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Title:

Broadcast script (handwritten) re media ownership

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Good evening. I want to devote some of the next few broadcasts in this series to seeing just how far monopolies & restrictive trade agreements have gone in Australia - & the effect on the general public.

One of the most important industries to the Australian public is the press & allied organs of information. Overseas in most countries there are numbers of daily newspapers which present news items from differing points of view - if a citizen wants to know about something which has happened, the information is usually available. In England there are numbers of Conservative papers, the Times which is generally conservative in outlook, the Daily Herald which is Labor & the Daily Mirror & smaller papers which are generally Labor in outlook, & the News Chronicle & the Guardian which are Liberal. It is possible for a citizen living in England to be normally well-informed.

This pattern is repeated elsewhere - but not in Australia. We have seen in Australia the number of daily papers decrease with the increase in population, & we have seen them obtain effective control of most other means of communication.

Let us take our own State. The Register - the oldest S.A. daily paper, was bought and closed by the controlling interests of the Advertiser in the depression. The Daily Herald failed for lack of capital & advertisements & ceased publication. A number of weekly journals were bought up & closed up by the larger newspaper interests - Smith's Weekly was one. This has left S.A. with two daily

papers, one morning & one afternoon, which are joint issues of the only Sunday paper - the Mail. Of these papers the Advertiser is frankly anti-Labor, while the "News" though giving ~~to some extent~~ items of news favourable to Labor cause some publication, is not generally sympathetic to Labor's view point. If neither paper is willing to publish an item of news, - unless it is an item which may get a few seconds mention in the A.B.C. ^{news.} - the public will never hear about it, & will certainly never read about it.

Let us turn to the other States. In Melbourne there are now only two sets of news paper owners - the Melbourne Sun - Herald group & the Age. The former has a large interest in the Adelaide Advertiser, & some common direction, & ~~the publisher~~ the Adelaide Advertiser has a substantial interest in the Sun - Herald.

There was another paper operating in Melbourne till 1953 - the Argus which was till then largely owned by the controllers of the London "Daily Mirror". They sold out to the Sun - Herald group in 1953 & the Argus, which had for a long time threatened to the Sun - Herald interests, & a circulation of 170,000, was closed down.

The Australian Journalists Association had recently passed a resolution in the following terms, & intended to reaffirm it - "The Federal Council of the A.J.A. expresses its disquiet at the evidence of group pressures within the Aust. news paper industry which are fostering a trend towards

monopoly & creating sporadic dismissals of
journalist artists & photographers.

2. This in addition to employment aspects
merging of newspaper interests constitutes a threat
to the full interplay of opinion & criticism
which is the basis of a viable democracy.

Melbourne now has two sets of daily
papers - the Sun-Herald papers, & the Argus,
all anti-Labor.

In Sydney there were three sets of
daily papers published - ~~the~~ the
S.M. Herald - published by the Fairfax, the
Telegraph - published by the Packer
interests, & the Northern papers. The
Northern press has now been bought by
the Fairfaxes, including the various State
editions of "Truth" so that Sydney
now has only 2 sets of daily papers - all
anti-Labor.

In Brisbane the Courier-Mail is
controlled by the Melbourne Sun-Herald
group, the which also owns
the Telegraph. ~~They~~ they therefore have
a complete monopoly of the daily papers
there, & of course both are anti-Labor.

~~Hobart~~ ~~Mercury~~ owned by Davis.
~~Launceston Examiner~~ independently
~~owned~~

~~W.A.~~ owns both daily newspapers.

~~R. Murdoch~~ owns the daily papers

In Western Australia one concern
owns both daily newspapers - anti-
Labor of course - and the weekend paper
is owned by the publisher of the
Adelaide news.

In Tasmania the two daily papers
are independently owned - they are both

anti-Labor.

~~Apologies from the Federation~~

The only other major daily in Australia, in Broken Hill, is owned by the publishing arm of Adelaide news.

The picture on the Australian mainland ^{there is} ^{at} no more than six organisations control the daily press, and some of these have links between them. They share press services, & arrange the syndication of material. Between them they control Australian newspapers. They have the newspapers completely tied on contracts & are responsible for distribution of a number of other publications than their daily papers. They own between them nearly all major Australian periodicals. ~~This is~~ The number of organisations only six years ago was 10 - you can see but the tendency to monopoly is working out.

To break into the newspaper field in Australia, such is the size of newspapers but the cost of a new organisation would cost a budget of minimum of \$3,000,000 in S. A. alone - it would be much more ~~interest~~ in the larger States.

This is a severe impossibility for the Labor party, which is now faced also with the fact that the groups mentioned control nearly all commercial radio stations in Australia - not including this one - that's how I came to be talking to you now - and all commercial television stations. Since they can control the information upon which

the public basis its opinions, & decide whether
 to suppress information or opinion - and if
 often is suppressed - they are able to determine
 the bias of the American people to a alarming
 degree.

It is further recommended that the S.A. branch
 of the A.L.P. be declared the policy when
 it elects a State Govt. but, of setting
 up with govt. funds a daily
 morning paper run by an independent
 commission on the lines of the A.P.C., &
 which will give fair & full coverage
 of that information to which the public
 is entitled for the work of democracy.
 Broadly.

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