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Taking the Good (News) with the Bad

Alternative Publications Build a Movement on the Margins

ABBY SCHER

On a recent summer day, I found myself walking from the subway along Malcolm X Boulevard in Bedford Stuyvesant in search of the editor, publisher, lead writer and advertising director of Our Time Press, a monthly newspaper distributed largely in central Brooklyn. I was visiting David Greaves, the one-man band whose energy and vision keeps this local, radical newspaper—circulation 20,000—going. His office was stuffed in the back of a used furniture store, and the brand new computer on his desk was only recently purchased using a loan from Accion International, the nonprofit loan operation working in poverty-stricken areas of the world, including Brooklyn.

I discovered Our Time Press in downtown Brooklyn, taking an issue from a pile stacked high in the vestibule near the ATM machine. Every month, Greaves combines articles and photos of local interest with political essays and reporting. The July issue, for example, published a four-column photo of Brooklyn Boy Scouts marching. Right next to it in the left hand column, Greaves reprinted a letter written by a friend of Gary Graham/Shaka Sankofa, describing the condemned man's struggle against being removed from his regular cell for transport to Texas' death row. Inside, Greaves ran Sankofa's last words before his execution, plus Fidel Castro's statement on his death (printed in a box right under the regular pro-entrepreneurial column "Black Business Roundup").

I love Our Time Press. Already five years old, it is probably one of the most important progressive publications out there, but it fails to receive credit for the same reason it is so important: because it is locally written and distributed. The tagline under its masthead reads "The local paper with the global view," and it is true that a new community—Central Brooklyn—is being informed and formed by a paper operating in an internationalist Black frame of reference.

I'd be interested to know how many other Our Time Presses there are out there. In New York, other publications targeting communities of color also have a political edge. Among the four Haitian newspapers in NYC, one, Haiti Progres, is explicitly radical. (As a former coeditor of Dollars and Sense, I was thrilled to discover it recently ran a translation of a D&S article, "The ABCs of the Global Economy.") The often-free distribution favored by the newer local papers also bypasses the perennial problem faced by the left press—distribution. The consolidation of bookstores and the demise of the independent bookseller has diminished the reach and usual outlets for the left press. Nurturing the resurgence of local radical papers can only help it.

Press Beyond the Usual Suspects

At its best, the alternatives present different voices of analysis to different constituencies. When successful, a publication rests on the shoulders of a movement, past, present or future. Each historical moment throws up a publication or two that may survive its time and perhaps contribute to the next eruption, or even influence the framing in the corporate media.

The alternative press publications like Our Time Press or Blu do not preach to the converted, especially among the young. Young people are dropping away from regular newspaper reading in droves, yet youth-led publications—particularly underground and student papers—are a growth area. These newspapers often draw on the national left press or left wing think tanks on the web for information which continued on page two
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they reframe in their own language. Student-led papers frequently cover issues such as anti-sweatshop organizing and globalization in far more depth than mainstream publications.

These days, the newer alternative publications seem to have a cultural bent—New Directions for Women may be long gone, and Ms. struggling to find an audience, but Teen Voices and Desert Moon offer feminist parents popular non-sexist alternatives to the dominant kid magazines. The most famous of the newer cultural magazines is Adbusters, a bimonthly out of Vancouver that sponsors “Buy Nothing Day” to protest rampant commercialism and runs counter-ads riffing on corporate advertising.

But Adbusters is in an usual situation since it receives subsidies from the Canadian government. In the face of burn-out, low pay, and ever-dry revenue streams, many other “alternative” publications come and go. A former favorite, Profane Existence, was an anarchist punk magazine with maybe 7,000 circulation at its height that started around the same time as Adbusters in the late 1980s. After 10 years, the small collective just couldn’t do it any more.

Chuck D’Adamo of the Alternative Press Index reports that since the API’s founding in 1969, it indexed a changing too, becoming more consolidated and less local. Left-wing publications became independently owned islands in an increasingly corporate sea. At last count, 86% of newspapers are now owned by a few corporations. Important left publications like Z-Magazine, Counterpunch, Left Business Observer, and The Nation exist in stark contrast to the corporate mainstream press.

The print media is more profitable than ever even as it cuts back on news gathering—a trend even decreed by mainstream editors like Gene Roberts of the New York Times. The newspapers’ legitimacy erodes as its role in presenting the “news” erodes. Circulation is stagnant or down. Still, the editors at big papers are well remunerated, making $250,000, with bonuses alone averaging $56,000 annually.

Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) released an interesting survey a few years ago showing that Washington journalists are more conservative on economic issues and more liberal on social issues than most of the public. While 77% of the public polled thought corporations have too much power, only 57% of these journalists did. This gap in perception between journalists and parts of the public paves the way for community publications to take on big media against the odds.

Context Asks Why Not What

That said, I also think there is an essential fallacy in some off-the-cuff criticisms of the corporate media—if only we could deliver the right information to more people, then the people would “be with us.” In fact, one of the largest problems with the news that media critic Martin Trow pointed out long ago is that it is decontextualized information. It ignores the larger social contexts. It accepts the

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wealthy patron or two in order to stay afloat despite stagnant or declining circulations. Others become entrepreneurial—20% of the operating revenue of the economic justice magazine Dollars and Sense comes from fundraising, but 40% comes from its seven economics readers used in college classrooms. E magazine, a 40,000 circulation environmental bimonthly out of Connecticut, devises special issues as far as a year in advance and raises money from environmental foundations to help pay for them.

Still, the magazines survive on slim margins. And they wonder, like Deborah Thomas, publisher of the media watchdog magazine EXTRA!, whether their audience will ever extend beyond the usual 200,000 or 300,000 readers of the national magazines. The left press has always depended on underlying social movements for its health and in periods of relative demobilization it tends to stagnate.

The Importance of the Left Press

The left press develops in waves. In the late 60s and early 70s, “there were all these left academic publications forming, like Review of Radical Political Economy,” recalls D’Adamo of the Alternative Press Index. Every city had an underground newspaper. Then in the mid-70s, the “underground” papers became sanitized, promoting music more than politics. Another wave came in the mid- to late-1980s with the interest in criticism—that’s when EXTRA! formed, along with Adbusters.

The ‘zines young people started putting out in the late 1980s and early 1990s were driven by individuals and rarely became community enterprises.

All the while, the corporate press was changing too, becoming more consolidated and less local. Left-wing publications became independently owned islands in an increasingly corporate sea. At last count, 86% of newspapers are now owned by a few corporations. Important left publications like Z-Magazine, Counterpunch, Left Business Observer, and The Nation exist in stark contrast to the corporate mainstream press.

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Grassroots Radio Fights for Access

Radio Activists Win Pathetic Sliver of the Airwaves For Neighborhood Radio

PETE TRIDISH

In late 1996, myself and four activist friends launched Radio Mutiny, an all-volunteer, non-commercial, anti-profit pirate radio station in West Philadelphia. We were tired of orchestrating elaborate media stunts for the sake of getting a 5-second mention on the news, tired of the endless prattle of corporate apologists and the soundbite assembly line of commercial and public radio, tired of the market-research driven playlists on the music stations.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 threatened to open the floodgates for media giants to buy up thousands of local radio stations which would decimate what was left of local radio and reduce the public trust of the nations airwaves to an aetherial strip mall. Inspired by the radio rebels of El Salvador and microradio pioneers Steven Dunifer and Mbanna Kantako, we decided that we were ready to face fines, searches and possible jailtime at the hands of the federal government to take back a chunk of the public's airwaves for our neighborhood.

Within a few months of taking to the airwaves, our numbers increased from five to 50, and we were soon on the air seven nights per week with programming unlike anything else on the dial. We had music ranging from big band to western swing, cheesy French pop to samba, klezmer to hip hop. We had weekly public affairs shows like Red Sun Rising (news of the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere), Incarceration Nation (hosted by a former inmate and prison activist), Sweet City Sensation (health tips from The Condom Lady, mixed in with K-tel Classic disco), and Africa Report (news of Africa as interpreted by a former ANC party member and soldier from South Africa).

We discovered the miraculous outpouring of local talent that surges forth when a neighborhood is given a new means of self-expression. Our little radio station became a medium for telling peoples’ stories without regard for profitability or market share or political expediency—the gatekeepers of for-profit radio.

Challenging the FCC

Of course it couldn't last forever. After nine months on the air, we got our first visit from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We struck back three days later with a defiant return to the airwaves in front of Ben Franklins' printing press downtown, a potent symbol of the origins of the first amendment. At the same time the ACLU announced that they would defend us if we went to court. This kept the FCC at bay for months, but some of our programmers left. We had many non-profit and immigrant groups that were excited to work with us, but who ultimately could not afford the risks associated with joining our station. Our station was divided about the next moves to make. We tried to make the most of our demise by using the impending confiscation of our radio station to further the cause of legal neighborhood radio. As fun as our station was, our vision did not stop at a radio station for the daring and perhaps somewhat foolhardy—we wanted a station that all of our neighbors could join.

By the time the FCC broke into our station and carted it away, the combined efforts of hundreds of stations like ours had created a public relations nightmare for the FCC. To improve the image of the FCC, Chairman William Kennard announced that he was going to do everything he could to create a legal community radio service. At first we thought this was just a lot of spin-control, but eventually it became clear that he was serious.

After years of public comment and engineering studies, the combined pressure from media reformers and direct action activists prevailed to win a partial victory. On January 26, 2000, the FCC voted to create a new low-power FM service. The new rules allow small non-profit groups, libraries, churches and community organizations to apply for licenses to operate simple, inexpensive local radio stations. Individuals cannot apply for licenses, but any group can apply, from your local chapter of ACT-UP to the Rotary Club.

The equipment costs of these stations can be as low as a few thousand dollars. Perhaps thousands of non-commercial microradio licenses will be given out across the country over the next year. The technical standards of required distance between stations are so stringent, however, that most cities will only be able to have between one and five new stations. These standards mandate enormous separations between radio stations, far more than is necessary to prevent interference. Some of the largest cities, like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, will get no new licenses under LPFM. Activists are continuing the fight to open up more bandwidth in these places—and pirates who are currently operating interference-free in these places continue their civil disobedience.

Meanwhile, wherever there are frequencies available under the new plan, Prometheus Radio Project is working to find activists and community groups that want to start neighborhood radio stations. We know first hand from our days as pirate-radio activists that almost any neighborhood can support a good new radio station. Community radio stations draw together activists and neighborhood folks from all walks of life, creating the sort of public institution that gives focus and expression to a community.

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Radio is a remarkable medium. It is cheap to produce, the receivers are ubiquitous, and it is remarkably easy to create informative and entertaining programming. Radio can serve as a great training ground for youth to learn to speak publicly, to fix things, raise money, to plan ambitious projects. And every neighborhood has someone who can do a beautiful weekly serial reading of the Epic of Gilgamesh, someone with a giant collection of the music of Lower Serbia, someone who can explain the news behind the Western headlines about their home country.

Facing New Challenges
The struggle for low power FM radio (LPFM) has already been won—the first licenses will be issued within a month or so. As of now, everything is moving ahead, but advocates of low power radio still face a number of threats. The most pressing is the broadcasters lobby and NPR. These incumbent broadcasters, commercial and non-commercial, have combined forces to squelch their new competition. The House of Representatives has passed a bill that will eviscerate the low power radio initiative, eliminating 80% of the new stations that will be allocated. If the Senate passes a similar bill, and the President signs it, the new stations will never get a chance to go on the air. In response, activists are planning a giant mobilization to shut down the National Association of Broadcasters radio convention in September in San Francisco.

The other major threat comes from fundamentalist Christian radio operators. All advocates of low power radio are advocates of freedom of expression—we have no problem with Christian, right-wing radios stations. The Christian Right, however, has been particularly adept at bending the FCC’s rules to allow for nationwide repeater networks built out of stations that are supposed to be allocated for local use. In the first round of applications, these groups entered hundreds of superficially local efforts that were fronts for a national religious programming network.

It is deeply ironic that progressives have fought so hard for this service, but right-wing churches seem poised to get most of the frequencies. It is all the more ironic because these churches have put little or no effort into establishing the service, and do not seem interested in persuading their Senators to support it—they spend all their efforts on getting as many stations as they can. Prometheus Radio Project seeks to counter this trend by getting as many legitimate, local progressive organizations and publicly minded institutions to apply for stations as possible. There will be just one, five-day opportunity to apply for a low power radio station in your town, sometime within the next months. If you ever wanted to have a community media project—the time is now. Don’t let this chance slip by!

Pete Tridish works with Prometheus Radio Project, which received a grant from RESIST in February. For more information or assistance in establishing a low power FM radio, contact PRP, PO Box 30942, Philadelphia, PA 19104; www.prometheus.tao.ca; prp@tao.ca.

A Review of Seizing the Air Waves
Ron Sakolsky and Stephen Dunifer, eds. of a Free Radio Handbook

BEVERLY CHORBAllAN

“...FCC regulations make it impossible for all but the very wealthy to even apply for a broadcast license. This...is the equivalent of saying anybody could speak from a soapbox in the park, but the box had to be made of gold.”
— From Lawyers Guild amicus brief defending Free Radio Berkeley

“...Turn on the radio. Fear is your only god on the radio. Nah, fuck it, turn it off.”
— Vietnow, Rage Against the Machine

Seizing the Airwaves is a gargantuan wealth of information and resources for anyone contemplating the notion of community-based broadcasting. Part One begins with a communications history lesson. The highlights: We learn about the historical emergence of the FCC in the 1930’s and its protection of commercial domination of the airwaves. In 1967 federal legislation on broadcasting created PBS and CPB as commercial protectrices of non-profitable elitist cultural programming. And in 1996, the Telecommunications Act unleashed a multinational corporate merger free-for-all in the media industry. Rather than “providing jobs” and “a digital windfall” to the consumers, deregulation is allowing a handful of corporate mega-liths to dominate the media. Homogeneity is the obvious result.

The spark of hope is that, although technically illegal, micropower stations have evolved all over the world. From aboriginal acquisition of abandoned emergency radio communications equipment in the wilderness of the Northwest Territories to the organized tenants of an urban housing project in Springfield, Illinois, people are broadcasting in low frequencies for a specific community. They are making all the decisions about what music to play, what guests to interview, which issues to discuss, and how to package it all. Even as I write this review, the situation is literally in flux. Micropower stations are springing up all over the world, challenging the power structure of the communications industry, and empowering communities to talk to and about themselves and weaken their relationship to the manufactured world of profit-driven radio.

Legislation, too, is being drafted to try to undo the present corporate control of radio. Lawsuits are being appealed. While in the United States, federal funds are presently tied to a given community’s acceptance of the slick public radio formatted fare, other communities here are saying “no” to that model and venturing out on a limb to produce their own programming with dedicated community participation. The balance is capable of being tipped.

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Radio Free Berkeley. In 1995, the FCC was keeping the station on the air, by arguing that the Wobbly interviews Louis Hiken, an activist/educator, and a Wobbly interviews Louis Hiken, an attorney with the Guild who is representing Stephen Dunifer and his station, Radio Free Berkeley. In 1995, the FCC sought an injunction in federal court to shut down the station. Hiken and Sakolsky discuss the legal and constitutional issues in the case and the judge’s opinions and reasoning. So far, Dunifer has succeeded in keeping the station on the air, by arguing that the airwaves are public and that the FCC licensing scheme infringes on the First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech.

On the other hand, Mbanna Kantako has chosen not to participate in the suit. He explains why. “Anything the government gives you, they can take away... don’t no government give you freedom of speech, don’t no government own the air.”

Kantako, a blind African American, and his wife Dia and their children operate Human Rights Radio out of their apartment in Springfield, Illinois. They began the station in 1986 as WTRA (Tenants Rights Association). Kantako's station presents programming in a given community, a community station can really take hold and serve that community well. It will also become something of the community and will therefore be harder for the government to shut down. This book tells you what you need and how to put it all together and gives you information about folks who will answer your technical questions. Legally, you’re on your own, and there’s the rub.

The last pages are entitled, “When the FCC Knocks on Your Door” and contains good, sound legal advice. For Americans, this is the point where our First Amendment journey leads to an intersection with the Fifth Amendment. When you find yourself in that position, keep your mouth shut, and call a lawyer. Dunifer provides excellent advice in a question and answer format which covers the full range of options available to those interested in pursuing startup broadcasting, both licensed and unlicensed.

Please buy this book and distribute it as you see fit. Not only are the voices in it uplifting, inspiring, and downright defiant, but the wealth of information and resources it contains is in a handy format and contributes greatly to any community-based communications effort.

Beverly Chorbajian is a lawyer in Worcester, Massachusetts. This review is reprinted from Social Anarchism, Number 28; sociala@nothingness.org.

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Local Cyber-Activism Takes Off
Lessons and Perspectives for Organizers in the Age of Globalization

MARTIN EDER

The newspaper headline was a grabber: “Battle of Seattle Blazed by High-Tech Tools: Hints of New-Era Protests.” Indeed that participation in Seattle (and in other major recent protests) was due in part to the extraordinary Internet communications that organizers used to exchange documents, make decisions, promote events and speak to the press. But as one of the leaders of a cyber-activist project, I want to both sing the praises of the new technology and sound the warning that technology means little without traditional organizing on a personal and collective level.

Technology and the Internet are exceptionally powerful organizing tools. Yet these are just the newest tools of our trade—not the panacea to replace grassroots organizing. Perhaps some social-justice activists were convinced that the then-emerging technology of the printing press, newspapers, photography, radio, the telephone, video cameras, fax machines or the home computer would revolutionize and democratize information sharing. Given historic precedent, technology will more likely be used to indoctrinate, monopolize and maintain the existing power structure than change it. Having said that I cannot help but express my enthusiasm for cyber-activism and its potential.

Cyber-Activism with a Handshake

A bit more than a year ago Activist San Diego (thanks in part to a grant from RESIST) was born as a local communications and networking project to keep the left-progressive community informed about each others’ activities. Many wonderful websites serve national causes, national campaigns and national networking. Activist San Diego is one of the organizations at the forefront of creating local models of cyber activism as part of a comprehensive strategy to invigorate grassroots mobilization and communications. ASD arose out of the perceived need to have a common and centralized place to get and distribute information.

While planning emergency response mobilizations to oppose the bombing of Iraq, local activists wondered how to let each other know where and when to meet if and when the atrocities began. A local web page, updated daily, best met the need. The beauty of the web and the Internet is that you can transfer massive amounts of vital information to huge numbers of people at virtually no cost. Synchronous and asynchronous conversations can occur to keep everyone in a group informed and involved. As the Zapatistas showed, it is possible to reach across the world, creating solidarity.

Creating Local Networks for Change

If we want to build the left-progressive movement it must ultimately be done at the local level where individuals and groups can organize face-to-face and join in collective action. The www.ActivistSanDiego.org web site was built to serve a comprehensive set of local functions:

- A centralized activist calendar merged

from peace, cultural, GLBT and environmental calendars. While ASD administers it, anyone can post onto it.

- Web pages for action alerts, events, general information and volunteers.

- An easy and automated “build-your-own-page” to post alerts, events, announcements, etc.

- An Activist Directory listing organizations, contact info, meeting times, etc (very much a work in progress).

- Listing of resources for activists and links to national and international groups and causes.

- A network of activist-partner organizations.

- And most recently a cyber-media center has been initiated.

Cyber-activism is an aspect of grassroots communication and mobilization, not a substitute for it.

Without continual and effective outreach few activist websites will develop a sizable audience. After handing out thousands of pieces of printed literature at rallies and events we got a flurry of visits to the site, but these diminished quickly without follow-up.

We learned two primary lessons. First, cyber-activists must regularly contact their constituency to give them reason to visit the site. Our method is to send out an Activist e-Zine every week with dozens of Internet hot links back to our information-rich web site. Rather than filling up people’s email boxes with descriptions of many events, we send subscribers what is essentially a list of events, campaigns and causes that are described in greater detail on the site. ASD’s e-Zine reaches about 1400 local activists every week and has begun to increase participation in local events.

Second, we have relearned learned the continued on page seven
Local Cyber-Activism

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age-old lessons of grassroots organizing—nothing substitutes for personal contact and follow up. We created ASD as a cyber community center until we can get into a physical space. Those of us in the social justice movement are really hungry for a genuinely supportive community. The Internet can be glitzy, but when push comes to shove the Web is not huggable.

The Digital Divide

ASD in no longer just a cyber-activist project. Again, cyber-activism is an aspect of grassroots communications and mobilization, not a substitute for it. ASD feels accomplished sending out 7500 emails to self-identified activists, but have we genuinely made a difference? Email is the most impersonal of human communications and the easiest to ignore. Even most skeptical progressives will not throw away an unopened envelope, but we do not think twice about trashing email when our boxes are full. Combining email with letters and phone calls on priority campaigns produces results. We have potluck dinner meetings with our members.

The challenge of cyber-activists relates to the digital divide. Crossing the color line has been the most important task facing the left. It is even more crucial among cyber-activists. Technical elitism spells death. We must be ever cognizant that our fundamental mission is to empower the disenfranchised—immigrants, working classes, communities of color, the disabled, youth and the elderly—the very constituencies that have the slowest computers or least access to emerging technologies.

ASD works to meet that challenge by seeking activist board and advisory board members from diverse communities to build connections to those sectors. We are also seeking funding to network the leading organizations and individuals. We also believe that concentrating our efforts among youth will help bridge the divide. It is the youth and community organizers who will bring these tools into new sectors.

“All politics is local” but the context must be globalized. Our task is to make emerging technologies serve the people.

Martin Eder is the Director of Activist San Diego, which received a grant from RESIST in April 2000. For information, visit www.activistsandiego.org.

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“facts” neatly gathered as a closed and dehistoricized universe that comes out of nowhere, rarely asking why something is the case or how we got to this state of affairs.

As critical theorist Herbert Marcuse argues, we must analyze the “facts” so they no longer seem inevitable or obvious, and situate them in a larger frame that we’ve thought a lot about. It can be an historically aware frame or a theoretically informed one. Merely delivering the “right” facts is not truly an alternative.

Going Mainstream or Staying Left

The type of media that is interesting and growing is controversial media, as can be seen by the voracious media networks on the Right. The Right’s exposés—most famously about President Clinton’s sex life—power controversies in the mainstream media. At one time, Bob McChesney pointed out to me, Ramparts played that role. It’s left wing exposés on the Vietnam War and 1960s politics provoked national press attention. Now, he argues, the two or three meaty exposés a year by the Progressive are never picked up, not to mention the list of stories issued yearly by Project Censored.

This suggests that we cannot measure the effectiveness of the left press by the level of mainstream attention. We are marginal and ignored. When our issues do make it into the pages of the mainstream press, they do not get sustained attention, unlike the vapid campaigns of the corporate party candidates, for instance. And spending too much creative energy trying to capture the mainstream press’s imagination can be risky, since it can distort the goals of our movements and reduce our politics into imagemaking.

Does that mean we should just be grateful that our press nurtures the movements out of which they grew and forget about corporate media? Activists like McChesney and Ralph Nader are pushing for the left to take on media democracy as a major political goal. “The core principle is that control over communication has to be taken away from Wall Street and Madison Avenue and put in the hands of citizens, journalists, and others whose concerns are not limited to the bottom line,” writes McChesney in Rich Media, Poor Democracy.

First, according to McChesney, the labor movement needs to give money to community and nonprofit media while accepting that its money will not buy them editorial control. The government can also lower mailing costs for nonprofit publications. Second, McChesney calls for restructuring public broadcasting into a system that cannot accept grants from corporations. This means the US government must subsidize local, independent, public access and national networks on the order of $5 billion to $10 billion a year, as is done in Japan and Britain. Third, the government must hold commercial broadcasters to high public service standards instead of handling the public airwaves over to them. De-regulation has meant half of radio airtime is now dedicated to advertising. Allow them only 18 to 20 hours of broadcasting a day, with the rest of the “liberated” time going to public affairs and children’s shows. Finally, enforce antitrust laws and break apart the media monopoly chains that are blinding newsfare.

The left and Labor Parties abroad put such politics in their platforms as a matter of course, but here only the Green Party is campaigning on these issues, albeit with a less detailed and radical agenda than McChesney. Like many media activists in local alliances, the Greens focus on the ever more commercial airwaves not print. It is vexing to devise a true reform agenda for the print oligopolies.

Some of us long for a national leftwing newspaper—let’s add that to McChesney’s list of activist solutions. Or, better than creating a single outlet, let’s get more money to the Pacifica and Inter Press news services so what remains of the independent community press can get some comprehensive coverage from the left. Funneling reporting from Labor Notes, Dollars and Sense, and Color Lines to round out their offerings. Spread around our work so it’s read by more than the usual suspects and we are forced to write in a way more people can read and engage with. And, while we are being utopian, why not build up a truly alternative news world so more of us are reading the reporting of the community newspapers on the left, particularly in communities of color. It’s past time but unfortunately we are not past the time when money limits what we can do.

Abby Scher, former editor of Dollars & Sense, currently works at the Independent Press Association in New York.
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