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Editorial

Auto censorship in BiH media world as well in entire region has rapidly increased and more notable. Economic and political pressures, violation of labor rights and complete absence of any helping program for journalists that have been threatened to be fired are altogether the reasons why auto censorship is growing at present. Editor removing the article or program report which he may not consider "objective" in terms of media entrepreneurs or certain political network would do the job and in this case journalist shall proceed with auto censorship every time when he/she thinks that whatever he/she does shall not „suit“the entrepreneur or editor.

Basically, the problem is the bound or tie between the politicians and media entrepreneurs, the ever – present media clientelism and unpopularity or even banning of union actions eventually taken by journalists. Naturally, individuals choose more challenging and brave path, the path of responsibility, truth and professionalism; the price is mostly losing a job or mobbing at work. The price is high but in this case journalist may keep his/her professional and personal dignity, work to the benefit of public and set this profession back to its genuine mission – provide public with information regarding all public issues.

Individual courage is important, however, is this enough to preserve professional level and media fairness? The crucial question is how to protect journalists and support journalists' willing to remain professional in their work? How to update the laws that protect journalists and how to implement these laws?

Finding legal and professional/journalists' mechanisms for reducing political impact on media, through both ties with entrepreneurs or institutions influenced by political party legal representatives, should be initial step in creating the space for reducing censorship and auto censorship. Association of BiH Journalists has for the last few years been advocating the introduction of special law on transparency of media ownership and information pluralism and media contents.

Also, it is important to ensure and provide transparent media financing from public funds and following of money flows through marketing and other associated services that media provide their clients with. Finally, it is crucial to encourage and reinforce journalists themselves to stand up against and fight against censorship, particularly through creating and strengthening of media unions, in order to ensure (self) protection of professional journalism and its key values, through union activities and individual activism as well.

Journalists have been put under lot of pressure, but they are not the only ones suffering the consequences in the system where unions and works are devaluated. In order to have any changes imposed, it would be necessary to face the auto censorship within political parties, public institutions, civil society, at work etc. Censure and self – censure shall be covered in this E – bulletin edition by the following persons: Ronan Brandy, senior journalist from Ireland and Council of Europe expert, Amer Tikveša, BiH journalist, Franjo Sarčević, Prometej.ba, local web site editor and Goran Dakic, also a journalist.

Adis Šušnjar, BH Journalists Association

Events

11-12 Sep 2015

Regional cooperation of journalism associations of West Balkans Countries

Two – day brainstorming meeting was held in Sarajevo including the representatives of journalists' associations from West Balkan region aimed to establish the network for public advocating of media liberties and safety/security for journalists, on regional and national levels. Cooperation of journalists' associations from the region shall result in the establishment of regional platform for more efficient protection of rights and safety/security of journalists, including the development of democracy – based environment allowing media staff to perform their duties.

Auto censorship as natural occurrence of BiH media world

By: Franjo Šarčević

News Bar, satiric TV show appeared just in time regarding auto censorship. This show is usually broadcasted at RTL TV house and it's edited by the team editing also another satiric portal News Bar which, I believe, analyses, critics or simply describes social and political reality of neighboring Croatia and its neighbors. Most of you are familiar with this fact anyway. Namely, this TV show started with its program with a joke: "What's the difference between censorship and auto censorship"? The difference is in auto and not just any auto, instead a high class auto!"

And this is how I fall into Medias res in some strange way, getting into the core of this problem: why do journalists and editors decide to go for auto censorship very often. Therefore, most of the time the reasons for this are based on a simple selfishness which again may be divided into selfish reasons of the first group and selfish reasons of second group kind. First sub group may include journalists that work hard in order to earn some money and because of existential reasons they face they must be careful about what they write risking thus to break the thin ice they are standing



Events

10 Sep 2015

Necessity to draft a social image of journalists in BiH

During the debate of Tuzla Journalists' Club and covering the problems in media community, the participants emphasized that the main problems included the endangering of working/labor rights of journalists in BiH, including the impact by local governing officials on media and generally, poor status of journalists. Enes Osmancevic stated that the Club should summon all journalists from the Canton of Tuzla in order to make mutual creation of demands, requests and proposals and mutually fight for their rights and better position and stats for all journalists. Tuzla Journalists' Club held an Electoral Assembly of this Club.

[Details](#)

8 Sep 2015

Reducing pressure by local authorities upon media

Journalists in Gorazde agreed that it would be necessary to work on journalism solidarity, strengthening the Journalists' Club, education of journalists including the education of the local authority representatives that treat local media relationships in inappropriate way. It was emphasized that intensive dialogue with local authorities is also necessary on order to reduce the pressure on local media houses and also improve the status of journalists in the regions.

[Details](#)

8 Sep 2015

40 new members join the Association of BiH Journalists during the summer period

Frequent increase in number of members clearly indicates that the Association of BiH Journalists has been recognized as media professional institution and also relevant organization for the protection and improvement of liberties, rights and responsibility of journalists, including the protection of reputation and dignity of journalism in general.

[Details](#)

4 Sep 2015

Respect and solidarity as precondition for better position of journalists

Solidarity and greater support amongst colleagues is a first step to advance the status and better protection of journalists in Una – Sana Canton, journalists stated in Bihac during the debate on present and current problems of media community in USC. Journalists held the Electoral Assembly of the Una – Sana Canton journalists club on the same day.

[Details](#)

2 Sep 2015

All media houses invited to report more on journalists' problems

Brcko District Journalists agreed that they should not actuate the procedure of drafting of law framework on media in Brcko District, which was previously suggested and that journalists should seek other forms of protection. They also emphasized that the journalists' right shall be protected in different way, such as Law on Labor and that journalists should join in forming associations and fight for their rights. Electoral Assembly of the Bosanska Posavina journalists' club was also held.

[Details](#)

28 Aug 2015

Local media in Birac region fight for survival

Pressure by certain local authorities, unreliable jobs, lack of media projects and general financial support altogether represent threats to the survival of local media houses in Birac region, claimed members of the Srebrenica local journalist club during the debate on labor rights of journalists and problems they have been facing. Clubs Electoral Assembly followed the debate.

[Details](#)

on. Second sub group on the other hand may include journalists and editors that play major role in the above mentioned joke. They, in association with political officials, become puppets of governing authorities or generally those who have power and who, one way or another, govern certain financial streams. This consequently in some natural implication provides them with undeserved privileges.

In this sense, I believe that today direct censorship is, to smaller amount, is present in terms of editors receiving direct orders or limitations by the, shall we say, political party commissioners. This censorship is more manifested through many subtle ways that appear hidden and thus more dangerous.

It doesn't take much to realize that our media are not free and that auto censorship is their natural environment. Accordingly there is no need to waste words on daily news papers with very few exceptions. Let's use "Vecernji list" as sample representative. It is de facto a HDZ political party bulletin which best articulates demands by Croatian nationalism and I shall allow myself and say that: "they manage to reach the goals of the above mentioned nationalism". This media, as once stated by father Dr. Drago Bojic, "demonstrates rigid shape of patriotic media manipulation since everything is set to serve the politics and its leader. "Now that I mentioned "Vecernji list", it would be unfair not to mention its ideological twin brother ""Dnevni avaz" or, come to that, newly started weekly magazine STAV, which, I am convinced serves the SDA politics and promoter of Turkish politics in BiH on one hand, and on the other hand, it's lagging behind and seems inferior that one could place it in to the first half of the 19th century into the period of so called the awakening or raising of ethnic consciousness and national romanticism.

Main web sites follow up this situation and these include web sites that are, at certain moment ready to serve some political party and they make benefit out of this.

And once again I shall quote Bojic who said that "bracing with political and economic power, political parties, national and religious leaders, manipulating information, plotting and misusing the facts represent with certain exceptions the real picture of all BiH media houses".

This bracing is maintained through mechanism of censorship and auto censorship since editors and journalists know what to write and how far they can go so this bracing shall sustain or even reinforce. What better example can we provide but the most recent one and still actual case and situation with Naser Oric? I shall allow myself and sound hypocritical and I shall censor myself so I will not say everything I think and know about the above mentioned gentleman (and I believe most journalists know about this case). Anyone being familiar with facts about the above mentioned gentleman shall understand why I decided to go for auto censorship. But, isn't it little scandalous and terrifying how Naser Oric has been displayed in public as some sort of mythical hero and raw model, through media by the Bosniak politics control (both through SDA, SBB or presented as "ethnically and nationally more and more conscious")?

This one kind of concealment of everything that is not in accordance with designated "ethnic interest" or "majority emotion" can also be seen in non – critical relationship between media towards Turkish foreign policy through R.T. Erdogan, I failed to notice and Google allows me to, that any influential media house passed or made comments shameful statement by Erdogan, during the interview on national TV on 5 August 2014 where he stated:



Events

28 Aug 2015

Short Films from "Zivjeti zajedno" (Living together) serials at the Youth event held in Tuzla in 2015

Documentaries "Komsije" ("Neighbors") and "Heroji bitke za ranjenike" ("Heroes of the battle for wounded") from the "Zivjeti zajedno" ("Living together") serial produced by the Independent Association of Vojvodina Journalists and Association of BiH journalists were shown on Friday 28 August at the Tuzla 2015 Youth Event festival. Event titled "Uvijek postoji izbor" (There's always a choice) gathered the youth from around Balkans and was dedicated to citizens' bravery and courage during the period of war and peace.

[Details](#)

Media on Media

8 Sep 2015

Digitalization in BiH: Activities regarding the urgency of digitalization process in BiH passed officially

Council of Ministers of BiH passed the Information of the Ministry of Transport and Communication on drafted activities aimed to urge the digitalization process, held on the 22nd session on 8 September 2015

[Details](#)

6 Sep 2015

Public Poll: 80, 5% of citizens believe that prosecutor's offices should launch investigations based on media reports

According to the public poll implemented by the Association of Positive Values as part of the Read, watch and react project, conducted in many cities throughout BiH, 80.5% of the citizens are convinced that prosecutors offices in BiH should commence investigations pursuant to media reports outlining illegal actions and work by politicians and public figures in general.

[Details](#)

refused to make alliance with any mephistopheles politics or political party, but this all helped me to realize how the story works.

However, I must be honest till the end and say that while editing „Prometheus crew“, I was facing situations when I decided to remain silent that is, not post the article I had previously prepared, but the reasons were of cautious nature, even including fear, particularly during the stage when my family was threatened or was put under pressure because of my work. I was not concerned when web site from Herzegovina with snake name virtually criticized me because of my critics addressed against Croatian nationalism and its fans „finished me off „also through their comments. On the other hand, I also refused to stop with criticizing Bosniak nationalism because certain Mr. Avdukic titled me as genocide committer through official Rijaset of IZ (Islamic Association) web page. However, when you get threatened by people you know, a retreat and withdraw must be considered as mere fight for survival.

These blackmailing, direct or indirect threats, the atmosphere of fear are yet another moment that makes negative impact on our media reality.

“They used all kind of words to insult me. They called me Georgian or even worse, I was, excuse my expression, called Armenian”.

Therefore, media do not want to oppose those they consider as they readers. Journalists do not want to have conflict with media entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs do not want to have conflict with their financing sources.

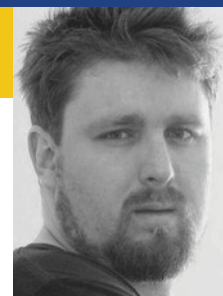
Can you imagine what would happen to journalists who wrote down for Vecenji list that Dario Kordic was indeed a war criminal and that it was a disgrace that Marinko Cavara, Dragan Covic and other “highly ranked officials” give credit to this unfortunate person as to national hero and hero – martyr. What would happen if Dnevni avaz journalist wrote about dark sides of unofficial prime Bosniak? What would happen to RTRS journalist who criticized the Great Leader Milorad. What would happen to STAV journalist, who may tomorrow write the text, based on the above mentioned statement, including many other statements, about Erdogan and describes him as yet another fascist driven political official. Of course, they all would have no problems at all, but they would most probably be looking for a job elsewhere.

This is what this issue is all about: a journalists is engaged with some media house with goal and purpose to earn his or her salary, instead of being an investigator or be a public consciousness, becomes aware where he or she works and what the company he or she was engaged withdrew its funds and then he or she makes common sense conclusions. He/she becomes aware what the system is built on and by contributing through his/her work, he/she feeds this system. If this political system is based on a myth from the 7th century till heroic resistance by Herceg – Bosna, it thus feeds this myth. If on the other hand, second political system is based on myth from the time of Bogumils through 9. 10. 15, 115th genocide, then it-s the journalist feeding this myth. If third political system is based on Kosovo – heroic epoch and homeland – defensive wars then the myth is fed once again. If fourth political system is based on a mixture of Yugoslav nostalgic, Unitarian ideas and pseudo – citizen community, then one should do his/her own work. Basically, we receive supporters' relationship towards history, non – critical and undefined, we get silence on criminal, suppressing crucial issues into the margins, and we get the chaos we live in. Media thus become part of the system and match up with political rulers of the system.

Working as „Prometheus crew „editor, I had a chance for Faustus deal that have been offered to me in cunning and rather discrete way. A person or group being aware of their advantages, provide you with the deal, make a promise, you, with your „consciousness „would be left alone to spot the point out of this. Of course, with all weaknesses I possess and with all due respect for some people, I



Journalists turned into workers



8 Sep 2015

BH journalists supporting #nohatespeech campaign

Association of BiH Journalists joined the action #nohatespeech aimed against the promotion of hate speech and prevention of its broadcasting in an online world. Italian organization Associazione Carta di Roma, supported by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), Article 21, National Federation of Italian Press (FNSI) and Journalists' Union RAI (USIGRai) launched a #nohatespeech campaign.

It was not just about citizens' responsibility – for journalists, it was about fulfilling basic duties: providing readers, viewers and listeners with facts.

[Details](#)

By: Goran Dakić

The question of (auto) censorship in BiH media is actually the question of complete absence of professional self – conscience. In February this year, a public forum titled “Oslobodi medije” (“Liberate media”) was held in Belgrade, during which, Predrag Balgojevic, one of the participants and “Juzne vesti” (“Southern News”) editor – in – chief, emphasized that government in Serbia had been killing journalists, whereas they kill them today financially.

There was nothing to be added to his conclusion, nothing to be amended, but the conclusion borders may undoubtedly be expanded, since it's a well known fact, more or less, which media houses and to what extent are being financed by the government of the Republic of Serbia. This financial injection at the same time may provide creditor with loan handling and successful life within media field throughout the country.

In our media world, according to words by Svetislav Bozic, a Serbian composer, the activity of senseless issues distribution is predominant; however, it is in no way pointless, at least not for those agitating conflicts in this media battlefield. This emptiness got its final shape in tabloids that are packed with pretty much everything just to have something in them. Tabloid policy at the end is created by tabloid based journalism and considering how it looks like today it becomes clear that its mother is actually promiscuity street girl, which has for a long period of time been a synonym for politics as well.

Politics has, over their forward places players, tend to protect its reputation in media world. It's either donations or intelligence service projecting by puppet editors and thus anything becomes possible: it's possible to ignore forensic analysis issued by National institute for Forensics of Kingdom of the Netherlands, it's possible to ignore human insulin, it's possible to ignore the building of convicted and wanted criminal on the run, it's finally possible to ignore assaults and attacks on media houses, properties or journalists. When Banjaluka journalists club organized protests, followed by the police intrusion into the Klix.ba premises and offices, only one media house representatives from Banjaluka failed to turn up for protests. This was exactly the very media house whose representatives should have turned up before anybody else, but the censorship which had been part of ontological structure of this media, prevent these representatives from turning up.

Does censorship exit in BiH media world? No doubt about it. Does auto censorship exist in media world in BiH? No doubt about it as well. Few years ago I participated in forum “Culture and media” organized by member of the Matica Srpska (in the Republic of Srpska. I spoke about this issue – media censorship, that is, about censorship in sections or shows about culture in media in RS. Tens of examples were sufficient enough to land mere theory about censorship as such, down to sobering and practical ground. This was how, for example, certain Banjaluka daily newspaper (and I did mentioned this newspaper using their official name) brought up a series of articles about Jelena Trepetova Kostic, an actress that was appointed the Head of Department at the Academy of Art with the University of Banjaluka, though she was not fluent in Serbian language. Articles were cheap, disqualifying, non – principle based and unethical. But, it was amazing that the statement by the pre – condemned actress was not brought up, in any of the, I reckon, four texts published. This did not happen and appear in any chapter published and posted, including interfile, or even confirming that “Jelena Trepetova Kostic has not responding to our calls for days” – no, no and no ! This example outlined the censorship in its editing power and force and also, auto censorship which reflected the indoctrination of young journalist who, at least signed up his name on the bottom of this, rather unprofessional, babbling.

At the beginning of December 2013, Rajko Radovanovic, acting director of RTRS, announced that, prior to his arrival, there had been so called “black lists” in this media house. During the interview for “Press RS”, Radovanovic stated that there were “black lists” containing, from time to time, the names of public figures from both, governing officials and opposition members, including some parliamentarian and non – parliamentarian political party members. Later on, Stefan Karganovic, the “Honorary Consul of Nicaragua” “made” the list of public enemies, and this could have been considered as pure recommendation for media execution and journalism ignoring of these people, with no exception whatsoever. Different opinions, no matter to their nature, were simply deported and banished into the area of media silence. Those willing to express their opinion and have their say had no space to do it, and those who did have space to express their opinion, were to remain silent for good.

Authentic journalism did not pass away, but it's slowly dying. There are more media houses, particularly electronic one and the crops of this field of white cotton filed journalism must simply be picked. Slaves have no say in this, since once a slave always a slave and shall do what he is told to do. This quantity of mediocrity thus provides those with skills with very limited space. Journalists are accordingly turned into “slaves”, though not all of them, but still vast majority are turning into “slaves”. Majority in the People's Assembly of RS was created through corruption and bribing anyway. If this recipe proved successful in Assembly, journalists really stand no chance at all.

Vacancies

OSCE seeks public information officer

Office for Security and Co - Operation in Europe in BiH posted a vacancy notice for the following position: "National Public Information Officer". Deadline for applications is **2 October 2015**.

[Details](#)

International Award for Civil Journalism – Citizen Media Award

The topic of this year's contest for civil journalism – Citizen Media Award was: "Our world, our dignity, our future– Sustainable development and engagement".

Contest has been open and individual participants, groups, associations, civil initiatives, manufactures, actors and editorial offices from civil journalism fields have been encouraged to apply and compete.

Deadline for applications is **30 September 2015**.

[Details](#)

Internship at Deutsche Welle for journalists and editors

Internship program is available at all DW (Deutsche Welle) sectors including: television, internet department, radio, communications and Deutsche Welle Academy.

Internship duration is scheduled for 6 months including a minimum money scholarship amount starting from EUR 310.00 per month.

Applications remain open for all students and journalists with previous experience in media houses.

Applications shall be accepted during **October and April**.

[Details](#)

How to battle self-censorship?

By: *Amer Tikveša*

Unlike standard censorship, which, to some extent, could have been bound to previous socialist times, auto censorship seemed much harder to cope with. Namely, during the socialist system, the power emerged from Communist Party only. Although it had ties with almost every aspect of life, it was still THE ONLY source of power with no competition whatsoever. A significant number of journalists would have not considered it as censorship, since most of them shared same ideas and accordingly committed their work best way they could. Its censorship capacities were clear even for those who were willing to avoid it, if they wanted to. The problem of present time is underlined in power dispersing and because of that, journalists' work seems like going under rain drops, though this does not apply to every journalist and not to any given subject. It rather looks like this: journalists would write an article, as previously ordered by their editor. Unless particularly told, he or she then writes about what he/she thinks his/her editor may like to read. Editor thus takes the position towards the entrepreneur accordingly and the owner would carry on identically towards the advertiser or towards his political mentor or protector and not often the owner acts accordingly towards both of them, that is, entrepreneur and political mentor. Relations thus become netted. One media house would have more advertisers and because of bracing between economic and political power, there would always be more than one advertiser, which eventually would condition his advertising by demanding support to a particular political party. Also, the media entrepreneurs in BiH are often people directly or indirectly involved with politics or would operate significantly in business field, apart from being present in local media world. There is therefore a multiple necessity not to get into conflict with certain people since the price of eventual conflict may be too risky to afford.

However we shall focus here on the problem hidden in "media business" syntagme. Business common sense is aimed towards the manufacturing of new values. We cannot talk about mere satisfaction of consumers needs, but instead about new needs and new products for their implementation, as well as new consumers. Information in business world thus becomes a product. It is no longer something that can be found and launched into market in order to satisfy the public need for information but it is also something that is actually manufactured and produced.

Man's eagerness to be informed creates the need for discovering. Discovering or revelation as oppose to informing, also contains mythical dimension or belief with no arguments about what one's beliefs actually are. Auto censorship appears here as efficient manufacturing tool for production of new truths that new reality should be based on. Therefore, it must not be considered as something that would obliterate, smooth up or cover up the information. It should be considered as crating or production tool. We can discover what has been covered up, hidden, but once we find out, we may find out that what we had discovered simply could not be appear as the truth.

The entire context within which the hidden fact functions as the truthful fact has now been altered. Therefore, it would be much useful to discover which auto censorship strategies could re – shaped journalists' consciousness about some event eventually change into public consciousness regarding the very same event, or at least the consciousness of only one part of public.

We shall distinct one thing that has become unusual, regarding this issue and that is the fact that battle against auto censorship must be aimed mainly towards journalists. They merely take up half the story and this part is less important, since there is no cure that everybody could apply in order to help them and which could be unique for everybody. Journalist resistance to auto censorship is individual. Even if we could apply one successful example of resistance to other cases, it would not mean that it was successful at all. Contexts that condition it are different.

Another half of this story is recipients. Only by having them involved her



we could make an impact on reducing auto censure. When it comes to journalists it would be necessary to follow their work, analyze it and reveal cases of auto censure. Making media aware that they may be followed and that their manipulative strategies may also be recognized and identified. Their work must be cultivated and be institutionalized, including analytic and critical approach.

When it comes to recipients, we shall ask ourselves where the habit of reading one paper only comes from, instead of reading another paper or watch TV program of one instead of another TV house. This happens because people think that the truth is by the side of the media they actually follow. We know that there can't be two truths but we also know that different people follow different media about the same thing and report differently and viewers believe them. We know that they will never agree about certain things. In order to solve this problem, it would be necessary to make people literate in terms of media starting from their earliest period through educational institutions. They should be taught and know what information is, how to recognize and identify important information and how to determine its reliability etc.

Namely, the analytic and critical approach to media and pointing out to auto censure is aimed towards journalist. It is certain that consciousness rising about being able to recognize their disadvantages may influence them to be more careful in the future. However, media houses care more about recipients and they live from recipients, rather than caring about any analyst. AS long as you can manipulate them, media will continue doing this. With the fall of number of consumers of auto censure products, situation may change.

BiH is still far away from this. Syntagm "media illiteracy" has just recently entered our public space. It's shy and glimpsing over the borders of expert public into the world of media consumers. Media analysis and critics are most of the time only read and left to consideration by experts. Greatest problem is that things no matter how they are, non – profitable and require donations and help by donators, and this is decreasing rapidly in media. If the purpose is to change goal changing society and community, then they must return media inside the country which is all the same – objective, independent, unbiased and inform the public.

Self-Censorship: Stifling the impulse to tell the truth

Some Definitions and some Irish Examples

By: Ronan Brady, Griffith College, Dublin

Take two imaginary headlines: **Unprovoked Police Attack on Students** or **Rampaging Students Attack Police**. Although they contradict each other, each headline could be accurate.

To clarify such a situation: We combine the information we get from as many different sources as we can. Of course the ultra-sceptics believe that there is no such thing as 'truth': To Foucault, "truth" is really just an illusion, a game played by powerful people to justify their power.

However in Foucault's world "democratic politics" are also an illusion. But journalists know ... that, in the real world, Foucault's scepticism would lead nowhere. We always knew that what we write is never more than approximately true, at best. But we also know that, without that approximate truth, ordinary people will have even less chance of reducing the hold powerful people have over our lives. Of course we do work under restrictions ... Limits: How do journalists respond?

Why does self-censorship happen?

Reasons may include: Fear: This may mean a direct threat to the journalist him/herself, to family, colleagues. Direct censorship can also induce self-censorship, as we will see.

Groupthink: When either all journalists, or a large majority of them, jump to the same false conclusion without critical thinking. Direct censorship can play a role here, too. But it seems the most common is ... Commercial Pressure: In a US survey 15 years ago, 41% of all reporters admitted that they'd avoided stories



and/or softened them to benefit their newsgroups.

In the years since then, the commercial pressures have massively increased, with inevitable consequences for ethical standards. This may be a universal problem. It is often difficult to distinguish whether self-censorship derives from financial pressure, from direct threats, or from groupthink:

All media outlets suffer commercial pressure, few journalists have never been threatened and

following the herd is always easier. My examples will combine aspects of all three causes, but one thing is certain ... Direct Censorship Leads to Self-Censorship. When a government rules certain subjects out of discussion it creates ripples, like a stone falling in water. It's surely better to 'play safe' and not mention troublesome subjects at all.

So the censor gets a double benefit.

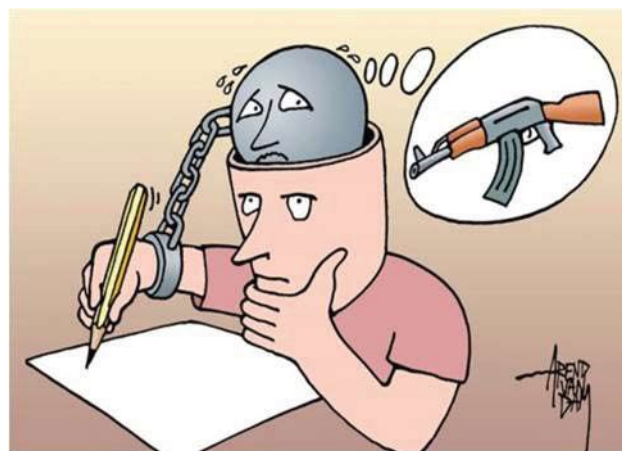
Direct Censorship in Ireland

Ireland had a tradition of direct censorship from its origins in 1922 until the 1980s, although neither Fascism nor Communism ever took hold. Ireland was neutral in World War II, but its censorship regime was more stringent than that of many belligerent states. Meanwhile, Irish literary censorship meant world-famous writers' books had to be smuggled into their own country. Broadcasting Censorship:

Rigid broadcasting censorship was imposed by the Irish government at the beginning of the conflict in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s. Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act enabled the government to forbid all interviews with those involved in armed struggle. It lasted around 40 years until it was lapsed in 1994. It was finally repealed in 2001.

Two Contrary Outcomes:

This ban on interviews meant less publicity for groups like the IRA: their concerns were often ignored in the broadcast media. But it also meant they couldn't be asked difficult questions. After IRA atrocities, broadcasting reporters had no means of challenging the IRA's answers. The IRA was denied the "oxygen of publicity". But the reasons why people joined it, got no scrutiny either. The conflict became and remained an insoluble mystery to viewers and listeners.



Broadcasting Ban Affected the Press:

Direct censorship did not extend to Irish newspapers. They were free to publish interviews and direct comments by paramilitary groups and their spokespeople. But when issues are excluded from radio and TV, the public tends to treat them as less important. The grievances that motivated the IRA not only lost their news value ... they became anathema in the horror IRA atrocities.

Self-Censorship Became the Rule:

Throughout the media, it became dangerous for your career if you suggested news stories that might show any sympathy for the IRA. British Army brutality, discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland, prejudice against Irish people in Britain, were all real stories. But they were downplayed or ignored.

Civil War within Journalism:

What followed was a kind of civil war within in Irish journalism. IRA prisoners were willing to starve themselves to death rather than be labelled as common criminals. Journalists who tried to explain why, were denounced as 'IRA sympathisers'. When hunger striker Bobby Sands won a key election in 1981, there were no Irish TV cameras to record the event. Luckily the BBC was there.

The Censorship Mentality:

This was not just a failing of individual journalists. It was an institutional problem. Management at the Irish public service broadcaster,

Incoming events

- **Konjic: workshop** on the protection of journalists in the local media (17 September 2015)

- Research in the framework of the **Media Circle**

- **Workshops for lawyers and attorneys:** Applying the EU media laws in the judicial system of BaH

RTE, enthusiastically supported the broadcasting ban. Staff lost their jobs if they infringed it in any way. British broadcasters at the BBC and ITN took a very different approach to a similar ban in 1988 ...

‘Voicing over’ the Words

Margaret Thatcher’s attempts to prevent people hearing the voices of Irish Republican leaders like Gerry Adams were frustrated ... when the British TV companies hired actors to voice-over Adams’ words. Whereas RTE had assisted the censorship, the BBC and ITN deliberately made fun of it.

Different Traditions

Rigid censorship in the ‘30s, ‘40, and ‘50s probably helped to create a more compliant culture at the top of Irish broadcasting. The BBC in contrast, had fought a battle with government over censorship in 1956. British troops had invaded Egypt after the nationalisation of the Suez canal. The government wanted to prevent any criticism of its action but the BBC refused to exclude the words of Labour leader Hugh Gaitskill condemning the invasion.

Fundamental Mistake: 1 - Irish self-censorship derived from two basic mistakes: 1: The role of the Journalist. Journalists have a duty to expose wrongdoing, irrespective of their own opinions. But those who exposed injustices in Northern Ireland were assumed to be partisan; pro-IRA.

Their professionalism was mistrusted. Politics interfered with what should be a dispassionate process.

Fundamental Mistake: 2 - Deep disrespect for the intelligence of the public. The assumption behind censorship is that the public is incapable of distinguishing between democracy and terrorism or between criminality and justice. Of course, voters can make electoral decisions which may seem foolish to most of us. But they’ve always shown they understand the fundamental issues.

So Has Section 31 Left Permanent Scars?

Thankfully, Section 31 is long gone. Young journalists in Ireland today only know about it through their history books or through anecdotes from their older colleagues. It doesn’t seem to have left any permanent scars, although those who were silenced remain unwilling to trust the broadcast media. But we’ll only really know if it has left permanent marks, the next time an Irish government turns on the broadcasters.

Enemies Without & Within

Journalism often responds poorly to outside threats. In the United States, the supposed threat from the Soviet Union in the 1950s and later the attack on the Twin Towers in New York 2001, both resulted in the publication of irresponsible allegations that later proved untrue. This book, published a decade after Section 31 was lapsed, details the bitter recriminations within Irish journalism.

Other Aspects of Irish Self-Censorship

It could be argued that the abject failure of Irish financial journalism to predict the state’s banking crash of 2007-8 was due to self-censorship. This was due to the bursting of a huge property bubble. Irish newspapers commented on the inflation of house prices. But they persuaded themselves there would be no serious consequences.

Newspapers Failed. This was partly because the Irish newspapers themselves had invested in the property bubble.

They’d printed lavish property supplements which predicted “a soft landing” to the property boom. They’d even invested in property companies. They didn’t want to hear the bad news and journalists closed their ears to the growing evidence.

The Evidence was Obvious:

Average Price of New House in 1994: €73,000. Average price in 2007 if prices rose by consumer price index: €109,000. Average in 2007 if prices rose in line with average earnings: €124,000. Actual average in 2007: €323,000. From 1996 to 2006, 597,000 new houses were built.

But there were only 347,000 new households in that period. Broadcasters Failed Too. But the newspapers weren’t the only ones at fault.



Free Media Help Line

Actual cases:

Bugojnodanas.info, a local web site – Municipal Mayor of Bugojno banned the bugojnodanas.info members to participate at any event organized by the Bugojno municipality officials for unknown reasons. Also, journalists were banned to make reports from NK "Iskra", a local football team, games by the president of Sport Association of Bugojno municipality. FMHL sent a notice to municipal mayor as well as president of Sport Association of Bugojno municipality demanding information regarding the reasons of such bans.

Bojan Bojic (Euroblic) - Police officials of Bijeljina Police Station find out that Vlajko Stefanovic assaulted his colleague, Bojan Bobic from Euroblic and forwarded the case to the Department of Criminal of Basic Court in Bijeljina. FMHL sent a note to officials of Basic Court in Bijeljina and is waiting for their response.

Amra Butkovic - After the decision by Amra Butkovic not to read the press release issued by SDU, a local political party during the central news TV program at 9 p.m. on 21 January 2014, our colleague Butkovic received a written dismissal and final warning. It stated that she should have taken this written warning seriously as it may lead to her sacking. This was the measure imposed by Zlatko Topic, general manager of JP TVSA after summoning and holding the session of disciplinary commission, held of 5 September 2013. Butkovic informed Free Media Help Line about this issue. She was charged for "sever violation of job description duties". Preoperational court hearings including main hearing have been held and final outcomes is expected to commence on 17 September 2015..

RTE, the non-profit public service broadcaster, devoted only 1% of its investigative output to the property bubble. That meant 10 programmes, involving 26 commentators (politicians, economists, etc). Only three of these predicted a property crisis.

WHY?

It's pretty clear that newspaper journalists kept quiet because of commercial pressures at their newsgroups, which we've covered already in a US example.

The broadcasters were obviously affected by groupthink.

But one crucial element of this was the appeal to the national interest.

Again and again they were asked to "put on the green shirt".

Real Patriotism

It's difficult for politicians like this man to understand but the real role of journalism is to ask the difficult questions, to challenge the accepted theories.

The most patriotic thing a journalist can do is to challenge what is generally thought to be 'patriotism'.

If the Irish journalists had challenged the economic policies more thoroughly, it's possible Ireland would not have gone bankrupt in 2008.

A Last Word on Self-Censorship

You may know that Ireland became the first country to legalise same-sex marriage by popular vote, this year.

Ireland is a very Catholic country and this was strongly opposed by the Catholic hierarchy.

Gay sex was illegal in Ireland as late as 1993. The vote for gay and lesbian marriage reflected a rapid change in the public's view of homosexuality, prompting many to 'come out'.

A Powerful Story

TV journalist Ursula Halligan came out with a very poignant statement, showing that, in fear of public prejudice, she had been censoring herself, all her working life.

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