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Summary

THE COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA ARE INTEGRAL TO AND INSEPARABLE
FROM THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PROCESS
AND REPUBLICAN STRUCTURES OF GOVERNMENT

The communications media are indivisible from the processes of democratic self-government since they alone are capable of providing universal means of speech, reception, press, assembly and exchange of information essential to informed, fully participating citizens.

The chief structural defects of the media follow from the failure of public policy to recognize and compensate for two unanticipated revolutions: the impact of mass technologies on media facilities and secondly the primacy of advertising revenues over consumer funding and thus over editorial content. These unforeseen developments have motivated vertical management controls over both facilities and content and the denial of general public access to either.

Consumers are no longer the principal media client. The shift in revenues and profit from consumer payments (circulation and reception) to business (advertising) has drastically altered the economic structure of the broadcast media as well as the popular newspapers, magazines and periodicals. Maximized advertising has become the primary concern of owners and editors rather than service to the audience.

With almost unrestricted choice of individual advertising media, advertisers need not and do not buy space and time from media which are opposed to or neglect their special interests. Advertisers do not purchase space and time from a medium which is uncooperative with their industry, their political allies, nor the dogmas of private enterprise.

Consequently citizens who lack access to the technical media facilities and who lack the mega-million dollar resources to become publishers or mass advertisers are barred from the popular electronic and print channels. Without rights to speak or to exercise unrestricted choices of information, citizens cannot cast informed votes for their representatives nor make valid decisions on public policies which affect their lives and livelihoods.

The Outlook for Democracy...an Opinion

Citizen sovereignty has now been effectively replaced by evolving working arrangements among the management cadres of private business, finance, law, the media, the military and an entrenched political bureaucracy. At best, this managerial collaboration may function as decentralized meritocracies. At worst, it could become a sanctioned and non-accountable oligarchy.

Neither the best nor the worst scenario precludes the continuity of popular electoral contests between management -selected nominees on selected issues nor the maintenance of the shells of representative government at national, state and local levels.

Popular concerns with maldistribution of wealth and income are irrelevant to the reality of the powers of management. Owners of corporate stock and trust beneficiaries have proven manageable. Control of complex tax systems, which only a handful of citizens understand and cannot influence, insures that management is secure in its powers and perquisites.

There are many institutional underpinnings of these evolving forms of government which have replaced popular democracy and republican government. Other than the captive media systems, they include unrestricted business financing of elections, politically controlled definition of legislative districts, and gross favoritism to incumbent officeholders. Business abuses include anti-competitive collusive agreements, abuse of banking and investment trusteeships. The chief

personal and social consequences include under-financed education, health, and social services, unjust and counter-productive tax structures.

Yet with universal access to facilities which permit everyone to seek, find and exchange information on problems and opportunities, we can adapt democratic institutions to today's awesome complexities with free and competitive marketplaces for information, ideas and citizen participation... we can re-structure the essential underpinnings of a democratic society and republican government.