



Bailing Out Minority Broadcasters

The reason for this should be obvious. If auto manufacturers become dysfunctional, only our cars may break down. But if media become so, society can break down. After all, we make decisions as to what policies and politicians to support based on the information at our disposal, and that information — or misinformation, as the case may be — is delivered by the media. If we had to rely on word of mouth, how much would we know about the war in Afghanistan, global-warming theories, or the death of abortionist Dr. Tiller? How much of an impetus would there have been for hate-crime laws if the media hadn't manipulated people with gratuitous and tendentious coverage of politically incorrect crimes? Would we have the present affirmative action for women if we hadn't been inundated with misrepresentations relating to the male/female wage gap? It's said that knowledge is power, and we should note a correlative: those who deliver knowledge are powerful. The fact is that the media can shape public opinion (and, in fairness, the public can shape the media).



And when governments control the media, they assume that power for themselves. This brings us to another old saying, one that can be called a law of man's nature, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." If media become reliant on government money, it is inevitable that, even if it's just with a wink and a nod, the media will increasingly do the state's bidding.

Now we come to a *Wall Street Journal* report on how a group of minority broadcasters is appealing to Handout Secretary Tim Geithner for tax money. Writing for the paper, Fawn Johnson [tells us](#), "At a hearing last week, National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters President James Winston told lawmakers that advertisers have severely cut investments in minority audiences at the same time minority broadcasters are having difficulty negotiating loan terms with banks." And the appeal sent to Geithner stated, "Minority-owned broadcasters are close to becoming an extinct species." I'm sure.

In case some haven't noticed, the traditional media in general are moving closer to extinction. Major newspapers have been losing advertisers and circulation, *U.S. News & World Report* just curtailed its print publication, and earlier this year *The Christian Science Monitor* became the first national newspaper to replace its daily print edition with its website.

Despite this, I'm quite sure these minority broadcasters will get our tax money. First, the political



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 16, 2009

correctness here is just too big to fail. Second, the Democrats in control of government know that the broadcasters in question sing their tune. It's a simple matter of funneling money to reliable mouthpieces; it's an investment in favorable coverage.

This is why those lobbying for the minority broadcasting industry are all Democrats. RadioFacts.com [provides](#) a partial list of the culprits. They are: "Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC), Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA), Charlie Rangel (D-NY), Ed Towns (D-NY), Bennie Thompson (D-MS), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), and Maxine Waters (D-CA), among others." Yes, the usual suspects.

Also in play here is a sort of elitist cynicism. In essence, part of the impetus behind this bailout proposal is that some don't like the way the market chooses winners and losers. But is it somehow more just to have the government choosing them? The funny thing about this is that the very people who tout "democracy" in most other contexts — nation building, get-out-the-vote drives, etc. — thumb their noses at it in economics. After all, what is the "market"? It is millions of people casting economic "votes" via their buying decisions and thereby determining what products and services get "elected." In contrast, state control places that power in the hands of a select few, who then determine what products and services get "appointed." Government intervention transforms us from an economic democracy into an economic oligarchy.

While I have always opposed such market meddling, the idea of bailing out media hits me, not surprisingly, on a personal level. With a few hundred thousand dollars, I certainly could do a lot to turn [SelwynDuke.com](#) into a more imposing force. And if government largesse were lavished on *The New American*, I could march into my editor's office and demand a raise (I can see it now, "We have enjoyed our association with you, Selwyn...").

Moreover, what does it mean to be a minority in the media, anyway? I toe the line of neither major party, am no liberal, and long ago stopped calling myself conservative — some would say I'm like Mayberry meets the Crusades. Yet I'm quite sure I'll never receive a bailout. But why not? If advancing minorities in the media is an imperative, we should again note that the job of the media is to relate information, not display epidermal melanin content. Thus, what should be the priority, advancing minority opinion or minority skin color? Is the superficial more important than the substantive?

Yet, to rub salt in the wound, not only do the economic oligarchs deem that traditionalists should be the losers, but they're going to support the "winners" with our money. And the salt on top of the salt is that, were we allowed to keep that tax money, we'd be better able to fund our own endeavors. It's not a transfer of wealth from the rich to poor. It's one from the rich in ideas to the poor in principles.

So, in the near future, the government may not only decide what kind of cars we drive but also what information we get. But, as Kim Jong-il and the closed society of North Korea have proven, the latter can have a palliative effect. Because at least then people may never truly grasp how lousy their cars really are.



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