, Kerala-based Countercurrents seems to be at the forefront of the 'alternative media'. With around 25,000 unique visitors per day, its focus is similar to that of Global Research, although it carries more features on India. However, the 'alternative media' has not yet taken off in India. Indians have not yet been turned on to the messages of the 'alternative media' and have thus not 'tuned in'. This is of concern to Binu Mathew from the Countercurrents website. He says the predicament is that we have too little time to tackle the challenges our ecosystem and humanity face.

For Mathew, good ideas not only catch fire, but in this digital day and age can spread like fire. And that encapsulates the power of the 'alternative media'. Till now, the mainstream media has been a major tool of social control, serving to sanction capitalism's inherent social and economic privileges and disadvantages. But it's losing its impact and is being replaced by alternative outlets. Whether in the US or EU, officialdom is losing control. And that's why it's running scared.

This article originally appeared in India's Deccan Herald newspaper on 18 Feb 2013.

The figures quoted for site visitors are approximate and based on statmyweb.com site statistics.

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