



THE LORD MONCKTON FOUNDATION  
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## **Press freedom's new enemy: the Press | *Monckton of Brenchley***

The governing class has long tried not merely to influence but, where possible, to control the Press. Now it doesn't even have to try. The Press, once proud to be the scourge of the Establishment, then to be its mirror, is now its fawning poodle. Consider three issues on which the Establishment and the Press have one view and the people whom the Press nominally serve have more than one view: abortion, global warming and supranational government. On these three great issues, the only opinion that the Press will normally allow is the fashionable, Establishment opinion. When I was a cub reporter, the Press was diverse in its opinions on nearly all major issues. Furthermore, news and opinion were kept carefully separate, and editorializing in news stories was frowned upon. As long as reporters kept the facts sacrosanct and their opinions were confined to the comment pages, the audience would know that at least the Press was giving it the facts. No longer.

Now, the near-unanimity of the news media has become a dangerous threat to democracy and, therefore, to liberty. For the long-standing and valuable distinction between news and comment has gone. It sometimes seems as if every news story were a polemic on behalf of the official position. This unholy infection of the news pages with drably uniform, overtly partisan, head-bangingly pro-Establishment prejudice denies the audience even the facts, to say nothing of a fair balance of views.

Has your news medium ever told you that millions of babies are butchered every year without even being given an anaesthetic first? Torture was once a crime. No longer. Has your newspaper or broadcaster ever expressed the opinion that the torture of blameless little children is not a mark of civilization and should be outlawed, at least to the extent of administering an anaesthetic first? The Press trumpets the so-called "precautionary principle" in other contexts: might it not suggest, just occasionally, that just in case a little child in its mother's womb is capable of feeling pain, it would be humane to administer an anaesthetic before butchering it? But no.

Has your news medium ever told you that there has been no "global warming" for 15 years; that a plain discrepancy now exists between the models' predictions and the less exciting reality that is observed? Has it commented that even if the wildly exaggerated projections of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (which have proven to overstate measured warming by double) were correct it would still be ten times more cost-effective to let the warming it

projects happen and pay the cost of any resultant damage than to spend a single cent today trying to stop it? No.

Has your news medium ever told you that a growing body of international treaties is transferring power from elected hands here to unelected hands somewhere else? Has it ever commented that with every such transfer of power democracy dies a little? In Britain, five laws in six are made not by our elected Parliament, which is a mere rubber stamp, but by the unelected *Kommissars* of Europe. Worldwide, the trend is towards what power-hungry politicians from Jacques Chirac to Al Gore have called “global governance”. Yet not one of the institutions of world government, from the UN to the World Bank and the IMF, is subject to election by the peoples of the states parties to the treaties that created them. And what does the democratic Press have to say about this inexorable attenuation of democracy? Exactly the same as the Establishment it serves: nothing at all.

Albert Camus once said that a free Press may be either good or bad, but that without freedom it cannot be anything but bad. Yet when I recently suggested that perhaps we believers in democracy should establish our own news medium here in Australia, there were howls of rage from the hard-left-dominated news media. But the freedom of the Press to give all the facts, not just one side, and to express all opinions, not just the official opinion, will be restored. In the US, Fox News decided to report the news straight, to separate it plainly from comment, and to make its opinions mostly Right-wing. The gap in the market turned out to be half of the entire television news audience. The rest of the TV news channels responded to Fox by moving still further Leftward than before, opening up the market still wider for Fox, which is now making 2 million dollars a day. Press freedom pays: and it will come to Australia, whether the existing largely one-sided news media like it or not.