Editorial

A free press, the foundation of republican government

All of us are familiar with the use of the press as a political weapon to brainwash populations. After all, was that not the method of Hitler (Goebbels and the Big Lie)? And we all know about the monstrosities of the Soviet and Chinese communist systems in the past. How many Americans, however, are prepared to admit the shocking truth, that the Chinese and Russian press today are freer and more honest than their counterparts in the United States, not to speak about televised so-called news reports. Indeed, the malicious bias of television newscasters is probably the more deplorable, because television is licensed by the government, and therefore more directly accountable to citizens.

The crucial experiment which demonstrates the dishonesty of the U.S. press, is their systematic failure to give honest coverage to Lyndon LaRouche, despite the fact that he is a leading contender in the Democratic Presidential primary. One has only to compare the treatment of Republican candidates, who in many instances got far fewer votes than LaRouche, to the media's unwillingness to report on the consistent pattern of two-digit returns which LaRouche has chalked up in primaries throughout the United States.

Let's look at the record. In California, LaRouche out-polled Lamar Alexander and Phil Gramm. In Illinois, he out-polled Gramm. In Louisiana, he out-polled Forbes and Alexander. In North Carolina, he out-polled Buchanan. And the picture was similar in Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Vermont, and elsewhere.

Between Jan. 1 and the March 26 California primary, in which LaRouche garnered over 160,000 votes, there were 573 stories on the primaries aired on the three national television networks. In not one was the name "LaRouche" even mentioned. Fox network, CNN, and the wire services have done no better.

Thousands of articles have appeared in print without mention of LaRouche, a candidate who has received over half a million votes in these elections. And to make the politically motivated blackout more blatant, these same media routinely peddle the Big Lie that President Clinton is "running unopposed."

A study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs reports that in the January to March period, ABC provided six hours and 18 minutes, and NBC five hours, to covering various of the candidates other than LaRouche. For example, Pat Buchanan got 36 minutes of prime time news coverage, Steve Forbes and Lamar Alexander each got 18 free minutes, and similarly with the rest. This was worth millions of dollars of exposure to the candidates. Moreover, it established in the minds of the typical viewer that *these* were the only serious contenders against front-runners Clinton and Dole.

In contrast, honest reporting on the activities of LaRouche and his associates, as well as the publication of articles by him and his associates, appear with some regularity in the Ibero-American press, in Chinese papers, in media in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet bloc, in Bosnia, in Croatia, in the nations of Africa and Asia, in Arabic-language journals, in India, and so forth.

The point is not LaRouche's popularity abroad, but the implications of this deliberate suppression of an important current of ideas in the United States. While the Federal Election Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have the responsibility to guarantee the fairness of an election campaign, they allow the media to use their news departments as instruments to decide who may and who may not be considered as legitimate candidates. It goes without saying that this is a complete denial of the fairness doctrine.

The argument used to justify this, is that newspapers and television networks are commercial ventures, and must satisfy advertisers first, and viewers only secondarily. This is the grossest kind of corruption, and totally violates the possibility for ballot democracy. Furthermore, the so-called American press, is in fact controlled by British interests. Reuters is just one, obvious case.

We cannot allow the corrupt news media to run rampant. A free press is the basis for the existence of a viable republic, and as such must be defended.