

Who controls the media cartel

by Marcia Merry Baker, Jeffrey Steinberg, and Frank Bell

At present, a handful of predominantly British and allied U.S. media giants dominate the newspaper, radio, and television markets across the United States, as well as movies, CDs, live performance circuits, music publishing, theme parks, sports broadcasting, and other aspects of the entertainment “industry.” What characterizes this monopoly situation is *not* that it arose from bigness-gone-too-far, nor English being a common language with Britain, nor mere greed. The media networks reached their extensive mind-control positions by deliberate efforts to achieve that goal, for strategic political purposes. Not each and every soundman, or newscaster may be aware of the top-down control, but the cartelization of the media, the central domination by British political interests, is a fact.

In its issue of Jan. 17, 1997, *EIR* documented this pattern

of control, giving profiles, featuring brief histories, and details of their current control of media assets, for the major media ownership groups. Here and in **Figure 1** on page 35 we summarize the essentials of that report, showing by category of media coverage, the dominant companies and their pedigree—either “Indirectly British” or “Directly British.”

Note that the chart also includes the category of “alternative” media, which is a component of the same cartel control. This picture emerges when the origins, practices, and lines of control of these so-called non-establishment media are more closely scrutinized.

All the major media conglomerates, at the board level, and through their financial arrangements, interconnect with the Club of the Isles, the London-centered oligarchical financial and political interests, shown at the top of the chart. The term “Club of the Isles” is used within these elite circles to designate the financial and oligarchical networks that operate through family and business ties, in their own interests, to wield global political and financial power. The House of Windsor is at present the *primus inter pares* within this network.

The London Tavistock Center for Human Relations, formerly known as the Tavistock Institute, operates as the chief psychological warfare unit for the Club of the Isles networks, developing methods and supervising the implementation of mass brainwashing through the media.

Cartelization

The process of cartelization of the U.S. media has been under way for many years, but it was significantly advanced by a deregulation bill, the Telecommunications Reform Act of 1996, which was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support on Feb. 1, 1996, by the 104th Congress. This law opened the way for an almost complete takeover of the “news” and other mass information segments, by British and allied media giants.

This point can be seen in the profiles of just a few of the most influential media conglomerates that are directly British-owned and -operated, which we give here. Otherwise, thumbnail sketches are provided for certain other components of the cartel named on the chart.

The chart itself is not intended to be comprehensive, but merely indicative of the type and extent of the cartelized control of the U.S. (and international) media. For full documentation, consult *EIR*, Jan. 17, 1997.

TABLE 1
Top 20 U.S. daily newspapers by circulation

Rank	Newspaper	Parent company	Circulation
1	Wall Street Journal	Dow Jones & Company, Inc.	1,837,194
2	USA Today	Gannett Co., Inc.	1,662,060
3	New York Times	New York Times Co.	1,107,168
4	Los Angeles Times	Times Mirror Co.	1,068,812
5	Washington Post	Washington Post Co.	818,231
6	New York Daily News	Daily News, L.P.	728,107
7	Chicago Tribune	Tribune Co.	664,586
8	Newsday	Times Mirror Co.	559,233
9	Houston Chronicle	The Hearst Corporation	549,856
10	San Francisco Chronicle	The Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc.	494,093
11	Chicago Sun-Times	Hollinger International, Inc.	491,143
12	Dallas Morning News	A.H. Belo Corporation,	489,338
13	(Phoenix) Arizona Republic	Central Newspapers	479,888
14	Boston Globe	The New York Times Co.	466,317
15	New York Post	News Corp.	428,401
16	Philadelphia Inquirer	Knight-Ridder, Inc.	422,829
17	(Newark) Star-Ledger	Newhouse Newspapers Group	402,331
18	Cleveland Plain Dealer	Newhouse Newspapers Group	387,011
19	San Diego Union-Tribune	The Copley Press	383,263
20	Detroit Free Press	Knight-Ridder, Inc.	363,426

Sources: *Editor & Publisher*, May 10, 1997; *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, 1998.

TABLE 2

Major magazines—largest U.S. revenue earners ranked by circulation

Rank	Magazine	1996 total paid circulation	Revenue (\$ thousands)	Parent company
1	Parade	36,156,000	494,031	Advance Publications
2	USA Weekend	20,002,968	228,611	Gannett Co.
3	Reader's Digest	15,072,260	543,643	Reader's Digest Association
4	TV Guide	13,013,938	1,077,584	News Corp.
5	Better Homes & Gardens	7,605,325	474,695	Meredith Corp.
6	National Geographic	7,603,991	212,808	National Geographic Society
7	Family Circle	5,114,214	267,391	Bertelsmann (Gruner & Jahr)
8	Good Housekeeping	4,951,240	281,758	Hearst Corp.
9	Ladies' Home Journal	4,544,416	240,986	Meredith Corp.
10	Woman's Day	4,317,604	300,950	Hachette Filipacchi
11	Time	4,102,168	708,146	Time Warner
12	People	3,449,852	906,431	Time Warner
13	Newsweek	3,194,769	532,703	Washington Post Co.
14	Sports Illustrated	3,173,639	787,342	Time Warner
15	Southern Living	2,490,542	188,881	Time Warner
16	Cosmopolitan	2,486,393	235,927	Hearst Corp.
17	U.S. News & World Report	2,260,857	323,187	Mortimer Zuckerman
18	Money	1,993,119	191,339	Time Warner
19	Entertainment Weekly	1,280,230	198,670	Time Warner
20	PC Magazine	1,151,473	381,639	Ziff-Davis Publishing Co.
21	Business Week	893,771	348,395	McGraw-Hill Cos.
22	Forbes	789,182	269,893	Forbes Inc.
23	Fortune	775,031	245,993	Time Warner
24	Computer Shopper	550,174	201,272	Ziff-Davis Publishing Co.
25	PC Week	5,821	240,616	Ziff-Davis Publishing Co.

Sources: *Advertising Age*, June 16, 1997; *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, 1998.

The Hollinger Corporation

The Hollinger Corporation, a direct outgrowth of World War II British Secret Intelligence Service operations, housed in Canada and the United States, owns more than 80 daily newspapers and 100 weeklies in the United States, concentrated in the Midwest. These include the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the 11th largest in the United States, whose total U.S. circulation is more than 10 million copies per day.

Hollinger International, officially headquartered in Toronto, is effectively run out of London. It originally developed out of a multibillion-dollar British intelligence private asset from World War II, known as Argus Corporation; in 1985, Argus was reorganized as Hollinger Corp. The current CEO of Hollinger is Conrad Black, whose father, George Black, ran Argus. Argus was involved in the munitions and mob-linked liquor trade, while amassing a media empire with newspapers in Britain, the U.S.A., Australia, and the Caribbean.

The Hollinger Corp.'s International Advisory Board, which shapes editorial policy for all of the Hollinger publications, is chaired by former British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher of Kesteven, and co-chaired by Sir Henry

Kissinger and Lord Peter Carrington. Other members include Dwayne Andreas (retired from Archer Daniels Midland, and formerly with Cargill) and Lord Jacob Rothschild. Conrad Black is himself a member of the Queen's Privy Council, the elite body which implements royal policy for the British Empire.

The Hollinger Corp. has been the driving force behind the "Clintongate" campaign to destroy the institution of the U.S. Presidency. Hollinger has been acting as a branch of British intelligence in this effort, employing the most advanced methods of psychological warfare, and deploying its own resources as well as those of allied media organizations, private tax-exempt foundations, and "wannabe" Tory fac-

tions of the Republican Party in the United States.

Other British control operations

The Thomson Group, another British media conglomerate with long-standing ties to the British monarchy and British intelligence, owns more than 105 daily newspapers and 26 weeklies in the United States, many of them in the smaller media markets. The company is headed by Lord Kenneth Thomson, also a director of the Hudson's Bay Co. The Thomson Group owned the London *Times*, until it sold it off to Rupert Murdoch.

Pearson PLC, another Fleet Street giant, owns a large stake in the London *Economist*, the chief propaganda organ for the City of London financial establishment, and now owner of the U.S. business and trade daily, the *Journal of Commerce*. Pearson's flagship paper is the London *Financial Times*, now widely circulated in the United States. The most important Capitol Hill journal, *Roll Call*, is published by the Economist Group. Pearson owns Capital Publications, which prints 41 newsletters nationally, while its Federal Publications specializes in U.S. government procurement and immigration law. Pearson also owns the Penguin publishing house

TABLE 3

Top 25 television groups in the U.S., by market coverage

Rank	Group	Headquarters	% coverage of nation's 95.3 mn. TV homes	Number of stations
1	Fox	Beverly Hills	34.8	23
2	CBS	New York	30.9	14
3	Paxson Communications	West Palm Beach, Fla.	26.8	44
4	Tribune	Chicago	25.9	17
5	NBC	New York	24.6	11
6	Disney/ABC	New York	24.0	10
7	Gannett	Arlington, Va.	18.0	18
8	Chris-Craft/BHC/United Television	New York	17.6	8
9	HSN/Silver King	St. Petersburg, Fla.	16.4	17
10	Telemundo	Hialeah, Fla.	10.7	8
11	A.H. Belo	Dallas	10.5	16
12	Univision	Los Angeles	9.9	12
13	Cox Broadcasting	Atlanta	9.5	12
14	Hearst-Argyle Television	New York	9.2	16
15	Viacom (Paramount)	New York	9.1	13
16	Young Broadcasting	New York	9.0	15
17	E.W. Scripps	Cincinnati	8.7	15
18	Sinclair Broadcast	Baltimore	8.2	28
19	Post-Newsweek	Hartford, Conn.	7.1	6
20	Meredith Corp.	Des Moines, Iowa	6.2	11
21	Granite Broadcasting	New York	5.9	11
22	Raycom Media	Montgomery, Ala.	5.6	26
23	Pulitzer	St. Louis	5.2	10
24	Media General	Richmond, Va.	4.7	13
25	Albritton Communications	Washington, D.C.	4.2	10

Sources: *Broadcasting & Cable*, June 30, 1997; *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, 1998.

and is the major supplier of U.S. textbooks, Addison-Wesley.

Rupert Murdoch, the Australian media mogul and personal protégé of Britain's World War II propaganda chief, Lord Beaverbrook, has spread his **News Corporation** all across the United States, in print media, radio, and television, while at the same time owning the semi-official organ of the British monarchy, the *Times* of London. The News Corp. owns 20th Century Fox, which has spawned the fourth major U.S. television network, Fox-TV, and has now launched its own 24-hour all-news network. The News Corp. publishes the *New York Post* and *TV Guide* (which, in revenue, is the largest magazine in the United States). It also owns the large HarperCollins publishing company and has a 20% stake in Reuters wire service, the number-one international news feed to the media in the United States, and the largest wire service in the world.

The media top dogs

The tables published here give the rank order of the largest media, by circulation or equivalent, for the top newspapers, magazines, television and radio, and cable operations in the United States. Also shown, are the largest media companies, ranked by revenue.

What you see is that, among the American-owned media giants, a half-dozen companies share, with their British cousins, a near-total monopoly over the news. The Associated Press, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times* (Times Mirror Corp.) are, along with Reuters and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, and its U.S. de facto subsidiaries, National Public Radio and the Public Broadcasting System), almost the sole sources of news for the overwhelming majority of Americans.

Meanwhile, the television news departments at NBC, CBS, ABC, Murdoch's Fox, and the cable-based CNN are part of this same cartel; they are operated by controlled subsidiaries of even larger multimedia conglomerates: General Electric owns NBC; Time Warner recently absorbed CNN; Disney/Capital Cities owns ABC; and Westinghouse owns CBS. Each of these giant media entities owns local TV and radio stations in major urban centers, as well as magazines, motion picture companies, and record companies, (in addition to their more familiar product lines), throughout the United States.

The reach of this cartel extends far beyond the borders of the United States, to reach English speakers around the world. For example, the *International Herald Tribune*, the English-

TABLE 4

Top 20 cable companies, by number of subscribers

Rank	Multiple system operator	Basic subscriptions
1	Tele-Communications Inc.	14,710,846
2	Time Warner Cable	7,321,000
3	U S WEST Media Group	5,004,948
4	Time Warner Entertainment-Advance/Newhouse	4,479,000
5	Comcast	3,865,508
6	Cox Communications	3,259,384
7	Cablevision Systems	2,807,575
8	Adelphia Communications	1,851,850
9	Jones Intercable	1,523,740
10	Marcus Cable	1,271,140
11	Century Communciations	1,257,400
12	Falcon Cable	1,167,850
13	Lenfest Group	1,141,519
14	Charter Communications	1,139,354
15	InterMedia Partners	941,855
16	TCA Group	691,232
17	Post-Newsweek Cable	594,321
18	TW Fanch	531,500
19	Prime Cable	490,508
20	Multimedia Cablevision	452,795

Sources: Cablevision, March 17, 1997; *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, 1998.

TABLE 5

Top 25 media companies, by revenue, 1997

1996 rank	Company	Total media revenue (\$ millions)	Headquarters
1	Time Warner	\$11,851.1	New York
2	Walt Disney Co.	6,555.9	Burbank, Calif.
3	Tele-Communications, Inc.	5,954.0	Denver
4	NBC TV (GE)	5,230.0	Fairfield, Conn.
5	CBS Corp.	4,333.5	New York
6	Gannett Co.	4,214.4	Arlington, Va.
7	News Corp.	4,005.0	Sydney, Australia
8	Advance Publ.	3,385.0	Newark, N.J.
9	Cox Enterprises	3,075.3	Atlanta
10	Knight-Ridder	2,851.9	Miami
11	New York Times Co.	2,615.0	New York
12	Hearst Corp.	2,568.4	New York
13	Viacom	2,404.0	New York
14	Times Mirror Corp.	2,321.0	Los Angeles
15	Tribune Co.	2,106.0	Chicago
16	Comcast Corp.	1,878.1	Bala Cynwyd, Pa.
17	U.S. West Media Group	1,726.0	Atlanta
18	Washington Post Co.	1,705.9	Washington, D.C.
19	American Online	1,690.0	Vienna, Va.
20	Thomson Corp.	1,664.0	Toronto
21	Dow Jones & Co.	1,501.8	New York
22	Cablevision Systems Corp.	1,315.1	Woodbury, N.Y.
23	Reed Elsevier	1,308.4	London
24	E.W. Scripps	1,167.5	Cincinnati
25	Advo Inc.	986.2	Windsor, Conn.

Source: *Advertising Age*, Aug. 18, 1997; *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, 1998.

language “newspaper of record” abroad, is a joint venture of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*.

Moreover, these same media cartel companies are now vying for more control, through “portal sites” for one-stop surfing on the World Wide Web. Among the top ten most visited “portals” for computer users at home, as of August 1998, was Walt Disney Online (with an estimated “reach” to 17.5% of such users), and Time Warner Online (with 13.9% reach).

In October, BBC World Service initiated its new Latin America Internet Service. The chief sugar-daddy for the BBC World Service is none other than mega-speculator George Soros, whose initial donation to the group was £1 million. At the beginning of October, Soros met with Baroness Kennedy, the Labour Peer and chairman of the British Council, to discuss more donations and projects. Watch out Ibero-America!

Whereas not too long ago, various trade journals would compile a profile of the 100 most powerful media executives, the list has now dwindled down to no more than 20 multimedia CEOs. And the merger mania and “restructuring” continues among these giant companies. For example, Times Mirror (owner of the *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Newsday*, and the *Baltimore Sun*) recently sold its legal-publishing subsidiary, Matthew Bender & Co., to the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate, Reed Elsevier PLC (based in London), for \$1.375 billion.

This, then, is the structure of an enormous cartel, operating in a mode that British intelligence official H.G. Wells dubbed an “open conspiracy.” Murdoch, Ted Turner, and similar media moguls have been trumpeted in the pages of the British-influenced “American” society journal, *Vanity Fair*, as holding the “real power” in what is called the “New Establishment.” But that too, like the other stories peddled for popular consumption by the cartel, is only partly true, and mostly a Big Lie.

As Figure 1 shows, the highly publicized moguls, such as Murdoch, Turner, and Sumner Redstone, are mere front men for the real conspiratorial power. That real power resides in the more shadowy Club of the Isles, whose media machine conceals its existence through the manipulation of perceptions and “public opinion.”